

AUSTRALIAN PUPPETEER

Winter 2002

HANDSPAN THEATRE

Farewell Handspan 1978 - 2002



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

The Magazine of UNIMA Australian Winter 2002

E d i t o r i a l

Welcome to the Winter Edition of the Australian Puppeteer's Magazine. This edition includes important information on the National Puppetry Summit to be held in Melbourne during October. Artists are coming from all over the country as well as numerous international guests so mark your diaries and start saving. In this edition you will also find reviews from some of the work performed over the last quarter as well as a host of other things.

There will not be an edition of the Australian Puppeteer's Magazine until after the National Puppetry summit due to my work commitments. However, we hope to supply you with an interim newsletter to keep you update with Puppetry Summit information and the rest.

Please continue to send in your contributions - especially artists from Western Australia and Tasmania (you are a VERY silent bunch)

Thanks again to all those who contributed to this edition. Especially to Dennis Murphy, Richard Bradshaw and Philip Millar who's continued support is very much appreciated. Also, once again, thank you to Jenny Gardner for the layout of the mag.

I hope you enjoy the Winter edition.
Sarah

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Sydney Puppet Theatre

Letters Letters Letters

Dear Australian Puppeteers,

My name is Elke Oelrichs. I am a recent enthusiast to puppetry and am hoping to contact other people in the Puppetry Arts. I am also looking for a Job in Puppeteering!

Offering: Great enthusiasm, energy, willingness to learn - and good skills.

I have no direct experience in puppeteering - apart from a 10-day workshop in Mittagong in 1994 and participating in a number of wonderful workshops at the 'Daylesford Children's Puppet Festival'.

But, I have some skills and knowledge that are related: 1 year certificate in Performing Arts with Nikki March in Sydney, 2 year Dipl. Of Arts,

Crafts and Design course. And extreme flexibility and adaptability to different situations.

I am financially independent, so I don't necessarily look for a full-time job. A part-time job or occasional job would be welcome too. At the moment I have made arrangements to tutor in the outback in Queensland, but will be free from the beginning of September.

I look forward to interesting collaborations and conversations with other interested puppet people.

Warmest regards,
Elke Oelrich
Email address:
<allriches13@yahoo.com.au>
Tel: 03-6383 4532

INTERESTED IN PUPPETRY?

We are an amateur group currently working towards the staging of a puppet show in Sydney this year.

We are looking for people to join us in this endeavour - must have a keen desire to work with puppets (and people) and the ability to commit to weekly rehearsal time (Sunday afternoons, in Marrickville).

PLEASE CONTACT

SAMANTHA on:

Ph: (02) 9698 5881
or email:
<sferris@au.gateway.net>

Please note

*By submitting your letter to
Australian Puppeteer's Magazine
you agree that it may be edited for
legal, space or other reasons
and after publication in the magazine
it may be republished
on the internet or in other media.*

In Memory

Leslie Trowbridge

Our friend Leslie Trowbridge

By Lorrie Gardner

Leslie Trowbridge was one of our Australian UNIMA members who lived in New Zealand. 'Leslie Trowbridge Puppet Opera' was his professional title. He died suddenly on 3 Jan. 2002. Many of his puppeteer friends from around the world had letters from him at Christmas and so news of his death took some time to reach us.

His unique form of puppetry may be known to many of our members. I first met him at the Puppetry Festival in Hobart in about 1978. He also attended the Adelaide and Perth Festivals. He loved taking his puppetry around the world to as many Puppet Festivals as possible; this was made possible in part from inheritance from his English father.

He was trained as an Opera singer and when that career was no longer available to him he decided to do opera through puppets. All his puppets are hand sewn of soft fabric with a central rod through the body which he

held from above. Much love and thought went into his choice of fabrics and decorations. He could then operate many puppets at one time. The opera music was played and he immersed himself into the music and characters.

My last card from him at Christmas said he was "*sewing velvets for Dubrovski - next opera*".

Obituary

By Anne Forbes

Leslie was born in Wroxeter, England on the 13th January 1929 and grew up on a farm in rural Southwest England. Around the age of 11, Leslie became interested in Shakespeare. Upon leaving school Leslie completed his two years of National Service serving in Egypt and Cyprus as an army cook. Following this, Leslie trained as an opera singer in Berlin and London.

In 1965, after the death of his mother, Leslie emigrated to NZ where he at first ventured into tourism owning and operating Cargills Castle in Dunedin for five years.

Around this time Leslie had an epiphany which he described thus: "An Eastern Prince vision has guests. Can afford Covent Garden Opera but cannot get them, so goes into anti-room and brings out puppet opera".

Leslie then devoted his life to puppet opera pouring every available cent into creating his productions and travelling to puppet festivals all around the world in the hope of performing them. On his travels he bought beautiful pieces of fabric, silks, brocades and items of jewellery which he lovingly hand-stitched together to create garments for his 'performers', the choicest pieces being reserved for the sumptuous vestments of his beloved Leading Soprano.

At one point inspired by the Water Puppets of Vietnam, Leslie purchased the remote Forks Lodge, in Westland National Park near Franz Josef Glacier, where he hoped to combine his interests in tourism, opera and water puppets. His idea was to perform

his puppet operas in the spa pool to lodge guests. Unfortunately this venture

didn't succeed the way Leslie had envisioned and he retired to Riverton where he continued to pursue his passion for puppet opera until the end.

In thirty years Leslie created over 75 operas and he made private videos of about half of them. He made a video of *Rigoletto* that he sent to the Scott Base in Antarctica. He travelled to festivals in Australia, China, Mauritius, Kenya, Pakistan, Iran, Poland, Japan, South Korea, Portugal, Croatia and the UK sometimes being accepted to perform. The last major festival he attended was the UNIMA 2000 World Puppet Congress in Magdeburg, Germany, where he performed 'Absalom & Etery' at a local cafe.

Leslie's puppets are in collections from Lithuania to Japan (Puk Theatre in Tokyo has one of his puppets on display) and several years ago Leslie presented the Shakespeare Globe Theatre in London with a puppet for their actors to use on stage.

Richard Bradshaw from Australia recalls seeing Leslie's puppets in Portugal; "Some years ago Margaret and I were in Lisbon for a few days and discovered that there was a puppet museum. We made our way there and were greeted on entry by a display of some of Leslie Trowbridge's puppets in a glass case.

The museum was run by Helena Vaz, who lived in the same building. Helena asked us if we could contact Leslie about these because there were plans for the collection to be moved a few hundred metres, and the government insisted that she get permission from the donors. She felt there was a very special quality to Leslie's puppets and was keen to keep them on display.

When we got back to Australia we discovered from Leslie that he had not donated the puppets to the collection. He had simply left them in keeping with Helena, intending to return for them at a later date. However he softened and decided that Helena could keep them."

A fanatic of all things puppet, opera or Shakespeare, Leslie subscribed to many magazines and organisations. He was a member of UNIMA for over thirty years, sometimes taking on the role of self-appointed ambassador for New Zealand puppetry. He was also a member of the Friends of the NZ Puppet Theatre Soc., Puppeteers in NZ (P.I.N.Z.), and the Shakespeare Globe Centre.

Sometimes he was very supportive of other puppeteers, and in 1988 he generously financed a cash-strapped puppeteer from NZ to attend the

World UNIMA Puppet Festival in Japan.

Leslie lead an isolated existence not only in his choice of occupation but the location of his home in Riverton which is a small township in the farthest south of NZ. Few people understood or appreciated Leslie's unique vision for puppet opera nor his enthusiasm in sharing it. His weekly routine consisted of one day mowing his 1/4 acre of lawn, one day making cakes and jam, one day letter writing, a day in town shopping, visiting the library and attending to business, and three days working on his latest opera production.

On his final day he had just finished mowing his vast lawn and indicated to his next-door neighbour that he felt unwell and went inside to rest. The neighbour checked on him a short time later and found that Leslie had gently expired in his armchair, surrounded by his beloved puppets and vast collection of opera CDs. Leslie died at home in Riverton on the 3 January 2002.

Leslie was a lovely, kind man if not a little eccentric who will be remembered by his puppetry colleagues for his passion to his craft and his mischievous sense of humour. No doubt the Leading Soprano is now delighting the heavens with soaring arias.

Treasurer's Report

01 Jun 2001 – 18 Jun 2002

INITIAL BALANCE	\$1288		
INCOME		EXPENSES	
New members	890	Envelopes	55
Renewals	1445	Postage	551
TOTAL Membership	2335	Printing	636
Donation	100	TOTAL Mag/mailouts	1242
Other	27	Unima Fees	733
TOTAL INCOME	\$2462	Post Office Box	133
		Other	22
		TOTAL EXPENSES	\$2130
		FINAL BALANCE	\$1620

Our financial position has improved slightly over the last 12 months.

