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PUPPETEER

UNION INTERNATIONALE DE LA MARIONNETTE

UNIMA AUSTRALIA CONTACT DETAILS

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RICHMOND, VIC, 3121

DEADLINE FOR AUSTRALIAN PUPPETEER No. 29 is November 11th*

**Subject to change, please check website for updates*

AUSTRALIAN PUPPETEER MAGAZINE

EDITORIAL

As the winter begins to thaw around the country, life in "puppet world" seems to be hotting up also. As we put away our fingerless gloves (that those of us are addicted to in the Southern States!), rehearsal rooms are full, sheds and workshops are ringing with the sound of hammering, people are bumping into venues across Australia and the world. And as we all know, the summer will be even busier! Recently I read the motto by which children's author Roald Dahl lived his life, I think it's a great one to pass on to you busy puppet people. It is,

My candle burns at both ends

It will not last the night

But oh my foes and ah my friends

It gives a lovely light!

Once again, many thanks to all the contributors of this edition - the quality and promptness of your articles is most appreciated. However, due to space restrictions, some articles submitted to me do not appear in this edition but, rest assured, your contribution is also appreciated and the articles will be carried over to the next edition.

Lastly, on behalf of UNIMA Australia, I would like to send special wishes and lots of luck to Fiona Gentle for a speedy and healthy recovery from her recent accident. Our thoughts are with you Fee, Phil and Clancy.

Cheers, Sarah Kriegler

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A Letter from our President



Richard Bradshaw,
President, UNIMA Australia

Harry Gardner has informed us that in her will Lorrie has generously left \$10,000 towards a scholarship to help young puppeteers. At our last Executive Committee in Melbourne in July it was decided that the money should be incorporated into the existing UNIMA Scholarship fund which is to be renamed "The Lorrie Gardner UNIMA Scholarship Fund". It seems a fitting way for us to remember Lorrie. (The donation roughly doubles the fund's capital.)

Meanwhile Harry intends to keep connected with UNIMA Australia. He was at the July meeting which ratified the changes our Treasurer, Simon, proposed to simplify the timing of membership renewals, which now fall due on one of two dates each year (depending on when members have paid

in the past). Harry also came to see "Pure Puppet Palaver" at Dante's in Fitzroy the following week. (There were moments when "Impure" may have been more apt, I'm happy to report.

This event was very successful in attracting adult audiences. The four night shows were quickly sold out and an extra session was added for Saturday afternoon. There are plans to repeat and expand the event next year. Palaver looks likely to

become an annual event, widening its audience by aiming some sessions at a general or young public, but not at the expense of losing the loyalty of its "mature" following!

In May-June I had been helping with a show for primary schools Annie Forbes directed for Terrapin in Hobart. One of the puppeteers, Laura, had worked on Terrapin's previous school show in 2004. The other two, Sam and Jenna, were graduates from the VCA's new postgraduate puppetry course.

Both at Palaver in Melbourne and Terrapin in Hobart I was impressed by the professional approach and talent of the puppeteers ... and also reminded of what a labour-intensive activity puppetry is! There has recently been some concern expressed that perhaps too many would-be puppeteers are being trained for a very limited market. My own feeling is that we are likely to see better puppetry! I can remember similar disquiet in the theatre world when NIDA appeared on the scene. NIDA and other institutions can now be justly proud of the achievements of their graduates who have helped to raise the standard of theatre in Australia, but the

sparks which light up our imagination in the theatre are not only kindled in training institutions. Part of the appeal of puppetry is that individuals can still find their own way and shine!

Sue Blakey is gaining support for a puppetry festival in Woodend VIC in May, 2006 which she hopes will be the first of annual festivals. With no "One Van" Festival in Blackheath NSW next year this is good news. Meanwhile Fiona Gentle and Phil Snow are preparing for a special emphasis on puppetry at the next folk festival in Woodford QLD this summer.

Philip Mitchell visited Melbourne and Sydney in August and reported on plans for UNIMA 2008, which will have as its theme 'Journey'. The festival now looks likely to be in April 2008 with the congress itself in the Perth Town Hall where Charles Webb's Royal Marionettes performed in 1886. (His show is believed to be the first in Perth to be lit by electric light.) Philip welcomes suggestions for shows and other activities for 2008 and a web site is being created to keep you informed.

I was delighted to be present at the official award of a Churchill Fellowship to Sue Wallace of the Sydney Puppet Theatre at Government House, Sydney on 5 August. Sue will travel to Europe, Japan and the U.S.A. for background to help establish a Puppet Centre in Australia.

The brilliant work of Norman Hetherington, our founding UNIMA Australia President, is to be celebrated at the Mosman Art Gallery in September with an exhibition and shows, including appearances with Norman and Mr Squiggle, star of T.V., postage stamps and the Archibald Prize for portraiture.

On receiving her Churchill Fellowship, Sue Wallace would like to thank her referees

Richard Bradshaw, Sue Giles
and Leonie Cameron

UNIMA Australia Inc. Scholarship

The UNIMA Australia Scholarship (soon to be renamed The Lorrie Gardner UNIMA Scholarship) is a scholarship of \$500 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 the applicant's 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 intent 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.

Acquittal: Successful applicants will be required to publish a report of activities relating to the scholarship in the edition of "Australian Puppeteer" following the completion of the scholarship.

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

The applications will be assessed by the industry panel of
Joanne Foley, Philip Millar
and Sue Wallace

Applications due: November 15, 2005

The successful applicant will be notified by December 15, 2005. The scholarship project must begin after January 1, 2006

TREASURER'S CHEST

by Simon Bainbridge,
Treasurer, UNIMA Australia

I am pleased to announce that the result of the special meeting we had on Sunday 24th July was an unanimous decision to accept the proposal and change the dates members pay their fees. What does this mean to you? I will be sending out a letter to each member before the end of the year explaining the changes and giving you your new date to pay your fees. Anyone who is currently paying their fees any where from January 2nd to June 30th will now pay on 1st

July, everyone else will pay on January 1st. This also means we can go ahead with new membership cards (the design is being finalised) and you will each be allocated a membership number. This will be on your membership card and you can quote that number when you pay your fees and I should end

up less confused and will save a lot of time. For now all members should continue to pay their fees as normal until you receive your letter and new due date. Thankyou to all the members who came to the meeting or sent in proxy votes, this is going to make my job much easier.

We have almost everything in place for the Unima Library to be located at the Swinburne library in Prahran. Thankyou to Ken for all the work he has put into this. All members will be able to make use of this facility when it is up and running by showing their current membership card and receiving a temporary loan card from the library. You will then be able to use the complete library. (some restriction will apply) For those members not in Melbourne you

will just need to join your local library, and apply for inter library loans. (Swinburne will send the book to your library, after you have finished with it, return it and your library will return it to Swinburne)

We are putting together all the overseas magazines we receive, and a back catalogue of all the Australian Puppeteers, as the starting point

of the Unima Library collection. Any one with books they would like to donate to the Library should contact either Ken Evens, Richard Hart or myself. Please note we are restricted to the size and space in the library so would only need one copy of a book. Before you send us anything we will check if we already have it.

We have had quite a few new members join over the last months, so welcome to them and a reminder to existing members to keep up the good work and continue pushing friends and colleagues to join up. Membership forms can be down loaded on the website or contact one of the committee.



Special Thanks to Philip Millar, Victoria Osborne and the artists of *Pure Puppet Palaver* who have donated 10% of their door takings to help aid puppeteers affected by the Boxing Day Tsunami. (as reported by Jennie Pfeiffer in the Summer-Autumn Mag) The *Pure Puppet* gang answered the call put out by UNIMA International for help and their generosity is greatly appreciated.

UNIMA INTERNATIONAL PUPPETRY FESTIVAL 2008

Festival planning is moving along swiftly as we search for conference events, performances, speakers, master classes and forum activities. Please note there has been a date change for UNIMA 08. The event will now be held in the FIRST WEEK OF APRIL 2008.

If you have information about national or international companies, artists, speakers, craftspeople or works that you think would be appropriate for the festival or conference, please contact us so we can follow it up. Many of SPPT's Company Associates and UNIMA members have been traveling overseas of late and using such opportunities to establish contacts and promote the Festival in general. We have created a website www.unima2008.com, which will be helpful in directing people towards

information regarding the event. On the website you will find the expression of interest forms.

Bookmarks are currently being printed to promote 2008, so if you are traveling overseas and can distribute them to people that may be interested, then let us know.

