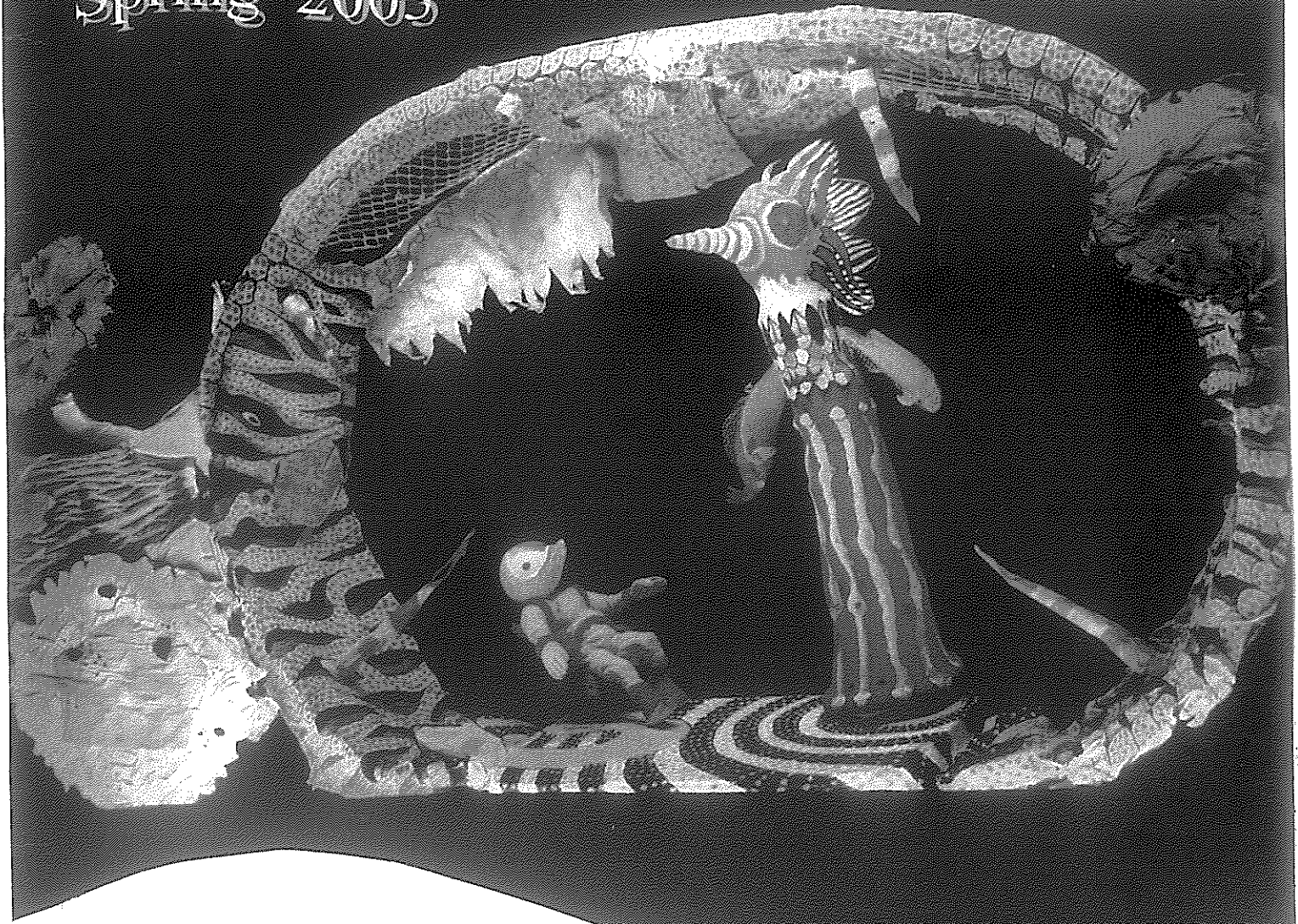


AUSTRALIAN PUPPETEER

Spring 2003

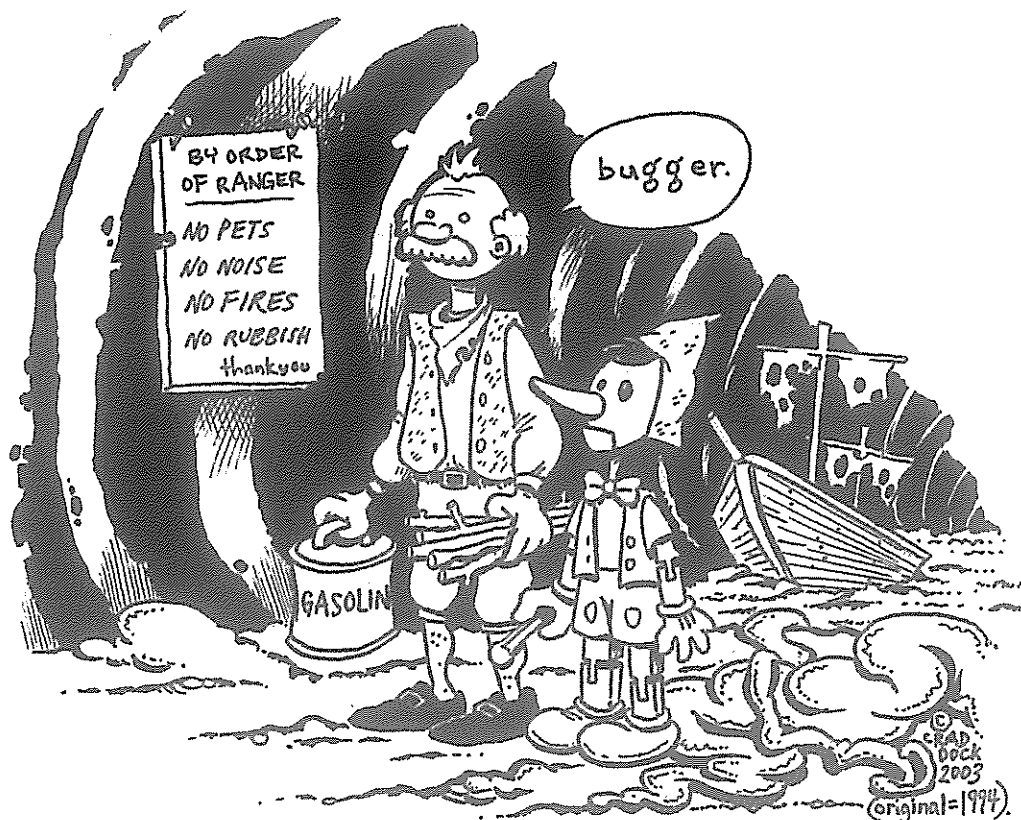


Union Internationale de la Marionnette



Unima logo designed by Norman Hetherington

Front cover image from *Dreamer in Space*
a DREAM PUPPETS production by Richard Hart.



PLEASE NOTE: By submitting your letter or article to AUSTRALIAN PUPPETEER you agree that it may be edited for legal, space or other reasons and after publication in the magazine it may be republished on the internet or in other media.

AUSTRALIAN PUPPETEER

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Illustrations: Brian Craddock, Julia Davis

A special thank you to Brian Craddock of Balderdash Puppets for his original artwork and cartoons.



EDITORIAL

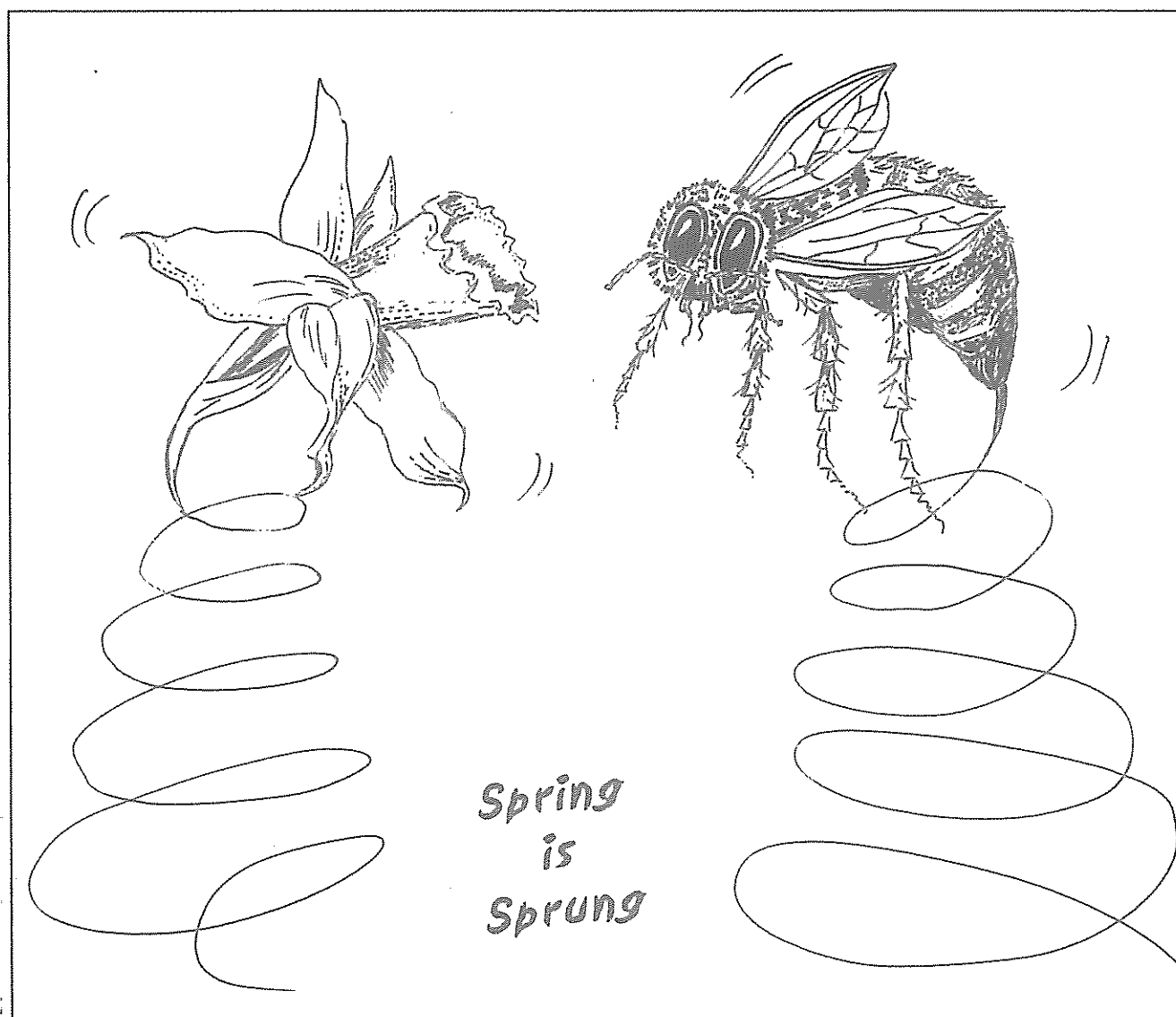
SPRING - IT IS HERE! The phut-phut of lawnmowers, the itchy nose, the whiff of barbies, bees in the bushes, blowies at the back door... The long, long dark Melbourne winter has finally ebbed away.

Spring is a time of creativity, renewal and regeneration, a time of inspiration, playfulness and sharing - qualities inherent in the practice of the puppetry arts. We have much to be hopeful and inspired about; discussions are afoot regarding a proposal for Melbourne to host the 2008 UNIMA congress and festival and the first postgraduate puppetry course in Australia will be offered at the Victorian College of the Arts in 2004. You can learn more about these initiatives in this issue.

Thank you to all contributors. This is your magazine; it reflects who we are and what we do. Don't be reticent in sending, thoughts, reflections, ideas, advice, pictures, artwork, newsy titbits and letters.

Here's to springtime and the Spring edition of 'Australian Puppeteer'.

Julia Davis





PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Lorrie Gardner

It is with great pleasure that we welcome Richard Hart to the position of UNIMA Australia secretary. He was elected unopposed. It is a big job and we thank Richard for being willing to give his time to work for UNIMA. We farewell our past secretary, Mary Sutherland, and her family, who are moving to Queensland at a barbecue at the home of Richard Hart and Julia Davis on Sat. 18 October.

