

NO. 27

AUTUMN 2005

**AUSTRALIAN**



**PUPPETEER**

UNION INTERNATIONALE DE LA MARIONNETTE



UNIMA Logo designed by Norman Hetherington

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## EDITORIAL

Welcome to this edition of Australian Puppeteer. Once again I have enjoyed immensely all the contact with the contributors and I thank them all for their cooperation and assistance.

Sadly we say goodbye to Lorrie Gardner and it is evident that Lorrie had a big affect on many people's lives. I will note here that Lorrie will be featured in an exhibition about **Americans in Australia** at the Immigration Museum, Flinders St, Melbourne. The exhibition opens on May 27 and will continue for 3 months. Information at - [www.museum.vic.gov.au](http://www.museum.vic.gov.au)

Gary Friedman and I have been regularly hosting Puppet Film Screenings at The Sydney Film School (82 Cope St, Redfern) and we are extremely grateful to Lesley Oliver for allowing us to inhabit the School for these occasions. We have shown films from such companies as Philippe Genty, Drak Theatre, and Jim Henson as well as local companies Spare Parts, Terrapin, and Sydney Puppet Theatre. If anyone is interested in submitting a film or performance (including works in progress), or would like to be included on the mailing list, please contact me - [saferris@ozemail.com.au](mailto:saferris@ozemail.com.au)

Last week we were privileged to host a shadow puppet performance based on The Tempest, performed by Kim, Symon, Ewan and Rachael Macintyre of The Puppet Lab in Scotland. The family has been travelling in Asia for 5 months on a research trip partly funded by the Scottish Council. Their website is very interesting, especially the Macintyre Family Weblog - [www.puppet-lab.com](http://www.puppet-lab.com) I hope that we can continue to encourage visiting puppeteers to perform for their peers and perhaps one day a Puppet Centre could coordinate such activities.

All the best and happy reading  
**Samantha Ferris**

*In the last edition some members may have noticed two errors in titles of stories. I would like to assure readers these errors were the fault of myself and not Jennie Pfeiffer who helped me proof read. The errors occurred as a result of a last minute rush to get the magazine to the printers and hopefully will not be repeated in my next edition. Apologies and cheers,  
Sarah Kriegler, editor Summer-Spring 2005.*

## AUSTRALIAN PUPPETEER

**THE MAGAZINE OF UNIMA AUSTRALIA**  
**NO. 27 AUTUMN 2005**

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**CONTRIBUTORS:** Richard Bradshaw, Jennie Pfeiffer, Jenny Gardner, Gary Friedman, Nancy Black, Sue Wallace, Philip Mitchell, Anne Forbes, Susan Jones, Fiona Gentle, Bryan Woltjen, Brad Spolding, Sean Manners.



**Karen Hethey and Bryan Woltjen**  
See page 26

## PRESIDENT'S REPORT

The death of our former President, Lorrie Gardner has hit us all. An obituary appears elsewhere in this issue. She will be remembered for her generous, happy contribution to our puppetry community, and especially for pursuing the idea of hosting the UNIMA Congress in Australia and the Incorporation of our organisation. It is sad that she won't be physically with us in Perth in 2008.

Many of us have fond personal memories of Lorrie. I got to know her and the family when I became a full-time puppeteer in 1969 and my work was based in Melbourne. Edith Murray, my mentor, had already made contact with Lorrie through a visiting English puppeteer friend, Dora Beacham (It was Dora who had encouraged Lorrie to take up puppetry). I knew hardly anyone in Melbourne, and spent many happy hours with the Gardners. (In my scrapbook is a photo from "The Age" of young Jenny Gardner in the audience of my first public show in Melbourne.)

The 2008 UNIMA Congress and Festival in Perth is being organised by Spare Parts Puppet Theatre which is bearing all the risk. It is very important that we do our best to make it a great success. In November last year I sent off letters drafted with Spare Parts to arts officers in all states and territories. Its aim was to encourage administrations to support individuals and companies wishing to be involved.

I received a prompt and positive response from Darwin encouraging Northern Territory artists to consider applying for funding through the Arts Grants program. Information can be found at [www.arts.nt.gov.au](http://www.arts.nt.gov.au). The response from the N.S.W. Ministry for the Arts congratulates UNIMA and wishes every success with the event but explains that their Cultural Grants Program currently does not support attendance at conferences or interstate travel. Individual cases may get support if they have demonstrable outcomes for the arts in NSW. No other responses have been received yet, but we do know that the Congress proposal presented in Croatia last June was strongly supported by W.A. administrations.

Since the topic of grants has been raised, I want to mention grants which are available through our organisation. The UNIMA Australia Inc. Scholarship is funded from an interest-bearing account and is presently worth \$500, to be awarded annually. The Handspan Visual Theatre International Travel and Study Grant of \$2000 is available annually until the fund is exhausted. More information is available elsewhere in this journal.

We are planning a new award honouring Edith Murray which will probably be to assist a young puppet enthusiast to take part in UNIMA 2008. (Edith was effectively the founder of UNIMA Australia.) The funding will come from a surplus earned at a small festival in Sydney in 1979. Although the Marionette Theatre of Australia, (of which I was then Artistic Director) administered the event, regrettably (in my view) it would not accept any financial risk.



That risk was taken on by Norman and Margaret Hetherington, and fortunately the festival more than covered costs; the excess is now with UNIMA. In the circumstances the Hetheringtons were quite entitled to keep any profit (just as they would have borne any loss) so we are doubly grateful for their generosity.

I also want to draw your attention to the Arlyn Award for puppet theatre design. This was set up in Vancouver, Canada by Luman Coad in memory of his wife, Arlyn Coad, who died in 1999. (The Coads performed in Australia in 1975.) Applicants can be from any country, and there is a trophy plus a money prize equal to the interest earned by the fund's capital. I have contributed to this award, and also had the honour of announcing the first winner at the Puppeteers of America festival in Tampa in June, 2001. That was to Vladimir Oskolkov of Tjumen, Russia. There was no award in 2002 and the second winner was Sophia Clist of London, U.K. The next award, for 2004-5, will be announced in the middle of 2006. For details go to: [arlynaward.org](http://arlynaward.org) or write to Arlyn Award Society, c/o NVCAC, 335 Lonsdale Avenue, North Vancouver BC, V7M 2G3 CANADA.

More information was available for the last issue than could be accommodated. One result was that there was no mention of the three "Dreamer" shows that were presented at the One Van Festival by our hard-working Secretary, Richard Hart. This was especially unfortunate because of the enthusiastic response from his audiences. At the end of his new show, "Dreamer in the Deep", with its splendid puppets, Richard got the kind of applause puppeteers dream of, with many people standing to clap.

**Richard Bradshaw**  
**UNIMA Australia President**

## ASIA-PACIFIC COLUMN

I am preparing for my first UNIMA Executive meeting in Croatia in 1-3 July, and will be pestering many of you for information about your current activities to include in my report. A UNIMA Asia-Pacific Commission meeting is also scheduled in Singapore early October. I am spending the intervening months in India, with assistance from the Australia Council, for both personal research, and for the Asia-Pacific Commission, for further development of professional networks with significant cultural organizations. Of course I'll also be promoting the Congress, and Australia as a destination for delegates, artists and Festival audiences.

**UPDATE** to news of communities affected by the Boxing Day Tsunami. The following is a summary of the UNESCO performance project initiative forwarded by the UNESCO regional office. This is a pilot project and after evaluation more projects may be supported.

### **PRIORITY**

For the six months through May to October 2005, the use of indigenous performing arts as a culturally appropriate approach to post-trauma stress counselling implemented in close collaboration with the Asia-Pacific Performing Arts Network (APPAN).

# OBITUARY

## PUPPETEER'S LAST SHOW by Jenny Gardner

Name: Lorrie Gardner

Born: 1933

Died: March 27<sup>th</sup> 2005

LORRIE Gardner, who for almost 40 years brought the world of puppetry to millions of Victorian kindergarten and primary school children through the Gardner Puppet Theatre, has died after a six-month battle with pancreatic cancer. She was 72.

Lorrie's fascination with puppets began after she arrived in Melbourne from the United States of America. Initially Lorrie was prepared for a life as a chemist after studying science at Cornell University in Ithica, New York. It was here that she met her Australian husband, Harry on a blind date. The two married, then travelled to Melbourne in 1957, establishing a home in Ringwood East.

Children bring out the storyteller in us all and Lorrie was no exception. Her chemistry degree never saw the light of day again. Beginning with a small tabletop puppet theatre, she entertained her children and others from the neighbourhood; the show's popularity led to an expansion of her repertoire and the addition of a full-size travelling puppet theatre. The Gardner Puppet Theatre was formed in 1967, when she began catering for primary schools.

By the 1970s the theatre was well-established in Victorian schools and kindergartens and Lorrie joined the surge for purposeful theatre in education. Each performance included an interactive segment where children were given the opportunity to be involved in the show. This often was through the handling of giant props or puppets or by doing actions and movements. Puppet building workshops were also added.

The 1980s were hectic, and Lorrie performed more than 500 shows a year. She embraced themes that were current and topical. Her longest running shows were those where indigenous issues and/or environmental concerns were expressed - The Rainbow Serpent, Under the Sea and Rainforest Magic (where even micro-organisms were given voice) were some. The work was enjoyable, creative, and very demanding. But Lorrie was the quintessential performer, well rehearsed and professional, and always ready for the unexpected. Improvisation plays as important a role in puppetry as any of the choreographed action.

