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<http://www.mahaiwe.org/press.html>

Mahaiwe Presents Lecture Series by Food Historian Francine Segan

Great Barrington, Mass.— Mahaiwe Performing Arts Center announces a delicious lecture series by food historian Francine Segan. The topics will include “Food Talk for Movie Lovers” followed by a screening of Campbell Scott and Stanley Tucci’s film *Big Night* (Monday July 15 at 6:30pm, movie at 8:00pm); “Virtual Food Tour of the Berkshires” (Monday, July 29 at 7:00pm); “Shakespeare’s Kitchen” followed by a screening of Franco Zeffirelli’s film *Romeo and Juliet* (Monday, August 12 at 6:30pm, movie at 8:00pm); “Opera Lover’s Cookbook” (Saturday, November 9 at 6:30pm); and “Gilded Age Holiday Entertaining” (Saturday, December 14 at 6:30pm).

“Francine Segan’s culinary history talks are always a treat,” said Mahaiwe Executive Director Beryl Jolly. “Her two previous lectures at the Mahaiwe about chocolate and aphrodisiacs were fascinating, and we’re delighted to bring her back for this series.”

Segan is the author of *The Philosopher’s Kitchen*, *Shakespeare’s Table*, and *Movie Menus*. Her most recent books are *The Opera Lover’s Cookbook* and *Dolci: Italy’s Sweets*. She regularly appears on radio and television, including CBS, Discovery and History channels, and the Food Network. She writes a monthly feature for the Tribune Media Syndicates, which has included interviews of such noted chefs as Jacques Pepin, Lidia Bastianich, and Mario Batali. Her lively and informative lectures range in topic from Dining Customs of Ancient Greece to How to Taste Chocolate. She addresses audiences across the country at venues such as The Smithsonian Museum, Virginia Fine Arts Museum, New York Times Travel Show, 92nd Street Y, Museum of Natural

History, Princeton Club, New York Chocolate Show, and Newport Historical Association. She lives in New York City and the Berkshires.

In “Food Talk for Movie Lovers,” Segan will dish amusing tidbits on the meaning of food in favorite films and she will offer behind-the-scenes peeks at foodie film moments in classics such as *Big Night*, *Babette's Feast*, and *Animal House*. She will screen hilarious film clips, including *Five Easy Pieces*, in which Jack Nicholson may be the first in celluloid history to have an order prepared “your way.” The talk will be followed by a screening of *Big Night* (R, 1996), Campbell Scott and Stanley Tucci’s film about a failing Italian restaurant run by two brothers who gamble on one special night to try to save the business.

Audience members will get to explore the Berkshires’ most fabulous foodie destinations all without leaving the Mahaiwe Theater by attending “Virtual Food Tour of the Berkshires.” Segan will spotlight restaurant hot spots and the best farmers markets and gourmet shops, as well as the many fabulous artisan foods made locally, including cheeses, sweets and breads. The folks behind Barrington Coffee Roasting Co, Berkshire Bark, Biscotti Babies, Berkshire Blue, Berkshire Mountain Bakery, and more will be on hand and attendees will receive detailed maps with locations and a list of must-try foods to explore the region on their own.

Besides learning why English people back in the 1500s clinked glasses to make a toast, “Shakespeare’s Kitchen” attendees will discover the reasons why Elizabethans never put a vase of flowers or their elbows on the table, wouldn’t eat with forks, and why “4 and 20 blackbirds” really were baked in a pie. Segan will sprinkle the talk with tempting tidbits on the fanciful foods and aphrodisiacs, intriguing table manners, etiquette, and unusual dining customs, like the telling of the amusing jokes, puns, and riddles between courses. The lecture will be followed by a screening of Franco Zeffirelli’s film *Romeo and Juliet* (PG, 1968).

In “Opera Lover’s Cookbook,” Segan will discuss the fascinating role of food in opera using amusing film snippets and stills of memorable dining and toasting moments in opera. Attendees will discover tantalizing trivia like the operatic origins of Melba Toast, why Rossini added special “sorbet arias” to his operas, and why great composers such as Verdi encouraged gambling during performances. ~~will take~~ ~~with~~ a humorous look back at the opera theater experience in the 19th century and a tasting of opera-inspired foods.

Segan’s “Gilded Age Holiday Entertaining” lecture will focus on the fascinating era when high society was at its peak. It was a time of calling cards, horse drawn coaches, high tea, cotillions, lawn parties, formal dinners—a time when even picnics were served on fine china. Her vivid descriptions will bring to life all sorts of historic foods, elaborate etiquette, and enchanting entertainments enjoyed then. Segan will also demonstrate how to create 19th century garnishes and attendees will enjoy tastes of popular 19th century tidbits and receive handouts of unique recipes of the era.

Tickets are \$20 to \$25 per lecture (including admission to the related film screening; movie-only tickets are \$7). This lecture series is sponsored by Salisbury Bank and Guido’s Fresh Marketplace. The Mahaiwe is located at 14 Castle Street in Great Barrington, Massachusetts. Box office hours are Wednesday through Saturday from noon to 6:00pm and three hours before show times. A limited number of \$15 tickets are available for patrons ages 30 and younger to performances at the Mahaiwe through Mahaiwe ArtSmart Tix. For tickets and information, see www.mahaiwe.org or call 413.528.0100.

About the Mahaiwe

Located in downtown Great Barrington, Massachusetts, the Mahaiwe Performing Arts Center is the year-round presenter of world-class music, dance, theater, classic films, “Live in HD” broadcasts, and arts education programs for the southern Berkshires and neighboring regions. The intimate jewel box of a theater opened in 1905 and has been in

continuous operation for over 100 years. In 2005, the theater experienced a renaissance as a beautifully restored 681-seat venue to offer a broad range of cultural and community events. Today's "Mahaiwe Mix" of diverse, high quality programming strives to provide meaningful, memorable entertainment for all ages and interests.

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