

AUSTRALIAN PUPPETEER

Spring 1999

☆ **Under the set at Farscape**

☆ **Black Hole profile**

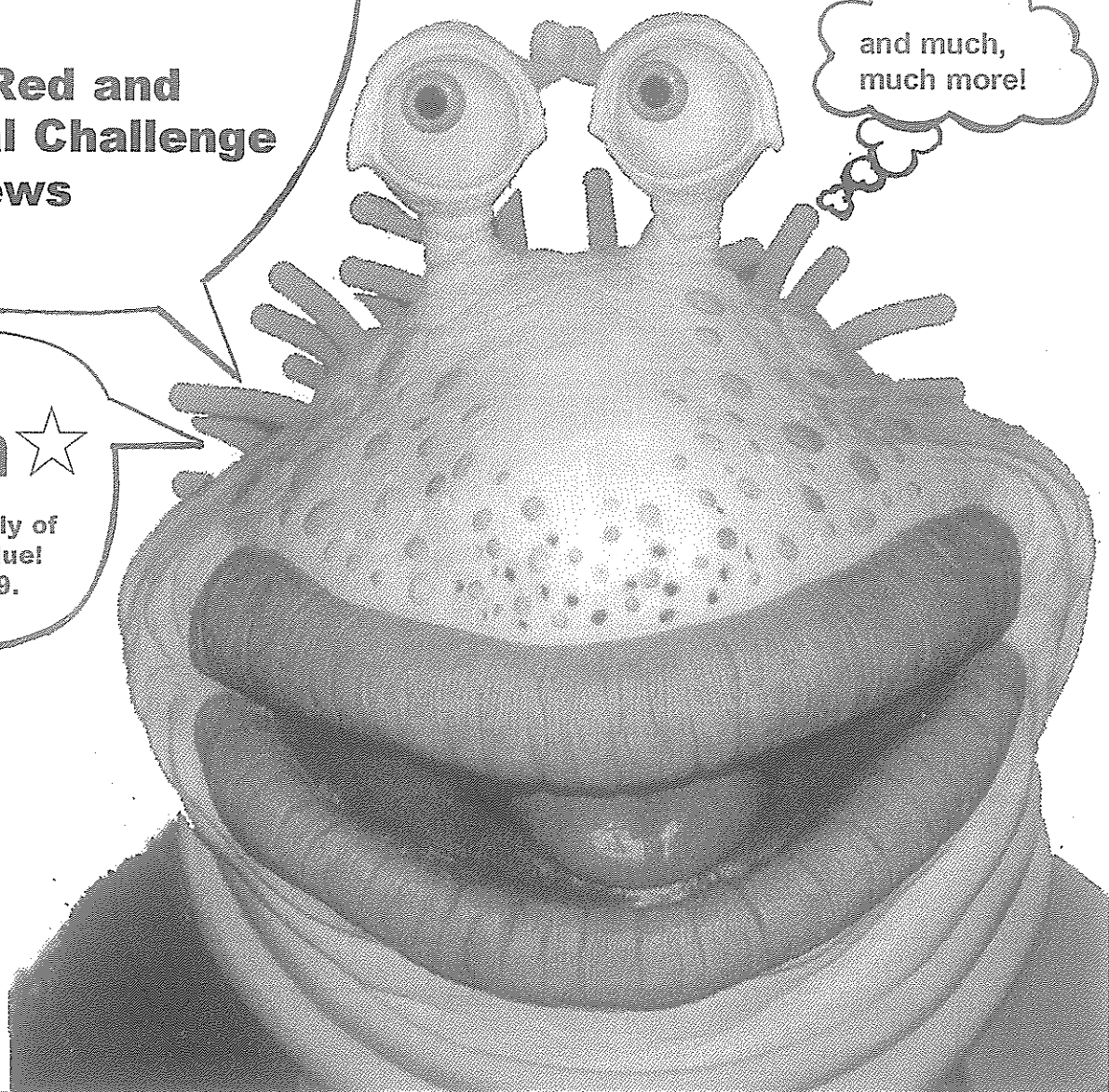
☆ **Build a Curlew**

☆ **Little Red and
Vertical Challenge
reviews**

and much,
much more!

☆ **Win** ☆

a week's supply of
Glitter Hot Glue!
See page 29.