We needed three Councillors to vote and represent UNIMA Australia at the Congress in June 2004 and for the next four years. We are pleased to announce that our three councillors for the next four years are Gary Friedman, Sue Wallace and Peter Wilson.

The two year tertiary course in Puppetry at the Victorian College of the Arts is to open in 2004 and was officially launched at the College on 20th Oct. 2003. Congratulations to all who have put so much effort into this venture.

The most important work that your executive has been doing at present is to work to advance a proposed bid for a UNIMA Festival and the hosting of the Congress in 2008. We have agreed to give the Victorian Arts Centre a first option until February, to see if funding can be found by them for a bid. After February, another state can run with a possible bid. To some extent it is out of our hands; we must convince those with money to put into this that we have a worthwhile project and one that will increase the profile of the city of Melbourne, the State of Victoria and the Victorian Arts Centre! We, of course, know that it will greatly help the profile of puppetry in every state of Australia! It is a harder ask than we at first thought - we need the State Government and Arts Victoria, just to name a few, on side as well as the Victorian Arts Centre who are handling the negotiations to date.

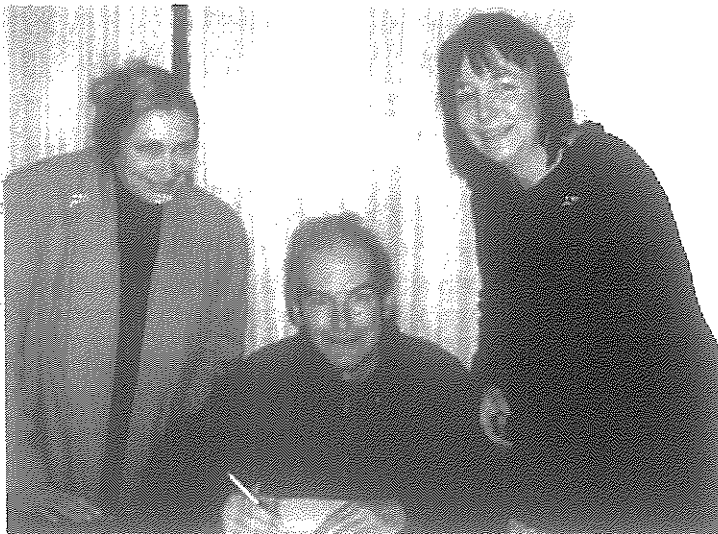
To consult with the UNIMA executive about Festival arrangements and negotiations, we are forming a Festival Committee of those interested to input into this process. We will endeavour to keep these people more closely informed by e-mail as the process develops. If anyone else out there feels they may have something valuable to contribute, we will be pleased to increase the committee size and include them - being on e-mail is important. At the moment the Festival Committee consists of Gary Friedman, Lorrie Gardner, Richard Hart and Julia Davis, Sarah Kriegler, John McDonald, Philip Millar, Jennie Pfeiffer, Sue Wallace, and Peter Wilson.

To prepare for such a bid we have consulted a lawyer about our options for a more legal structure to our organisation. Becoming an incorporated Association is suggested and then, only if absolutely necessary, we could, from the Incorporated association, quickly become a Company for a short period if this seems necessary. (The cost of auditing for a Company is very much greater than for an Incorporated Association.) When a final constitution is prepared we will put it to a vote of the membership. In this day and age, probably becoming incorporated is a good idea anyway, even if our bid does not go ahead for 2008.

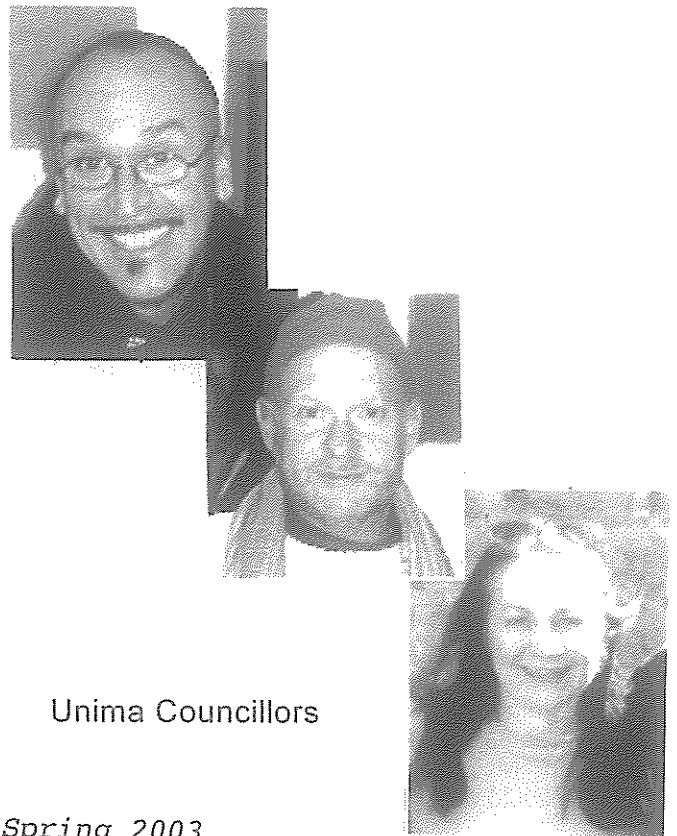
Check out our web page - Hilary Talbot has been working on it! We hope to now keep it more up to date. Thanks Hilary.

<http://members.ozemail.com.au/~unima/index.html>

Lorrie Gardner.



Mary Sutherland hands over the role of Secretary to Richard Hart.
Pictured: Jenny Pfeiffer, Richard Hart, Mary Sutherland.



Unima Councillors



SECRETARY'S REPORT

Richard Hart



Well, here I am in the Secretary's seat not long after an epic stint in the driver's seat and they both seemed to be moving very fast. OZ UNIMA was in the early stages of a bid proposal for the 2008 UNIMA Congress/Festival. There were meetings, high powered and even super powered, discussions galore and an e-mail group set up for information sharing. All this in just a few weeks! I had become part of an **active** organisation which is exactly the way I like it.

I think it is fantastic we have two alternating editors for our magazine. In the past it used to be a major cause for celebration just to get one editor! This new arrangement clearly halves the workload for each and should make it more appealing for members to take on this very rewarding role. The maximum expectation for any executive position is four years and we need to keep encouraging people to consider taking on any of these roles when one becomes vacant. If any one has an interest in taking on an executive role, (The editor is also an executive), sometime in the future, I will be very happy to hear from you. You can also express your area of interest for involvement with UNIMA on the subscription renewal form. This is very useful information to us all.

For those many of you who do not know me, I have been a puppeteer for over 24 years, toured nationally and internationally, call myself DREAM PUPPETS and have done a lot of school performing/touring over the last six years. There have been many times when I would have liked to have provided interested people with a brochure on UNIMA. There are many teachers and students who would gain greatly from getting the magazine and joining a network of puppeteers and interested people. To this end, I am working with John McDonald to put such a brochure together. We could even put it on the Website for you to

download. If you are interested in taking this brochure with you, please let me know. I would also like to include puppeteers/companies in each state and territory who are happy to be a contact in their state. Let me know if you want to be a contact.

For a number of years I was a member of the Sydney Puppeteers' group which was very valuable for discussion, information sharing, training and meeting other puppeteers. The ONE VAN Festival grew out of it, a wonderful offspring! I would like to help set up a group of Victorian puppeteers for the same purpose. With the right number of people, it is possible to share the costs of training workshops, guest speakers and find a venue to share new works in progress; the possibilities are endless! A town not far from Melbourne with the group meeting during the summer holidays could be two good ingredients.

Sean Manners has just set up a new WEBSITE called PUPPETRY IN AUSTRALIA. This is brand new. Given the title, it would probably attract a lot of overseas interest. The list of puppeteers and puppet theatres is not comprehensive at the moment. It has a link to the UNIMA Australia website. I have asked Sean if having one's own website is a pre-requisite for inclusion and he said no. If you want to be in it, send him the info. you want put in. The website address is: <http://www.puppetryaustralia.info>

HANDSPAN VISUAL THEATRE INTERNATIONAL TRAVEL AND STUDY GRANT

The selection panel for the Handspan Visual Theatre International Travel and Study Grant would like to announce the recipient for 2003.

On behalf of Handspan Visual Theatre the selection panel, comprising Heather Monk, Mary Sutherland and Richard Bradshaw, would like to congratulate Jai Hartnell as the first recipient of the \$2000.00 grant.

Jai will travel to Cambodia to participate in the 2004 Cambodian Living Arts - Cambodian Master Performers programme delegation.

The closing date for next round of applications will be 30th September 2004. Enquiries regarding the grant and applications may be directed to:

Heather Monk: (03) 9 429 4747
hmonk@optusnet.com.au

Yours in Puppetry,
Richard Hart,
Secretary, UNIMA Australia.



TREASURER'S REPORT

Income & Expenses - 19/06/2002 to 30/06/2003

INCOME

Membership:	
New members	1065
Renewals	2195
Company	475
Libraries	25
TOTAL Membership	3760
Publications (E Pur Si Muove, etc):	220
Payment for Summit Magazines	
Payment for Mailout Insert	10
TOTAL INCOME	<u>4440</u>
	=====
TOTAL INCOME - EXPENSES	<u>142</u>
	=====

EXPENSES

Magazine:	
Printing	2217
Postage	751
Envelopes, Stationery...	74
TOTAL Magazine	3042
Unima International Fees	684
Publications cost	202
45@P.O. Box	133
Other	237
TOTAL EXPENSES	<u>4298</u>

ASSETS & LIABILITIES as at 30 Jun 2003

General Funds	
Balance in Current Account	1052
Money in Scholarship Account	750
General Funds Total	\$1802

Scholarship Funds

Scholarship Account (12 Feb 2003)	10003
- General funds in Scholarship Acct	-750
Scholarship Funds Total	\$9253
Interest Rate on Scholarship Fund =	4.40%

Note that we have temporarily put some general funds into the scholarship account to take the balance over \$10000 and get a higher interest rate.

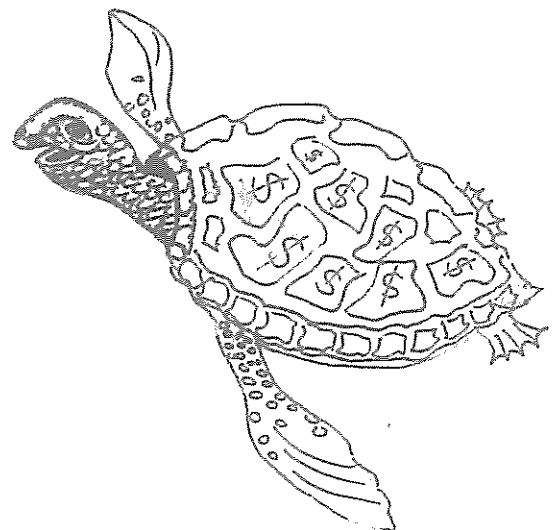
The Commonwealth Bank has agreed to exempt us from Bank Fees, which will save us a significant amount.

Web Site

Our web site is active again! Hilary Talbot is now revising and updating the site. It's great to have this resource being brought up to date again.

Members who have agreed to have their details published on the web site are now listed online. This list is generated from the membership list maintained by the treasurer, so if there are any errors in your details, or if you want your details included in the members list, please contact johnmcd@vicnet.net.au . Please contact Hilary at htalbot@spiritsdancing.com with other information for the web site.

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



HILARY'S WEB

Hilary Talbot

A few months ago John Macdonald asked me if I would be interested in looking after the UNIMA website. Of course the minute I agreed to, my work situation went from famine to feast, and so it has taken some time for me to get the pages up and functioning, and the overall look is still fairly plain. However, all the information is now accessible, and we now have the means of presenting up-to-date details of news and upcoming events in the puppetry community in Australia, as well as having an international presence on the web. One of the beauties of the net is that it is such a fluid medium, enabling revising and improving the site, even if it is in small ways, and as time permits. The site is likely to remain relatively simple in looks and structure, as my technical geeky skills are limited.

In the long run I'm hoping to make the site interactive by adding a bulletin board forum to the site, where people can participate in discussions and swap information by posting to the boards. Over the last few years I've been involved with two online communities that operate around discussion boards, and I think it could really help to strengthen the ties in the puppetry community that already exist. Also, in terms of keeping in touch with news and events, it has the advantage that you don't need a middle man or woman to keep updating a static site because people can post information themselves.

