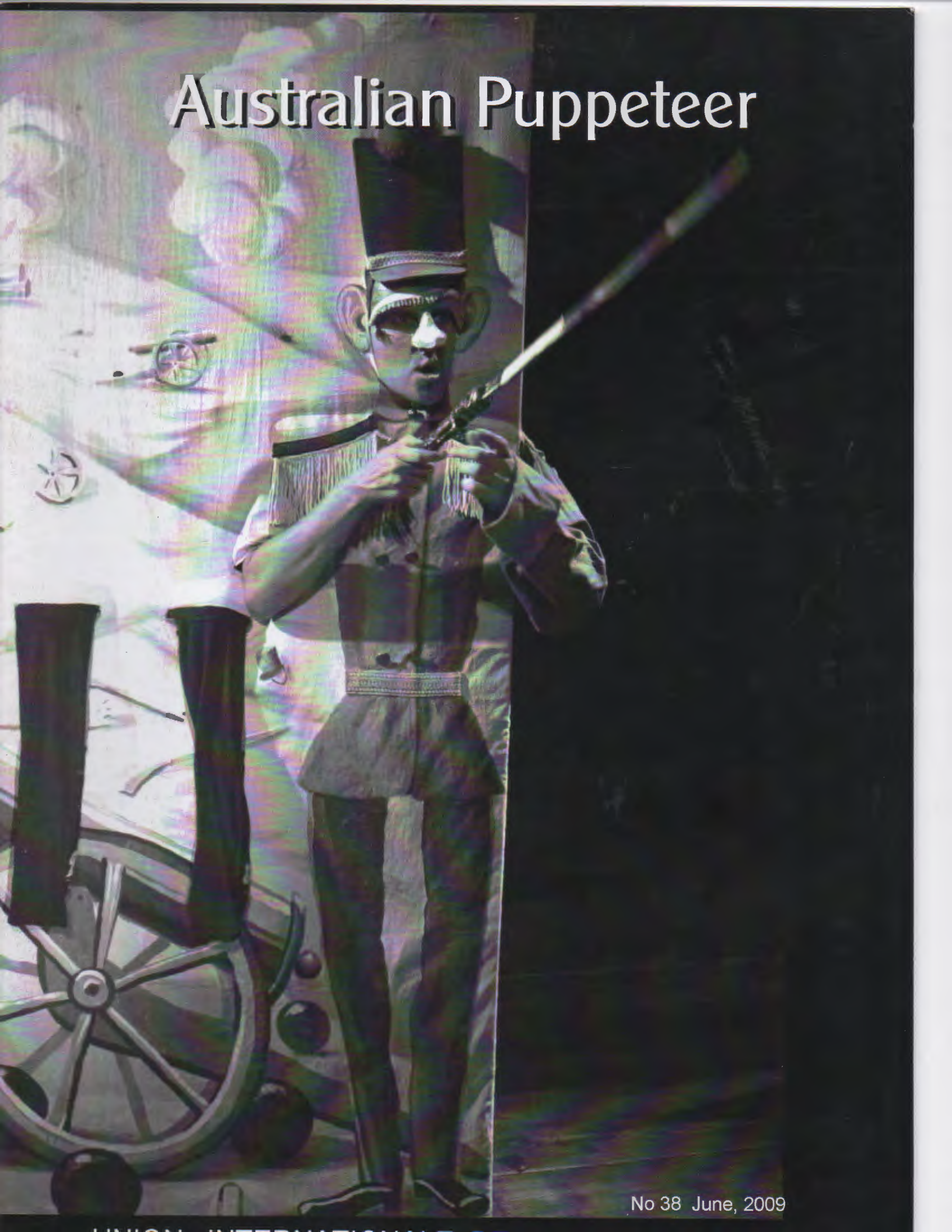
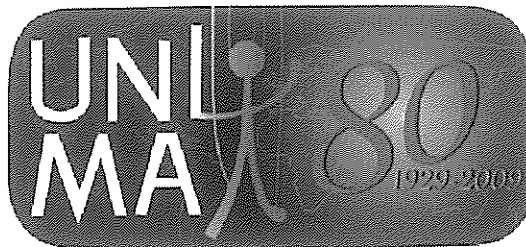


Australian Puppeteer



No 38 June, 2009

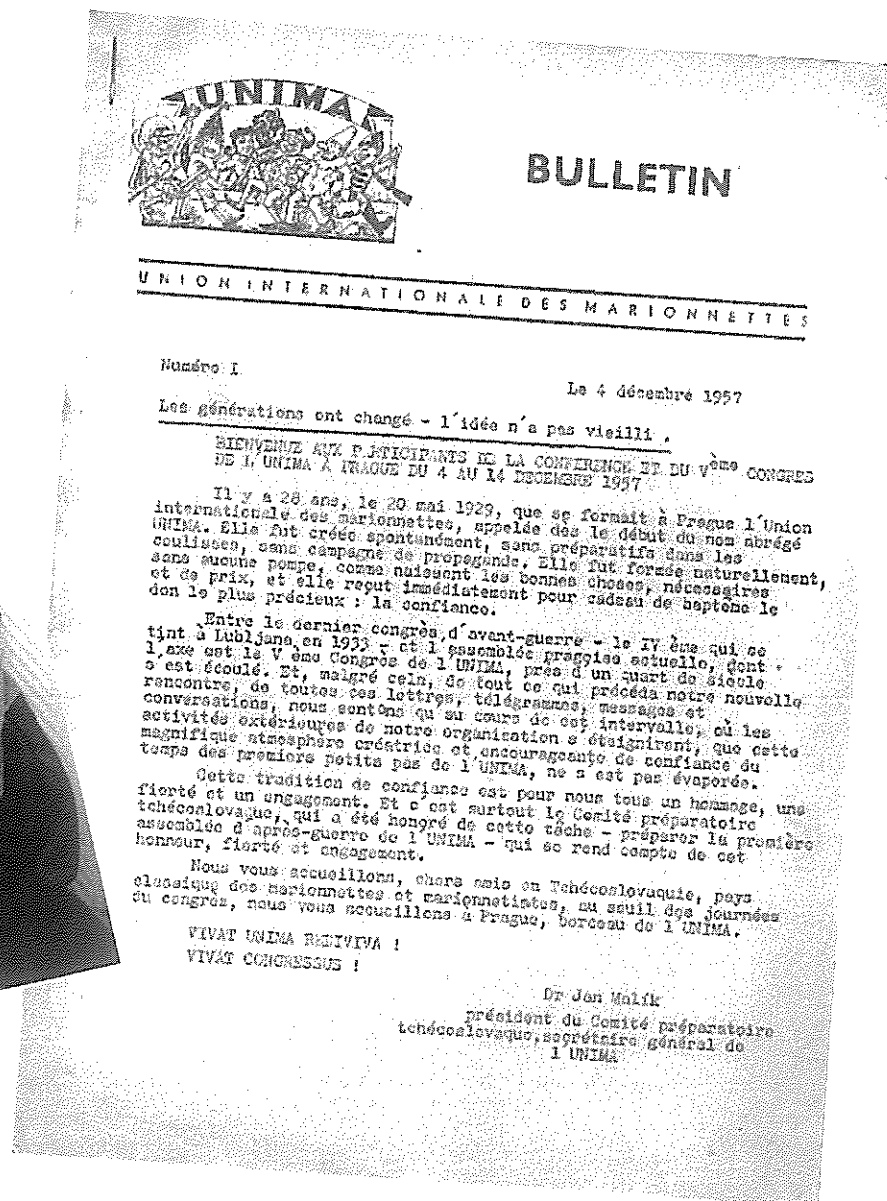


Dear UNIMA members,

I'm on my way to Prague where in the next days there will be the celebrations for UNIMA's 80th anniversary. Looking through the archives, I found this interesting document written by Jan Malik, the man who gave UNIMA its second breath after the war. I thought it might be interesting for you to see it. It explains the very first moments of UNIMA's birth, may 20th 1929.

Happy celebrations!

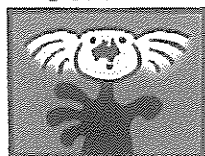
Jacques TRUDEAU
UNIMA General Secretary



COVER

Photo courtesy MeganCameron.
See her article page 17.

• UNIMA •



AUSTRALIA

Logo designed by Norman Hetherington

Australian Puppeteer No 38 June 2009

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Australian Puppeteer

no 38 July 2009

Editorial

Thank you to every one for your great contributions to this edition, especially considering you were given such short notice. We have some really interesting articles and lots of news about what everyone is up to here and overseas.

Julia Davis resigned from the role as Editor. She has been a fabulous contributor to Australian Puppeteer over many years and I, for one, will miss her support and eagle eye when proofing. Many thanks Julia.

Many thanks to Penelope Bartlau who dedicated precious time to proofing this edition during a demanding period for her.

I also want to welcome and thank Bronwen Kamasz for volunteering to do mail out of the magazine.

We welcome two volunteers for magazine layout Leon Hendroff from Western Australia and Jhana Pfeiffer-Hunt from Victoria. Both are skilled graphic designers and we look forward to some design ideas from them. Leon will be Editor for the next magazine.

Thanks to all the state (and territory) representatives who have gone to a lot of trouble to collect news.

We have a report from Kay Yasugi who received the UNIMA Handspan Grant and is obviously making great use of her opportunities.

Richard Bradshaw keeps us informed about those who went before with his history of Murray Raine.

Megan Cameron shares her experience of puppeteering in Prague – with some great pictures.

Jennifer Pfeiffer has been extremely busy as usual with UNIMA and her own PhD.

Sue Giles gets us up to date with UNIMA.

And then there's important reading from Jennifer Pfeiffer, Peter Wilson and Gilly McGinnes about VCA. I urge you all to send comment. We need creative brilliance in times of unpredictable change, not monoculture. Letters/comments to Gilly and Peter should be sent to the UNIMA Secretary who will forward these on.

Editor
Vicki Jaeger

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Contributors: Jennifer Pfeiffer, Sue Giles, Naomi Guss, Kay Yasugi, Peter Wilson, Gilly McInnes, Chantale Delrue, Richard Bradshaw, Megan Cameron, Dennis Murphy, Sue Wallace, Tiia Kask and Dominica, Anna Watts, Jessica Wilson, Anita Sinclair, Mitch Humphries, Hilary Talbot, Tamara Rewse, Kirsty Grierson, Michael Barlow, Penelope Bartlau, and all of those who have contributed to What's On, The State of the Art and provided great photographs.



President's Report

Jennifer Pfeiffer

The year is speeding by and I sit writing on the Eve of Winter Solstice. I do not know how the 'economic crisis' affects our work in the larger scheme of world events but I expect it cannot be good. The 'Arts' is always the first thing to be considered a luxury that can be dispensed with, with wells of support drying up. In fact, historically the 'Arts', puppetry particularly, has vibrantly sustained activity at such times doing the work it has always done: keeping public morale buoyant; provoking thought; prompting for change; and keeping excess in check. Puppetry is an ancient art and has negotiated and survived numerous 'dark ages'. I do not mean to paint a gloomy canvas but we live in times possibly more uncertain than any other in our recorded memory. The challenges of climate change, and all the necessary re-education that developed societies face to cope with and meet these challenges is something that puppeteers might want to think about.

On the home front of UNIMA Australia we say farewell to Michael Agar, who was unable to continue with his role of Treasurer on the committee. He will continue to assist the committee with a changeover and to help realise our wish for UNIMA Australia to be included on the list of Registered Cultural Organisations, which will enable us to extend our seeking of patronage. Committee member Annie Forbes takes up an Acting Treasurer role. We also bid farewell to Richard Hart and Julia Davis who have resigned from their respective roles on the Committee, and as Editors. We thank them and acknowledge their contributions, for both the extended work on the Australian Puppeteer magazine and the innovative development of the E-mail news. They have truly earned a break, and are at present focusing more on their company, Dream Puppets. We will be extending invitations in the near future to a function that we hope you can attend to help us give thanks to Richard and Julia. We welcome Tamara Rewse and Beth McMahon as interim appointments to the committee. Naomi Guss is redesigning the website in consultation with Hilary Talbot. We thank for Hilary many years of dedicated service.

Many will know of the changes that are in process at the VCA campus in Melbourne. The VCA has recently, in fact, been absorbed by the University of Melbourne, including a merge with the Conservatorium of Music, Parkville Campus. The VCA does not exist anymore and has been

re-branded to the name VCAM. Schools have been rationalised, demonstrated by the merge of Drama, Dance and Production (with Puppetry) into one, School of Performing Arts. The postgraduate puppetry course is being 'suspended', not offered in 2010. If that sounds somewhat vague it is because it has been hard to get direct answers to questions about the future of Puppetry at VCA(M).

In an article published in the national daily *The Australian* on June 5, (the web-link to the article is: <http://www.theaustralian.news.com.au/story/0,25197,25587530-16947,00.html>), in interview the new Dean of VCA(M), Sharman Pretty, states her opinions and broad plans for the Faculty. It brings forth a number of questions, most particularly surrounding the perceived value of our artform, puppetry. A "boutique course" as she describes, it is not entirely clear what she means other than it reveals assumptions and a lack of knowledge about (or interest in) puppetry.

Ours is a 'wide church'. We know and understand that puppetry is the simplest and most direct theatrical expression, accessible, engaging, and delighting children and adults alike. Paradoxically it is the most sophisticated of all the artforms, using all the plastic arts, rendering it multidisciplinary *a priori*. It is meta-theatre, a whole, fabricated and dramaturgically challenging theatrical illusion, always self-referential by bringing attention to its own means of production. It has intrinsic possibilities of political and philosophical commentary, the relationship between puppet and puppeteer, manipulator and manipulated, an existential fact making this a potential basis for all kinds of poetic layering of meanings. Who has not wondered at the emotional responses that puppets are able to evoke? One of those moments for me was watching Cho Cho San smother her child in the *Handspan/Playbox* production of the same name, in which Peter J Wilson was the puppeteer. As a theatre/puppetry student at the time, this experience, this profoundly disturbing image, cemented my conviction of puppetry's complexity and power. These moments are part of our heritage, our history. We want and need our practices to develop and grow, but Ms Pretty dismisses the 1980s with puppetry, as though the 80s are to blame for puppetry's strong resurgence now.

We have a solid history of puppetry practice in Australia with far from elite and 'boutique' roots. Puppetry has always been a form 'of the people'. Our traditions are still developing, in infancy, we might even say if we take the broad view. Comparing our work to European countries and elsewhere in the world, we are unique and have always been positioned to develop and improvise

our own unique hybrids - innovative styles that reflect our origins, identity and the plurality of our influences. If the puppetry artform is not nurtured, encouraged, and supported, if there is no incentive in Australia, we will continue with a struggle to build momentum and hold it, to witness periods of vibrancy that tails out through exhaustion and lack of support, to be condemned to continually re-invent wheels. That the puppetry course has managed to sustain itself through the patronage that Peter Wilson has attracted for it is an example to the VCAM college, and a tribute to Peter.

I am also personally affected by these changes. Access to guidance by puppeteers of the calibre of those teaching at the VCA is something I was relying on in conducting my PhD project. I am caught and obligated to continue and finish, over half way, but for the last months I have been delayed and compromised. I have to make the best of it, but I fear my project is not going to be what it might have. I won't have access to the mentors and experts in my field that I did. Six months ago the university sent me off on a field trip to India after awarding the prestigious and highly competitive Macgeorge Scholarship, an affirmation of my project, and to puppetry, so I thought. Barely back in the country, the course is ripped away from under us. It simply doesn't make sense.

I believe the rationale given presently in most of the Schools is that it is about money: about shortfalls, and gaping budget holes. But implicit in the nomenclature of 'boutique courses popular in the 80s' publicly stated by Ms Pretty, is also a judgement about our value. Therefore, it is more than about money. It is ideological. If it were just about money the appointment of the new Dean would reflect a person willing to spread entrepreneurial wings - a promise of the Melbourne Model - a person suitably experienced and able to find money to service the programs, such as an Executive Producer does, instead of one wielding a hatchet. I have myself expressed interest in interdisciplinary practice since the early 90s, something the Melbourne Model also claims to champion. 'Breadth studies' itself, if that means a deepening intellectual engagement with the world in a way that challenges and adds to the quality of your practice is not a bad thing; this feeds art. But that does not sound like what Ms Pretty has in mind.

Interdisciplinarity is not for everyone, nor should everyone be forced to choose it. To do it well requires ten times as much work and that cannot be justified or serviced in the scope of a normal fulltime degree. It has taken me much longer to be ready to attempt such a project. Interdisciplinarity, such as aspired to by the Melbourne Model, relies on a having a solid base of specialist knowledge in specific areas. Without that, interdisciplinary study cannot succeed.

Where are the next generation of experts going to come from if they are culled from our training institutions now? What would this legacy be in a decade? I call upon people: members, family and friends, anyone you know who has had a favourable experience of puppetry, to write a letter in support of our artform. Tell them that puppetry deserves to have a place in its own right in our premier training institutions, and where there should be expert advice to call upon.