In later years Lorrie reverted to more traditional anecdotes, delighting in the simpler stories that engage and enthral young audiences. Music was also a passion of Lorries. She played flute and piccolo in the Maroondah Symphony Orchestra and several folk bands. To this end, The Gardner Puppet Theatre became part of Gardner Entertainments, which increased their repertoire to include Bush Music shows and science shows. Her husband Harry assisted in the delivery of these additional events.

With the rapid spread of her cancer, Lorrie's last show was in October last year at her grandson's kindergarten, completing a full circle of performances that began 38 years ago with a performance at her grandson's mother's kindergarten.

Lorrie's life was a full one, busy with her puppetry, music, celebration, family, friends and adventure. She was big-hearted, loved a good laugh and could ``shop 'til she dropped''. Her contribution to the world of puppetry was recently acknowledged with a life-time achievement award in puppetry that was presented by the Australian branch of the international puppetry organisation, UNIMA. There was no one more proud than herself - except perhaps her husband, children, Henry, Jenny and Gayle, and grandchildren, Kartina, Oliver, James and Andrew, who survive her.

Jenny Gardner is Lorrie Gardner's daughter.

## LOOKING FOR A MONSTER – PARALLEL ROADS

In 1999, while exploring an exhibition of Holocaust art in Jerusalem, I accidentally came upon an old play written for puppets by a young Czech boy in 1943. It was attached to the back of a children's publication 'VEDEM' from the concentration camp of Terezin, in Czechoslovakia. 'We are looking for a Monster' was written by Hanus Haschenburg, a thirteen-year old poet from Prague, who together with his mother was interned in Terezin in late 1942, before being deported to the death camp of Auschwitz two years later. Although I couldn't anticipate it at the time, this boy's play was to have an enormous impact on my life.

It is the story of an extraordinary boy and the terrible times he endured. Terezin was promoted by the Nazis to the world as "a paradise ghetto" and a 'humane solution to the Jewish question.' Terezin was described by one survivor as 'dancing under the gallows'. The boy's puppet play is an allegory of a cruel life in the camp. In it Hanus reveals the lies behind the events that took place in Terezin -

**Minister:** Your Highness! I will set up camps where people will forget how to think.

**King:** We don't need non-thinking people – we need thinking ones – the way I want them to think. Otherwise whom shall I rule in my old age?

The Minister is probably an SS-officer of the Kommandatur and King Illiterate 1st alludes to the Commandant of the camp.

Later in 1999, when I returned to visit my aging puppet master in the Czech Republic, after an absence of more than twenty years, he gave me an old puppet head, which he explained came from the war. I had to play detective to find out more information. It soon became apparent, after reading the boy's puppet play, that this mysterious puppet head and the play might be related!

Thus began a five year journey, which took me back to eastern Europe many times, the first of which saw me accidentally locked inside the gates of the Auschwitz death camp one summer's night in 1999. It was only in my dreams that young Hanus, murdered by the Nazis in 1944, approached me silently, while locked in Auschwitz, and invited me to witness his first puppet performance. This was to take place in the dead of night in his dimly candlelit barracks. This dream I incorporated into the stage production of "Looking for a Monster", which in 2001 became a successful stage show.



Hanus' play was brought to life for the first time on the world's stage. I linked the boy's life as a young Jewish artist during the Holocaust to my own struggle, growing up in Apartheid South Africa. Tracing Hanus' life, I filmed my journey to Prague, where Hanus was born and lived, to Terezin, where he was imprisoned for a year and finally to the death camp of Auschwitz-Birkenau in Poland, where the young poet tragically died.

I am now engaged in making a documentary film of Hanus' short life. Travelling around the world, I have discovered quite a few surviving boys, who surrounded Hanus in Terezin and contributed to the children's magazine VEDEM.

It's become a fascinating journey, with more and more discoveries each day, as I sift through documents and interviews to unveil a truth of incredible events that took place more than sixty years ago.

Look out for the next exciting episode to follow soon!  
Gary Friedman

## PROFILE

### Nancy Black – Black Hole Theatre

*The NSW Puppetry Conference in January this year was a great chance to meet people working in the field. There were several presentations and Melbourne's Black Hole Theatre spoke about their tour in Europe in 2004. I had to find out more.....S.F.*

**Do you find that when travelling in such a close-knit group people fall into roles ie the optimist, the party guy/gal, the pessimist, the nurturer?**

I kind of expected that - as certainly that's happened on other trips I've done - but this time, not really. I mean we DID have roles - to some extent determined by what we were doing (director, tech, or puppeteer) - to another extent determined by our basic personalities and to yet another extent determined by necessity. Only I could be the Slave Driver and the Banker - but at varying times everyone took on various roles. Some of the ones that came in handy were: Clown, Bright Ideas Person, Enthusiast, Cook, Problem Solver, Soother, Nurturer, Wise Uncle, Handyman. It became VERY clear that the unwelcome roles (which cropped up occasionally and usually from the same person(s) were: Needy Churlish Child and Whinger. The demands of the tour were too intense for those to be tolerated - and we were basically a good group. Maturity helped a lot.... hate to say it, but it's true. We were all over 30 (some of us by a lot), had traveled, had been through a lot with a lot of people, and knew that we couldn't afford to make big stinks. There was no point.



**'CARAVAN' – from left to right: Jacob Williams, Kalki Henenberg, Rod Primrose**

**\* What things affect wellbeing on tour (jetlag/fatigue/climate/diet) and therefore performance? What techniques did the group develop to overcome challenges?**

In our de-brief we talked about this. The most important thing we thought was the quality of our accommodation. Jetlag wasn't a problem for any of us - and indeed, most people who travel a lot have learned how to avoid it pretty well. We made sure before we left that the work schedules were not too difficult so fatigue wasn't an issue - and when the schedules were tight, we knew about them well in advance. For the most part our accommodation was just great. But once or twice it fell below par for reasons out of our control - and we found that it DID affect morale and general happiness. I hasten to add that even when the accommodation was poor it never bled into the performances. We had some of our best performances with our worst B&B. Interestingly, however, when the accommodation wasn't great but the performance venue and context WERE - the accommodation's shortfalls didn't matter as much.

I think the MOST IMPORTANT element is to go into a tour with a glass-half-full kind of attitude. The glass-half-empty people will always find something to complain about, they won't respond positively to the environment, they don't recognize a gift when it's given, they're always feeling needy and cheated, they're trouble. They pull the group down. Sometimes we had that - but not often! When a glass started emptying, someone would come in to counter the drainage and fill it up!

It was really important, especially over such a long period of travel, that we have our own rooms - wherever we were. We did share a couple of times, but only for short periods, and we recognized that it wouldn't work as a longterm option - despite producers and presenters hoping, for reasons of economy, that we would all double up! We also really liked being in a flat as opposed to a hotel - mainly because it allowed us to cook meals for ourselves, thereby saving money and bringing in a homey touch. Having said that, we all agreed that the 5 star hotel we stayed in in Warsaw was divine and made us think we'd gone to heaven!

I personally think diet has a big effect on people - but y'know - you can eat well (healthily) just about anywhere now - unless you're in the 3rd world and have no money. You just have to look, and not give in to the usual routine of endless junk. None of us did because we all cared obsessively about what we were eating and it was so much fun to be trying out the food from different cultures! The UK is not a gourmet's delight.....but even there we managed!

It was also fortunate that our gigs were usually for at least a week, and several times longer - ie we were in Edinburgh for a month, in Cork for 3 weeks, in Prague for nearly 2, in London for 2, Potsdam for a week, etc. etc. It was only at the end that we were doing 3 days here and 4 days there, and by then we'd got our routines down pat for bumping in and out, and the end was in sight - so we could cope with that schedule fine. If it had been continuous we would have found ourselves wrecked with fatigue.

I've also found that laying it all out clearly beforehand is reallllllly important - eg how much money was being paid for what, telling the group, even the ones who didn't want background, we are currently developing a series of short skits for big corporate and to know, what the cost structures were, how the budget was constructed - so that they all knew no one was being ripped off.



Artists often assume they are being ripped off by producers and it's *usually* not true - they just don't understand the cost structures. And someone up there was looking after us. We struck it gold so many times - just by meeting fabulous people, by having a driver who was heaven, by going to particular places at particular times and finding our spirits instantly revived, by seeing work that knocked our socks off - I dunno. It was luck, and we had it in spades.

### **Can you envisage regular overseas touring for Black Hole?**

There is no question that I want to continue performing overseas - both in our own right and, hopefully, in collaboration with other companies - theatre groups, not only puppet companies. The inspiration we found overseas was priceless. The challenge we faced with our audiences was unlike any we had had here - in terms of the forms we work with, the sophistication and refinement of our material, the quality of our craft, and most importantly - the depth and power of our ideas. It was fantastic to engage with people who felt passionately about visual theatre, who saw our work and responded to it strongly - who were both critical and ardently supportive. We felt nurtured in a very meaningful way. We had many many wonderful experiences, but overall we felt that our favourite places were Edinburgh, Poland and Brighton. There is more to explore however - particularly through Eastern Europe.... then also we haven't been to Asia yet.... nor the Middle East.... Another show, another adventure!

