

## 1A Short Bio of John Szostek

THE LUMP BROS. variety show was a marvel of styles, a nickelodeon of comedy, music, magic, silent comedy sketches, and stories. From the zany exploits of NUTMAN! INSANE SUPERHERO! to the impossible magic of JUSTIN AND NICKOFF THYME, THE LUMP BROS., created an improbable and ridiculous world.

John Szostek and Ken Raabe were THE LUMP BROS. Their credits include being cast members of an Emmy Award winning CBS TV program and performing a two-part TV series for NBC. They recently opened for Ramsey Lewis. "SECRET CIRCUS-with THE LUMP BROS.", their TV series, is carried by Cablevision and "the One Show" in New York City. THE LUMP BROS. have taken their cabaret show to Zanies, The Gingerman, Who's On First, and The Comedy Womb. They performed their full-length show, "ASLEEP AND PLACES LIKE IT" at The Chicago Comedy Showcase for a three-month run. THE LUMP BROS. have entertained at Fairs and Festivals like LincolnFest and Custer's Last Stand. Corporations like Burson-Marsteller and Allstate have hired them for special events entertainment.

THE LUMP BROS. can perform indoors and outdoors, on stage or "mixing-it-up" with a crowd. Perfect for special events, fairs, festivals, and promotions. With their wide repertory they can suite Contemporary, Renaissance, CIRCUS or Victorian themes. Each theme performed in authentic style and costumes.

"Go...For the Marvels!" Tony Adler - "The Reader."

The impulse for the kind of theatre Piccolo Theatre would become began in 1969 in Coventry, England where he began performing in Public Houses and art colleges. John's love for commedia dell' Arte was born while performing in **Geoffrey Buckley's Commedia dell' Arte Gelosi Troupe** in Stratford-upon-Avon. He began to envision a theatre that embodied the vitality and spirit of the commedia dell' Arte, a theatre of comic prototypes, masks, and physical discipline. Later in 1970, back in Chicago along with collaborator Ken Raabe, this vision manifested as **The Solar Mime Company**, the first theatre group to perform in music clubs like The Bulls, John Barleycorn, Kingston Mines and Otto's. Then under the direction of the English master of movement and mask theatre, Geoffrey Buckley, they formed **The Gelosi Commedia dell' Arte Company** which performed for two summers in Chicago and was featured on NBC which produced two full scenarios for broadcast. The influential dancer and teacher, Ann Rudolph, saw one of the Gelosi live performances and they became

lifelong friends. Beginning in 1974 he began an intense period of interaction with Marcel Marceau, Jacques LeCoq, Oscar Ichazo, Mummenschantz [L] [SEP] and Carlo Mazzoni-Clementi. Later while working as an actor in New York, he met up with the principal artists of the then defunct **Judson Poets Theatre** and performed in **Day Old Bread** and **Lines of Vision**. When his dear friend and partner, Arlene Rothlein, died suddenly he returned to Chicago and in the process of refashioning his life decided to only do comedy. He then founded the award winning **Secret Circuz** which toured nationally and led to the award-winning Cablevision series, **The Secret Circus with The Lump Bros.** which ran for two seasons. In 1999 he founded the **Piccolo Theatre** with a group of dedicated actors and theatre artists.

## **Performances**

John has performed thousands of times as an actor or dancer. Some highlights include:

John has performed as a featured actor in the Chicago **Lyric Opera** productions of **Don Quichotte** (Arlecchino) and **Cosi Fan Tutti** (Pulcinella).

He performed in the **American Ballet Theatre** production of **The Firebird** and played the part of Beast in the **Chicago Symphony Orchestra** production of **Beauty and the Beast**.

John also played Dan Farblundget in the Emmy Award winning season of **Beyond the Magic Door**.

John is a member of Actor's Equity.

## **Directing**

His directing credits include

- **Halcyon Theater** - Scenarios of the Old Commedia
- **Lifeline Theatre - Chaos**, a production nominated for four Joseph Jefferson nominations and **A Servant of Two Masters**<sup>[SEP]</sup>.

Since founding Piccolo Theatre he has directed the company in

- **We Won't Pay! We Won't Pay!**
- **The Artful Widow**
- **Scapin**
- **Mistero Buffo**
- **Sinbad**
- **Vaudeville and Vixens** (co-direction)
- **Robinson Crusoe**
- **Low Pay? Don't Pay!**
- **A Servant of Two Masters**

## More!

In 1997 he led the restoration of Evanston's Main Street Metra Station.

Renamed **The Evanston Arts Depot**, the renovated space holds the Piccolo Theatre's performance space and the Piccolatté Caffé.

In 2008 was honored with the Artist of the Year Award by the Mayor of Evanston.

Since 1982 he has been the Executive Director of Evanston Festival Theatre which produces the annual **Custer Street Fair**.