ASIA-PACIFIC NEWS

After a long break, negotiations recommenced to form an Indonesia centre for UNIMA. Representatives in Indonesia (Gaura Mancacaritadipura, Mathew Cohen, Arthur Nalan, Wawan Gunawan Maria "Ria" Tri Sulistyani, Catur Kuncoro and Ananto Wicaksono) held a meeting on the 26 April in Yogyakarta. They prepare Rules and Statutes that will be submitted to the Statutes Commission making sure they are in harmony with UNIMA International Rules. They will then organise a general meeting and gathering of members, and elect an executive. This is the outcome of many years discussion with growing numbers of people. I congratulate them all and hope their UNIMA journey travels smoothly.

UNIMA Japan mobilised to collect money for the victims of the earthquake in Chengdu. I brokered the transfer of 2985.33 EUR to UNIMA China, who thankfully received the funds. The money went to a poor primary school that had great need. UNIMA China sent a letter of thanks from the school, Rongshan Number 3 Primary School, Lizhou District, Guangyuan City, Sichuan. I will post the letter on the UNIMA website, as space prevents me from doing so here... UNIMA Japan's Tamiko Onage, Chairperson of the newly formed Women's Commission has presented a plan to convene a meeting at the Festival in September at Charleville. She seeks proposals and news of projects and activities undertaken for and by women. These can be sent to her via UNIMA Japan or can be forwarded to her if you sent them care of me.



Early 19th century Bhavarth Ramayana, Maharashtra, performed storytelling tradition with drawings (Chitrakathi) at the Raja Dinkar Kelkar Museum, Pune, India. Chitrakathi is said to have influenced the more widely known Shadow puppetry traditions of the southern states: Andra Pradesh, Karnataka and Tamil Nadu. Photo: Jennie Pfeiffer

Secretary's Report

Sue Giles

Lots going bust in this year of global financial crisis, but the arts still manage to thrive and stay alive. We're in the right business – no money to lose as we already operate on a shoestring!

Resignations in the committee shook things up when **Richard Hart** decided to rest his weary committee bones after years of hard work including six years as secretary and **Julia Davis** reluctantly stepped away from the Magazine editorship and the membership secretary position. These two stalwart members have gone above and beyond contributing to UNIMA Australia on so many levels and maintaining the UNIMA OZ newsletter too, now enthusiastically taken on by Brisbane member **Amanda Karo**. We all extend a huge thank you to Richard and Julia, who remain members with the best interests of UNIMA at heart and tirelessly continue to make work that profiles the incredible imaginative flexibility of this art form. Treasurer **Michael Agar** also reluctantly resigned due to over-powering other commitments and has been replaced by committee member **Annie Forbes** who will be Acting Treasurer until the AGM. A big thanks to Michael for all his work and to Annie for taking this on.

The Committee has co-opted members **Tamara Rewse** and **Beth McMahon** in the meantime and they have already added huge energy to the committee.

The editing team for *Australian Puppeteer* now consists of **Vicki Jaeger**, **Leon Hendroff** and **Jhana Pfeiffer-Hunt** assisted by **Penelope Bartlau** and **Amanda Karo**. **Bronwen Kamasz** who has offered to do the vital task of mailout.

Hilary Talbot has been managing the UNIMA website for a long time and has sadly stepped down from this position this year, handing over the reins to **Naomi Guss**. Thank you to Hilary for all your fantastic work and welcome to Naomi – the website is a high priority for the committee as the first place of contact for the public.

State Reps have been gathering news from puppetry projects across the country. If you don't know them yet they will be contacting you for the next edition very soon. This is a way of keeping the information flow on a regular basis – what's on where and who is doing it.

The Reps are: QLD – Mitch Humphreys, ACT – Hilary Talbot, VIC – Tamara Rewse, NSW – Sue Wallace, TAS – Kirsty Grierson, WA – Michael Barlow, NT – **None appointed as yet – any takers or suggestions?**

Please take note of the **Handspan Visual Theatre Travel Grant** details further into the magazine – the deadline in September 30th for applications. Current recipient **Jennie Pfeiffer** will be travelling for archival research in Charleville then take part in a UNIMA international conference in Russia, in September. Last year's recipient **Kay Yasugi**'s report is included in the magazine.

Thanks to all the volunteers in this organisation who put in hard work and time and effort to keep communication going, members' privileges accessible and news up to date. The connection between members means that we can truly share and exchange knowledge, building a richer community of artists - richer in the best sense – stuff the GFC!

Applications now open for Regional Art Fund (RAF) 2010

Applications are now being accepted for the Regional Arts Fund (NSW), one of the key funding sources for arts and cultural activities in regional, rural and remote communities of NSW.

The Regional Arts Fund (RAF) is an initiative of the Australian Government. It supports arts and cultural activities that have long term cultural, economic and social benefits, promote partnerships and cultural networks, and provide skills development opportunities.

In NSW, the RAF is administered by Regional Arts NSW. Funding is available for projects commencing after 1 January 2010 in the categories of New Initiatives, Partnerships and Residencies and Mentorships. Funding is available for one, two or three year projects.

The value of this fund for arts and cultural development in regional NSW cannot be overstated," said Elizabeth Rogers, CEO of Regional Arts NSW. "In 2009 a total of amount \$326,200 was approved for a wide range of projects that included theatre projects, visual arts, multi-media, dance, music and film."

"The approved projects were submitted from all regions of the state from the far west to the coast, engaging with artists and artworkers, young people, disability groups and their general communities. In 2009 we were delighted to be able to support a number of applications for Indigenous projects including a three-year project to build economic pathways for Aboriginal artists on the South Coast, a two year mentorship program for artists in Wilcannia and a 24 week artist-in-residency project across six towns in the Far West."

Applications for the Regional Arts Fund (NSW) close on Friday 14 August 2009.

Information packs including instructions, guidelines and application forms for the Regional Arts Fund are available and can be downloaded from the Regional Arts NSW website www.regionalartsnsw.com.au

The Lorrie Gardner UNIMA Australia Scholarship

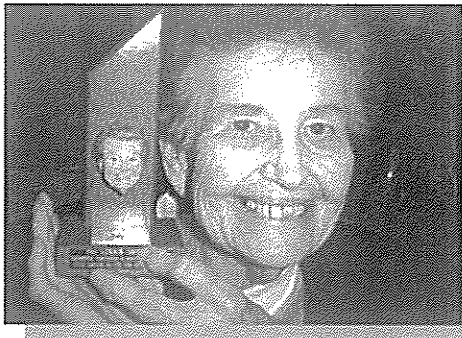
Lorrie Gardner of Gardner's Puppet Theatre was a long standing and active member of UNIMA Australia. She was President for 3 years until illness forced her to retire in 2004. In 2005 Lorrie Gardner bequeathed a substantial contribution to the UNIMA Australia scholarship fund.

SCHOLARSHIP AMOUNT: \$800

PURPOSE: To assist the development of puppetry in Australia by benefiting UNIMA Australia Inc. members. The Scholarship was set up in the spirit of assisting young or emerging puppeteers in Australia to develop their skills and to be further exposed to the art of puppetry through such things as attendance at workshops, study under a specialist teacher, or other related activities as the panel deems fit.

ELIGIBILITY: The applicant must have been a member of UNIMA Australia for the past two years.

REQUIREMENTS: Please supply a CV, a short outline of how you intend to use the scholarship and information about any courses or mentorships that relate to the scholarship.



SEND TO: All members of The Lorrie Gardner Scholarship Committee -

Sue Wallace spuppet@ozemail.com.au

Philip Miller philip@puppetvision.com

Joanne Foley foleybergere@bigpond.com

ENQUIRIES: secretary@unima.org.au

ANNUAL CLOSING DATE: 15th March 2010

ANNUAL DECISIONS ADVISED: 30th April 2010

Projects must start no earlier than May 1 2010

For more information on this Scholarship please check the UNIMA web site.



Email from Chantale

On my recent visit to Amsterdam last month I had the good fortune to visit my old friend Guy Sonnen, who collaborates with Dutch veteran puppeteer Feike Boschma. I also met with Hans Schoen, chairman of UNIMA in the Netherlands and Stephan Stoetzer who works with Hans. Hans and Stephan exchanged good memories of our meeting last year in Perth at the Unima conference.

Chantale Delrue



HANDSPAN VISUAL THEATRE INTERNATIONAL STUDY & TRAVEL GRANT

available for 2009*

LAST TIME OFFERED

A grant of \$2000 is now available to all practitioners of puppetry - makers, performers, writers, designers, directors – to undertake international travel or study for professional development

Handspan Visual Theatre was a Melbourne based Theatre Company which created and produced puppetry and visual theatre performance from its inception in 1977 through to 2002.

Artists who worked with Handspan Visual Theatre shared a creative spirit and passion for puppetry and visual theatre. It is this unique form of 'expression' that Handspan wishes to support in the form of an international study & travel grant. The grant is available to all practitioners of puppet arts, including puppeteers, directors, designers, writers and makers to undertake international travel or study.

The grant will be awarded annually in the amount of \$2000 for each of six years beginning in 2003 and concluding in 2008*.

Eligibility: No age restrictions but applicants must be current UNIMA members

Annual Closing Date: 30th September 2009

Decisions Advised: 30th November 2009

Travel: Travel or study should take place before the end of 2010

Selection criteria: Please contact the UNIMA Australia secretary for selection criteria
ad@polyglotpuppets.com.au or 03 9827 9667

Applications: UNIMA Secretary c/o 27A Cromwell Rd South Yarra 3141

*The Grant is available for 2009 because one year it wasn't granted.

Strings, Sticks, Shadows and Gloves: A Year at the London School of Puppetry

By Kay Yasugi recipient of the *UNIMA Handspan Travel Grant*

My project involved studying at the London School of Puppetry (LSP) over a year, completing a *Master's Level Diploma in Professional Puppetry*.

To give a brief background of the school, LSP was the first organisation to establish formal training in puppetry in the UK in 1987, and continues to be one of the only schools in the world dedicated solely to the teaching of puppetry for freelance artists. The school aims to prepare puppeteers for work in a range of fields including education, therapy, community arts, television and film. LSP is headed by Caroline Astell-Burt, author of *I Am The Story* and an expert in using puppetry in education, training and therapy. The other co-founder of the school is master puppeteer Ronnie Le Drew, who trained at the *Little Angel Theatre* in London, under the late John Wright.

With my background in primary education, I was keen to take the opportunity to develop my skills as a puppeteer, with the goal of pursuing puppetry and education once returning to Sydney. It has been an incredibly intense, challenging and exciting experience to do just that, though even more so with studying puppetry for its own sake, as it is an amazingly diverse art form.

Studying at LSP

The Diploma I undertook involved six units of study, where I trained in four puppetry disciplines (hand/body/glove/object theatre, rod, shadow and marionette) and created solo pieces for each one. I also worked with a number of visiting artists to integrate puppetry within their various projects, as well as learning business strategies for the puppeteer. I worked alongside puppeteers from all over the world, including France, USA, Brazil, Russia, Denmark, Ireland and the UK. We all trained to work as solo artists as well as in collaborative performance. We also had supporting studies including voice, movement and even African drumming!

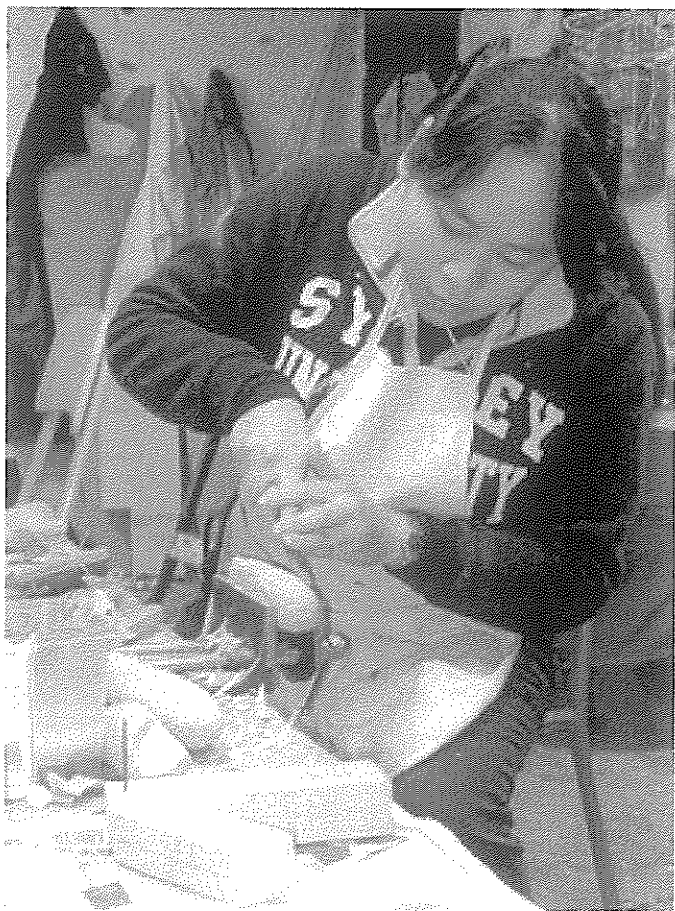
Shadow Puppetry

The first type of puppetry I studied was shadow – a medium so versatile in its qualities, ranging from ethereal, to frightening, and even to comic. Prior to this module, I had only been aware of shadow puppets as silhouettes on rods, operated behind a 'standard' screen. It was a delight to see that there is a much greater world out there, including coloured, 3-dimensional, body and mask shadow puppetry, operated with screens made with anything from animal hide to black plastic bags. We explored all of these and more during the LSP Shadow Puppetry Summer School in August 2008. A highlight was working with film maker Jean McEwan (from Popup Films) to integrate live shadow puppetry with new media. Later on I attended a fantastic 3-day workshop on traditional Indonesian Wayang Kulit shadow puppets with Japanese Puppeteer, Yuki Muramatsu. Although it is indeed challenging to constantly balance the technical requirements between the lighting, the screen and stage management while performing, it appears that as long as a performer has a dark space, the possibilities are limitless.

Marionette Theatre

The following module was marionette theatre, where we spent a week carving our own short string marionettes and then learning how to operate them. During our classes, I would often look down in bewilderment at my puppet and wonder how I would make it move. We had been exploring Edward Gordon Craig's notion of the 'uber-marionette' as the ideal instrument of perfect movement, and how the modernist practitioner had proclaimed it "our supreme honour to be ministers to the supreme force [of] movement" (Lyons, 1964). To be honest, I was initially just concerned with making the puppet walk (which was a lot more difficult than I had imagined). However, on progressing from those first steps, I began to see that there is so much more that can be done – including flying, crawling, falling (and getting back up again!). It was liberating to stop attempting to mimic naturalistic

Kay carving a marionette



movements and go towards the fantastical. My later experience with using long string marionettes allowed me to further explore the imaginative qualities of the puppet, where it can bound, leap, and sweep across the stage.

Rod Puppetry

In contrast to the relatively flowing movements of the marionette came the more direct gestures lending to rod puppetry. In this module we explored Japanese styles of rod puppetry requiring 2-3 operators (*Ningyo Joruri* – also known as *Bunraku*) or one operator (*Otome*), Eastern European styles such as *Table Top*, as well as large-scale and small-scale rod puppets. While creating our shows, it was interesting to reflect on how current thinking about performance relates to gender, race, ethnicity and sexuality. We worked with puppeteer Nenagh Watson (formerly from *Doo-cot* theatre) exploring our work particularly from a Feminist perspective, an experience which was refreshingly confronting and thought-provoking.

Glove Puppetry

The last type of puppetry I studied was glove/hand/body/object theatre. We began with looking at the movement potential of the bare hand and creating some collaborative pieces inspired by the rhythmic hand clapping of Carl Orff. We later moved on to explore the subversive nature of the glove puppet, so often used in political satire and parody (particularly with Punch and Judy in the UK). One concept that arose was the idea of “co-creation”, where the audience works with the performer to create meaning (Proshan, 1987, cited in Sherzer & Sherzer, 1987). As most of my shows are comedies, I definitely agree that the creative participation of audience members is crucial. My Director of Studies once aptly commented that “comedy is mercurial – it comes and goes”. The skill is keeping the audience ‘in your hands’ (which is still a two-way process). Overall, connecting with the audience is vital in every performance, not just within the comic sphere.

From a making point of view, I found this module the most challenging. Far from the simple photocopy patterns of hand puppets (so often seen in puppet books), it is quite a task to continuously adjust the puppet to fit the hand comfortably and allow the fingers to have unrestricted movement – a process that can require a lot of cutting, sewing (and unpicking stitches, more cutting and re-sewing). Nevertheless, the end result is extremely rewarding, having created a puppet that literally fits ‘like a glove’.