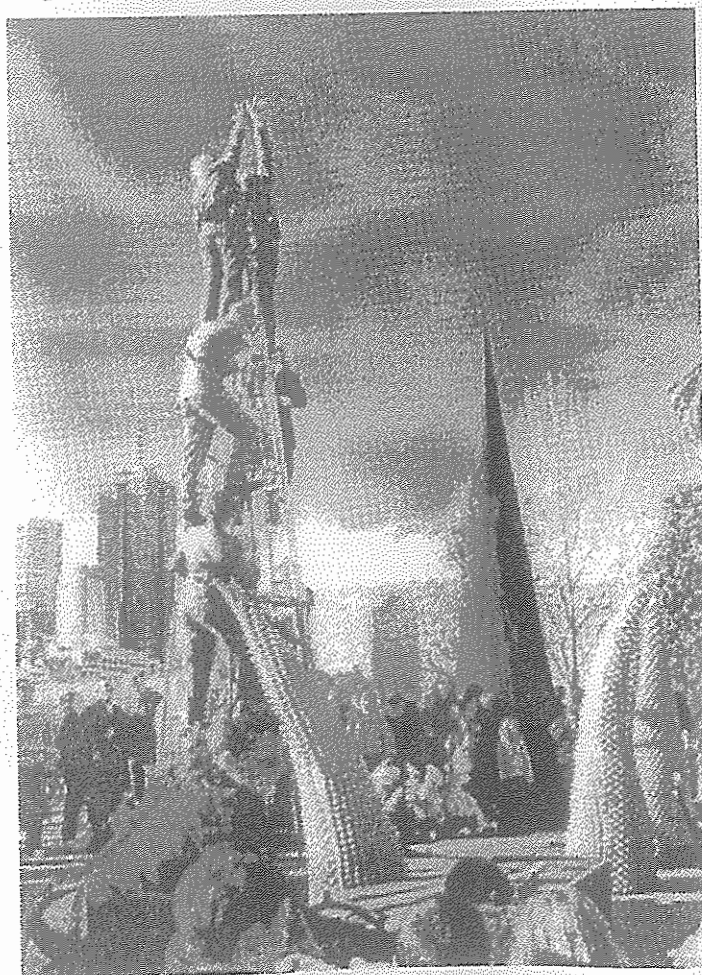


Sarah Kriegler, Paul Sladdin, Gilly McInnes, Mischa Long and Bruce Paterson at Polyglot's 21st

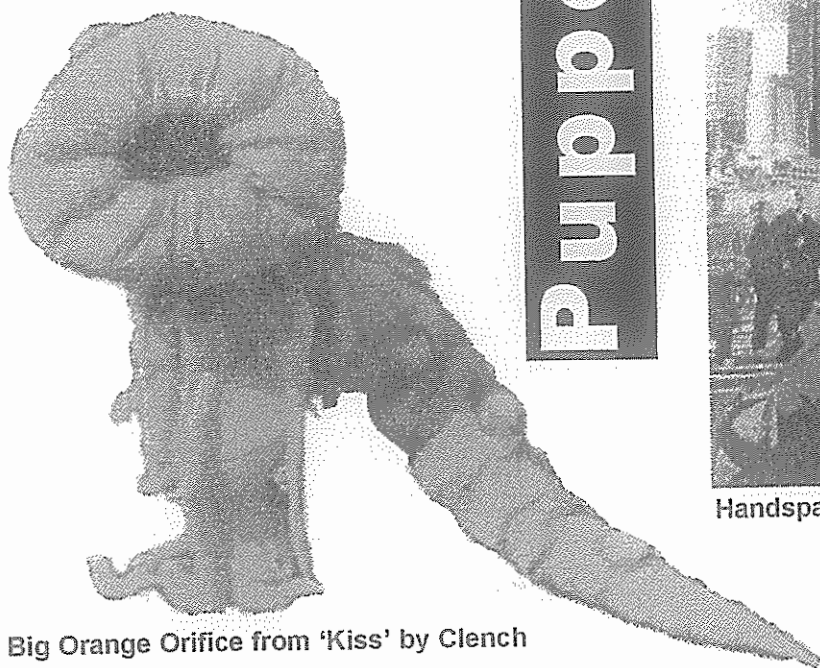


Puppetry writers at Polyglot's 21st;
Sue Giles and Richard Tulloch.

Puppetrazzi



Handspan's Cones project



Big Orange Orifice from 'Kiss' by Clench

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

The Magazine of UNIMA Australia ♦ SPRING 1999

Editorial

This has been "the steep learning curve we had to have" to paraphrase another PM. My admiration for the efforts of previous editors has increased in leaps and bounds as I've slowly assembled this issue. Many thanks to Anita for her excellent work nurturing and expanding the magazine over the last two years. Also thanks to my indefatigable assistant, the wonderful Victoria. I've made a few format changes and I'd be deeply grateful for any and all feedback on the look and content of the magazine. Let's continue to expand our readership, to reach professional puppeteers, enthusiastic amateurs and all supporters of the artform.

Please continue to send in material for the magazine in whatever form, electronically, snail mail, scrawled in crayon, whatever. I will attempt to emphasise the positive while still providing a forum for debate on issues of interest to Puppetry.

A key change in this issue is the increase in space devoted to advertising. In order to print at a higher quality we need to increase our subscriber base and/or increase revenue for the magazine. Please seek out and enlist new subscribers and encourage potential advertisers. Please note the new address for contributions, PO Box 208, Elsternwick VIC 3185. The new post office box will mean fewer folded and rained on photos I hope. I look forward to compiling a huge and comprehensive bumper 2000 issue to welcome the New Year. See you in Summer.

Philip Miller

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L e t t e r s

Dear Australian Puppeteer,

I put in an application to the Winston Churchill Memorial Trust on a bit of a whim. During February this year I met Paula (the Argentine puppeteer featured in the last issue of Australian Puppeteer). Over cups of tea and Mate - a strange Argentine herbal drink drunk as a symbol of friendship - she told me about her three years puppet training at Escuela de Titiriteros de Teatro General San Martin. The more she talked, the more I wriggled with jealousy. She pulled out of her backpack a wonderful hand and rod puppet and began to perform. I was impressed by her confidence and ability.

