
AUSTRALIAN PUPPETEER

Summer/Autumn 2001



WIN!

**Anita Sinclair's Puppetry
Handbook (Signed!)**

see back cover
for details

**ONE
VAN
Report**

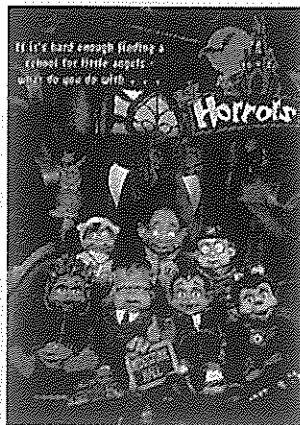
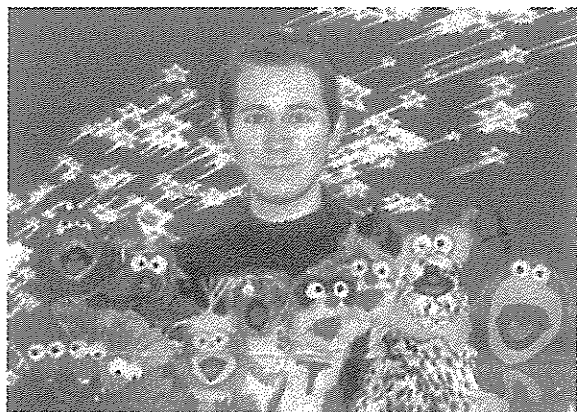
**Spare
Parts AD
update**

**News
and
Reviews**

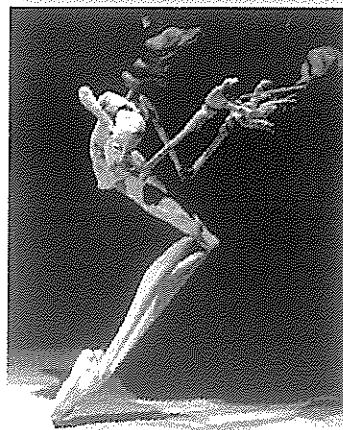
**and
more!**

UNION INTERNATIONALE De La MARIONETTE

Puppetrazzi



Saturdays at 9 am on Seven



From top left:
 *Michael Jazbec's
 JUPPETS
 *L'il Horrors
 *Tess, Sue and Lena
 @Polyglot
 *Frank Soehnle small
 rod puppet
 *Garden by erth



A U S T R A L I A N P U P P E T E E R

The Magazine of UNIMA Australia ♦ SUMMER/AUTUMN 2001

Editorial

To begin, a huge and heart-felt thanks to Sue Wallace for a wonderful term as UNIMA President. Her dedication and enthusiasm are quite inspiring. Keen candidates for the positions now vacating on the Executive Committee need to leap forward about now. As my term winds up too, I've been thinking a bit. Spend any length of time editing a puppet magazine and you'll find the big question rear its head i.e. Why Are We Here? (Anybody now, in your own time...) What is the function of a national centre of an international puppet community? (Still fuzzy? Any ideas down the back?) The reason I ask is that I'm really truly-ruly finishing as editor (I mean it this time) and I'm thinking about the 'where to from here' stuff. Not for me, I'll continue to be immersed in puppets of all sorts, but what about the magazine? Do we need it in this form? Would a more frequent, smaller newsletter format do the job? Is frequency important to the membership (by the way, sorry about the insane delay with this issue). What are the critical areas to be discussed, communicated, shared? I see that in both NSW and Victoria, small groups of professional puppeteers are setting up (or seeking to establish) independent puppet organisations. Does this mean that UNIMA isn't getting the puppet community spirit out there? Why do people forget that we exist and have been around for yonks? (Feel free to shout your answers out, don't be shy) Looking forward to a response. Meanwhile, my deepest thanks to all the wonderful contributors who have made the last year's worth of magazines possible, to Victoria for her continuing support and to Sarah for helping so much with this issue. Bye for now,

Philip Miller

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L e t t e r s

I thought I'd take you up on your suggestion and let you know what my puppets are up to. I work as a librarian and I am always involved in children's activities which involve my puppets. Over the past twelve months I have been so busy with university commitments that I never had the chance to organise a good old fashioned puppet show. Well on 23 January 2001, (after much preparation and rehearsing), We performed a huge puppet production called "Cinderella featuring the Juppet Puppets". There were over 140 people in attendance, which was the biggest attendance to a function the library has ever had. The script was written by myself and specifically coordinated with my Juppet Puppets in

mind and appealed both to children and adults of all ages. It was the greatest feeling ever and the feedback was terrific. I also managed to create a web site (as basic as it is), which outlines everything about the Juppet Puppets. I have also enclosed some pictures for you of some of the cast of Cinderella. More details and the script itself is available on the web site. I hope you get the opportunity to see the site, <http://www.angelfire.com/celeb/juppetpuppets/>. Thank you so much for taking the time in reading this letter, it's so great to see that UNIMA is interested in knowing so much about its members and their puppets. Thanks once again.
Michael Jazbec

WEBSITE UPDATE

Dear UNIMA Australia Members,

I am planning to do an update on our website soon, I'm aiming to work on it this weekend, but as I will need Joe's help and he is very busy with work and study, it may take a little while. Anyway if you have any information you'd like me to add, or/and details that need to be corrected please contact me as soon as possible.

I am especially interested in any News, upcoming events, calendars of performances, workshops etc.

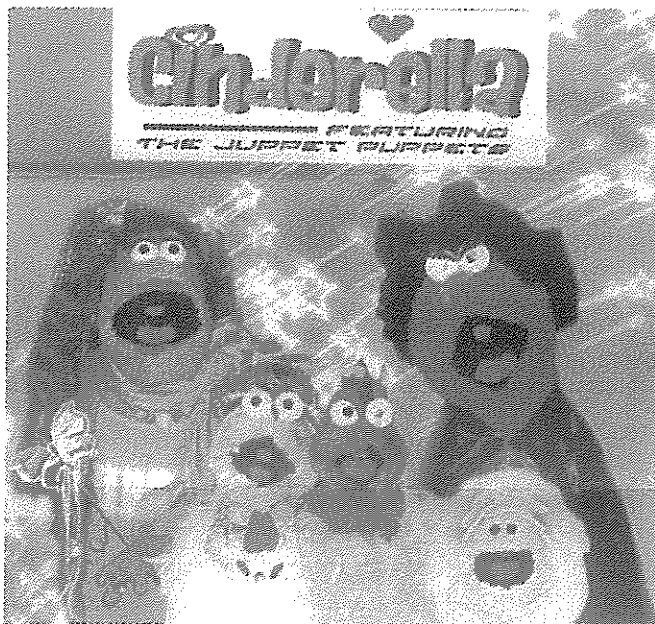
It's worth keeping in mind that the website is only updated quarterly (if that) at present so news that won't go stale too quickly is particularly welcome.

It is possible to put up biographical info and one or two pictures of your work and your contact details.

The site is visited by a wide variety of people interested in puppets from all over the world, from school teachers to festival directors, so it's one way of promoting your work.

I look forward to hearing from you,

Regards,
Mary Sutherland,
Secretary UNIMA Australia





Greetings,
After Magdeburg Congress Festival, a surprise. The phone rings one night which proved to be an invitation to perform at the Third Quanzhou International Puppet festival.

With a rehearsal opening of three minutes it was hard in opera to get suitable sound. Another ten minutes next day at puppet school and twenty-six minutes at a teacher's college but a triumph on China TV twice

A night parade, seeing many Chinese shows. The best bit was to visit the Quanzhou Municipal Theatre with Chief Puppeteer Mr Wong. I'm sending back a tape of my show to the Puppet Hall

Leslie Trowbridge
Puppet Opera

Stop Press:

No Right To Bear Puppets

Under the guise of preventing violence, the United States Secret Service banned "Large Puppets" from recently elected President Dubyah's inaugural area. They claimed wooden sticks from the puppets could be used as weapons.

A rose by any other name...

Ian Tregonning would like to formally announce that he is no longer a puppeteer. He realizes that claiming to be a puppeteer has only brought heart ache and misery, and seems only to have been a hindrance to his ability to earn a living to support his family, and an embarrassment to all. After reading the article about Pan in the Australian Puppeteer (Oh, Shit! I've said that word again!) where Murray Raine rightly pointed out that people just hate the very thought that a grown man could be "a Puppeteer", and what the company preferred was to refer to them as "creature actor", I came to realize that what is needed is a concept make over. An image change. If I could afford a marketing consultant, I would...well, actually if I could

afford a marketing consultant, I wouldn't employ a marketing consultant, I'd be holidaying in Tuscany...

Anyway, after taking a look at the cast list for the up coming Spare Parts show "The Deep" - with the depth of puppeteering experience Spare Parts has to draw on, here in the West (and to those of you who don't know, there are many ex. Sparts "Company Associates" living in this fair city, most of them under employed and embarrassingly over qualified for work of this type) - whom do the jobs go to? A few of the core ensemble, fair enough...but actors...dancers? If a puppet company doesn't employ puppeteers.... Any way, it dawned on me! I have decided to change what I do. I thought about billing myself as an actor or a dancer

- but then some one might give me a job as one, and I'm not sure how I'd go... Then I thought about blinding them with science. I could be a "Multi- dimensional Sculptural Manipulator". Sounds good, but a bit complex. I think they'd smell a rat. I could under play it - call myself "just a talented bloke!" Not really the "Big Sell" needed these days. No, what I decided on was.... wait for it.... "Actor of the Third Party". Nice, hey! "Actor" - you know, gets their attention and sounds posh, "Third party" - you know - the puppet, no I mean... the figure...sculpture... er...umarticle! Oh Shit I give up. Anyone know anyone who could get me a job in a Bank?