This is an improvement on the previous 12 months, when our bank balance dropped by about \$300.

We also raised \$818- to help Jennie Pfeiffer get to the Unima Asia Pacific Conference.

Thank you to Lorrie Gardner and Jenny Gardner for their fund raising, organising a trivia night and a benefit performance, and to the Unima members who made donations.

John McDonald
Treasurer, Unima Australia
johnmcd@melbpc.org.au

Announcement from Jennie Pfeiffer, Asia Pacific Rep.

21 March 2003 will be
declared World Puppetry
Day.

UNIMA executive meeting will be held in Delhi, India at the Ilc India International Centre, from 17th to 21st March 2003.

Resource Commission will also meet in India during this time. It will be a symposium on the East West dialogue -

cross cultural influences - a three day event which will be locally hosted (ie board and lodging), the participants will have to find their own travel costs. Papers will be selected before approval of participation and abstracts of papers are needed. Papers should be fairly scholarly (there is a possibility that the papers may eventually be published by the International Federation of Theatre Research).

Obviously one of the aims of such a conference is to encourage Indian researchers to come forward, as well as those from other Asian

countries, and this may affect some of the selection. One of the aims of a conference of this nature is to stimulate research into puppetry. There is a general notion of cross-culturalism, but that need not be adhered to too strictly. One area of possible interest is when a form of puppetry is transplanted and performed in a different cultural context.

I suggest that anyone submitting papers send them to Jennie Pfeiffer who will then forward them all onto John McCormick of the Research Commission with whom she is in contact. (Lorrie Gardner)

Puppetry Summit Update

Melbourne, October 25 -27th

Latest news

South African Puppeteer Gary Friedman Confirms for Summit.

The Summit is pleased to announce that South African political puppeteer Gary Friedman will be speaking at the Conference. Gary has been an active puppeteer working in both live theatre and television. His live work has included programs in prisons and pioneering AIDS education and awareness campaigns. His television work has ranged from children's programming to election commentary.

More than just the creator of Spitting Image, Roger Law will present and discuss a unique series of short films, including pilots and projects that never quite made it into full-scale production. This session is about creativity, obsession, and the uncontrolled desire to smash hundreds of thousands of dollars worth of pottery.

Masterclasses

The National Puppetry and Animatronics Summit is rapidly confirming a program of masterclasses including *Advanced Manipulations*, *Animatronics Performance*, as well as *Makers and Design Workshops*.

International Guests

The Summit is pleased to welcome Penny Francis (UK). Co-founder of the London-

based Puppet Centre Trust and Editor of Animations magazine for seventeen years, she is one of Britain's most respected puppeteers. She was awarded an M.B.E. in 1998 for services to puppetry. Several other international guests have been confirmed, but need to remain a mystery for a bit longer. For further updates, send your contact details to the email below.

The National Puppetry and Animatronics Summit is hosted by the Victorian Arts Centre and is part of the Melbourne Festival. The Summit is assisted by The Australia Council, Arts Victoria, Film Victoria Digital Media Fund and the Australian Film Commission.

The Summit Club

Running every night of the Summit, the Summit Club will provide a stage for puppeteers from across Australia. To register your interest in performing and receive technical specifications for the Summit Club, contact Alex Prior at alex@paxinos.com.au or telephone 03 9696 5085.

Film Festival

The Puppetry Summit also includes a four day film festival hosted by the Australian Centre for the Moving Image. The program includes a tribute to the Henson era, as well as rarely seen films by the Czech master of puppet animation Jan Svankmajer. Registration for the Summit includes free entry to all of the Film Festival sessions, or individual tickets are available for the public.

The Whole Gamut

Anyone who ever doubted the power of the puppet will be pleased to hear that the Summit has received support from both Arts Victoria and Film Victoria through the Digital Media Fund. There welcome support has allowed us to keep registrations fees for the Summit as low as possible. It also makes it clear how puppetry has influenced performance from the theatre to film, from children's television to parades and outdoor events.

Keep up to date and register online at the Summit website, www.puppetsummit.com.au, or contact Colleen Wait at John Paxinos and Associates on 03 9696 5085 to register by phone. Email: colleen@paxinos.com.au.

Summit and Conference registration

Full/Organisational \$440.00
Puppeteer \$330.00
Student/Concession \$198.00

Puppetry Summit Accommodation:
Room for Summit Week for Single or couple on Futon Bed in lovely inner city home. Must be pet friendly (pet, not petting)
\$100 single, \$150 couple
T: Jenny 03 9489 1530
(Sociopaths need not apply)

Dear Dr. Puppet

Dear Dr Puppet,

I'm connecting some control lines to operate my puppet. I've tried fishing line but it's a bit tricky getting the knots to stay put.

Any suggestions for an alternative?

Dear Strung-out

Fishing line is a bit of a mixed blessing for puppet controls. It's strong and light but tends to stretch under load and is difficult to knot accurately.

One of the most versatile options for control lines is the trusty old venetian blind (VB) cord. It's strong, light, comes in a few thicknesses, is easily coloured, knotted, glued or sewn. I've found sewing, rather than knotting,

handy for accurately setting the length of a control line and it's very easy to unpick and adjust.

Dacron or Kevlar braided cord is incredibly strong but is expensive and not particularly abrasion resistant. Best for kites really.

I've recently had some success with the nylon cord sold as whipper-snipper or trimmer refill. Again it comes in a range of weights and strengths, doesn't stretch as much as fishing line and it's really tough. You can even find a gauge that fits neatly inside curtain spring as a cheap cable/ cable housing pairing. Cheaper than Teflon lined bicycle brake cable housing too.

Use electrical connector

clamps to set lengths rather than bothering with knots. Strips of electrical connectors can be found in the usual electronics shops. They're extremely handy for clamping all sorts of lines, cables, small rods and other bits and pieces.

The key is to experiment by applying stress to the line in a way the mimics the conditions of performance. It's no use being gentle and coy if your puppeteers are going to belt the living daylights out of your control. Often it's better to err on the side of caution and use a heavier grade of line than would seem necessary. The weight gain is usually negligible compared to the increased longevity of your control.

UNIMA - Important Announcement SCHOLARSHIPS TO PUPPETRY SUMMIT

UNIMA will offer two scholarships to the Puppetry Summit to the value of \$200 each.

The Summit is to be held in Melbourne in October.

This will take the place of any other scholarships offered in 2002.

Please place your applications for these scholarships to Mary Sutherland as soon as possible.

Polyglot Puppet Theatre *at the* *Festival of the Southern Ocean*

By Caitlin Egan

During March this year, Polyglot Puppet Theatre was commissioned by the Mallacoota Festival of the Southern Ocean to create the infamous Children's Play. The following article was written by Caitlin Egan, a Year 10 student from Mallacoota Prep - Yr 12 school.



Each Easter, the town I live in, Mallacoota, holds an arts festival.

A highlight of the festival is the Children's Play. Some years the play has been written by locals, school children included. Other years it has been made by people from out of town. This year it was a play with a difference, it was a play with puppets.

The play was put together in Mallacoota, by a puppeteer group, the Polyglots. The Polyglots are: Sarah Kriegler (director) Jenny Swain (musical

director/composer), Trina Gaskell (designer/maker) and Sue Giles (dramturg) who were extremely patient and great fun to work with.

The Polyglot people and school children in Mallacoota made many of the puppets for the play. The best one being a giant pelican. All of the songs in the play were written in Mallacoota [by Jenny

This year it was a play with a difference, it was a play with puppets.

Swain]. People who were in the play were either Polyglots or Mallacoota locals. Everyone from the play I have talked to had said that they enjoyed being in the play immensely.

I was encouraged by my father and two sisters, who were already in the play, to join in. Two of them

were playing music, and one as a puppeteer. At first I wasn't sure, as I don't really like acting or being in front of many people. But I decided to give the play a go. I'm glad I did. It was great fun.

The play was called *The Noise Factory*, and was about a girl being followed by a noise factory, and how she and her animal friends get rid of it. I was one of five bird puppets.

Each bird had a song that introduced it. These songs were a great way to give the puppet a character, as a puppet can have any personality you want, depending on the way you bring them to life. We were taught that, when using a puppet, to look at it, so the audience will look at it too. This is another great thing about puppeteering, especially if you don't like acting, because the audience doesn't see you, they see the puppet. The puppet can seem real, and alive but only if you don't touch a human. If the puppet does, then it doesn't seem alive any more, as people are so animated compared to puppets.