My most recent job has been designer and maker for Canberra Youth Theatre's 'King Jack', which was produced for Tidbinbilla Nature Reserve, headlining their Spring Regeneration Festival which celebrated the re-opening of the reserve after the devastating bushfires in January 2003. For this I made 10 animal and bird masks, using paper mache over sculpted clay shapes. I incorporated a new (to me) technique of stretching and molding PVA-saturated felt over the paper mache and was pleased with the results it gave.

I have also had some success with another rendition of John Howard, this time as a scarecrow for the ACTEW AGL Scarecrow Competition 2003 in Floriade. The scarecrow was surrounded by two small boats and one rusty sieve, each holding asylum seekers. I figured that Howard's iniquitous new policies on border protection, detention and treatment of asylum seekers, and his willingness to spread racist fear in our community for his own ends, qualified him as a scaremonger. He won the people's choice award of most popular scarecrow. I'm happy to lend or hire him out, depending on purpose and circumstances.

See Hilary's 'Scarecrow' on the back page of this issue.

Check out the updated website:

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

PUPPETS LAUNCHED AT THE VCA

Philip Millar

Whatever the collective noun for puppetry (string? gaggle? booth?) there were quite a few enjoying the free food and wine at the recent launch of the new puppetry course at the VCA (Victorian College of the Arts). The assembly was primarily composed of the usual suspects of Melbourne puppetry. Curiously absent were any representatives of Victoria's funded puppet companies, Polyglot and Snuff. (Invitations not extended?)

Formal proceedings were kicked off with a rerun of the Puppetry Summit Introductory video. This refreshed the memories for those who hadn't seen the 2000 Olympic opening ceremony recently (or it may have been Peter J. Wilson's show reel - can't be sure).

Professor Andrea Hull AO, head of the VCA, started the speeches describing the 'growth industry' status of puppetry and animation. Puppetry, it seems, is on the up and up in LA. at CalArts too. VCA's involvement was also reflecting contemporary development in entertainment. Professor Hull handed over to Peter Wilson, describing him once as a "living treasure" and then as a "national treasure". This was greeted with polite applause and a few stifled giggles from those enjoying the free champagne too much.

Peter described the establishment of the puppetry course as being like all his Christmases coming at once, a goal developed out of his recent Arts Centre Fellowship, Australia Council Fellowship and international fact-finding tour. He emphasised the importance of a training institution as a breeding ground and a foundation for industry growth.

The new course teaching staff will consist of Peter Wilson (Performance), Gilly McInnes (Writing), Al Martinez (Production), Richard Jezorney (Design) and Ramon Rivero (Film and TV). The VCA will also aim to establish relationships with other international puppetry schools such as those in Prague, London, Los Angeles and Charleville-Mezieres.

Lyndsey Cattermole AM, the next speaker, was enthusiastic and very funny in her summary of her involvement with puppetry. Ms Cattermole noted that previously she had only been aware of "Punch and Judy and that scary shadow thing from Indonesia" and hadn't really noticed how prevalent puppetry was until it was pointed out. Her decision to back the VCA course came from a pitch meeting with Peter Wilson, Richard Jezorney and Ramon Rivero. In selling her the idea of a unique puppetry school, apparently the truth was stretched a little, as Ms. Cattermole noticed that Swinburne was developing a puppetry course just around the corner from her office and there were around thirty other puppet schools around the globe. Undeterred, Ms. Cattermole remains a keen benefactor who, together with Dame Elizabeth Murdoch AC DBE, has supported the development of the new course.

Once again, the ant farm of puppetry will be moving forward. We eagerly await the first batch of graduates to see what they produce.

PUPPETRY AT THE VICTORIAN COLLEGE OF THE ARTS

Launch Event





Postgraduate Diploma in Puppetry

(Information supplied by Peter J. Wilson)

The Postgraduate Diploma in Puppetry is a programme of training providing the framework for acquiring skills in design, writing, making and performance for puppetry. The course is designed to develop the student's technical skills, communication skills and their capacity to collaborate with other artists. It is designed to provide the opportunity for students of related disciplines to translate their existing skills into the specific skills required in puppetry. In conjunction with the proposed Masters by coursework, the Postgraduate Diploma is a response to the growing recognition that Puppetry is an art-form in its own right, which until now has been unavailable for full-time study at tertiary level in Australia.

Duration of the course: One year full time

Subjects:

PERFORMANCE THEORY A and B

A critical perspective on contemporary theatre practice and the arts including cross-cultural interdisciplinary and contextual perspectives. The weekly seminars will be based upon student class papers dealing with specific issues, together with guest speakers and the viewing of various types of dramatic performance including film and video.

PERFORMANCE SKILLS A

Performance Skills is the acting and puppetry component of the course. It is practically based, exploring a wide range of puppetry styles including rod, shadow, object, string, glove and body puppet. In this subject the student will gain first hand experience in techniques of manipulation and operation particular to each style. Students will also gain training in vocal technique and movement.

PLANNING AND MANAGEMENT

Through lectures, seminars and group assignments, the students are introduced to the planning of a production/s through all phases of development. On completion of this subject students should be able to analyse and evaluate the basic organisational structure and management practices of various types of theatrical producing organisations and the various phases of production planning and scheduling from conception to implementation. Students should be able to plan their own work using the basic principles of finances and budgeting, including the demands that various styles of performance make on production and technical resources. Students will participate in collaborative learning during the development of joint grant applications. Though the introduction of basic business practices, including tax, ABN, GST, insurance, public liability, OH & S etc., students will be able to apply their skills in the setting up of small business activity as it relates to arts practice.

TECHNICAL SKILLS A

This subject is complementary to the subject, Performance Skills. It is similarly based and addresses a wide range of puppet styles. In this subject students will focus on technical issues that are particular to puppets and the

scenic space around them. Students will study puppet construction which will include the consideration of issues such as weight, size, materials and mechanics.

WRITING AND DESIGN A

This subject examines the development of a puppetry script from the initial idea through to its realisation in performance. The students will explore and become familiar with various script development models and the particular role of the writer and the designer within them. They will analyse the differences between the development phase and the production phase of a script's development and the roles of writer and designer within those phases. The subject encourages the student to understand and experience the interrelated nature of the various creative elements that comprise puppet theatre as a collaborative art form as well as the experience the more traditional solo approach. The subject will examine existing scripts both text based and non text based. It will encourage the development of an original work.

HISTORY OF PUPPETRY

This subject is an exploration of the different theatrical expressions, styles and techniques from a range of cultural traditions. It will introduce the student to the history and development of puppetry in both Eastern and Western traditions including Australia's own puppetry traditions. Content will include Punch and Judy, Black Theatre, Chinese Glove, Bunraku and will involve an exploration of their forms and the social context of their development. It will be delivered by a series of seminars developed by the students under supervision of the lecturer.

PERFORMANCE SKILLS B

This subject is a further development of the material introduced in Performance Skills A. Students will examine the concept of animating an inanimate object - addressing the question of 'what makes a puppet live?' that lies at the heart of the relationship between puppet and puppeteer. Students will be introduced to techniques aimed at investing 'intelligence' into the inanimate object. This subject will also explore the particular issues facing puppetry within the context of animation for film and television.

TECHNICAL SKILLS B

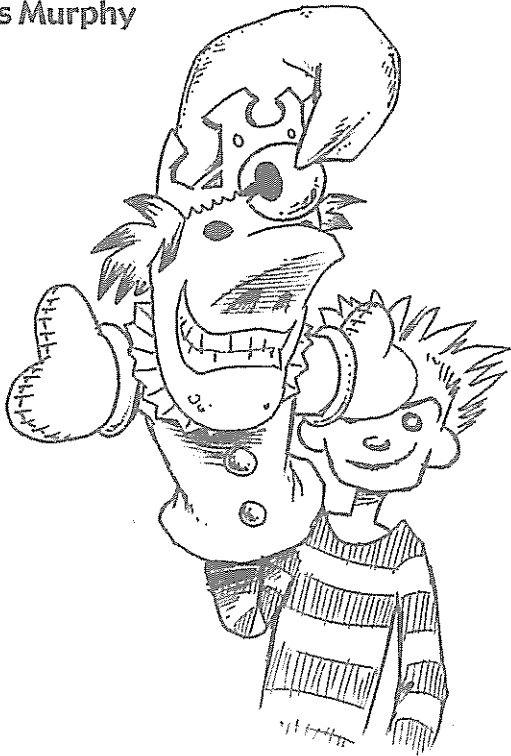
This subject is a further development of the material introduced in Technical Skills A. Students will examine the areas of lighting, sound and set/properties/costume construction as well as address the staging issues and implications that are particular to puppetry in both live performance and film/animation. Students will be encouraged to take a lateral approach when finding a visual solution to a particular brief.

PRODUCTION

In this subject students will gain practical production experience by being assigned to productions in a variety of roles, ranging from puppet fabrication, puppet performers, lighting and sound operation, stage management or design. This is the opportunity to test the technical and creative knowledge that has been introduced in classes. Productions will be generated by visiting directors as well as projects by masters programme students. There will also be the opportunity for students to engage in works generated by other schools in the College. Students will be required to keep a diary of their production experience.

WALKAROUND PUPPETRY

Dennis Murphy



Walkaround Puppetry is used mainly to 'meet and greet' festival goers and to add a bit of excitement to an event. It means you are working without staging and are visible to the crowd. You need a convincing character that can engage an audience but not confront it. Some children can find it frightening. Done properly, it can be a very rewarding experience for the audience and for the puppeteer.

To make it work the most important thing is Focus. Your attention and energy need to go into the puppet. I once saw a man running around through a crowd making noise and shouting. It was a few seconds before I noticed that he was holding something in front of him. It was a puppet. I hadn't noticed because the puppeteer caught my attention rather than the puppet.

The audience follows your focus so you can direct them onto the puppet. At the same time you have to be aware of how people are reacting. From the corner of your eye you watch the body language, seeking out those people who appear receptive and backing off when the kids seem worried.

It's important to put yourself in their shoes and try to imagine how they are seeing it. I remember a puppeteer, a very big man, who was carrying two puppets. He walked right up the children, loomed over them with a puppet asking, "What's your name?" The children naturally clammed up and hid behind their parents' legs.

The best approach is to be heard first. That way

the puppet is spotted some distance off rather than suddenly appearing. I also find it best not to open with a question to the kids. They'll clam up and you'll have no act. I go for a non verbal response. In falconer's glove and with a dodo on my elbow, I walk through the crowd warning them to stay back and not make any sudden movements. The act centres on me proclaiming the dangers of this savage breed while the sleepy looking dodo looks on. The audience is called upon to do nothing and they do it willingly.

Another example: Spike the Baby Dragon and I are in conversation as we approach. Spike is whingeing about being hungry so when he sees the kids he asks if they have any ice cream. Instead of waiting for them to say something Spike asks them to check their pockets for leftover ice cream. This gives them something to do and an excuse to break eye contact. Invariably a girl will be found to have no pockets (feminism hasn't yet reached children's wear) so Spike tries to get someone to lend her a pocket of theirs. Before they know it the kids are in conversation with a dragon.

I am constantly amazed to see how even small children pick up the spirit of the thing. Three year olds puff out their chests and stand up to Wedgewood, my angry English bulldog. Despite his forceful looks, the kids see right through his bravado and delight in defying him.

The best part is that the children revel in the personal attention they are getting. "Wow, a puppet talked to me!" It's great to see them walk off with their chests (and their self confidence) puffed up.



Dennis's Dodo

(Many Australian puppeteers spent some time overseas in the last few months and were inspired by what they saw and experienced. In the following pages you can read about puppets in Vietnam, St. Petersburg, London and, of course, at the festival in Charleville. Ed.)

The Vietnamese Water Puppets of Hanoi

Terry Ryan

Recently, I was fortunate enough to see the Thang Long Water Puppet Theatre while visiting Hanoi. With a bit of string-pulling (pardon the pun) I managed to organise an interview with one of the head puppeteers before the show. My tour guide acted as translator.