Although three years away, the event is fast approaching and we would encourage all puppeteers and associated artists to start thinking about shows/workshops/lectures they might be interested in either seeing or presenting. Obviously funds will be limited so if you are considering the possibility of bringing a show to Perth, we suggest you look in to what funding is available to you now. We would love to present as much Australian work as we can!

Handspan Visual Theatre International Study and Travel Grant

This is a \$2,000 grant, awarded annually to an Australian artist who works in puppetry and visual theatre, specifically for international study and travel

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

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

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

Eligibility: No age restrictions but applicants must be current Unima members
Closing Date: 30th September 2006
Decisions Advised: 30th November 2006
Travel May Commence: January thereafter
Enquiries: secretary@unima.org.au

SHADOW PUPPETRY WITH JAI HARTNELL

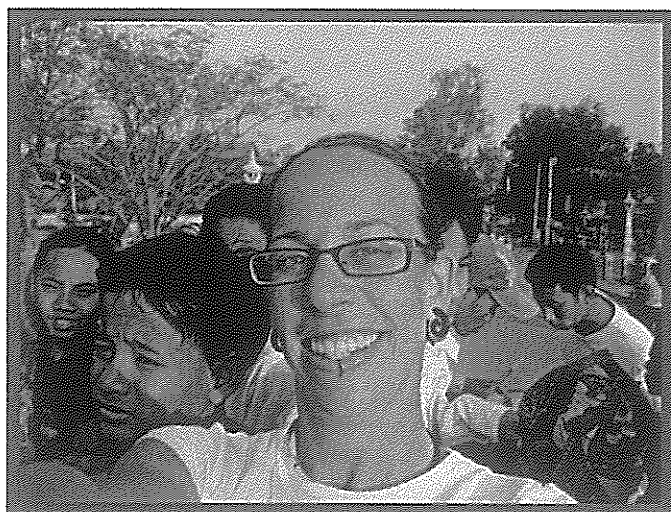
JAI HARTNELL, PUPPETEER, PUPPET MAKER AND DESIGNER, WAS THE FIRST RECIPIENT OF THE HANDSPAN VISUAL THEATRE TRAVELING SCHOLARSHIP.

IN 2004 JAI TRAVELLED TO CAMBODIA TO RESEARCH AND LEARN ABOUT TRADITIONAL SHADOW PUPPETRY. FOLLOWING IS HER REPORT WHICH APPEARS ONLY NOW AS

A RESULT OF LACK OF SPACE IN THE LAST TWO EDITIONS

This time last year I wasn't sitting in a trendy inner city Melbourne café, sipping a soy latte, typing an article on my laptop and pondering that the coffee extraction was a little burnt today! No, this time last year I had just had the most amazing experience of my life. No lattes at breakfast time, instead seafood noodle soups to die for. And everywhere I looked; generous, friendly smiles dwarfing my enormous grin.

Shadow Puppets are my thing and it was time for another Asian experience, so tired of sifting through the Indonesian ads for tourist shows or puppet sales, I took a long shot and typed Cambodia and shadow puppets into my internet browser. Four months later, having received the Handspan Visual Theatre International Travel and Study Grant (auspiced by Unima and Polylogot) I was in Cambodia participating in the Cambodian Living Arts (Silipak Khmer Amatak) annual cultural



delegation. This took place between January 11 and January 23, 2004 (although I stayed an extra week until the very last day of my visa!).

Cambodian Living Arts (CLA) is a non-profit organization and is a project of World Education/Cambodia. CLA was initiated in 1998 by Arn Chorn-Pond and a group of Cambodian-Americans and other US based supporters who wanted to restore dignity to Cambodia's "living treasures", who suffered greatly under the Khmer Rouge. CLA's long-term aim is to revive traditional forms (music, dance and shadow puppetry) and inspire a cultural renaissance to make the arts Cambodia's international signature by the year 2020. As in many Asian nations, these traditions have hardly changed in thousands of years. Due to recent history as well as current economic and social realities, Cambodia's traditions are particularly vulnerable.

The delegation takes place each year as an opportunity for CLA and its Cambodian members to showcase their achievements and

raise awareness and funds to support their ongoing programme. The delegation was extremely well organised and the days were filled by a combination of meeting with, and watching performances by, the Cambodian Masters and their students. This was complimented by visits to important historical and cultural sites, helping us place our experiences within a specifically Cambodian framework.



These experiences were awe-inspiring, breathtaking and incredibly moving and I discovered many aspects of traditional Cambodian life. Yet I also learnt much about Cambodia today through the wonderful opportunity of playing with Cambodians of all ages in their newly found social and artistic freedom. This year's delegation participants were joined not only by the Cambodian masters and students, but also myself and a group of three young American Jazz musicians who were living in Cambodia and working with local artists facilitated by CLA. This made

for an exciting and eclectic group of people.

The delegation began in Siem Reap, the closest metropolitan centre to the magnificent world heritage site of Angkor Wat. In its heyday the Angkorian Empire was the most powerful kingdom in SE Asia and the centre for culture. Beginning our experience so close to it's ruins was most appropriate and thought provoking. It emphasized the unusual and often unfortunate history of the Cambodian people and the fact that the present artistic environment could not be more different than those of the glorious days of the Angkorian Empire. For some of the Cambodians travelling with us, including adults, this was their first opportunity to Angkor.

For me, the most exciting aspect of this period of the delegation was meeting the troupe of shadow puppeteers based at Wat Rajabo, the main temple in Siem Reap. At Wat Bo the Shadow Puppet Master is the head monk, the Venerable Pim Sim, thus one must keep ones head below his. Maybe, one day, master puppeteers will be treated with the same respect in Australia! The Wat Bo *Sbaek Thom* Troupe is one of only two Cambodian repertory troupes of large shadow puppets (a tradition recently listed as a protected form of Khmer heritage by UNESCO). *Sbaek Thom* (large puppets) are reserved for the presentation of the *Reamker*, Cambodia's version of the 'Ramayana', while *Sbaek Touch*

(small puppets) are used for vernacular entertainment.

In Siem Reap as well as the organised performances and meetings, I squeezed in a few extra curricula puppetry activities. I couldn't wipe the grin off my face when I found myself travelling out to a small village at dusk, packed into the back of a pickup truck alongside puppets, musical instruments and puppeteers, and a huge pile of coconut husks for burning. After setting up, surrounded by an orange sunset, we joined the excited villagers in watching the show. It was an unforgettable, once in a lifetime experience.

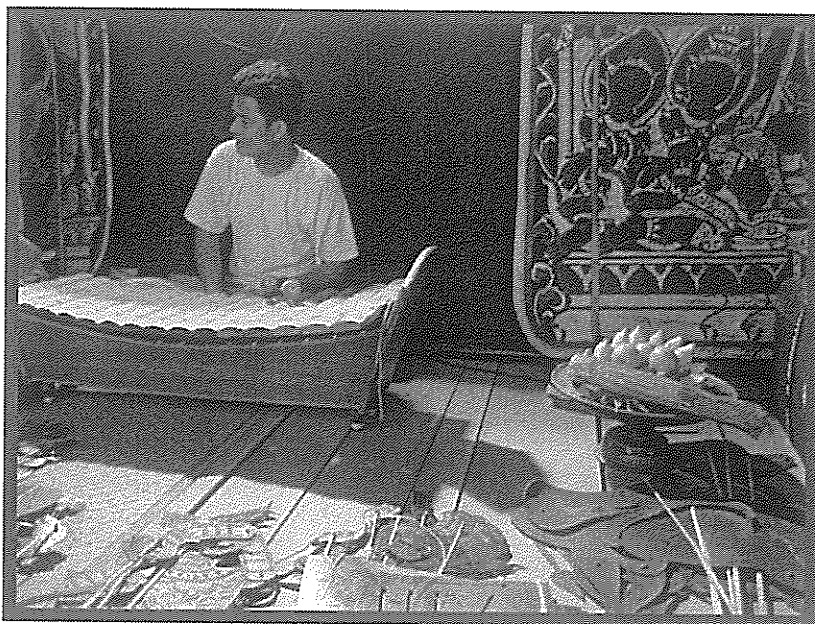


Halfway through our time, the delegation moved to Phnom Penh where the jam-packed days continued. Once more we visited historical sites and Masters and their students. Here, the harsh reality of their lives was very evident, and yet, it was a heart warming time. In Phnom Penh I spent my spare time hanging around at Sovanna Phum Theatre Company. Founded by a French woman, Delphine Kassem, and a Cambodian man, Kossal Mann, this theatre company (dance, mask, music and shadow puppetry) has been running for 10 years and moves from strength to strength. Again, the delegation was invited to a shadow puppet show! With support from CLA, Sovanna Phum had created an educational show about HIV/aids and were to perform in a relocated slum village on the

outskirts of the city. And again I gleefully managed to squeeze my way onto the back of the pick up (although this time I almost got my head taken off by a sign – too cocky!) There, we got an even bigger reception than at the village in Siem Reap. Many of these

children had probably never had the opportunity to experience this aspect of their rich culture and it was a wonderful thing to be a part of. Once the delegation had officially concluded I stayed on for another week and convinced Sovanna Phum to let me sit on the floor and punch out my very own leather shadow puppet (which I managed to smile through Australian customs, even still strongly smelling like the cow it had so recently been).