### **What next for Black Hole?**

We have 4 major works in varying stages of development: a children's piece, adapted from an Irish myth about selkies; a raunchy adult vaudeville piece set in Victorian London, with music by Jonathan Mills; a piece we began in collaboration with Dowtcha Puppets in Cork, Ireland about famine, war, madness and the quest for a hero; and a visual piece using a famed medieval painting as its catalyst. As those percolate in the outdoor events, and will also be offering adult workshops - aimed particularly at the corporate sphere. Our website will hopefully be up and running within the next 2 months, and everyone can keep up-to-date via that!

**blackholetheatre.com**  
**15/117 Sturt Street**  
**Southbank VIC 3006**  
**Tel/fax: 03 9696 0652**



**Rehearsal in a park in Prague**  
**Sarah Kriegler, Jacob Williams,**  
**Rod Primrose, bg - Kalki Henenberg**



# UNIMA PERTH 2008 UPDATE

Spare Parts Puppet Theatre will be the organisers of UNIMA PERTH 2008 on behalf of UNIMA Australia and the planning process is underway. It is scheduled for the first week of May 2008 and we hope that there will be a strong representation from South East Asia, the Pacific and of course a huge representation from Australia.

The proposed theme of the event is “**Journeys**”.

We are looking for performances, speakers, masterclass and workshop leaders, exhibition opportunities and participants in the running of the event. Like previous UNIMA festivals we can offer venue support, technicians, promotion, etc for the show but we are hoping that the artists can find support in their country to find there way here. We will be offering a percentage of box office for artists as a performance fee to cover costs.

The following components are being proposed for UNIMA 2008:

**The Congress** is the meeting of UNIMA members from around the world. This meeting will take place over 4 days.

**The Conference component** will feature practical masterclasses, discussion groups and speakers that will run over the 9 days of the festival. It is anticipated that a high profile puppetry artist will be invited to be the keynote speaker. We are proposing that some more intensive masterclasses and workshops happen before the event starts. (e.g. puppet making workshops in regional Western Australia, performance workshops that can be presented during the event.)

As **Digital puppetry** is moving at a great pace in areas like Film and Television, animation and game development, we wish to include Film television animation and animatronic screenings, discussions and demonstrations.

We will also be looking at having a **Festival Club** where spontaneous performances and events can happen, as well as informal chatting and socialising.

An adjudicated **performance competition** has been proposed that will comprise of short puppetry pieces.

**Exhibitions** of puppets from Australia and around the world will form a significant part of the event. These will be featured in Galleries and exhibition spaces around the city. It has been proposed that the exhibitions form a Journey around the city.

There will be **opening and closing events**...the opening parade being a journey through the streets of Perth culminating in a festive celebration of puppetry and journeys. **Community** participation and **street theatre** will contribute to what promises to be a spectacular opening.

We are still in early planning stages and ideas, contributions and suggestions of contributions are very welcome. If you would like more information or to make a proposal or suggestion, please contact:

**Philip Mitchell - Artistic Director**  
Spare Parts Puppet Theatre  
PO BOX 897  
Fremantle 6160 WA  
Tel: 61 8 93355044

# REVIEW

## Naked Puppet! What Naked Puppet?

By Jennie Pfeiffer

### 'Frankenstein'

John Fairfax Studio, Victorian Arts Centre

Director: Jessica Wilson

Writers: Jessica Wilson, Colin Sneesby and Anne Thompson

The review I commenced changed in the writing into a commentary on larger issues. Through various conversations with peers post-performance, and different polarising views that emerged in the 'arts' sessions of the recent Alfred Deakin Innovation lecture series held in Melbourne, key topics became foregrounded in my thinking. In broad strokes the debate revolves around the autonomy of the artist vs policy directions concentrating on audience and reception; fears that being overly concerned with audiences or works circumscribed by 'issues' - or pandering to policy criteria in search of support to get works produced - will lead to a closing down of creative potential. While there is substance to these valid concerns I'd like to highlight for a moment a seemingly obvious point that is easy to lose sight of. Frankenstein clearly exhibits the concerns of the mentioned debate. There is a difference between 'awareness of audience' and being driven by the demands of audience spectatorship (or production funding). There is also an argument to be introduced for 'audience development'.

Frankenstein is a wonderful narrative that still holds currency in the public domain. It is a story that has reached mythological status through its multiple retellings in popular media, comics, cinema, cartoons et al. Mary Shelley's novel is still on senior secondary and undergraduate university reading lists and most people understand the mention of 'Frankenstein's monster'. An adaptation of the novel for the puppetry stage has much potential for the resonance and rich dramatic potential contained in it. Not for a second do I suggest that stagecraft and excellence be compromised for any audience, but I do propose that an adaptation of the novel for literary students may well be different to one that is, for instance, developed for a festival circuit. I must assume that this production was developed with these target students in mind. In the puppetry world, it is an audience in great need of developing and a tough audience to crack for numerous reasons: for the assumption held that puppetry is only for children (even though we know it's not) and for the fact that in contemporary culture teenagers are for the most part a 'media savvy', cynical lot predominantly brought up on a diet of TV, mainstream Hollywood cinema and computer games.

So in this regard the production was a bold move in the right direction and for students of the novel it had all the elements: narrative as narration, a coherent engagement with the novel's text, an evocative set that established the Gothic flavour. In addition it was layered, historically placing it with a sequence about the French revolution, and projections showing clips of the famous Boris Karloff cinema version, and hence a self-awareness of its currency in popular culture, giving a context and points for student discussion.

For a production that had so much to recommend, it is difficult to pinpoint the source(s) of what, in fact, may be a series of problems, one perhaps being the source of another. Hence a series of questions: Did the set design and its proposed functions, such as the film rear-projections, inhibit other stage business eg sightlines, setting it far back in the space thereby reducing the scale of the puppets and stage action? I sat toward the front and lost much of the detail of Graeme Davis's marvellous puppets. Was this due to the layout of the Fairfax Studio, or are other venues also problematic? This would be difficult to remedy without serious reconfiguration. Did the layering departures from direct adaptation disrupt dramatic momentum? If not, perhaps more of them could be incorporated to avoid having them sit as isolated incidents. Something wasn't convincing about the narrating voice: was it the (actual) voice or the text? Did the tight playing space slow down the stage action at points? Those involved in the production can best answer these questions. I applaud the production for homing in on the over-15s. The audience on the day I attended were a rowdy bunch, but they did settle and watch. If it takes a naked puppet... or any other points of recognition for the age group, then I say proceed. Further development and resolution would enhance this production as a sustaining piece of puppetry theatre.

# REVIEW

## Nenhumas Cordas – Without Strings, The Puppet Show.

Cellar Theatre, presented by the Sydney University Dramatic Society, April 2005

by Sue Wallace

How could I pass up the opportunity of seeing this show when its adult oriented publicity declared itself in very big print to be a PUPPET SHOW? I was delighted, surprised and enthused by what I saw. The Cellar Theatre is a difficult space with a low ceiling, poles in the way (both for performers and audience) and basic seating. It is also friendly and intimate with the audience sitting only metres from the playing space.

The set for Nenhumas Cordas was a variety of playboards roughly draped in cloth. All the puppets were made from what appeared to be sheet foam that had been shaped and glued. Most kept the basic cream/yellow colour of the foam with some spray-painting to accentuate features. There were a mixture of hand puppets with moving mouths, two with live hands and others with hands operated by rods, a body puppet, animated boxes and one masked character. The program notes acknowledged the "low-fi aesthetic".



The show opened with the lonely guy, an unattractive puppet who finally meets up with an equally unattractive girl puppet. She steals his heart, literally, and so the story unfolds in episodes, following the journey of the heart. It has a lucky escape from a butcher, an adventure with boxes, an encounter with a bear, a monkey, an aggressive bird and a chihuahua. Lonely guy never retrieves his heart but is knitted a new one by a kindly bird like creature. The heart we lose to love is never really lost. It can be refreshed and transformed.

The episodes were introduced by a talking fish and commented upon by two angel/devil characters. The puppeteers were in view in most scenes.

This was a short show at forty minutes with a well-constructed dramatic flow, an understanding and willingness to play with puppetry and a good use of scale. The bear character was a body suit, larger than human, and momentarily terrifying. This was soon followed by an ingenious chihuahua that was nothing more than ping pong ball eyes and very large foam ears attached to the middle finger of the hand. The puppeteer's fingers were the dog's legs and a little bell on the underside gave a wonderful sound animation to this very charming character.

Perhaps this was the first experience of performing with puppets for some of the cast. The manipulation was uneven, some puppeteers were obviously more adept than others. The single masked character was stylistically jarring. It may have worked better with more costume. The text was pre-recorded which was unnecessary in such a small space and some voices were impossible to understand. This was a pity because the text was used sparingly and what I could hear was well written.

These are minor criticisms to a thoroughly enjoyable show. It was fantastic to see a group of young performers creating such good work with obviously very limited resources. "Nenhumas Cordas" deserves continued work and a broader audience.