It was amazing to see how differently the five bird characters were animated; they all had distinct personalities and even flew differently.

The play was a great thing to be part of, not just because of the puppets but also because of the great people involved. It was a lot of fun, I have even kept my puppet!

Ann Davis

A Lifetime of Puppetry Honoured

'PUPPETEER IN QUEEN'S BIRTHDAY HONOURS LIST'

By Dennis Murphy

For her "services to the arts through puppetry", Sydney Puppeteer, Ann Davis, has been awarded the Order of Australia.

Ann was already an established puppeteer in England when in 1956 Peter Scriven invited her to come to Australia to join the Tintookies production. She later settled in Sydney and went to work in the new technology - live to air television.

It was her work on Channel 9's Super Flying Fun Show that gave Ann the most exposure - in the guise of her creation, Amanda The Cat. As well as children's television, Ann toured with Joan and Betty Rainer's Australian Children's Theatre.

Eventually, Ann's interest in younger children inspired her to develop specialised shows for playgroups, pre-schools and kindergartens. The rest of her career was devoted to the under-5's.

Ann's generosity to young puppeteers is legendary. Always ready with help, encouragement and advice, Ann had no concept of a 'Trade Secret'. Jonquil Temple put it best - "I know of no other puppeteer who has so devoted herself to passing on her Art to others."



HANDSPAN

Handspan Eulogy

By Phil Lethlean

At every Paddy's wake there is a moment where the solemn praise and worthy words dissolve and some self-righteous Homer Simpson disciple slurs forth with Ulysis.



Handspan's members watch on in disbelief

Handspan was a band. Born in the circus oz, men at work days ,of the garage-to-grandeur lottery, VW kombis and drum solos. We did benefit concerts for rebel causes, toured the world with shows at the while Circus Oz was putting political satire into the ring and Men at Work business as usual. (We claimed the oogie /boogie high ground).

The jets were in town. We burned the midnight lamp wrestling with polystyrene and smoke machines into the wee small hours... We squeezed through the Parry Marshall garage band stage, through the "flying thing" two punters and a dog stage, and

can only dock with a molecule that it can recognise. We were obliged to lasso ; a board, an Artistic Director, a General Manager and a Membership. How snug.

Once you have a club you need meetings and agendas. Inevitably

the agenda item comes up regarding the credo and who can join. The credo is of course "egalitarianism uber alles "and the conclusion therefore is, more members. Members with wonderful ideas and the energy to germinate them.

However it can be difficult for a band to accommodate an orchestra , unless it's to perform the final 64 bars of 'Hey Jude'.

finally made it to bewildering puppetry mega stardom, with hit album after hit album. (And a couple of timeless B sides). In those days some of the drum solos were so 'now' they coined the term "Visual Theatre" in their honour.

Management changed as per the Spinal Tap cliché when the Oz Council got involved, a divine and benign organism that ,alas

I'm not sure that a diet of fresh blood is the sort of nourishment a lean and hungry dirty-deeds -done -dirt-cheap body needs. Too much indulgence leads to heart problems. This of course is hindsight insight. The spirit was always welcoming, almost desperately , and all new blood enlivened Handspan. But perhaps Handspan was a false beacon for talent looking for an echo. Perhaps it was by then already the Dennis Potter character it concluded as.

VISUAL THEATRE

By Handspan Theatre

- 1978
Ark of Oz
Hansel and Gretel
The History of Rock n Roll
Enwaptured The Mouth Show
- 1979
The Apple Show
Sticky Sweet (A cabaret)
The Bunyip of Berkley's Creek
- 1980
Prime Time
- 1981
Carnival of the Animals
O'Clock Tiger
Seaside Double Header
- 1982
Bombora (with Mushroom Mime Troupe)
- 1983
Streetwise
Secrets
- 1984
Cho Cho San
Guts
Sorcer's Apprentice
Viictoria's 150th Celebration
- 1985
The Haunted
Tutta Casa Letto E Chiesa
- 1986
A Change of Face
Peace March and Peace
Vigil
Who Are You
Christian TV Association (TV project)
Smalls
- 1987
Captain Koala (Country Fire Authority Project)
Jandy Malone and the Nine Moments
Moomba Street and River projects: including The Last Wave
- 1988
Elision (Music/puppetry)
Four Little Girls
Mondo Rock (Video promo)
Out For A Duck
Waves of Change
- 1989
Banquet
We Repeat Ourselves
Rivercraft
Beastly Combinations Below the Belt
- 1990
The Wooden Child
Women Alone - The Therapist
The Immaculate Contraption
Listening for the Heartbeat
- 1991
The Crossing
The Reading Boy
No Right Angles in Paradise
- 1992
Carnival of Love
Gullivers' Travels (with Melb. Theatre Co)
Lunatic Soup
Ask for the Captain
- 1993
Viva La Vida Frida Kahlo
Wild Nights
Metafour
- 1994
The Tin Soldier and The Paper Bag Princess (with Out of the Box Festival, Brisbane)
Dreamt I Could Fly (Moomba River Pageant)
Daze of our Lives
- 1995
Tonight Ideas Take Flight (Moomba River Pageant)
Held on the Breath of the Wind
Gilda
The Kangaroo Tale (with Koorie Health Unit)
- 1996
Mind's Eye (with Back to Back)
Gilda, Waiting & Sugar on Top
Dante: through the invisible
The Bucket Family (Street/Festival work)
- 1997
Raised by Wolves
Sidney Spider Slow Down Cuz (with Koorie Health Unit)
Bare Bones (street piece)
- 1999
The Cone Project
Delores in the Department Store (Creative Development)
- 2000
Miss Tanaka
Snapshot (Community Arts)
Synthaesia project (with Art Access/MSO)
- 2001
Lift 'em up Socks

Farewell Dear Friend

By Lizz Talbot

It was "the Handspan Flash" that first attracted me. That and the prospect of a job, since I had actually managed to secure the role as the Fan Lady in Nigel Triffits "Secrets", replacing Carmelina Di Guglielmo, who had created the part, but had other projects to pursue. The original Handspan studios on the top floor of 108 Gertrude Street offered not only a fabulous views over Fitzroy and the city, but was also a densely atmospheric place, with its black rehearsal studio and object riddled workshop, a place for the conjuring of magic and making of mystery. That was 1985.

My first tour destinations with Handspan were Paris, London and then New York and until 1999 (when I relinquished my formal membership) Handspan tour schedules, both within Australia and internationally, continued to play an enormous part in the structure of my life. Secrets, Cho Cho San, and Picasso's Four Little Girls were highlights and took me around the globe.

I met Philip Lethlean on that first tour and the rest of that story really is history. I performed until 7 months pregnant with my first daughter Grace and worked in Gullivers Travels several years later with daughter number 2, Laura, on my hip! Handspan is a very big part of my life.

Great people, great times and wonderful opportunities to play a part in the development of Australian theatre and its potential as international cultural export.

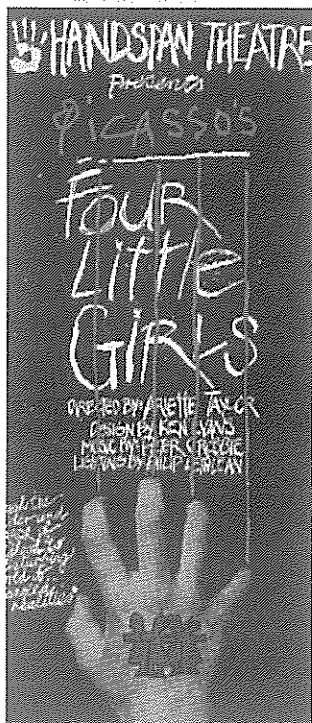
There is a certain loneliness that accompanies the end of Handspan Theatre. Each show I watched from the outside or worked as a performer was wrestling with the concept of creating a visual language in which to convey meaning layered with emotion. I believe Handspan created unforgettable theatrical experiences for its audiences - not in every minute of every show, but in those

unpredictable moments when an individual audience member would become involved in that very private picture /meaning/ subconscious world within them, triggered by the play. Some shows had a deeper level of control over this element and were better able to guide the audience through a visually based emotional journey. Regardless of the ability for any given work to achieve that throughout the performance, the ability to connect abstract with emotion via image was there to some extent with in each show. And the shows always looked beautiful. I love that form of communication and I'll miss experiencing it. With the Company' end there is a certain sadness that that particular combination of magic will not be available any more.

Meanwhile its back to the archive boxes...

My Boig might read;

Because of the picture format and the puppet element (abstraction open to interpretation) there would always be a level of visual and image association within the individual audience member that was impossible to predict or edit. I loved that. It linked in with my obsession with archetypal imagery and love of painting. Which is why the selection of imagery is so important and why I would cherish the opportunity to be a part of that team.