From being an art form performed by peasants in ponds over the last thousand years, the modern Vietnamese puppeteer studies puppetry over five years in state funded courses. Water puppetry is studied for one year. In the cast of nine puppeteers, there were additional musicians and singers; the level of professional experience ranged from five years to over thirty years. Although most of the performance had musical and singing backing, the puppeteers also voiced their own characters where appropriate. It's a rather soggy job, as the puppeteers stand waist deep in water and view their puppets from behind bamboo slats.

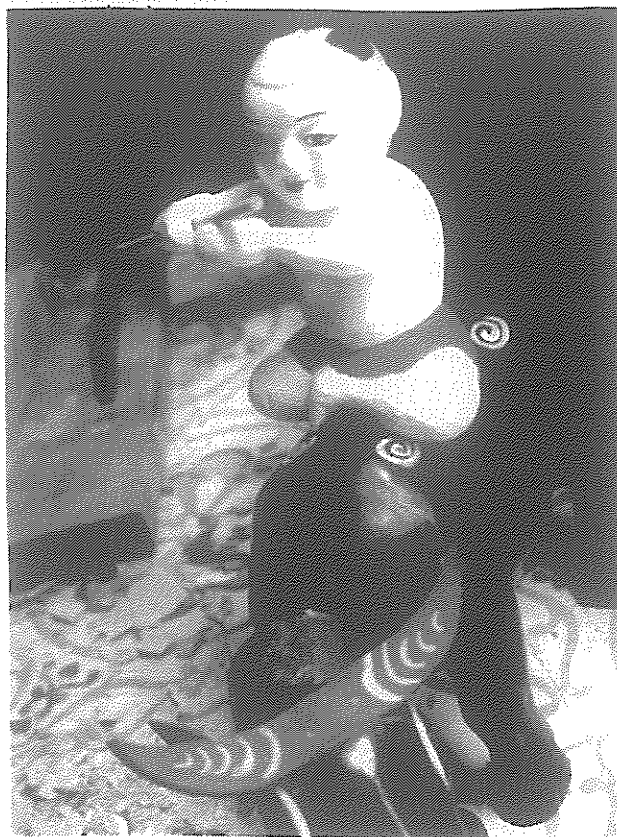
Being used to going from short term contract to contract here in Australia, part of me was rather envious of their constant employment! As Vietnam has opened up as a tourist destination over the past decade, state funded arts companies are increasing, which means more work for Vietnamese puppeteers.

As the performance was on the last night of my trip, I had become much more aware of how important water is to the Vietnamese way of life and consciousness. In fact, the word for water, "nuoc", also means "country" or "nation". This is reflected in the themes of the show, which is made up of short sketches. Growing food, mainly rice, and catching food, mainly fish, are integral themes of country life. The sketches are mainly action based, which of course puppets do best, with a bit of trick puppetry and pyrotechnics (love the fire-breathing dragons!) and good ol' slapstick comedy. There was a very cute piece about a father and son going fishing using bamboo baskets to catch the fish. Of course, the father's bamboo basket landed on his son's head, which was not appreciated at all!

The other themes included the use of mythic animals, such as dragons, swimming lions, and phoenix and unicorn dances. Traditional heroic tales were also portrayed, such as the "Legend of the Restored Sword", where King Le Loi, after triumphing over the invasion of the Ming, returns the magic sword to the giant turtle of the lake. Bit like

the Vietnamese version of an Arthurian legend. The puppets are made of wood, and are painted and lacquered quite beautifully. They generally have only one action and are held on the ends of long bamboo poles, which are hidden under the deliberately murky water. There are controlling strings, which go through the base of the puppet and along the bamboo rod. The legs don't move but the human puppet designs show bent knees and slightly forward tilted bodies to give the impression of movement. The medium of water is well utilised with lots of splashing and diving. And just when you think the puppetry is all chaotic control and splish-splashy choreography, there comes a piece, called "The Fairy Dance", which shows beautifully controlled and disciplined puppetry. The range of action and conveying of story from puppets that are quite limited in their movements was amazing.

The performance was a satisfying end to a wonderful trip and helped me to understand and appreciate the cultural traditions and psyche of Vietnam.



'On a buffalo with a flute'

ST. PETERSBURG PUPPET THEATRE

Tony McNally

Visiting St Petersburg is always an enjoyable experience, as it is a city that never ceases to amaze one with its marvellous architecture and palaces, its interesting history and art life, as well as its delightful people. My recent trip was made even more enjoyable by seeing some 5 performances by the highly talented *St Petersburg Puppet Theatre* and becoming enchanted by their artistry, their creativeness and the endless talent that each of the company seems to have in abundance.

I was fortunate to be asked by the company to Dostoevsky House to see their latest work which was created by Tania Melnikova, based on Ancient Greek legends and titled *Dreams of Pan*. This is a puppet show for adults and is full of fun, humour and mischievous sex! which had the audience totally hooked in and appreciatively enjoying each wicked and wonderful moment. The original musical score by I. Rogalev is just perfect and so appropriate. The first performance of this work was done only last month at the Puppet Festival in Ryazan where it was received with much acclaim.

Then we were invited by the Australian Ambassador, Mr Les Rowe, to his splendid home in Moscow where the company gave a Special Performance of their Golden Mask, award winning version of *Cinderella*. Some 150 ambassadors, ministers, journalists, puppet loving devotees and myself were there and we were treated extremely generously by the Ambassador and given the most wonderful performance of this famous fairy tale - completely rewritten and retold in the most theatrically entertaining way but without destroying the original story in any way.

Elina Ageeva, who is the principal puppeteer, is nothing short of a genius when she gets near her puppets - they dance, they sing, they argue, they amuse, they totally transport the audience into another world when in her hands. And she also

becomes part of the play in the most unobtrusive yet seemingly necessary way.

I saw performances of the 3 other shows - *Thumbelina*, *Carnival* and *Sleeping Beauty*, at their workshop. Each of these is a work of the combined talents of the company.

Thumbelina is so creative and witty one is continually left wondering "How on earth did that happen?" as endless new puppets keep appearing from God alone knows where. I could have watched it over and over again.

Sleeping Beauty is romantic and stylish and has, without doubt, some of the best moments one can imagine from puppetry. It is a lyrical story about love and fate, full of style and convincing puppets, including a wonderful scene with some basset hounds sniffing around the set to entertain and distract us all.

Carnival is based on the well known piano cycle by Robert Schumann and all the characters are from Commedia dell'arte. It is a true delight and so enchanting.

At the Embassy Party the Ambassador gave a wonderful speech, congratulating the company saying, "It was a great pleasure to give the St Petersburg Puppet Theatre their first Australian exposure when they played to an audience of Russian, Australian and foreign guests. The company is dazzlingly creative and their performance left the audience - adults and children alike - touched by their special brand of magic"

It was then announced that the company would tour to Australia in January and February of 2004.

To miss them would be to bypass some of the most wonderful talent available in any art form, anywhere. You must make sure you see them.

Tony Mc Nally <tony.mcn@bigpond.com>



All Aboard!

Five Days Aboard the Puppet Barge

Sean Manners

I make my way up the busy London street and turn right just as the instructions said, across the road and down the steps. There along the way a little is the puppet theatre. Tucked away in a quiet corner of this bustling city is one of England's more unusual puppet theatres, *Movingstage*. A very apt name, because this theatre is unique, built into a pre-thirties Thames Barge, just seventy five feet long and fourteen feet wide called the 'MayBrent', moored at Little Venice, Paddington.

The Puppet Barge, as it is known, spends its winters here putting on regular performances but in the summer the theatre is folded down into the hull of the barge; the tarpaulin covers go on, the mooring ropes come off, the motor is started and it's away.

It is the first of July, 2003 and I have been offered the opportunity to join the Puppet Barge on its annual migration right through the centre of London and beyond up the River Thames. The trip will take five days from Little Venice, on the Paddington Arm of the Grand Union canal, across London to Limehouse Docks and up the River to Henley-on-Thames where the summer season starts just after the famous regatta. It then makes its way back to Little Venice spending time at various points along the way putting on regular performances. Every year Juliet and Gren Middleton, owners of the Puppet Barge, work miracles in the 50 -60 seat marionette theatre and produce a matinee marionette show for children and a Saturday evening adult performance. Many classic tales such as *The Three Little Pigs*, *The Tempest*, and specially commissioned pieces make up the repertoire, ably manipulated by Juliet, Gren two other professional puppeteers hired for the season and two trainees. Gren's background is in television, specialising in lighting and Juliet spent along time with the Little Angel Marionette Theatre.

Movingstage started in 1978 as a touring puppet theatre. Gren and Juliet toured for four years through England, Europe and India. The problems of touring a full marionette stage complete with bridge, came to the fore so they started thinking of other ways that they could take their shows around the country. The answer came in the form of water transport. The Maybrent was a hulk lying in the river at the entrance to a boatyard. After much hard work it was transformed into the Puppet Barge, which opened on 27/1/1982. and was formally opened in February 1982.

The Puppet Barge is now actually two barges: 'The Maybrent' which houses the theatre and 'Eroda', a slightly smaller river barge which is the accommodation for Gren and Juliet. The staffing of the theatre during the summer consists of a part time administration and press officer who works out

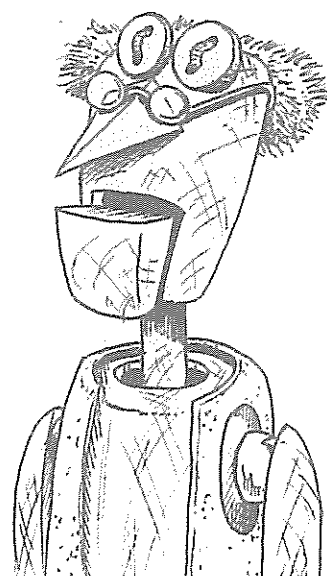
of the office, two professional puppeteers and two trainees who live aboard. There is a very communal feeling on the barge with all the meals being prepared and all the domestic chores being done by everybody. This extends to when the barges are on the move as well with everybody helping with mooring, swabbing decks and helping getting through the locks.

Every year Gren and Juliet take on one or two trainees for the summer season. This gives people with an avid interest in puppetry a chance to learn about all the aspects of a puppet theatre, especially marionettes, and to decide whether the profession is for them. Some of the trainees go on to do seasons as professional puppeteers aboard the barge or on to carve out their own careers in puppetry. I spoke to Richard and Amy, this year's trainees, about their journey to the Puppet Barge and where it might take them.

Richard, a fourteen year old, has been interested in puppetry from the age of five. The experience so far has shown him a totally different kind of lifestyle, an immersion into puppetry, meeting many different people in the puppetry world and has offered Richard an insight into how to make a living out of puppetry. He eventually would like to write and direct a television puppet series.

Amy has been involved with puppetry for about five years in total and has a degree in Puppetry from the London School of Speech and Drama. She heard about the traineeship through word of mouth and because Amy also has a love of boating and the water she felt that this was a brilliant combination. The traineeship has given Amy a very laid back lifestyle, a strong sense of community, great role models and a chance to see how a puppet theatre works. She would like to have her own touring puppet company eventually.

The five days gave me an great insight into the workings of this very different puppet theatre and a fantastic trip on the River Thames. Many thanks to Gren, Juliet and the whole crew of the Puppet Barge for giving me the chance to participate.



CHARLEVILLE-MÉZIÈRES - the 13th World Festival of Puppetry - Sept. 19 -28, 2003

Sue Wallace

I arrived in Charleville by train from Paris with Joanne Foley, found the caravans (home for the next week), said a quick hello to room mate, Sarah Kriegler, and visitor, Jessica Wilson, quickly changed to survive the unseasonably hot weather, grabbed ticket, grabbed town map – right - 15 minutes to my first show – Can I make it? "Go for it," said the others. And so my festival started.

Everyone who comes to this festival has a different festival experience. You see different shows and meet different people – old friends and new. The commonality is the buzz and the orgy of puppetry available to you. Sleep is a rare commodity.

It is an understatement to call this a big festival.

The "In" (or invited) Festival has 450 shows by 158 companies in 35 venues. The "Off" Festival has 156 performances by 66 companies in 8 venues. The Programme de Rue (Street Theatre Festival) boasts 552 performances by 51 companies in 51 places around the town. Not in any program are the impromptu performances, the street vendors and the festival veterans who hire their own space and tout for business. Add to this the 13 exhibitions, the scheduled meetings and the festival bar and you are guaranteed to be missing something – the dangling carrot being it might have been the best thing you ever saw!