"At my school" she said "we learn to put our souls into our hands." With that phrase I was sold and determined to get there - somehow. I began to look into travel scholarships and found an advertisement for Churchill Fellowships. I sat down at the kitchen table and thought hard about what I hoped to achieve as a theatre maker and puppeteer, filled in the application and sent it off. An interview and five months later I was standing in Government House receiving my Churchill Fellowship. It was a great surprise and even greater signal of encouragement. I plan to spend the first six months of next year in Buenos Aires at Escuela de Titiriteros. The course covers voice, song, performance, movement, dramaturgy and puppet making and is situated in the most prestigious theatre complex in Argentina. Buenos Aires itself has two mainstream puppet theatres, two puppet schools as well as a street dedicated to smaller companies called The Puppet Street. I hope to immerse myself in this world of "theatre of the impossible" and learn all I can.

Sarah Kriegler

Dear Philip,

Arrived in Perth to commence my residency with Spare Parts tomorrow and it will be a varied and interesting time with the company.

My first week will be the students from the WAAPA (West Australian Academy of Performing Arts). Spare Parts have over the past 18 years had an association with the Academy and this is an opportunity to continue that association. We are then working on developing a piece for the Awesome festival which opens in Nov. 8th. The theme of Awesome this year is Street and the work will be a street piece - visual and dancy is my brief. It will have a cast of three puppeteers/dancers. I will also be conducting training classes for company members and new and emerging artists. Part of that week will be centred around another Tim Winton kids novel. The Skyworks/NRS pilot now in the can will be launched in Canberra in late Sept. Titled... tumblegum.com, the video will be under the banner of the AFC. It will be launched in Canne in early Oct. It is hopeful with

gathering interest in the pilot becoming a series, 26 episodes could well go into production in December 1999. Designed by Richard Jeziorny, written by Richard Tulloch, much of the 1st episode was shot outdoors by the Googong Dam in the Canberra region. The interior setting is in a cave somewhere out there and features four delightfully whacky and humourous animal characters who try to build a weather station but fall foul and get injured and spend much of the episode being bandaged up by a rather wierd and impetuous teenage lizard.

We have applied for C classification-Drama which has seen three episodes in the first instance being written.

As for other stuff in Skyworks life and/or mind, I'm off to Bali in Oct for two weeks to develop a new work with Nigel Jamieson titled 'The Theft of Sita' which will be Premeirring at the Adelaide festival in 2000. The work will be using three shadow puppeteers from Bali and three puppeteers from Australia.

Peter J. Wilson

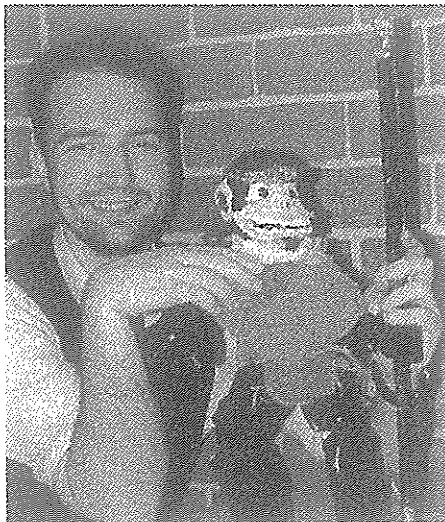
To UNIMA Members and Victorian Puppeteers,

I am a young 26 yr old Australian Male, voluntary self taught puppet maker/ performer, a trained sculptor/ performer, a member of UNIMA for nearly two years and I am relatively new to the world of puppetry. I have worked with Andrew Hanson (Handspan) with MIFA 97 & 98, and learnt some techniques with Richard Hart (Dream Puppets), and recieved invaluable advice from Anita Sinclair. I am interested in all aspects of puppetry theatre, special Fx, magic and meeting lots of puppeteers from all over the world.

I urgently require some volunteer assistance from at least two professional puppeteers (Performers and Makers) preferably with similar background experiences and interests, to assist me with production of a puppet adaption of **MONKEY: Journey to the West.....** by Wu Cheng En. This has long been an idea of mine two years before ABCTV re-screened the television episodes.

The show will include the use of Rod & Hand puppets, Shadow, black light puppets and Ultra-violet light Glow in the Dark Puppets.

I have built a stage and four of the main puppet characters have been made also.



If you would like to assist me with this project or meet me please contact

NICK STEEDMAN
(MONKEY BUSINESS)
Phone: (03) 9571 7345
My mail address is -
Flat 4 / 10 St Huberts Rd
Carnegie, Victoria 3163

P.S Does anyone have any Bunraku photos or any copies of MONKEY puppet scripts for me to look at and adapt? If yes, please send to above address.

If there is any professional puppet project out there (eg "The Hobbit", "Alice through the looking glass") coming up where you need a performer or puppet maker I would greatly appreciate the experience. I have not had nearly enough entertainment industry experience and I would greatly appreciate a lot more and some help in this area.

All the Best for a New Millenium of Puppetry Across the World.

Nick Steedman

FROM the PUBLICATION COMMISSION OF UNIMA :

To whom it may concern ...

On the occasion of the next Congress and World Festival of our Organization held in MAGDEBURG, GERMANY, we shall publish a book UNIMA 2000. This book will present the 'state of the Art' in Puppetry and related forms of Theatre.

One special chapter will be devoted to Museums presenting historical and actual items like puppets, stage sets, scenography, posters, scriptures, etc ... There are special museums as well as collections of puppetry items in other museums.