Extracts from Handspan speech

By Andrew Bleby

Tonight we're in a room full of memories and relationships. We all have memories of Handspan – so many memories of good times and bad, extraordinary and mundane crowding this room tonight. There are too many people here who are qualified to be standing up here, so instead I was asked to say a few words.

I am one of the few people in this room who has never been employed by Handspan Theatre, but I've lived through a lot of its life. Many rowdy arguments about the company's work were held in the back yard of Helen's and my house in Kerr Street Fitzroy in the 1980s, which was, incidentally, next door to the house of a young teenage girl who ten years later became a member of Handspan, and whose father used to comment on the amount of green smoke which wafted over the fence.

I was there in a café in South Melbourne after a performance at Anthill of Jandy Malone and the Nine O'Clock Tiger when Peter Wilson counted out the door take and divided it up – it was the company wages for the week. I was there in the Cortilla Del Rocca in Spoleto, Italy on the opening night of *Secrets* when a misty rain started to gently fall just as the opening bars of *Riders On the Storm* signalled the curtain call and a long pause before

tumultuous applause. I have shared hotel rooms in Murray Bridge and Amsterdam and a caravan park at Portland with the company on tour, I've sat in the Kombi in the rain, I've walked down the main street of Wangaratta with a couple of hundred primary school children and a flag stuck up my back, I've participated in company dreamings and the drafting of the famous manifesto, I've videoed a protest performance against nuclear ships, I was there at the tenth birthday and the 21st, and I've caused the company to perform in tents, theatres and classrooms around South Australia. I married one of the company's founders. Apart from that, I haven't had anything much to do with the company at all.

But I haven't carried the sets up half as many flights of stairs as many of you have. I wasn't there when the Universal Theatre caught alight. I haven't sweated for hours with a black bag over my head. I wasn't in Bogota surrounded by guns and cocaine, and I haven't been around for most of the last ten years. These are your stories, and everyone here tonight probably has a hundred of them.

Creativity, innovation and outrageous invention and daring have been the hallmark of this company. It was not created by government decree, or by graduates looking for work, or by one person's vision. It started in 1977 when a group of young artists working for the rather more traditional Parry

Marshall Puppet Theatre staged a mass defection in an attempt to extend the boundaries of their work. It was a group ethic, and an ethic of creative enterprise, and these remained the cornerstone of its operations for most of its life. Its company structure went from loose collaboration to enforced corporatisation, but it always battled to be inclusive, to be driven by and for its members (and "battle" is probably an apposite word where issues of membership are concerned).

At times it was like a family, at others it was like chaos theory itself.

Above all, it produced some extraordinary work – and some real dogs of course – but it had an influence which reached far beyond its own members and audiences. It opened new doors in people's minds – children and adults alike – it brought a fresh sensibility to Australian theatre; it pummelled puppetry into a new shape and invented the term "visual theatre", and it showed that animating the inanimate, live on stage, could produce images of transcendent power and beauty.

Over its lifetime, Handspan created 77 original theatrical works in 25 years. It undertook tours to 5 continents – only Africa and Antarctica missed out. It involved more artists than you'd find at a Melbourne Festival opening party. And that included some extraordinary artists too... you know who you are.

BOOK REVIEW: *The Asian Shadow Play*

By Prof Tilakāsiri

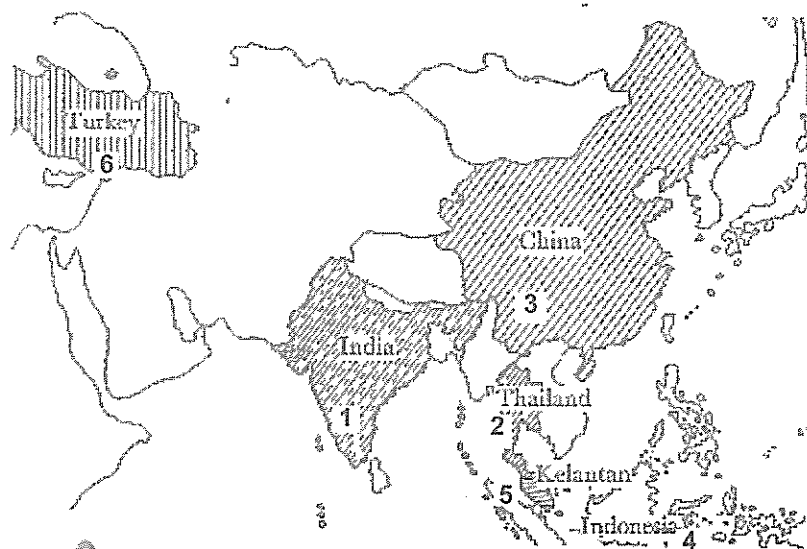
Following on from his 1970 book, *The Puppet Theatre of Asia*, Prof Tilakāsiri takes on a comprehensive study of shadow puppetry in its varied types and forms prevalent in Asian countries.

The book details the shadow art from its origins in the oldest civilisations of China and India spreading it to Indonesia, Thailand, Cambodia and Malaysia. From there it was carried by performers to the Middle East and from there to Europe, England and America in the 17th to 19th centuries.

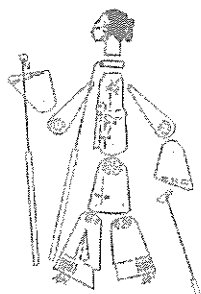
The book is well illustrated with reproductions from many sources. Despite its traditional and sacred origins, shadow puppetry is now innovative and secular in its outlook. Tilakāsiri examines this in his final chapter on contemporary and future developments of the artform.

According to Henryk Jurkowski, Past International President of UNIMA, "The reading of his book is a pleasure and an act of learning".

Copies are available for \$25 postpaid from MURPHYS PUPPETS, 79 Binalong Road, Old Toongabbie NSW 2146



The Spread of Shadow Play



Puppet History

by Richard Bradshaw

The Jewels that were Quarantined

Many of us have copies of books by the English puppeteer H.W. Whanslaw (1883-1965). (I met him in London in 1964). In 'Everybody's Marionette Book', originally published in 1935, 'Whanny', as he was known to his colleagues, revealed that the first marionettes he saw were Jewell's Marionettes. He was still at school when he saw them at the 'Victorian Era' Exhibition at Earl's Court in 1897.

Mae Jewell was born Mae Holden, and was a member of a famous English family of marionette presenters. Her father, John Holden, had begun the tradition, and her brothers John (c.1841-1899), James, Thomas (c.1847-?) and sister Sarah Jane (c.1845- c.1910) were all puppeteers. Her husband, Jesse (1878-1941), had worked in Thomas's company.* According to John Phillips, the troupe had sometimes been called Jewell-Holden, and it was Mae who was responsible for the manipulation of the puppets. She was known as Madam Jewell.

The Jewells went from England to live in the USA in 1904, and were based there

until they stopped performing in 1935. Jewell's marionettes appeared in vaudeville, museums and circus sideshows.



In Australia they were consistently advertised as 'Jewel's Marionette Circus', rather than 'Jewell's'. Some ads announced that 'Madame Jewel's 'Circus Day in Toyland' will startle you and one report states that 'Madame Jewel is the creator of the marvellous marionettes...' They opened at J. C. Williamson's Her Majesty's Theatre in Melbourne on Boxing Day, 1918 in the pantomime 'Goody Two Shoes'.

The pantomime had opened a few days before Christmas without the two specialty acts from America, Jewell's Marionette Circus and the Kenna Brothers, acrobats. A news item in *The Age* on Christmas Day reports that the Jewells, Kennas and other artists had arrived from America 'yesterday' from which you might suppose their ship was late. However, from later reports it is clear that they were already in Australia but had been detained in quarantine!

The 'Great War' had ended with the signing of the Armistice on 11 November, but an epidemic was now spreading through the world, killing many thousands. It was called the 'Spanish Flu', but there was reason to believe it had begun in North America. In December strict quarantine was in force in the ports of Sydney and Melbourne.

The Jewells were featured halfway through the first half of the panto. It was an elaborate fit-up, with its own audience of marionettes. Acts included a performing elephant which carried its trainer off in its trunk, a lady taming three lions, wire walkers, dancers, Buffalo Bill on a bucking bronco, and a lady dancing on the back of a horse. There were also a couple of Highlanders who would 'mysteriously stretch to a height of seven feet and

with equal suddenness telescope to a height of one foot'. The show ended with 'a naval action'.