President's Report

It has been a very interesting Summer of Puppetry for me. The Sydney Festival brought out The Colla Marionettes, 12 puppeteers from Italy performing **Around the World in 80 Days**. (a short review later in the magazine). The audiences at The Rocks Puppet Cottage had the chance to see 11 different shows over the school holiday period. A full house at The Cottage is about 80 people. Sometimes there were more than 150 trying to squeeze in. The "One Van" Mini-Fest sold out. This reinforces the notion that puppetry has a strong and growing audience.

My four year term as President of UNIMA Australia ends shortly. I will not be nominating to run for another term. This is not because I haven't enjoyed the position and found the experience rewarding. Other commitments have their hands firmly on the buzzer awaiting my attention. I have recently been asked (and accepted) to be on the UNIMA Publications and Communications Commission. One of my responsibilities will be to submit articles to the international UNIMA newsletter about puppetry activities in our region which are of interest to the international puppetry community. Please let me know if you are interested in contributing.

During my term I have worked with some exceptionally dedicated members of our Australian

puppetry community including Dennis Murphy, Richard Hart, Anita Sinclair, Jenny Pfeifer (our UNIMA Asia/Pacific Commission representative) and the current executive Philip Millar, Mary Sutherland and John McDonald. I would also like to acknowledge the various partners who have contributed so much. We know the saying "magic happens" but it happens more reliably when people give their time and energy to actually make it come about.

Over the last four years I have been able to meet with quite a few Australian members and to also meet with Unima members in Japan and Mexico. It is because I am a member of Unima that these meetings have been possible. Puppetry is my passion and these meetings (and letters and emails) talking with puppeteers and their art have been very stimulating.

We will be accepting nominations for the position of President until May 30 and then will notify the membership of the nominations so that a vote can take place. If you are thinking of nominating or would like to nominate someone else, I would be very happy to talk with you. (02 9550 6457). As I have experienced, the basic requirements for the position are:

1. A willingness to work with the executive for the efficient running of the organisation and to meet the needs of the membership
2. An appreciation (or willingness to learn) of the history

and vitality of Unima Australia and International

3. A desire to promote the Art of the Puppet
4. An ability to communicate

Don't be shy. The executive looks forward to a bundle of nominations in the post at PO Box 208, Elsternwick Vic 3185

Thank you all for a very valuable four years.

Sue Wallace

Secretary's Report

Hello everyone, I'm sorry it's been so long between reports.

I have, in fact, been working on our behalf, only I have twice missed the Magazine publication deadline. First I must quickly tell you that our lovely daughter Jessica is now 9 ½ months old. She's just wonderful, very beautiful and talented of course, though at the moment it's looking like she'll be late to get moving but early to talk, just like her mum. As any of you who have children, or have spent much time around them will know, parenting is an incredibly time consuming activity, and is automatically your first priority. Spare time is a thing of the past, and I have to leave something un-done in order to do any other jobs, (still I've never been very fond of housework anyway).

Treasurer's Report

I had hoped that by now we'd be able to report that we have new membership cards from UNIMA International, sadly this is not the case. Just as we nearly had everything straightened out with Sylvie Jupinet of UNIMA International in France, the newly elected UNIMA International executive has begun their term and we have to begin almost from scratch. We have received '99 stickers so if any of you still have current membership cards let me know and I will send them to you, otherwise we'll attach them to the new cards when they come.

The Executive had a very positive meeting in Melbourne on 2nd November 2000, and we were delighted to formally welcome John McDonald as our new Treasurer. John is multi-talented, being computer literate to the point of being able to write his own data bases (WOW!!) and I think we can look forward to a period of heightened efficiency and organisation. He has also been asking awkward questions like, what is our legal status? Should we consider incorporation? How does GST affect us? We are currently looking into these and will keep you informed of developments. During the period we were without a treasurer some of our record keeping was less than ideal. Therefore if you disagree with the status of your membership, you have changed address and we have not updated or you have any other questions or comments please don't hesitate to contact John or myself

The majority of what I currently do for UNIMA Australia is in the area of communication. I answer questions, give advice, refer people; members and others, to members who can; advise them, make puppets for them, restore old and damaged puppets, give them private lessons, sell them puppets, sell them puppet books. I am also able to put people in contact with others interested in the same specialities within Australia and overseas. My correspondence takes the form of letters, phone calls and e-mail. We are getting an increasing number of enquires from visitors to our website. I would welcome more communication from within the membership, both enquires and service providers, both voluntary and professional. I also receive requests for recommendations from National and International festivals requiring performers.

Updating our website is a project I will endeavour to undertake soon, as it has not been reviewed for some time, any new information, Biographical, events, news etc would be most welcome. Comments would be welcome too. I respond most efficiently to phone and e-mail. Please be inspired to communicate sometimes we in the executive wonder if our struggles are appreciated. I know you are all busy -- so are we!

Kind regards to you all,
Mary Sutherland.

Unima Membership

\$30- for a year for new members
\$25- per year for renewals.
This includes your subscription to Australian Puppeteer.
Please add \$5- per year for postage to New Zealand, Asia and the Pacific, or \$15 per year for postage to Europe, America and Africa.

Note for couples sharing a magazine

A standard Unima membership only includes membership rights for one person. These include voting rights, international membership and membership cards. If you only want one magazine, but you both want Unima membership, you can do this by paying an extra \$10- per year (ie, \$35- per year for renewals).

Lost contact...

The following members have moved and we no longer have contact information for them: Larissa Deak, Tim Graham, David Hamilton, Paul Mears, Cate Medcraft and Pat Mitchell. If you see them, please ask them to let us know where they are. They can contact John McDonald, (03)98187514

THE NOVICE AND

by Graeme Davis.

Last year I produced a work *Deus ex Machina* for "Ardent Shorts" at Polyglot Puppet Theatre. Thus began the journey to discover the magical and sometimes elusive world of puppet making. This work included a little boy puppet for black light theatre. Upon request (*from me, Ed.*) the following is hopefully an understandable explanation of his 'working device'.

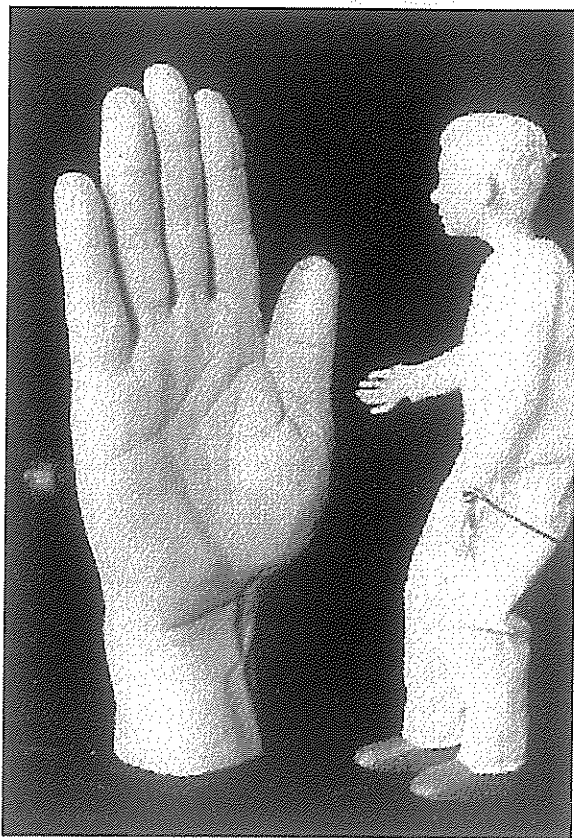
After building the "boy" puppet which stands only 215mm. tall the problem arose of making him operatable by one puppeteer. My first breakthrough was with bicycle spokes and spoke tighteners. By taking a spoke tightener from the end of a spoke and crimping off the small end, inverting and embedding it into your puppet, you have an attachment point for detachable rods made from spokes. This allows you to work separately on the manipulation device and if you make a mistake in your experiments, the puppet is still intact. It is also good in breaking down the puppet for storage.

Because I needed the head to come off the boy for this performance, inadvertently I

discovered something else, more about that later. To have a removable head and still be able to control it needed a detachable linkage. My answer was small magnets. Here I am including a drawing to explain it diagrammatically.