We want to present those institutions, if they are of some significance and also accessible to the public.

This international directory should give name and address, opening and perhaps closing periods (vacations?), a few notes about persons or organizations running the museum. Characteristics, topical emphasis, specialities in short ...

Swift answers are highly welcome. Thank you.

Hartmut TOPF

Answer please to my address or fax :

Hartmut TOPF
Nassauische Str. 9-10
10717 - BERLIN
GERMANY
Tel/fax: 49-30-8737658

PRAGUE EUROPEAN CITY OF CULTURE 2000

WORLD FESTIVAL OF PUPPET ART • 29.5. to 4.6. 2000
Karlova 12, Praha 1, 110 00 Tel/Fax: 02/2222 0928 Tel: 02/2222 0913
[http: www.puppetart.com](http://www.puppetart.com) Email: puppet.art@pha.ineenet.cz
with patronage Ministry of Culture
Prague City European Union
UNESCO

The President of International Institute of Marionette Art takes a great pleasure to invite your Theatre for world Festival of Puppet Art which takes place in Prague from 29 May - 4 June 2000.

Prague is European City of Culture 2000, and our Festival is an official program to celebrate Art of Puppetry from all over the World.

All kinds of show are welcome for children and adults, from traditional Puppetry to the new, and innovation works.

World Festival of Puppet Art is competition and International Jury will award prizes for: the Best performances, Best actor, Best actress Best director, Best Puppet designer, Best scenography, Best music and special awards.

During the Festival every participant will be provided with free accommodation, food, and some pocket money.

You are kindly asked to choose a one of your performance and send to the Festival by 30 October 1999. Also we need video tape, some photos, a short story of the show and filled application form.

Festival Commission will select performances and inform you about details 1st January 2000.

World Festival of Puppet Art welcomes Puppeteers from all over the world to meet and share their craft in Heart of Europe and celebrate the Art of Puppetry in Prague European City of Culture 2000.

Prague 9.9.1999
Mgr. Todor Ristic, President

President's Report

Here we go. Here we go. Here we go. I'm not lamenting the end of the footy season but celebrating new beginnings with Philip Millar at the helm of the magazine. The magazine is an enormous undertaking that comes with no financial reward. Editors past and present, I think you are all heroes.

Thank you Anita Sinclair for your final magazine. I walked in the door after a long day with a beer in one hand and the unopened magazine in the other. Even before I had unlocked the back door, the beer was open and so was the magazine. It was a tremendous read.

We have had one response for the position of Secretary of UNIMA Australia. The executive is delighted to welcome Mary Sutherland to the position. Mary has long shown an active interest in UNIMA and for some time has managed (with her husband Joe) the UNIMA Australia website.

Please read the open letter to all national Centres of UNIMA from Jacques Felix, the Secretary General. We have been invited to respond to the question "What are the aspirations of our National Centre for the future of UNIMA"? Please take some initiative and set up a discussion group in your area if you can or write to Mary Sutherland with your ideas.

There is also the important nomination of councillors to become a Member of the Council of UNIMA. Nominations must be received by the President of the Elections Committee of UNIMA by December 1, 1999. At the Budapest Congress we were allowed three councillors who were invited to attend the congress and who subsequently received information about various UNIMA meetings from the international centre. If you intend to go to the Magdeburg UNIMA congress and festival, this is a wonderful

opportunity to meet UNIMA members from around the world and to become better acquainted with the workings of UNIMA. If you are interested please contact Mary by November 15.

We will have a UNIMA gathering at the "One Van" Puppet Festival. I hope to see many of you there. In the meantime, since this is the last issue for 1999, Many Happy Manipulations now and into the next decade.

Sue Wallace

Treasurer's Report

Prodos is currently preparing a report for the Bumper Year 2000 issue. Stay tuned!

"One Van" rides again!

January 21, 22 and 23, 2000

Over a bottle of champagne (generously given as an encouragement award by Dennis Murphy) the "One Van" Puppet Festival was declared a "goer". Imbibing with Leonie Cameron (co-ordinator of the Blackheath Area Neighbourhood Centre), Ted Greenwood (President of the Blackheath Chamber of Commerce) and the indefatigable Rowena McGregor (festival co-ordinator), Steve Coupe and I were reminded of the power of letting others share your dream.

There has still been no government sponsorship for the festival. It is steam driven by the businesses in Blackheath and by the generosity and support of the Management Committee of the Blackheath Area Neighbourhood Centre and by the artists who come and perform for a small fee just to be part of the adventure.

The program is nearly complete. There will be eight different shows and four workshops for the general public in puppetry building and manipulation. The Puppet Cabaret, which was such a success last festival, will happen again with a different mixture of fabulous, short performances.

On Friday January 21, I am working on a full day of workshops and discussions just for puppeteers including:

1. A case study workshop on marketing (2 hour workshop). If you intend to be there and want your business to be one of the case studies, let me know quickly.
2. A workshop in puppetry manipulation for television with David Collins (three hour workshop)
3. A workshop on the Art of the Shadow with Richard Bradshaw (two hour workshop).

There will be a fee for this series of workshops (not exceeding \$100). Come for the workshops. Come for the festival.

Festival programs will be ready at the end of November.