"Perhaps the Marionette Circus is almost too ingeniously absurd for the youngsters, and appeals more to the baldheads,"

"Perhaps the Marionette Circus is almost too ingeniously absurd for the youngsters, and appeals more to the baldheads," the Bulletin declared, "The eternal elephant and lion-taming acts are about the most humorous, but the lady on the bare-backed steed is also a capital farce."

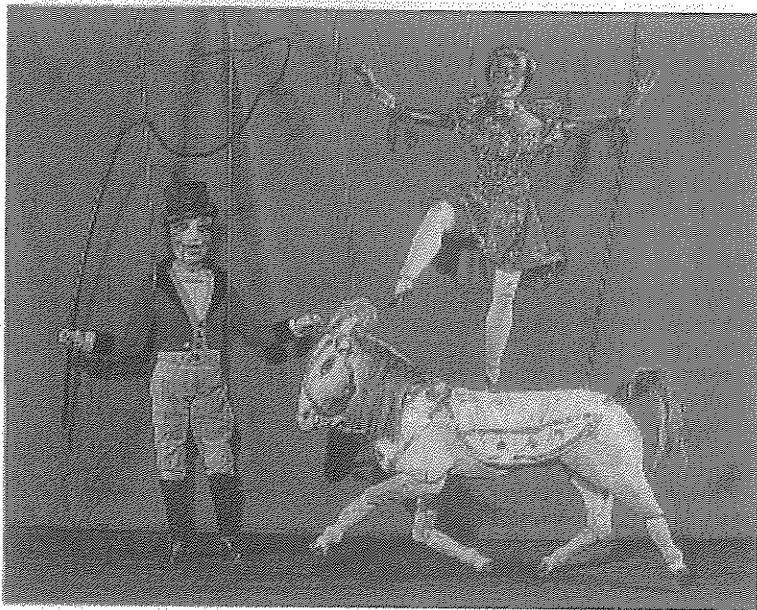
Some of the puppets survive in the huge private collection of Alan Cook of Los

Angeles and were on display in a 1999 exhibition in Everett, Washington. It is clear from a photo in the catalogue that there are two rods to the horse's body and one to its' head. There is also evidence of strings to the front knees and the back hooves. The lady seems to be entirely worked by strings. There are strings to her hands and elbows, but it looks as if these come together to make one string to both arms. There are also strings to both knees. Clearly the rods to the horse reduce the number of strings and allow more freedom of

movement to the dancer, but why then does that body rod go to the very point where she stands? If it doesn't have a further function it would be better nearer the head. Possibly the rod goes through a loop at the back of the foot which would allow her to turn,

the whip suggests extra strings to it, but this may just be for the photograph. Quite vigorous movement of the whip could be achieved with the rod alone.

The ringmaster has a moving mouth. There also seems to



kneel and even jump up from the horse. She is brown-skinned, but her wooden legs are covered with pink stockinet down to the ankles. The elbow joints on the uncovered wooden arms are hidden by the red-ribbon decoration.

In addition to strings, the ringmaster has three very obvious rods, one to the whip and two to the knees. The latter are fastened above the joints which indicates they are not rigidly attached, but why are these rods rather than strings? Does he dance perhaps? The continuation of

be a string from his neck which is perhaps there to bring his other hand towards his face. Perhaps what we are seeing is really a shadow of a string that raises the hand and allows him to lift his hat. But what is that in his other hand? This is surely before the days of hand-held microphones, and it's not the way you hold a cigar! I suspect that what he holds is a baton partly obscured by the horse's head. Further, I think that the knee-rods are to give sufficient control over the puppet for it to be able to jump astride the horse's neck for the finale. Maybe that is also why the

body-rod is not nearer the horse's head.

During the run there was a very dramatic turn of events. The flu epidemic had arrived and people were dying. On Tuesday, 28 January, the government ordered all theatres and cinemas to be closed. Schools that were to reopen after the summer holidays on the following Monday, were now to remain closed. N.S.W. and Victoria were separated from the rest of Australia as a quarantine area, so normal transport between Sydney and Melbourne was possible. But passengers from Victoria to Tasmania had to spend seven days in quarantine at their own expense before embarking, and you needed a permit to travel to South Australia. By the time the epidemic ended in 1920 almost 12,000 Australians had died from it.

On Thursday 30 January the Minister of Health received a delegation of theatre and cinema owners and managers. The General Manager of J. C. Williamson's spoke for them saying that 2,200 people earning £7,930 weekly were now out of work. Of these 1,140 earning £5,300 weekly worked in live theatres. In addition the weekly rentals of theatres totalled £2,300. That afternoon the Minister received a delegation of

equally concerned theatrical employees.

The theatres remained shut for five weeks, and began to reopen on 6 March. 'Goody Two Shoes', still including 'Jewel's Marionette Circus', reopened on Saturday 8 March with a "grand vice-regal performance". In attendance were the Governor-General, the Governor, the Lord Mayor, the Chief Justice and their wives.

The season was to have ended on „8-hour Day%, Monday 7 April so that the show could open in Sydney on the following Saturday, but once again the theatres in Sydney were shut. The Melbourne season was extended another week and the panto moved to the Theatre Royal in Adelaide instead, for a two-week season beginning Easter Saturday, 19 April.

It finally opened at Her Majesty's, Sydney (in Pitt Street) on 17 May, 5 weeks late, and ran until 4 July. A two-week season began in His Majesty's, Brisbane on 12 July and, after two days in Toowoomba, the pantomime was to travel to New Zealand. A reference to the marionettes in the Brisbane Courier referred to them as "Jewel's Mannikins", and that term 'mannikin' (or 'manikin') for a marionette was sometimes used by other companies.

Curiously while the Jewells had been in Melbourne there was a similar marionette show at the Tivoli in Adelaide in the first half of January, where the pantomime was 'The Old Woman Who Lived in a Show'. This was Petram's 'World-Famed Marionettes'. Mr and Mrs Petram's performance lasted a quarter of an hour and boasted 300 figures. There were ballet dancers, acrobats, a dancing horse etc. A puppet audience sat in the boxes at the side of the miniature theatre, and a puppet orchestra played throughout the show. Mrs Petram appeared at the end of the show to accept the applause.

I know no more about the Petrams. The Bulletin referred to this performance as "the Petram revival of the old marionette show". The presenter of the show was the Australian entrepreneur William Anderson (1868-1940), who had opened Wonderland City, 'The Coney Island of Australia', in 20 acres in Tamarama, just south of Bondi, Sydney at the end of 1906. This complex (recalled today by Wonderland Avenue, Tamarama) had included a marionette theatre.

Illustrations.

The ballerina and circus performers belong to Alan Cook of Los Angeles who has a private collection of over 3000 puppets. Some of Alan's puppets were exhibited in Everett, Washington in 1999, about the time of a national festival of the Puppeteers of America in nearby Seattle. The photographs by James Arrabito are from the exhibition catalogue, 'The Mantell Manikins Return Home to Everett' (August 1999) Permission has been granted for their reproduction here.

Adapting Traditions

By Dennis Murphy

After many years as an Australian puppeteer using modern puppetry I decided to adapt puppetry from the Italian Commedia dell'Arte tradition. Originating in the 16th century, this style of puppetry is still being practiced in Italy.

While much has been written on the Mask tradition, the Puppetry branch had been largely neglected. So I went to Italy in 1992 to begin gathering information and to see first-hand how this old artform plays to modern audiences there.

I found that the performances were still well-received by their audiences who were very familiar with the style and the characters. Children in the front rows were thoroughly engaged as were the adults up the back. The shows were in local dialect and employed the type of puppet and staging prevalent in that region of Italy. The puppeteers saw themselves as carrying on a tradition, often a family tradition going back several generations. Most had been trained by a Puppet Master.

My job was to translate and reconstruct an alien cultural form to make it accessible to modern Australian audiences while balancing up two concepts that seem diametrically opposed - Tradition and Invention.

I feel I was informed by history but not enslaved by it. I was aiming for renovation rather than mere restoration. But how much innovation can be done to a tradition before it stops being a tradition and becomes an individual's work?

Traditions have never been etched in stone. They have a history. Passing on a tradition does not inhibit the development of an individual style. The success of any innovation is dependent on the ultimate judge - the Audience.



Successful inventions are then imitated and eventually become "traditional".

All the Commedia dell'Arte performers were particularly conscious of their audience. Working in improvised comedies made them very adaptable and experimentation was second-nature to them.

Success with an audience was immediately detectable through laughs, applause and the takings at the end of the show. The performers were so in tune with their audiences that as society changed over the centuries the shows evolved along with them.

Not being trained under a Puppet Master I had no one to stop me from experimentation and innovations. So I felt I had a free hand in my adaptation subject, as always, to the arbitration of the Australian Audience.