The head of the puppet is mounted onto the body by placing the hollow head over a spring mounted neck. The tension in the spring neck keeps the head upright but still allows it

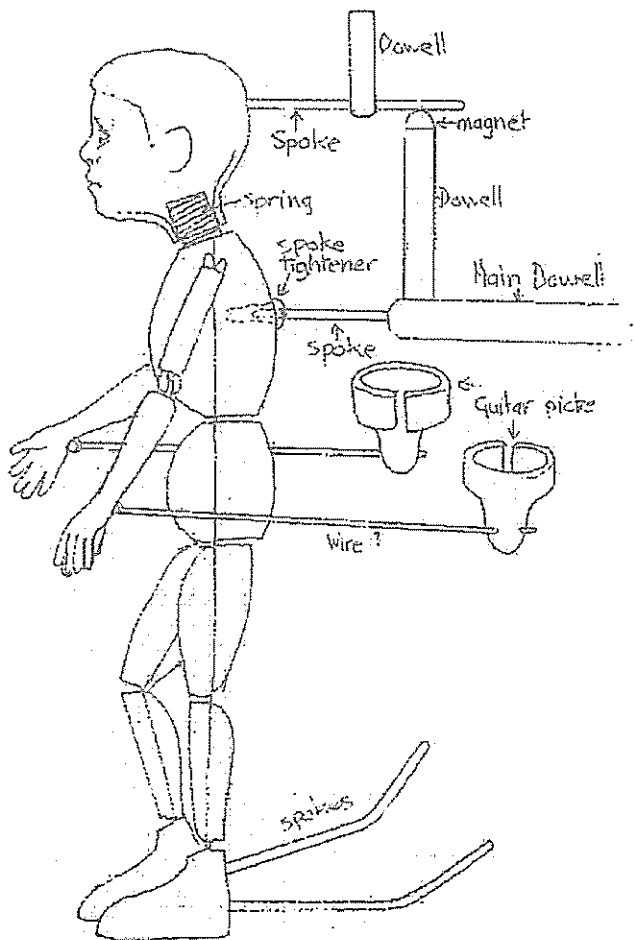
to be manipulated by the spoke rod coming from the back of the head. This spoke rod rests on a magnet mounted on an extension dowel coming from the body rod. Next the main body rod in this case is not screwed tightly into the body. Leaving it a couple of turns loose allows the body to hang upright with gravity. Now what you find you are able to do is the following. While holding the puppet upright with the main rod and slightly rolling it left and right the rod from the



SERENDIPITY

head follows the magnet attached to the extension. So with one hand the puppet maybe carried and look from side to side while walking. You can also be walking across the stage, roll the control bar so the puppet's head looks out to the audience with his body still facing forward.

The next part in the development of the puppet came from my son Kyle who was its puppeteer. I had given it to him to practise with, with independent rods for the hands suspended from the main rod with elastic. The opposing hand had to look after both hands and both legs. Kyle found he could hold the puppets main control rod with his middle fingers and leave his little finger and thumb available. Using plastic wrap around guitar picks, moulding them to fit both thumb and little finger attached them appropriately to the arm rods. This now allows the opposing hand to operate the legs and individual head movements. It is now possible for one person to control the puppet completely if needed. The result appears to be a more direct and delicate control of the puppet



In closing I would like to thank Kyle for his work on the puppet, music and his performance. Also I would thank Astrid for making the clothes for this puppet and her performance

and last of all thank Fran too. If you wish to make any enquires I am contactable on phn. 9568 0838. Signing off another addicted puppet maker.

ONE VAN

Report by Artistic Director Sue Wallace

We were trying NOT to have a festival this year, to concentrate on a big festival in 2002 but the community insisted ... and they responded at the box office. The mini-fest on January 27 was a sell out! Over 600 tickets were sold to 3 events. We made this festival a fund-raiser and although I am waiting for the figures to come in, we are definitely in the black. I must thank Rowena McGregor (unpaid Festival Coordinator), the Blackheath Area Neighbourhood Centre (BANC) for their continued commitment to the festival and especially I thank the ARTISTS. Each year we have at least 20 artists arrive at the Festival as either performers or volunteers. As well as performing they move seats, stage manage, look after lights, help bump in and out, do front of house and help clean up. Without the artists and the volunteers and staff from BANC, the festival wouldn't happen.

Leanne Murphy from Purpletown Productions performed a beautifully engaging show for young children who were equally captivated by Leanne's fabulous performance energy, her beautiful puppets and combination of music and storytelling

Steve and I (Sydney Puppet Theatre) performed "The Writer and the Troll", a very funny, high energy show. We presume the hoots and hollers at the end of the performance were in appreciation!

In the curiosity room (entry by gold coin contribution), Andrew McDougall (Waterview Puppets) performed and John Davis showed videos of puppetry from around the world.

Then in the evening there was the Adult Puppet Cabaret with Murray Raine (Sydney), Quirk (Lynne Kent) from Brisbane, Dennis Murphy (Sydney), Ross Prior (Melbourne), the Sydney Puppet Theatre with Larissa Deak and Jill Waters. It was hosted by the indefatigable Greg Howard and stage managed by Gavin Sainsbury. What an audience! Over 200 adults so happy to be part of the event, eager to respond, to applaud, to engage with the artists. I don't think any other community in Australia gets the opportunity to experience such an event.

This festival has proved successful. The audience is becoming puppet-wise and enjoying themselves. The beautiful village of Blackheath has embraced the festival and it continues to develop into a major event.

2002 Alert (see flier for more info)
MASTER CLASSES,
January 20 to 24, 2002
In 2002, the Festival is introducing 5 day Master Classes in the week leading up to the festival. At this stage 2 master classes are on offer - a manipulation class with Frank Soehnle from *figuren theater tubingen* (Germany) and a construction class with Philip Millar (who needs no introduction to the membership). Participation in the master classes is by application and numbers are limited (15 for manipulation, 10 for construction).

When Steve and I traveled to Europe in 1996, we saw about 50 puppetry performances. The work of *figuren theater tubingen* was by far the most exciting. It will be a great privilege to host their visit to Australia.

FESTIVAL
January 25, 26 & 27, 2002

If you have a show you would like to perform during the festival let me know. We are particularly looking for shows specifically for young children and for the family audience. If you have a fabulous workshop (2 - 3 hours) for children or adults in either construction or manipulation, let me know. Please send your videos, brochures etc to me at PO Box 520, Petersham, NSW, 2049

A side trip by Joanne Foley

(to the Jim Henson International Festival of Puppet Theatre in New York and onto the World Festival of Puppet Theatres in Charleville-Mezieres 2000.)



Jane Davies' show *Fortunata* (WA) was invited to perform at the Charleville Festival in France. Funding support Jane received from ArtsWA covered the basic costs involved in getting the show, Jane and Sanjiva Margio (performers), and myself (tour manager / technician) there. After months of administrative work, rehearsing with French text, freighting and organising, Jane and I, on our own accounts met in New York. We saw several shows over the first few days of the Henson Festival. Then it was onto France to meet Sanjiva. I'd been sick in N.Y.C., now Jane was sick. Bad sign, careful Sanjiva!

We arrived in Charleville a few days before the Festival to get organised and to collect the freight from Antwerp. It must have been our blessed naivety of the situation that got us to Antwerp and back with the freight THAT day. It was the big day of truck

strikes, autoroute and road blocks in Belgium against the price of fuel. The day 90% of petrol stations in Belgium were empty and closed! We took the fact that we made it as a good sign. The festival began. A blur of work, shows, and rendez-vous with little sleep and puppet overdose for 10 days.

General consensus gathered through conversations, written articles and rumours was that this festival was out of hand

Fortunata's first show went pretty well for a show in a gymnasium with temporary raked seating and two total blackouts! During the second blackout, which lasted minutes, Sanjiva gave a flashlight to an audience member to light the stage. Technical

venue problems not ours. The second show four days later was great. It was in a lovely small theatre, it was sold out, there were no technical problems and Jane and Sanjiva gave great performances. We were fortunate to have help from the Festival with transport and storage during the Festival and to get the show back to Antwerp and freighted. The Festival was over. It was a lot of work and a considerable investment to get *Fortunata* to the Festival, but I'm glad we did. It's important to show your work to different audiences and to such a large number of international puppet theatre people. It's a great opportunity also to see their work, to meet and to talk. It gives a valuable different perspective to working in puppet theatre.

General consensus gathered through conversations, written articles and rumours was that this Festival was out of hand. There was no questioning its pre-eminence in the world of puppet theatre, but much questioning on its insufficiencies. To paraphrase this general consensus :

- More than 250 shows in the IN, over 100 in the OFF, plus street theatre and exhibitions over 10 days.
- Paid tickets for the IN, free tickets for the OFF.
- 80,000 tickets sold in the IN. A full price ticket is about \$20.

*I walked out of
some, enjoyed
many and really
liked a few*

- The inequality in the programme was a problem.
- The quality of some shows in the IN was far below some in the OFF. The worst and the best with no distinguishment except the price. The average standard was very average.
- Too many cancelled shows because of technical problems in venues or of companies forgotten in the programme.
- A general call for true artistic direction of this huge and out of hand Festival.

We'll see what happens at the next one in 2003.

In total I saw 29 shows; 24 in Charleville ; 5 in New York.



Some small, some big, in theatres, in gyms, in bars and in streets. I walked out of some, enjoyed many and really liked a few. Thoughts of what to write about the shows are too many. So I'll just write about two of my highlights. The biggest and smallest pearls.

The biggest was Ex Machina's (Canada) "The Farside of the Moon", Robert Lepage at the Henson Festival. The movement of the set (stage width moveable mirror, sliding panels, projection screens...), and of the lighting, the music and the use of props and parts of the set (a front loading washing machine door also becomes a hospital

scanning machine, an airplane window, a fish bowl...) transformed physical and mental spaces and was beautifully manipulated! Apart from a briefly seen puppet, Robert Lepage was alone on stage. He played several characters, principally one man and his brother. The characters were so real, the dialogue was brilliant. It was funny, serious, sad and whimsical. In over two hours of performance I was transported into modern urban western, coldwar space race, real and imaginary worlds. Full of emotions. Although it appeared to be a

one hander, the set and lighting equally performed. The machinery and technology behind it was not simple, but the show seemed simple. It was a big production, but it was intimate and personal. The smallest was a word of mouth private show in Charleville. It didn't have a title and it wasn't programmed. I'd heard that this woman was doing a show for an audience of one that lasted 15 minutes, that you had to make an appointment with her, that it was in a toilet and that it was really worth making the effort to see it. I was so lucky to get her second to last appointment

on a cancellation! Her, is Caroline. I don't know her last name. She's a Quebecoise living in Belgium and involved with Tof Theatre. (Interesting, Robert Lepage is also Quebecois). Her show was really more of an encounter. I entered into an extraordinary toilet and met an amazing character. Not a word was spoken. The character was so alive and sensual. It did things to you and got you to do things to it. It was a wonderfully moving experience.