**Created & performed by:** Nick Coyle, Phoebe Dixon, Simon Greiner, Brendan Strobl and Kay Yasugi.

**Directed by:** Simon Greiner

**Music by:** Tim Derricourt and Dave Rennick

# UNIMA 2008 LOGO COMPETITION BRIEF

## Event

The 20<sup>th</sup> UNIMA World Festival and Congress/ Conference is to be held in May 2008 in Perth Western Australia. This is the first time the event is taking place in the southern hemisphere.

The event, held every four years will encompass a ten-day international festival of puppetry, a conference, and the Congress of UNIMA where the Executives and Councillors from throughout the world meet to discuss organisational and artform issues.

Perth 2008, will open with spectacular ceremony. The Festival component will present performances and exhibitions from across the world throughout the City of Perth. The Congress/ Conference component will also offer a unique and exciting masterclass programme and lectures by guest speakers. The Festival is open to the general public.

The proposed theme of the event is "Journey" - connecting traditional to contemporary.

## Background to the Organisation

UNIMA (UNION INTERNATIONALE DE LA MARIONETTE) was established in 1929 for the purpose of internationally expanding and developing puppetry. It was designed to preserve the traditional puppetry of each country, assist the development of puppetry on a worldwide scale, and to spread puppetry as a means of cultural awareness.

UNIMA is a Non-Governmental Organisation affiliated to UNESCO, bringing together people from around the world who contribute to the development and the art of puppetry with the objective of using this art in the pursuit of human values such as peace and mutual understanding between peoples regardless of race, political or religious convictions and differences in culture, in accordance with the respect for fundamental human rights as defined in the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights (December 10, 1948).

UNIMA Australia is one of the national centres of UNIMA, and a voluntary body of which Spare Parts Puppet Theatre and its Artistic Director, Philip Mitchell are members. UNIMA Australia have entrusted the West Australian party to work on the presentation, structure and details of the bid to host the World Puppetry Festival and Congress/ Conference in Perth in 2008, which led to the Australia's win of the bid.

Spare Parts Puppet Theatre is a non-profit organisation and has been operating from its home base in Fremantle, Western Australia for over 23 years. The company has been involved in significant international artistic exchange and cooperation, and is going to play a central role to plan, organise and implement the event.

## How the logo will be used.

The logo for the 20<sup>th</sup> UNIMA World Festival and Congress/ Conference will be used extensively throughout the promotion of the event, on such vehicles as its stationery, printed promotional materials, and website.

## Prize

A prize of \$300 will be offered to the winner.

**Eligibility:** This is a competition open to all Australians.

**Inclusions:** The logo should include "UNIMA", "2008", and "Perth Western Australia". You can submit as many entries as you like.

**Format of entries:** Entries can be submitted either electronically or as hard copy.

**Closing date:** The competition closes at 5pm (WST) on July, 22, 2005.

**Send entries to:** Spare Parts Puppet Theatre  
PO Box 897, Fremantle, WA 6959  
Tel: 08 9335 5044 Fax: 08 9335 7687 E-mail: [admin@sppt.asn.au](mailto:admin@sppt.asn.au)

**For additional information about the various organizations:**

UNIMA International <http://www.unima.org> UNIMA Australia <http://www.unima.org.au>

Spare Parts Puppet Theatre <http://www.sppt.asn.au>

# UNIMA 2008 LOGO COMPETITION

## Rules and submission requirements

1. The competition is open to everyone.
2. You may submit multiple entries, however each entry must be sent individually with an entry form.
3. The entries can be e-mailed in a PDF format or posted as a hard copy. If PDF please ensure that you hold the original artwork. If your entry wins, we will need to access the original artwork.
4. Your design(s) must include the following: "UNIMA", "2008", and "Perth, Western Australia".
5. Your design(s) must be effective in print both in black and white and in colour.
6. Your design(s) must adapt well to electronic and print media, as well as reproduction on textile surface.
7. Please avoid the use of gradients (including elements such as drop shadows) unless created inside a vector program.
8. Your design(s) shall not in any way infringe any third party's right, including but not limited to copyright, logos, trademarks, trade names, or other proprietary rights of publicity or privacy.
9. Your design(s) and concept should not offend any national cultural or religious sensitivity.
10. Judging will be based on originality, effectiveness of design, distinctive identity, neatness of presentation, balance of design, aesthetic appeal and adherence to the rules.
11. Spare Parts Puppet Theatre retains the right to make modifications to the winning design. This may include in the areas of design and colours.
12. By participating in the competition, you authorise the use of the design for promotional purposes.
13. Entries that do not comply with the above specifications may be rejected.
14. Closing date for submission is at 5pm (WST) on July 22, 2005. Posted entries must be postmarked by July 22, 2005, inclusive.
15. Entries submitted after the closing date will not be accepted
16. Entries must be submitted to either of the following addresses:  
Postal: Spare Parts Puppet Theatre, PO Box 897, Fremantle, WA 6959  
email: admin@sppt.asn.au
17. Upon completion of the contest, Spare Parts Puppet Theatre acquires ownership of the design by assignment of copyright.
18. By entering the contest, all contestants agree herewith to abide by the rules and regulations above.

***Good Luck! Please find entry form insert inside magazine***

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## PROFILE

### Petr Matasek

I made my way to the Victorian College of the Arts to meet with world renowned scenographer, Petr Matasek. I found a sweet and unassuming man, almost childlike, whose modesty belies his impressive biography. Petr first attended the School of Visual Arts and Design in Prague, and later the prestigious Academy of Performing Arts in Prague, from where he graduated in 1966 after eight years of study. It is also the place at which he now wears the mantle of Professor of Scenography with charm and grace.

After graduating he worked as a designer for Children's Theatre ALFA in Pilsen (yes, the town after which the beer is named), where he was fortunate to meet with directors who had a different approach to children and puppet theatre. There he found enough space, intellectually and creatively, to concentrate on improving his skills, to expand and develop a repertoire of designs and approaches.

One evening, on spec, he was invited to speak, a once only opportunity, at Drak Theatre in neighbouring Hradeckralove, where he met Dvorak, Director of Theatre, and Josef Krofta. The rest is now history. He stayed at Drak for the next twenty-five years. It was there that he began to develop what was to be later known as 'object theatre'. Peter tells me the "the term was first coined by other observers rather than those practicing it, and not labelled as a thing in and of itself, but rather from a process of extending the use of materials". It came from experiments surrounding an evolution of a dramatic puppetry language that did not require shelves, drawers or playing boards.

## Genesis

Work evolved that was influenced by the multiple factors of theme, the people/colleagues involved in the projects, a feeling or history of the subject matter and themes and a certain will or need to communicate. The will concerned itself with the genesis of a Puppeteer that didn't want to be confined to any (PUPPETRY ONLY) category, to be quarantined and boxed in by the assumptions and conventions of performance traditions. By the late 70s/80s a puppet theatre had begun to emerge that spoke its own language, had a different vocabulary. It came about through exposure and the influence of all kinds of dramatic theatre, of working with actors, and of allowing these influences to merge. Petr were often invited to actor's theatres to workshop and create and they often brought objects with them to work with rather than ready-made puppets. Thereby they found, or discovered, the sense for dramatic matter on the stage through using the materials and objects. Objects began to sneak out of the workshops and into the drama theatre. As a consequence they were invited to participate in broader spheres. Petr says this change was rather on a "scale of thinking rather than a scale of sizes".

He emphasises that the themes determine what objects and materials end up in the stage action – sometimes they are ready made puppets, or objects, or combinations of both that significantly combine with the elements of light/ projections /sound.

Fond of using wood and metal, Petr is currently exploring the range of plastics, always bearing in mind that quality of the substance leads to the quality (nature) of the dramatic definition. He likes to stay with a material to give it full exploration. As an example he cites the dramatising of epic Finnish legend, Kalevala in Perth. It was during that production that he explored the metonymic potential of wood. For example, the wood was used for a huge puppet that demonstrated the female power of nature, but it was transformable so that at times it also represented a place of power, and using the particular space its qualities variously represented a boat, a forge, a ship.

## Archetypal stories /images

Petr has worked and exhibited in many countries – with Odenza Actors Theatre in Denmark using transforming costumes and scenery - and as far away as Iceland. When asked about the cultural specificity of universal symbols he replied that the USA was the only place where he felt that associative moments are significantly different, and that more thought had to be applied to what you're communicating, due to a dominant media culture and a saturation of media images. The impact of Disneyland has been far-reaching in that society.

Petr is at the VCA to conduct workshops with the puppetry students to "investigate a methodology for working later", of finding a way of cooperation and of making correspondences, of establishing a group dynamic that will influence a production that is to occur later in the year. He is returning to work with the students on a production based on La Fontaine's fables, made possible with assistance of Simplot's International Masterclass Series and the Sidney Myer Foundation. It will make use of character archetypes to be further developed by association, improvising, and sharing skills. He describes the process as an axis of multiplicity: of experimentation, chaos, mess and play in the workshop from which will emerge a finished production that the audience will finally see. Part of that process is being sensitive to what's going on in the group and to recognise moments that will provide dramatic tension. In this respect each production is unique to the group of people generating the creative material from whatever it might be: object, material, puppet.

## Puppet - add-on or stand alone

Do current trends indicate that puppetry is treated as an add-on in contemporary theatre production? Petr has adopted an interdisciplinary approach to his art and practice. It is a matter of gathering multifarious experiences so that one can claim a broader creative range to draw from. Much new work is interdisciplinary and incorporates numerous genres, breaking with many conventions and making use of alternative spaces and site-specific work. He does not negate traditional puppetry practices, but rather claims an alternative approach.