The principle cultural difference between Italian and Australian audiences was that Australians did not have any previous knowledge of Commedia. I would have to establish the characters and their relationships with each other at every performance.

I had to eliminate the dialect humour and specific Italian regional references, of course, substituting English and Australian accents to show the social status of each character. The upper class characters speak

Standard British or Received Pronunciation (RP) while Arlecchino the servant speaks with an immigrant's accent. Isabella speaks RP while her maid has a Liverpudlian accent.

Most of the traditional themes and techniques transferred easily, e.g., physical buffoonery, word

play, clown-like figures, satire, interaction with the audience, gross exaggeration, trickery and breaking of ordinary rules of social etiquette.

There were differences in social etiquette between the Italian and the Australian cultures. Generally speaking, Australian audiences tolerated sexual references better than scatological references and the mention of Death carried more of a taboo. The inclusion of traditional violence was problematic. The only real taboo I felt was "Don't alienate the audience". If violence and references to Death make the audience uncomfortable, they are dropped. Society has changed.

As Dina and Joel Sherzer point out in their book, **HUMOR AND COMEDY IN PUPPETRY**, all new forms of puppetry even if invented yesterday, draw on many features and techniques that have always been characteristic of puppets.

In the end I was amazed to find so much of what worked with an Italian audience in the 16th century still works with a 21st century Australian audience. And that must be the test of any successful "Tradition" - Does it work with its audience?

Further Reading

SHERZER, Dina & Joel eds. **HUMOR AND COMEDY IN PUPPETRY**, Ohio, Bowling Green Uni. Popular Press, '87

BURKE, Peter. **POPULAR CULTURE IN EARLY MODERN EUROPE**, London, Temple Smith, '78

WARM UP EXERCISE

THROWING STICKS

Throwing Sticks, as the name suggests, is a throwing and catching game. Some doctors say throwing and catching is one of the best things you can do focus and warm your brain as it involves using both sides of the brain. It is an excellent way to warm up a group before a puppetry workshop or rehearsal as it also increases hand-eye co-ordination and peripheral vision use.

There are heaps of variations participants can do at each stage of this warm-up.

(i) Standing in a circle as a group, each with one stick of bamboo or rolled newspaper. Participants must look to the left holding their sticks beside them at chest height, perpendicular to the floor.

Participants are going to, as a group, throw with their right hands and catch with their left. Elect one person as the caller. The caller begins the "and, throw" chant again. Participants bend slightly on the "and" and "throwing" altogether on the "throw." Participants must use their peripheral vision to throw the stick. The stick needs to travel vertically through the air without spinning.

Keep repeating, beginning chanting slowly until the group gets the hang of the exercise and then increasing the pace of the chant to establish a rhythm.

(ii) When a good rhythm is established, stop and reverse directions (throwing with their left hands and catching with their right)

(iii) As in Part Two (ii), add in second stick.

(iv) Reverse directions

(v) When group is able to successfully manage continual throws in both directions, try throwing 8 throws to the right then without stopping 8 to the left. The caller must call out "change" when it's time for the group to change directions.

The ultimate aim is to have a circle of throwing sticks that goes;

8 throws to the right, change
8 left, change,

4 right, change, 4 left, change

2 right, change, 2 left, change,

1 right, change, 1 left, change,

1 right, change, 1 left, change,

1 right, change, 1 left, change,

1 right, change, 1 left, stop.

REVIEWS

STORMY NIGHT

*Performed by
Terrapin Puppet Theatre*

Reviewed by

Sue Moss

Terrapin Theatre's latest production "Stormy Night" is based on Peta Murray's adaptation of Michèle Lemieux' children's story.

Unable to sleep one stormy night a young girl lies awake, her head full of questions; "Is there only one of me in the world?" With her dog for company the girl embarks on a journey of dreams and visions. Through a combination of shadow puppet animation, music and bunraku puppetry the girl's metaphysical speculations about life, death, friendship and destiny are explored.

A house appears through clouds. At each window a square of yellow light illuminates the night. The raked stage design enables performers Kirsty Grieson, Jacob Williams and Sarah Duffus, to manipulate and move a playful dog and a girl preparing for bed. The ritualised dark clothes associated with the Bunraku style beautifully accentuate and merge with the girl's excited restlessness.

"I can't sleep" she complains, as a buzzing mosquito and a

storm conspire to disturb her half-sleeping, half-waking state. An egg segues to infinity then to a face. Later more faces distort and blur. The fracture-zone of the psyche resides in the territory of the young girl's wakeful questions. Ben Sibson's evocative sound score teases and enhances her nocturnal meditations.

A feature of the production is designers Greg Methé and Julia Christie's two-dimensional forms that seamlessly transmute into three-dimensional expressions of the child's questioning mind.

"Stormy Nights" is a lyrical and evocative theatre. "Where does infinity end?" "Does God live there?" asks the girl.

These are BIG questions; philosophy for kids and adults. This production offers no answers, rather it invites the audience on a journey of the imagination across space and time. "Stormy Nights" incorporates challenging philosophic concepts - elements of Platonism, determinism, free will, and existentialism mingle and swirl around the momentum of her journey.

Do we live the world? Or does the world live us? "Stormy Night" counterpoints light and shadows with a child's night journey through a world of the virtually real.

FLAMINGO BAR

*Performed by
Figüren Theater Tübingen*

*Reviewed by
Victoria Osbourne*

Flamingo Bar was performed at One Van Theatre Festival in Blackheath in January 2002

Oh really the editor wants a review only six months later how fresh will it be? This review dredged up from the recesses of my deep esteem.

I put on the CD of the musik fur das figüren theatre tübingen and try to breathe life into that squash court of bright light where puppeteer Frank Soehnle so nonchalantly strung us all along.

Karin Ersching drove the technical vehicle so seamlessly we did not consider her efforts at all. To what extent do sound and light make theatre? To the extent it could all fit into one van. The music pulsed and heaved and pushed the show along. To what extent does puppetry depend on loving lighting? To the extent we could see those bones breathe.

The first thing Frank did was cross stage right and sniff the puppet's leg. He inhaled the aroma of the frock. He gave us sensory experience just straight away so tactile, so alive with scented possibility.

Then there was an impression of marionettes made of mortal remains, their long limbs pointed into distress, their eyes caring into emptiness.

He did not manipulate the marionettes so much as allow them to arrange themselves. He would assist the puppet to raise her leg and expect the puppet to come to order.

Soehnle had an extra-ordinary relationship with his puppets.

The man/peacock was strung into attitudes of pleading, of desire, of desperation so intense that the audience clenched their collective abdomen. He hung a puppet and it swayed, spinning slowly in the mote-ridden light, like a prisoner, like a dancer, like a politician caught dangling from the wrong sexual deviance. He would literally throw a puppet toward an attitude, knowing gravity would bring the puppet life.

And if the puppet did not do what he wished, if the puppet insisted on twisting its arm in an ugly way or catching the strings uncomfortably, then Soehnle would argue with it. Come on, he would silently urge the puppet, get on with it.

I've never seen a puppeteer berate his creations like Frank. He had no preciousness. He didn't care. They were his fellow performers and if they didn't

do their job, well, they were useless.

But they did work, those sculptured bones, those pointed spirits, those flouncing feathers and those bloody Oedipal tears of unrolling tights. Can you imagine the tension when the dagger sharp chopstick leg slid erotically into the eye socket? This was far more than mere strip tease. This was strip assassination.

Soehnle himself became a puppet, forcing his muscular hairy legs into tiny ladies shoes. The lady developed from his lap, an old woman with wispy hair. No, just as we thought we recognised her, she was unmasked, revealing an alternative yearning we knew to be true.

But it was the intermittent vignettes with the little dog that captured our audience's heart. The little dog came with Frank to see the opera. The little dog was so cute.

Frank commenced by arranging a row of theatre seats, joined in the old fashioned way, in the middle of the stage. He then approached the seats as though an audience surrounded him. I'm sure I saw them. I'm sure the stage was quite crowded when the lights went down and the opera commenced. When he was sure the rest of his

audience was absorbed, he revealed his little dog who popped out of his coat to enjoy itself watching the opera.

Here we could see Soehnle's separation skills most vehemently. His own performance was marching to a completely different drummer than that dog. Maybe it really was a trained dog? The dog was perky, cheeky, sort of a pencil slim ghost of Basil Brush in a German cabaret kind of way if you get what I mean.

Soehnle himself was more sombre, captivated by the opera and aware that he was audience. He had certain duties to perform as audience, such as keeping his dog hidden by the fan, under control, apologising to his fellow audience who may have been offended. But he could not help himself, he was finally overcome by the tragedy unfolding on the unseen opera stage. He wept as the heroine died in an agony of cadence.