One of the most satisfying aspects of the delegation was that whilst I was overwhelmed with the opportunity to be interacting with these gifted artists, they were overwhelmed by the fact that I was interested enough to be there. For



one of the first times in my life, I had a connection with people of a country less developed than my own, which was based entirely outside an economic framework. It was also a very encouraging experience to be surrounded by the delegation participants, an involved group of Americans working to save and enhance culture. It was also inspiring to see what a difference having their culture intact made to the Cambodian artists we met, and in my studies of culture and meaning this provided an important example of the role culture plays in the human search for meaning.

My experience on this trip was so profound that I decided to work toward returning to Cambodia for a longer time. I am glad to say that my commitment paid off and I am about to return to Cambodia for 12 months as an Australian Youth Ambassador for Development, to work with World Education/ Cambodia, CLA and both puppet troupes again. The AYAD programme is run by AusAID and for my project I have an Australian

Partner organisation, Monash University, facilitated as a joint initiative of the Monash Asia Institute and the Department of Fine Arts. My role will predominantly be a developmental one, supporting and assisting in increased financial sustainability and recognition of the Cambodian shadow puppetry tradition.

I am grateful to everybody who made my experiences possible; all the people from Unima, Polyglot, CLA and of course Handspan (who through this grant are still able to provide support and encouragement to new generations within the puppetry community.) Stay tuned for the adventures of the first Australian Youth Ambassador for PUPPETRY Development!!!

Puppet History

by Richard Bradshaw

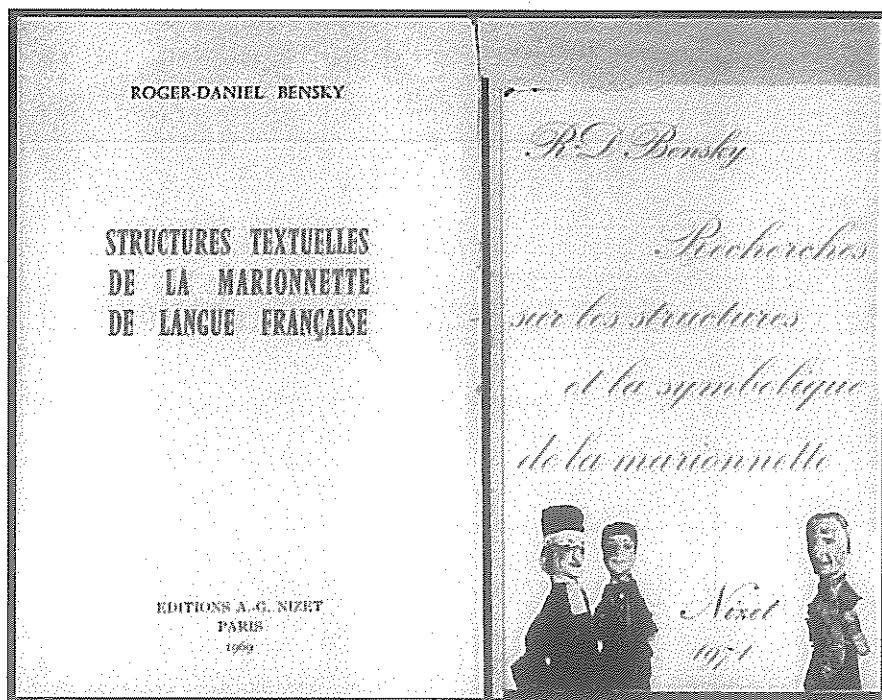
AUSTRALIAN PUPPET BOOKS: Part 2

This time I am looking at a number of books on puppetry which have a Perth connection. The first two are in French! [By another R.D.B.!!!!]

"Structures textuelles de la marionnette de langue française", by Roger-Daniel Bensky [Paris: Nizet, 1969] and "Recherches sur les structures et la symbolique de la marionnette" by the same author [Paris: Nizet, 1971]. You will find references to his work in the writing of Henryk Jurkowski and other authors of puppet theory.

B.A. and M.A. at the University of Western Australia. He then gained a doctorate from the University of Paris. At Georgetown he teaches literature and drama, specialising in modern theatre. In 1997 he published "Le Masque Foudroyé", again with Nizet, on modern "cutting-edge" dramatists and directors in France. He has been made a Chevalier dans l'Ordre des Palmes Academiques by the French Government.

Roger has directed student productions in French and in 1989 organised the Georgetown University Bicentennial Intercultural Festival of Performing Arts which involved 15 languages.



I first learnt of him when I played at Nancy and Bill Johnston's Nutshell Theatre in West Perth in March, 1974. He had recently been visiting family in Perth and had given a talk to local puppeteers at The Nutshell. There he made special reference to the ground-breaking work of Yves Joly (whose wonderful show using hand, umbrellas and cut paper I had been fortunate to see two years earlier in Charleville-Mézières).

Professor Roger Daniel Bensky teaches in the French Department of Georgetown University in Washington, D.C. He was born in Perth in 1937 and earned both a

Later in 1974, by happy coincidence, I met Roger on his home territory. I was doing shows at Bil Baird's puppet theatre in Greenwich Village, N.Y. and was flown up, with Bil's theatre

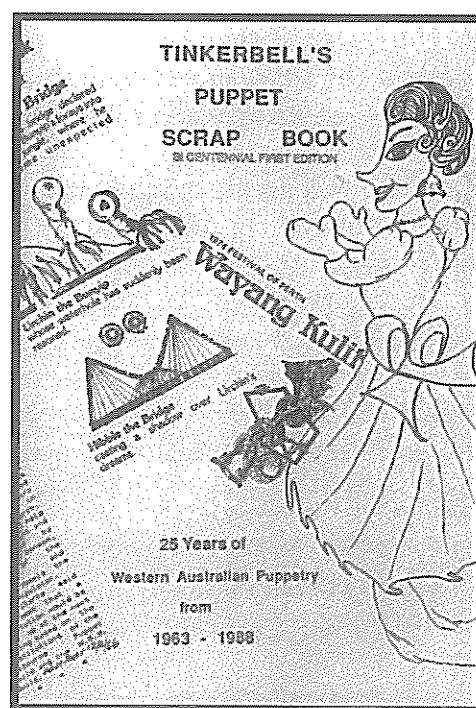
manager, to present my show at the Chancery Theatre of the Australian Embassy in Washington. (Peter Scriven had helped to arrange this.) Roger and his wife Danya were invited to attend and we spoke after the show.

When I returned to Sydney there was a letter from him and copies of his two books waiting for me. Of particular interest to me was what he had written about "Le pont cassé", especially because my version goes further than the original which ends with the "toff" beating the insolent worker. [I added the tossing over of the toff and the fall of the worker at the suggestion of John Fox at the A.B.C.] The psychological and social gap between the two men is symbolised by the physical gap in the bridge, and their anonymous representation of two classes is heightened by the use of silhouettes. Roger wrote a P.S. in his letter: "The Broken Bridge" adapted very well. In other words, all smart Alecs get theirs and the ducks have the last quack."

Margaret and I caught up with Roger again at the 1980 UNIMA Congress and Festival in Washington, D.C. That festival was administered from the Georgetown University campus where visiting delegates were housed. To a conference on World Traditions of Puppetry and Performing Objects Roger contributed a paper: "The Pulse of Puppets: An Ontological Perspective".

It would be great if he could be persuaded to contribute to a similar conference at UNIMA 2008 in his first home town! "Tinkerbell's Puppet Scrap Book", compiled and edited by Mildred Clarke, [Perth: privately published, 1988]

Subtitled "25 Years of Western Australian Puppetry from 1963-1988, this book was published in the year of the bi-centenary to coincide with a festival of puppetry organised by Spare Parts Puppet Theatre. [That festival had memorable master-classes given by Eric Bass (U.S.A.),



Kermit Love (U.S.A.), Philippe Genty (France) and Josef Krofta (Czech.)]