With so many possibilities the future is exciting!

Compiled by Jennie Pfeiffer





## FROM TERRAPIN'S 2004 ANNUAL REPORT: THE ARTISTIC DIRECTOR'S REPORT.

On the 2<sup>nd</sup> of January 2004, Terrapin Puppet Theatre's founding Artistic Director, Jennifer Davidson, sadly passed away. Jennifer created a foundation of excellence in puppet theatre that has served Terrapin for almost twenty-five years. With my appointment as Terrapin's fourth Artistic Director, I am in the privileged position of augmenting this substantial legacy with my own dedication and enthusiasm for the art of puppetry.

The six months following my appointment in July 2004, was a time of intense activity for both the Company and myself. I participated in four creative developments; wrote the adaptation for and directed the 2004 schools production; secured a bilateral training arrangement with the Victorian College of the Arts Puppetry Course; and consolidated a program of corporate sponsorship. I also began addressing the numerous issues that naturally arise when a Company has a change in direction. These included a review of management and governance policies as well as a reassessment of the Company's requirements for workshop and storage space. Added to the Company workload was the project-management of *The Garden of Paradise* (commissioned by Ten Days on the Island).

However my primary task on joining the Company was to write a new three-year artistic program and business plan to submit to the Australia Council for our triennial funding application. This coincided with Jessica Wilson's final production for Terrapin – *Frankenstein*. Despite our respective demanding workloads we managed a smooth crossover and have both achieved success for Terrapin in these endeavours. *Frankenstein* gained good reviews, an increase in audience for adult work, and an invitation from the Victorian Arts Centre to perform a season in April 2005. The funding application was successful too giving the Company another triennium of secure funding for our core activities.

My second major task was to recruit a new General Manager. From a field of very strong candidates Marianne Taylor was selected. Marianne brings to Terrapin excellent skills in arts administration, project management and lighting design.

My initiation into Terrapin Puppet Theatre was, and continues to be, a challenging and rewarding experience. As I look forward to the next three years, foremost in my mind is implementing an exciting and stimulating program of puppet productions with the many talented Terrapin artists who are the life-blood of this Company. I am also instituting a structure of training and professional development to build on the calibre of skill and artistry of the Terrapin team. Finally I hope to achieve a broader touring circuit for our productions so that more Australians (and beyond) can enjoy Tasmania's Terrapin Puppet Theatre.

**Anne Forbes**  
Artistic Director

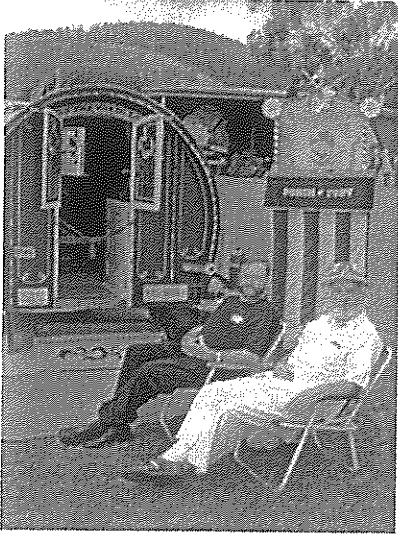
....AND THE FIRST FIVE MONTHS OF 2005 have been a whirlwind of activity for the Company. Between January and April we were engaged in the rehearsal and production of *The Garden of Paradise*, which premiered on April 1<sup>st</sup> at the Theatre Royal as part of the Ten Days on the Island festival. This production was a collaboration of Tasmanian artists initiated by Ten Days and project managed by Terrapin. Unfortunately a flawed creative process hindered the collaboration and this was evident in the final production. While successful in some aspects *The Garden of Paradise* was nevertheless received with very mixed reviews. The future of *The Garden of Paradise* is currently under review.

### *The Very Persistent Gappers of Friip*



In February we staged the 9<sup>th</sup> *Terrapin Puppet Picnic*, a free community event celebrating puppetry, attracting over 3,000 locals. With a strong focus on participation, the event encourages children and adults to become makers of art, not merely passive observers. Children and their families make puppets and are entertained by professional puppet performances and a range of roving puppeteers and other artists. This year Terrapin performed *The Very Persistent Gappers of Friip* and we were thrilled to have the excellent services of Murphy's Puppets and Smiffs' Puppets. Dennis Murphy gave a superlative performance of *The Frog Prince* starring the irrepressible Arlecchino, and Basil Smith beguiled the crowds with his brightly painted Gypsy caravan and a delightful rendition of "Punch & Judy".

April was a busy month with the *Garden of Paradise* season; a creative development for *The Tastic Tent* (more about that in a future magazine!); and a season of *Frankenstein* at the Victorian Arts Centre. Currently Terrapin is in production for our 2005 schools touring program *The Storytellers Shadow – a celebration of Hans Christian Andersen*, which is being written by Richard Bradshaw. The puppet maker is Jenna Hann who graduated from the 2004 VCA Puppetry course. The puppeteers are Laura Purcell who recently attended the Petr Matasek masterclass at the VCA, and Sam Routledge who also is also a graduate of the 2004 VCA puppetry course. Youth Arts Queensland has granted Sam a mentorship with Anne Forbes through the Spark Mentor Program.



#### *The Murphy/Smiff warm-up routine*

Over winter we will be initiating a series of professional development opportunities. The first of these is a "Writing for Puppetry" workshop with Richard Bradshaw, to be held at the Tasmanian Writers Centre on 22nd May. Coming up later in the year Regional Arts Victoria will be touring *My Sister's an Alien* throughout Victoria. In September we will be presenting *Boxes*, which is a co-production with the National Theatre for Children from NZ and the *Tastic Tent* will be built and launched. Finally we will be preparing for our 2006 silver jubilee celebrations, which include the 2<sup>nd</sup> National Puppetry and Animatronics Summit (see below).

### **2<sup>ND</sup> NATIONAL PUPPETRY & ANIMATRONICS SUMMIT 2006**

Following from the success of the first summit held in Melbourne, October 2002 – a second National Puppetry and Animatronics Summit is proposed to be held in Hobart in June 2006 – over the Queens Birthday weekend. This would be one of the precursor events leading to the 2008 UNIMA World Puppetry Congress and Festival to be held in Perth. The Summit will be organised by Terrapin Puppet Theatre Ltd working with the mandate of a steering committee\*. Funding from the Australia Council has just been approved, we await various State funding bodies.

The first Summit was successful in bringing together practitioners to discuss their art form and its future. Building on this foundation the 2006 Summit would cover all aspects of the modern craft.

Topics to be discussed at the Summit could include:

- Touring
- Training, skills development and renewal of creators and performers
- Artists royalties and artists rights
- The creative process and the development of new work
- Raising the public profile and advocacy
- Puppetry as an art form
- Mechanisms for contact and exchange
- Occupational health and safety
- Technology, enhancement of craft, and change
- New audiences
- The present and future of the art form
- International marketing and partnership opportunities
- Locating an Australian style in an international context

The Summit provides a vital forum for interchange and the development of the form - a form that has become vital across the entire theatre industry. The aim is to structure the Summit to provide a series of forums for policy discussions and debates, leading to a facilitated plenary session on the final day.

**Terrapin welcomes any feedback about the timing, content and logistics etc of the summit in this pre-planning stage. Please send suggestions/support/enquiries to:**

**Terrapin Puppet Theatre Ltd**  
 77 Salamanca Place  
 Hobart, TAS 7004.  
 Tel: (03) 6223 6834 Fax: (03) 6223 6399

Email: Annie Forbes [ad@terrapiin.org.au](mailto:ad@terrapiin.org.au) or Marianne Taylor [gm@terrapiin.org.au](mailto:gm@terrapiin.org.au)

\*A.Forbes, M.Taylor (TAS); S.Wallace (NSW); P.Wilson, J.Pfeiffer, P.Millar (VIC); P.Mitchell (WA)

# PUPPET HISTORY

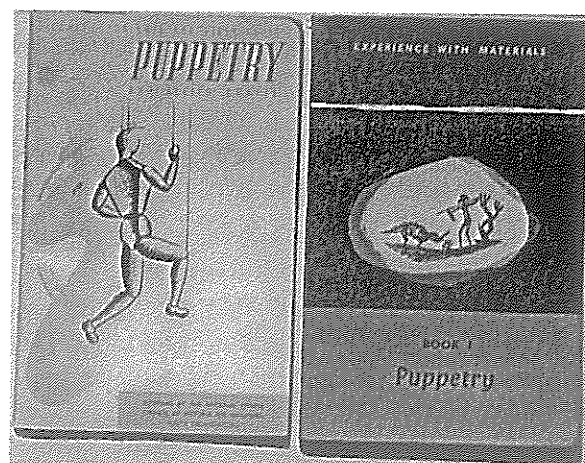
## AUSTRALIAN PUPPET BOOKS: Part 1

I am beginning a series of articles on Australian puppet books. To be precise, I should say books on puppetry by Australians since two of them, about which I will write in a later piece, are in French and published in Paris. You will need to excuse me for being self-indulgent when I write, since some of the books trigger memories! I planned to write about several books at a time, but I've ended up devoting this piece to two books and the work of Bill Nicol, in whose surname you can aptly find the letters for the word "icon".