Unfortunately, his little dog had been trying desperately to attract his attention. When the dog failed, it too expired in a most dreadful and dramatic manner. Frank displayed such comic timing our audience was brimming with tears when he realised that his little dog was dead. I can't tell you what happens next.

You should have seen it.
Really.

Then he does the most extraordinary thing of all. He's sitting in the theatre seats, on stage and he becomes aware that he's looking at an audience. The audience (us) becomes aware that this man has just dropped all pretence of performance. His mask is off, he is just a man, staring out into the audience. He seems to be confused.

Surely he is the audience?
What is our expectation?
Surely we cannot expect him to perform?

Then we see stage fright.

He holds this bare self consciousness for eternity (the audience reflected endlessly) then he shrugs, packs up the theatre row and goes about his show, twisting and tormenting his puppets and allowing us, the real audience, to get on with our job.

Bertold Brecht said that theatre happens in the audience. Frank threw that convention hard into the fourth wall for a meta-theatrical moment such as rarely seen in this country.

When they say in their program notes that they are looking in their work for the borderline of puppet-theatre they're not kidding.

Come back das figuren theater tbingen, we love you.

RISINGHIGHER

*Performed by
Polyglot Puppet Theatre
and the Carlton &
Kensington Highrise
Community*

*Reviewed By
Lorrie Gardner*

"Polyglot Puppet Theatre's show "Rising Higher" is a remake from the production performed last year called "High Rise". It certainly did rise higher - especially in my eyes since last year I saw the show that had to be brought inside due to high winds and was no longer spectacular. (See "Australian Puppeteer" Winter - Spring, 2001). This time I saw the production in all its glory.

Polyglot has remade many of the show's props and stages and this time performed inside but in a room that has a very high ceiling - the Arts House in North Melbourne Town Hall. The story line is the same - a celebration of our migrants and the peoples who live in the Carlton High Rise flats and their stories. However help from children and staff from the Carlton Primary School, together with children from the Kensington Avenue Playground has been acknowledged this production.

I took my five year old granddaughter, Kartina.

We arrived early and entered a large room with mats all over the floor and colourful stages set all around the large hall. We settled ourselves almost alone on a mat toward one end and speculated on what might happen. Before long we were not alone - the mats all filled with people - audience everywhere - hundreds I think. The idea was for the audience to turn around in our spaces to see action all around us. An aisle was kept around the hall between the stages and the mats and now musicians appeared there to keep the audience happy while late comers were seated.

Kartina was most excited when the red scarf which the puppet, Hiba, dropped from a high window floated in a beam of light over the audience! We loved the large lighted boats that progressed around the hall. Kartina was also excited when, at one place, images appeared on all the walls and ceiling. The show was not long and Kartina loved the visual imagery and especially she loved seeing children working the puppets. Hopefully she came away with a feeling of the importance of all peoples living and working together - she certainly came away happy!

My own reactions were, that sitting one end, I was not able to hear the story

told in the stage at the far end of the hall. These stories were recorded with the voices of the residents speaking, and, unlike when I first saw them in the small hall last year, this time the clarity was sadly lacking. They seemed somehow over shadowed by the spectacular events all around us and this was a pity because to me the stories seemed important. Children operated puppets to the stories, but even this visual could not hold Kartina when the stage was so far away from us. She was happier with the story in the stages close to us but did not really comprehend what was happening even then.

So much work has gone into this project by many people. Congratulations Polyglot for the vision and congratulation to all the children and other helpers for realising this vision!

NEWS FLASH

'Wollongong Students Discover Puppets'

*Article supplied
by Adam Kronenberg*

Don't Call Us, a show written by Adam Kronenberg and performed by graduating students of the Performance course at the University of Wollongong, was my first experience with puppetry, and what a magical one!

I had the pleasure of puppeteering a banraku puppet that we fondly named 'Babushka' because of her emergence into the play from the inside of a singing 'diva' puppet. The other performers and I had no previous experience with puppetry, and spent four weeks with Kronenberg developing our skills to a performance level that would see us through into greener pastures where puppets never 'corpse' and performers get paid.

Don't Call Us was borne from an idea designed around a movement-based narrative integrating tools such as puppetry, acrobatics and a strong live soundscape. The show raises questions about the degeneration of interpersonal communication in the monopolising world of telecommunications, through an exciting and visually dynamic artform incorporating puppetry, acrobatics, song, dance and multimedia. Puppetry was employed to tackle the more fantastical elements of *Don't Call Us* such as walking and talking mobile phones, a singing telephone exchange and a sewing babushka doll.

Don't Call Us reflects the world in a frenzy of technology, but it is the puppetry that allowed us to create a world - a world where mobile phones have their own lives, opinions and personalities - a representation of a future

world that may come to fruition if the theme of the play is ignored.

Creating this world involved intense training in both puppetry and acrobatics, expanding my horizons to places I never thought I'd venture to.

We learnt to explore our creative sides and take risks, but most importantly, developed a sensitivity and awareness to the movement required to bring these inanimate objects that we call 'puppets' to life. I found my experience with puppetry and with *Don't Call Us* awakened me to a new mode of expression that is unlike any other I have experienced - an expression that removes focus from yourself, but establishes such a connection with the body

and mind that the slightest tilt of the puppet's head floods you with the emotion and sensation felt when acting yourself.

The show has been amazing to learn and rehearse, and the life that we feel in performance transmits to the audience through the sheer focus required to tell the story. The experience has broadened our horizons, and we wish to expand them even further to allow a nationwide tour of *Don't Call Us* to take place in the future - a treat that will be well worth waiting for!

What's On

VICTORIA

Polyglot Puppet Theatre

Workshops

Basic Puppetry Skills

Tutor: Sarah Kriegler
(TBC)

When: August (TBC)

Cloth and Cane

Tutor: Vanessa Beck

When: September 7th
& 8th, 12 - 5PM

Being Objective

Tutor: Katy Bowman

When: September
14th & 15th, 12 - 5PM

Advanced Puppetry Manipulation

Tutor: Heather Monk

When: November TBC

Bookings essential:

Phone: (03) 9827 9667

Polywork continues as our free monthly workshop for practicing artists.

We're gathering quite a creative team and are finding it really great to be exploring each other's arts forms and puppetry ideas.

Call the office Monday - Friday between 10am - 4pm for further details

Shows

The Mighty How

The Mighty How is in rehearsal for a second season of schools touring

Touring dates are July 22nd - September 6th.

There will be a VIP night for industry members on Friday 2nd August. Please call Polyglot on 9827 9667 to book your ticket.

New cast members are Tiresa Ballard and Krisztian Bagin.

Studio Polyglot

Studio Polyglot has a two week season this year with a wonderfully diverse program of emerging artists and new short works. *Studio Polyglot* is part of the Melbourne Fringe Festival.

When: September 23rd - October 6th

Artists include: Bruce Paterson, Jaqui Cane, Graeme Davis, John McDonald, Joe Blanck, Ania Reynolds, Jai Hartnell, Ken Arnold.

Further information:

Polyglot Puppet Theatre

27a Cromwell Rd

Sth Yarra, 3141

Victoria

Ph (03) 9827 9667

<polyglot@vicnet.net.au>

<polyglotpuppets.com.au>

Black Hole Theatre

Bigger, Badder and Down Right Meaner

By Paul Newcombe

Yes!! Black Hole Theatre is returning in October 2002 - more sex and more gratuitous violence in the new production of *Caravan*. Since you last heard from us either at the One Van Festival, Blue Mountains or at The Commercial Hotel Yarraville, we were forced to ground with members of the company going to work in television, theatre and various other commitments. During this hiatus, the script for *Caravan* took on a life of its own, growing in size with new characters and more bloody murders and acts of indecency.

Now two years later Black Hole has regrouped and reemerged with a fatter script in arm, and a new cast. They are as follows:

Paul Newcombe - master mind and fingers
Rod Primrose - fingers
Victoria Osborne - fingers
David Franzke - sound
Daryl Cordell - mechanic
Sue Malberg - production
Catherine Barry - eyes
Nancy Black - eyes and script

Sadly missed are Megan Cameron and Sue Giles who have gone to run with another mob.

Now with a full hand, Black Hole has begun rehearsal. *Caravan*

is bloody pulp fiction performed with miniature puppetry, shadows and fancy low tech special effects. Caravan is a slick clever production, not to be missed.