The book reproduces all the puppet-related press-cuttings from Mildred's scrap book which dates back to 1963. [Tinkerbell (of Tinkerbell's Puppet Theatre) is the name of a glove-puppet.] It is an unequalled record of puppetry in W.A. from 1963-88, with information on local and visiting puppeteers. It is richly illustrated with the photos that accompanied the original press items.

Mildred Clarke was for many years secretary of the Puppetry Guild of W.A. (Inc.) [For a time this was one of two puppetry guilds based in Perth, the other being the Australian Puppetry Guild (W.A. Section).] When Peter Scriven was the Puppetry Consultant for the Australian Council for the Arts...which became the Australia Council...Mildred was a member of the Puppetry Panel he convened.

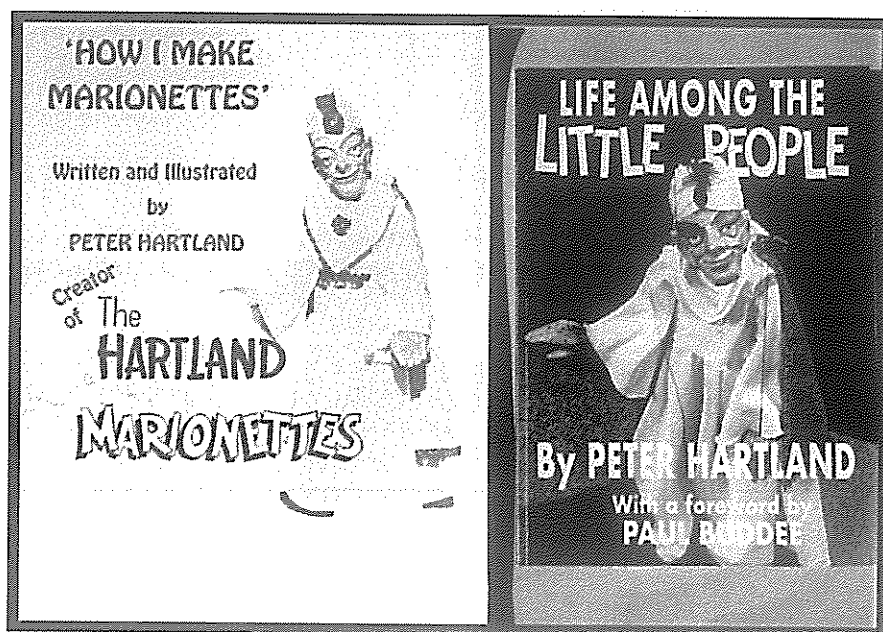
"Life Among the Little People", by Peter Hartland [Perth: Pembroke, 1991] Peter has subtitled this book "A Selective

Autobiography" and it is an enjoyable account of the life of a professional marionnetist in the early days of Australian television, on the show circuit and in N.S.W. clubs when they really flourished.

Peter Hartland was an art teacher and actor in Perth who created the Hartland Marionettes in the 1950s, starting with shows in local fairs. When TV arrived in Perth in 1959 he wrote and presented weekly marionette segments on Channel 7 in a shows that starred Rolf Harris, who had been lured back from London.

time at a Dairy Expo in Perth in 1979. Peter had returned to Perth in 1973 and became 'Advisor in Puppetry' to the Education Department. He visited schools throughout W.A. and directed courses in puppetry in selected high schools. When he retired he devoted himself to writing and promoting an interest in marionette theatre.

The book is an enjoyable read and a valuable insight into the life of a successful professional puppeteer, and also into early days of television and the thriving club circuit. There are many photos. It is



In 1961 he resigned from teaching art in Perth and relocated with his first wife, Lorna, and daughter, Maureen, to Sydney to begin creating puppet pieces for A.B.C. Children's TV. Eventually worn out by the demands of weekly T.V. they then developed items for the N.S.W. club circuit. These used some nice portrait puppets such as the radio-and-T.V. personality Jack Davey, and politicians, Menzies, Calwell, McMahon and Gorton.

Their 15-minute show "The Magic of Milk" was first presented at the Sydney Town Hall during Dairy Week in 1961. About 2,700 performances later it played for the last

published by Peter Hartland's own "house", Pembroke Publishing, 1A Pembroke Street, BICTON WA 6157

"How I Make Marionettes", also by Peter Hartland, is a manual on making marionettes of human figures, worked with upright controls. Instructions are given for making hollow heads from layers of gluedstrips of paper both in moulds and over plasticene. The illustrations are excellent and there is a minimum of text.

The VCA Schools of Production and Drama present

LAFONTAINE!

The wit and scathing insights of Jean de la Fontaine's 'Fables' interpreted via the art of puppetry. Directed and designed by the renowned Czech artist, Petr Matasek.



de la fontaine 68

The incisive and timeless wisdom of Fontaine's poetic fables transcends generations, geography and politics to shine as brightly today as at their beginnings in the 17th Century. Performed by students of the VCA Post Graduate Diploma of Puppetry and the Graduate Diploma of Animating, LA FONTAINE! interprets the precious cargo of these fables handed from generation to generation, and presents them via the puppet form.

Dates 9th–20th Nov 2005
Evenings
Wed 9th–Sat 12th Nov at 8pm
Tue 15th Nov at 6.30pm
Thur 17th–Sat 19th at 8pm
Matinees Fri 11th, Wed 16th,
& Fri 18th at 11am
Sat 12th, Sat 19th &
Sun 20th at 2pm
Venue Studio 45, VCA,
45 Sturt Street, Southbank
Tickets Adults \$18, Conc.\$12
Bookings 03 9685 9257

Puppeteers Lachlan Plain,
Gretta Newall, Bronwyn Weingott
Animateurs Daniel Diesendorf,
Fanny Hanusin, Daniel Koemer,
Alix Stirling, Adam Pierzchalsky,
Jacob Williams
Director/Designer Petr Matasek
Associate Director Peter Wilson
Head of Theatre Making &
Postgraduate Studies
Richard Murphet
Dramaturg Gilly McInnes
Workshop Director Al Martinez
Workshop Assistant Kat Clark

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vca.unimelb.edu.au
W www.vca.unimelb.edu.au
/production

STUDY PUPPETRY IN 2006 AT THE VCA

Australia's first postgraduate puppetry course is headed up by one of Australia's leading puppeteers: the renowned director and performer Peter Wilson. This unique course sits within the School of Production at the VCA and is taught by a team of leading puppetry practitioners.

Students will receive training in performance, construction, writing and design skills for puppetry within the VCA's unique artistic training environment where students from the six schools – Drama, Production, Dance, Film & Television, Art and Music study together in the same campus placed in the heart of Melbourne's Art Precinct.

The programme is two years in duration – the first year is a Postgraduate Diploma in puppetry and the second year is a Master of Puppetry (by coursework). Both years of study are eligible for FEE-HELP.

Postgraduate Diploma in Puppetry

Duration One year full time

Course consists of ten subjects

- Performance Theory A
- Performance Skills A
- Planning & Management
- Technical Skills A
- Writing & Design A
- Performance Theory B
- History of Puppetry
- Performance Skills B
- Technical Skills B
- Production

Master of Puppetry (by-Coursework)

Duration One year full time

Course structure

- Writing & Design
- Research project
- Production Project A
- Production Project B

For further course information or brochure contact Edith Vella
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We want to be puppeteers!

An insight into contemporary education and professional opportunities for puppeteers
by Peter Wilson and Gilly McInnes

A recent piece published by Arts Hub (www.artshub.com.au) 'Who wants to be a Puppeteer' by Naomi Guss highlighted the challenges faced by puppeteers in Australia pursuing an art form without appropriate support and funding. In the following article Peter Wilson and Gilly McInnes, experienced and internationally-respected puppetry artists teaching in the Postgraduate Diploma in Puppetry at the Victorian College of the Arts, agree that it is timely for puppetry to be brought to the table as a serious art form. They offer their perspective on the industry; the increasing opportunities for work; Australia's global role; the increasing quality of work being produced here; as well as the need for education programs to further develop our skills and national tradition.

This is one of the most exciting times in the history of puppetry in Australia – we are in the midst of a solidifying critical mass of artists producing, making, writing, funding (applying for funding!), studying, performing and attending puppet theatre in Australia. Our art form is not just for kids anymore - but nor should it be just for adults either...it's for 'audiences' now. What we are enjoying at the moment is the growth and solidification of a professional industry that strives to create the highest quality productions for young and old.

