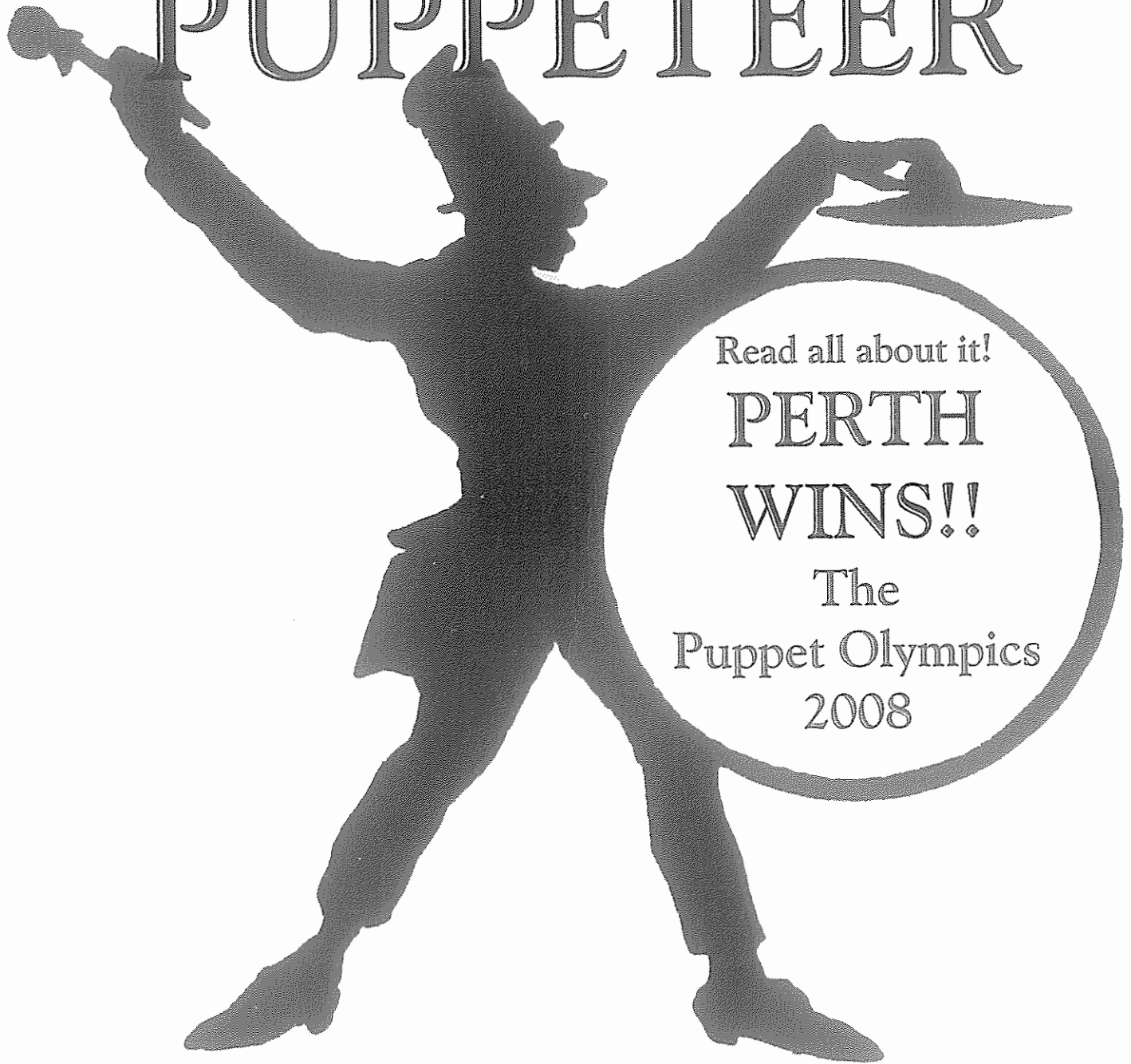


WINTER 2004

AUSTRALIAN PUPPETEER



Read all about it!

PERTH
WINS!!

The
Puppet Olympics
2008

UNION INTERNATIONALE DE LA MARIONNETTE



UNIMA Logo designed by Norman Hetherington

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THE MAGAZINE OF UNIMA AUSTRALIA WINTER 2004

AUSTRALIAN PUPPETEER

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CONTRIBUTORS: Norman Hetherington, Lorrie Gardner, Jennie Pfeffer, Philip Mitchell, Sue Wallace, Larissa Deak, Gary Friedman, Francis Wright, Zuzanna Glowacka, Kathy Foley, Lainie Cann, Samantha Ferris.

EDITORIAL

Welcome to the Winter edition of Australian Puppeteer. Thanks to Julia and Sarah for entrusting me with this issue – I thoroughly enjoyed all aspects of putting together the magazine, especially communicating with the contributors to this issue.

Three years ago I began exploring the world of puppetry following a trip to Europe where I took my son to many puppet shows in Paris. Returning to Sydney I made inquiries which inevitably led to Sue Wallace and Steve Coupe of the Sydney Puppet Theatre. Amazing now to be saying farewell to the Rocks Puppet Cottage where I first met Sue and Steve. I wish them all the best in their future projects and thank them for the star the Puppet Cottage was. A few more Sydneysiders feature in this edition – it's all good news.

The most exciting news to broadcast is of course the success of the Spare Parts Puppet Theatre for its successful bid for the 2008 UNIMA Festival and Congress – hearty congratulations to the team.

I have included two articles from Europe and thanks to Gary Friedman for putting me in contact with our correspondents. As well there are reports from Australian puppeteers working on projects overseas. I think the parallels are interesting and remind us of the wide reach of puppetry. And then there is our own One Van Festival to look forward to in 2005.

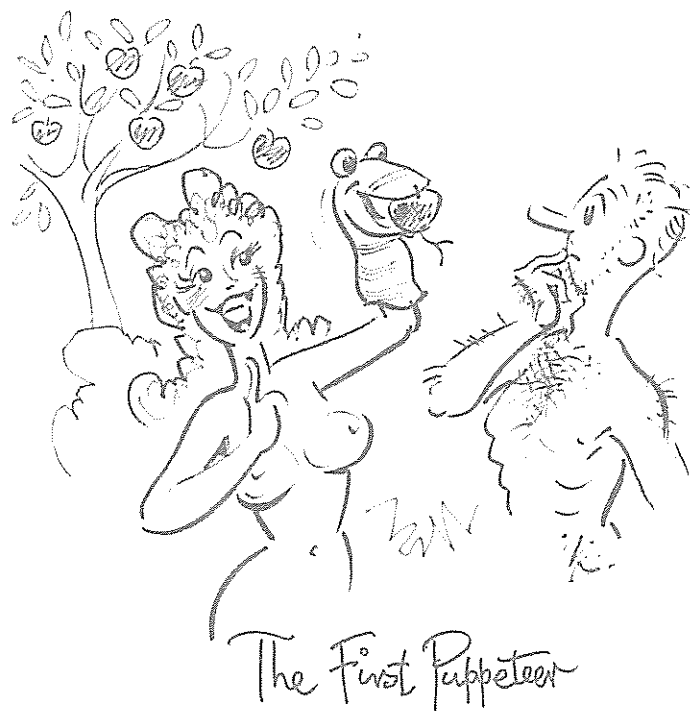
In the meantime I will travel to Europe, on the lookout for exciting shows to attend. Early October I

will be organising a film night with Gary Friedman in Sydney. This will be a great chance to get together and talk puppets and view some great puppetry on film. All are welcome and details will appear in The Australian Puppeteer. We hope to regularly host such evenings and incorporate discussions and viewings of work in progress.

Many thanks to the people who have written for this issue, and to Sue and Julia for their generous help.

I hope you enjoy this Winter 2004 issue of Australian Puppeteer.

Samantha Ferris



Artwork - Norman Hetherington



PRESIDENT'S REPORT

WINTER 2004

Our Special General Meeting on 30th May voted overwhelmingly (39 to 1) in favour of all four proposals and so incorporation will now proceed. We were pleased that so many of you did, if unable to get to the meeting, send in your proxy votes.

The next general meeting as an incorporated Association will be in August or September. This will be a very important meeting where all officers and committee are up for election for the next year, we will be voting for president, secretary, treasurer, and three committee members. Again there will be proxy voting so please let's have more of you than ever sending in your votes. You may also nominate for any position but please try to get a seconder for your nomination. If you are not near any members to second your choice contact one the current committee.

In the past we have elected office bearers for a four year term. This is not possible under the new incorporation but we still encourage office bearers to re nominate for at least four years if possible to keep continuity. John McDonald has served four years and so will not nominate again as Treasurer. Richard Hart has only been Secretary for one year and we expect him to re nominate. I have been President for three years. At the most I would continue for one year more if elected, for the sake of continuity of the committee but am happy if someone else wants to nominate for this role.

A bid to host the 2008 Congress and Festival in Perth was presented to the Congress in Croatia on 9th June by Philip Mitchell on behalf of UNIMA Australia, Spare Parts Puppet Theatre and the City of Perth. WE HAVE WON THE BID! Australia will now host the next International Congress and UNIMA Festival in Perth 2008. Let's all of us get behind Spare Parts and UNIMA Australia to make this one of the best. Details are just coming in now as to what happened at the Congress as we go to press. There will be much more in subsequent issues so watch these pages.