You can go to this festival and not book anything in the "In" Festival and still see puppet shows all day and night. To tempt you further is Ray daSilva's bookshop.

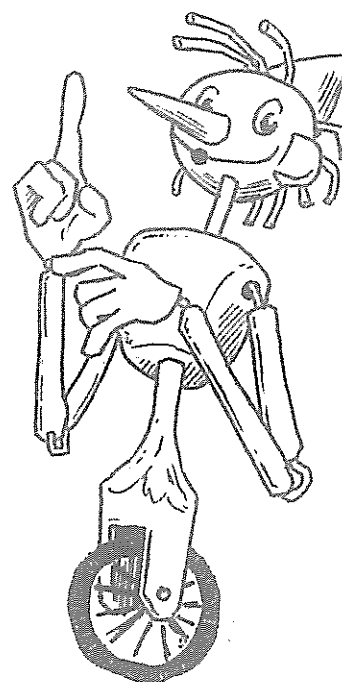
Charleville-Mézières has declared itself the puppet capital of the world. It boasts the first ever international school of puppetry with a 3 year course and shorter summer courses. It has a UNIMA office and hosts this amazing festival every 3 years. What a clever town!

It is in the Ardenne region in the North-East of France. The train ride from Paris takes you through Epernay and Reims, the realm of champagne. Past Charleville is the Belgian border. With a population of only 60,000, the realisation of this festival is one of the puppet wonders of the world. How did they find 35 venues and install raked seating and scaffolding with curtains and lights in all of them? It seemed that every school hall, club, cinema and indoor sporting facility had been seconded for the event. The visitors from all over the world stayed in hotels, at the camp site or were billeted in peoples' homes.

The magnificent Place Ducal is a very impressive town square that was constantly milling with people

and performances. It was a perfect setting for Les Plasticiens Volants' beautiful interpretation of "Conference of the Birds". Late evening, we sat at an outdoor café and watched gorgeous, huge, beautifully lit, inflated birds drift by us. This is also a festival for the locals and shows (indoors and out) were well attended by local families and school kids.

This year's festival was specifically dedicated to the French language and most visiting companies performed in French. Some chose to perform in their own language (e.g. English or Spanish). Few shows were without language.



The shows

I saw about 22 performances and I only copped one really bad one. Most shows I saw in the "In" Festival were sold out and the audiences were very attentive and generous, much better behaved than the UNIMA Budapest festival where people liberally walked out of shows and seemed determined to video and photograph everything. The stand-out performances for me were *Light* by Mossoux Bonte (Belgium) and *Re: Frankenstein* by Neville Tranter's Stuffed Puppets (Holland). These stood out because they both took me right out of my reality and induced a strong emotional response.

Light was a composite of soundtrack, dancer (Nicola Mossoux) and the dancer's shadow created on a big white scrim (perhaps 10m wide and 6m high). The light (mostly white light) came from various sources, from the wings, from the floor on stage and hand held by the dancer. The shadows were always big. The dancer (who was never behind the scrim) was like a slave to the shadow. Some of the most

CHARLEVILLE-MÉZIÈRES festival (cont.)

stunning effects were created by the dancer almost sitting on top of a single light source where even the fabric of the costume took on a new life. This is what I love about shadow; it doesn't bind you to an image but can transmute, distort and magnify a seemingly banal material into something unexpected. At 55 minutes, the performance was very uniformly paced by the superb, driving soundtrack. The show would have been even better if it was shortened by 10 minutes and/or given more (dare I say it) light and shade. This is no criticism of this sparse and highly investigative piece. *Light* left me in an altered state of vulnerable solitude.

Neville Tranter performs *Re: Frankenstein* alone. He speaks slowly and clearly without a microphone. He performs in English. There must have been 1,000 people at this performance and it was the only show I saw to receive a standing ovation. The puppets are unattractive, seemingly roughly made with muppet-style moving mouths. A lot of the lighting came from shoulder-high lights lining each side of the stage. There was no back curtain to complement the black wings. The up-stage area was littered with road cases and other, normally hidden, paraphernalia. This created a more starkly clinical ambience than an expensive set would have done.

Frankenstein sneaks up on you. What a cunning performer is Neville Tranter! He lures you into his story. We know this story ... don't we? Tranter's *Frankenstein* is not just a story about a doctor and a monster; it is a tale about the search for perfection, the search for identity. It is about concepts of beauty and about recognising yourself in others. It is about Nazi Germany and refugees. It is a story, a simple story that shines a mirror on its audience. I didn't think all this when I was watching the performance. It crept up on me afterwards, like a shadow in the night.

On a flippant note, it seems that this year's "guide book to adult puppet theatre" recommends the use of unobtrusive colours. Grey and beige abounded. Not surprisingly there was also very little humour. It was a great relief to see Welsh company, Green Ginger's *Frank Einstein* and Belgium's Stephane Georis' very funny, object theatre show, *Polinchineur de Tiroirs*.

On last count, 12 Australian puppeteers turned up in Charleville. A festival like this reminds you of the conviviality of the greater puppetry community. It was this open hearted friendship that encouraged me 21 years ago (when I last attended a Charleville Festival) to pursue a career in this extraordinary art form.

My thanks to the Blackheath Chamber of Commerce for their financial support which helped me attend the festival. Also, big thanks to Joanne Foley who not only organised accommodation and tickets for me but also generously introduced me to her vast circle of friends and colleagues.

UNIMA in Charleville

UNIMA now has its office in Charleville in a beautifully renovated building with a courtyard away from the Institute of Puppetry where it has been for many years. During the 13th World Festival of Puppet Theatre, four Australians joined UNIMA members from many parts of the world at an informal meeting in the courtyard. With wine and finger food we were very fortunate to be able to chat with President, Margareta Niculescu and General Secretary, Miguel Arreche.

Pictured here from left to right: Sarah Kriegler, Sue Wallace, Miguel Arreche, Peter J. Wilson, Margareta Niculescu and Joanne Foley.



CHARLEVILLE- MÉZIÈRES - Another view

Sam Ferris

Forget the Olympics and any kind of World Cup, the real action was at the 13th International Puppetry Festival in Charleville. After a hectic few days in busy Paris I gave myself over to the peculiar charms and entertainments of the puppetry world and happily set up home for 4 days in a caravan at the riverside camping ground with my Aussie team-mates.

First stop was the booking office where a busy nest of officials attend to reservations and repeat the line, 'Desole Madame, c'est complet', as I attempted to squeeze in as many shows as possible. I'd pre-booked 15 mostly adult shows but missed out on a few regarded ones. As a first-time festivaliere I was not too concerned; there was just so much happening and I depended on the word on the street to seek out fringe shows. This is how I discovered the most appealing events, with a lot of top tips from Joanne Foley, our woman in Charleville.

On my first day I had a lot of fun with 'Frank Einstein' by the Welsh company 'Green Ginger' and some glove puppet skits by a German duo led by Marc Schnittger. But the shows that made me wide-eyed and smiling were the shorter, quirky, offbeat pieces by French troupes, taking 'small' ideas and transforming them with panache into great entertainment. 'Connaissances du Monde', a dinner suit clad duo, welcomed its 7-strong audience into a retro caravan – it was almost claustrophobic but the 15-minute absurdist piece they performed commands your attention. As we stepped

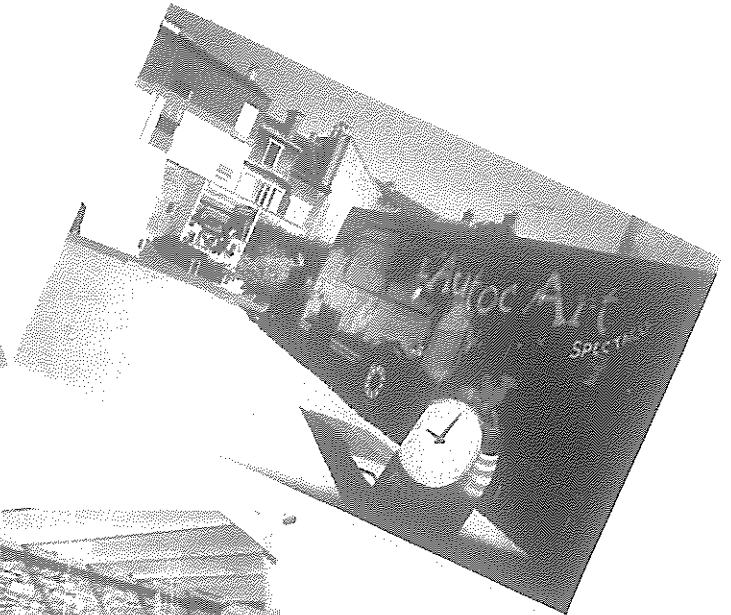
out of the van we looked like we'd been on some trip to another land...but with no time to dwell on how we got there I ran to my next show and wondered. Could I have supported 10 days of this? I'm reminded of Roger Law's words, 'All puppeteers are masochists'.

I caught half of 'Les Poupees Barbares' en route to another late-night show and was thoroughly caught up in their manipulation of various doll body parts and a cannibalistic scene accompanied by some great dj-ing. Too much to mention.....A major highlight for me was 'The Brainwashers', a 12 minute stop frame animation by Canadian, Patrick Bouchard. I returned 3 times to see the film and the display of the 12 constructed sets – incredible workmanship and again a macabre story expertly played out by puppets. I made a list of recurring themes or elements in the 20-30 shows I saw – baby dolls; dismembering; definitions; and of course birth, death, and dreams. I also noted that often, especially in longer shows, there was a point where it felt like nothing more would be revealed. An example was 'Bing', a piece by a German artist that, in my opinion, did not get past artistic self-indulgence. Maybe this is why I enjoyed the shorter – by no means less professional – shows because in the longer ones there did not seem enough drama or laughs to justify the length.

Charleville - an invaluable experience matched by the wonderful and generous company of Sue, Sarah and Joanne (How I miss our breakfasts at Philippe's 'Le Gai Hasard'). Another 3 years to wait ??!



Place Ducale



The Autocart



'Le Gai Hasard' - Sue, Sam and Sarah

The Lambert Puppet Theatre of Dublin

Richard Bradshaw

The Lambert Puppet Theatre is housed in former mews (i.e. stables) in Clifton Lane, Monkstown, behind big 19th century houses that face across Dublin Bay. It is a short walk from the station of "Salthill and Monkstown" on the DART line, the rapid transit rail system that skirts around the Bay. It has a well-equipped theatre space, and upstairs it has a good sized workshop, two studio rooms and a puppet museum.



The Lambert Puppet Theatre

Shows are given at weekends, visits are organised for schoolchildren and birthday parties are catered for. Puppet Workshops can be arranged and each September there is an International Puppet Festival. The International Festival caters for adult audiences as well as children, and some past performers are the Gentys, Albrecht Roser and Frank Soehnle. This year there were shows from England, Wales, Russia, The Netherlands and Australia. there were also puppet-making workshops for children and adults.

The festival ran from 13-21 September, and on the first Sunday there was a free puppet event ("weather permitting") at the East Pier at Dunlaoghaire (pronounced "Dunioury") just along from Monkstown. This was opened by Eugene Lambert himself and his ventriloquial puppet dog, Judge. It seems that everyone in Dublin knows Judge!

Eugene Lambert began his performing career as a ventriloquist. One poster in the theatre is for a variety performance at the Loftus Hall, Ballynote on November 26, 1944. His dummy was then "Charley", and he is billed as "Ireland's youngest boy ventriloquist". The present dummy is Finnegan with whom Eugene sings a duet in a clever feat of aural illusion. Finnegan struggling to avoid being put back in the suitcase is a joy to see.

I first met Eugene when he came to Australia with Finnegan in 1970 as part of a promotion for Irish tourism. At the time he appeared regularly on a children's program on Irish TV involving "The Wanderly Wagon". This is where Judge came to prominence. Eugene's wife, Mai, and their children...there were ten...were all involved with the puppets. Eugene told me then that he had recently (in 1968) bought a large Victorian house overlooking Dublin Bay and planned to build a puppet theatre there. The house was ideal

because there was a room for each of the children and there were mews behind where the theatre could be housed.