This is one of the most exciting times in the history of puppetry in Australia

A recent article published on this topic by Arts Hub, *Who wants to be a Puppeteer?*, highlighted the importance of education in puppetry to provide practical and theoretical skills for puppeteers wanting to sustain a career in the industry. In late 2003, the VCA created a Post Graduate Diploma in Puppetry to provide an advanced course of study for puppeteers already working in the industry. Many

passionate, professional educators have contributed to this and other courses in fellow institutions to provide study pathways (undergraduate and further) for puppeteers in Australia. Our mission at the VCA is to provide the opportunity for experienced practitioners with the right skills and relevant experience to refine their art, reinvigorate their practice and to pause and reflect on their work. Our duty is to work towards establishing a standard of excellence in our discipline and to provide artists with a theoretical, historical and international understanding of the art form. The philosophy of the VCA is that learning comes from doing. As a result, tuition in each of the six schools of Art, Dance, Drama, Music, Production, Film & Television is practical and intensive: classes are small, tuition is intense, places are limited and admission is very competitive.

2004 was our first year and we proudly graduated six students - all of whom are now employed in the industry in Australia or overseas. Our mission was to intensively train a select and limited number of puppetry artists to develop, create and show original work. This brings us to the crux of the matter – what matters most now is that we are all, solo puppeteers to large companies, involved in a critical mass. New groups are forming all the time, new artists continue to develop new art forms, forging their own artistic paths. Our art form is gaining credibility, our skills and craftsmanship are increasingly seen as valuable and desirable. Puppetry is being created and performed for people in many contexts across the country: libraries, schools, parks, streets, clubs, pubs, films, television, major theatres, arts centres, festivals - both main program and fringe - museums... and probably more. People are learning puppetry skills from teachers in schools, friends and mentors, company-based workshops, units of study in film schools and universities and through overseas study and travel. All these levels of work and study are combining to form the critical mass that is exploding puppetry into the cultural life of Australia. It is penetrating the consciousness of artists and

audiences and making the need to support it obvious and necessary. We discovered in our first year of the VCA course that there are two clear streams of need emerging in the field of puppet theatre education – professional puppeteers wishing to expand their own practice, and professionals in other disciplines who want to explore and incorporate puppetry into their art form.

It is too soon to know the effect of our course (and the many others led by distinguished puppet theatre practitioners) on the industry as a whole. At the VCA we offer a cross-pollination opportunity with other disciplines as well as an expansion of the pure art form. Perhaps early proof is in the productions and the visiting artists? Later this year, internationally renowned designer/director Petr Matasek from Prague will return to continue his work with VCA puppetry and animateuring students (from the School of Drama), in a program that incidentally is being sponsored by Simplot and the Sidney Myer Foundation – proving that generous corporate support is out there! We are also working on a proposed workshop with Phillipe Genty in 2006. Our 2004 students were privileged to work with Indonesian Shadow Puppet Master, I Made Sidia, who developed with the students an excerpt from the traditional Hindu tale, *The Ramayana*, for the 2004 VCA puppetry graduation presentation.

A culture of puppet theatre in Australia is a relatively new form in a young country. In Europe by contrast, puppetry is mentioned in the writings of Aristotle and Plato – it has been in the European consciousness for centuries. *Punch and Judy*, for example, is 350 years old! In Asia puppetry found its place also in the ancient texts and temple performances of many religions which were the stuff of everyday life. Even earlier, it takes its place in pagan and shamanistic rituals of primitive mankind. We cannot yet emulate this depth of “puppet consciousness” in Australia except perhaps in some areas of Indigenous Art and ritual. Australians as a whole are not necessarily intimately connected with this, but as we grow in this consciousness and as we grow our work across the length and breadth of our cultural lives, the notion of and the need for institutions like a National Puppet Centre become more possible.

We propose that right now Australian puppet theatre is developing its own proud tradition. As a young nation we are gloriously and proudly a ‘magpie’ nation – we can take the best of other traditions and create our own definition. We are not restricted by tradition. We learn from all cultures to form our own style and create unique techniques that define a signature Australian puppetry language. Are we not so very fortunate that Australian traditions are still evolving and taking shape right now – that we are involved at the grass roots?

...there is no doubt that the art form here is flourishing

Nowhere are examples of the growing of our art form more obvious than the many Australian companies, producers and solo performers traveling the globe exporting our idiosyncratic puppetry creations including (for starters) Erth, Snuff Puppets, The Sydney Puppet Theatre, Knee High Puppets, Terrapin Puppet Theatre, Spare Parts Puppet Theatre, Polyglot, Black Hole, Windmill Performing Arts Company, Performing Lines, Richard Bradshaw, David Hamilton and Richard Hart. In 2006, the 2nd National Puppetry summit will be held in Hobart in June, hosted by Terrapin Puppet Theatre. In 2008 Australia will host the UNIMA (World Congress) in WA in Perth. Held every 4 years, the previous Congress was held in Croatia and attended by thousands of individuals and companies.

Puppetry is gaining recognition in Australia; there is no doubt that the art form here is flourishing. Educational courses raise the bar in Australian puppetry practice, encouraging and supporting excellence, innovation and creativity in our students and seeking to offer this support throughout the puppetry community – making our artists all the more attractive to audiences here and overseas. We welcome and encourage continued discussion on the status and future of puppetry in Australia in the public arena. Perhaps, such debate fuels the passion and feeds the momentum for this unique and remarkable art form of ours to continue on its exciting path.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT AT VCA

with Petr Matasek May 2005

By Tirese Ballard

In May this year Peter Wilson, Gilly McInnes and the students in the puppetry dept. at the VCA generously welcomed outside artists, to join them in their two-week creative development with international Designer/Director from the Czech Republic, Petr Matasek.

The creative development explored the fables of La Fontaine and will continue later this year in another development and rehearsal period rejoined by Matasek with the puppetry, animatuer and production students to go into full production later this year.

The creative development began with the reading of some of La Fontaine's fables, such as: The Shepherd and the Sea, The Peacock who complained to Juno, The Jay dressed up in Peacock Feathers, The Miller - his Son and his Donkey, The Elephant and Jupiter's Monkey, The Head and the Tale of the Snake, to name but a few, as there are dozens. All of these, which through the animal kingdom, explore themes of identify, status, transformation, the human ego and values of our primordial human nature.

After brainstorming and interpreting the varied perceptions and responses to these fables we hit the black space for some get down and do it visual construction and impro. For a moment

there I thought we'd been transported into the theatre works of Robert La Page, but no we were in the graffiti altered "Muppetry Dept.", (will we forever fight the dignity of puppetry as an art form, thank God puppeteers have a sense of humour, and well personally I'm of the generation that loved the Muppets, the sign remains unchanged, go GenX!), back to La Fontaine - taking the imagery, stories and concepts of these fables and giving them another life off the page in the form of puppetry and visual imagery and it was triffic!

Working as a group we delved into the creative space, largely using shadow screen and projection, improvisation with our own physical anatomy and objects creating images that morphed and transformed continuously, with various sound tracks accompanying our explorations. But the challenge was yet to come.

The day came when Matasek brought forth the object, the objective, or was it the obstruction of which were to hurdle. Working with 'wood', not beautifully prepared carved marionettes, but plain old chunks of 'wood', untouched but for a chainsaw, giving us the slabs and chunks that we hoped to bring to life. This unfolded in several ways: firstly the collection of all things natural in wood, my collection of fresh green leaves were no go, so back out into the grounds of

VCA collecting twigs and bark or which we formed masks, secondly with the help of Al Martinez the carving of roughly 20cm high statues or characters. From these lead into another series of explorations, this time Robert La Page was no-where to be found.



Example of wooden "Idols"

qualities and the great character it holds in its aesthetic.

So ended this creative development for the La Fontaine Project at the VCA. What was also inspiring and important about this creative development, was the welcoming of outside artists some of those being from Terrapin and Polyglot, into Australia's first course offered in 'puppetry' initiated and run by Peter Wilson at the VCA. It was a great opportunity to meet and work with other puppeteers, continue nurturing a puppetry community and to also become more aware and know more of and importantly support Australia's first course solely geared towards puppetry. We are fortunate to have access to some great teachers in Australia who connect us new guns to international artists and their work

At first it was quite daunting as many of us did not consider ourselves sculptors of this nature, to this seemingly unmalleable material in comparison to others we had been playing with, but as all creative journeys warrant, the process began and discoveries made of this awesome material and affirming and inspiring to further discover the mystery wood holds for the 'sculptor', the 'puppet maker', and now be it so for the 'puppeteer', working with its raw form, its earthy, transformative

ONE MUPPET, ONE VOICE

by Kynan Baker

It's hard to imagine a working puppeteer today who isn't aware of Jim Henson. Indeed many of us owe him a direct creative debt. Henson single-handedly transformed puppetry on television and created some of the most original, enduring and memorable characters in popular culture: The Smurfs. No, wait, the Smurfs was some German guy. Jim Henson created the Muppets.