Lorrie Gardner
UNIMA Australia President

ASIA PACIFIC NEWS

Greg Methe attended the UNESCO –APPAN Symposium and Festival in Bangkok, 6-9 June. The topic: Puppets - Facing the Interior Face - Memory, Recovery and Transposition: The Asian Experience. I regret not being able to attend, as it sounded like a fantastic event.

We hope to hear more of the conference when Greg returns, but in brief - the conference was a combined symposium and series of discussions, and included workshops and masterclasses. The event worked towards an innovative experiment of cross-cultural exchange where a final presentation was devised, drawing on all of the information exchanged during the week, and to be performed in front of an audience.

The conference was to commence with a presentation by invited speakers from the seven participating East Asian countries, plus India and Australia, as to the present situation and status of puppetry in their respective countries. What followed was a swap-fest with information exchange on all matters of puppetry performance: styles, techniques, traditions, narration, puppet manipulation, choreography etc.

Masterclasses were scheduled eg Thai puppetry masters from the Joe Luis Theater or demonstrations such as the making of traditional Kathputli, string puppets.

On June 8 a session was scheduled for analytical and scholarly discussion of several topics, "Primitive Man: Formation and Transformation of Puppets" and: "Puppets as a Tool for Power over the Self and the World".

Finally, there was to be a session on the UNESCO Proclamation of Oral and Intangible Cultural Heritage, the Living Human Treasure System and the new UNESCO Convention on Intangible Cultural Heritage. This included a Problem Identification and Needs Assessment which was to outline the reasons for frailty of some puppet traditions and a discussion that was to cover the best ways in which puppetry can be helped to survive and grow. I can't wait to hear more about this.

We can also look forward to hearing of Andrew Hansen's adventures in Delhi in the next issue of Australian Puppeteer.

And I look forward to working with all of you, especially towards having a strong Asia-Pacific presence in the International Festival and Congress in Perth 2008.

Jennie Pfeiffer

*CONGRATULATIONS TO JENNIE ON HER APPOINTMENT
ONTO THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL OF UNIMA INTERNATIONAL!!*

THE 20th UNIMA WORLD PUPPETRY FESTIVAL & CONGRESS 2008

It is with much excitement and pleasure that we announce the success of Spare Parts Puppet Theatre for UNIMA Australia, Eventscorp (Tourism Western Australia), The Perth Convention Bureau and The City of Perth's bid for the 20th UNIMA Congress and Festival.

The above organizations coordinated the presentation of the bid made in Croatia at the 19th World Puppetry Congress. The response to our presentation was overwhelmingly positive and the desire by many to come to Australia was unanimous.

It will be the first time the Congress and festival will be held in the Southern Hemisphere and only the third time outside of Europe.

A Full copy of the bid can be seen at
<http://www.pcb.com.au/conference/puppet/>

We have also arranged for it to be put on UNIMA international website.

The bidding team consisted of Olly Williams, General Manager of Spare Parts Puppet Theatre, Philip Mitchell SPPT Artistic Director and UNIMA Councillor, Nel Simpson, SPPT performer and her first visit to Europe. We also were assisted by Leonie Groves, from the Western Australian Government Office in the UK.

Richard and Margaret Bradshaw also provided good humour and pleasant company with our brave efforts.

Leonie was responsible for the importing of 121 bottles of Western Australian Wine which was handed to each Councillor as they registered. We had spent the night before tying UNIMA Australia tags to them as our UNIMA Australia bags were stuck in customs along with the 200 clip on Koala bears!!!.

The Bid documents were fortunately imported as excess baggage. This excess costing over 2 and a half thousand dollars!

Events Corp in collaboration with SPPT and the Convention Bureau had put together a stunning 3 minute video presentation which incorporated images from the Puppet Summit video and images of Western Australian landscape, Perth City and buffed speedo men jogging on beach!!!

We hope to send this promo video out to all the UNIMA centres to promote UNIMA PERTH 2008.

The response to our presentation was very encouraging. We must thank Olly Williams for the tireless work she put into the budgeting and organisation of the proposal.

Our promise of Japanese language interpretation proved very positive with guess who!!! UNIMA Nihon!!! So we anticipate a big Japanese delegations at UNIMA 2008.

We have also proposed that along side the congress that we run a conference consisting of masterclasses, lectures, forums etc. This interaction and hands on experience was seriously lacking from the Croatia experience and the idea was enthusiastically supported when discussed in Croatia.

From here, Spare Parts is organisational coordinator of the Congress and Festival,[†] will consult with the funding partners and UNIMA Australia.

We will now seek to get input from UNIMA Australia members and set up a consultative committee. People need to be thinking about what you would like to contribute to PERTH 2008 and the sources for financial support you will need to develop and transport these contributions.

Also suggestions or contacts for companies/artists that can get Government support to bring an "excellent " show here in 2008 would be appreciated.

The main observation I have made from both Budapest and Croatia is that it may be better for us to go for quality and not quantity. We also want to showcase the best of Australian puppetry!!!

We will keep you informed as organisation develops.

CONGRESS NEWS

The Congress was held over five days. The highlight of the Congress was Jennie Pfeffer being elected to the Executive Committee. Jennie was also nominated as Vice President, unfortunately Jennie needed to be there to accept the nomination. This nomination underlined the strong enthusiasm and support that was evident for Australia's hosting of UNIMA 2008.

Massimo Schuster has replaced Margereta Niculescu as President of UNIMA while Miguel Arreche remains as General Secretary. Stanislav Doubrava and Tamiko Anagi are the new Vice Presidents.

The Congress voted for a 25% rise in UNIMA fees and also to make it payable in Euros not US dollars.

Therefore this may impact on UNIMA Australia fees? Jennie as our representative on the executive will be involved in the continuing debate on options to subsidise developing countries and what is an appropriate scale of fees. Many models were discussed and if anyone would like more detailed information please contact me.

What was very enlightening about the congress was all the "commissions". These are basically sub committees set up to deal with issues relating to their designated Commission. As many of you know Jennie has been very active on the Asia Pacific Commission. These commissions can be found on the website and each commission seeks information to keep them updated. Eg our new schools, new publications, research, training opportunities etc.



Penny Francis from UNIMA England proposed a new commission for Financial or fundraising. This partly came to the forefront of discussions because of the distinct lack of representation from Africa and Latin America. It was also highlighted that funds or assistance should be sought to get these councillors to Australia for UNIMA Perth 2008. The commission was approved.

I met with Fabrice Guilliot, the UNIMA website co ordinator. He also has another comprehensive website www.takey.com Fabrice will be putting our bid document on to the UNIMA website but would also like his other website updated. I briefly looked at it and it does need some feedback to him. Polyglot is absent from the website as too are some contact details. He is very approachable and would like to keep everything up to date. It is a great puppetry website with lots of good links.

I would also recommend that we check that our details are up to date and confirm them with Miguel Arreche, General Secretary.

There are lots of other details, insights, experiences and opportunities to share so I will try to write a "second edition" for the next Aust Puppeteer. If you would like to know more then please feel free to contact me at Spare Parts.

Olly and I will be putting our noses down and getting on with real jobs as we prepare for Hare Brain's Perth season then National tour. We are also preparing the artistic program for the next triennium and have three new works on the boil!!

Grendel and the Gladiator (inspired by Beowulf), The Velveteen Rabbit adapted by Greg Lissaman of Jigsaw Canberra, and a large scale street theatre commission for the Perth International Arts Festival 2005, a collaboration between WA artist Shaun Tan and Jiri Zmitko.

We are entering a very exciting period for UNIMA Australia and a wonderful opportunity to showcase the best of Australian puppetry, artists and educators. We look forward to an exciting and challenging four years ahead!!

Best wishes
Philip Mitchell



PUPPETRY IN FOCUS CONFERENCE

The State of the Art – Puppetry in NSW

January 19 & 20, 2005

The Sydney Puppet Theatre has put in for funding from the NSW Ministry for the Arts to hold a 2 day Puppetry in Focus conference as an umbrella event before the 7th "One Van" International Festival of Puppetry in Blackheath, NSW. After talking with many puppeteers in NSW it has become evident that we need an opportunity to get together in a formal environment to look at the revitalisation of puppetry in this, the most populated state in Australia. The conference will bring an overview of puppetry, linking an understanding of past and present puppetry practise in NSW with reference to national and international practice. More importantly it will look to future initiatives, dreams and visions.

Since the demise of the Marionette Theatre of Australia in the early 1990's there has been a lack of focus for puppetry in NSW. While companies and individuals have been pursuing careers in the art form and creating good work, the public face and profile of the puppetry arts in NSW has diminished. With the imminent closure of The Rocks Puppet Cottage, the need for this summit has become even more pressing

A number of puppeteers will already be converging on Blackheath for the festival. Facilities for meetings, workshops and accommodation are readily available as are management support staff from the Blackheath Area Neighbourhood Centre.

This event is to focus on puppetry in NSW but all puppeteers and associated artists are welcome to attend.

The proposed program for the conference includes

Day 1

- History forum "What's gone before"
- The State of the Art – how NSW puppetry practice compares with national and international practice.
- Producers' Forum for stage and TV – you've got a good show/pilot how and where do you sell it?
- Individual and company presentations – all participants are invited to make a 10 minute presentation of their work through a short performance, a talk or data presentation.

Day 2

- A fun half hour puppetry workshop
- 4 half-hour presentations of puppetry in education, training, community and film & TV
- A 3 hour chaired discussion on Dreams & Visions
- A summary session for action plan and follow-up

Of course, the days are interspersed with food breaks and ample opportunity to talk and connect with each other.