Both these shows left me feeling that I'd really shared in and not just observed another's secret world.

I've been back several months now and with distance and on reflection a conclusion is affirmed.

Long live live performance!

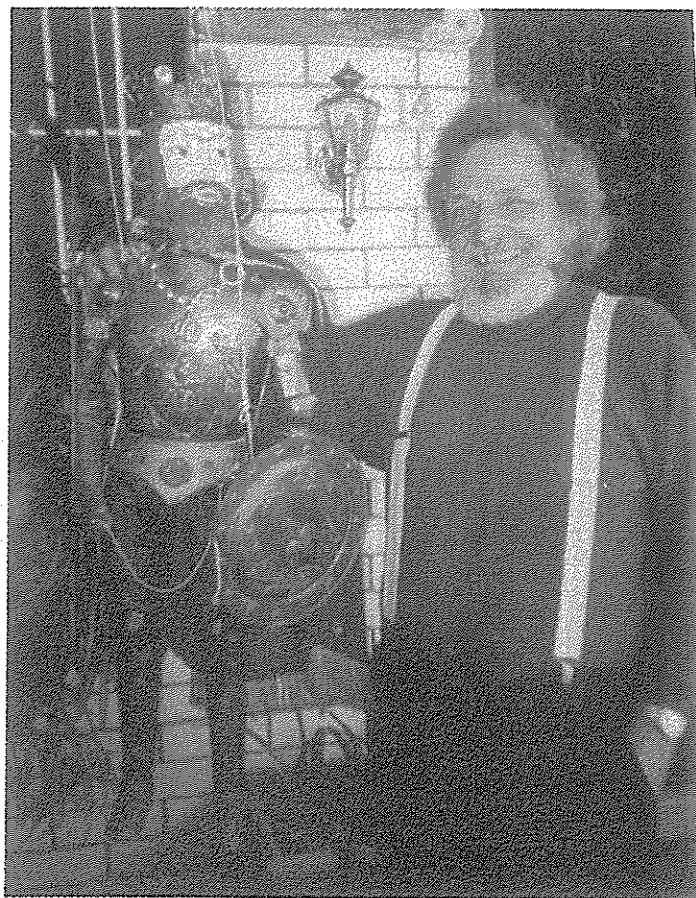
Long live puppet theatre festivals!

Joanne Foley



Giovanni

By Dennis Murphy



Two piercing pale blue eyes were all that could be seen of his face. The rest was covered by an oxygen mask and fringed with fly-away grey hair and beard. He waved his hand limply and said, '*Toca-te parlar.*'

It's your turn to talk. He had just walked halfway across the room to demonstrate the hand joint on one of his puppets and the exertion had been a bit too much. Long years of inhaling cigarette

smoke and sawdust had played havoc with his lungs but hadn't diminished his spirits.

Giovanni Bronzino was born in Palermo, Italy in 1935 and grew up watching the traditional Sicilian rod puppet shows. As an adult he immigrated to Rhodesia as a carpenter and woodcarver. One day he was astonished to see a Sicilian puppet troupe touring Africa. They were the famous Mateo family from New York. Seeing Giovanni's woodcarving skill, they offered him a job with the company back in the States. The Mateo's style

came from Catania, very different to the Palermitan, so Giovanni declined. But the idea of recreating the Sicilian puppets was planted firmly in his imagination.

Later, having come to Australia,

Bronzino

Giovanni began fulfilling his dream. Over many years he used his spare time to slowly and patiently raise an army, then a second, Saracen, army. The puppets are a metre high made of solid wood and then covered in full armour. Giovanni acquired the use of a hut at a former army camp turned community centre in Marrickville. There he housed his puppets, staging, workshop and tools. And spent his nights when he was worried about security.

Eventually, he amassed all the puppets necessary to do the epic *Orlando Furioso* cycle. The monomania that kept him focused all those years also made him unwilling to compromise on TRADITION. Things had to be done properly. The puppets weighed upward of 25 kilos each. It took a truck to transport the show and a full day to set it up. Nevertheless Giovanni managed to tour and amazed audiences that were unused to puppets, let alone the Traditional Puppetry of Sicily. (A tradition that was, at that time, in serious decline back in Italy.)

The storylines are set during the reign of Charlemagne, a world of bold knights and fair maidens, where heroes are supremely heroic and villains black as pitch. The puppets depict the main epic of war,

The monomania that kept him focused all those years also made him unwilling to compromise on TRADITION

with numerous sub-plots of love and passion. There are heroic battles in which swords flash, shields clang, heads roll and warriors fall. Blood, thunder, treachery and foul intrigue were punctuated with earthy humour during the *intermezzi* starring comic Sicilian puppet characters.

Ill-health began to slow Giovanni and his strict adherence to Tradition made it difficult to find new students. His attitude was that students needed to be passionate about the Art and prepared to take on the years needed to learn it.

It's now been years since Giovanni had the strength to lift a puppet but the Passion still burns from those eyes peering over the oxygen mask. At a time when arts funding bodies want artists to become marketing hucksters and the federal government expects them to be tax accountants, it's reassuring to know that there have always been people like Giovanni - too wrapped up in their Art to be bothered with such utter nonsense.

A visit to Giovanni always sends you off full of energy and passion - and probably with a little touch of fanaticism. But where would artists be without those three key ingredients'?

D'Arcs, Deaves and Diverse Divers.

Puppet History by Richard Bradshaw

Who was F. T. Barrass, and how did he acquire a troupe of D'Arc's marionettes which he brought to Australia and New Zealand in 1902-4?

In an earlier article I have written about the great nineteenth century British puppeteer Lambert D'Arc who toured in Australia with his six children in 1892-3. The tour ended in Cooktown where a fire which started under the stage near the end of a performance, destroyed the Town Hall and most of the puppets and sets. The D'Arcs remained in Cooktown for half a year rebuilding the show. From there they sailed to Thursday Island where Lambert died a fortnight later.

Later the D'Arc marionettes were the first European puppets to perform in Japan. I am in contact with Assoc. Prof. Eri Mizote of Japan who is researching their work there and has sent me photocopies of illustrated leaflets which give a very valuable idea of their shows, with the still-walker, dissecting skeletons, Mother Shipton and her children, a chair-balancer, a pole-balancer etc. Among the many scenes two are underwater ones with a diver.

So far the first performances by D'Arc's marionettes under the direction of F.T. Barrass that I've found were in 1902 in Ballarat from 17 February to 8 March, Bendigo from 29

March to 16 April. Adelaide 5-19 July, then on tour to Gawler, Port Pirie, Kadina, Wallaroo, Moonta and Kadina again on 11 August.

Barrass also took D'Arc's marionettes to New Zealand. They were in Dunedin in July, 1903 and then played in Christchurch, Wellington and Auckland, where they were at the Opera House in December, 1903. In May 1904, they were at the City Hall in Auckland sharing the bill with Bryant's Entertainers. J.C. Bryant, a ventriloquist, was the manager of the tour in New Zealand, and E.C. Clitherow was nowhere to be seen.

...there is little doubt that the show came from the D'Arcs but Mr Barrass' knowledge of the D'Arcs themselves seems surprisingly incomplete

Amongst historians of the cinema in New Zealand D'Arc's marionettes are well-known, because during those shows in Auckland the bill included moving pictures, an early ... if not the first ... example of cinema in that country.

The show was usually called *D'Arc's Fantoche's Franpais[es]*. ["Fantoche" is a French word for puppet, relat-

ed to an old Italian word for puppet, "fantoccio" from which we get "fantoccini"] From there is little doubt that the show came from the D'Arcs, but Mr Barrass' knowledge of the D'Arcs themselves seems surprisingly incomplete!

Some of his advertisements claim that the company was founded in 1860 (or 1864) by the late George Lambert D'Arc, but the Adelaide program says it was founded by "the late Mons. John Lambert D'Arc in 1860". Lambert D'Arc, who was born in Reims, France, did start his marionette shows in Britain in the 1860s, but on his death certificate from Queensland his first name, supplied by George, his eldest child, appears simply as "Lambert", no "John" or "George".

Barrass also claims that the company is on its sixth tour of the world. In Ballarat he claims it was last there in 1878. In Auckland he claims that the company (under the original Mons. d'Arc) played at the Theatre Royal in 1869. [It didn't] He claims the company has performed by command before King Edward VII and Queen Alexandra. And by the time Barrass arrives in New Zealand he has become Professor F.T. Barrass.

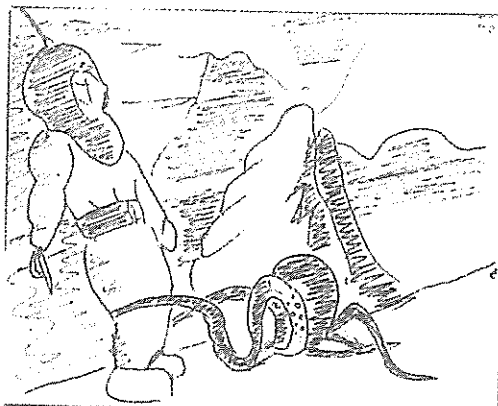
In Ballarat the Marionette directors are given as "Mr. F.T. Barrass and Miss Beatrice

D'Arc". None of Lambert's six children was named Beatrice, and George would have been only 36 at this time, so it unlikely to be a grandchild. In Adelaide the proprietors are given as Messrs D'Arc, Barrass, and Clitherow. [Had Beatrice become a man?] I doubt that any of the D'Arcs were members of the company, which numbered 10, but until I find the company listed on a shipping list I can't prove it.