The theatre was opened in 1972, and it was in that year that I again caught up with Eugene, this time at the first international festival in Charleville-Mézières, France which was also the occasion for a UNIMA Congress. It was there that I first saw Eugene performing with Finnegan. Eugene came in a large van he had brought from Dublin which comfortably seated Eugene and Mai and their ten children. They made quite an impression.

Eugene had once worked as a refrigeration engineer. (When he picked us up at Dublin Airport he mentioned that he had helped install the first refrigeration unit there.) He knew no other puppeteers when he started

out and he built his marionettes following instructions in a book by the English puppeteer, Waldo Lanchester. On a visit to England some years into his new career he was surprised to find so many active puppeteers. His new friends included Jan and Ann Bussell.

He also befriended the late Eric Bramall at the Harlequin Puppet Theatre in Colwyn Bay, Wales. Performances are still given in that theatre which is now run by Eric Bramall's partner, Chris Somerville. Chris has been a long-time friend of the Lamberts, and was performing with his marionettes and Punch and Judy at this year's festival in Dublin.



Eugene Lambert opens "Puppets on the Pier" at Dunlaoghaire. (Chris Somerville's "Punch and Judy" is to the right.)

The Lambert Puppet Theatre has been very much a family business, with some of the grandchildren now involved. Now that the children have grown up and moved away they are no longer all involved. Miriam Lambert is the manager for the theatre and festival,

The Lambert Puppet Theatre of Dublin (Cont.)

and it was she who first made contact with me by e-mail when we got back from the tour of Spain last May. I had already accepted invitations to festivals in Turin and Cagliari (Sardinia) and the timing of the Dublin festival allowed for me to play there first. Miriam was a joy to deal with and had generously and efficiently made the freight booking for my cases to go on to Turin before we had even arrived in Dublin.

Most of the Lambert children followed artistic pursuits. Jonathan, who has sadly died, was a talented mime artist who performed with Marcel Marceau. In fact, Marceau visited the Lambert Puppet Theatre and was very taken with Mai's scones. So much so, that he praised them on a radio interview he did in Dublin. Another son, Gene, is an artist but is also very involved in working for services for people with disabilities. He had had a serious road accident and for a time when he was in a wheelchair lived in a flat in an adjoining mews, which has since been incorporated into the theatre. Stephen has usually helped with the stage-management, but was too unwell to take part this year. His brother, Liam, helped backstage this year...and also Stephen's son, Richard. Emily Tully, a granddaughter, was the charming and capable press officer. David, another brother who worked on the festival this year, mainly as a driver, is a successful sculptor responsible for a bas-relief on the theatre's facade.

I had not been in contact with any of the family since they saw my show in Charleville in 1972, and there was a whiff of nostalgia in my presence this year over 30 years later. Limm had been a young boy then, and was pleased to know that I was still doing "The Cat Came Back". Yes, still. Still. (When he first saw it I had already been doing it for 7 years.)

When Eugene had been in Sydney in 1970 he told me how he had sometimes volunteered to take part in productions at the Abbey Theatre and how Brendan Behan had once bounced one of the Lambert children on his knee. In their production of "Alice in Wonderland" Miriam had supplied the voice for Alice on the soundtrack... but one of the other voices was provided by that great Irish actor, Micheal Mac Liammoir.

In 1992 Eugene was doing some plaster-casting in the workshop when he had a call from someone to see if a visiting American performer could come out and see the puppet theatre. The performer's name was Michael Jackson, but that meant little to Eugene who still had a dusting of plaster on him when he came downstairs to greet him. Clifton Lane was blocked with limousines and sightseers. Michael Jackson expressed a great interest in puppets but something else made a strong impression on him. "You mean to say that Marcel Marceau has actually been here? Wow!" Eugene liked the young man, but was struck by his shyness. Next day the phone rang hot as radio stations around the world rang Eugene to inquire about the visit.

My experience when David drove me to the Dublin Airport freight section of Aer Lingus to send my puppets on to Turin will give you some idea of the status of the Lambert Puppet Theatre in Ireland. When I went to do the paperwork the officer saw the Lambert name and said how he had taken his children to the Theatre. Then when I went on to the warehouse with the cases the man there recalled the Lambert puppets on T.V., including Judge the Dog and the Wanderly Wagon.



"Hansel and Gretel" by the Lambert Puppet Theatre (Handpuppets)



*Eugene Lambert making puppets.
Photo by MatKavanagh, The Irish Times*

The Lambert Puppet Theatre of Dublin (cont.)

A Footnote:

One person who gives help and support to the Lambert Puppet Theatre is John McCormick who until recently was Senior Lecturer in Drama Studies at the Samuel Beckett Centre at Trinity College in the heart of Dublin. We have been in contact for some years because of a shared interest in nineteenth century puppeteers. John and his wife present puppet shows, and until recently he was on the UNIMA Executive. They met us at the theatre when we arrived from Australia and we were later able to spend a day with them seeing something of rural Ireland.

(John had an Australian stepfather, Don Finley (born Melbourne, 1902.; died Ireland, 1982) who was an accomplished theatre designer and who founded the Turret Theatre at Milsons Point, Sydney in 1928.)

It turned out that John and Clodagh, together with their puppeteer daughter, Julie-Rose, were going to the festival in Turin also. John is now working on a book on the history of Italian puppetry and one bonus of being with him at the Turin festival was that we got a chance to visit where the Lupi puppet collection is now housed in premises belonging to an adjacent church at via Santa Teresa no. 5.

The Lupi family was active in puppetry in Turin from the first half of the 19th century. They came to specialise in marionettes which, in addition to strings also have a stiff rod to the head. At the top of this rod is a pear-shaped handle and the strings are attached to leather strips fixed to this handle. The rods are very long because the marionette bridge is high. The "hero" of this company was Gianduja, whose name was given to the theatre in which they played.

The present museum houses a large collection of puppets, set-pieces, display cases of heads, of shows, of hats and so on. There is a theatre with the marionette stage set up- and performances are still given here with the puppets sometimes over a hundred years old.

There is a smaller theatre which is part of the museum and, to our great surprise, there is yet another middle-sized theatre in which an elderly puppeteer presents performances by armour-clad Sicilian marionettes. We saw a video promoting a Lupi production of "Aida", a production they once performed in Egypt, and as a parting gift we received a video of the Lupi production of "Peter Pan", by puppets we had seen on display in the museum.



Lupi marionettes with an orchestra operated from below in the foreground.

More about PUPPETRY, POLITICS and the war....

Letter from Allelu Kurten, former UNIMA rep. for the U.S.A dated September 18, 2003 and sent to Miguel Arreche for distribution.

Dear Friends in UNIMA, Members of the Executive Committee and Councillors,

I am deeply concerned over the divisive action taken by some members of the Executive Committee at the meeting in India.

UNIMA is an international theatre organization working ceaselessly to build bridges of international understanding through the art of puppetry. It should NEVER become a political entity, though we, the members, are often political activists in our own countries.

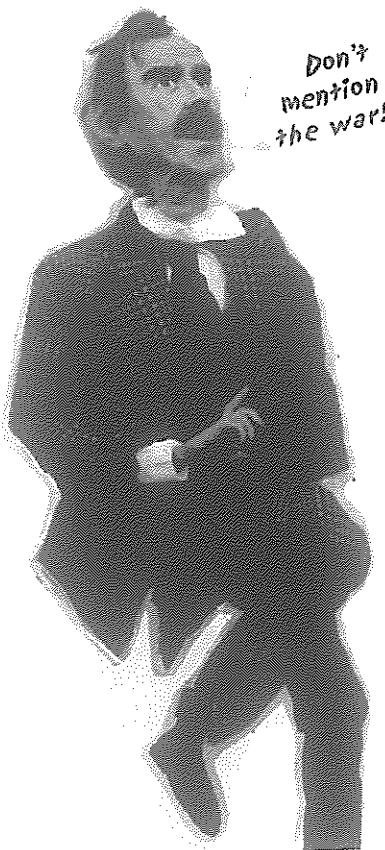
The start of the Executive Committee meeting in India coincided with the start of the US war on Iraq. Though many members of UNIMA undoubtedly felt this pre-emptive strike to be folly (and I, as you know, am among them), it was, in my opinion, an equally serious folly for Executive Committee members to call for a vote condemning the war - thus putting Vincent Anthony, the U.S. representative, in an untenable position. In UNIMA-USA, the Board of Directors could never make a statement for or against a political action unless the entire membership agreed to the vote. This rule should apply to the UNIMA Executive Committee as well. Happily, it seemed to be an unwritten rule in the past. At the '84 congress in Dresden, when a motion was proposed to condemn the bombing of Dresden in WWII, President Henryk Jurkowski defeated this effort by pointing out that UNIMA could condemn any such actions of WWII - on Warsaw, for instance. Before the '88 UNIMA festival in Japan, we came to a tacit understanding that doves of peace should be the emphasis - not Hiroshima/Pearl Harbour.

If the UNIMA Executive Committee becomes politically

activist, the whole universal purpose of our organization will be lost: i.e. that we all, as artists and puppeteers, are working for peace in our world despite the aggressive actions of many of our countries. I urge all of you to adopt a policy reflecting this fact so that all future meetings can avoid such an unfortunate outcome.

With all best wishes for the future of our organization,
Allelu Kurten

(We encourage responses to this issue by all members of UNIMA Australia. Please send your letters to : <austpuppeteer@yahoo.com.au>)



Basil Fawltly puppet
by Julia Davis

WORLD PUPPETRY DAY Dennis Murphy

I was amazed to see that Ian Tregonning's jest about World Puppeteer Unemployment Day triggered such a quick, outspoken response from puppeteers. We are usually such an apathetic lot. It made me think back to my activities on World Puppetry Day.

I was in Newcastle on my last day of a pre-school tour. Two morning shows then the afternoon 'off'. After the shows I grabbed lunch at my favourite Newcastle restaurant (Anatolia Turkish Restaurant on Beaumont Street), then a quick coffee (Giovanni's Deli across the street) and off to a two and a quarter hour drive south to Sydney.

Once home I unloaded the pre-school show from the van and loaded the outdoor staging, puppets and sound system for my Commedia shows. After a shower, a change of clothes and a coffee (a private blend - I'm giving nothing away here) I drove south for two and a half hours so that I would be bright-eyed, bushy-tailed and already in town to spend the weekend on the Goulburn show ground. So much for having the afternoon 'off'.

It got me thinking about what lawyers call 'billable time', that is, time that you can charge to a client. In the arts we generally work 'non-billable time'. Especially development time. Even once established there's all the driving and set-up times.

I am not an accountant. (I'd rather have one than be one) but since the pre-school has been running 18 years it's probably paid off its development costs (not to mention my mortgage.) But tallying up the day I had one hour and ten minutes of billable time (actually performing) and at least nine hours of non-billable driving, loading, unloading, setting up and tearing down.

So I was in paid employment on World Puppetry Day - but mainly as a driver!

NEW SOUTH WALES

Probing Port's Puppet Potential

Dennis Murphy

That was the title of a week of puppet workshops for adults in Port Macquarie. The organisers, a local puppet company called "No Strings Attached" wanted to kindle some interest in puppetry, to recruit more members and at the same time get themselves some instruction. Part of the brief would be for me to give some direction to the group's current production.

I was reluctant at first to take on the job, having never taught puppetry. But I had met the group two years ago and was impressed with their enthusiasm. So I agreed with the proviso that I only teach what I know - manipulation and writing - not design, puppet making etc.

The workshops were on offer at 2pm and repeated in the evening at 7pm. A 'City of The Arts' grant ensured there was no charge for participants. The organiser, Eric Fordyce, did a fantastic job of publicising the workshops, writing to some 100 local artists and teachers. It made the local paper five times. With Port's hinterland populated with artists there was no knowing how many people would front up.

My preparation for the course was a good exercise in verbalising things that I do all the time without thinking. Putting into words stuff that the hands do automatically in some sort of conjunction with the brain's left hemisphere.

I sought advice putting a question to Lorrie Gardner of Gardner's Puppet Theatre and Sue Wallace of Sydney Puppet Theatre. "In 25 words or less, what would you tell a Writing For Puppets class?" They both gave virtually the same answer - "Why use puppets? If humans could do it better, use humans. If you use puppets, there should be a good reason to choose that medium." (I'm paraphrasing here to get 25 words.)