Sue Wallace
02 9550 6457

Secretary's Report

As the retiring secretary of the Australian UNIMA Centre, I would like to thank all members for their support for the organisation, especially the editors of the magazine. Anita Sinclair did a fantastic job of further evolving the magazine. She, along with all editors past and present, devote more time than anyone else to this organisation, which makes them very precious and special. It can be a very difficult job at times when the quantity of material requires heavy editing to fit it all in. The fact that so much material is available from members is testimony to the success and demand for the publication, which can mostly be attributed to the editor's work. It gives me great pleasure to pass on my role as secretary to Mary Sutherland. I have known and worked with Mary over the past few years and feel sure she will be of great benefit to us all. Mary is very experienced in the puppetry world, very professional, very good at what she does, has lots of contacts, resources and enthusiasm. What more could you hope for in an executive? Having Philip Millar as our new editor is a very exciting proposition. I'm looking forward to seeing further evolution of our publication. It's also great to have two new and fresh executives. Great stuff!

Richard Hart

Applications are invited for the UNIMA scholarship

The grant is to assist the development of puppetry in Australia and is open to all applicants who have been financial members of Unima for a minimum of two years. An amount of \$500 is available for activities or projects during 2000. Please apply in writing, clearly outlining your proposal and budget. Send applications to Unima President Sue Wallace (see address page 30) by January 10, 2000.

SECRETAIRE GENERAL Jacques FELIX

B.P. 249

08103 CHARLEVILLE-MEZIERES

FRANCE

Fax 24 33 54 28

To all the National Centres of UNIMA, YOU ARE UNIMA!

Dear Friends

As the XXlth century and our XVIIIth Congress approach, we are looking for ideas from all over the world which could help to build the future of our Union for centuries to come

Often, the most successful projects of UNIMA have originated from ideas or dreams of National Centres or from those of ordinary individual members.

After the BUDAPEST Congress, the Executive Committee of UNIMA, created the 'UNIMA 2000' Commission, presided over by Claire VOISARD. Its aim is to promote worth-while proposals. This Commission has, as one of its assignments, the encouragement of new ideas and suggestions put forward by our National Centres and by our UNIMA members with the aim of starting up future projects, new activities or new tendencies.

Consequently, we encourage the National Centres to communicate their ideas, above all, those relating to the future of UNIMA or even better to explain to us how they intend to implement their ideas. Why not organize a meeting in each of our National Centres on this topic:

"What are the aspirations of our National Centre for the future of UNIMA?"

Hence, I request that you all share your dreams with us and that you inform us of your ideas for the future of our Union by writing to the Secretary General of UNIMA, BP 249, 08103 CHARLEVILLE-MEZIERES, FRANCE, and the UNIMA 2000 Commission will present your ideas during our XVIIIth Congress.

Please do not forget to inform the Secretary General before the 1st December of the names of the Councillors who you have appointed to represent you at our next Congress and who will occupy the position of Member of the Council of UNIMA up until the year 2004.

Finally, to conclude, please do not forget to send **immediately before the 15th September 1999** your candidatures for the Members of the Executive Committee. These candidatures should be sent to the Election Committee of UNIMA at the following address:

Miss Idoia OTEGUI, President of the Elections Committee of UNIMA,
Centro de Iniciativas de Tolosa, Apdo Postal 100, C/Emeterio Arrese 2,
20400 TOLOSA, SPAIN.
Tel: 34 943 65 04 14, Fax: 34 943 69 80 28, e-mail: iotegui@cittolosa.com

We are counting on your participation, thanking you in advance,
Yours Cordially,

Jacques FELIX

BLACK HOLE

Company Profile By Megan Cameron

Passionate about skilled puppetry, painting and with the desire to challenge themselves and their audience, Black Hole is a company of freelance artists, puppeteers, designers and theatre makers gathered together to facilitate ideas and get projects up and running. It all started when they got together to drink beer and flog a show called **AND THE ASS SAW THE ANGEL**. The show went well, everyone got on famously and the company has grown and spread its wings.

PUNTERS BIG NIGHT is the current incarnation of a great outdoor festival

piece developed with the assistance of a New Media grant several years ago, Involving a dancing, burning, three metre puppet, Punter was most recently seen at the Mallacoota festival and is due to perform in The Tower of Light at M.I.F.A. (an excellent show with Punter creating the fiery climax-Ed.)

The company wanted to do a show on the theme of humanity lost in the urban jungle - the demise of care and community - the search for the pulse that connects us all. **THE EMPIRE** has come from the ensemble: story, structure, style, design

ideas, production values aims and objectives. It is a booth show for inside or out, **THE EMPIRE** is still in development stage and currently waiting for funding to go into full production.

FIN is a traditional puppet-booth show created for children between the ages of two and eight. A purely visual experience with charm and humour about growing and change. **FIN** will be ready for summer 1999 and hopefully head off to the One

*"It all started when they got together to drink beer and flog a show called **AND THE ASS SAW THE ANGEL**"*



Punter strolls down Brunswick Street.

Van Festival in January 2000.

THE TABLE SERIES is an evolving, variety style work that has developed primarily from responses to commercial opportunities, utilised some existing puppets and masks, and invented more. The Food and Wine Festival, the Melbourne Fringe festival, the Commercial Hotel in Yarraville, and many other private functions have enjoyed the glory of Gilda, the grouchiness of Ma and Pa, and the bizarre Quail.