Applied Puppetry

Apart from studying the various puppetry disciplines, we also worked with visiting artists from a wide range of backgrounds such as musicians, choreographers, film makers, installation and visual artists, and practitioners from physical and devised theatre. We worked with each artist for 1 – 2 days, problem solving how to integrate puppetry into their current projects. This involved anything from creating model sets, drawing sketches, creating mock-up puppets, or doing short performances. It was quite an experience to switch between projects, where one day we could be creating gargoyle puppets for a box installation and the next day be improvising a

scene for an upcoming opera. It was wonderful still to see how puppetry can fit into the wider context of the arts.

Other Events and Festivals

During my time at LSP we also participated in different festivals and other puppetry projects. On 31st August 2008, a group of puppeteers from the school travelled to the beautiful town of Buxton in Derbyshire for the *Buxton Puppet Festival*. We performed a one-night Cabaret Shakespeare show, where we had sausages, witches, skeletons handing out chips, and a jaded Ophelia back from the dead, all in one room (with an array of amused audience members). A highlight from the festival was seeing Lempen’s new show, *Journey of Turtle*, as well as cheering on two of our own LSP puppeteers (from Octopi! Puppet Theatre and Beyond the Bark Puppet Installation Theatre) perform a double bill show called *Lost Boys*.

After that festival we were involved in organising a two week season of performances at the Rosemary Branch Theatre in London, running from 30 September – 12 October, 2008. The show was titled *IDOL*eyes and showcased a series of short pieces by a range of puppeteers and animators. The best part for me was arranging the school shows, which was both rewarding and exhausting. One particularly memorable moment was performing for an enthusiastic group of secondary students from a special needs school. It was an experience so positive that it left me keen to continue performing for schools when I return to Sydney.

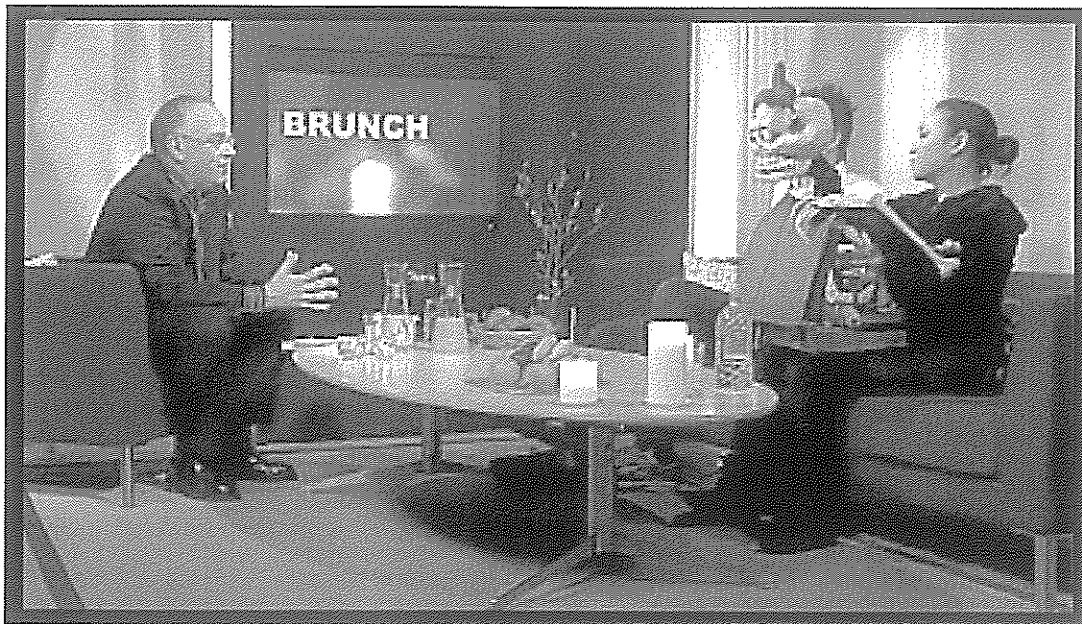
A major highlight of my time overseas has been attending the Copenhagen Puppet Festival, which ran from 19 – 29 March, 2009. It was the second time this festival had been run, with the main emphasis on adult puppetry and creating discussions on setting up puppetry training in Denmark. Five LSP students were invited to the festival alongside our Director of Studies Caroline Astell-Burt and Ann Campion (British UNIMA). We enjoyed an exciting week of performing for adult audiences, seeing shows and attending seminars. We also collaborated with a Polish puppetry school (Ludwik Solski Statsskole for Drama in Krakow, Wroclaw). We performed for a series of free cabaret night performances to showcase the work from both our schools and worked together to perform some collaborative pieces on the final day of the festival. One unexpected surprise from the week was being invited to Danish TV2/Lorry studios to promote the festival! I went along with one of the festival organisers, Barnaby Stig Swann Pederson, to be interviewed on the Danish breakfast show, *Brunch*. My puppet *Yorick* also made an appearance eating chips and trying to look like he understood Danish (you can see the interview at www.puppertoos.com).

A running theme at the festival was the concept of the “visible puppeteer”. In my previous experience as a puppeteer, I had almost always been hidden behind a screen (for invisibility and anonymity was partly what drew me to puppetry in the first place). However, I am completely visible in all the shows I created during my time at LSP. I have found that being visible forces the performer to constantly switch roles between puppeteer

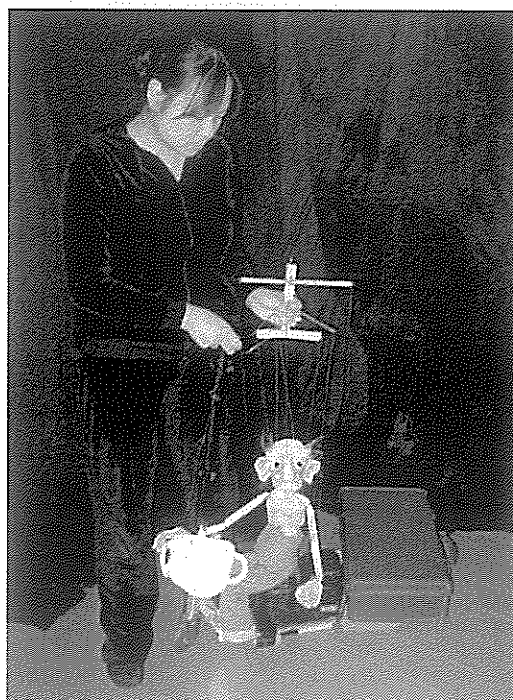
and actor, which is a skill of its own. It seems that theories and opinions about the role of the actor in puppetry varies considerably when seeing the wide range available – from the ‘double-act’ style operating in *Avenue Q*, where the actors are on show just as much as the puppets, to the almost invisible presence of the operators in *Ningyo Joruri* (or *Bunraku*). I have found that I am learning more from the latter, from the values of stillness – using it in the puppet and in my own body when operating.

My own face can be at times too animated compared to the puppet, unlike the main operator’s face in *Ningyo Joruri*, which Roland Barthes describes as “smooth, clean, impassive, cold like ‘a white onion freshly washed’,” (Barthes, 1977). My face is certainly no onion (or any other stoic-looking vegetable), but the challenge still stands as an exposed operator to channel one’s own energy into the puppet. One of the best examples I have seen of this has been *War Horse* at the Royal National Theatre in London (with Handspring Puppet Company). Seeing the intense focus and raw energy of the puppeteers making the horse simply breathe was – simply breathtaking. The viewer forgets that the horse is made of wicker and rods, and for a moment, sees a real horse before them. Such a level of skill fused with spirit is indeed something to strive for.

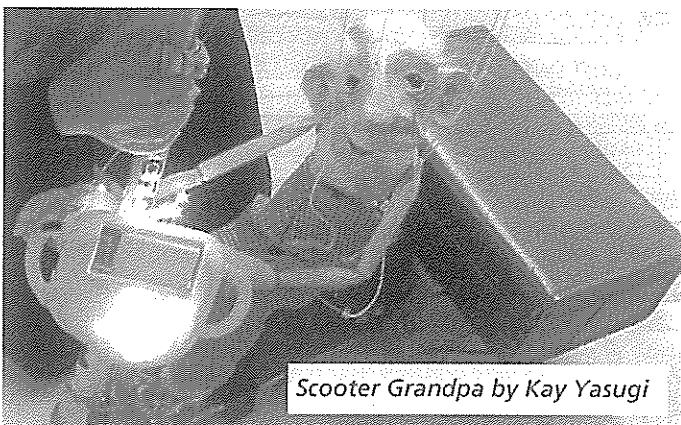
Having now completed the Diploma, I come away with five new puppet shows, a more expanded knowledge of puppetry and an even greater enthusiasm for this magnificent art form. This year has made me reflect on puppetry itself – particularly its symbolic qualities and unique potential to express movement. Having seen a vast array of puppetry (with still much more yet to see), I have also been interested in how this art form can be integrated within the wider context of the arts – which I observe is happening more and more. On returning to Sydney, I look forward to not only developing my puppetry with education, but also exploring this amazing art form for its own sake. It certainly is the art form that encapsulates all the others!



Interview with ‘Yorick’ on ‘Brunch Danish’ TV2/ Lorry studios



Kay with Scooter Grandpa



Scooter Grandpa by Kay Yasugi

This project was financed by contributions from the University of Sydney Thomas T Roberts Education Fellowship and the UNIMA Handspan Travel Grant. Kay Yasugi is a puppeteer with a background in teaching and illustration. For more information, please visit her website at www.pupperoos.com.

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A letter from Peter Wilson

Peter Wilson — Lecturer in Puppetry, VCA.....M

Until 2004, Puppetry in Australia had no formal full time course for the training of artists in this art form.

Fast-forward to Dec 31 2009 and we still don't have any tertiary or college course in puppetry where artists come to train and specialise in a wide range of disciplines associate with the Puppetry art form.

Why? A decision has been made by those in positions of power and influence at the University of Melbourne (of which the Victorian College of the Arts is now a Faculty) to have 'no intake' of students for 2010. Is this a euphemism for closing down puppetry?

Puppetry has a long tradition in Australia, the first appearance of a performance dating back to the late 1700s. Puppetry in all its different styles and forms has appeared right across the country over the past 200 plus years. It has a strong history, which has been strengthened over the past 40 years by an increasing group of active artists. Puppetry has developed a growing audience in the many places we see the art form played – in the streets, in theatres, in cabaret, in the community, in schools: audiences have also increased even more widely when you consider that puppetry has appeared in major Australian events such the 2000 Sydney Olympics and the 2006 Commonwealth Games.

And let's not forget such shows as *The Lion King* or *Avenue Q*, major Broadway award-winning pieces of theatre that are phenomena in Puppetry. Puppetry is at the central artistic premise of these works. And where did these artists train and develop their craft to be able to even audition for such remarkable theatrical events? They trained at performing arts colleges and puppetry schools throughout the world.

For the first time in the training of puppetry artists in Australia in a tertiary institution, the VCA, in 2002, championed by its then Director Professor Andrea Hull, embraced the notion of establishing a Post Graduate program in Puppetry at the college, therefore finally giving some legitimacy and serious recognition to the importance of training in the art form here in Australia.

It takes an incredible effort in planning, development and financial support to begin to establish any arts training course. The Puppetry program, which has been in place for the past 6 years at the VCA, is no different. It took two years to put together the curriculum and generous financial support from a number of benefactors. At the stroke of a pen by bureaucrats who simply don't 'get it' or understand the importance or the artistic merit that puppetry offers within the performing arts, puppetry yet again will be the loser: audiences even more so.

The Puppetry program at the VCA connected to artists from most other visual and performing arts disciplines

including dance, drama, music, art and animation. The program over its 6 years taught to 33 full time students. Another 14 students or practicing artists engaged in various projects over 1 or 2 terms. The 33-plus alumni have gone on to work in puppetry in a variety of ways including establishing 4 new puppet companies, making new puppet works, experimenting with the art form in various different ways, travelling the world with works created at the VCA or working with existing companies.

Over 140 Production Students worked alongside the puppetry students in their preferred placements in roles of stage management, production management, puppet makers, composers, lighting designers, sound composers and builders for set, props and costume. This chance for production students to study in their various disciplines gave them greater understanding of the puppetry art form. They will take their skill and respect for the art form with them. But an ongoing opportunity for Production students is now a thing of the past.

6 Internationally renowned Directors or Designers came to the puppetry program to train and work with our students over many months throughout the past 6 years. They have imparted extraordinary teaching knowledge and performance techniques. Our international guests have been mightily impressed with what the puppetry course has been able to create. What we created for Puppetry at the VCA compared well with the major puppetry schools in Europe, the US or South America.

The international puppetry community, on hearing of the demise of the program, are dumbfounded with the decision to put on hold a student intake for 2010. It is strongly perceived both in Australia and abroad that the decision to withhold students from participating in the program beyond 2009 is uneducated and ill-informed. Puppet schools exist and are growing in strength throughout Europe. Puppetry has a great and long history in many countries throughout the world. The VCA Puppetry program was unique in the southern hemisphere, unique to performing Arts Schools in Australia, unique to the VCA.

All may not be lost, as it has been suggested by the Head of Performing Arts at the VCA that there may be some thought given to finding a way that Puppetry can be woven into the undergraduate program beyond 2011. The current Post Graduate program may be gone at year's end, but the commitment and devotion by practitioners to the art form within Australia will never diminish.

I recommend puppetry artists and theatregoers across Australia come to Melbourne in September and see the Internationally renowned puppeteer, Ronnie Burkett at the Arts Centre performing *Billy Twinkle*. This is an extraordinary puppetry artist who coincidentally trained at a performing arts college many moons ago.

Puppetry and the VCA_. A personal view.

By Gilly McInnes

There are many changes happening as the old VCA is reconfigured as the new Faculty of VCA and Music of the University of Melbourne, under the leadership of Professor Sharman Pretty. You may have read some of the press recently in *The Age* and *The Australian*.

It is not clear where this will lead or what philosophy about the Arts and their place in our culture underpins the decisions currently being made. Right now the guiding principle appears to be cost effectiveness alone. There is a managerial template being applied to the old VCA to deal with debt and attain financial self sufficiency. The move of the VCA to the University means that courses offered must fit into the available budgets and so those that survive will be noted for their self sufficiency and ability to survive within that template. The cost of real estate per student or costume rack has assumed great prominence in the psyche of the place. The budget of VCAM (doesn't it sound like a nest of work stations that are part of V-Line!) will be around a third of that of WAPAA or NIDA, so those institutions will hardly be seen to be our competitors for students.

While speaking of collaboration being the way forward (*The Australian*, June 5th 2009), Professor Pretty has to date modelled an autocratic way of working. She has not yet shared any vision involving Education or the Arts with regard to the institution nor has she sought to know very much about what actually takes place with the students and their learning inside the various courses. Any discussions are purely based around the numbers.

For financial reasons, the post-graduate Puppetry courses are 'not being offered' in 2010, and I am told that the course will not appear again in the form it has previously taken. Within the new School of Performing Arts, the place of Puppetry in the future is still being discussed and considered. So the place of the art form in the institution itself is not dead, but by no means assured. This is where the opinions of the arts industry can be helpful in expressing to the School of Performing Arts the importance of having a puppetry presence alongside the other theatre art forms at VCAM.

There was quite some resistance to this present Puppetry course when it began – almost as if it were an insult to the talent of the present practitioners and a threat to their livelihood. It has proven to be none of these: it has opened up possibilities for practitioners in allied art forms to extend their present work to embrace the possibilities of puppetry; it has offered opportunity for experienced practitioners to take part in Master Classes and to participate in discussions and arguments about the art form and to teach and mentor; it has found new collaborators and fellow-artists from amongst the alumni; it has brought younger artists to the practice of Puppetry, enlivening the local puppet scene.

Few of our graduates are waiting for the telephone to ring. Many are forging ahead with their own companies or solo works or collaborations: the indirect object, Purple Capsicum Puppet Theatre, Barking Spider Visual Theatre, Men of Steel, Blood Policy, Company Gongoma – among others, and also many individual practitioners.

The way our course is constructed has asked each student to write (play-make), design, make and perform. It has introduced each student to collaboration with lighting, sound and set designers and the practices of management. We graduate Puppet theatre-makers. Perhaps there are not enough of them for the bean counters' old ways of seeing, but I suspect that more Puppetry graduates are actually working solidly in the Arts than graduates of other theatre disciplines.

So! Here is the opportunity for those of you who have had or still have strong ideas about what such a course should entail. Engage with the School of Performing Arts and passionately argue for it to be included. All positions will soon be up for grabs (across the entire VCA, actually...). All course content will be up for grabs. Go for it! Think undergraduate. Think post-graduate. Or write in support of a presence for Puppetry amongst the course offerings for the future. Send letters to me and I can place them where they will do the most good.