Feedback

Do you want to be involved? Have you got any suggestions for conference topics, speakers etc.? Please contact Sue Wallace 02 9550 6457 or spuppet@ozemail.com.au OR David Collins 02 9560 6486.

Registration Fee: We are looking to keep this fee to a minimum – between \$50 and \$100.

Accommodation in Blackheath: There are many accommodation options in Blackheath including motel, hotel, self contained cottages, camping and billeting.



7th “One Van” International Festival of Puppetry January 22, 23 & 24, 2005

The next festival is shaping up to be a really exciting event with wonderful international and Australian performers including Stephane Georis an Object Theatre artist from Belgium. The program is still in the shaping so if you want to be part of the festival contact me. Send a video of your work or ideas you have for a great puppet workshop for kids or adults.

We are in discussions with photographic artist Constantine Korsorvitis to create an exhibition of his beautiful collection of photos of Asian shadow puppetry.

The festival has also received a grant from Festivals Australia to create *Nature Band*, a roving gang of Fauna and Flora to be designed by Jenny Kee. The very creative Sean Manners will be working with members of the Blackheath community to build the creatures ready to roam the festival.

To be on the festival mailing list send your details to the
Blackheath Area Neighbourhood Centre,
Gardiner Cres, Blackheath NSW 2785
Ph: 02 4787 7770
Fax: 02 4787 7777
Email: banc@lisp.com.au

To contact Sue Wallace
PO Box 520, Petersham NSW 2049
Tel/Fax: 02 9550 6457
Email: spuppet@ozemail.com.au

SEOUL RECOLLECTIONS

The Little Dragon (TLD) is a puppet musical created by LATT Children's Theatre in Seoul, Korea, under the direction of Australian company, REM Theatre's Roger Rynd and his creative team. It is with mixed feelings that I recall my time working as one of the puppeteers on this show for a six-month stint.

TLD is one of a series of performances created as a part of a language acquisition programme for the English language teaching company in Seoul, Unibooks. The play and the theatre the productions were performed in were conceived by a visionary, Unibook's recently deceased, President Park. Mr Park foresaw a place where Korean children would experience fun and practical applications of the studies they were undertaking in English language.

The Little Dragon was in its second season when I joined the LATT team. The cast was comprised of Koreans, Australians and an Englishman. One of Unibooks' goals is for Korean kids to have the opportunity to listen to English used by native speakers, as well as to see and hear fellow Koreans onstage speaking English. TLD uses simple English to tell its story, but the text was only one aspect of the production. It was a show that appealed to its audience's senses. It employed the use of puppetry, song, dance, music, simple acrobatics, audio visual projection, lighting, staging, costume and make-up to create a theatre

experience that was many children's first and I believe that The Little Dragon was a fantastic exercise in audience development.

TLD is a journey tale. It is the story of a newly hatched dragon looking to find "a friend just like me". The Little Dragon is taken through a series of situations by her primary companions, the Dragonflies and meets a number of animals who teach her lessons along the way. She is chased by a villain, 'The Collector', who collects creatures in his great and magical coat. The Little Dragon passes through cave, forest, sea and city to develop into a fire breathing dragon and save an unborn dragon in its egg from the misguided clutches of The Collector. The story ends with the promise that the egg will hatch into the friend The Little Dragon has been looking for along the way.

The puppets in the production were a combination of rod and glove puppets. As puppeteer I performed a number of characters and I was grateful for this structure, for as the season progressed, it meant I could experiment with the development of each of my characters at different times. It was both a treat and a torment to have such a long season for although the repetition seemed interminable at times, it was always heartening, and a little chastening, to sense the moment when audiences seemed to synch into the show and come along for the journey with us.

What did I learn from performing 5 days a week for 6 months? TLD taught me that professionalism is the ability to give each audience the same amount of energy and enthusiasm. This was at times

difficult and I had to remind myself that although I may have performed the show 163 times before, each audience deserved a performance imbued with a vibrant enthusiasm and an orchestrated freshness that comes from the learning of performance craft.

The two seasons of The Little Dragon have given job opportunities to a number of fine Australian puppeteers, including Steve Coupe, Sue Wallace, Melissa King, Sam Routledge, and myself. I feel proud to include myself amongst their names and encourage anyone who is presented with such an experience, to grab it and make the most of that opportunity to develop their craft.

Larissa Deak



Original puppet designs by Choe, Su-Yon for The Little Dragon

PUPPETS IN FIJI

In October 2003, I was invited by the Australian Red Cross to travel to the South Pacific island of Fiji for ten days (13 – 23 November). The aim was to evaluate the work being done in the field of '*puppetry-in-education and development*' in the region. This was to include attending a week-long puppetry workshop, to interview the trainee puppeteers and those involved in initiating and maintaining the programme and to observe a few of their community performances.

My objectives for the trip were to look at the current effectiveness and viability of the Fiji Red Cross Puppetry groups in operation in the region and decide what further training was necessary to enhance their long-term health and social educational puppet programme.

Background

The Fiji Red Cross' puppetry-in-education programme began in 1997. After attending a two-week drama and puppetry training course, held by the Foundation of the People of the South Pacific in Lambasa, Temo Sasau, a volunteer coordinator for the Fiji Red Cross, started a local puppetry-in-education group in Suva. Temo soon conducted puppetry workshops throughout Fiji and the South Pacific region, using the skills he had learnt in this first workshop.

In 2000, the Fijian puppets became "*Puppets for Peace*". This occurred as a result of the coup and racial issues. The puppets promoted

messages of racial harmony, independence and neutrality.

Two years later, a second puppet making workshop was conducted in Nadi (the second largest town in Fiji). This workshop trained youth volunteers from five regional Red Cross Societies. The training included representatives from Cook Islands, Samoa, Vanuatu, Tonga and Fiji. The volunteers were trained in HIV/AIDS awareness and prevention and how to use puppets. The workshop also trained the volunteers in puppet making, script writing and performance skills.

To date the puppetry programmes have included a Marijuana campaign, Phil irises, Dengue Fever, HIV/AIDS, Sexually Transmitted Infections, Disaster Preparedness, blood donor campaigns, many environmental issues and Red Cross promotions in the community. The group have worked through local Government Ministries and NGOs, within Suva and the islands.

During the day the team perform in schools, and in the evening they repeat the performances, with discussions and follow-up in the local community. This allows the parents to see what their children have learnt thus reinforcing these messages.

In the South Pacific region, many communities are illiterate. The medium of puppetry reaches out across these educational barriers and communicates to people using their own language and customs. Thus, it is much easier to pass important social messages across,

without losing the audience in the process.

The Workshop

Our workshop was held at the Fiji Red Cross Suva office from 13 – 23 November 2003. The aim was to expand the puppetry groups in Fiji, to include three rural groups from Labasa, Lautoka and Sigatoka, as well as for those puppeteers already operating at the National branch in Suva.

The workshop was run as an initial training program for Fiji Red Cross volunteers from many of the South Pacific Islands. The volunteers had never had any prior exposure to puppet theatre. Temo, the workshop Coordinator, has previously conducted similar workshops, where he would disseminate his puppetry skills to aspirant volunteer puppeteers.

The first day was chiefly dedicated to guest speakers, who presented facts about different issues, which the puppeteers needed to include in their performances. They presented facts on HIV/AIDS, which has only recently become a national health issue in Fiji; Sexually Transmitted Infections and a talk about Marijuana and other common drugs used on the islands.

In the afternoon the participants were driven to a community centre in Nandera, run by the local church. Here the Suva group performed their "*Marijuana Show*". The crowds gathered under tarpaulins for the church fundraiser in the hot afternoon sun. While the puppeteers

set up their stage, traditional Fiji dancers entertained the crowds. Then came the puppets, performing in Wasa-Vakawiti (*the local language*). The show was hugely enjoyed by adults and children alike and at the end, the stage was swamped by the younger audience.

It is interesting to note that I felt that the new team, who although had never been exposed to puppetry before, had a better theatrical presence.

On Wednesday evening I travelled again with the team. This time to the Naisogowaluvu Community Centre, a rural community on the outskirts of Suva. To get there, we had to carry the heavy sound equipment and puppets down a ravine and over a slippery bridge in the rain at night. The truck could not reach the community centre by road. With just a single torch the group manoeuvred the equipment into the hall. Their was one light bulb to light both the hall and the stage. Never the less, the new workshop group and the already-established Suva team performed their Marijuana shows respectively. They were warmly received by the audience and after the shows we were all invited to join the community elders in a 'kava' (local grog) ceremony.

Each day was dedicated to writing new scenarios and developing their performance skills. I was asked to discuss my experiences in educational puppetry; about the success of *Puppets Against Aids* internationally and about my work

with similar issues in prisons in South Africa.

On Thursday evening we travelled to the Muanikau Community Centre, just outside Suva. Both groups, once again, performed their shows. The Police Chief welcomed the performers and audience and gave some valuable feedback to the puppeteers after the show. The feedback obtained from the audiences has been invaluable in helping them adapt their scripts and performances to the target audiences.

The four groups now spent much time rehearsing for the all important Friday performance. We were informed that various dignitaries and some of the local funders had been invited to attend.

The final performance to the British High Commissioner and others was warmly received. This was followed by a warm response, speeches and tea. The British High Commissioner, Mr Charles Mochan presented a most interesting talk on the roots of puppetry and of course, how Punch and Judy played such an important part in British history.