But when I put that question - Why use puppets? - to the group I was taken aback by their reply. "Because we love puppets." Fair enough. As an amateur group they were not making money from the shows; they were in it to enjoy it. It required me to think on two levels - what was good for the audience and what was good for the enthusiasts backstage. It called for some improvisation on my part - at least now I was back on familiar ground.

Rather than directing as such, I was asking questions. Why do it that way? What are you trying to say here? What are you trying not to show here? What do you want to do? - all the time fighting my instincts as a soloist to jump in and do it my way.

I began to relate teaching to performing. That was a bit of a breakthrough. For example, I discovered in the lectures that I was repeating myself. Saying everything twice. (There - I just did it again!) But relating it back to my work I realised that I wasn't trusting the intelligence of the audience - in this case, the workshop participants.

I also felt at first that I wasn't getting through to them; I wasn't getting much feedback. Then I realised (duhhh!) that I am used to getting laughs every two or three sentences and this 'performance' wasn't comedy.

Thinking back on it now I suspect that I probably learned more from the workshops than the students did.

Creative Puppets

Veronica Pout

Creative Puppets is a new business that was begun on the 21st February 2003 by Veronica Pout and Peter Rae. Our show, "As Time goes By" is a light hearted comedy being performed in Nursing homes, shopping centres and also Community Groups in Sydney and Melbourne.

The Stars, Ethel and Morrie, are visited by their grandson Joey who adds a little sparkle and chaos to their lives. We end the show with an old-time sing-a-long with audience participation.

We are currently putting together a children's show designed for pre-schoolers, and plan to have the show available by October



V I C T O R I A

Gaudi and the Turtle - Creative Development

Written and directed by Sarah Kriegler

Performed by Alex Papps, Vanessa Ellis and Heath McIvor

Design: Vanessa Beck, Sound Design: Anthony Olsen, Lighting Design: Tim Wood

Gaudi and the Turtle is an adult puppetry and performance piece that I have written based on the life and humanist ideals of Spanish Architect Antenna Gaudi.

The fifth draft of the script was presented as a showing for peers and friends at Polyglot Puppet Theatre during August.

The aim of the showing was to receive critical feedback on the script and ideas so far, to determine what reads to an audience and what is not clear yet, as well as to document the process and performance in order to secure funding for a performance in 2004.

I am very pleased to announce we have received confirmation that we were successful in our first grant application to the City of Melbourne. With this money - and hopefully more will follow - we'll present the work at North Melbourne Town Hall in August/September 2004.

The success of this application is really due to the extraordinary creative team who gathered together purely for the love of the work and a hearty lunch to make the creative development a success. It's tough developing a new work on a budget only of \$2,000. I cannot thank the team enough for believing in the future of the project to commit to the creative development for nothing. I also am indebted to Polyglot Puppet Theatre and their incredible generosity for lending us the theatre.

Thanks also you puppet lot that came and supported the creative development and we'll see you for the real thing next year!

Coming Soon January 2004

Stubbies

A Season of Summer Shorts

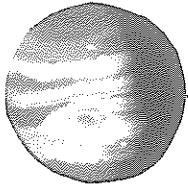
With Renaud Herbin (France) Uta Gerbet (Germany) Sarah Kriegler,
Victoria Osborne, Lachlan Haig and Jeremy Davis and Noah Marley from
Kronic Circus

A season of short puppetry and circus performances.

SOMETHING FOR EVERYONE!

In association with Polyglot Puppet Theatre

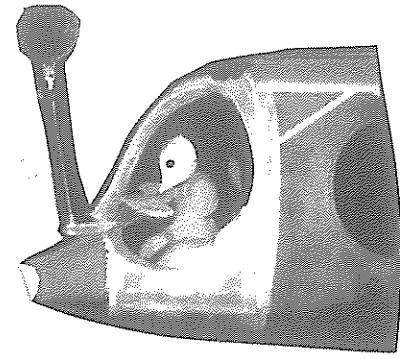
For dates, bookings and further information call Sarah on (03) 9388 8262



Dreaming in Space: THE BIG TOUR



Richard Hart



Early on the 4th of May, a fully packed Dream Puppet van, (the "Dream Machine"), slipped down the driveway to commence a very long journey. Its mission: to take "DREAMER IN SPACE" to peoples and schools of all descriptions in the centre, far west and north of Australia.

A couple of days before, I was given a real five leaf clover to take with me for luck. It would be almost four months and over 20,000 Kms later before returning to that same driveway.

A lot of preparation before hand resulted in very few difficulties on the tour. The van was well checked, serviced and fitted with a new engine. Detachable shelving was snugly fitted around the show in the back to accommodate a small and large tent, card table, tools, puppet repair and maintenance ingredients, cooking goods, bedding, first aid, clothes, books, CDs, office files, contact addresses, etc., even a small portable B/W television set and no, I did not forget the umbrella.

The first leg was from Melbourne to Port Augusta, about 5% of the overall distance to cover. Having a new engine, I had to vary my speed all the time to run it in and arranged the first 800 km service for Mt Barker, SA. The timing and distance was perfect; the service was done in the morning and I arrived at Port Augusta late afternoon, 5th of May, smack in the midst of an old car rally. All accommodation was booked out! What saved me was the small tent, though I did find the plug to my inflatable mattress missing! This was my only oversight in packing. Five shows in two days and it was off to Ceduna, for one show, then across the Nullabour!

This was my third crossing of the Nullabour, (which is Latin for no trees). It was a strange and scary feeling knowing that I was not coming back this way - then again, it was also a relief. The return journey can be very boring. It took two days and Australia's most expensive petrol to do it. There is no radio, more traffic than you would imagine, crap food,(so take your own) ,

and lots of overseas tourists in a daze of mild shock at the arid expanse that is so daunting. It finishes at Norseman and you feel deserving of a civic reception for such an amazing achievement. Instead, you get a very disinterested BP roadhouse followed by a small town and another 200 Kms to the next main town.

At this point I want to reveal my experiences with tent camping as an alternative to hotels and motels. The first main advantage is the cost saving. I used powered sites and they ranged in price from \$7 per night to \$20. The higher price reflects the much higher hotel prices for that area. It is also a security backup factor as I found in Port Augusta. Modern tents are surprisingly cheap, compact, weatherproof and quick to set up. I purchased a new 4 person tent with an enclosed veranda and room to stand upright in the middle for \$125. I could get it set up with bed and cooking within half an hour and allowed the same time in the mornings. Being able to cook your own meals is an advantage, even in small towns.

The main disadvantage of tenting is the weather, so when it was bad I stayed in hotels. The tour was viable only because I saved so much on accommodation. I also had a larger, older Terka tent for stays longer than two days. I abandoned inflatable mattresses early in the tour; they take too long to inflate and can leak. A good stretcher bed and sleeping bag did the trick.

The south western part of WA is a lovely place to tour . The audiences just loved the show which helped to overcome the feeling of being so far away from home. My only difficulty was when the van's alternator died, so I was driving around between battery charges until getting an expensive emergency repair in Bunbury. Fortunately, I did not have to change any of the booking schedule for the entire tour due to car problems.

Before heading north and after the first month on tour, I had the wonderful opportunity to stay for three days in Freemantle with Joanne Foley



Dreaming in Space: THE BIG TOUR (cont.)

and her parents, Pat and Maurie. It was a great time to catch up with Joanne and Ian Tregonning and to see some of the puppetry work being done there.

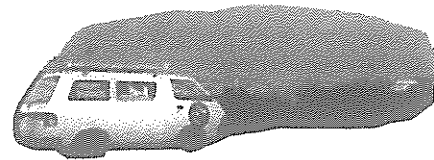
As I went further north up the coast, caravan parks were the best places to stay. I met a lot of tourists and interesting contacts; it made the whole experience more like a holiday. Three days at Monkey Mia were magic and inspirational followed by an 80 km stretch to Carnarvon, dodging mob after mob of kangaroos alive and dead at 40 kph. The carnage was unbelievable and I narrowly avoided hitting them. The dream machine did not kill or injure any animal for the whole tour. Avoid night driving in the bush.

Tropical Australia is like another country. It was the dry season but some weird weather patterns popped up every now and then. One morning in Onslow, after the heaviest downpour in 25 years, I found the side floor of my tent bobbing up and down. I got out to see I was on the edge of a huge rain puddle with a neighbouring tent in the middle, flooded.

My partner, Julia, met me in Broome, two months into the tour. Broome is the only place I have performed a black light show outdoors in the daytime. It worked, but we bought a lot of extra black plastic. We travelled across to Kakadu where we did a bush tucker safari and she went back to Melbourne upon arriving in Darwin, where I spent two and a half weeks. Darwin is hot, even in winter and I felt very close to Asia and very far from Melbourne and Sydney.

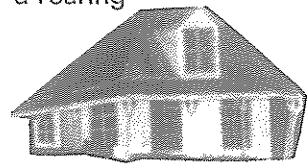
From Darwin, it was straight down the Stuart Hwy performing in towns on the way. In the north and northwest, I performed to a lot of aboriginal audiences who really embraced the show. They

picked up on the visual story telling brilliantly as if it were spoken to them. After the usual shyness at the start of question time one by one the hands would pop up until there was a virtual forest. Question times were quite long.



I met my daughter, Zoey, in Alice Springs and she travelled with me for the three weeks back to Melbourne, via Uluru. On the last leg from Darwin the dependence on the Dream Machine's mechanical health was developing into a strange psychological phenomenon. I became almost obsessive compulsive about the number five (remember the five leaf clover at the start?) It is easy to see how mariners in the middle of the ocean develop superstitions when survival is a stake. This is my fifth year with School Performance Tours, the van needed 5,000 km services, I would take petrol from pump number five by design or accident and spend multiples of five on petrol. It stopped when I got back to Melbourne, without therapy you will be glad to know.

After 20,000 kms and nearly four months, we drove from Adelaide to Melbourne in one go, with controlled impatience. Before turning into the driveway, the surreal spectacle of a human body with a lion's head emerged from the night dancing toward us. Had this epic journey driven me insane? No, it was Julia Davis wearing a very realistic lion head she had made for a roaring welcome home.



***Congratulations to Jai Hartnell,
the first recipient of the Handspan Visual
Theatre International Travel and Study Grant***



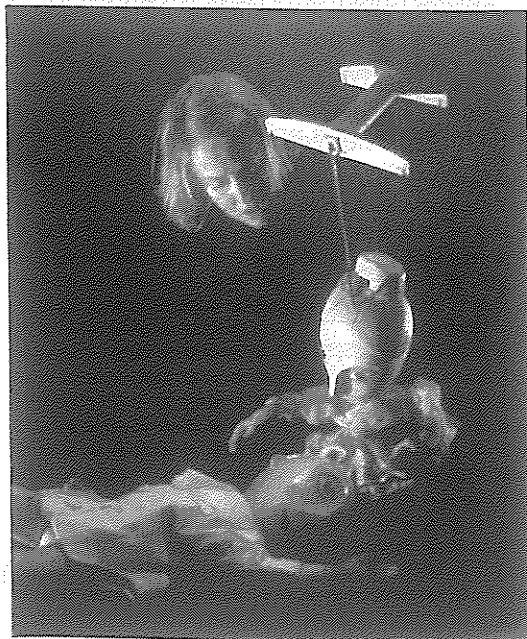
WESTERN AUSTRALIA

SPARE PARTS PUPPET THEATRE - PERTH

2003 started off with the highly successful season of *Granny is an Alien!* written and directed by Michael Barlow (April/May). The show will hit the road in November and December for the Metropolitan Schools Touring season.

We had a safe arrival home for the performers on the regional schools tour of *Hare Brain* which visited various schools and remote communities within the Pilbara in WA. The show travelled 5,748km which meant that everything was dusty and wobbly (and that's just the performers). *Hare Brain*, being the popular show that it is, will venture east for a National Tour in 2004.

June and July saw the highly successful World Premiere of *Spellbound...* (a production nicked named "mammoth" from cast and crew). This adventure story tells the tale of Petrushka, a clumsy clown, the beautiful Ballerina and the handsome Benjamin and their desire to be free from the magician, Zeno's mysterious world of tricks, magic and illusion.



Are Zeno's puppets just made of wood? Or is there a soul inside wanting to get out? Can the clumsy Petrushka break the spell and free himself from the all powerful Zeno's magical prison and win the love of the Ballerina at the same time?