For myself, I wonder if the bureaucratic nature of the University, particularly as it reveals itself at the moment, is actually a useful or nourishing context for the lively complexity and sophisticated collaborative nature of creating Puppet theatre. I wonder, given the extraordinary lack of knowledge and experience evident in the public comments made by the present leadership about Puppetry (and, indeed, about Theatre Arts training in general), whether there is any sort of fertile soil to grow a new thing, right now.

Of course there has to be a big thank you to the Howard Government and the Victorian State Government for refusing to fund VCA to continue to be the inspiring Arts Training College it was established to be.

But be assured: Puppetry is an ancient art and yet always newly forming. And it will always break through and well outlive the current enchantment with sterile managerialism. Success and happiness are the greatest revenge! I wish them for us all.

Gilly McInnes June 2009
Lecturer in Puppetry
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Some of the Anderson family with puppets. L. to R.: Steve Price (a grandson) Sue Price and Marg Anderson (daughters).
Photo by Neil Ray (2008).



Jack and the Beanstalk. [Jack selling the Cow]
Photo by Peter Oldham (2008).



Hugh working Peter Popple.
[People magazine April 3, 1957]

PUPPET HISTORY

MURRAY RAINE AND THE HUDOAN PUPPETS

By Richard Bradshaw

The Sydney-based puppeteer Murray Raine recently bought a set of marionettes he had known as a boy in Newcastle, N.S.W. and now has plans to use some of them. The stylish puppets were made in Sydney in the 1950s by Hugh Anderson, and dressed by his wife, Doris (whence Hudoan Puppets).

Hugh was born about ninety years ago in Nambour, Queensland. (This was also the home-town of the puppeteer Phillip Edmiston.) He attended art school and after some experience in advertising spent over a decade in the Royal Australia Navy, including time as an anti-aircraft gun instructor. Once he gave instruction to a young Prince Philip!

After World War II Hugh returned to commercial art, and one of his jobs was creating Christmas window displays for Sydney department stores with figures and scenery representing children's stories or nursery rhymes.

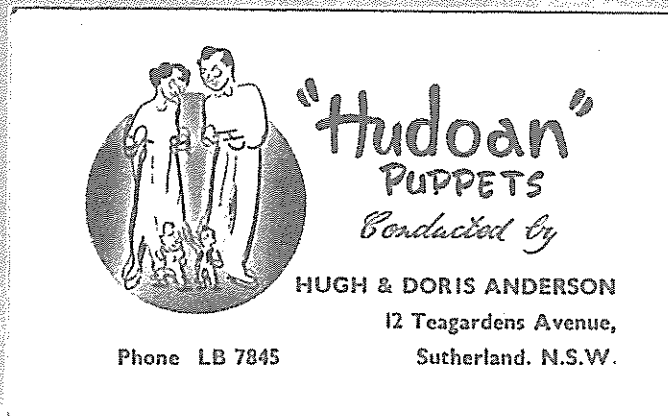
In the early 1950s Hugh and his family were living in Garrong Road, Lakemba [Sydney] and on the opposite side of the street lived Edith Murray, founder of UNIMA Australia, who was at the time establishing Clovelly Puppet Theatre. When Edith discovered what Hugh did she encouraged him to consider trying puppetry.

About this time Norman Hetherington, a leading cartoonist for *The Bulletin*, was becoming involved with marionettes. His first marionette play was *The Reluctant Dragon* (1953) and thanks to Edith's intervention, Hugh Anderson worked as a puppeteer in that show. Norman played the effete, poetry-writing Dragon, while Hugh played the waffling Sir Giles. I have very fond memories of this show, and can still recite some of the verses that the Dragon and Sir Giles swapped.

In those days the Puppetry Guild of N.S.W. had a big membership and at some meetings people would bring along a short puppet item e.g. Emma Garlick's *Fidelo*, the *Faithful Clown*, Mrs Dehle's crawling baby etc. Hugh brought along a kilted Scotsman who performed to a 10-inch 78 r.p.m. record of Will Fyffe singing *I Belong to Glasgow*. It was possibly his first marionette. In his subsequent work there can be little doubt that Hugh was strongly influenced by Norman's marionettes.

The Andersons moved to Kirrawee [Sutherland, Sydney] where I remember visiting them and seeing puppets being made. They presented shows in stores at Christmas and Easter, at parties and at trade fairs. I saw them perform at a Toy Fair in the Trocadero in George

Street, Sydney in 1955, and then in 1956 at a Children's Fair in the Sydney Town Hall. There they performed a "puppet pantomime" called *The King of No-Man's Land*. It had twelve characters and there were six free shows daily.



About the mid-1950s reel-to-reel tape-recorders became readily available giving puppeteers a chance to record soundtracks for their shows when previously the only recorded sound had come from commercial records that lasted only a few minutes. Hugh and Doris recorded their own scripts, doing the voices themselves, with Hugh composing the music for

the shows. Murray has the tapes, now transferred to CD, but it is unlikely that they are useful now except to give an idea of the stories. Even in their day they could have benefited from more theatricality.

Television arrived in Australia in late 1956. An illustrated 3-page article in the magazine *People* of 3 April 1957 reveals that the Andersons were intending to try working for TV. With this in mind Hugh had created a marionette, Peter Popple, with moving eyes and mouth, and an eyelid that could wink. The puppet was designed to fly and was worked with sixteen nylon strings. Photos in the article show the puppet at various stages of construction up to completion.

Hugh and Doris had three children but their son, Bruce, was tragically suffocated on Cronulla Beach in 1962 when sand collapsed into a deep hole he had been digging. Hugh gave up puppetry and the family moved away from Sydney. In 1969 the entire Hudoan enterprise was offered for sale: seventy marionettes, staging, props, scripts and reel-to-reel recordings.

The puppets were bought by Marti McLelland of Newcastle who took out a loan to do so. Marti had trained to be a high school music teacher at the Sydney Conservatorium and after a spell as a professional performer in musical comedy in England and Australia had become head of drama at Nelson Bay High School. She also ran a lively puppet business performing weekly on NBN Television, in department stores and at festivals. The Hudoan Puppets became The Marti McLelland Puppets.

At the age of seven, a young Murray Raine and his mother saw some of these puppets perform *Jack and the Beanstalk* in Winn's Department Store in Newcastle. (Marti had recorded a new version for the show.)

Murray had already been inspired by a Marionette Theatre of Australia performance of *Puss in Boots* in the previous year, so his mother had given him a Pelham Puppet clown that Christmas. After the show they went backstage to meet Marti and her two helpers and discovered that she ran weekly puppetry classes at the Newcastle Young People's Theatre. Murray was enrolled the following week!

The youngster clearly had talent, and Marti began allowing Murray to take home one of the marionettes each week. He practised using them and studied their construction. As a teenager he would borrow whole sets and perform shows to his own scripts.

In November, 2007, after a long period without contact, Marti phoned Murray from her home in Nelson Bay to say she needed to part with the puppets and was hopeful that he, of all people, would like to buy them. So on 3 January, 2008, for an attractive price, Murray became the owner of fifty Hudoan marionettes, plus props, scripts, and tapes. Although the puppets are half a century old now they are in surprisingly good condition. More recently Marti discovered she had original drops for the shows, in very good condition, and Murray now has these too.

He does not have all the puppets that Hugh made. In 1980 Marti had sold fourteen of the figures to a Tasmanian schools-performer. (He would like to know where they are now!) Also Murray has recognised only one of the puppets in a backstage photo Hugh's daughter Sue Price has sent him.

Norman, with Margaret, has been to Murray's to see the puppets and was impressed to see how well they have lasted. Murray is now thinking about using some of the puppets in a production, possibly enlisting the aid of Sue and Steve of the Sydney Puppet Theatre. It will be a challenge to present a marionette play for today's audiences who have very different expectations from those of half a century ago, but it's a nice idea.

The Andersons had finally settled on the Sunshine Coast in Queensland and created an Alice in Wonderland attraction in Maroochydore which they ran for many years. Hugh was once the Maroochy Citizen of the Year. He died from leukaemia in 2005 aged 85, and Doris died a year or so later.

Murray had tried in vain to locate Hugh after he acquired the puppets and eventually I found an obituary in the Sunshine Coast Daily by Googling on "Hugh Anderson Big Cow" (for reasons that will become obvious later)! I have used that obituary as a source for some of the information in this article. In it a daughter, Sue Price, is quoted as saying that her father always had time for other people. "Nothing was ever too much trouble for him. He was one of Nature's gentlemen; an extremely gentle and generous man."

Disappointed to have missed out on meeting Hugh, Murray decided to try to track down Doris. He phoned every Anderson on the Sunshine Coast without luck, and followed leads from the obituary. He was about to give



King Humberdink from The King of No-Man's Land (1956). Photo by Peter Oldham (2008).

up when he noted that the obituary said Hugh had designed the War Memorial in Cotton Tree, a suburb of Maroochydore. He rang the Council and was referred to the R.S.L. where the President told him: "I was an old mate of Hughie's. I know his daughter Sue. I'll give her a call."

The next day Sue Price phoned Murray from her home in Maroochydore and told him that Doris had also died. She and her sister Marg Anderson (who lives in Campbelltown, N.S.W.) had strong memories of the puppets, even to some of their names, although they were very young at the time. Murray went to Queensland and met Sue, taking with him the puppet King Humberdink, and Sue showed him a box of clippings and photos Doris had kept. Sue has since visited Murray ... and the puppets ... in Sydney with her son, Steve, and sister, Marg.

The Alice in Wonderland attraction has not survived, but Hugh has left some large "monuments" which will be around for some time yet: in Queensland, the Big Cow at Yandina, and some life-sized bulls at Rockhampton; in N.S.W. the Giant Soldier at Uralla and the big Gold Panner in front of a motel in Kelso, near Bathurst. [www.bigthings.com.au]

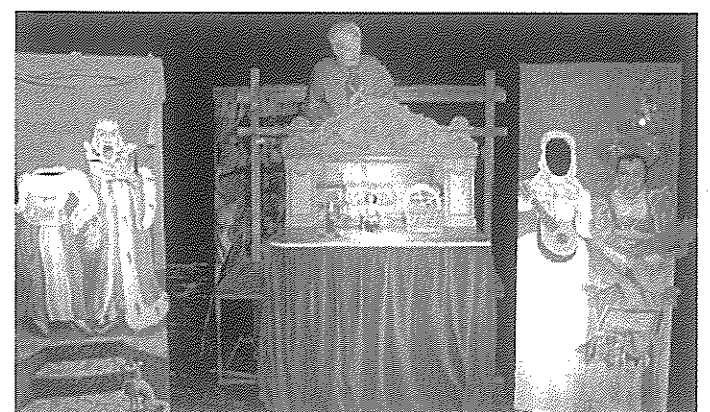
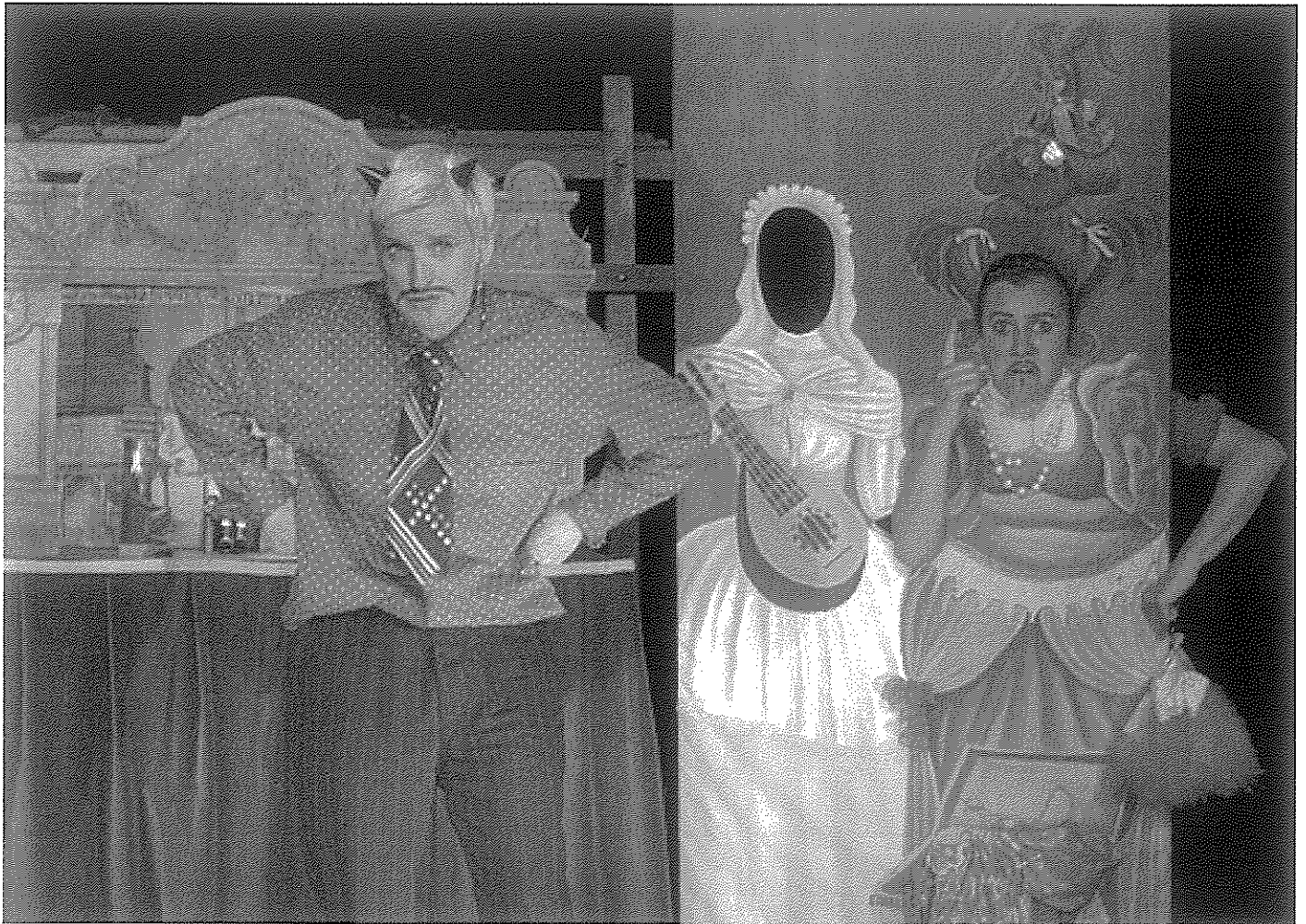
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Hudoan business card (ca 1956). Bradshaw collection.*



Some of Murray's Hudoan marionettes. Photo by Peter Oldham (2008).



Hugh with the Gold Panner framework on a trailer. [Family photo] | Inset - Gold Panner



Six Months in Prague

Theatre Mentorship with Bela Schenkova and Divadlo Anpu

By Megan "Tex" Cameron

Last year, at the UNIMA Festival in Perth I was completely blown away by Bela Schenkova and her Company Divadlo Anpu. They performed their version of *Romeo and Juliet* with small antique Marionettes, mask and performance. The style was terrifically anarchic yet the story was clear. I was hooked and asked if I could visit them sometime in Prague. One week after the festival was over I received an email from Bela inviting me to come and offering to pay for my airfare, accommodation and living expenses. I visited twice in 2008, performing my own shows, *Fin* and *Andy Clockwise* with the company's repertoire.

So began a professional relationship which has led to my residency in Prague for six months in 2009. I have been here now for nearly three months and we have created a beautiful new show for Adults and Children called *Certuv Svagr* or *The devil's brother-in-law* in English. Again it involves small antique marionettes (a Bela trademark) and many other clever, fantastic yet simple theatrical inventions. The show is in Czech so it has been very difficult for me to learn marionette operation and Czech at the same time. Sometimes there were tears and a pain that got me in the ego, but under the guidance of a very strict director and fellow performer Bela Schenkova it succeeded. Our premiere was an enormous success. We performed the show in Anpu's Big Top in Letna Park in the centre of Prague. I was pleasantly surprised by one audience member, a Czech Australian Puppeteer from Sydney Lenka Muchova. I think she was as surprised to see me as I her.

So now I will continue my marionette training. Bela is not a traditional stickler for the rules in performance but is a master puppeteer and does believe in learning the skills first. The very small marionettes have a different set of rules to the larger ones. For example you don't lip sync every sound or syllable as this makes the tiny puppet too busy. So I am unlearning a few basics and it is surprisingly hard.

I am learning so much about Marionettes, directing and performing and in the most poetic environment of Prague. I am challenged to a point of extreme frustration sometimes and it is divine. Bela is an inspiration to work with. She also works with and has a close relationship with the Brothers Formani for over fifteen years, another company which inspires. The Brothers have designed and performed for Anpu and Bela has performed with them many times. There is truly a theatrical family within these two companies and I have to pinch myself at times to believe I have become a part of it.

We are in the process of translating the script so we can bring the show to Australia hopefully in the early part of 2010. I hope that Bela can work with Australian Puppeteers and performers with her unique style. I thank the Ian Potter Cultural Trust for their support for this project and am looking forward to the following three months of touring, training and directorial mentorship.