**"Puppetry and Allied Crafts"** (undated, but after 1945; 44 pp including cover) was published by the National Fitness Council of Victoria. It has a foreword by W.D.Nicol (Melbourne Teachers' College) and E. Swires (Assistant Organiser, National Fitness Council of Victoria). There is mention of a mobile puppet theatre the Council toured in January 1944 and 1945 that led to a training course for youth leaders from 20 organisations.

A brief historical introduction tells how an "international guild has been formed to link up the puppet enthusiasts of many lands" (UNIMA?), and for further information people can write to the Puppet Guild of Australia, c/o National Fitness Council. There is a script for "The Golden Fish", and instructions for making simple glove puppets, shadow puppets and marionettes together with simple stages. No author is given, but W.D.Nicol was certainly involved.

**"Puppetry"** by W.D.Nicol [Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 1962] was Book 1 in a series called Experience With Materials. It has 112 pages including the card cover, and the line drawings were done by the author's daughter, Jennifer Nicol, who included a portrait of her father at work. It has instructions for making paper-bag, sock and glove puppets, flat and shadow puppets, rod puppets and marionettes. There is a chapter on costume and lighting and one on "The Making of a Puppeteer". It is an excellent little book; well written, informative and attractively illustrated.



*Two books due to W.D.Nicol*

"Celastic", a great material for puppets that is no longer available, is mentioned, and there are instructions for "The Melbourne Method" for making puppet heads, introduced to the Melbourne Teachers' College in 1939. (We used a version of this at the Clovelly Puppet Theatre and were quite delighted when we discovered Peter Lorre had suggested using "The Melbourne Method" to kill someone in the 1944 film classic "Arsenic and Old Lace".)

In the Clovelly version of the Melbourne Method a dry core of scrunched newspaper was squashed around a paper cylinder or dowel rod and tied about with string. Starch paste was then spread on both sides of a sheet of newspaper on a table (very messy this) and then put over and around the dry core and smoothed into a basic head shape. A second sheet of newspaper was similarly pasted and pieces were squashed up to make an instant "papier mache" for nose, eyebrows, ears etc. These features were secured with strips of the glued paper. This was left to dry over several days and then torn strips of paper towel were glued over the head to provide a better surface for painting.

The book ends with the scripts for three plays. "The Alligator's Eggs", a popular Brer Rabbit play done by the Melbourne Puppet Guild, is recommended for glove puppets. "The Three Pirates", a song, is suggested for shadow-puppets. "The Golden Fish" (a.k.a. "The Three Wishes") is for marionettes, and is the same as in the previous book. On the cover of this fine book is an illustration, repeated inside, of a stylised shadow puppet of an Aborigine about to spear a bunyip. The puppets were made of sheet aluminium. Almost certainly the story was "How The Moon Was Made" which was done with marionettes at the first show I saw at Clovelly Puppet Theatre in 1952.



A drawing by Jennifer Nicol of her father W.D.Nicol from 'Puppetry'

William Dalziel Nicol was born in Dundee, Scotland in 1907 and was brought to Australia with his family in 1922. In 1923 he began an apprenticeship with a wood-machining firm. He completed this and in 1928 began training as a teacher. In 1930 he was a student at Melbourne Teachers' College. His first marionette was made in 1937 with high-school students at Hamilton, Victoria.

In 1939 he became a lecturer in Art and Craft at Melbourne Teachers' College where he introduced Puppetry and formed a student Marionette Club, with a small theatre built into his lecture room. Evidence of the theatre was still there when Arthur Cantrill, from my Clovelly Puppet Theatre days, taught film at the College, which became part of the University of Melbourne.

Bill Nicol also began working with the National Fitness Council and in 1945 a basement they leased at 161 Flinders Lane became a Puppet Theatre where weekly shows were given by the Puppet Guild, whose members were mostly his students or former students. The theatre ran until about 1950 when the lease expired. Bill continued to teach puppetry at the Teachers' College and in 1964 a group of his students performed with shadow puppets at the Adelaide Festival.

London-born George Merten, who served in the R.A.A.F. in World War II, helped Bill establish the Puppet Guild. Merten moved to Canada in 1950 and became an important figure in puppetry in Ontario. He wrote "The Marionette" (London, 1957), "The Hand Puppet" (London, 1958) and "Plays for Puppet Performance" (Boston, 1979). In 1956-7 he was President of the Puppeteers of America.

People who gained experience with Bill included Peter Scriven (of "Tintookies" fame), Robert Akins (who, with his wife Nancy, established The Pilgrim Puppet Theatre in a former church in Hawthorn, 1975-80) and Roger Goss who made costumes for the Marionette Theatre of Australia, and was a puppeteer on the 1976 Asian tour of "The Tintookies". Both Bill and Peter Scriven used to relate the story of how Peter had chosen to study Puppetry for the Intermediate Certificate in Victoria but was failed by Bill because he didn't keep a proper notebook!

Bill Nicol lent sets of marionettes to Edith Murray for the opening season of Clovelly Puppet Theatre, Sydney in 1949. (I also think that some of the puppets in Peter Scriven's shows at the old Theatre Royal in Sydney in 1953 were Bill's.) I remember when Bill came to give a talk and show some of his marionettes to the Puppetry Guild of N.S.W. in the early 1950s. In 1968-69, after he retired from the Teachers' College, Bill and his wife, Emily made a couple of journeys by car from their home in Ivanhoe, Melbourne to the college for Aboriginal students at Kormilda in the Northern Territory where Bill included puppetry in an art training course. The students made shadow puppets and marionettes decorated with their tribal markings.

When I was Artistic Director for the 1975 puppet festival in Melbourne at Bill's request I performed a legend, "Why the Crow is Black", with shadow puppets from Kormilda to a tape recorded by one of the students. Another of the students, Ungunmer, was staying with Bill at the time of that festival and she gave a fascinating talk on things puppeteers might perform for Aboriginal communities.

Bill once described being invited to attend a men's ceremony that included self-administered subincision, a very bloody business. The cuts were cleaner because Bill had kindly provided razor-sharp craft blades. Meanwhile Emily was apart with the women who had a jovial time together, imitating some of the men.

In 1973, when Peter Scriven was back in Australia as Puppetry Consultant for the Australian Council of the Arts (which became the Australia Council in 1975) he formed a Puppetry Panel as one of the advisory panels of the Theatre Board. He invited Bill to be on the Panel, which lasted for a few years, and that is where I got to know him. A quiet, wise man with a gentle sense of humour.

Bill died in 1978, drowned in a boating accident on Western Port Bay.

At the One Van Festival last January Rod Primrose showed one of Bill's figures from the Kormilda days. A beautifully crafted wooden figure, it seemed to fall naturally into lifelike positions. It has quite a story to tell.

On page 70 of his book Bill writes: "Puppetry as an art and craft project is not complete until the puppet is used to entertain; 'Puppets are born to act.'"

**Richard Bradshaw**

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**[www.puppetryaustralia.info](http://www.puppetryaustralia.info)**

**PUPPETRY AUSTRALIA** has had a fairly busy first half of the year with significant interest from around the world and in Australia. The 7<sup>th</sup> "One Van" Festival kicked it off, using the site up to the end of January with the full program, maps, booking forms etc all viewable and downloadable. This was very useful to prospective visitors. Now the site is supporting the UNIMA World Congress in Perth in 2008 and closer in time, the Woodford Folk Festival with its puppetry component, and the Sydney Puppetry Film Group that is meeting regularly to watch a variety of puppetry related films.

The site gets emails mainly from people with an interest in puppetry or wanting to find out more and get involved. Unfortunately it gets very little input from practicing puppeteers. To make a vibrant industry it needs people to work together. This is the only one way to make that happen.

Still want to build up on the resources section so if you have resources that you want to share please do so (which particular Bondmaster product is it that is used for foam?? there seems to be a multitude. What about sources for latex, foam, aluminium, paint, the list goes on).

Haven't got a website but would like a presence on the web, Puppetry Australia can give you a page for free, for nichts, for nothing, not a cent. All you have to do is provide the information, photos etc., preferably in a word document or the like.

**Sean Manners – Webmaster**  
**[sean@puppetryaustralia.info](mailto:sean@puppetryaustralia.info)**

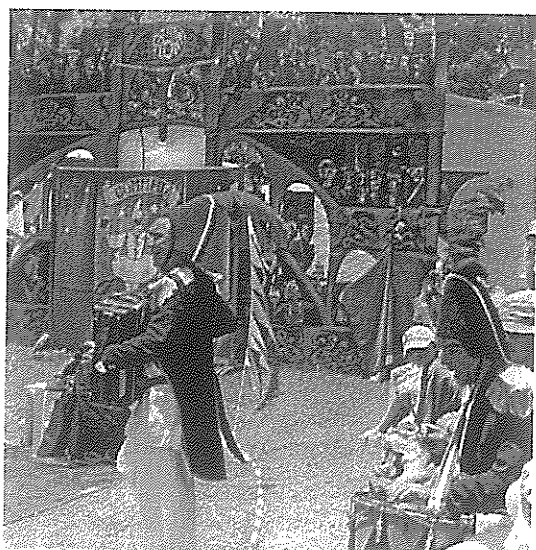
Woodford Folk Festival Presents

# 1<sup>st</sup> Woodford International Festival of Puppetry

26<sup>th</sup> December – 2<sup>nd</sup> January

The Woodford Folk Festival is an event of international standing. Held over six days and six nights it presents more than 2000 performers and 400 events with concerts, dances, workshops, forums, street theatre, writers' panels, film festival, comedy sessions, acoustic jams, social dialogue and debate, an entire children's festival, art and craft workshops, late night cabarets and special events including a spectacular fire event. The Festival features the cream of Australian performers and a generous gathering of special international guests.