Since Henson passed away in 1990, the Muppets have had a rocky history. Their film and TV ventures have met with mixed success -- the chief ingredient in that mix being failure -- and the business dealings of their parent companies have occasionally overshadowed the product. But through it all, the characters have endured, in the public memory and in the public eye. (And also, I guess, in the public mind's eye, which the public would use to see the public memory.)

It's these unique characters -- Kermit, Miss Piggy, Fozzie Bear, Gonzo, Animal and those two old guys from the balcony whose names nobody can ever remember -- which make the Muppets so special. Building on a foundation of astounding technician-ship and truly underrated acting skills, the Muppet performers have created and honed a series of puppet characters who are more rounded and believable than many of Hollywood's human stars, such as Paris Hilton.

Thanks to a multi-million dollar deal with the Jim Henson Company, the rights to the Muppet characters now belong to The Walt Disney Company, an arrangement which Jim Henson himself was attempting to finalise before his untimely passing. Disney has a proven history in successful character franchise

management and is in many respects the ideal custodian of Jim Henson's legacy.

As you'd expect, Disney is putting the full weight of its creative, financial and production power into a major Muppet comeback. So far, the results have been extremely positive. Successes directly attributable to the Muppets Holding Company -- the Disney subsidiary which now operates the franchise -- include a hit made-for-TV movie, a huge DVD release for *The Muppet Show's* first season, and a marked increase in public awareness of the Muppets.

...Can you see a "but" coming?

On Thursday September 8 in New York, and Friday 23 September in Los Angeles, Muppets Holding Company (MHC) is holding open auditions for alternate performers for Animal, Beaker, Bunsen, Statler, Waldorf, Pepe, Gonzo, Fozzie, Miss Piggy and Kermit. According to the Muppet Hotline set up to answer audition enquiries, these performers will be on call for "occasional Muppet appearances." And the Muppet Hotline has never lied to us before.

The Muppet hotline has never lied to us before.

Before the end of the year, MHC is going to have a list a mile long of puppeteers which MHC brass considers are good enough to become Muppeteers -- and not just any Muppeteers, but stand-ins for the core Muppet performers, stand-ins capable of performing the classic Muppet characters. And that means, within six months, maybe less, people are gonna start seeing "understudy" Muppets popping up all over the world.

According to MHC, this will increase their ability to keep up with public demand for the Muppets. No longer limited to a single overworked performer for each character, the Muppets would be able to

make "personal" appearances simultaneously in seven different time zones. This plan, in case you hadn't guessed yet, demonstrates a fundamental misunderstanding about the Muppet characters.

Underpinning the Muppet magic since the beginning has been Jim Henson's strict policy: Only a Muppet performer can perform a Muppet, and each Muppet character can only be performed by his or her specific puppeteer. A bond exists between each Muppet and its performer, a complex chemistry which imbues the character with life. That spark of individual life sets the Muppets apart from any other set of family characters. Jim Henson's single-performer policy means the Muppets lead singular lives and that their personalities evolve over time. When Miss Piggy appears on *The Tonight Show* with Jay Leno, Jay treats her not as a costume character or a corporate mascot, but as a welcome, returning guest.

For over thirty years, Kermit the Frog was only ever performed by his creator, Jim Henson. Only after Jim's passing was Kermit entrusted to another puppeteer, Steve Whitmire, who worked closely with Jim and who strives to capture the essence of Kermit. The Great Gonzo has for three decades been performed exclusively by Dave Goetz, whose unique humour and heart are inextricably intertwined with Gonzo's unique humour and heart. Although Dave's nose is smaller.

Under MHC's plan, a large roster of anonymous puppeteers would be interchangeable with the established Muppet performers, whose careers and lives are so closely linked with their characters, and who represent a direct link between Jim Henson and the legacy he left behind.

By creating a fleet of Muppet clones, MHC is attempting to save money and maximize profits. But what this plan will

actually do, instantly and inevitably, is turn the characters into instant stereotypes -- reducing them from complex, three-dimensional beings to a set of mannerisms and catchphrases, until they become bland corporate icons with no individuality whatsoever. Nuance, personality and reality go out the window, replaced by a checklist of catchphrases and an approximation of a voice. Consistency? Gone. Thirty years of character development? Dumped. As long as Piggy does that karate thing, that's good enough for MHC. Without consistent performers, the

The Great Gonzo has been performed for three decades exclusively by Dale Golez...

Muppets will no longer be the Muppets. Kermit The Frog will become Kermit A Frog -- and all for the sake of convenience. Fifty years of Muppet history is being thrown aside so that MHC can create an assembly-line of not-quite-Muppets. The artists who originated and honed the Muppet characters will be demoted, becoming part of a pool of on-call impressionists, hired day-to-day based on convenience, cost and the whim of MHC.

It's hard to begrudge an ambitious puppeteer the chance to audition for the Muppets, and possibly fulfill a lifelong dream. But it's also hard to avoid seeing the downside of "understudy" performers. Multiple, concurrent performers for each character can't help but affect the character negatively -- and that affects the audience's relationship with that character. If three people are playing Kermit, that's three different Kermits. And that puts at risk the very thing that makes the Muppets successful -- our personal connection with them.

The current Muppeteers have all worked with these characters for *at least* ten years. Cattle call auditionees can't

possibly be expected to attain the same level of technician-ship, vocal ability and improvisation skill just by attending a weekend workshop and doing a few mirror exercises.

The creative autonomy enjoyed by the Muppeteers, earned through decades of apprenticeship and training, means that Steve Whitmire can tell a writer or director with absolute certainty, "Kermit wouldn't say that." But put a 19-year-old who's just passed his final call-back audition in the same situation, and suddenly Kermit could be doing and saying some pretty way-out things. (And if that particular 19-year-old doesn't cooperate, well, that's just gonna make the choice much easier for the next understudy in line.)

MHC needs to be told that this plan is a mistake. Recasting is inevitable and necessary as performers pass away or retire. Fostering and mentoring genuine understudies is an important step for MHC to take, but concurrent, multiple performers making simultaneous appearances is absolutely unacceptable.

The Muppets can be successful without becoming mass-produced character gloves, handed out to the nearest puppeteer and passed off as the real thing. When did we go from Jim Henson -- and ONLY Jim Henson -- playing Kermit for thirty years, to handing Kermits out like company T-shirts?

One Muppet, One Voice is a public campaign by Muppet supporters to ensure these concerns are heard and understood by MHC. We are encouraging all Muppet supporters to write to the Muppets Holding Company to tell them we don't want the Muppet characters to be compromised. To tell them why the Muppets are special to us and why we don't want to see them watered down, farmed out or cloned. To tell them that their plan must be reconsidered, for the sake of the franchise, but mainly for the sake of the Muppets.

What's that? You want to help? I don't blame you, I've been pretty convincing. The people to write to at MHC are;

Chris Curtin -	General Manager,
Martin Baker -	Consultant,
Debbie McClellan -	Director of Creative Affairs.

The address is;
**Muppets Holding Company,
 1201 Grand Central Ave., Glendale,
 CA 91201 USA.**

Don't forget a stamp!

And we've even got a website, www.SaveTheMuppets.com, where you can read a shorter, less entertaining version of this article and also join our mailing list. As the campaign grows we'll be adding new information, answering questions and unveiling new plans. Of course we've got plans -- you don't take on Disney without having a of couple ideas up your sleeve.

This article may be lighthearted in tone, but its purpose is truly serious. The legacy of one of the world's greatest puppeteers is at stake, as well as the innocent joy the Muppets have brought and will continue to bring to millions of Muppet supporters, now and for generations to come.

Changing MHC's mind may seem a daunting task. But the One Muppet, One Voice campaign is built on the idea that just one person *can* make a difference. I urge you all to consider this issue seriously and take the time to write to MHC to give voice to your concerns.

One Muppet, One Voice *will* be heard.
 And together, we *will* Save the Muppets.