Photos supplied by Megan Cameron

Prudential Children First! Singapore International Festival for Children

By Dennis Murphy

This eleven day festival celebrated its 10th anniversary with an eclectic mix of twelve productions from eight countries. The only purely-puppet show was Richard Bradshaw's *Shadows* but some groups incorporated puppetry into their work.

The English company Mimika Theatre performed in a tent with the audience facing a counter with a wall of cabinets behind it. During the performance various cabinet doors were opened to reveal part or the whole of a video screen. Action took place both on screen with video and on the counter in front with puppets. The story followed the adventures of six characters in a day. It was a lovely combination of the two media with a seductively restful soundtrack that enchanted the audience.

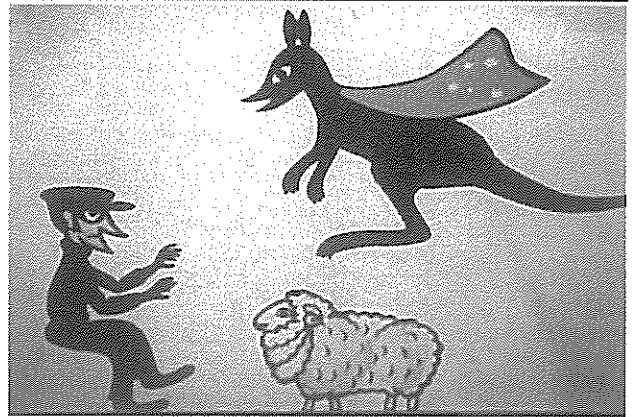
Also in a tent deliberately set up in the style of a travelling theatre tent was Adelaide's Slingsby Theatre Company with *The Tragical Life of Cheeseboy*. It is a story of separation as Cheeseboy is marooned on Earth when his home planet is reduced to a bubbling fondue. It featured lighting effects, object theatre and an excellent storyteller character.

Bedtime was a wordless Spanish production by KATARSIS. Two young friends can't get to sleep and so turn to mischief. Using their imagination and the few props around them, socks, sheets etc., they create an imaginative variety of creatures. A balloon with two pillows became a ponderous monster walking to the edge of the bed.

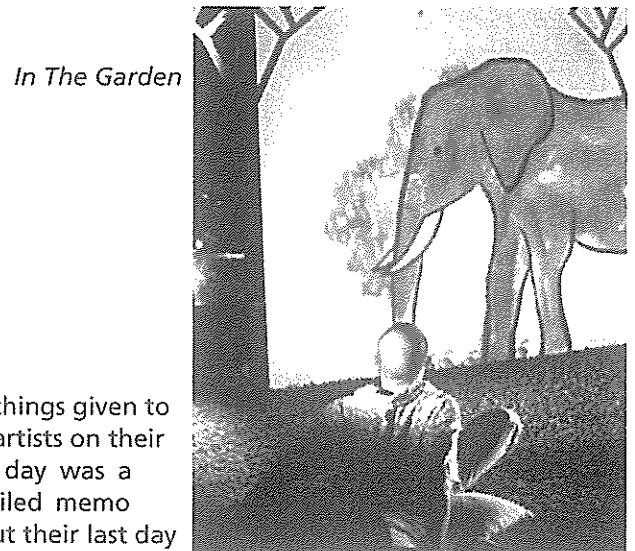
In The Garden, a Spanish/Belgian production was aimed at small children. Working with a simple set that incorporated rear-projection video, the actors could step behind the screen and be seen in silhouette or come out in view and interact with the video images on the screen. There were rain storms, passing animals and a delightful bit with the actors in silhouette playing with a ball of video'd yarn which grew and shrank. Many shows claim to be for the littlies, but this one really was specifically for them.

The festival was centred around what was until 1999 the Parliament Building. Now known as the Arts House, it provided lots of performance spaces. A Canadian mask show, for example, took place in the old legislative assembly with audiences sitting on the cross benches and in the visitors' gallery.

The festival, the only one of its kind in the region, is run by ACT3 International, a Singapore-based arts group whose aim is to nurture and develop young audiences for Theatre. Like all of Singapore the festival was meticulously organised and amazingly efficient. Among



Richard Bradshaw's Shadow puppetry



In The Garden

the things given to the artists on their first day was a detailed memo about their last day

- what time to check out of the hotel, what time to be ready for pick-up to go to the airport, even the limo's licence plate number.

But efficiency did not make it a humourless affair - far from it. Laughter and banter before, between and after shows provided a beautifully friendly atmosphere. Young volunteers helping to run the festival gave the artists the opportunity to get to know what was happening in this fascinating multicultural social experiment called Singapore.

POSTSCRIPT COINCIDENT: At the end of the festival the organisers asked me back for a festival in September. Unfortunately, the date conflicted with a standing annual booking at Bondi's Festival of the Winds, a kite festival. The Singapore organisers were intrigued because the festival they were talking about was also a kite festival.

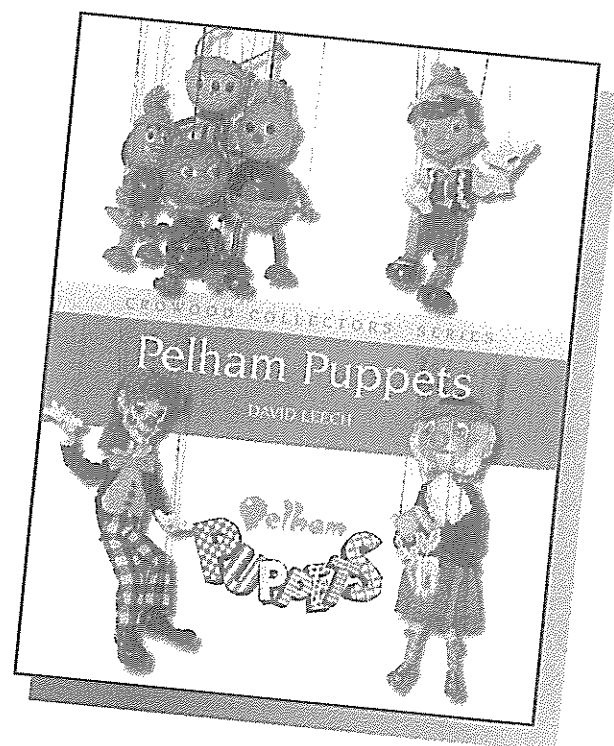
When I mentioned this coincidence to the Bondi organisers they told me that every second year they had fewer kites in the sky because many kite flyers were away at an international kite festival in France. Three unconnected kite festivals - on three different continents - all on the same weekend. Uncanny.

Book Review

By Sue Wallace

Pelham Puppets by David Leech

The Crowood Press, Crowood Collectors'
Series 2008
ISBN 978 1 84797 055 8



This beautiful hardcover book is 224 pages of research, anecdotes, drawings and photographs dedicated to Pelham Puppets. The company was started by Bob Pelham in 1947. World War II and its long years of hardship and austerity had not long ended. Wanting to give children a sense of joy, colour and creativity that had been missing in those war years, Bob Pelham was inspired to create well made, colourful wooden string puppets. He sought the advice of professional puppeteers Jan Bussell and Anne Hogarth. With their help he created the controls and stringing for puppets that children could use effectively.

It wasn't without hardship that the business took off but when it did Pelham Puppets were exported all over the world. By 1963 they were producing 4,000 hand made puppets a week. At the peak of production in 1978 they were producing almost 400,000 a year (over 7,500 puppets a week) and became the largest employer in their town of Marlborough, UK.

The facts and stories in this book continue to amaze the reader e.g. "The very first sales leaflet in 1947 listed 23 characters in regular production". The business had just started and they were producing so many characters. This flare seemed to characterise the business and Bob Pelham was always ready to experiment and extend the range. He worked with a dedicated team of people including designers, carvers and mould makers. They made animated displays, large 2.5 metre marionettes, hand puppets, vent puppets, puppets for professional puppeteers and a staggering range of string puppets.

With every puppet purchased came an invitation to join Pelpups an international club of young puppeteers. By 1971 there were 40,000 Pelpups around the world. The book has an extraordinary

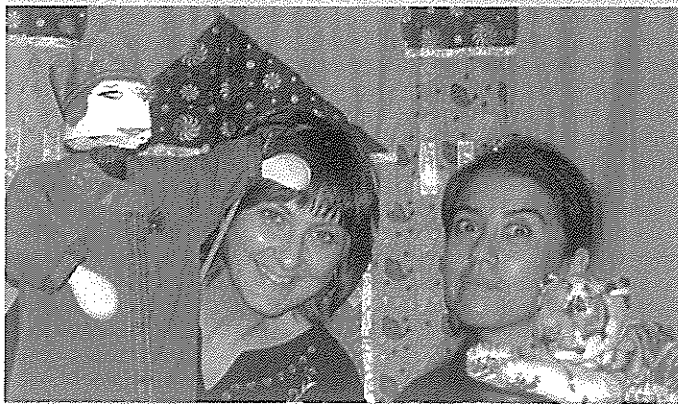
section on the Pelpups which shows the great generosity, love and care that Bob Pelham and his team gave to this international Pelham family.

The author asked his parents for a dog for his eighth birthday. His wish came true but it was a Pelham puppet dog and it became a treasured possession that started David Leech's career as a puppeteer and later a puppet manufacturer. He became a Pelpup and first met Bob Pelham when he was 13. Eventually he worked along side Bob in almost every aspect of puppet creation. Although few budding puppeteers ever got to work directly with Bob Pelham, he and an everlasting effect on many children and adults. If you have seen Richard E. Grant's film *Wah Wah* about growing up in Swaziland, you will recall the scene where the young boy is staging a puppet show. Grant used his own collection of Pelham Puppets for the scene.

Pelham Puppets is a detailed and lovingly crafted book about an extraordinary man, his colleagues and his enterprise. The photographs of the puppets will inspire you to start scouring second hand stores and the internet for your own collection. Good luck! Pelham Puppets have become very collectable and even have their own Collectors' Club.

(Thanks to Murray Raine for the loan of this book.)

Success in Bangladesh



Tiia Kask (Estonia) and Dominica Capozucca Jachnow (Argentina) with their puppets Aruman and the Indonesian Tiger.

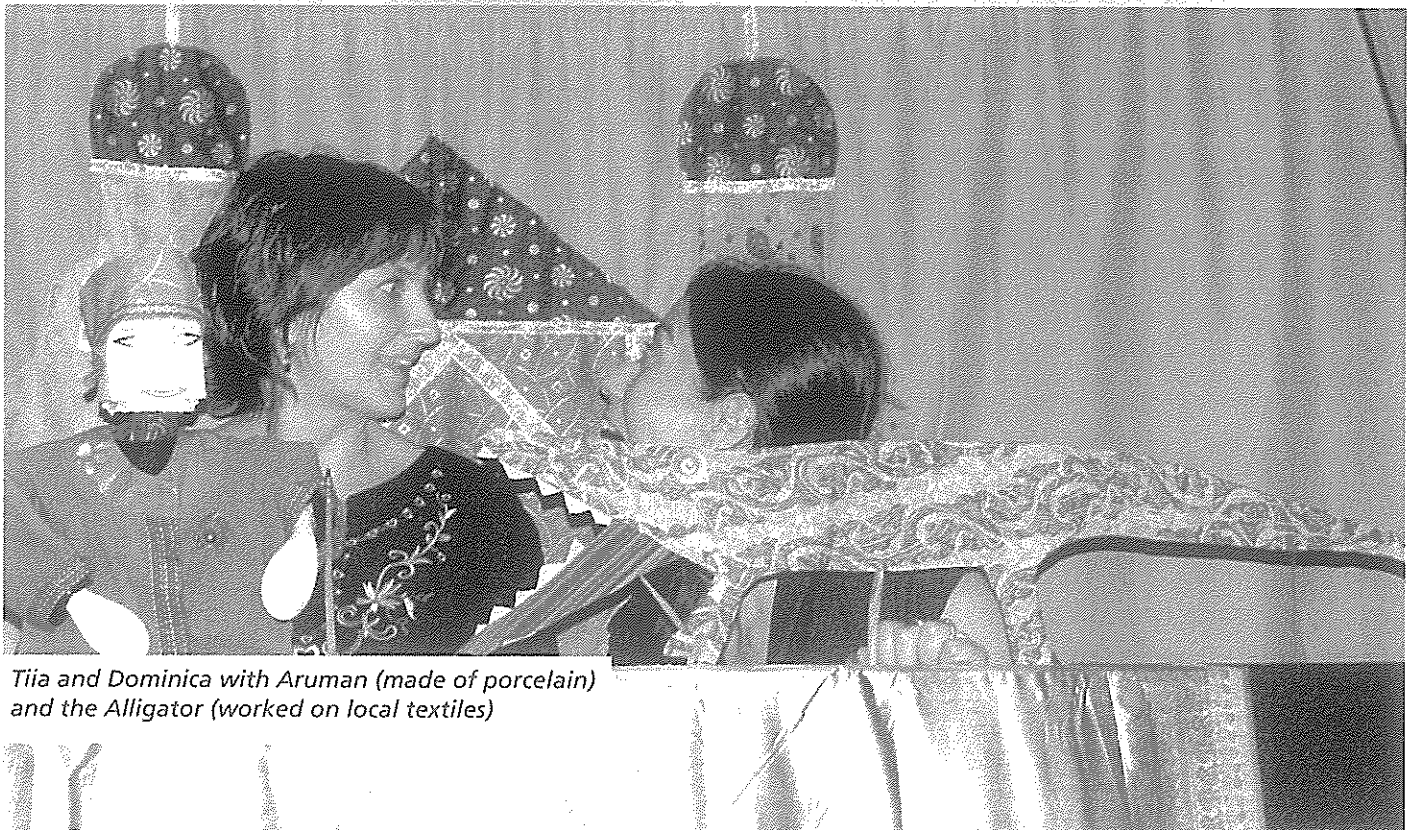
Hello from Tiia Kask & Dominica at CASA CATORCE, Dhaka, Bangladesh

We just want to announce the start of our group in Dhaka, Bangladesh. Two creative women: Tiia Kask from Estonia and Dominica Capozucca Jachnow from Argentina met in Bangladesh. After setting down in this crazy city we started CASA CATORCE with great success.

Every Friday we have a show. We started with *Poppet* a play for the little ones to five years old, and then jumped into a bigger production *Aruman, Hero of Java* for children up to six years.

Being in Bangladesh is quite a challenge: a Muslim country with an interesting political background. Integration for foreigners in the local society is limited: it means hours of traffic jams, barriers with the language and a hectic way of living. Children here do not have any opportunities to access cultural events. After noticing that, Tiia and Dominica decided to do something and puppet theatre was the choice. Tiia's theatre background is from Estonia, USA and Thailand. She helped with scripts and gave her creativity to backstage and provided some great voices! Dominica comes from the dancer side and also art and story telling.

Together they are a good combination and lots of fun for the children in Bangladesh.



Tiia and Dominica with Aruman (made of porcelain) and the Alligator (worked on local textiles)

Roll Camera

By Anna Watts



Q. What do an accountant, an engineer, an academic and a truck driver have in common?

A. They were just some of the students of Puppetry for TV and the Web 2009.

Gary Friedman was the very generous teacher of the short beginners puppetry for TV course in Sydney earlier this year. I had wanted to do the course for a few years, whereas my husband Gerard was new to all things puppetry. We began with no preconceptions and eight weeks later had written and directed our first short puppet film.

Puppet building and performance techniques for the camera were the main focus of the course. We had great fun as camaraderie and laughter were the order of the day. We learnt a lot about improvising, the physical demands of the medium, and group performance. We learnt that the reverse image on the TV monitor is tricky and it takes a lot longer than you think to shoot a page of dialogue!

Gerard found working with puppets quite liberating as the audience's focus is on the puppet not the puppeteer. He said the most surprising aspect of the course was the confidence he found in being able to perform. As a couple the most valuable thing we learnt was how we work together as a team to generate ideas. We both found it amazing to create something from nothing — from script right through to editing the final product.

A happy bonus of the course was that we made new friends. Friends interested in puppetry — bonus upon bonus! A big thank you goes to Gary for this valuable course.

Check out Garry's website www.puppetrynews.com to view the *Beginners Puppetry for Television and the Web Course* to be held in January 2010 and *Ruddlink* our spoof on the Australian government's economic stimulus package.

Puppets in Film opportunity

Hi There,

I'm Shelley, the producer of a VCA student short film being shot this July. The film, written and directed by Lauren Anderson (VCA Masters Student) is called *Vigilant! Healthy! Wholesome!* We are seeking puppeteers for special effects in camera on our film.

Vigilant! Healthy! Wholesome! is the story of *Sylvie*, a bride on the run. *Sylvie* has more problems than your average runaway bride. She's a lesbian in a society where homosexuality is a much feared disease. Not only that, she's trying to keep a handle on her carnivorous wedding dress which eats anyone who gets in her way.