The Puppetry festival will be a celebration of puppetry as an art form as well as exploring it in a cultural context. We intend to feature a range of performance styles from Australian and International companies and artists as well as workshops, forums, **opportunities for street theatre and performances in other venues** and hopefully a film festival. We will also be holding a short works review/challenge, which will be an evening event and will be run as a friendly competition. Prizes will be practical and hopefully useful and will include, puppet-making materials, sound design for a new project, use of rehearsal spaces etc. This concept is to encourage people to try new work and ideas, to have fun and have a go.



We are now accepting proposals for companies/artists interested in being involved in the Puppetry Festival and the short works review. Submissions should include a synopsis or script and as much visual material including filmed footage of the work. We would prefer a full-length version of your show regardless of the quality, rather than an edited one. If you have any queries about this please contact me. Submissions for the short work review should include a synopsis of your idea and any relevant visuals. **Don't forget to mention if you are interested in facilitating workshops or forums and if you would be interested in contributing to other aspects of the WFF (musicians etc).** The puppetry festival needs to fit in with the overall vision of Woodford and so we recommend you check out the festival website. Also works need to be no longer than one hour.

The program will include fees for invited artists and will provide accommodation and meal allowance and in some cases, travel assistance. The short works review will not include a fee but will include a festival/camping pass and the chance to show off your work, be a part of a really cool festival, hang out with your puppetry pals and hopefully win great prizes! Invited artists are also encouraged to enter.

If you don't have a show but you would like to be involved in the event, Woodford has a volunteer program and we encourage people with experience in theatre/events to apply, along with other artists through the Woodford Website  
[www.woodfordfolkfestival.com](http://www.woodfordfolkfestival.com)

We look forward to hearing from you,

*Michael Peterson*  
Program Coordinator  
Woodford Festival

*Fiona Gentle*  
Program coordinator  
Puppetry Festival

*Daniel Laws*  
Production Manager  
Puppetry Festival

**Please send submissions to:**

Fiona Gentle  
207 Alt St, Haberfield  
NSW 2045  
Tel: 61 02 9716 4482  
Fax: 61 02 9716 4482  
Mob: 0438 661 117



## POLYGLOT PUPPET THEATRE

The Australia wide tour of *Baggy Pants* will wrap up in June.

When his best friend Singlet is whisked away from their Island by a menacing wire hanger, Baggy Pants follows – rescue on his mind. The odds against his success are enormous. After all what can a little pair of trousers do against the Evil Model Monster, the all-consuming City Creature and the perils of the Sad Dump? Meeting many characters on the way – enemies and allies – Baggy Pants and Singlet have adventures, excitement and sadness before they are reunited.

Appearing in venues throughout Queensland in June, Baggy Pants is an evocative and unusual performance that combines dance and puppetry in a classic tale of friendship and loyalty.

Polyglot will also go into creative development for their production *Echo* (Working Title) in June. Echo is the beginning of a partnership between Polyglot and Deaf Children Australia. Following on from a successful and stimulating short term project where Muckheap was rehearsed as a deaf interpreted show, Polyglot and Deaf Children Australia are looking to create a performance that makes the most of the gestural language of Auslan and the powerful relationship between deafness and imagery. Echo (Working Title) is a new way forward into partnership and an intriguing one theatrically.

In 2005 the development of the work will begin, working with deaf and hearing kids and interpreters, collecting children's artwork, their ideas, sounds and dreams. We'll then take that research into the rehearsal room and work on the story, culminating in a showing of work in progress. We are looking forward to creating the full production for touring in 2006.

*Headhunter* will tour Victorian schools with Regional Arts Victoria in August.

Headhunter is a story about two indigenous young people, urban and alive with possibilities, told with puppetry, music and a very cool car. Funky and fast it takes the audience on a road trip around an Australia they didn't know existed.

Headhunter is collaboration between Polyglot Puppet Theatre and Ilbjerri Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Theatre Co-operative. Two groundbreaking companies join forces to create a new show suitable for prep – six.

For more information check out Polyglot's website [www.polyglotpuppets.com.au](http://www.polyglotpuppets.com.au) or call 9827 9667.



# GIANT SKELETON UNEARTHED IN JOONDALUP CITY

Bryan Woltjen

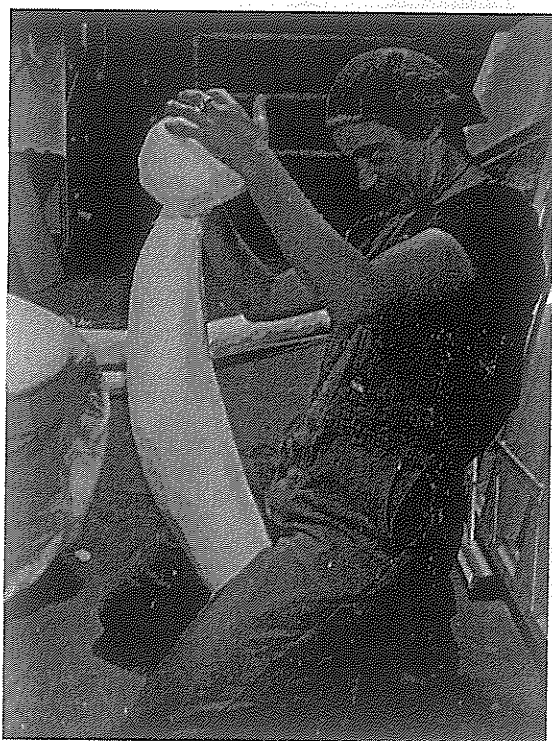
"Don't be ridiculous, you can't build a puppet that big" he said.

"You're right, just because the last float we made together was a 10m high 12m long articulated raptor, it's no reason to get all ambitious" she replied.

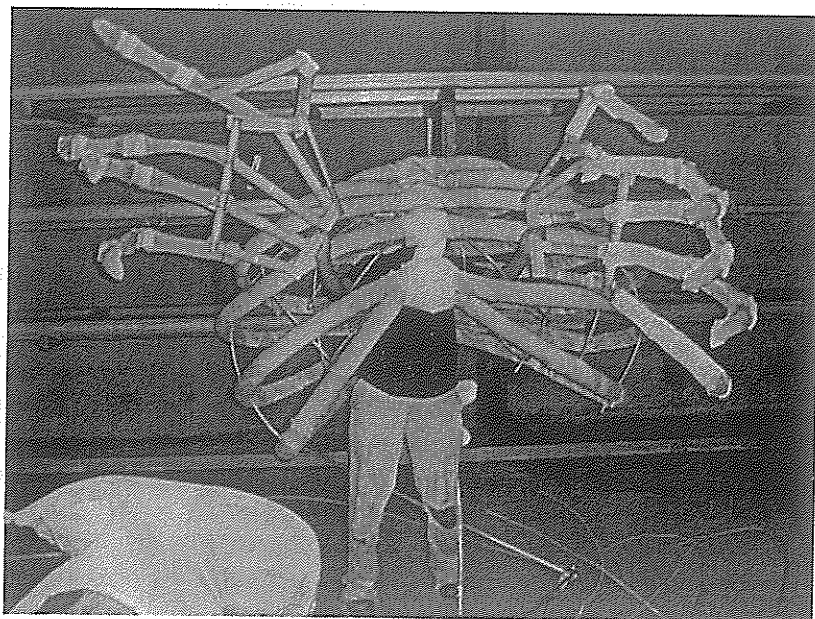
## OxycyloTL Blueprint



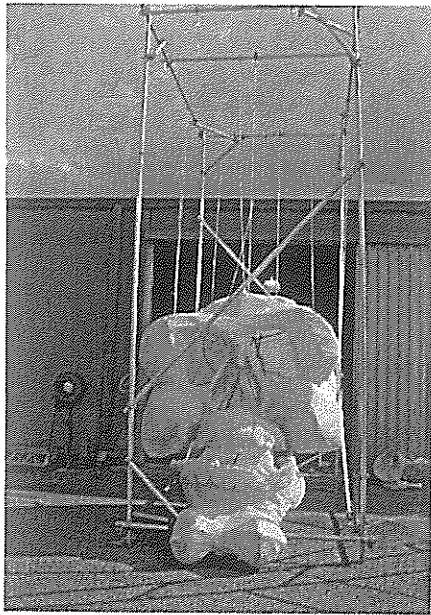
Furthering the argument he said, "Just because the parade rider doesn't list any height restriction for the float that's no reason to go all crazy and lose all sense of responsibility, judgement, common sense and decency (not to mention a healthy respect for weekends and evening leisure time). Besides..." he continued "what if it scares the kids?..." At which point animaturg deviants Karen Hethey and Bryan Woltjen erupted in a maniacal fit of laughter, donned overalls and pink fluffy earmuffs, and with an eerie unearthly glint in their eye, began the erection OXYCYLOTL, a giant Mexican Walking skeleton.



l: Karen 'erecting' an arm bone  
r: Alien facehugging



With the theme of 'Mexican Day of the Dead', as part of the parade in the 2005 Carnavale for the Joondalup Festival, OXCYLLOTL is a 6m tall fully mobile articulated skeleton. Designed and built by duo KH and BW, it was operated on the day by a small team of puppeteers and a select group of students from Halidon Primary School, whose peers walked leading the float in skeleton masks and costumes. Built from a frame of heavy-wall aluminium, a cane/foam/recycled head, and armatures of aluminium and carved polystyrene, OX was articulated at approximately 10 points by a combination of pulleys and direct lines. Carved pool noodles made the finer joints of the fingers and toes and also provided the immature (yet combat prepared) workshop staff with weapons of mass procrastination.