Kynan Barker
 Campaign Director
 One Muppet, One Voice
savethemuppets@gmail.com

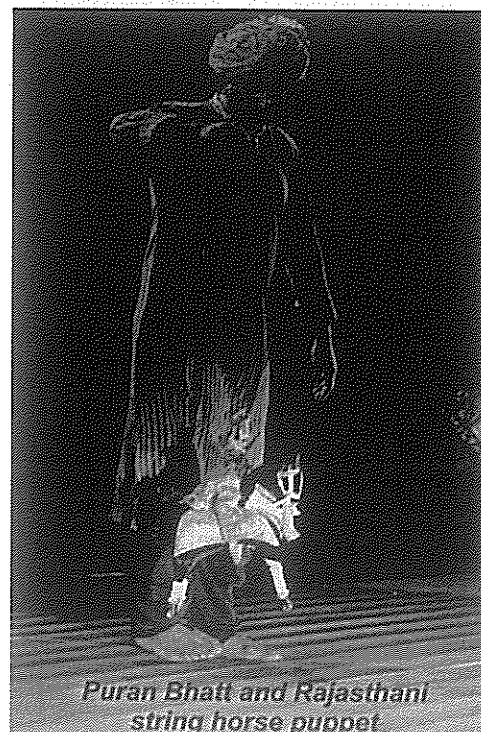
Asia Pacific Report

by Jennie Pfeiffer, Chair Asia-Pacific Commission

I write from New Delhi where days are steamy. It has taken a while to acclimatise to life here, and it seems that one has to learn to go with the flow as plans and arrangements can change on a daily basis. For instance, the Singapore Puppetry Festival, hence the Asia-Pacific Commission meeting postponed by organizers. I'm meeting many people, who on the whole have expressed interest in Australian puppetry and support the notion of cross-cultural exchange. I think there are possibilities of realising such exchange over the next few years.

There is a lively arts scene and several key organisations that provide artists and audiences with events and functions to attend that range from: exhibitions, book launches, talks and seminars, film screenings, or performances: the India Habitat Centre and the India International Centre. One does keep running into the same people. There is a separation however, and not unlike Oz it seems that there is a high/low divide and that classical works are favoured and readily find support, whilst new contemporary works, and certainly traditional folk forms, struggle. Puppetry is not considered one of the THE most significant artforms, not like classical dance for instance. In some instances support and incentive are available, and there are people and institutions that particularly show a great deal of concern for the traditional forms, especially those that are on the verge of dying out.

One example is the Rajasthan string puppetry tradition. As a form it has unfortunately deteriorated over the years as "global creep" heads into the rural villages where the tradition has sustained itself for generations. As was explained to me, the practice of this puppetry is closely connected to the life, traditionally puppeteer families being nomads who travel from place to place where markets and festivals provide the audiences they need. They return to



Puran Bhatt and Rajasthani string horse puppet

their homes for the wet season when they tend their farms to take care of the year's food supply. Of more recent decades a number of processes have been at work. Puppetry performances have lost audiences for want of sustained interest and competition with cinema and TV. The economy and way of life has changed seeing migration towards city centres looking for sustaining work.

The style has a repertoire that for many generations remained relatively unchanged and having seen it, the question begs: how many times can the same repertoire maintain an audience, particularly if one is now anchored to a set location and community? Over time this has led to a deterioration that has shifted the craft from one of a performance tradition into a 'making a living' from carving cheap quick puppets for sale on the street to tourists, items not well suited to performance and losing much of the rich detail of the performance puppets. These carvers, ranging in age from 12-13 year old boys who are new to puppets, can knock out

50-60 puppets a day, to older men who still know something of the performances. Still it's a living.

However there is one man from a long line of Rajasthani puppeteers who is almost single handedly changing the map. Puran Bhatt has five sons and three daughters. I haven't asked him how old he is, but I suspect he is around or less than 50yrs. He is a Master puppeteer in the Rajasthani style. He studied from master, Mohan Lalbhat in manipulation and Naurang Lalbhat for carving. Many say he has surpassed his gurus.

I attended a week-long workshop held at and organised by the Sangeet Natak Akademi in association with Puran Bhatt. *[The SNA is not actually an academic institution as I once thought, but it is a learning facility, enabling independent workshops, conferences and exhibitions. SNA also holds an extensive archive of books. It has a comprehensive AV collection of documented performances, traditional and contemporary. I have yet to plumb all the material cloistered there, and apparently have little hope of acquiring a catalogue, so research here is an old-fashioned slog].*

The purpose of the workshop was to bring two venerable Master puppeteers, one a manipulator, the other a puppet-carver from Rajasthan [Nagaur] and enable them to teach the finer points of the craft to 35 tourist market carvers from various Rajasthan locations and elsewhere, even from within Delhi. The outcome of this workshop was to narrow the field down to 12 potential string puppeteers who will be rewarded with continued intensive support for training and development over the following months in making, manipulation, and music, continuing up to 12 months when it is hoped that productions will be the outcome.

Beyond training the basics of this form, Puran is continually reinventing it. His work since the eighties, commenced with an enterprising program of workshops in Rajasthan facilitated by Zazie Hayom, Theatre en Tete, with French funding for French artists and continued over a series of seasons. Combined with his long

association of work with Dadi Pudumjee, this has enabled him to travel outside of India. He has given workshops and performances in Europe, and gained insights into all manner of theatrical forms. He has absorbed these influences and uses them at will to create new forms of expression for the traditional puppets and characters, expanded the repertoire into new puppet plays and operas, something that had never occurred previously in the Rajasthan traditional style. The stories he tells are of "another era when Rajasthan was a kingdom ruled by Amarsingh Radhore, a hero for the puppeteers".

Additionally, Puran has also reinvented the presentation of the form. He has modified the 'trad rep', which was confined to a booth on the street and a limited number of set routines: dancing girl, snake charmer, magician, horse and rider into variations that allow the manipulators to be in full view, to have a whole chorus line of dancing girls and to invent new string puppet characters, such as a very entertaining singing camel that appears in Dhola Maru, one of the most famous Rajasthani romantic ballads. It is an 'Arabian Nights-like' court tale.

Puran himself is quite the showman and a wonderfully warm and friendly person. He lives in Katputli colony, (Katputli meaning wood puppet), which is a particular community of relocated or displaced puppeteers from Rajasthan and elsewhere, the 'forgotten artists'. Until fairly recently it existed as a tent city, and while buildings have since appeared, it is a rowdy crowded place with quite primitive living conditions by western standards. The first time I visited, having navigated my way to the colony by auto-rickshaw, finding Puran's house was a challenge, the place being a maze of narrow laneways, shanties and walls. The mention of Puran's name, however, was enough and I found ready escorts, although I must say trust went a long way here, as I could have been led anywhere and would have been none the wiser. There was a complete language barrier. I spend the afternoon with family members, relations, babies, kitter, nobile phones

competing for attention, sharing computer displays of DVDs of work. I felt a welcome guest and I know that I would always have a place to go to in Delhi as long as Aakaar Theater and the Bhatts are around.

There is much to tell of my journey. My experiences have been as diverse and contradictory as Delhi is reputed to be, moments when I have wondered what possessed me to come here, and moments when I could consider living here. Over coming issues and through the UNIMA website, I look forward to sharing more.

Please note; In the last edition of Australian Puppeteer's Asia-Pacific column, the photo listed as Dadi Pudumjee's Putul Yatra celebrations was actually a festival organised by the Sangeet Natak Akademi, and for which Dadi Pudumjee prepared the opening event. Apologies Dadi and SNA.

Jennie's work has been assisted by the Australian Government via its advisory body the Arts Council of Australia

What's on around the country

VICTORIA

Polyglot Puppet Theatre

Polyglot will hit the road with Headhunter in August/ September 2005. Headhunter will tour Victorian schools with Regional Arts Victoria and will then have a two-week public season at ArtPlay. It will then head up to Queensland for a one-week season at the Gardens Theatre in Brisbane, followed by a season at Croc Fest 2005 in Swan Hill.

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 a collaboration between Polyglot Puppet Theatre and Ilbjerri Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Theatre Co-operative and was inspired by the short film by Archie Weller and Sally Riley called "Confessions of a Headhunter" based on the short story by Archie Weller of the same name. Headhunter was written from a creative development process with material collected from kids at 2004 Croc Fest in Swan Hill and with inspiring contributions from the KODE school, Glenroy.



Polyglot is also touring Muckheap throughout Queensland in September/ October 2005.

