

For Monmouth veteran, summer is the time for homecoming

M mainetoday.com/theater/monmouth-veteran-summer-time-homecoming/

Someone dropped out of the cast, and Mark Cartier got the call. He was needed in Monmouth.

“So I came up,” he said about his first encounter with the Theater at Monmouth in 1997. “And I stayed.”

This summer marks Cartier’s 20th season at the Theater at Monmouth, Maine’s official Shakespeare company. Cartier is part of a cast that will present a half-dozen shows in repertory with revolving openings throughout the summer. Cartier appears in four of them, including “The Barber of Seville” opening Friday. In one play, Shakespeare’s “Henry V,” opening July 22, Cartier plays four characters.

“Really, it’s like coming home in a way,” says Cartier, who lives Massachusetts and has stayed with the same family in Monmouth for 15 of his 20 summers. “I haven’t taken a year off since I started. This is what I look forward to every year. I’m not a resident of Monmouth, but I’ve lived here (cumulatively) five years of my life. I feel like I’m part of the town.”

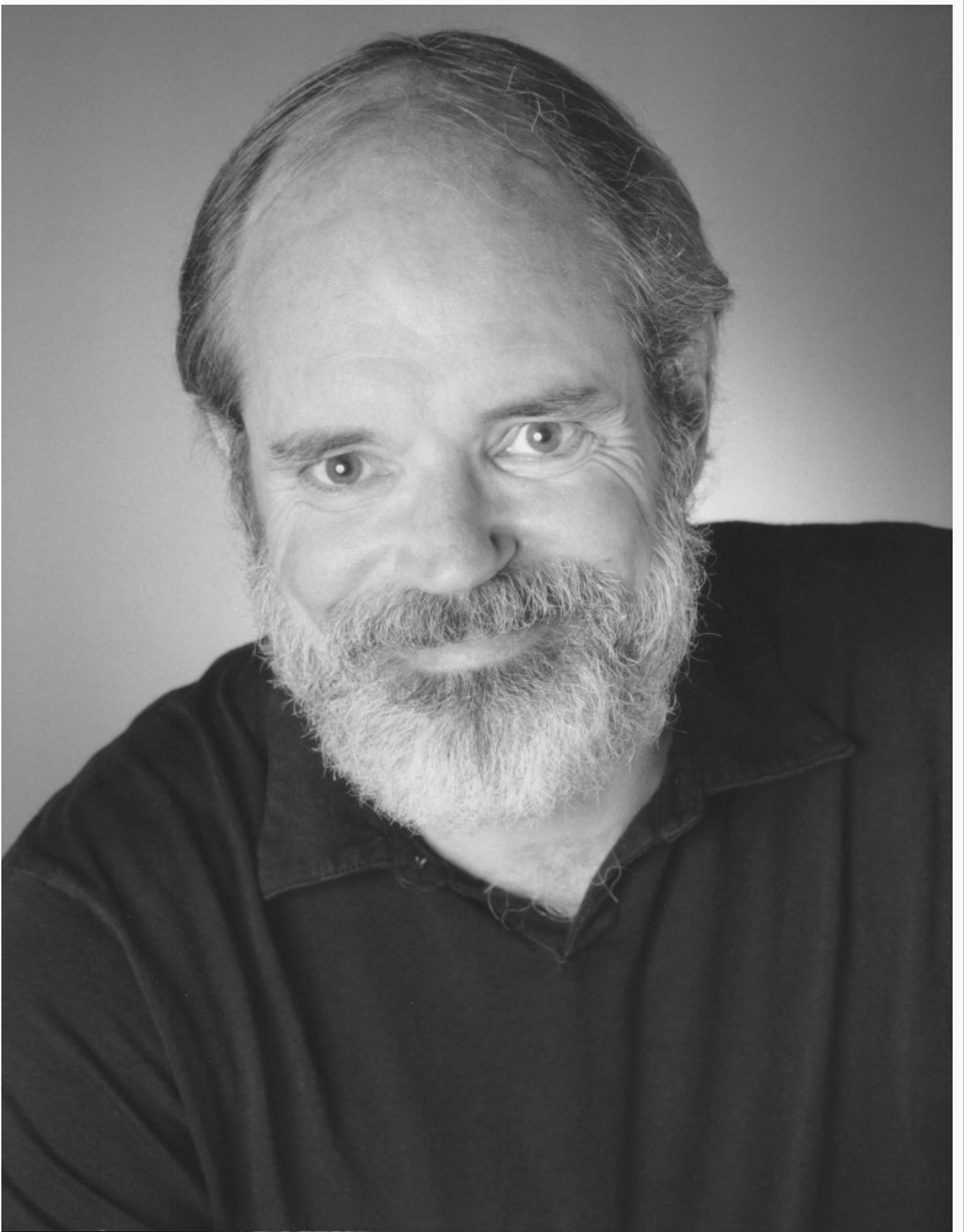
Cartier, 61, is the veteran member of a cast of two dozen mostly college-age and young professional actors, who come to Monmouth from across the country to spend the summer acting in the immaculate, 250-seat Cumston Hall. This summer’s theme is “Vive la France” with a non-Shakespeare focus on French playwrights. In addition to Shakespeare’s “Henry V” and “Love’s Labour’s Lost,” the season includes “Cyrano,” “Barber of Seville” and “The Illusion.”

Cartier’s biggest role comes in “The Illusion,” originally written by Pierre Corneille and adapted by Tony Kushner. It opens July 28. Cartier has the lead role of the father, who enlists a sorcerer to tell him how his estranged son’s life has transpired. It’s a story of passion, regret and, ultimately, love.

Cartier lives in West Bridgewater, Massachusetts, and works mostly in southern New England. He spent 20 years in the cast of “Sheer Madness” in Boston. In Maine, he’s worked at the Public Theatre in Lewiston and the Penobscot Theatre Company in Bangor. He’s spent a lot of time as a non-speaking extra on the sets of movies shot in Boston, including “Mystic River,” “Gone Baby Gone” and “The Departed.” He’s had speaking roles in smaller films.

But it’s Monmouth that keeps him coming back.

“This place has been very kind to me. It’s been my professional home for half of my acting life,” he said. “They’ve had ample opportunity to get rid of me, but they keep asking me back.”



Mark Cartier is back at the Theater at Monmouth for his 20th summer.
Photo courtesy of the Theater at Monmouth



A scene from "As You Like It" at The Theater at Monmouth *Photo by Rene Minnis*

THEATER AT MONMOUTH

OPENING THURSDAY: "Barber of Seville"; opening July 21: "Henry V"; opening July 28: "The Illusion." Already in repertory: "Cyrano" and "Love's Labour's Lost"

TICKETS & INFO: \$20 to \$32; 207-933-9999 or theateratmonmouth.org