Note: the production is strictly Adults Only

Venue: 150-156 Dante's
Gertrude Street Fitzroy (corner
Napier Street)

Dates: Wednesday to Sunday
9-13 October, 16-20 October
2002

Times: At night (to be confirmed)

Enquiries: Paul Newcombe (03)
9531 6193

Tyrannosaurus Sex

*More of a 'Willy' than a
'Tommy'*

Tyrannosaurus Sex is a warm and funny puppet rock opera about the hopes and dreams of a penis called Bob.

Bob is average size, just like 95% of the male population, but sadly he measures himself against impossible media stereotypes. Consequently, his self-esteem is fragile. Bob must confront his fears before he can finally be reconciled with his body.

The puppetry ranges from small, intimate tabletop moments to full size mutant dinosaur mayhem. Rod puppets, a variety of black theatre techniques and a large suit puppet monster offer a diverse and stimulating spectacle.

The songs include delicate introspective ballads (Hiding in

me), techno-funk (Tyrannosaurus sex), meaty heavy metal (SNAGS on the Barbie) and catchy sing-alongs (Size matters).

Tyrannosaurus Sex involves some of Australia's most experienced puppetry practitioners:

Director: Richard Bradshaw
Lighting: Designer Phil Lethlean
Puppeteer: Heath McIvor
Designer/puppeteer: Philip Millar
Music: Singer/composer Derek Rowe

Venue: Upstairs at Bar Open,
Brunswick St, Fitzroy
Dates: 26th Sept - 19th Oct
Times: 8.45pm

[^]Discounts for UNIMA
members[^]



Spare Parts Puppet Theatre

Shows

The Deep

Based on the book by
Tim Winton

SUIT: 4-10 year olds

SYNOPSIS:

Alice and her family live by the sea. Every day her family goes down to the jetty for a swim. Her

mum and dad dive and make huge belly flops. KABOOM is the sound of her brothers doing bombies off the top rail. But Alice, who is not afraid of snakes or spiders, just watches from the rail. Alice is scared of the deep.

The Deep tackles Alice's fear of the deep ocean. She hates sticking in the shallows and feeling so small but is not brave enough to swim out where the ocean turns from green to blue. Although her family tries to encourage her to swim with them it is not until she has an unsuspecting swim with the local dolphins that her fear of the deep is conquered.

THEATRE SEASON:

23 September - 12
October

REGIONAL TOUR:

August/September 2002
Touring: Geraldton,
Bunbury, Karratha,
Kalgoorlie, Esperance,
Margaret River,
Merredin, Mandurah,
Albany

Further Information:
*Spare Parts Puppet
Theatre*

PO Box 897

Fremantle 6959, WA

Ph: (08) 9335 5044

Email:

<admin@sppt.asn.au>

Web: <www.sppt.asn.au>

NEW SOUTH WALES

The Rocks Puppet Cottage

The Rocks Puppet Cottage is open every weekend throughout the year and daily during school holidays. Performances are at 11am, 12:30 and 2pm. Free admission

Shows

*HARLEQUIN TO THE
RESCUE*
(MURPHYS PUPPETS)
JULY 13 to 19

PUPPETEASE
(ROSS BROWNING)
JULY 20 & 21
AUGUST 24 & 25
AUGUST 31
SEPTEMBER 1st
SEPTEMBER 7 & 8
SEPTEMBER 14&15
SEPTEMBER 21 & 22
OCTOBER 11, 12 & 13
OCTOBER 26 & 27
DECEMBER 14 & 15

A DOG'S LIFE
(MURPHYS PUPPETS)
JULY 27 & 28
AUGUST 3 & 4
AUGUST 10 & 11

*HARLEQUIN AND HIS
MAGIC LAMP*
(MURPHYS PUPPETS)
AUGUST 17 & 18

THE PRAM SHOW
(MURPHYS PUPPETS)
SEPTEMBER 30 &

*Attention all
independant artist and non-funded
companies!*

Please forward your workshops, performance dates
and schools tours
information to:
sarahjeankriegler@hotmail.com

OCTOBER 1st
DECEMBER 7 & 8

LOKI OF THE VALLEY
(JILL WATERS)
OCTOBER 2,3 & 4
DREAMER
(DREAMER PUPPETS)
OCTOBER 5,6,7,8,9,AND 10

*MURRAY RAINE'S
PUPPETS*
OCTOBER 19 & 20

*RICHARD BRADSHAW'S
SHADOW PUPPETS*
NOVEMBER 2&3
NOVEMBER 9 & 10
NOVEMBER 16 & 17

ANIMAL CRACKERS
(NORMAN
HETHERINGTON)
NOVEMBER 23 & 24
NOVEMBER 30
DECEMBER 1s

*ALLENBY'S FAMOUS FLEA
CIRCUS*
(MURPHYS PUPPETS)
DECEMBER 21 & 22
DECEMBER 28& 29

PROGRAMME IS SUBJECT TO
CHANGE.

UNIMA - Important Announcements SCHOLARSHIPS TO PUPPETRY SUMMIT

UNIMA will offer two scholarships to the Puppetry Summit to the value of \$200 each. The Summit is to be held in Melbourne in October. This will take the place of any other scholarships offered in 2002. Please place your applications for these scholarships to Mary Sutherland as soon as possible.

How to Subscribe to AUSTRALIAN PUPPETEER

One Years Subscription
(Four Issues)

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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.

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be full members of Unima
but want to share a
magazine, please add \$10-
to the normal membership
fee.

Please make cheques
payable to Unima
Australia,

and post to:

Treasurer, Unima Australia
PO Box 208
Elsternwick, VIC 3185

Unima Australia now has
an ABN: 16 949 470 066.

Note that we are not
registered for GST.

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UNIMA AUSTRALIA WEBSITE

<http://www.ozemail.com.au/~unima>

DEADLINES

Please note; there will not be another full edition of Australian
Puppeteer until after the National Puppetry Summit but an
interim newsletter will be forwarded to all members.

Newsletter deadline;

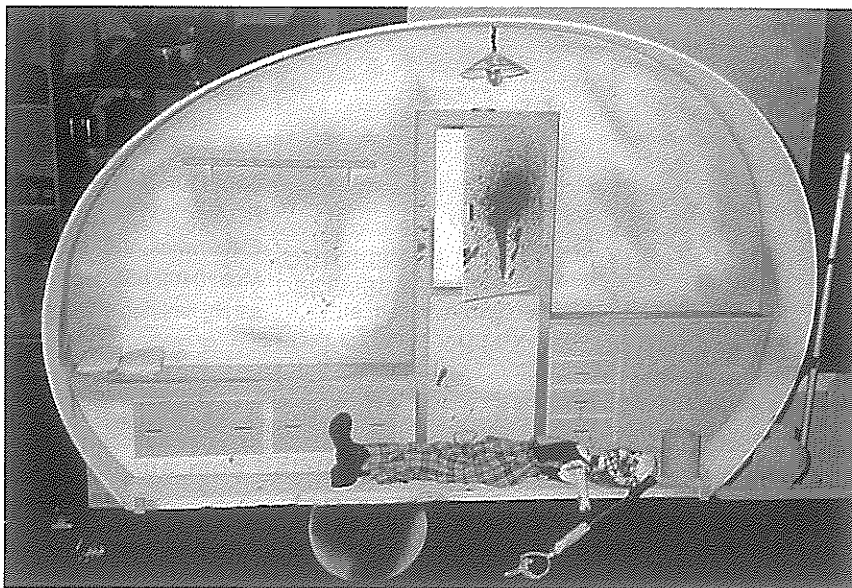
August 31st

Magazine deadline;

October 28th

Forward all information either to; sarahjeankriegler@hotmail.com
or

PO Box 208, Elsternwick, VIC 3185



Caravan by Black Hole Theatre Inc.
Front cover - *The Many faces of Handspan - Farewell*





Guidelines for future submissions to AUSTRALIAN PUPPETEER

We love to receive your wonderfull articles.

Please help the volunteers that spend hours putting each publication together by following these guidelines.

Please proof your work before sending it on

Send articles in *Microsoft Word* as *attachments* to an email, or on disc.

Font: **ARIAL, 12**

Please leave a *single space only* between sentences and *3 mm returns* between paragraphs.

Quotations marks used only when quoting the "spoken word", otherwise use 'single marks'.

Any queries or computer assistance, please contact me on <jgardner@labyrinth.net.au>

No formatting .. this means ..

No bolding

No centring, align left

All in sentence case (No **WHOLE** words in upper case)

*No
indentations*

With Reviews - please follow the format in this publication - **TITLE** (uppercase, 14, bold); space; ***show title/theatre*** (12, bold, italic); space; ***Reviewed By*** (12, bold Italic); space; then body of review.

THANK YOU FOR THIS - it will make my job a lot easier! Remeber, any problems, contact me by email or phone Lorrie.