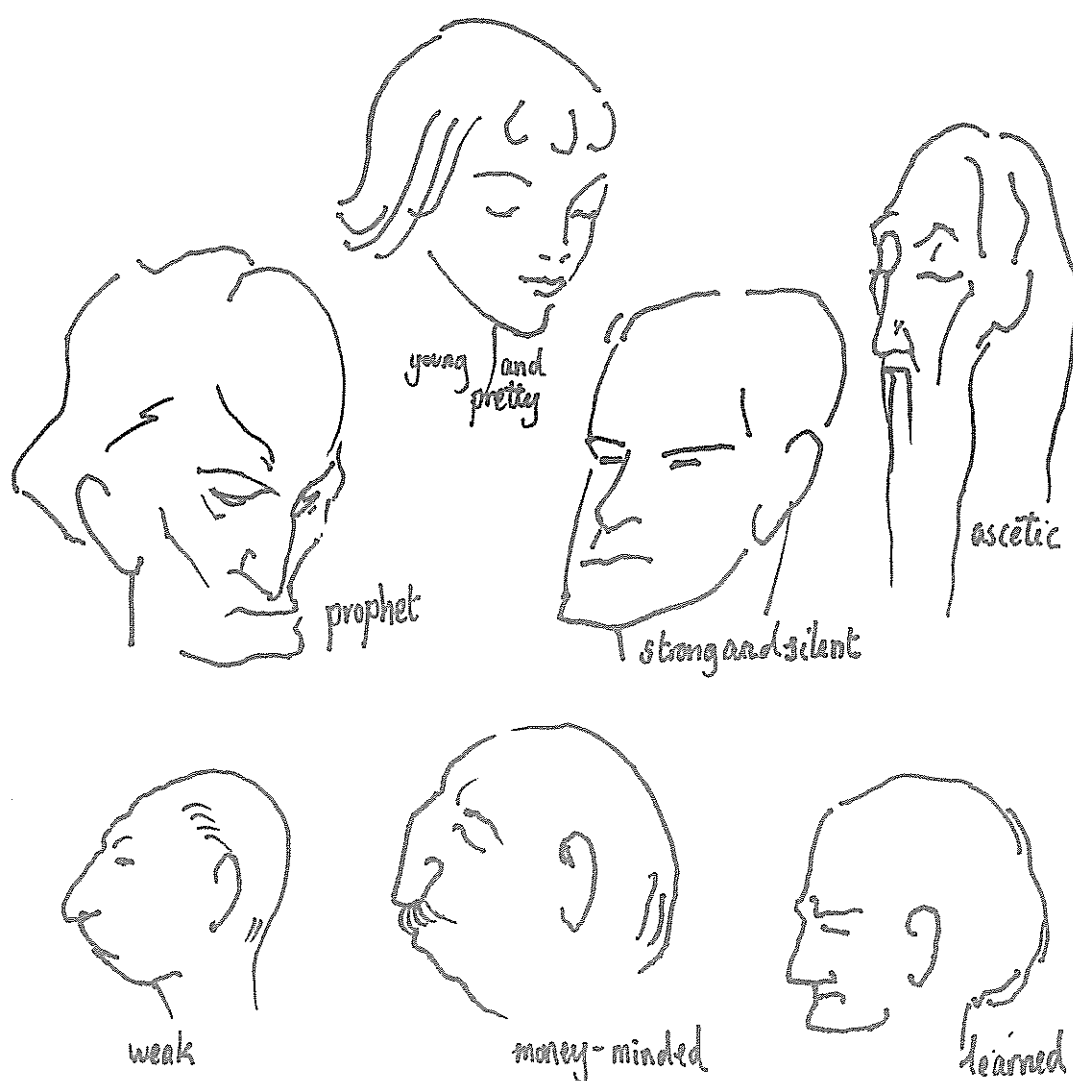
Although the participants were taught how to make and perform with simple mouth puppets, they were never previously given a grounding in puppetry or shown how to manipulate this specific style of puppet.

Temo, who is the only puppetry trainer in Fiji, has never undergone a basic training course in puppetry or

theatre. Rather he has learnt everything he knows *"just by doing it"*. Although he doesn't know much about theatre, he certainly has the enthusiasm to learn from others' experiences and is devoted to puppetry as a powerful medium to convey messages across to the communities throughout the region. He is to be congratulated for his significant achievements.

We now wait further funding to enable the continuation of follow-up training for the extremely valuable work being carried out by the Red Cross in the South Pacific.

Gary Friedman
February 2004
www.africanpuppet.com



"Facial Characteristics" from 'Masks & Puppets',
D.S.Green (c.1940)

LETTER FROM THE UK WHATEVER HAPPENED TO TELLY?

While I was at drama school in the 70's, I made the decision that I didn't want to spend my entire life out of work. It would surely be sensible to specialize in something that not many actors did, so I decided to be a puppeteer. I have always enjoyed the idea that as a puppeteer you can never be typecast, as long as you can come up with a range of good voices for the character you might be asked to play, I have also always believed that puppets are capable of great dramatic strength.

I was lucky enough to be one of the first in my year to get a job: it was with a touring children's theatre company that performed with puppets. This was invaluable training of the kind that a drama school doesn't give you. The audiences were – as audiences of children always are – completely honest. The scripts were good, and I met people who were kind and helpful, and who taught me a lot.

Then, because someone mentioned me to someone else, I got onto a list, and began to work on bits and pieces of TV, which I found I liked very much, and in the early 1980's I landed a job on an important BBC-schools' television series, which employed me for the next eleven years, and gave me the confidence to pick and choose what I did. The standards required of performers were very high,

largely because we broke new ground in the subjects we dealt with. The pinnacle was reached with a number of programmes that dealt with child abuse. Again, the scripts were good. Some of them were excellent. They demanded proper acting ability, and as a performer, they made you think.

I suppose I got spoilt, and have always judged what I worked on by the quality of the writing. I believe that one of the joys of performing – be it on stage or screen or someone's sitting room – is having a good script to work with, and to bring it alive, both physically and vocally. We need good scripts. Now and more than ever before. A good script is worth its weight in gold. It may seem obvious, but every production – theatre, television or film – should start with the script. (Too often, this is something left rather a long way down the list.)

Unfortunately, in children's television, a good script is rare, and it's getting rarer. The trouble is that everything is now so completely SAFE. And cheap. Few executives want to take risks anymore. They do not want to spend any money, either. Until recently, exciting projects were in production for children, on both the BBC and the Independent Television networks. Drama featured heavily in the schedules – drama in the form of adaptations, and also original commissioned scripts with a strong narrative and strong characters. Some of it involved puppets or animatronics to great effect. It cost money, and for the most part the money was well spent; it was then recouped by the sales of the programme, and its repeats.

Television was there to stimulate and to be thought about, and producers of children's programmes understood their craft, and were largely devoted to it.

Drama for children has now all but disappeared. We have Telly-tubby disease: quantity over content. Make as many programmes as you can in one go, so that you never have to make any more; and make it all very colourful, because the only things kiddies understand are primary colours; make your script as simplistic as you possibly can, and add some tinkly music and some really silly burbling 'voices' so that nobody has to actually think about anything.

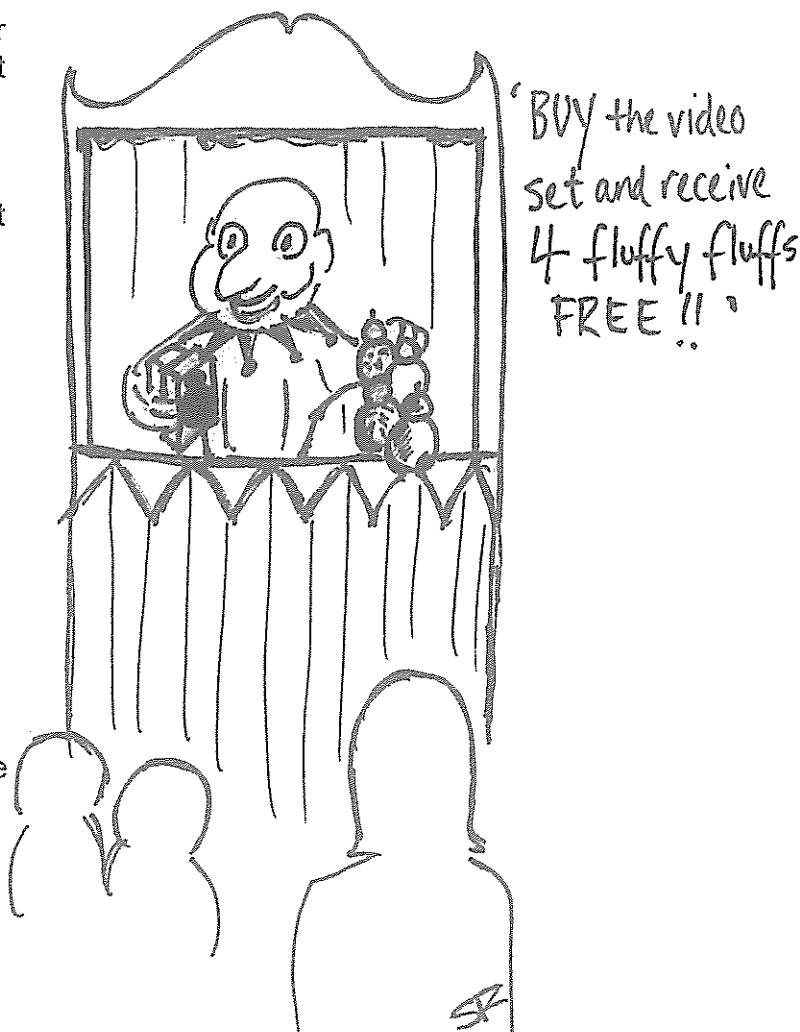
Banish any suggestion of drama or CONFLICT! After all, children must never be allowed to come to terms with anything called the real world. Make kids' telly completely and utterly banal, and above all make it SAFE. AND THEN fight off the opposition by spouting on about how much research you've done, and suddenly, hey presto, you have set a new trend in programming, and your pile of rubbish becomes the yardstick by which all other projects are measured. Weird!