Much inspiration is drawn from 1950s horror films, in essence. We want it to appear slightly dated but in a period or location you can't quite place.

The "star of the show" is the wedding dress. We want to do our effects in camera and are seeking puppeteers to make our dress move.

What we are needing is for the dress to have a life of its own. It will need to move fluidly, almost like the dress has tentacles, or like a stingray.

Not being puppet-minded ourselves, we thought the best way for the dress to "ripple" of its own accord and "rear up" and swallow people, would be to have strings attached to the dress with puppeteers out of frame manipulating the strings to make the skirts of the dress move.

So in terms of having specific skills I would not be confident in saying necessarily what experience the puppeteers would need to have. I hope the info I have given enlightens people somewhat.

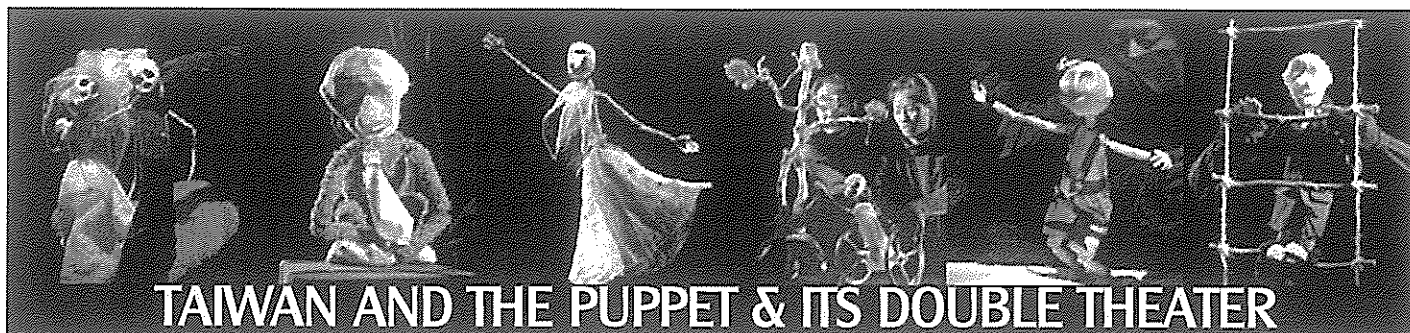
However, we are more than happy to be corrected on this and would love to collaborate with whoever is interested.

We are shooting on 16mm film (for black and white) July 14th to the 21st, with a day off somewhere in between.

As we are a student production, we are unable to offer a fee but believe that the finished product will be something quite special for a show reel. Plus we guarantee fun and comfortable working conditions.

Please, do not hesitate to contact me with any questions about the production.

Many thanks,
Shelley Dresden
0406 714 454
shelley.dresden@gmail.com



By Richard Bradshaw

I Am Another Yourself publicity photo

At one point at UNIMA 2008 in Perth it was announced that a large number of puppets for the Million Puppet Project had come from China. Oops! That should have been Taiwan, which had sent 1514 puppets thanks to the efforts of The Puppet & Its Double Theater. Taiwan is not part of China although it calls itself the Republic Of China (R.O.C.). In fact, in the last century Taiwan belonged to China for only four years, 1945–9.

Taiwan was not a Chinese possession when the Republic of China was originally proclaimed on the mainland in 1911 by Dr Sun Yatsen, who is revered today in both countries. From 1895–1945 it was occupied by Japan, and there are still reminders of this in the way slippers are donned at the entrances to homes or studios and in the design of some pre-World War II buildings.

At the end of WW II it reverted to China, under the Nationalist General Chiang Kaishek. But when the Communists proclaimed the People's Republic in 1949 he fled to Taiwan, taking with him 1.5 million Nationalists, and swelling the population to 7.5 million. He also took with him the name R.O.C., hoping one day to re-establish it on the mainland. So began the era of "two Chinas".

Taiwan is a leaf-shaped [some say sweet-potato-shaped] island traversed by the Tropic of Cancer. Its greatest length is just under 400 Km and greatest width under 150 Km. While the west coast is generally low-lying and very developed, the centre and west coast have some spectacular mountainous scenery. When I was a youngster we knew it by its Portuguese name, Formosa, meaning "beautiful".

The language called Taiwanese is almost the same as the language of Fujien on the mainland, from where settlers began coming in the 15th Century. [The traditional glove-puppets and marionettes of Taiwan are like those from Fujien.] Taiwanese is still the main language of Taiwan's second biggest city, Kaohsiung in the south, but to the north Mandarin dominates. In the small city of Meinong, close to Kaohsiung, and where we spent five nights, the population is 95% Hakka Chinese with their own language and traditions. Taiwan has a small (and now valued) aboriginal population, resembling Filipinos and having ten tribal languages. The Taiwanese are generally very friendly towards westerners.

Taipei has an efficient user-friendly metro system and, since our first tour, a high-speed train, using French TGV technology, now connects Taipei in the north to Kaohsiung in the south. The favoured form of private transport is the motor scooter, and waves of them flow down the roads, sometimes carrying a family of four on the one scooter. (The scooters are allowed to do a "hook-turn" at intersections like the turns allowed in central Melbourne.)

Tension between Taiwan and the People's Republic was fairly high at the time of my first tour in 2001 so we were surprised to find that Taiwanese puppeteers often visited their mainland counterparts and even had their puppets made in Fujien. The relationship is better now and in April there were nearly 4,000 tourists per day from the mainland, a figure expected to approach 7,000 per day in May. Still, for me the idea of Taiwan becoming part of China again seems a bit like Australia returning to Britain!



Party at company's studio April 2008.
Larry Reed on the left, Lily on the right. Photo: Jo Cheng

Making puppets at Long-du Elementary School in Meinong
Photo: R. Bradshaw

I will write about the traditional puppetry in a later article, but now I want to tell you about an exciting and adventurous contemporary company, The Puppet & Its Double Theatre. The name comes from the name Antonin Artaud gave to a set of seminal essays on theatre, *The Theatre and its Double* (1938), when he sought to make theatre more reflective of real life.

The company was founded in September, 1991 largely through the efforts of Chia-yin Cheng, known to English-speakers as Jo Cheng. [Most Taiwanese have an "English" name given to them by their teacher when they start to learn English. I once met "Cinderella"].

Jo studied puppetry at UConn, the University of Connecticut in Storrs, under Bart J. Roccoberton, Jr. UConn began as an agricultural university but thanks to Frank Ballard (a former President of the Puppeteers of America) it established a Fine Arts course for puppeteers, unique in the U.S. Frank was succeeded by Bart under whom the school has flourished. Now it has its own comfortable building at some distance from the main campus with excellent facilities for the students. One of the visiting tutors to UConn, who had a profound effect on Jo, was the wonderful German marionettist, Albrecht Roser who toured Australia in 1975.

Jo is a very capable and talented puppeteer of whom Bart once said to us: "I would trust her with my life!" When she makes an observation on something in my show I take it on board (and that is saying something)! Most of the puppeteers in the company have been women, and of the ones we were with this time only Lily was there in 2001. It was the wonderful Lily who slept at the studio alongside my puppet cases in 2001 to make sure they were safe. She speaks Taiwanese as well as Mandarin so did all the complicated negotiations for my shows in Kaohsiung. Jo is now married to Louis who works as a technician for a leading touring children's theatre, and Lily is now married to "Ah-Gway" [my spelling!] the bursar of the Long-du (i.e. "Dragon's Belly") Elementary School in Meinong [see later].

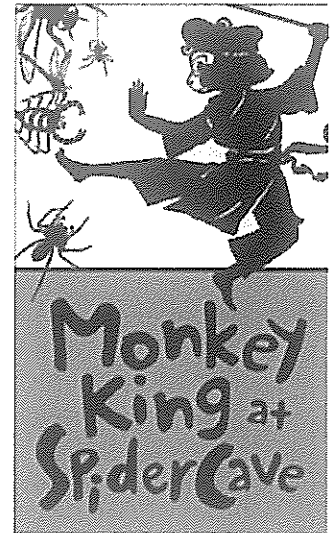
The company is now a respected part of the Taiwan arts scene, and the repertoire ranges from small shows for schoolchildren to ambitious productions for adults. For *Portrait of Dora* they employed one of Taiwan's leading actresses. This is the 1976 play by Helene Cixous that casts a feminine perspective on one of Freud's case-studies, an ambitious undertaking for the company ... and one that sadly did not do well at the box-office.

One production they had hoped might get to UNIMA 2008 in Perth was Stravinsky's *The Firebird*. This was directed by Bart Roccoberton, on sabbatical from UConn. It had a cast of 19, puppeteers, actors, dancers etc. and the 90-piece Taiwan National Symphony Orchestra (so even in a reduced form it would have been a problem for UNIMA 2008). [I was briefly teaching at the puppetry school in Stuttgart in 2006. We met up with Bart on a visit to Albrecht Roser just after this project and saw astounding clips from the production.] That same year the company created the impressive



Monkey King at Spider Cave

Poster for Monkey King at Spider Cave



Monkey King at Spider Cave directed by the shadow-theatre director Larry Reed [ShadowLight Productions, San Francisco]. This also played in San Francisco and San Jose. [Larry was briefly with us in Taipei in April en route to a project in Hangchow, China.]

The Puppet & Its Double Company has performed at festivals in Hungary, India, Belgium, Singapore. This year they are returning to Avignon, France with their 2002 show *I Am Another Yourself*, which they are then taking to Dordrecht in The Netherlands. They have also organised tours of Taiwan for Albrecht Roser, myself and Los Titeros de Binefar (from northern Spain). Our tour was one of the most enjoyable tours ever: well organised, problem-free and great fun. We travelled with two vehicles and with a team of five others, including Jo and Lily.

It is a busy company. It organises workshops and exhibitions, and has published a book on shadow-puppets and a kit for a shadow version of the *Monkey King*. When we arrived in Taipei this year we were taken to the Museum of Contemporary Art where the company had worked on an interactive installation with the French artist known as "Bluescreen" [Jean-Francois Maunier]. And while we were in Meinong they were working on projects with classes at three elementary schools: one with rod-puppets, one with shadows and one with "black light". The results can be viewed at the following websites, and they are quite remarkable, especially when you consider the afternoon rehearsal that day had to be cancelled because of rain.

Fu-an elementary school, shadow:

www.youtube.com/watch?v=JRW9duoyVDk

Gwan-hsin Elementary School, "black light":

www.youtube.com/watch?v=XfNNQeeWO1g

Long-du elementary School, rod puppet:

www.youtube.com/watch?v=No-2HyognVU

You can find out more about The Puppet and Its Double Theater by visiting the company's website: www.o-puppet.com.tw. This has an English and Chinese version and you can access video extracts of *Monkey King* and *Portrait of Dora*. In the next issue I plan to write about their production of *The Puppeteer Granny* and traditional puppetry in Taiwan.

Victoria

Polyglot is having another bonanza year with heaps of activity and lots of international touring.

The Big Game just returned from the Singapore International Arts Festival where we played to big happy crowds in the steamy heat: cast member Jacob Williams said he got so hot his ears sweated.

Check Out! is off to the Shanghai Children's Festival in July, doing 10 shows in six theatres, subtitled and translated. NB: The only Happy Mart in the world is in China – will we be sued?

We Built This City. Our favourite interactive playspace will be at the Kennedy Centre in Washington in September. We are keen to get the Obama family in to play, after all they're locals. Straight after this we go to Wangaratta!

LOCAL news: Hissy Fit – snake charming gone wrong – is playing at Federation Square July 7 – 12 as part of Puppets at Fed Square.

Muckheap is back on the road in October touring schools in Victoria for the first time in 9 years. This show just keeps on going. Currently it's played to 80,000 children across Australia. One day we'll put all the casts together and do it en mass.

Echo. An extended school residency at Furlong Park School for deaf Children – is our newest project, working with kids to create a comic book inspired walk-through world. This project is also developing a link and a relationship between this school and Epic Arts in Kampot – where Jai Hartnell is working with a group of Cambodian Deaf young people. This project will continue to be developed over the next three to four years. See website for updates.

Sarah Kriegler and Mischa Long are also running extended residencies at the moment. These residencies are a great opportunity to do deep work with kids, working towards performance.

Polyglot staff is Sue Giles – Artistic Director, Simon Abrahams – General Manager, Anna Schoo – Administrator, Bindi Green – Venue and Production Manager, Mandy Field – Artlink Coordinator.

www.polyglotpuppets.com.au or 9827 9667

Victorian Report June 2009 from Tamara
Thanks so much to all who contributed to this issue. This process endeavours to foster exchange, knowledge and support for all of us working in Puppetry.

Richard Hart – Director of Dream Puppets. Dream Puppets has presented over 150 performances in the last three months alone and our audience base is still expanding. **Superbia**, our latest production, has been successfully reworked, with thanks to Nancy Black and we are planning a series of short pieces for mature audiences, to be ready for next year.

About Face Productions (Annie Forbes and Tim Denton): Over the last three months we have been mainly occupied with the teaching and training side of puppetry. We delivered workshops for children at the Castlemaine State Festival then flew across to NZ to conduct a series of performance demonstration and making workshops for **Puppet Expo** at the National

Theatre for Children in Wellington. We also delivered a commission of six giraffe puppets we had completed to a company in NZ. Over the last term Annie continued her lecturing and mentoring role at the VCAM culminating in directing the Post-graduate Puppetry students in their Solo works. Tim also did some back-fill tutoring for Julia Davis's puppetry students at Swinburne University.

AboutFace Productions

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(Annie) 0438 000 907 tazface@bigpond.net.au

Jenny Ellis – Company Gongoma's The Mermaid's Daughter, a shadow puppet show with live West African music, toured to primary schools from Newcastle, New South Wales to Toowoomba, Queensland in April, and around regional Victoria, including Rutherglen, Bendigo and Ballarat in May. Company Gongoma's brand new hand-puppet show *The Fish That Wanted to Fly*, set in a mangrove lagoon, had a sell-out season at La Mama and Northcote Kids in May. Jenny will be in Tennant Creek, Northern Territory running workshops with an Aboriginal community on a project by Australian Theatre for Young People, 21 June – 4 July

Project Reliquary: *Reliquary* draws upon the connections between Australian Indigenous and Korean spirituality to create a unique contemporary dance theatre piece using puppetry, media projection and aesthetic sound design.

Puppeteer Hamish Fletcher Collaborating with Korean choreographer Soo Yeun You and Indigenous choreographer Gina Rings, innovative Sonic Artist and Sound Designer Philippe Pasquier, and Industrial Designer Brandon Hur, Company Miji has infused the work with heightened visual and aural elements through an unusual mixing of media projection, puppetry, dance and sound art.

"Reliquary is a work full of ideas, some moments of profound beauty and pathos, and some exquisite synthesising between the various art forms. ... The dancing is excellent, the puppetry and sound score adding quality and depth to the performance."
The Age, 2007

Reliquary had performance at International Indigenous Dreaming Festival 2009, and the project is going to be presentation in Melbourne and around Australia as part of Kultour program 2010. (www.kultour.com.au)

Melinda Hetzel, Artistic Director, Peepshow Inc.: Peepshow Inc. are currently working on the long-term rebuild project for their new Puppet Peepshow mobile venue, which will be launched early next year. The company has also been working on the beginnings of a creative development period for an exciting new production, **Siblings**, which brings together a group of Indigenous and non-indigenous artists and will draw on the histories surrounding the Merri Creek and Yarra River.

Barking Spider Visual Theatre (BSVT): BSVT is in creative development with **Match**, with newly appointed director John Paul Fischbach. *Match* is taking the clay into the wrestling ring – think *Wrestlemania* and weird-ass puppetry. Also, BSVT developed & presented **Short Pants No Holes:** a series of improvised tales for



A scene from Reliquary

children for La Mama for Kids and will present an excerpt at ArtPlay Cabaret in July. The BSVT show **Dispatch** has received City of Melbourne funding and will have a season later this year (venue to be confirmed). **The Biscuit Readings** had a bumper season at The Melbourne International Comedy Festival and is back on at The Village in November (& Falls Fest in Tassie at the end of the year). Other than that, Penelope (BSVT artistic director) went in to operate a giant marionette as part of Melbourne Fashion Festival and came out directing a full fashion show (& operating the marionette). The contra in clothing was the best deal ever! Also, Penelope ran puppetry workshops at Monash Uni Student Theatre in object & bunraku puppets: the students are hungry for puppets – where can they go now without the VCA? Next up, BSVT will lead The Wangaratta Heritage Project developing a new performance work with the local Wang community, based on local stories and using object puppetry. www.barkingspidertheatre.com.au

Jacobe Boheme: Jacob has been travelling through Finland, working with Outi Sädekallio from Theatre ILMIO Ö. (www.teatteri-ilmio.com) in Helsinki, developing a co production between Saami youth from northern Finland and Indigenous youth from Central Australia. The project involves creating cross cultural awareness through puppetry, dance, music, storytelling and theatre.