Written by Humphrey Bower in collaboration with Philip Mitchell and Zoe Atkinson. The Sicilian marionettes, designed by Zoe Atkinson, seamlessly come alive through black theatre and bunraku puppetry lit by Andrew Lake. Lee Buddle's musical score captures the beauty of the baroque and the gritty energy of rap and hip-hop. Starring in this show of magic tricks and swirling sword rides were Michael Barlow, Simon Clarke and Rachael

Whitworth.

The Deep is currently touring the eastern states. It started in August performing to 13 venues between Melbourne and Townsville. We expect them back with shopping in hand at the end of October. Jane Davies' *Fortunata* is currently showing for our October Theatre season. Jane and Sanjiva created this show in 1999.

After preparing *The Deep* for the tour Noriko Nishimoto returned to recreate *The Midnight Gang* at the playhouse Theatre in Perth in October. On stage with the 5 cast (puppets) are 16 musicians from the West Australian Symphony. With the school season already booked out we are looking at a sell out season!

We are having a busy time with our *Puppet ED* puppet making and performing workshops. We have residencies at Exmouth District High school (1263km North of Perth) and locally at Shelley Primary School, not forgetting the local metro schools where tutors visit on what now seems to be a regular basis.

H2O, the pool show of the year, is now officially part of the Perth International Arts Festival for February 2004. Performers, Michael Barlow, Sandy McKendrick, Paul O'Sullivan and Narelle Simpson will take to the water in glory of light and floaty things... stay tuned!

If you want to keep up to date with *What's On* at Spare Parts...check out www.sppt.asn.au.



TASMANIA

TERRAPIN PUPPET THEATRE

Update - October 2003

Terrapin's school touring production, *My Sister's An Alien*, has begun its six week tour to Tasmanian primary schools. From Gretel Killeen's irreverent and enormously popular book, *My Sister's an Alien*, is directed by Cazerine Barry. This is an exciting new puppet theatre that will challenge and entertain children from Kinder to Grade 6. A special once only public performance will be shown in Hobart on Monday, 3rd November.

In 2004 Terrapin will launch its new summer training intensive in puppetry. Drawing on the unique experience of Terrapin artists and guest artist, Jenny Kemp, Hobart Junction will be a laboratory of skills and ideas. Programs are open to performers, directors, designers and visual artists interested in extending their understanding of puppet-based theatre. Participants will be involved in all elements of work creation from concept development, through design and making, to performance. Call Terrapin now for a booking form: 03-6223 6834.

For more information on any of Terrapin's projects, see our web site: www.terrapiin.org.au or e-mail: info@terrapiin.org.au.

MIXED MEDIA PRODUCTIONS

If kangaroos could fly

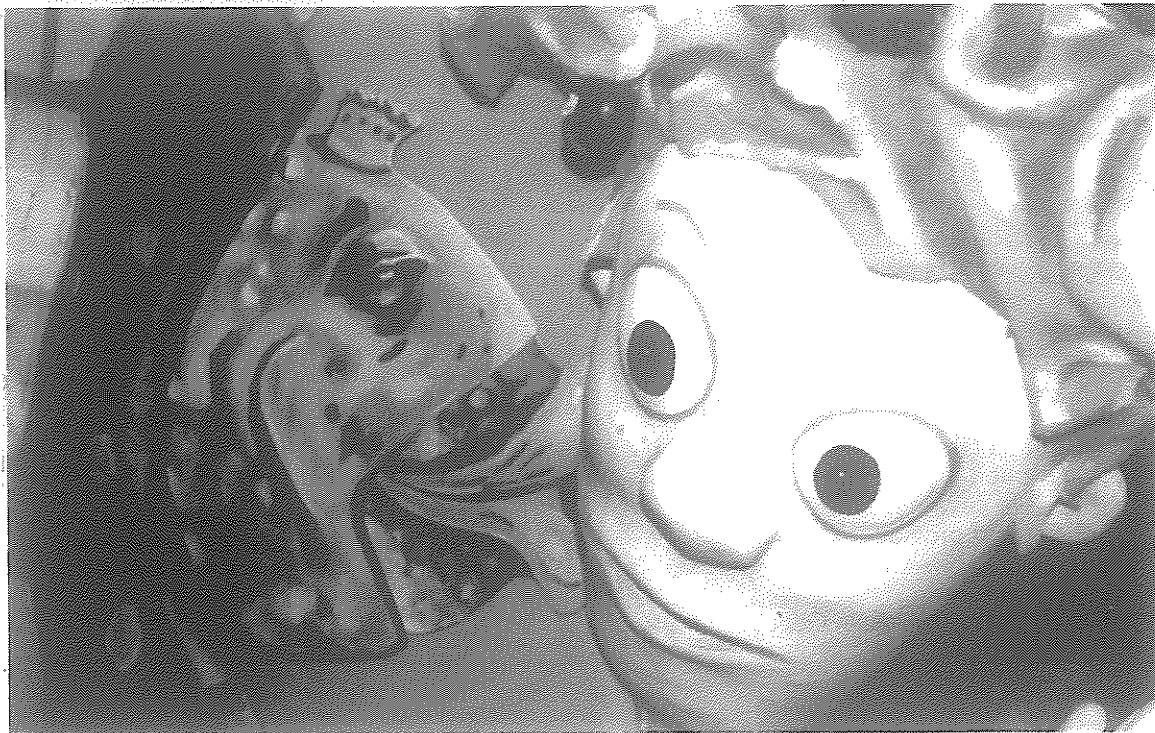


Directed by Martin Bachmann # Performed by
Thomas Zotz and Heidi Callewaert

ON TOUR IN EUROPE: 6th October - 19th
December 2003

Supported by Arts Tasmania, Data-publish.com,
September Figurentheater, Jugendkunstschnule
Donauesschingen and private sponsors.

For more information about the new show go to our
website <http://www.mixedmedia.com.au/children.htm>



TASMANIA (CONT.)

SMIFFS' PUPPETS:- "PUNCH AND JUDY"

Basil and Janet Smith
PO BOX 230
Margate, Tasmania, 7054



Basil and Janet Smith from their idyllic retreat in Tasmania, will again adventure into the puppeteering world. Basil has remade his Punch and Judy troop and his theatre and is now offering shows for the lucky children and adults in Tasmania.

Basil told me that he set up the show on his own private beach, photographed it all, then used the photo for his advertisements. He said that the clients can book the show but they must provide their own beach or alternative backgrounds!

When do you start travelling in your own Gypsy caravan again, Basil and Janet?

Lorrie Gardner.

VISITING PUPPETEERS

Wendy Passmore and her partner, Tam, of WP PUPPETS, Canada visited Australia recently. They entertained Australian audiences with their shows which featured some Australian wildlife. Pictured: Wendy and some of her many puppets.



What's On

VICTORIA

HIRAM TERRAZZO'S LOUNGE OF LEISURE

AT DANTE'S, FITZROY

CNR GERTRUDE & NAPIER STREETS - FITZROY

Opening night Friday 21st November 2003

Fridays: Dec 19, Jan 16, Feb. 20.

Doors open at 7.30p.m. Show starts at 8p.m. Door charge.

Hiram Terrazzo rides again at Dante's, Fitzroy!
After successful seasons interstate Hiram returns to Melbourne with his unique brand of vaudeville mayhem.

A monthly Friday night cabaret featuring magic, puppetry, circus, illusions, site acts, juggling & acrobatics. couched in theme based nights drawing from the traditions of cabaret and burlesque theatre. Come on a journey through the ages from Victorian times to the racey 1930's in Berlin. Think Moulin Rouge meets the traditions of Carnivale and the style of the 1940's nightclubs.

For further details contact Lachlan Haig mob. 0413 145 124

St. Petersburg Puppet Theatre

Show at Forum Theatre, Melbourne Jan. 2 to 24,
Space Theatre, Adelaide, Jan. 27 to Feb 1.
Touring SA - Feb 3 to 15. Touring VIC - Feb. 17 to
Mar .3. TAS - Mar. 5 to 13.

NEW SOUTH WALES

The Rocks Puppet Cottage Kendal lane, The Rocks

Performances are presented EVERY Saturday and
Sunday throughout the year.
Shows are DAILY in School Holidays. Show times:
11am 12.30 and 2pm
All shows are FREE - No need to book but come 15
minutes early to get a good seat.

The Art Gallery of NSW
presents:
DARKNESS & LIGHT
CARAVAGGIO and his world
29 November 2003 to 22 February 2004

The exhibition features Italian-style puppetry on the
following dates:

JANUARY: Sunday 4; Sunday 11 to Friday 16;
Sunday 18 to Friday 23; Sunday 25.

FEBRUARY: Sunday 1; Sunday 8; Sunday 15.

Details: (02) 8225 1791

One Van Festival

"One Van" Mini-Fest 2004

"One Van" International Festival of Puppetry January 23 & 24, 2004

Blackheath (the Blue Mountains) NSW

Program includes:

2 nights of the now famous Puppet Cabaret (adults
only) Jan. 23 & 24

2 or 3 Family shows on Jan 24

2 Kids' Puppet workshops on Jan 24

Artists include Philip Millar and cohorts, Dennis Murphy,
Krinkl Theatre, Greg Howard, Ross Browning and other
wonderful artists yet to be confirmed.

The Mini-Fest is a fund-raiser and a teaser for the next
big festival in January 2005.

"One Van" January 2005

In the planning for 2005 are

3 4 days and nights of performances, street theatre
and public workshops, including 2 international

companies and a host of fabulous Australian artists.

3 A master class in creating political puppet theatre

Do you want to participate?

Send videos and promotional details of your shows to -
Sue Wallace

Sydney Puppet Theatre

PO Box 520, Petersham NSW 2049

Tel/Fax: 02 9550 6457

Email: spuppet@ozemail.com.au

Do you want to be on the mailing list?

Send your details to -

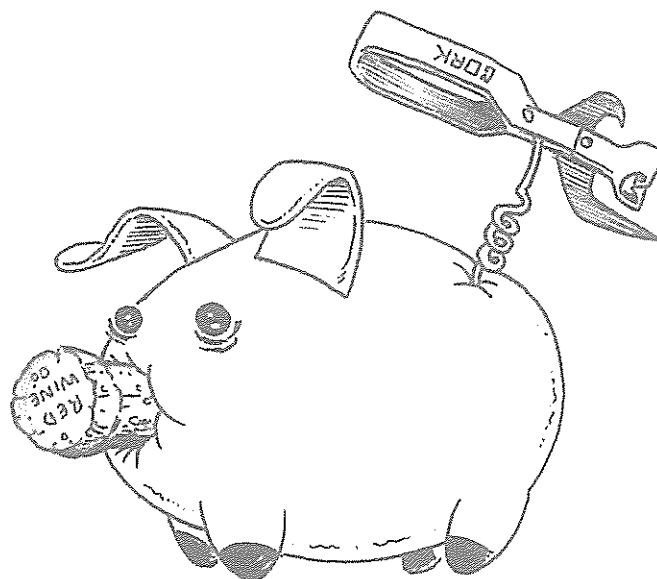
Puppet Festival Mailing List

Blackheath Area Neighbourhood Centre

Gardiner Crescent, Blackheath NSW 2785

Tel: 02 4787 7770 Fax: 02 4787 7777

Email: banc@lisp.com.au



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How to subscribe to UNIMA AUSTRALIA and *Australian Puppeteer*:

One Year Subscription:

New Members: \$35

Renewals: \$30

Couples Membership:

New: \$45

Renewals: \$40

Unima Membership includes your subscription to *AUSTRALIAN PUPPETEER*. Please make all cheques payable to **UNIMA AUSTRALIA** and send to:

The Treasurer, Unima Australia
PO Box 208
Elsternwick.VIC.3185

Our ABN is: 16 949 470 066

Note that we are not registered for GST.

WELCOME TO NEW UNIMA MEMBERS:

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David Collins
Fiona Gentle Snow
Philip Gentle Snow
Peter Lenkefe
Monika Lenkefe
Martina Prusova
The Victorian College of the Arts

Debra Berzins
Helen Evans
Lydia Greenfield
Jill Grevatt
Rebecca Hall
Brendan Moon



DEADLINE for Summer edition is January 20
Thank you for your contributions





Inside back cover photo page:
Scarecrow by Hilary Talbot
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