BUT – as long as the toys in the shop are selling, that is all that matters. Of course, merchandising now plays such a huge part in any production that it takes precedence over the content of the programmes. A collection of fluffy toys that will look good as toys MUST without doubt be fantastic viewing, so let's get someone in to give them something to say, and nobody will notice if the script is

dreadful. The kiddies will LOVE the whole package.

We have a responsibility as performers to try – diplomatically of course! – to drag things up from the depths to which they've now sunk, because if we don't, then high quality television for children is lost for ever. And when that happens, we are out of a job.

Francis Wright, June 2004



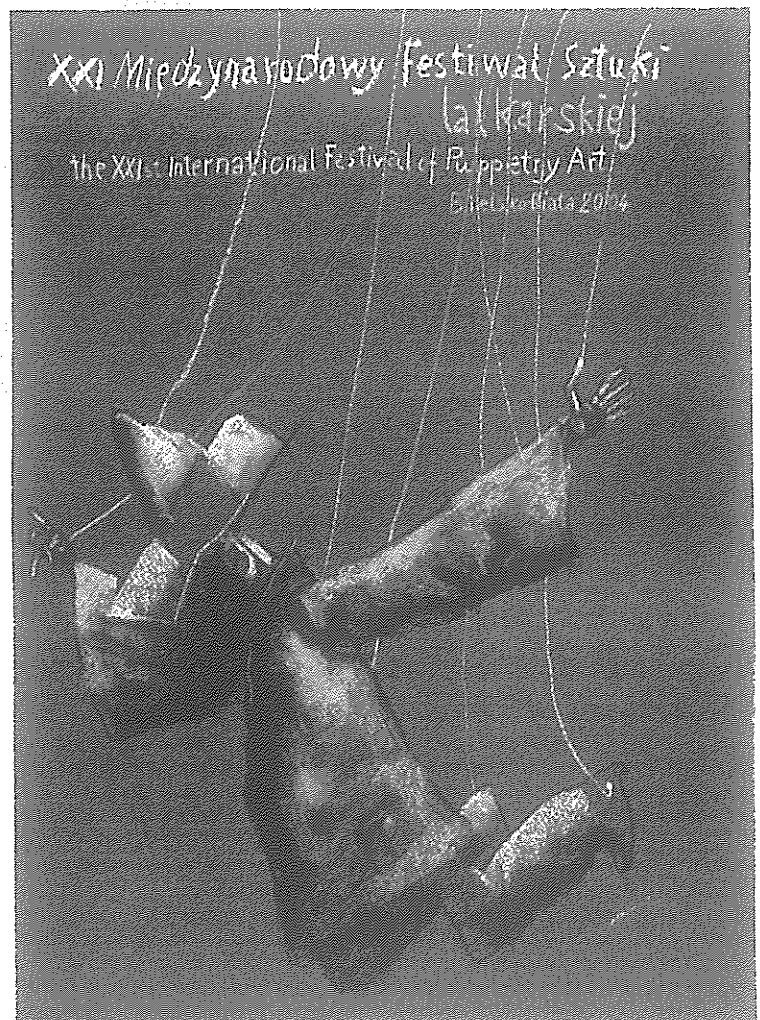
LETTER FROM POLAND
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BIELSKO – BIALA, POLAND
1-5 MAY, 2004

The International Festival of Puppetry Art is the most prominent puppetry event in Poland. It also enjoys considerable renown in Europe and all over the world as a true holiday of the puppet theatre. Organized as a biennale, it has an almost 40 years-long tradition. The festival was inaugurated in 1966 by Jerzy Zitzman, a celebrated director and stage designer, founder and long-term director of the Baniatuka Puppet Theatre in Bielsko-Biala. For many years, and especially during the iron curtain days, the festival was a meeting place of the East and the West, a confrontation between the European puppet theatre and its world counterpart, as well as a specific university of the art of puppetry - not only for Polish puppeteers.

Bielsko has always been the site of encounter between traditional theatres and the most avant-garde accomplishments of the contemporary theatres engaged in an artistic quest. Here, puppeteers from many countries could for the first time see theatres protecting and cultivating national traditions, such as the Vietnamese water theatre, the Sicilian marionettes of the Napoli brothers, the ritual theatre from Togo, the original Punch theatre, the Greek shadow theatre etc. During the course of years the guests included

were all the famous artists who today are involved in creating the history of the world puppet theatre, including Albrecht Roser, Roman Paska, Eric Bass, Joan Baixas, Henk Boerwinkel, Josef Krofta with his famous Drak Theatre, as well as Peter Schumann with his legendary Bread and Puppet Theater, and many, many others.

This year's festival, under the artistic direction of Lucyna Kozie, tried to represent the puppet theatre in its broadest spectrum, answer the question what is puppetry and what it could become; the same holds true for the nature of its inseparable attribute - the puppet. 26 performances were given by 22 theatres from 16 countries: Austria, Germany, Russia, Lithuania, Great Britain, Slovakia, Belgium, Czech Republic, Belarus, Hungary, Netherlands, Japan, Italy, Spain, Israel and Poland.



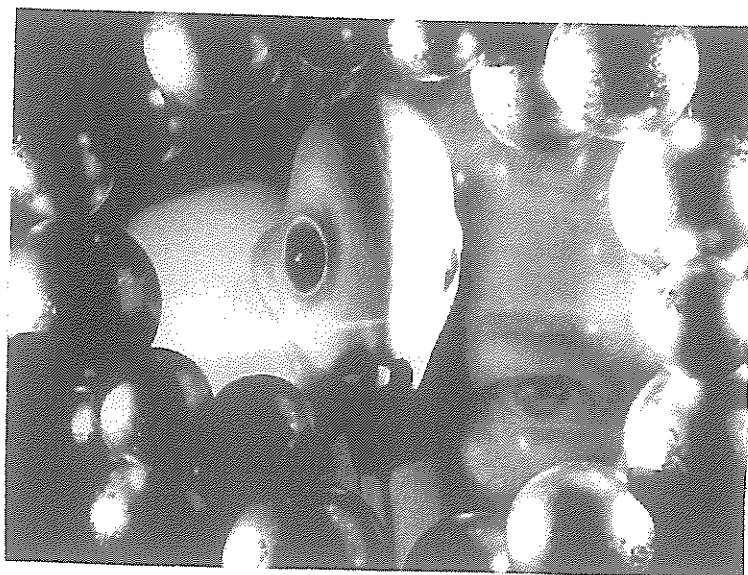
The shows presented in Bielsko were addressed both to children and adult spectators. They were staged in various theatrical conventions: performances referring to traditional puppetry techniques (e.g. *Circoluna* by the world famous shadow theatre Teatro Gioco Vita from Italy, or the marionette performance *Organillo* by Stephen Mottram from Great Britain), shows connecting traditional and modern techniques (e.g. *Yume no Utsutsu*, *Utsutsu no Yume* by the Dondoro Theatre from Japan, highly interesting both in its content and form) as well as theatres seeking new means of theatrical expression - representing the avant-garde current in the art of puppetry (e.g. the dance theatre meets audiovisual art performance *D.A.V.E. – digital amplified video engine* by Klaus Obermaier and Chris Haring from Austria or *À rebours* – the theatre of electrostatic shadows by Tadeusz Wierzbicki from Poland).

We enjoyed performances by celebrities of world puppetry such as: Josef Krofta, Michael Vogel, Fabrizio Montecchi, Marián Pecko, Stephen Mottram, Hoichi Okamoto. Apart from featuring the accomplishments of the unquestionable masters of the puppetry art, the festival's organizers also tried to promote younger talents, companies still searching for novel means of expression (great recognition was enjoyed by the performance of the young Russian company Potudan from St. Petersburg and its *Potudan* show). Other presentations included the outcome of the work by graduates of the Polish puppetry schools in Wroc_aw and Bia_ystok. The festival also included open-air performances, exhibitions, discussions and meetings with artists.