Tex-Mex band Texicali Rose and Black Hole join forces in the delightful **DON IN THE CITY**.

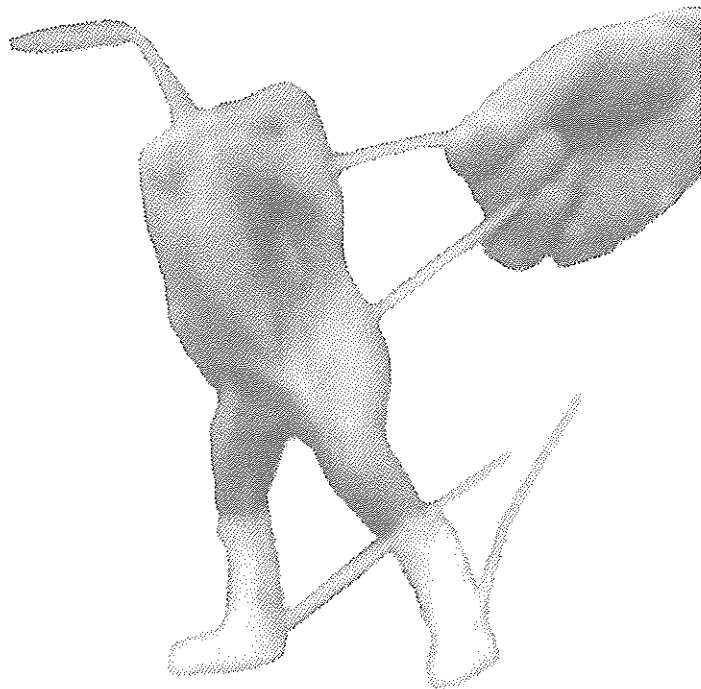
The project deals with scenes from a contemporary Don Quixote utilising the skills of Texicali Rose and the arresting giant shadow work of Black Hole. Bound to be very funny, due for 2000-we hope.

Following on from 1998, **100 PAINTINGS**. Where Cliff Dolliver and Paul Newcombe locked themselves in Scully and Trombone in Brunswick St for 100 hours and painted furiously in the window to produce 100 paintings. Black Hole will be presenting **ART IN A MOUNTAIN**, a huge blow up mountain with windows, Black

Hole painters and sculptors shall create the inside of somebody's brain. At nightfall, the creation turns into Shadow Puppetry, accompanied by a selection of Musicians.

We have gained a workshop space through the kindness and generosity of our sage-like member Daryl Cordell. Thanks to Paul Newcombe and Fiona Sweet for all those years spent in their back garden, trying to make art and usually making a mess.

The beautiful Cliff Dolliver has left us for a couple of years while he goes to Ireland with Moira and the twins to seriously investigate Irish malt whisky, a UK connection for Black Hole and get a bit of painting done.

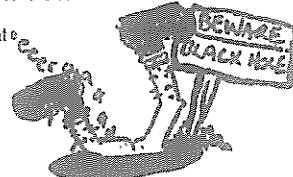


The bizarre Quail struts its stuff.



Pa, Megan Cameron, Gilda, Rod Primrose and Ma.

That's it from down the Black Hole
See you ^{late}



Puppets on the Teev

ESTHER HASKELL

'BOP' from "In the Box"

Esther Haskell started with "Rubbery Figures", a weekly satirical program on the ABC. She worked and learned in a team of about eight puppeteers from all walks of puppetry life. Then she answered an ad as a trainee puppeteer/runner/gaffer on "Fast Forward."

Now she manipulates 'Bop', a cute red moppy haired puppet on "In The Box" for pre-schoolers. 'Bop' was designed by Brenton Kempster and constructed by Christopher Lane. 'Bop' assisting two live presenters, Tracey Fleming and Brett Annable, keeps visiting kids involved in games, activities, songs and dances.



Picture courtesy Channel 10

'Bop' has been through three incarnations. His hair, eyes, face have changed considerably over the series. Esther feels his latest re-cast makes him much cuter and really identifiable. Kids love him. The original mouthpiece was 'very stiff and hard to operate. Bop, has one rod hand and the other is immobile. He's a pretty basic puppet and he's quite heavy. Esther's building up a big muscle in one arm!

"In the Box" goes to air 8.30am Mon - Fri on Channel Ten. The new puppet can be seen from October.

MICHAEL SHEID- 'Bookworm' from "The Book Place"

Michael started working with puppets in 1970 in South Australia with The Bunyip Children's Theatre.

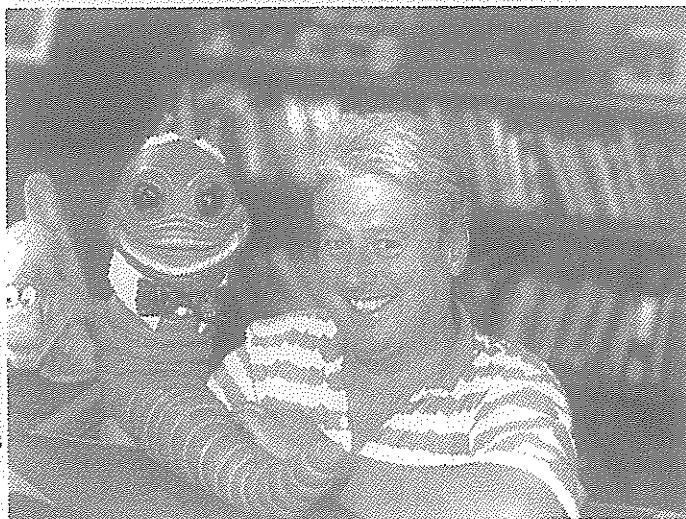
One of the ensemble was Karel Rehorek who used to be in the Black Theatre of Prague. Karel was very influential in training Michael who then went on to tour schools with Patch Theatre Company.