The aim of Oxcylotl (besides to produce every possible bone/stiff/penis joke known to mankind) was to give the impression that OX was pushing his own frame along the parade, contextualizing the *modus operandi*. Another version of the design had Oxcylotl with the world's biggest zimmer-frame. Built at Bryan's Bayswater studio, the creature came together in little over two weeks of foam, styrene, cane and glue filled fun.

The maiden voyage went famously, with the only hitch in the last 100 yards a pulley having jammed and snapped the rope lifting the left shoulder. Once again we are reminded of the delicacy of peace and goodwill between steel pulleys, sash cord weight and breaking strain. (Oddly, at the same point in the parade two years prior, Wubba Ducky the aforementioned giant raptor, had snapped a pulley operated rope articulating the jaw mechanism).

### *Strung Out*

"So is that it?" he asks, glinting at the cheering crowds following the creature into the sunset.  
"Yeah, it went so quick" she replies.  
"And it didn't fall over or anything..." he says.  
"How can we top this one???" she queries. At which point they quietly observe a Boeing 747 meandering smoothly across the horizon.

### *Into the romance of the sunset...*



# BUNYIPS SPOTTED ON THE BANKS OF THE YARRA



*"An audience gather by the banks of the Yarra below Birrarung Marr at sunset. Fires send smoke across the water and an occasional rumble of dark music and the odd cry of a human is heard in the distance. Clearly something is a foot..."*



*The Nyet Nyet Woman*

The Snuff Puppets with Indigenous artists will present a spectacular outdoor theatre performance of ancient dreamtime stories, in the lead up to the City of Melbourne's Reconciliation Week program. *Nyets Nyet's Picnic* will be at Birrarung Marr from the 20th to the 22<sup>nd</sup> of May 2005.

Snuff Puppets are a giant puppet company with an astounding body of work and performance experience. Snuff Puppet performances are a combination of spectacular visuals, live music and physical theatre. The company has delighted, disgusted, horrified, and entertained thousands of people all around the world.

*Nyet Nyet's Picnic* is the premiere of a contemporary work that revives ancient stories from the dreamtime. Giant puppets, dance, and music will culminate in this highly entertaining exploration of local monsters, bunyips and spirit creatures.

The show will vividly bring to life these stories, ensuring that Indigenous mythology is remembered and treated with pride by all Australians. In a true act of reconciliation, *Nyet Nyet's Picnic* is a collaboration between

Indigenous and non-Indigenous artists. This coalition of artists comes from across the Aboriginal nations of Victoria.

*Nyet Nyet's Picnic* is a genuinely scary, culturally enlightening and engaging night of theatre. The performance is the cultural highlight of Reconciliation Week and is free to the public.

**What:** Nyet Nyet's Picnic by The Snuff Puppets  
**When:** 6.30pm,  
20, 21, 22 May, 2005  
**Where:** Birrarung Marr,  
Melbourne  
**Cost:** Free

Some carpet seating provided, but BYO cushions if required. The Snuff Puppets are supported by Arts Victoria and the City of Melbourne. For more information, visit [www.snuffpuppets.com](http://www.snuffpuppets.com) or [www.thatsmelbourne.com.au](http://www.thatsmelbourne.com.au)

*Nyet Nyet's Picnic* was initiated through the Victorian Commissions, supported by the Victorian Government, Arts Victoria and the Australia Council for the Arts



*The Hairy Men*

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by Ponch  
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The second last time I saw Lorrie was on the evening of World Puppet Day. I popped into the hospital to see her before the World Puppet Day drinks. She was extremely tired and weak. Her arm was giving her a lot of trouble because it was swollen and she couldn't really sit up without the aid of pillows. Being World Puppet Day, I brought her a little finger puppet I had made as a gift. As soon as it was unwrapped, Lorrie put it on her finger and began performing. The puppet introduced itself to me and chatted a bit, had a good look around the room and even winked at a nurse (more or less!) Here was Lorrie, ill and very weak, with one swollen arm and yet still, the performer in her couldn't be silenced. This is how I will remember Lorrie. She was a dedicated puppet artist, always working and deeply dedicated to her craft. She was also very supportive to my work. I can't remember a show, creative development, fund raiser or season of short works in the last few years where I haven't snuck a look at the audience and seen Lorrie's smiling face next to Harry's amongst the crowd and there hasn't been an edition of the Puppet Magazine since I started editing it that Lorrie hasn't contributed to. Always encouraging and diplomatic, she served her community very well. She was a good friend and she taught me a lot. I know she knew this. I will miss seeing her smiling face in future audiences and hearing her cheery laugh filling the theatre. On the night of her funeral, I performed my little show "One Night The Dog" - a show that of course Lorrie saw and gave me some lovely feedback. As the lights dimmed I thought of my old friend Lorrie Gardner and was glad that I had known her. Sarah Kriegler

## UNIMA AUSTRALIA

### *Grant Details*

#### *UNIMA Australia Inc. Scholarship*

*Normally this Scholarship is offered in March each year. If there are no successful applicants, it is offered again in November. The March applications have been postponed this year and applications for the 2005 Scholarship are now due by July 15.*

**Amount:** \$500

**Purpose:** To help younger or newer artists to further their training and knowledge by such things as attendance at workshops, study under a specialist teacher, or other activities that the panel deem to be worthy and which help their knowledge of the puppetry arts.

**Eligibility:** Applicant must have been a member of UNIMA Australia for the past two years.

**Requirements:** Please supply a CV, a short outline of how you intend to use the scholarship money and how the scholarship will help your future development. Please provide written evidence and information about any courses or mentorships that relate to the scholarship.

**Applications due:** July 15, 2005

**Successful Applicant to be notified by:** August 15, 2005. The scholarship project must begin after September 1, 2005

**Send to:** UNIMA, PO Box 3124, Victoria Gardens Shopping Centre, RICHMOND VIC 3121

#### *The Handspan Visual Theatre International Travel and Study Grant*

**Amount:** \$2000 annually until 2008.

**Purpose:** The grant is available to all practitioners of puppet arts, including puppeteers, directors, designers, writers and makers to undertake international travel or study.

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

**Applications due:** 30 September 2005

**Send to:** Richard Hart - Secretary, 31 Dallas Ave, HUGHESDALE VIC 3166

Details about how to apply are also on the UNIMA website: [www.unima.org.au](http://www.unima.org.au)

# UNIMA AUSTRALIA DETAILS



UNIMA Australia Inc

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Please make all cheques payable to UNIMA Australia and send to:

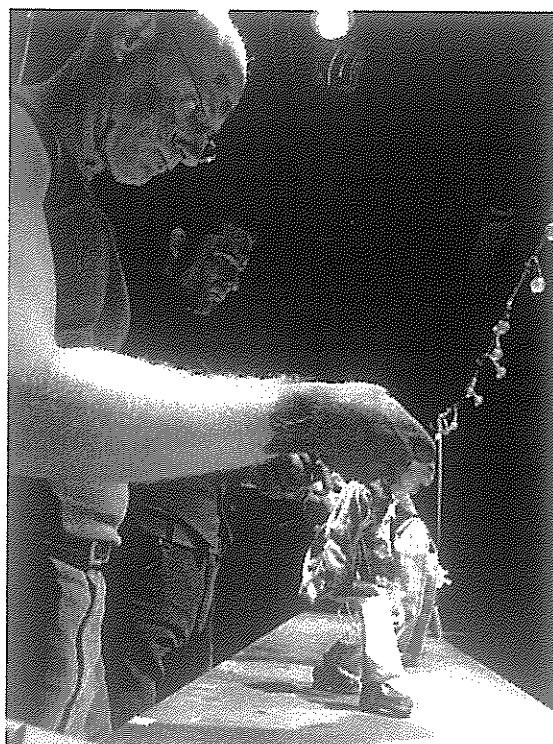
THE TREASURER, UNIMA AUSTRALIA  
PO BOX 3124  
VICTORIA GARDENS SHOPPING CENTRE  
RICHMOND VIC 3121

**DEADLINE FOR AUSTRALIAN PUPPETEER No. 28 – WINTER 2005:  
12<sup>TH</sup> AUGUST**





*Around 20 members and friends gathered for World Puppetry Day in Melbourne. After a few light libations at Anita Sinclair's house we moved on to the Prince Patrick Hotel for a casual and sociable dinner. A few new members were signed up and lots of global talk on the state of world puppetry.*



*Mal and Jacob  
In Warsaw  
See page 11*