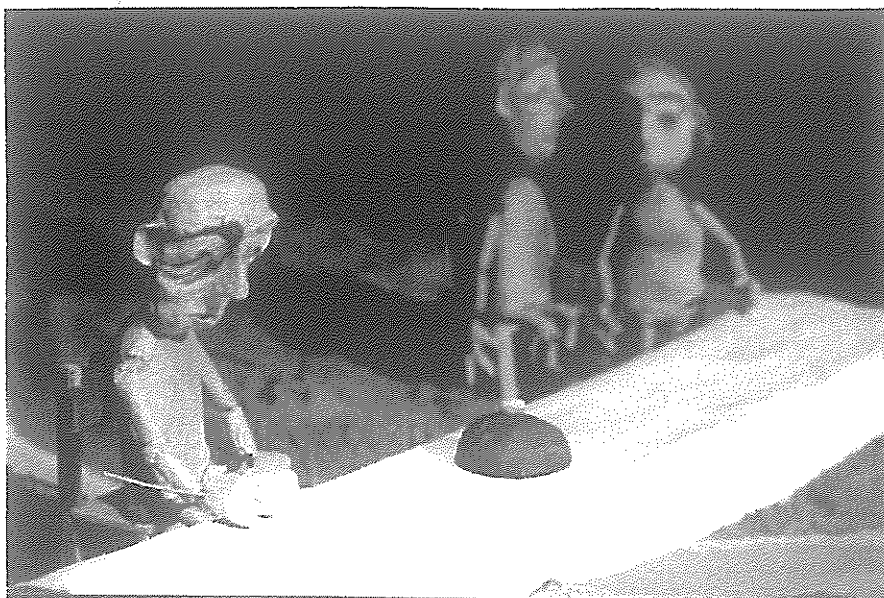
The festival was conceived as a competition. For the first time, in addition to the Grand Prix (the professional jury award), other prizes encompassed the Young Critics Award and the Children's Jury Award. The Young Critics Award, (received by the abovementioned Potudan company), was presented by students of theatre studies from 7 university centres. Thanks to the invitation to Bielsko, the majority of them had the first opportunity to encounter the puppetry phenomenon, especially the puppet theatre intended for adults. Let us hope that they will continue to develop this new interest and share it with their peers. An identical verdict of the professional and children's juries (for *The Steadfast Tin Soldier* performance by Das Maininger Puppentheater from Germany) proved that good theatre is universal, regardless whether it is addressed to a child spectator or an adult.

Zuzanna Glowacka
June 2004

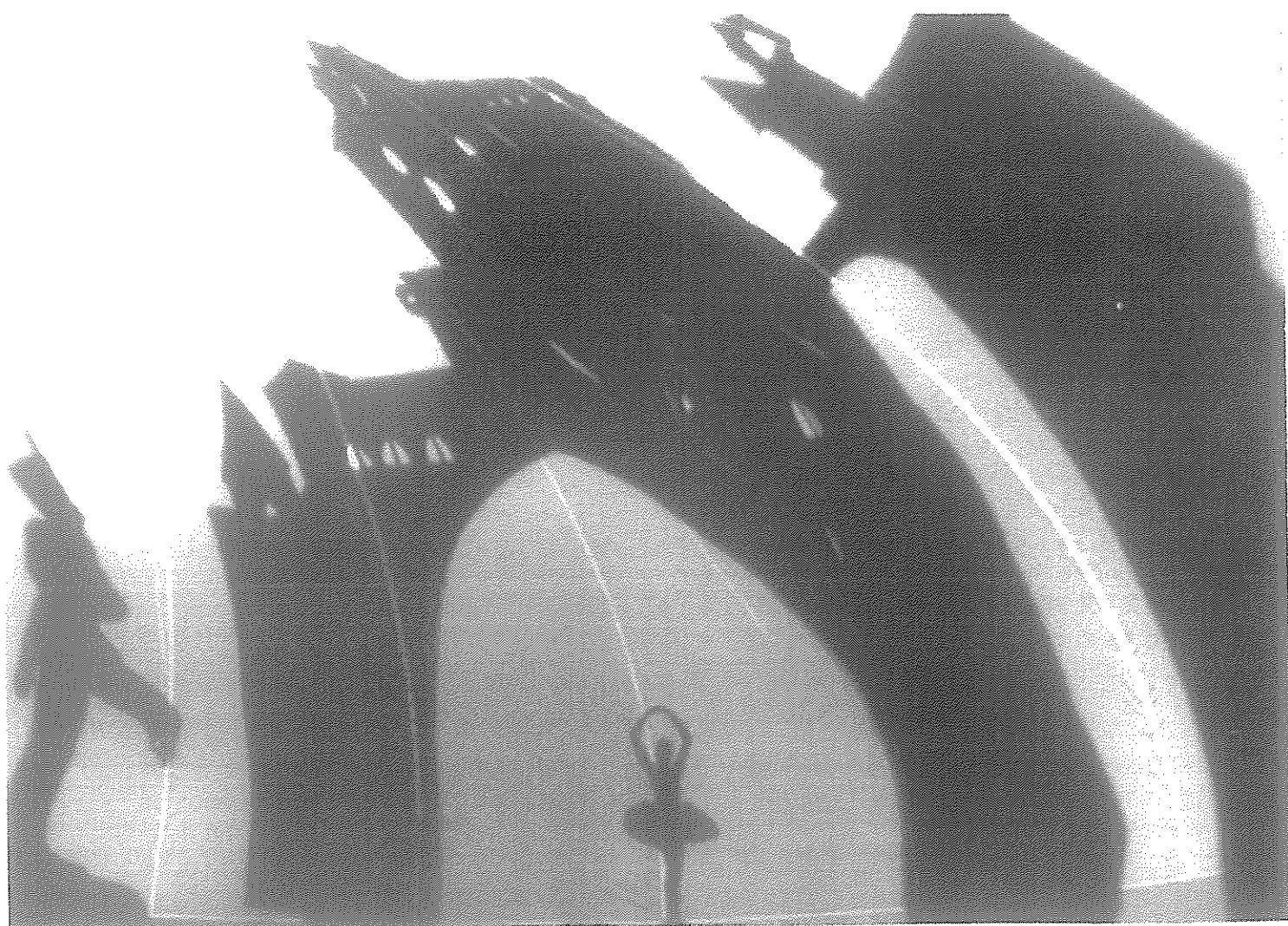
International Festival of Puppetry Art
The Banialuka Puppet Theatre
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Biala, Poland
www.banialuka.pl



ORGANILLO



POTUDAN



THE STEADFAST TIN SOLDIER

SHADOW PUPPETRY, ISLAM, AND RECENT RESPONSES TO THE BALI BOMB

(This is the last half of an article published in "The Puppetry Journal" of the Puppeteers of America. It is republished with permission of the author and the magazine. Since I Made Sida will be in Australia, I believe, in September, this article will be of great interest to Australian puppeteers. - Lorrie Gardner)

..... It seems today the whole world at present is on a trajectory defining religious borders. I see it daily in our American papers since 9/11. I saw it in Java in response to the war in Iraq. I saw it in Bali after the bomb. It prevails in Northern India dividing Hindu and Muslim. The terrifying thing about terrorism and responses to it is the practice of demonising the other to push apart groups that have coexisted peacefully.

Puppeteers in the time of terror

So what is a puppeteer to do in a time of terror? I will speak briefly of an innovation called Wayang Dasananur Kerta (the Wayang [Shadow Puppetry] of Ten Essential Things), which was created in response to the Bali bomb by puppeteers from STSI the Indonesian College of Arts in Denpasar, Bali. While the artists who created the work are Balinese Hindus, it is a piece that they have been presenting throughout Indonesia to audiences of Hindus, Muslims, and Christians. It is a performance in the best tradition of wayang, combining modern techniques, indigenous thought, and a sensitivity that

diffuses animosities. The story effectively calmed tensions that simmered between Hindus and Muslims on the island in the wake of the attack by Javanese Muslims against Western tourists and Balinese.

January 4th 2003 in Kuta, Bali, in the exact place where a bomb killed hundreds of people when the Sari Club disco was blown up by Islamic fundamentalist linked to the Al Qaeda network on October 12, 2002, a performance by Sanggar Paripurna Bonasari Gianyar (Paripurna Bonasari Company of Gianyar) was given. A recording was played on TV on January 9, 2003 and was followed by interactive dialogue between the audience (calling from home) and the main puppeteer (dalang) I Made Sida. Many other performances have followed in both Islamic Java and Hindu Bali, including touring to local schools to address post-traumatic stress caused by terrorism. The intention of the performance was to release inhabitants of Kuta, Bali, and Indonesia from the psychic damage of the blast and to restore a sense of harmonious well being. While the performance was theatrically innovative and technologically experimental, it rose from a traditional root of Indonesian theatre that is found in both Islamic and Hindu areas. Wayang's exorcistic potential merged with modern artistic innovation to heal a shattered world.

Directed and narrated by Dalang I Made I Made Sida and electronically arranged by Dewa Darmawan, the performance used LCD, video, and electric lighting borrowed from Larry Reed's Shadowlight Theatre and showed innovations resulting from Sida's previous international work with Dalang Sri Djoko (Java), Kent Devereaux (U.S.A.), Nigel Jamieson (England), and Paul Grbowsky (Australia). The group took its name from a tenfold division of the cosmos that Dalang Sida, the father and teacher of I Made Sida, theorises as dasamana kerta, the ten elements that cause harmonious prosperity. These

include earth, air, water, fire., plants, trees, fish, animals, men, and the divine-all of which must coexist in harmony. The core idea of the presentation was that the world is out of kilter, ecologically and socially, and its time we humans put it back in order.

The episode took a traditional story of how the God Siwa (Shiva), having cursed his wife Parwati to live as a demoness is consumed by sexual longing for her. He transforms into the terrible demon and his coitus with her results in multitudes of demons that carry pestilence throughout the world. This causes the god Iswara to descend to earth to play what becomes the first performance of wayang kulit shadow theatre. Watching the puppetmaster, Siwa and Parwati see how they have forgotten their origin and let the deadly outweigh the divine. As they see who they really are, the demon/gods stop their ravages, pestilence vanishes, and human welfare is restored. Music, dance, beauty, and balance are the cure for a world in chaos. The concentration of energy that January night in Kuta was palpable to those who watched and felt that healing was taking place through the performance.