E.C. Clitherow is also the Advance Director, and in Bendigo he had been advertised as the Advance Manager. This is a clue to the origins of this company. Thanks to the very thorough research of a friend, the late John Phillips of London, we know that in January 1895 Nellie D'Arc married Ernest Clitheroe in Hong Kong. George had returned to Cardiff and gave performances in Britain before returning to the Far East. But in February 1895 there were D'Arc marionettes at the Bijou Theatre in Calcutta where the Sole Proprietors were "the Sisters E.N and M D'Arc." E.C. Clitheroe was the General Manager. They left Bombay for South Africa at the end of March.

Mary was back in London in May looking for marionette workers offering a year's engagement at a good salary with passages paid from home and back. "Must be sober."

George and his family were in China in 1900 where his whole show was looted and destroyed during the Boxer



Rough sketch of a photo of the "Undersea Fantasy" scene by the Australian puppeteers Kay and Alan Lewis, from a 1938 photo belonging to John Lewis.

Rebellion. [Although he stayed on and performed occasionally, he also built D'Arc's Grand Hotel in Tientsin, which he ran until he died.] What is uncertain is how many of the puppets that were made in Cooktown were kept by George, and how many stayed with the sisters.

The youngest pair of the six D'Arc children, William and Ethel formed their own marionette variety act in England in 1905. They came to perform in Australia in 1912.

I think it is just possible that proprietors in Bombay were "the Sisters E.N and M. D'Arc", with a comma instead of a full-stop. (Lambert's death certificate Nellie appears just as "Nellie" (possibly named after Lambert's mother, Petronelia, and not a familiar form of Ellen). But after George, there came three sisters, Emily, Nellie and Mary.

It is hard to believe that Barrass would have made a mistake with Lambert's name if one of Lambert's daughters had been on the tour, so it seems very

likely that E.C. Clitheroe, or E.C. Clitherow, was not travelling with his wife, Nellie D'Arc. At the same time, because of the dates, it also seems quite possible that it was this show which had appeared in Japan between 1900 and 1902, including at Tokyo's Kabuki-za! Further research is needed, but at this point shipping lists have provided no clue. Certainly there is much agreement between the Japanese leaflets and the program seen in Australia.

Typically the show would begin with an overture, which at the Adelaide Tivoli was played by Miss Maud Barrass. The show opened with "fantoccini" acts such as the chair-balancer, Mother Shipton and her children, a dissecting skeleton, a Grand Turk etc. etc." These acts were followed by the underwater scene. After a brief pause came the "Court Minstrels", a marionette "Negro" minstrel show.

After interval there was the pantomime of "Blue Beard" which was followed by a harlequinade, in the tradition of Victorian stage pantos. Finally there was what one reviewer called "a glittering, gorgeous series of transformations" under the title: "A Mid Summer Night's Dream" or "The Fairies' Deli, and Home of the Silver Swans." ["Scenery and Effects produced regardless of Expense."]

During a run, the program could be varied slightly. A printed program which survives from the Adelaide Tivoli season has "Babes in the Wood" at the beginning, and no "Blue Beard" ... although the harlequinade was still there, this time after the underwater scene.

The underwater scene mentioned above was advertised as "20,000 Leagues under the Sea", although it was far too short a scene to be the full

Jules Verne story. The Melbourne magazine Table Talk had mentioned in December 1901 that a marionette version of "20,000 Leagues under the Sea" was coming, but I've not yet found any mention of the Barrass show

Typically the show would begin with an overture which at the Adelaide Tivoli was played by Miss Maud Barass.

in Melbourne.

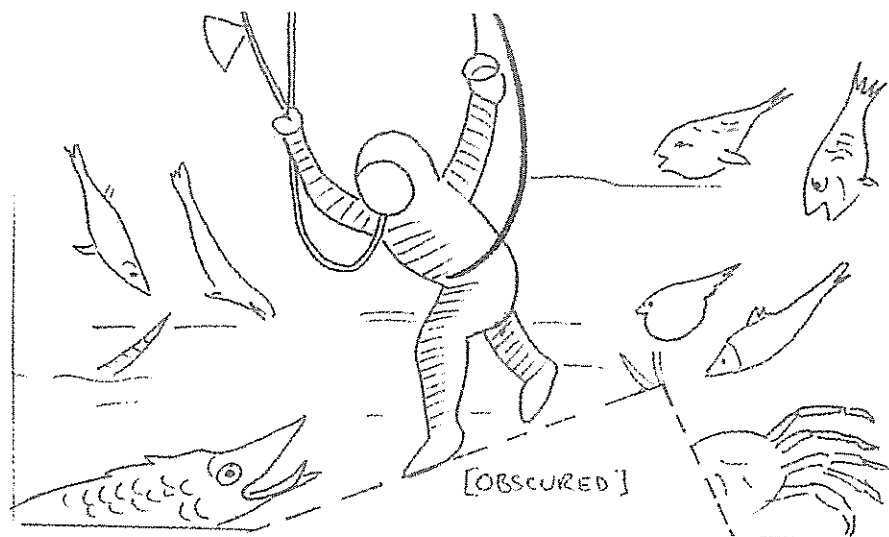
The Advertiser in Adelaide described this as "a gorgeous piece of stage craft". The impression of water was conveyed by the use of transparent front cloth. All kinds of fish swam to and fro. One fish came too close to a diver who

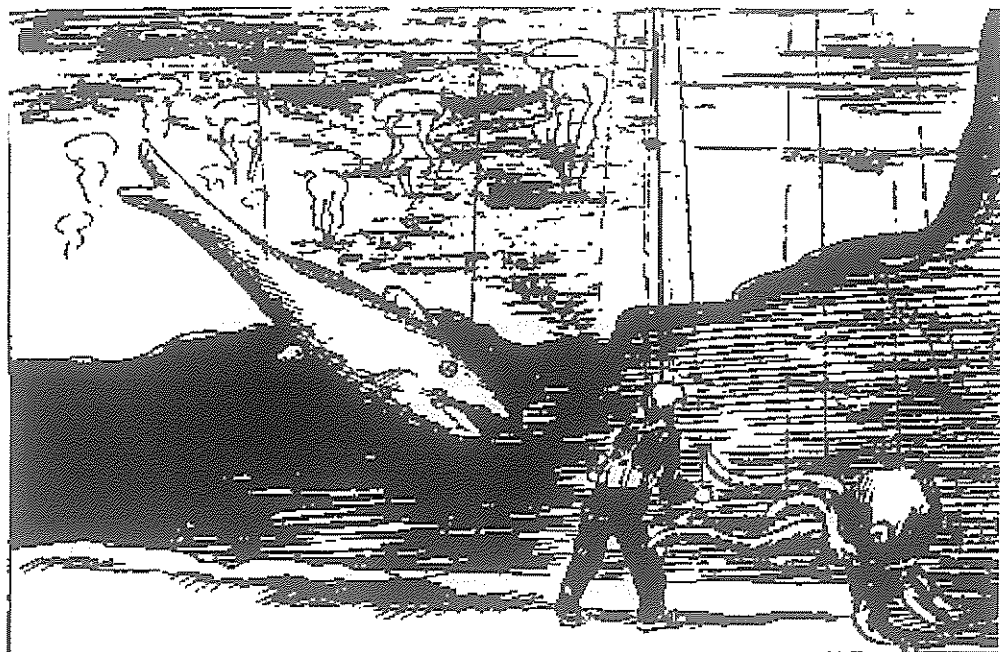
had been lowered into the deep and the diver cut it neatly in half with a tomahawk. (The reviewer thought that a naturalist might quibble at the huge frog that ate sea-snakes!)

Two of the drawings in the Japanese advertisements show a diver underwater and in one he is brandishing a tomahawk at a large fish.

Now the American puppeteer Walter E. Deaves had a famous underwater act in which a diver fought with an octopus. He called this "20,000 Leagues Under the Sea", and according to Perry Dille, writing in "Puppetry 1933", he introduced this some time after his 1910-11 trip to India. Deaves first came to Australia in 1909, arriving on a ship from Japan, so it is not impossible

Rough sketch of a scene from D'Arcs' marionettes from a leaflet promoting their show in Japan at the beginning of the twentieth century. This was probably the same scene seen in Australia in 1902





Sketch of Walter Deaves' famous underwater scene, "20,000 Leagues Under the Sea", from Paul McPharlin's "The Puppet Theatre in America". This was possibly seen in Australia in 1914-15

that in Japan he heard of the D'Arc act or even saw a Japanese puppet company that reproduced it. Deaves was back in Australia in 1914-15. He was apparently here for 27 weeks, although so far I have only found him in a variety show at the Coronation Hall in Bondi Junction!

If Deaves played in Brisbane on that second tour and if he presented his diver, then it is quite possible that he influenced the Australian marionettist Alan Lewis...who also made a marionette

diver.

That puppet is now in the possession of Alan's grand-nephew, the Sydney based puppeteer John Lewis. John knows that Alan, whose marionettes were made in the 1930s, was influenced by a American puppeteer he saw in Brisbane and wonders whether it was Deaves. Alan Lewis and His wife Kay included an underwater scene in a show called "All Aboard for Happiness".

N.B.

Curiously, my older brother and sister, both long dead, saw Alan and Kay's show because in the 1930s they attended school in Fauconbridge and I remember visiting there once with Edith Murray (1897-1988) who directed Clovelly Puppet Theatre. Edith was quite delighted when John Lewis, who had been going to her theatre since he was five turned out to be Alan's grand-nephew!

Spare Parts Puppet theatre announces new Artistic Director

It is with great pleasure that the Board of Spare Parts Puppet Theatre announces the appointment of Philip Mitchell to the position of Artistic Director of Spare Parts Puppet Theatre.