As a actor, Michael played Mo McCachie in 'Young Mo' for about two years and helped launch the Mo awards.

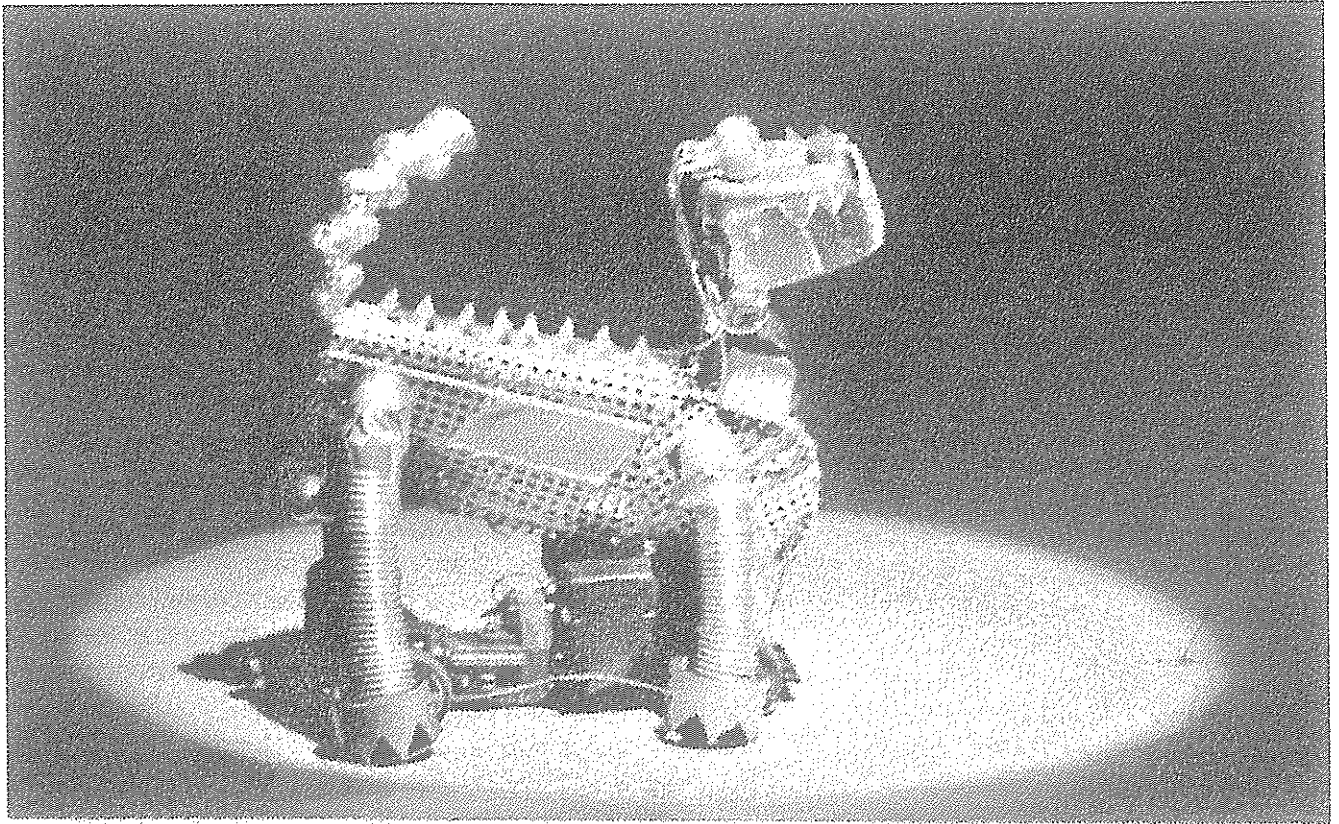
Michael's involvement with TV puppets began with a Rock wallaby arm puppet for 'Rock Around the Clock', which started with Channel 10 and then went to Channel 7. It recorded once a week and went to air initially once a day then increasing to two. The Rock wallaby also had segments on 'The Early Bird Show', which generally consisted of more ad libs than written material.

Michael has worked as a presenter on 'Here's Humphrey' and in the suit for 'Fat Cat'. He also operated Clarence W. Wallaby MP Esq for Channel 10 - a pretentious fellow who promised the world and delivered nothing. 'The Book Place' is now in its eighth year. The Bookworm (aka Slugsy/Worm) was initially made in Brisbane then rebuilt by the Fright workshop. Fright also built the suit Bazza the Bunyip, which had built in cable operated eyes and eyebrows and a mic near the mouth directed to a speaker in the Bunyip's stomach.

