

Courant Culture

# Bring Out Your Inner Willie Wonka

by Clint Hamblin

**Boston Chocolate Tour.** If you loved *Willie Wonka and the Chocolate Factory*, make a reservation to take Old Town Trolley's one and only Boston Chocolate Tour, a well-choreographed and calorie-filled confectionary expedition designed to please your eyes and fill your stomach with decadent chocolate desserts.

Departing from the Trolley Stop Store at the corner of Boylston and South Charles Streets, this frequently sold-out adventure will make you laugh and achieve a sugar high beyond your wildest dreams, but take my advice: Leave your calorie counter at home.

Once aboard, tour guide and funny man Ted Galo gives everyone a chocolate mousse-like cake from Finale, Boston's renowned dessert restaurant located in the Park Plaza building. Looking like chocolate mud, this dessert appetizer quickly jump-starts the trip.

On to The Top of the Hub at the Prudential building where a scrumptious pistachio cheese cake with chai tea ice cream is served along with a spectacular view of Boston.

According to the Parker House guide, the Boston cream pie originated at the Omni Parker House Hotel, and as you bite into Boston's namesake dessert, you cannot help but wonder, "How much more is there?"

The tour ends at the Langham Hotel's chocolate bar buffet, where more than 100 sinful, all-you-can-eat chocolate goodies



Joanne Chang of Flour Bakery & Café and Ming Tsai of Blue Ginger at last year's "A Spoonful of Ginger"

are waiting for you. Chocolate fountains, crêpes, doughnut machines and mountains of mousse beg for your attention.

Tickets are \$75 per person, and advance reservations are required. Tours are available through Saturday, April 28. For more information, call 269-7010.

**Godiva at the Pru.** You can continue your pursuit of chocolate by visiting Godiva at their new location in the Prudential Center. The world-famous chocolatier will be located in a prime location next to the Free People boutique and across from the Sephora flagship store.

The Prudential Center boutique will adopt the new Godiva "modern allure" store design, boasting a clean, contemporary look created to complement the distinct Godiva packaging. The boutique will

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Theater Review

# Souvenir

by Jules Becker

For Florence Foster Jenkins, "What's important is what you hear in your head."

Though actually tone deaf, the Pennsylvania native and New York socialite and philanthropist (1868-1944) apparently believed herself blessed with perfect pitch and purity of tone. Convinced she possessed the talent to be a "true coloratura," this resolute soprano regarded audience laughter and applause as admiration through decades of benefit recitals and concerts before growing audiences. Her ultimate triumph came with a sold out Carnegie Hall debut (with 2,000 ticket buyers turned away).

Jenkins' dubious but fascinating legend resonates richly in Stephen Temperley's inspired 2005 Broadway hit *Souvenir: A Fantasia on the Life of Florence Foster Jenkins*, now singing out hilariously in Leigh Barrett's tour de force performance in its Boston premiere at the Lyric Stage Company of Boston.

The key word here is fantasia. On one level, the play represents its author's vivid fantasy about the singular collaboration between the undaunted soprano and her accompanist Cosme McMoon. On another, it reflects Temperley's perception of the



young pianist's evolving relationship with Jenkins as he trains her and shares her curious career as a singer. As for an obvious third level, namely the heroine's ostensible self-delusion and fantasizing about her voice and gifts, McMoon's reactions and insights seem to take his employer's total absorption in her music at face value.

Ultimately, audience members are likely to warm to Jenkins as fully as McMoon does, even as they succumb to sidesplitting laughter during Barrett's riotous renditions of classic arias by Mozart, Gounod and Verdi. It takes a first-rank singer to jettison pitch, tone, key and tempo as sharply and amusingly as narrating McMoon describes. Barrett, unquestionably a pre-

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"BEAT A PATH TO THE BOX OFFICE. IF THERE WERE A THEATRICAL RICHTER SCALE THIS SHOW WOULD REGISTER A 10." - LOS ANGELES TIMES

ILLUSTRATION: DAVID H. COMBES

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"HILARIOUS & DELIGHTFUL!" - Associated Press

# Well

by Lisa Kron

Directed by Leigh Silverman

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