A resident of Tasmania, Philip Mitchell (36) has worked extensively with Terrapin Puppet Theatre over the last ten years as a performer, director, deviser and Associate Artistic Director (1995-7), as well as creating work for young people and within the community as a freelance artist through his production company, Extended Play.

In announcing Philip's appointment as Artistic Director, Spare Parts Puppet Theatre Chairman, Gerard McCann said that "Philip will bring to the position and Company a wealth of experience in puppetry, performance, direction and production development which is the perfect combination from which Spare Parts Puppet Theatre can continue to its development of vibrant, new theatre for young people and their families."

Philip will spend some time with the Company to commence strategic and artistic planning in the very near future and will move into the role full time following completion of obligations in Tasmania later in the year.

On accepting the position, Philip said "I am over the moon at having been offered the position of Artistic Director, for it provides the opportunity to work with new people and a range of very talented artists to create exciting new approaches to Australian puppetry. The quality and maturity of Spare Parts Puppet Theatre work is a credit to a strong artistic and administrative team. It is the energies of this team that I look forward to immersing myself in to build on the Spare Parts Puppet Theatre tradition of creating the highest quality theatre experience for young people. It's a fantastic challenge!"

After four years in the role, and having achieved the goals she set out to achieve in the position, incumbent Artistic Director, Noriko Nishimoto resigned in October 2000. Noriko is to remain with the Company until the end of June 2001. During her time as Artistic Director with Spare Parts Puppet Theatre, Noriko developed a body of work that has become the foundation for the Company's

strong reputation as a producer of vibrant theatre for children and their families. Her works include adaptations of *The Bugalugs Bum Thief*, *The Bunyip of Berkeley's Creek*, and last year *Eat the Moon* and the co-production with the West Australian Symphony *The Midnight Gang*. Noriko's final work as Artistic Director with the Company, *The Deep*, will premiere in June.

With the Company celebrating its 21st year of operation in 2001, Philip Mitchell becomes the third Artistic Director of Spare Parts Puppet Theatre, being preceded by the Company's founder and patron Peter L. Wilson (1981 - 1996) and Noriko Nishimoto (1997 - 2001).

For further information contact:
Olwyn Williams, General Manager Spare Parts Puppet Theatre. 08 9335 5044

NEW FROM TERRAPIN

By Alicia James

The beginning of the year has been busy for Terrapin. We started off with a two week creative development period for our next adult show which will premiere in November. Designers Hanna Pärssinen and Greg Methé and Artistic Director Jessica Wilson worked with Brisbane visual theatre writer, Ainsley Burdell on the work which will explore superstition. The creative team ploughed through material, exchanged personal experiences and looked at how individuals site superstitious practice to deal with the unknown. The group will get together for another development process in April.

Terrapin's dynamic cross artform training program, Hobart Junction, was held in the first week of February. Cast Touring collaborated with Terrapin to bring Ian De Gruchy to Hobart to share his work in the medium of projected image. With over 20 years experience, Ian is Australia's most knowledgeable artist in this field. He exploits the adaptive potential of the medium to contextualise ideas within both architectural and performance situations. 25 people joined Ian in the one day seminar in the Peacock Theatre. Brendon Shelper from Legs on the Wall worked solidly with a group of 15 performers and directors for four days in a workshop presented by

Salamanca Arts Centre. Brendon demonstrated conceptual development processes that 'Legs' use when creating new works on the rehearsal floor. The workshop gave performers the opportunity to work closely with other professional performers in a non-product orientated process and develop an exciting new repertoire of skills. Designer Hanna Pärssinen, led 12 people from a diverse range of backgrounds through the basics of conceptualising and building the mechanisms of a puppet of their choice. Held in the Terrapin workshop the group discovered the



intricate process involved in building a puppet. This was the second Hobart Junction since the annual program was launched in February 2000. The program is designed to provide challenging and useful training opportunities for professional artists from a variety of backgrounds. Through this model, Terrapin hope to stimulate collaborative work and the development of new projects locally. The next week saw five artists thrown into a room for three days with the objective of creating a concept for a new street show. For years Terrapin have been recycling puppets from past shows for the many requests for street

and corporate entertainment. The intention now is to develop a new show especially for this context. Watch the streets!

The annual Terrapin Puppet Picnic was held on 17th February in the beautiful St David's Park in Hobart. This is a free community day full of puppet-making, mask making, performances, games and a whole lot more. Supported by the Hobart City Council as part of the Hobart Summer Festival, the day oozed creativity from the masses of children who attended and aimed to make the artform of puppetry accessible



to the wider community. The picnic was staffed by over twenty volunteers who did everything from putting up marquees, making dacron puppets, masks and shadow puppets, roving in a number of Terrapin puppet characters or cooking up a frenzy at the sausage sizzle. It's fantastic to see so many people support such an important day for the community.

Continued page 23

A R G E N T I N A

revisited

Manuel Rivero is a twenty five year old Argentine puppeteer. He grew up in, Chaco, a North East province of Argentina. He is an indigenous Argentine and until the age of ten, lived a traditional life in rural Argentina with his family. However, traditional life can be hard and the lure of a better life provided by the ways of the city eventually became so strong, his family packed up and left. Argentina's attitude to it's indigenous population is extremely poor. Like Indigenous Australians, Indigenous Argentines face fierce prejudices and almost impossible employment prospects. Urban Aborigines end up in menial employment such as cleaning houses or begging on the trains and stations as a means of survival. Manuels's family arrived in Buenos Aires in 1984, one year after the end of the "dirty war" to find the streets were not lined with gold and unemployment was extremely high. With no money in an expensive city, his family was forced to move into a shanty town on the outskirts of Buenos Aires. The shanty towns are not the kind of place anyone chooses to live. They are very violent and dangerous places. They fill in the gaps in the city, between the affluent suburbs, beside railway lines and the airport run ways. If you can picture the scene in the movie

Cry Freedom where Donald Woods and Steve Biko walk through the streets of Soweto, this is exactly the kind of place Manuels' family moved to. They made a makeshift house of corrugated iron with no electricity or running water and this was their home for ten years. When Manuel was in his mid-teens, members from a local church walked through his shanty town advertising free workshops for the children of the area. Manuel heard about the workshops and went across to the community centre over the road. It was there he first met puppets.

He says, in all honesty and without a hint of drama, that he owes his life to the puppets

Through the community centre he learnt how to make and manipulate puppets. The first puppets that he made were constructed of shells of a small pumpkins called maté (pronounce *matay*) and with these first shrewd puppets in mind, Manuel called his theatre group Tititeros de Maté (Puppeteers of the Maté). His family have moved out of the shanty town and now rent a small house in a poor area

north of the city centre. The floor of the house is hard packed mud and in the bathroom there is a pile of carefully cut newspaper for toilet paper. Manuel now lives in a small shed converted into a bedroom behind his parents house. He rehearses his shows in the small courtyard between his room and the house with his mangy, flea-ridden (but lovely), dogs playing around his feet. Every weekend, he sets up his puppet booth in the local plaza and performs his work where he says taking the audience to the magical place of performance is his greatest pleasure. This is his livelihood and the way he has survived. At the end of each show, he passes around the hat for his fee. He says, in all honesty and without a hint of drama, that he owes his life to the puppets. Most of his friends from his childhood in the shanty town are either dead, unemployed or thief for a living now. With the combined income of his Dad's mechanics job and Manuel's performances, the family survives.

Manuel is interested in puppetry as a symbolic tool of communication. He attempts to convey to an audience cohesive stories that demonstrate his intentions clearly. He is not interested in an audience drawing its own conclusion as to the meaning of the work.

His focus is on strong, clear narratives performed mainly with hands puppets and little or no text. When he is creating a new show, he mostly begins with a common saying (for example "If you sow dark seeds, you grow shadows") and then "brainstorms" ways to physicalise the saying. He spends a lot of time drawing images inspired by the phrase and then develops characters and the story from the drawings. Finally he constructs puppets, usually, made from sculpted foam and fabric. Sometimes he uses the maté shells to create a smooth finished puppet as he has no access to materials such as fibre-glass.

Manuel's manipulation skills are extraordinary. With his crude puppets, he communicates complicated story lines with great clarity. He talks about manipulation of puppets as finding the right energy and rhythm. His passion and his talent for his artform is inspiring, not to mention his story of survival.

Argentina is full of these stories. Most people work hard to keep their jobs, particularly artists. Artists of all sorts are found on almost every street corner performing, painting, playing. The city is filled with art and the public appreciate and support their artists. Businessmen and women will

stop in the street for half an hour of their lunchbreaks to watch a show or listen to a guitarist. There is no social security in Argentina and few arts grants, so to succeed as an artist takes great commitment and real risks of going hungry. Everyone has to find a way to make their art support themselves. A lot of puppeteers sell hand made puppets in the numerous city arts markets. Many others teach in schools and cultural centres (community arts centres) but most have a street show like Manuel's that provides them with an income. And in a country where almost everyone struggles to survive, there is a deep appreciation of the artists who entertain on the streets and provide a little bit of affordable escapism.

Sarah Kriegler

TERRAPIN UPDATE

Continued from page 21

Straight after the Picnic, Jessica, Greg and Ros Watkins headed to Melbourne for a second creative development session for The Mighty How. This primary school touring show is a special collaboration between Terrapin and Polyglot Puppet Theatre. The show will bring the spirit of invention into the classroom and celebrate the creativity and uniqueness of the backyard inventor whilst exploring a world engaged in a mad technology race. The production premieres to Tasmanian schools from 25th June and heads to Victoria for a season from 10th August.