Mike Bevitt: Purple Capsicum Puppets is a new puppetry company creating performances and workshops for kids based in Melbourne. Launched at the Adelaide Fringe, our show of **The Bremen Town Musicians** received a 4 star review in the Advertiser, and

since then we've done three short tours of Adelaide Schools, as well a Melbourne, and regional NSW tour. We're performing in the Coburg Family Carnival, with Northcote Kids Festival at the Melbourne Fringe in September and October, and are currently working as puppet makers for a new Channel 31 TV show.

the indirect Object: In March our production **Nightlight** (originally created and performed for the 2008 UNIMA South Africa Out the Box festival) won the 2009 Best Puppetry Award at the Adelaide Fringe. Member and performer Beth McMahon is currently undertaking a Masters in Puppetry at the VCA - creating a cabaret style visual theatre/puppetry piece with collaborators from puppetry, drama, music, and production to be performed in September as part of the Melbourne Fringe.

Swinburne University: Staged Scenes in the Dark, which was a mask and puppetry performance 22- 24 of April this year with two Melbourne based puppeteers Julia Davis and Tim Denton with mask making teacher Dr John Butler and performer Alex Pinder. This was a very successful collaboration using two of the oldest artforms in a modern context. The number of students interested in puppetry as an artform has also grown this year.

Our second year students are producing a roving Puppetry performance called **Hive** for The Melbourne Fringe Festival in October.

Sabrina D'Angelo: Started touring Tassie primary schools with Terrapin's new show **The Falling Room** and **the Flying Room**. We had a successful season at Hobart's Theatre Royal last week, and will be on the road with the show till the beginning of August. Details at www.terrapin.org.au

Men of Steel: Have branched out and welcomed a new member to the team, Steve Noonan. Supported by the Australia Council For The Arts, they Toured to Korea in May/June to perform in the Chuncheon Mime Festival. They did sell-out shows to semi-traumatised under 5's in a 500 seat theatre and a special feature adult show featuring bums, boobs and a nipple. 'Please welcome to the stage, Cookie Cutter and sexy friend....'

The Becken Project (Ken Evans and Rebecca Russell): have been engaged in several projects with a basis in visual theatre with children.

We are currently working with the ArtPlay Puppet Troupe, **ApPt**, rehearsing a new show for performance at Puppet Lab in July. The show is based on Stephen Michael King's picture book, **The Man Who Loved Boxes**. This series of workshops is the third of its kind we have run with ApPt, each focussing on a different aspect of visual theatre. This current project is focussing on performance with the children performing alongside Ken and Rebecca, operating Bunraku style puppets and transforming set. Ken and Rebecca have written, designed and built the show.

Most of the children involved have been part of each ApPt project and are therefore becoming quite knowledgeable and proficient visual theatre practitioners.

We have also curated the fourth annual Puppet Lab at ArtPlay which runs from 4th-11th July 2009.

My Darling Patricia: My Darling Patricia have a few projects in the pipeline. In May and June, they have been in development at the Casula Powerhouse for their show **Posts In The Paddock**. It features Shadow Puppets (made by Clare Britton) and rod and glove puppets (made by Bryony Anderson). It is hoped the production will premiere late in 2010.

The next show to hit the stage will be **Africa**, which will performed as part a Malthouse Theatre residency to be undertaken in the Tower theatre. This production features intricate puppets built by the extraordinary Bryony Anderson, to be operated by, Clare Britton, Sam Routledge and Alice Osborne. Alice has just returned from Paris after performing with Compagnie Phillipe Genty for the past two years.

Sam Routledge: Sam has recently received a 'Choose Your Own Adventure' residency from Aphids, which will allow him to continue his collaboration with Video Artist Martyn Coutts and Animateur Willoh S. Weiland. The project is a collaboration with the Australian Model Railway Society of Australia and its primary form is the animation of H0* scale figures.

Jessica Wilson: Has been directing a new work for **Jump Leads** a new organisation set up to produce works for young audiences. With this show she continues to develop her artistic relationship with Johnnothan Oxlade as a designer. It is a gorgeous piece for very young audiences based on a suite of lullabies and revolving around a grand piano that spills forth all sorts of magic and music. Jessica Wilson's,

Dr Egg and the Man with No Ear, that played in Chicago last year at Redmoon theatre, has been

nominated for 4 Jeff awards. The Jeff awards are Chicago's equivalent to New York's Tony's, so it is an honor in a city full of theatre of all varieties. One of the nominations was for Graeme Davis's haunting puppets: Best Artistic Specialization. The work was received with critical acclaim and played to full houses for its seven week season. Jessica also took it to the International Performing Arts for Young People Showcase in January this year in Cleveland, OHIO, with the help of Arts Victoria. It is now being managed by a Canadian agency who are concocting a late 2010 North American tour.

www.jessicawilson.com.au

Lana Schwarcz: Touring **Grandpa Sol** to Canadian Fringe Circuit until October. People really getting into it!

Tamara Rewse (Skite Vikingr): Her new solo work **Morbid Porn** had a creative development from the 1-12 June and undertakes a second development with Duda Paiva from the Netherlands from the 29th June-10 July, Supported by Hothouse Theatre, **A Month in the Country** and FULL TILT. This work is being created by Tamara Rewse, Nancy Black, maker Zoe Stuart and Kelly Ryall.

Black Hole Theatre: Black Hole Theatre has 2 projects in development: a children's work called **Sealskin** (working title), in partnership with Arena Theatre, ArtPlay, and Kazzum Theatre in London. A contemporary tale of a boy going through crisis. Nancy Black is directing, Bryan Woltjen designing, the hip hop artist Elf Tranzporter and composer Darrin Verhagen doing music and sound design.

The script is being developed with young people through ArtPlay. Bryan Woltjen is working with a young graffiti artist from Artful Dogers Studio to develop designs and puppets. Elf is working with children to create and record rap lyrics. A creative development, supported by Arts Victoria, will take place in November. The eventual production will be presented in non-traditional spaces such as laneways, under bridges, in warehouses and carparks.

Also in development: **Slow Food: the Musical**.

A musical based on *Romeo and Juliet* where the Montagues and Capulets are represented by fresh vegetables and junk food. A chicken carcass is Juliet, a packet of McDonald's chips Romeo. Heath McIvor doing the lyrics, Kelly Ryall the music.

Plus continuing workshops at ArtPlay and others for young people at Brimbank.

Also looking to re-mount their award winning **Coop** in 2010.

NSW

Inspired by the **Sydney Puppet Theatre's** show **Oh Rats!**, The Rocks Chamber of Commerce is pooling the creative talents of their shop keepers and for 2 days in July, The Rocks will "go Ratty" with window displays, especially made pastries and lollies and generally a long tail of a good time in The Rocks. The Sydney Puppet Theatre will perform **Oh Rats!** on July 24 & 25 @ 11am at 80 George St, The Rocks (in the Metcalfe Arcade). Shows are sponsored by The Rocks Chamber of Commerce and are free.

*H0 model railway scale where 3.5 mm (0.14 in) represents 1ft.

South Australia

Gabrielle Griffin relocates to SA

Since relocating to South Australia in 2007, seduced by the bright lights of the big city, **Gabrielle Griffin** (ex-Krinkl Theatre & *The Two Frocks*) has continued with her adult puppetry obsession. Her small solo show **Pegging up the Sky** opened the 20th UNIMA Congress & Festival in Perth; after a season at the Puppet Palace during the 09 Fringe Festival, it was nominated for the Best Puppetry Award. She just completed a week's Residency at Adelaide's Vitalstatistix Theatre Company, beginning to explore material for her new solo work **Family Pie** about female reproduction desires and same-sex parenting. Before that, she played with Pooka Puppet Company's *Sexarella* puppets, in a creative development at the Festival Centre. Most recently, she successfully obtained a Professional Development grant from Arts SA through the Government of South Australia to attend the World Festival of Puppet Theatre in Charleville-Mezieres, and is very excited at this unique opportunity to extend her practice. She continues to accept the challenge of exposing unsuspecting adults to the wonder, humour, and depravity of puppetry, and is being very stubborn about it too!

Tasmania

Puppets in Tas

Terrapin Puppet Theatre have had a busy start to the year returning from a successful time at the Come Out Festival in Adelaide with the shows **Boats** and **Explosion Therapy**. *Boats* looks set for a lot of touring in the following year.

Their new production **The Falling Room** and **The Flying Room** written by Finegan Kruckemeyer opened at the Theatre Royal in Hobart during the May school holidays. It will now do a 7-week tour through out Tasmania.

Terrapin played host to Madam Cai Jin Ping, President of the Children's Art Theatre of China. They are collaborating with Terrapin on a show for 2010. Frank Newman, Artistic Director of Terrapin will head to Shanghai in July for further work on the project.

Melissa King, Jenna Hann, Melinda Mills and Kirsty Grierson are further developing the performances from Terrapin's **Articulate** program last year. They are working on several tabletop shows that they performed at the opening of The Ten Days On The Island Festival.

ACT

Canberra Youth Theatre is rehearsing **TANK**, a flexible, fun, intimate portable theatre that will tour. It is a zany history of water, set inside a small theatrical water tank, and will comprise 6 x 6 minute plays for an audience of six. **TANK** will have a diverse range of puppets: finger puppets, an abstract object puppet, a rod puppet rat, a couple of large character heads of a shark and a desultory polar bear. **TANK** will premiere at Floriade in September.

Also in the works is **Jigsaw Theatre Company's** new show, **Wendy**, a new musical imagining of Peter Pan's Wendy as a modern girl, which will tour ACT primary schools and have a public season in early August. Shadow puppetry will be used to create flying crocodiles and adventures on the high seas as *Wendy's* bedroom magically transforms into *Neverland*. Film maker Marisa Martin's short stop-motion animation **Tegan the Vegan** is currently in production, due to be completed by mid 2009. The characters are 20cm tall, plasticine puppets. See the website at:

www.eormedia.com.au/films/teganthevegan.htm for more details and pictures.

Gran's Bag by Greg Lissaman and Chrissie Shaw will have a season at the Street Theatre in the July school holidays (8 – 17), and then go on to The Riverside Theatre, Parramatta in Sydney in early August. *Gran* 'pulls' the entire show out of her giant red handbag – which seems to have a life of its own. With storytelling, songs, and puppetry, *Gran* takes us on a fun adventure full of twists and turns. More details here: <http://www.chrissieshaw.com/products.html#gransbag>. For 4 – 7 year olds. Finally Chrissie is making a life-size goat puppet for Merici College's Jubilee drama production of **Dinkum Assorted**, by Linda Aronson, 27– 29 August, at Belconnen Theatre.

QLD

Attack of the Attacking Attackers

Created by: Jonathon Oxlade, Matthew Ryan, Lucas Stibbard and Neridah Waters.

Performed at: La Boite Theatre Company, Brisbane.

Reviewed by: Mitch Humphrys

It's got a title that is bound to intrigue you and it's a pain in the bum to say when trying to order tickets. However, **Attack of the Attacking Attackers** (or AAA, for the simplicity of this review), brought to life by Brisbane's finest young theatre makers, is, basically, gonna rock your socks off and give you the sorest voice from laughing that much, as it mixes in the random themes of Sci-Fi, Horror and The War on Terror and stirs it all up in the big dumb cauldron of craziness!

So I'm going to try and sum up, what is possibly one of the most random shows that you'll ever see, in the length of this next paragraph, and then hopefully you'll see why this is such an original and wickedly twisted production...

Little Margaret desperately wants to add the 'Comet Spotting' badge to her Brownie uniform, and even though she's pretty tough for a kid, her doofus of a brother and his dimwitted cheerleader of a girlfriend accompany Margaret on her expedition in the scary woods. Then things get weird. The girlfriend goes skinny dipping in the Swap of No Return, the brother is way more interested in Margaret's Nerdy mate, there's a poor Hippie character that gets I guess the word 'attacked' fits nicely here, and then the teenagers find themselves caught in a war between Space Aliens and Demons from Hell. Well I guess its one of those productions you just have to see to believe!

It incorporates such a large range of theatre techniques: dance; stage combat; mask work; and slapstick routines. Of course what intrigued me the most was the many different styles of puppetry used: Shadow, Object, Hand and a big skeleton head reciting the AAA theme poem right at the beginning. And who better to coordinate all this mayhem than the very talented (and my puppetry mentor of last year), Jonathon Oxlade. He has a style of his own that draws the audience in and leaves them in stitches!

Jonathon has had a wealth of experience and has trained with Kid Praha in the Czech Republic focusing on puppet design and construction. These days he works as a freelance Theatre Designer, Illustrator and Puppeteer.

After writing this review, I was speaking on the phone with Jonathon and he mentioned that he has left QLD to become a Melbournian. In fact he is now involved in designing the sets and costumes for the upcoming show *Goodbye Vaudeville Charlie Mudd* as part of the Malthouse Theatre, showing between March 6-28. I hope Victoria appreciates us Queenslanders giving up one of our most talented and innovative puppeteers! Good luck Jono!

Western Australia

SPARE PARTS PUPPET THEATRE

VIVE LA REVOLUTION!

Over the past few months, thanks to a WA State Government Arts Capital Fund Grant, lots of work has been carried out to upgrade the stage of the Spare Parts Puppet Theatre; all aimed at improving the theatrical experience for our valued audience.

Our theatre seats and carpet are now in a sorry state of disrepair, only highlighted by the recent renovations! So, we are calling for donors to make a financial contribution to our **Buy-A-Seat Campaign**.

Individual donations over \$500 and organisational donations over \$1000 will be acknowledged with an inscribed plaque mounted on the back of a theatre seat. All other donations are also greatly appreciated and will be acknowledged in our programs and on our website.

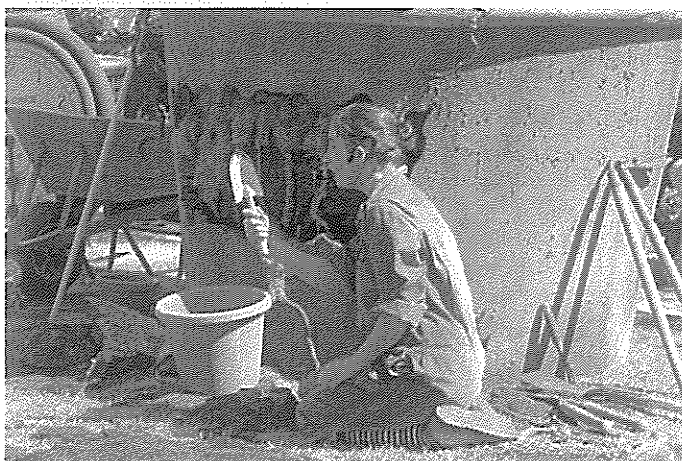
To ensure your place in the history of Spare Parts Puppet Theatre, please contact Emma Brain on 9335 5044 or email: audience@spt.asn.au.

Live@Woodside

On Wednesday 15 April, Spare Parts Puppet Theatre descended upon Woodside Plaza in the Perth CBD to present a FUN and FREE afternoon of workshops, demonstrations and performances. The event was a Steamworks Arts production and was part of a series of residencies, performances, exhibitions and free community events that sought to bring life and vitality into the Perth city centre.

Families picnicked in the sunshine whilst enjoying **The Magic Garden**, a new performance devised specifically for the day, as well as a roving visit from the spooky **Aqua Sapiens**. Company Associates, Leon Hendroff and Lyndell Darch were on hand to assist children with crafting their very own fruit and veg puppet and master puppet maker, Jiri Zmitko, demonstrated the fine art of marionette carving.

The day proved to be a roaring success with hundreds of people in attendance, and will be repeated at the Walkington Amphitheatre in Karratha on the 5 - 6 July.

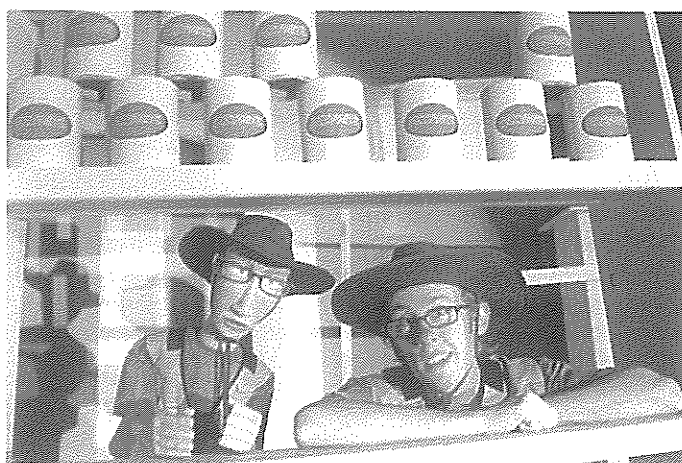


The Magic Garden

The Man from Snowy River

Spare Parts Puppet Theatre presents an exciting new work **The Man From Snowy River** as you've never imagined it, with all the thrills of Banjo Paterson's classic poem and a big meat pie sized slice of silliness. The story of one boy finding his place in the world is brought right up to date with our own special brand of magical puppetry, shadow play and object theatre.