This wayang presentation involved twenty musicians and four puppet manipulators who sat on a movable skate board as they moved around behind the large shadow screen. Traditional puppets and new larger size ones were included. Animals were realistic in movement, modelled on innovative dalang I Wayang Wija's puppet making. The demonic spirits were featured at the beginning of the show and usurped human bodies, so terrorism was born. Soon conflict was everywhere. People fought with each other, no care for the environment or animals was shown, and fires flamed. Pollution was rampant both psychically and physically. This was the Sidia's picture of Bali where environmental exploitation of the land, religious

sectarianism, and economic devastation of the bomb have caused enormous impact.

The fallout of the bomb was presented. Orphans of workers at the Kuta club sought their parents. An old woman looked through the rubble for her son who had been a security guard. The gossip and bickering of leaders and groups pointing fingers at each other was portrayed.

I Made Sidia as narrator played out that demonic and divisive energy - showing it to be a misuse of the life we share. The message was clear: when we understand who we really are, we will not allow evil to dominate our actions, but care for all the elements, creatures, and for each other. The play restored balance via art, ecology and understanding. The play did not target Muslims, seeing them as much victims of a wider social and political disorder, just as were the primarily Hindu victims of the bomb. A holistic solution was demanded.

The history of world shadow puppetry is about cultural melding and sharing. It has roots that are Buddhist, and Hindu, and Islamic. It was imported from Asia and the Middle East to Europe and has become a significant area of innovation. As I watched Wayang Dasnama Kerta, I felt hopeful in a time of terrorism and war. As members of UNIMA, I hope we can join hands with our fellow puppeteers - Islamic, Christian, Hindu and atheist - realizing that the demons we are fighting are not each other. We fight ways of thinking that do not allow for difference, that maintain that there is only one way, that others are demons and god is on one side.

I Made Sidia used a traditional puppet narrative to point out that the good, the beautiful, the divine is latent in each, just as are the will to war and power to defile. This performance showed there is a power in the world that is encouraging us to favour our demonic potential and puppetry

can be a force to exorcise the violence. Rather than turning to war or religious animosity in the aftermath of a devastating act of terrorism, I Made Sidia turns us to puppetry, music and dance as forces for making the world safer for puppets and people, creating a model for how art can mend our fragmented world.

Kathy Foley

(Kathy Foley is a member of the UNIMA-USA Board and a Professor of Theatre Arts at the University of California – Santa Cruz)

SCHLOCK TREATMENT

I teach puppet making at the Design Centre, Enmore TAFE. My mission for term 1, 2004 was teaching puppet making to second-year Events & Entertainment Design students at The TAFE Sydney Institute, Design Centre, Enmore. Their mission: to make puppets for their performance of Schlock Opera at the Enmore theatre on 4th & 5th May.

Schlock Opera? A live performance on stage at the Enmore Theatre showcasing the works of first - and second – year students of this course and Design Fundamentals students. The students were responsible for designing and making the set, costumes, puppets and props plus staging, lighting, sound, audio-visual, media, marketing, graphics, stage production & event management. My objective: to inspire; to teach puppet making; to share information; to generate creative approaches; and to help bring the designs of my students to life in the form of puppets. 10 weeks, 36 students (2 groups of 18), 90 minutes per week for

each group...so many designs, so many students, and so little time.

So, my students had never made puppets before and with a lot of ground to cover my initial objective was to inspire. The first couple of classes involved talking & discussion, showing examples of some puppets, covering the basics, doing some exercises and showing a fab video on contemporary Puppet Theatre in America called *Puppetry: Worlds of Imagination*-featuring the works of Basil Twist, Ralph Lee, Michael Curry, Janie Geiser and the Henson International Festival of Puppet Theatre. This proved to be a really inspiring video and a great way to start the course and get the creative juices flowing. I also got a buzz when I saw myself in this video (although no one else could see me) in one of Ralph Lee's puppets at the opening ceremony of the Henson International Festival of Puppet Theatre in New York, 2000.

During these first few weeks I was conjuring and devising how on earth I would get around to all the students in each class when it came to advising them on their particular puppets, and each week provided a new challenge. My students were working on their designs with their first-year groups who were designing the costumes for the show. This required flexibility (a lot of this) and consistency in the style and appearance of each group as a whole. The styles of puppets they were designing were broad indeed- rod puppets, body puppets, body-mounted puppets, puppets with harnesses and combinations and variations of these. There were 13 of these groups whose design guidelines involved juxtaposing an aria from a popular opera with a 20th century theme, and using particular colour schemes and fabrics plus a design element (a word).

Once they had worked out what type of puppet they were going to make, I decided to group the students according to "types of puppet", perhaps 4-6 per group. Each of these groups would listen as I went around the table to answer questions and give ideas and direction. This way they could learn about problems other students needed to solve, and maybe solve their own at the same time (hopefully giving me more time to move around the groups). Some of the students made their puppets in pairs, and this worked well for them as well as for me.

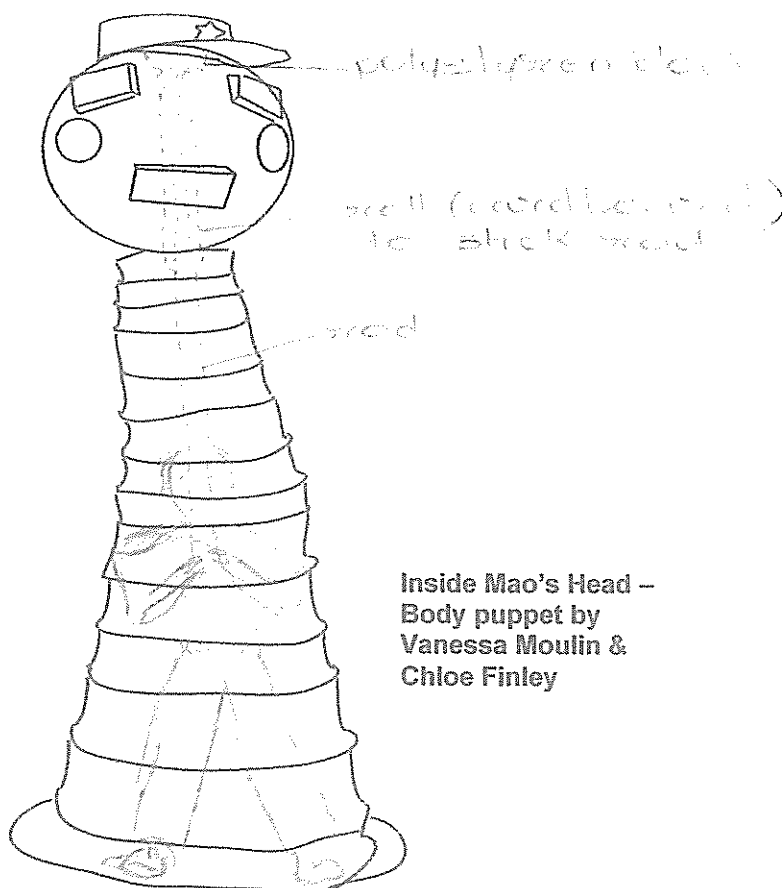
That system worked for a couple of weeks, but as the student's designs evolved and changed to fit in with their "opera" groups, it became necessary to consult with them individually, which was more of an intense and condensed powwow advice giving session. I discovered the very informative website of The Puppeteers Cooperative, and as most of their designs were large-scale puppets, the students found this site helpful.

Constantly thinking on my feet and honing all my knowledge to give the best advice possible in such a condensed time certainly proved to be a challenge. I gave each student homework to provide me with drawings of their puppet in relation to the operator(s), diagrams of the skeleton of their puppet showing the materials they intended to use (and how), plus a further drawing indicating the fabrications they intended to use. This helped them to think out their building processes and although it meant more work for me, with so many students, it helped me to become familiar with their designs and progress and eventually put a face to a name (and a puppet design). One session was dedicated to critiquing their small-scale prototypes before moving on to making their puppet.

It was a bit of a crazy time for the students- keeping up with all their classes and preparations for their big show, and for me...keeping up with so many students and so many puppet designs.

When it came to technical rehearsals for the show, there were still a few stitches being sewn and some last minute painting and gluing and the like. Rehearsals had been going on at College leading up to bump in and dress rehearsals at the theatre, and with such a tight schedule, along came the "Lights! Camera! Action!". The students put on a great show, and made a collection of very interesting, clever and dynamic puppets. I am continuing to learn and grow through the challenges and rewards of teaching puppet making.