That's about it for now, we are all looking forward to things slowing down a bit in March!

REVIEWS

BOOK REVIEW

WHATMADEPISTACHIONUTS? Early Sound Comedy and the Vaudeville Aesthetic, Jenkins, Henry New York; Columbia University Press, 1992

This book is a valuable resource for puppeteers devising comedy. It supplies a concise analysis of the comic techniques lifted from Vaudeville and adapted for cinema. The anarchistic comedy of the early sound films, derived from Vaudeville, is inherently "puppety" and relates particularly to the subversion found in traditional glove-puppetry.

With the advent of "The Talkies" in the 1920's, Hollywood needed performers to fulfill the public's growing appetite for movies, especially comedies. Filmmakers raided Vaudeville and Broadway to recruit top line performers who had their own character acts and were already well-known from their touring. Here was a ready-made way for Hollywood to quickly and easily churn out some product.

But it wasn't long before the filmmakers, wanting more control, began to interfere with the performers. The basic conflict was over the vaudeville performers playing for laughs and the filmmakers wanting to tell a story. The author refers to this simply as

"The Pie in the Face" (gag) versus "The Chase" (narrative). The producers wanted to bring all their films into the classical Hollywood model. (How classic" anything in this new artform could be is debatable.) Performers meanwhile felt they knew what worked, for them and for their audiences.

Some artists like the Marx Brothers learned to temper their anarchistic comedy enough to avoid derailing the storyline but many artists returned to Vaudeville feeling that the Hollywood mould was not their vehicle.

Jenkins traces this conflict through decades of Hollywood's history and ranges over other contemporary artistic issues. He gives an excellent summary of how Vaudeville and its artists worked, setting the scene for the arrival of the Hollywood headhunters. He analyses the basic comic characters and plot devices used in the films and deftly covers the "variety vs legit" theatre debate

A particularly fascinating part of the book is where Jenkins details the fads in humour. Snobbery became rife. The bourgeoisie's pretensions had them shunning 'low' humour and seeking 'thoughtful' laughter. The social Darwinists saw the guffaw as a mark of ill-breeding

while the puritanical streak in the American character worried that the country was laughing too much and being ruined by "frivolists". They longed for the return of self-restraint and discipline to divert America from its course toward anarchy and immorality.

Mind you, a goodly lot of the "modern" material they objected to had been lifted out of old jest books, some over two hundred years old. The jokes provoked identical predictions of doomed society back when they were first published.

Unfortunately, the author chose as his primary examples films that have proved impossible to get on video, apart from the Marx Brothers. It would have been wonderful to see *"Diplomaniacs"*, a Wheeler and Woolsey film he dissects in great detail but alas.

I was also a bit put off by his overly academic jargon. The author couldn't seem to bring himself to mention Vaudeville without calling it "The Vaudeville Aesthetic" (the bourgeoisie's snobbery?). He uses "diagetic" several times without explanation. I couldn't find the word in any dictionary. I hate that.

The jargon does, however, occasionally supply some unconscious humour as when the author tries to say that the Vaudevillians played for

laughs but could only manage
"the aesthetic's focus on
immediate affective response."

Dennis Murphy

FURTHER READING: -

NELSON, T.G.A. *Comedy.
The Theory of Comedy in
Literature, Drama and
Cinema*. Oxford, Oxford
University Press, 1990

A good overall view of comedy.

SEDDER, Gilbert *The Seven
Lively Arts*, New York,
Sagamore Press, 1957

More on the snobbery in comedy
and the arts.

STEIN, Charles W., ed.
*American Vaudeville as Seen
By It's Contemporaries*, New
York, Alfred A. Knopf, 1984

Fascinating insights about all
aspects of Vaudeville

**Around the World in 80
Days, Colla Marionettes, a
short review.**

This work was very traditional
having been created in the
late 19th century. I don't quite
know what Festival Director
Leo Schofield was thinking –
it really was museum theatre
with a touch of sonic absurdity!
It was a bit like watching a
picture book come to life with
long breaks between the turning
of the pages. The coming to
life was minimal but attention
to visual detail was superb.
The scenic design was really
beautiful if a little faded in
with, surprisingly, no trick
marionettes. There were 12
puppeteers! However, what
the show may have gained in
scenic beauty it lost entirely in
an idiotic soundtrack – the
puppets were lip-synced to an
American soundtrack for a
British story. It was tough
enough to listen to Phileas
Fogg and his French valet
with American accents but the
Indian princess who
screamed "Oh my God" with a
New York accent was just ...
silly. Needless to say, there
were vacancies in the theatre
after interval.

Sue Wallace

If you are in Melbourne in
August you'll be able to see
"The Billy Club Puppets" by
Frederico Garcia Lorca.
Brian Hogan is directing
Melbourne Girls Grammar
with Anita Sinclair consulting
on the puppetry. There will
be 40 puppets and masks
involved in the production.
Public performances are on
15th, 16th and 17th of
August 2001. More next
issue.

Miss Tanaka

Presented by Handspan Visual Theatre & Playbox

Reviewed by Susan Lintern Coward

Adapted by John Romeril.
Based on a story by Xavier Herbert.

Director/ Script Collaborator,
David Bell.

Original concept, Noriko
Nishimoto.

Composer Darrin Verhagen.

Designer: Greg Clarke.

Lighting Design, David Walters.

Puppet Design: Rob Matson.

Puppetry Director: Heather Monk.

With Bradley Byquar, Megan
Cameron, Heather Monk, Tam
Phan, Junko Sakamoto, Toshi
Sakamoto, Jeremy Stanford,
Yumi Umiumare, Tony Yap.

Set in Broome- in late 1939
and centred on the thriving
Pearling industry, "Miss
Tanaka" has received
favourable reviews from the
Melbourne press, and the
foyer of Playbox displays
enthusiastic comments from
patrons who have been well
entertained by the colourful
presentation, knockabout
comedy, invigorating
Japenese drumming and
contrasting jazzy/syrupy love
songs coming over the airwaves.
There is a darker side to life
too - ominous news reports of
the rise of fascism in Europe
are relevant to only one of the
main characters who has
fears for his Jewish family; the
locals have the immediate
dangers of cyclones, sharks,
crippling injury and maybe a
knife in a dark alley to contend
with.

The show is made in collaboration
with Playbox, but directed by
Handspan's Artistic Director,
so this is an opportunity to see
how Handspan's work has
developed after a long break
from big-stage productions.

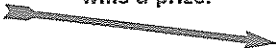
The show is visually very striking
- a white- box set is filled with
projection to evoke the
atmosphere of a variety of
locations, from the beach to
the red-light district, the
pearling factory to the sumo
ring. Occasionally cut-out
pieces will be swung down
from the walls but otherwise
there is no scenery. Sometimes

an image is shown in film-screen
format to give a more literal
sense of place - such as in
the brothel where two divers,
Hanif and Sakamoto are
flashed up in a series of poses
as they enjoy the rewards of
their labours, to the
accompaniment of a frenetic
soundscape. On another
occasion, a reflective disc is
manipulated by a white-clad
puppeteer to create a
mood of enchantment as lines
of light flow across the
surfaces of the stage to evoke
"The Pearl Road" of the Moon
rising over the sea. One
'literal' image had me baffled -
the frequently repeated face of
a young person of indeterminate
gender and race. No clue was
given as to why. Reading the
script later, it transpired that a
puppet sequence in which this
woman, symbolised by a black

pearl (she was Aboriginal) is
swallowed by a shark painted
to resemble a Japanese kite,
had been cut. Given that
these were important strands
that would surface and resurface
through the play, it was an
odd omission. Its replacement
by a puppeteer walking slowly
across the stage holding a
paper lantern carried no meaning.
Despite the best efforts of the
two puppeteers, Megan
Cameron and Heather Monk,
the Puppets, in the form of
animal representations of
human characters, did not feel
integrated into the production.
They were extremely
entertaining, thanks to some
tight choreography and expert
manipulation, and looked good
despite unhelpful lighting, but
were used as decorative
repetition in a different medium.
At one point, a 'live' actor was
being harangued and mocked
by characters on the small
overhead screen with whom
he was "playing" cards. These
were then shown as the puppet
emblems of themselves - a
frog and a monkey, but stranded
behind a gauze from where
they could no more interact
with the hunched figure than
their onscreen counterparts.
Their contribution was restricted
to frenzied dancing and a couple
of floating hands of cards.

The two puppeteers staged a
very funny sumo-wrestling
spoof with a variety of cushions

Excellent travelling story
wins a prize!



Winner!

painted with Kabuki-style faces, going up in size as the bouts progressed. This was a joy -clever in concept and execution. It would have been good if this standard of thoroughness had been found elsewhere

Perhaps this was due to difficulties in staging the script as written, or an over- long production process, where original intentions were lost and only their residue was left ... If so, it was a shame, for this was a rare opportunity for a 'crossover' production presented by a writer gifted with a strong visual imagination.

I realise than this review gives the impression that the manipulated image features large in "Miss Tanaka", whereas in the scheme of things it is a small, but significant part of the whole. The play is very good, the production plays for laughs and gets plenty and I can certainly recommend seeing it. I would be fascinated to know what John Romeril makes of it though

A few years ago, on tour in France, we arrived at our hotel to find the rooms were tiny with two beds squashed into a single room which took up every inch of floor space. Only needed one bed per room, we decided I would ask for one bed to be removed from each room. Gamely taking out my my "French made easy" phrase book, I wrote down my speech asking for one bed to be removed. I proudly walked up to the cute french woman at reception and read off what I thought was french for "Could you please remove one of the beds from my room" She looked at me oddly and asked me to repeat it. So I did. She went bright red and called me over to a quieter part of the lobby and asked me, in perfect english "why do you want this?" She looked worried and a little disgusted. I must have looked at her strangely as she asked to see my piece of paper with the sentence written on it. As she read what I had written, she fell about laughing and then explained. I had mispronounced the words and had instead asked if I could have some straps attached to my bed! Not a bad idea.