Director: Philip Mitchell, Writer: Mark Storen, Designer: Jiri Zmitko, Composer: Lee Buddle



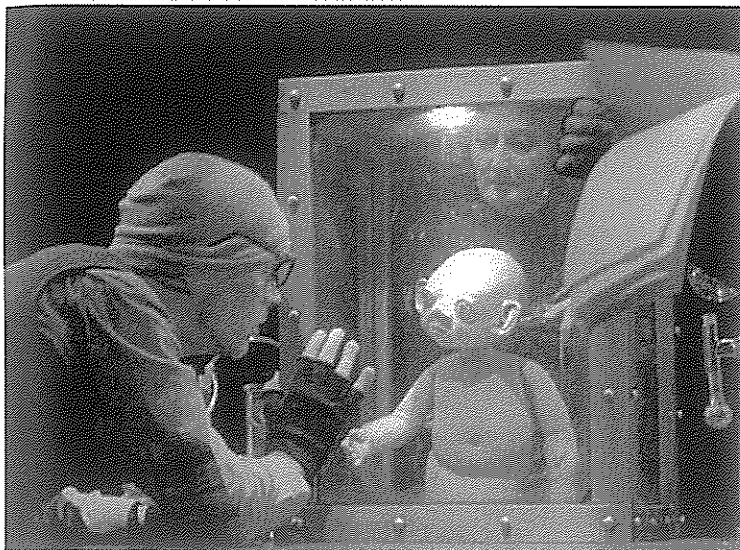
The Man from Snowy River



The Jeff Awards

By Jessica Wilson

The Daughter swims, represented here in her puppet form. Photo: Photovation, Perth



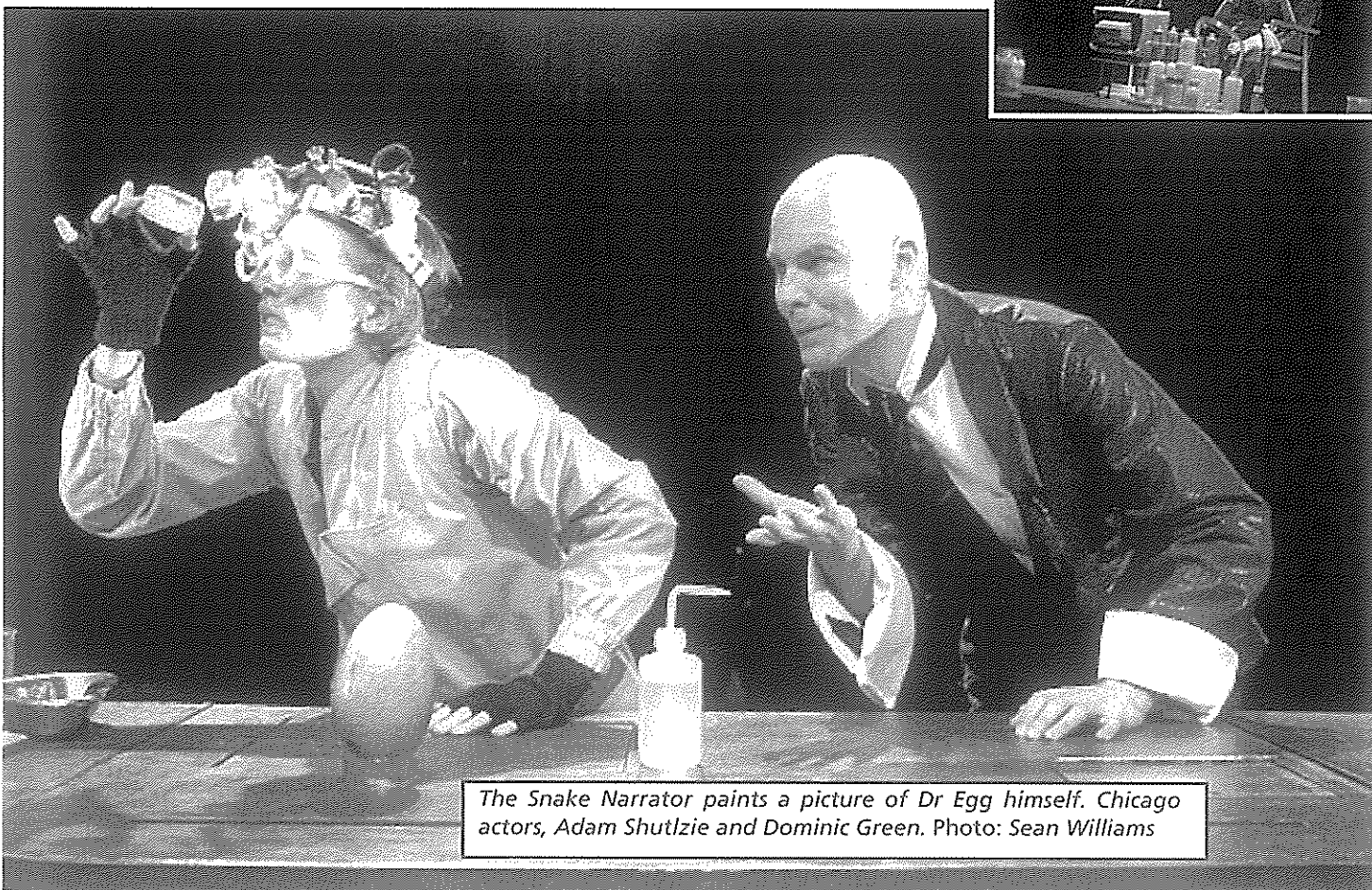
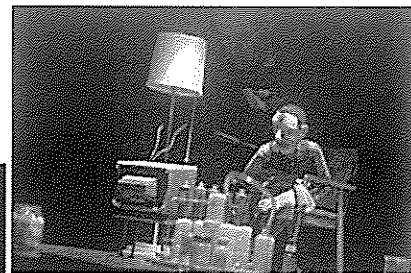
Where an ear should have been made, a whole child grew. Brain Lucas and Annie Lee with puppet by Graeme Davis. Photo: Heidron Lohr

Jessica Wilson's, *Dr Egg and the Man with No Ear*, which played in Chicago last year at Redmoon theatre, has been nominated for four *Jeff Awards*.

The *Jeff Awards* are Chicago's equivalent to New York's *Tony's*, so it is an honour in a city full of theatre of all varieties. One of the nominations was for Graeme Davis's haunting puppets: *Best Artistic Specialization*. The work was received with critical acclaim and played to full houses for its seven week season.

Jessica also took it to the International Performing Arts for Young People Showcase in January this year in Cleveland, OHIO, with the help of Arts Victoria. It is now being managed by a Canadian agency who are concocting a late 2010 North American tour.

The Man resists the temptation to act on his desire for a new ear. Puppet by Graeme Davis. Photo: Heidron Lohr



The Snake Narrator paints a picture of Dr Egg himself. Chicago actors, Adam Shutlz and Dominic Green. Photo: Sean Williams



What's on



SYDNEY – from JUNE 28

MURPHYS PUPPETS at the ART GALLERY OF NSW:

Sun 28 June 2:30 **Frog Prince**
Sun 2 August 2:30 **Frog Prince**

MURPHYS PUPPETS at the POWERHOUSE DISCOVERY CENTRE, Showground Road, Castle Hill.

Enquiries (02) 9762-1303

Tues 14 July 10:30 and 11:30

Allenby's FAMOUS Flea Circus

Wed 15 July 10:30 **The Pram Show**

Thurs 16 July 10:30 **The Pram Show**

Tues 21 July 10:30 **The Pram Show**

Wed 22 July 10:30 and 11:30

Allenby's FAMOUS Flea Circus

Thurs 23 July 10:30 **The Pram Show**

Fri 24 July 10:30 **The Pram Show**

KARARATHA – JULY 5 – 6

The Magic Garden

Walkington Amphitheatre
Karratha WA

MELBOURNE – JULY 5 – 12

Puppet Lab at ArtPlay

The nine day programme brings 22 workshops for pre-schoolers to 14 year olds delivered by 17 Puppet Artists and presenting on the final day a Puppet Cabaret.

MELBOURNE – JULY 7 – 12

Hissy Fit – snake charming gone wrong – is playing at Federation Square July 7 – 12 as part of Puppets at Fed Square. www.polyglotpuppets.com.au or 9827 9667

CANBERRA – JULY 8 – 17

Gran's Bag

Childers Street ACTON
Canberra ACT
(02) 6247 1223

The Street Theatre July 8 – 17 at 11am
Riverside Theatre, Paramatta (early August)
More info: www.chrissieshaw.com

The Rocks, SYDNEY – JULY 24 – 25

11 am

Oh Rats!

The Sydney Puppet Theatre
80 George Street, Sydney

PERTH – SEPT 3 & OCT 29

Puppet Making Workshop for Adults!

Join our head puppet maker, Jiri Zmitko, as he reveals the secrets behind the fine art of marionette construction.

Over the course of nine weeks, you will be expertly guided through the process of devising, carving and manipulating your very own wooden string puppet.



Where: Spare Parts Puppet Theatre
1 Short St, Fremantle

Cost: \$450 (inc. weekly refreshments, hire of chisels and all materials)

Please don't hesitate to contact us on 9335 5044 to secure your place!

ACT – AUGUST 27 – 29

Dinkum Assorted

Belconnen Theatre

More info: www.chrissieshaw.com

MELBOURNE – AUGUST 25 – 29 & SEPT 3 – 20

Ronnie Burkett brings **Billy Twinkle** to shows at the Geelong Performing Arts Centre 25 – 29 August and Fairfax Studio, The Arts Centre, Melbourne 3 – 20 September.

See back cover for more details and an article by Penelope Bartlau on page 32.

SYDNEY – AUGUST 28 to SEPT 11

Puppets Alive Exhibition

10am – 5pm

Friday 28 August – Friday 11 September 2009

Don't miss this rare opportunity to attend an exhibition of puppets by Lenka Muchova and Jimmy Willing, puppet plays scripts by Karel & Eva Rehorek, hand puppet stage by Frank Popovsky and tin toys by John Cervenka.

Entry is free. All welcome.

Ku-Ring-Gai Art Centre
Bancroft Park, 3 Recreation Avenue, Roseville NSW 2069
(02) 9242 0310 artcentre@kmc.nsw.gov.au
www.kmc.nsw.gov.au/artcentre

MELBOURNE – SEPT 23 to OCT 11

Melbourne Fringe Festival

www.melbournefringe.com.au

ANITA SINCLAIR IN MALDON

A year has passed since I brought my puppets, masks and sculptures away from the madding crowd and in amongst the mixed collection of characters in Maldon.

Once I settled in, carefully blending with the background for a while, I made a move and presented some cabaret pieces here and there, both in Maldon and in Castlemaine. I have moved into a studio/shop in Main Street Maldon, much like the one in Collingwood (and for those who remember, Mask of Janus in Richmond). I've been in there a month now, and had colleagues visit from Melbourne, and messages from others who finally noticed I'd gone missing.

I have a guest room and my phone number is 5475 2712.

My most recent visitor arrived yesterday, Friday 12 June. It was Eliza Jane Gilchrist, last seen in Scotland six months ago, a friend of Shona Reppe and Ailie Cohen, both of whom we had first met performing marvellous story-telling pieces in One Van Festivals in Blackheath, NSW.

Eliza works with Mark Pencak, describing her role as designer/builder. I have not seen a performance yet, but the pics in the folio show exciting, weird and beautifully made puppets. Mark is touring *Monsters in My Cupboard* in Queensland at present, so Eliza is using this time to get around and meet the locals. She is planning a visit to Sue Giles in Polyglot Puppet Theatre in Melbourne. Eliza is also a sculptor, producing imaginative mixed media pieces somewhere between Installation and poetic image.

My next performance project is a contribution to a local Maldon weekend devoted to the history of Henry Handel Richardson, author of *The Getting Of Wisdom*. I plan a 15 min Shadow Puppetry piece, either created and performed alone, or with one or two locals. There's a very promising twelve-year-old writer in the fish shop. A new recruit maybe?

Maldon is a hotbed of writers, sculptors and art enthusiasts, and has a number of very suitable small venues (comparitively) with Castlemaine nearby offering the excellent Theatre Royal and other larger spaces.

Anita is the author of *The Puppetry Handbook* sinclair145@yahoo.com.au



The Nutcracker, made by Anita for the Australian Conservatoire of Ballet.

Puppet Palace 2010

Friday 19 February — Sunday 14 March 2010

Puppet Palace is now seeking **Expressions of Interest** from puppet companies/productions who wish to present shows at next year's Puppet Palace

as part of the **Adelaide Fringe Festival** held in *The Garden of Unearthly Delights* precinct.

Puppet Palace is Australia's largest annual puppetry project. We coordinate & present a diversity of puppet shows in a dedicated puppetry venue for a total of four weeks. Each show runs for a season – anything from one week to four weeks in duration. Each show is registered as part of the Adelaide Fringe Festival, one of Australia's largest arts festivals. (We also arrange some extra shows in schools and community festivals where possible and appropriate). The aim of Puppet Palace is to promote puppetry in South Australia and nationally, develop audiences for puppetry in South Australia and to support puppet companies through the creation of performance opportunities.

Puppet Palace began in 2007 and has grown each year to now attract paying audiences in excess of 8,000 who come to see puppet shows in the Adelaide Fringe Festival. Puppet Palace shows also attract visits from visiting international programmers through the Fringe and Adelaide Festival of Arts and is a great place to showcase yourself.

Additionally the Adelaide Fringe has a Puppetry Award. In 2009 fifteen puppet companies took part in the Adelaide Fringe.

We seek expressions of interest by 31st August 2009.

If you would like to participate in 2010 please forward us information about your show with the following:

Show title & running time of show/ Technical requirements/ Number of performers/ Basic bio & CV of company/ Short show description & image (if possible)/ audience suitability (ie age range)

Information about Puppet Palace and how we program and run the project will be sent to you once you have been in contact with us.

Best wishes

Keith Preston & Lachlan Haig

Email: artbeatkp@aol.com Mob: 0418 839 264 AH: 08 8352 4618

Web: www.puppetpalace.com.au



Billy Twinkle - Down Under moments of genesis

By Penelope Bartlau

World renowned puppeteer Ronnie Burkett is returning to Australia in 2009 with his long awaited new production *BILLY TWINKLE – Requiem for a Golden Boy*. Recognised as one of Canada's foremost theatre artists, Ronnie Burkett has been credited with creating some of the world's most elaborate and provocative puppetry.

Back in 2007, I was at the Victorian College of the Arts doing a Master of Puppetry, and Ronnie Burkett, creator and performer of *Billie Twinkle*, came to give the Masters & Post-graduate puppetry students a Masterclass.

During this time, after class, we got together for the odd shandy or three, showing Ronnie a bit of Melbourne "kultcha". Over the bevvies, Ronnie told us bits and pieces about *Billy Twinkle*, which was in early stages of development. He knew the main character and the storyline, but was toying around with different ideas for some of the other characters, and he had an idea about creating an Australian character. This was to be a kind of rock 'n roll, Smith Street type of gal, who'd dress in a lot of black, have a face full of piercings and a heart of gold. So, Jacob Boehme (my fellow Masters student) and I dragged Ronnie around some of the less seemly bars of the inner city – all in the name of research. It didn't take too much of a dig to find what Ronnie had in mind.

So the next step in the development of this character, having worked out that yes indeed such a "type" exists in Melbourne, was to fill out all the details of character type: what would she do for a job? Where and how would she live? And, most importantly, what would she sound like and how would she speak? I don't know what it is about our Australian accent, but it certainly is a curly one for non-Aussies to mimic. (My guess is we're much better at American and English accents because we are raised and reared on television from these countries – what a shame for our TV industry that there's not more flow the other way.) So Jacob and I became Australian vernacular and pronunciation coaches – which was great fun and interesting too, to dig into our language and it's psychology.

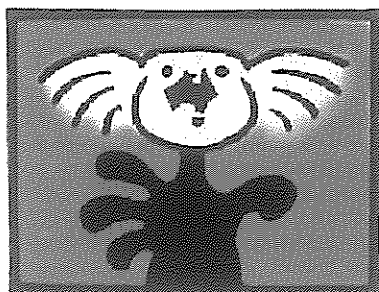
So, will we see this diamond-in-the-rough, 'tough but tender', Aussie rock-chic on stage this September? I don't know. But if we do, we'll know that Ronnie sure did his research.

Billy Twinkle shows at Geelong Performing Arts Centre 25 – 29 August and Fairfax Studio, The Arts Centre, Melbourne 3 – 20 September. See advertisement back page.

Intended for adult audiences. Not suitable for people under 15

UNIMA AUSTRALIA CONTACT DETAILS

• UNIMA •



AUSTRALIA

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