Muckheap is a tale of two people trying to clean out their shed for hard rubbish day. In the process they find everything that they thought was junk is too interesting, useful or too full of memories to throw away. When memories and characters take over, the audience is swept up with the junk into a fabulous storytelling frenzy. While the "keep" pile gets bigger and bigger, they find themselves telling the story of Jacky and the Beanstalk – with a twist. In the end, all good intentions are joyfully discarded in favour of a rich and exciting life. Junk will never look the same.

For more information check out Polyglot's website www.polyglotpuppets.com.au or call 03 9827 9667.

What's on around the country

TASMANIA

Terrapin Puppet Theatre

The Storyteller's Shadow:
a celebration of Hans Christian Andersen

TASMANIAN SCHOOL TOUR
Term 2, 4th July - 12th August
Term 3, 19th September - 30th September

PUBLIC PERFORMANCES [4 performances]

@ Peacock Theatre, Salamanca Arts Centre, Hobart
Saturday 13th August - 2pm & 4pm
Sunday 14th August - 2pm & 4pm

INTERNATIONAL TOUR
Caravenen HCA '05 Festival, Denmark
Sunday 21st August - Saturday 9th September

Suitable for 7 - 12 year old children

Written by world renowned puppeteer Richard Bradshaw OAM and featuring Ben Sibson's evocative sound score composition, *The Storyteller's Shadow* features a broad variety of puppet forms - shadow puppetry, paper cut-outs (like those of Andersen's time), projections, object theatre, and a model "toy theatre" based on the Theatre Royal in Copenhagen.

WRITER: Richard Bradshaw OAM
DIRECTOR: Anne Forbes
COMPOSER: Ben Sibson
PUPPET DESIGN: Jenna Hann, Anne Forbes, Tim Denton, and Richard Bradshaw
SET DESIGN: Jon Bowling and Bob Dickason

LIGHTING DESIGN: Marianne Taylor
PERFORMERS: Laura Purcell, Sam Routledge, Jenna Hann

2005 is the 200th anniversary of the birth of Denmark's most famous author, Hans Christian Andersen. The Storyteller's Shadow is a celebration of both the life and writing of Hans Christian Andersen and reinforces the bond between Tasmania and Denmark.

This delightful production incorporates several of Andersen's most beloved stories including 'The Ugly Duckling', 'The Little Match Girl', 'The Shirt Collar' and 'The Princess and the Pea' - but with an Australian/Tasmanian flavour! The duckling does not freeze to death in an icy pond but comes close to death in a drought-stricken dam, and as for 'The Princess and the Pea' any resemblance between the characters in this story and actual living people is entirely coincidental!

Terrapin is delighted to announce that The Storyteller's Shadow has been invited by Caravenen HCA'05 to tour to Denmark in August 2005 to join the worldwide celebration of these special occasions with a magical performance for children. The tour includes Vestsj/Ælland, Randers, Århus and Svendborg between 21st August and the 9th of September.

WESTERN AUSTRALIA

Spare Parts

Big changes at Spare Parts Puppet Theatre signify the beginning of a new era leading up to the UNIMA 2008 International Puppetry Festival. Our previous General Manager, Olly Williams, has sadly migrated to the Department of Culture and the Arts

to become advisor to the State Arts Minister Sheila McHale. After a couple of months of surviving without any manager at all, Cathcart Weatherly has come on board as GM bringing fresh energy and new ideas to both SPPT and UNIMA 08. He was previously with WACOS, and has fantastic experience in lobbying government and leading not for profit organisations.

Julie Kornaat has also moved on and we were lucky enough to employ Clare Waldron as our Administration Officer, who has done a fantastic job of holding the fort through all the staff changes! Rachael Whitworth has come on board as Operations Officer, to assist the GM and AD with Unima planning and pursue new opportunities for SPPT. Rachael has been a performer with SPPT for the last five years and recently completed a Graduate Diploma in Arts and Entertainment Management, so it is exciting that the company is able to give her an opportunity to transition in to management.

VELVETEEN RABBIT

We have just finished a sell-out season of *The Velveteen Rabbit*, a new work for the company directed by Philip Mitchell. Greg Lissaman, director of Jigsaw Theatre Company, came across to Perth to adapt the story by Marjory Williams about a boy's love for his toy rabbit. Designer Zoe Atkinson used real toys, marionettes and rod puppets inside a 10m wide booth containing sliding screens to give the piece a film-like quality, delighting audiences with clever perspectives.

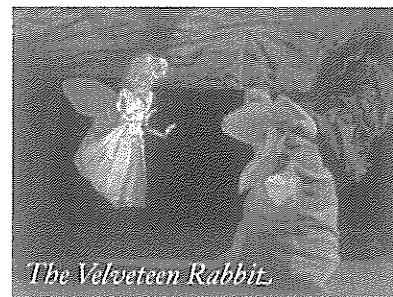
The show received exceptional reviews and even after adding 7 performances, the season completely sold out. Performers Michael Barlow, Simon Clarke and Rachael Whitworth were stretched to the limit, often performing 3 shows a day!

GRANNY IS ALIEN TOUR

After a brief recovery period, a team of artists set off on a regional tour of Southern WA to perform *Granny is an Alien* as well as conduct puppet making workshops in schools. This show, written and performed by Michael Barlow, also completed a successful national tour and sell-out return season in Perth earlier in the year.

BLUE BACK

For our next season we will be presenting Terrapin Theatre's production of Tim Winton's *Blueback*, adapted by Peta Murray. The sets have arrived and we are excited about presenting another Winton work, which always prove to be very popular with WA audiences. The show will be presented in a season at our Fremantle theatre as well as in schools during the last part of fourth term. Michael Barlow and Karen Hethey are the performers.



Announcing the Inaugural Woodend Festival of Puppetry

All years have their good news, bad news stories. 2005 is no different.

The sad news as you will now know is the demise of the wonderful One Van Festival at Blackheath. Its passing will be missed and Sue Wallace must be praised and thanked for achieving such a wonderful legacy to puppetry and working so hard for all those years.

Perhaps the pain may be eased a little by the good news of 2005.... that is...the announcement of the inaugural Woodend Festival of Puppetry.

For those unfamiliar with Woodend, we are a small township on the side of Mount Macedon in Victoria with Hanging Rock 4 kms away. Like the famous film Picnic at Hanging Rock there are some surprising facts about Woodend.

- Woodend is located right in the centre of the Macedon Ranges Shire.
- We seem to be one hour's drive from everywhere, (almost); 1 hour from Melbourne, Bendigo, Ballarat, Geelong, Hume highway. 45 min from Melbourne airport, 40 minutes from Daylesford and 30 minutes from Castlemaine.
- Woodend over the years, has been home to various puppeteer partners. As one set move out, another coincidentally moves in.
- Woodend is home to Sue Blakey and Steve Scott, of Festive Factory, which is a full-time puppetry and performance based business.
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Woodend is a growing township that has seen massive changes in recent years. There has been an influx of new residents. This increasing population has seen the rise of more artists into the region with a number of high profile musicians in the area and the rise of the Woodend Winter Arts Festival over the Queen's Birthday Weekend.

The inaugural Woodend Puppet Festival is scheduled for May 5-7th 2006. The festival profile is planned as follows: 8 performances, 2 exhibitions (one professional, the other to be the work of stu-

dents and exhibited in shop windows along the main street. This one is to be called The Puppet Walk). Planned also are 3 workshops, one of which is for professional development and the other two open for the general public. There will be a festival club offering the opportunity for public and artists to mingle and enjoy The Lucky Dip: a 10 min open mike concept which may be fragments of new works in progress, presentations from the workshops or improvised puppetry sessions. Finally, there will be a forum series called Meet the Makers with artists (number of forums yet to be confirmed).

This first festival's theme is;
"Celebrating the Diversity of Puppetry"

We are looking for shows that are clear examples of specific styles. For example, shows may use one style (e.g. purely shadow) or a combination of techniques. We are also looking for adult and children's shows.

There is no shortage of wonderful venues with 240 V power available. However shows need to be self contained bringing their own sound, lighting and staging. Companies selected will need to avail themselves to participate in the forum series. For "out-of-towners" there is a great selection of B & B accommodation available.

Planning is well underway with support from local council and Rotary. Many busy months lie ahead but in the mean time I am calling for Expressions of Interest from all artists, companies, individuals, and partnerships who might like to be a part of this first event.

Please contact Sue Blakey,
on (03) 5427 3436
or e-mail sue@festive.com.au

The Macedon Ranges Shire Council, through its Arts Advisory Committee and Cultural Services Unit, is proud to fund the Woodend Festival of Puppetry. This project is also funded by the Rotary Club of Woodend