Lainie Cann



Inside Mao's Head –
Body puppet by
Vanessa Moulin &
Chloe Finley

DREAMWEAVER PROJECT

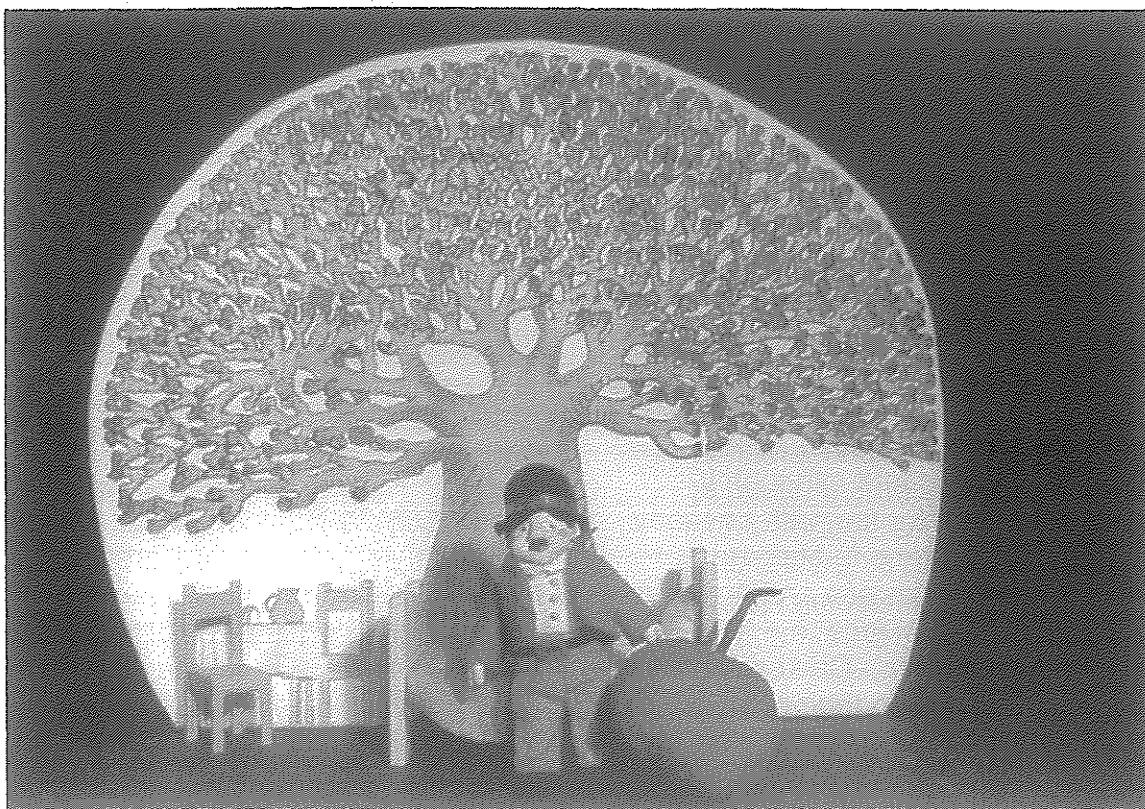
For the past 15 months, Janice Edwards and Sue & Steve from the Sydney Puppet Theatre have been working separately on a wonderful (if time consuming) project for a group of Western Sydney Libraries. The Dreamweaver Project is the creation of a series of storytelling kits based on children's picture books. The children's librarians will use them as part of their story time to encourage young children to read. Each kit is a one-off, a little puppet show or felt board creation that best interprets these picture books.

Eight kits have been completed and we are about half way through. The project will be launched on June 21 along with the launch of a new book from Libby Gleeson.

These *shows* need to be quite small, designed for tabletop or felt board on easel style. They need to be sturdy as they will be used by librarians for at least 10 years. It is also important to design and create each kit with the end user in mind. The librarians are not puppeteers so the characters have to be novice friendly.

Janice created a series of kits 10 years ago. Obviously impressed with their lasting use CLAWS (Children's Librarian Alliance Western Sydney) received a grant to create a new batch. We have also created a training video which demonstrates each kit in action and shows other essential information needed to set the kits up. The filming of all 8 kits was done in one day with 3 hours out in the afternoon to demonstrate/perform the kits to about 50 librarians and answering their questions. Peter Oldham has done an amazing job as videographer capturing the demonstrations and editing the footage.

Sue Wallace



Mr McGee' by Pamela Allen
Interpreted/built by Sue Wallace

PROFILE

NAME: Scott Wright

TITLE: Artistic Director, EARTH Visual and Physical Incorporated

Interviewed by Samantha Ferris

SF: Which part of your work do you see as directly related to puppetry?

SW: I think all our work relates to puppetry - from concepts to design to construction to performance. There are so many broad spectrums of puppetry. The work that we make is purely visually driven, it is based on often abstract figures that are powered by people.

SF: Does that mean less character driven?

SW: No, every image has its character but conceptually I would say that individuals don't claim so much of a position. But that can change and EARTH evolves...

SF: What about the size thing - do you make large figures because that is what you have become/are known for?

SW: The size thing relates to a desire to work outdoors and that has been there since the beginning [15 years ago].

SF: The outdoors is your stage... **SW:** yeah...

SF: How about your role in the company.

SW: I'm called the Artistic Director but in a lot of ways I play the role of a catalyst and a problem solver. Which means I have less time to play with materials, and we all started out as makers.

SF: Do you get excited by new materials and new ways of doing things?

SW: Oh yeah, that's a big part of it, it's like a new toy - like an upgrade on your DVD. And that tends to happen every 6 months or so. A new product comes along and we like to experiment. Having said that, we are really into papier mache at the moment..

SF: Have you been to see recently a really good show involving puppetry?

What's your definition of an excellent performance?

SW: Yes, Red Tree in Queensland and the VCA students' performance in Melbourne. I want to see performance that makes me cry...and in Red Tree they got me a couple of times. I'll cry at a really beautiful image, from sheer joy at seeing an image that resonates with me. I'm also a bit of a fan of 'accidents are meant to happen' and I like to see those happy coincidences in performance.

SF: And that happens in puppetry...

SW: Yes, that marvellous thing in puppetry when you think that you know a character really well and then by just the slightest turn of the head, or a lighting mistake, everything can change and you see something else. You can allow these things to happen. I'm a big lover of the beautiful accident.

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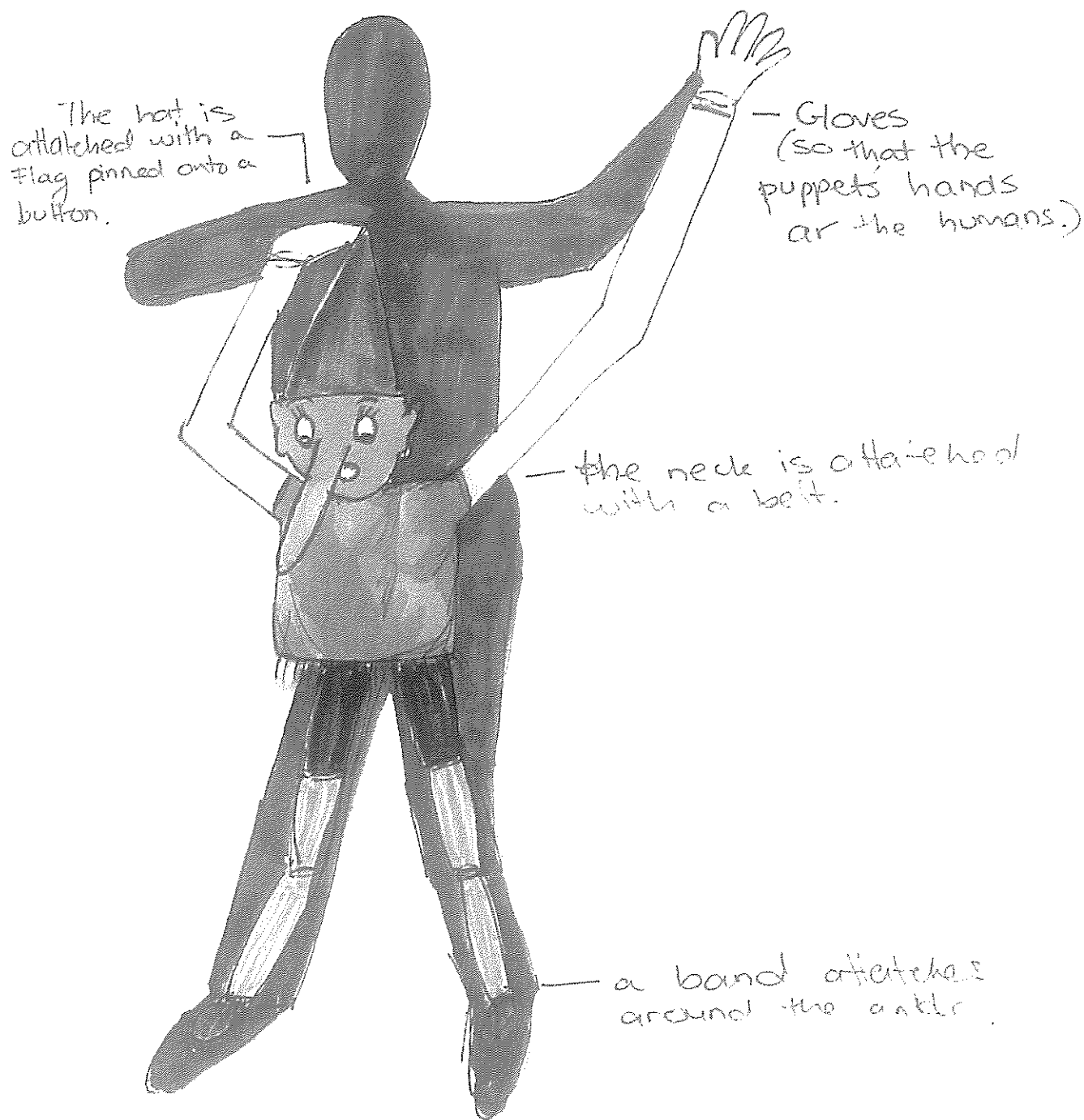
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DEADLINE for submissions to Spring edition:
September 10

Peeping Tom



Peeping Tom - mounted puppet
by Nicole Levenston
see page 26

Body/Rod Puppet.