Megan Cameron.

Look out for *COUNT ME IN*
on the ABC featuring puppets
and puppetry by Ken Evans.
Mondays and Fridays at 10
am

What's On

Polyglot's workshops for 2001 start here

Don't miss the fun

All workshops held at the Polyglot Space:
27A Cromwell Road, South Yarra Victoria 3141.
Phone (03) 9827 9667 for bookings or email us on

All are great fun workshops that involve making puppets, creating characters and taking your own puppet or creation home with you.



"Going Mouldy".

When: May 21st, 22nd, 28th, 29th.

Tutor: Phillip Millar

Times: 7pm – 10pm each night.

Price: \$264 per person for 4 sessions.

How Many: Numbers limited to ten

An introduction to mould making and casting. Philip works with soft and hard casting materials; latex, plaster, clay, silicone, fibreglass and many more. Participants are encouraged to come for all four sessions for maximum enjoyment and ease of progression.

No experience necessary

Four Weeks Work

When: June 4th, 11th, 18th, 25th

Tutor: Heather Monk

Times: 7pm – 10pm

Price: \$33 per session per head

How many: Only twelve places available.

Puppetry for adult beginners and those who want to find out more. Most of the recent participants have gone on to create work for Studio Polyglot for the Fringe Festival.

"Manipulation for emerging Puppeteers"

When: June 4th, 11th, 18th, 25th

Tutor: Heather Monk

When: 7pm – 10pm

Price: \$166 per person for 4 sessions

How many: Numbers limited to ten

Beginners puppetry for Adults. Making a simple puppet and learning how to give it life. Heather Monk is a highly experienced performer and puppetry director and these classes are perfect for those starting out in the art form.

"Rude Mechanicals"

When: July 2nd, 9th, 16th, 17th

Tutor: Philip Millar

Times: 4 x three hour sessions 7pm – 10pm.

Price: \$264 for 4 sessions.

How many:

Number limited to ten

Puppet mechanisms and controls. Basic principles, materials, tools, designing puppeteer friendly controls, fiddly bits and advanced applications.

It is advisable to do all four sessions for the best follow-on experience.

EXCERPTS

(WITH ORIGINAL SPELLING) FROM THE ROCKS PUPPET COTTAGE VISITORS' BOOK

17/12 Very Funny. Made me cough.

11/2 Very grate & good place.

23/3 Best ever in the WOULD.

11/5 Very affective.

10/6 A great show although I don't think the Devil needs to exist.

17/7 Sensational Show. I wish I had the kids with me.

12/12 An excellent show which leaves a deep cultural impression on tourists. Very professionally done.
A Very Impressed
Singaporean Tourist

17/1 Very Refreshing. - Isette
(whose father was a puppet-master in Dalmatia)

19/1 I think it was very good and I'd like to see 100 more.
Matthew

21/1 My eight year old twin girls have been coming here since they were two

21/11 It was an unreal show. It rocks.

27/1 In these days of whiz bang technology it's great to see kids mesmerized by something so different, entertaining and non-violent.

20/2 Your very good mister.

7/3 It was god

17/4 Thank you! A wonderful antidote to American kid's shows.

7/8 I haven't seen anything like it for free - Max (Actually he means 'priceless' - Max's Mum.

27/9 I had a great time here at the Rocks. I saw the puppets and I got a balloon. It's really great. I've had a very great time. Bye Bye Bye, Alissa

10/10 I have four children and they have all grown up with the puppets from the Puppet Cottage. Thank you for the wonderful memories.

30/1 0 This is the sixth time we've been here and the shows keep getting better.

27/1 We heard about your show in Singapore (good news travels)

12/2 The Giddy GiddyBird was eggscellent!

12/3 1 thought your puppet show was great and your puppets to. From Dom. Ring me 99XX-XXXX I'm your friend now.

27/5 Fantastic again. I hope you get paid lots of money.

27/5 One word - Great. (A 42 year-old kid)

7/6 I haven't seen it yet but I know it will be good.

14/6 You should put in more stuff.

23/6 The show was truly wonderful. Sorry about the

crying bit. (My brother)

24/6 Delightful. Otherwordly Transporting.

1/7 "I want it again." Monica
(3 1/2 years)

7/7 Great Puppet show. The best I've seen yet.

13/7 My best puppet was the man.

18/8 My cousin Emma and myself a year older than her thought it was brilliant.

10/9 This was the best puppet show I have seen in my life.

20/9 Artin was hear.

15/10 I'm from Adelaide SA. We never have anything like that there. I was outstanding. Sally, 11 yrs

19/10 Un seul mot - Bravo!! - Francois

10/12 Lovely show from your friend

5/1 Thanks for making me laugh.

12/1 The show was so much fun. I even got a sticker.

14/1 Please don't have Rumpelstiltskin plays. I saw when I was 4 1/2 & I had nightmares!! - ten years ago!

4/1 will love you always.

Excerpts provided by
Dennis Murphy

WAUCHOPE CHILDREN'S THEATRE DAY

Over a good lunch and a couple of glasses of wine, Jonquil and I talked about a dream of running a small Puppet festival in the country. It was a dream we had shared for many years.

At that point maybe I am influenced by alcohol sooner than most, I said lets do it I'll organize a day in September at Wauchope

Why Wauchope you may ask? Firstly, my grandchildren live there and after a little investigation I discovered two puppet groups in the area and a circus group so I hoped that meant interest in theatre and some support, Dennis Murphy and Janice Edwards lent their support to the project joy of joys. My friends were willing to take the plunge with me.

Next day reality hit.

I've never done anything like this before and there was no funding so it came down to compromises and bums on seats.

Combining organization with visits to my family, things started to happen, I contacted the local Arts council and made contact with Krissa Wilkinson a member of the Wauchope Arts Council and President of Bad Dags, a puppet group in Wauchope. I booked a wonderful hall which opened onto a park, so many families had the opportunity to bring a packed lunch and stay for the day. The most important thing was to find a local contact person who had local knowledge and could be the contact number on our brochures. A fantastic

storyteller and puppeteer Zoe Robb had moved to Port Macquarie and was a member of the local group "No Strings Attached". She agreed to join us in our endeavours and what a wonderful help she was.

Our biggest job was marketing and advertising and contacts for enquiries. A fortnight before Zoe and I visited all the local schools in the surrounding areas.

*We had a very
successful day with
very few dramas
except those on the
stage*

Finally the great day arrived. We set up the hall very early and as we had only sold very few tickets despite many inquiries we felt very anxious when 15 minutes before the show was about to start there wasn't a person in sight.

I promised everyone a serious case of hysteria in the door way and Dennis thanked me for the information in advance. Five minutes before the performance began the cars started to roll up.

The members of "No Strings Attached", the Port Macquarie puppet group, were a great support, selling tickets and drinks and sweets in the intervals and many other tasks.

We had a very successful day with very few dramas except

those on the stage.

The morning started with Janice Edwards a wonderful storyteller. She had been billed for Pre-school and infant children, but I can assure you my seven year old grandson voted her stories as great and so did many of the parents who attended.

Dennis Murphy followed with the Pre-school show THE PRAM SHOW. Everyone loved the monkey who was always falling asleep.

After lunch Jonquil Temple ran a workshop for Primary aged children, THE GREAT SEA. Everyone wanted to be the shark of course.

Dennis performed his second show THE FROG PRINCE for all ages [This version is like no other]

It was then a dash round to the local Chinese Restaurant for dinner before the evening performance.

Jonquil ran an adult workshop in the evening so the people from the circus group, puppet groups and high school students and teachers had a great time. Lots of ideas were passed around and we all felt elated by the end of the evening.

There was great enthusiasm and many children and adults came to every session.

What did we gain from this?

The puppeteers enjoyed the chit/chat between the shows — ventriloquism, stage building etc. It was great sharing a meal together after the show instead of lonely hotels.

I am truly grateful to JANICE, DENNIS AND JONQUIL for the concessions they made in order to pull this off. A big THANK YOU to all our helpers from Port Macquarie and Wauchope. The day was an outstanding success.

I learnt lots about how to do it better next time.

If any one would like to know any further details, please ring me.

Jan Paton,

PHJ02199082495

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D E A D L I N E S

Hmmm, not sure. Let's ask the new editor. Winter would be about right, maybe before the end of July. Go on, get amongst it, a letter, a photo, a story, a CONTRIBUTION. Win a prize!

Competition!

E	E	R	E	H	E	A	R	S	A	L
T	S	U	E	P	J	O	I	N	T	B
T	H	R	O	D	U	Y	A	N	S	E
E	A	V	B	U	P	P	O	O	H	E
N	D	E	L	O	A	S	P	S	O	R
O	O	L	I	O	N	A	N	E	W	E
I	W	V	T	E	T	G	E	N	T	Y
R	R	E	H	A	S	G	L	O	V	E
A	R	T	B	R	A	D	S	H	A	W
M	A	N	I	P	U	L	A	T	E	E
A	P	L	A	Y	B	O	A	R	D	R

All you have to do is write a sentence (more if you are really inspired) using all the words from the above puzzle that you can. The best sentence (haiku or anecdote) using the most words will win a signed copy of the most up to date edition of "The Puppetry Handbook" by Anita Sinclair.

She'll even write an inscription for you! This is your chance to win a really excellent prize.