Picture courtesy Channel Seven



"The Book Place" goes to air 8.30am Mon-Fri on Channel Seven



Picture courtesy Joel Salom

**JOEL SALOM - 'Eric the dog'-
"O'Loghlin on Saturday Night"**

Joel is a physical circus based comedian. He has been a street performer around Europe and Australia for seven years. He's mucked around with remote control for years. As a kid he had a remote controlled car. He used a remote controlled shoe box in his street work (there was a car underneath it). He would wait until an unsuspecting person came by and then move the shoe box just a little bit. Quickly a crowd would build up, watching the surprised reactions to the shoe box from adults and kids alike. As the shoe box act developed he used a little plastic snake to spit water at the onlookers - until the motor burned out.

Anyone who saw Eric's unfortunate accident where he fell off the stage in mid August would be intrigued to learn the incident occurred after the official 'live' show had finished taping. The producers weren't happy with the camera move on Eric's exit so they did it again, with the audience still there as an out-take. Because the pressure is off, James and the other comedians are relaxed and gagging around spontaneously which gave rise to much hilarity as Eric observed his own testicles in a most uncomfortable way.

'O'Loghlin on Saturday Night' goes to air 9.30pm Saturday on ABC TV

**Pig's Breakfast
Series Two**

Following fifty-two episodes completed in July, Southern Star have announced that Pig's Breakfast will be commence shooting a further twenty-six episodes from March next year.

Picture courtesy Channel Nine



Leu *Tempo* Festival

**Report by
Richard Bradshaw**

The French island of Reunion is about 40 minutes by plane from Mauritius, a little north of the Tropic of Capricorn in the Indian Ocean. Roughly 70 Km in diameter, it rises to over 3000 metres. Geologically recent it has an active volcano and deep ravines lead away from the three central curved ridges, or "cirques".

It seemed too good to be true to be going to a festival there in July. In fact, I don't think I really believed it would happen until I took my puppets to a freight agent in Toronto and sent them on to Reunion instead of back to Sydney. An irreversible step, so it was not reassuring that the agent had never heard of the place!

The artistic director for the festival was the outgoing Chandra Pelid. She and her partner "Baguette" are responsible for Komela, a puppet theatre in St Leu where the festival took place. No one calls Baguette by his real name. A genial giant, I remembered him towering above everyone else at a Charlieville festival years ago.

St Leu is a small coastal town and the festival was centred here and in a theatre in nearby Piton St Leu, where one of the technicians was an Englishman, Stephen Parkes, descended from Sir Henry Parkes! The TEMPO in the festival's name is in honour of the generosity shown to Komela by the late Jean-Loup Temporal, an outstanding Parisian puppeteer. [The sister of Sydney puppeteer Tina Matthews once lived in St Leu!!]

The two main strands of the festival were shadow theatre and object theatre. The first show we saw was a treatment of the "Bounty" story by the well-known shadow company of (Luc) Amoros and (Michdie) Augustin of Strasbourg. This was a night-time outdoors show set up in a ravine. An elaborate and dramatic show with live music and dialogue, it used black-and-white images projected on a screen which suggested the rigging of a sailing ship. Some of these images were reminiscent of the illustrations in Classic comics,

The two main strands of the festival were shadow theatre and object theatre.

while others were shadows of the performers themselves. A stylish production, it was very impressive and dramatic, but maybe a bit unrelentingly so.

Two other fascinating shadow shows were provided by the all-female company of La Conica Laconica from Barcelona. We had seen a version of the smaller show in Brussels in 1997. Performed by the principals, Merce Gost and Alba Zapater, it explored the bizarre shadows cast by found objects using two small hand-held halogen lamps. The objects were as varied as string, bottles, Mylar, water in a dish, a CD rack, a roadside "witch's hat" etc. A striking cityscape was achieved using the insides of transistor radios. Often the humble sources of the extraordinary shadows came as a complete surprise at the end.

This first show which was performed to recorded music has led to a much more elaborate and stunning show which used live singers, sometimes singing along with their own recorded voices. The unaccompanied singing was without words and the images were again produced using "found" objects which this time included a shopping trolley and a glass table. The shadow screen filled the proscenium opening and the shadows of the singers were part of the images. At one point the screen was replaced with another which had zippered openings through which the singers pushed their heads while the moving light sources behind gave unexpected and very funny movement to the shadows of their bodies. Without words or narrative or any obvious theme, this show was quite enchanting and timeless. We thoroughly enjoyed it and could have watched more. (One of the singers was a New Zealander, Mary Davison.)

Three of the object theatre shows were by Christian Carrignon and his partner Katy Deville of Les Theatres de Cuisine, Marseilles, both working solo. (Christian and Katy were members of the Genty company which toured Australia in 1991.) In these shows the actors interrelated with everyday objects almost like a child at play. Christian performed the original "Le Theatre de Cuisine" from which the name of their company comes. This is a seminal object theatre piece from 1979 which has toured the world. From beneath a picnic table he created a world above him peopled by corks and bottle tops in which a coffee mill becomes a coffee shop, a tea caddy becomes a theatre etc.

In a longer piece, "Catalogue de Voyages", Christian created a world of childhood memories from a jumble of objects in suitcases. It was a stream of consciousness with no apparent logic to the sequence, but like the non-narrative shadow piece it held one's attention to the insanely funny end. To the Triumphal March from "Aida" Christian left the stage loaded up with all the suitcases. He towed behind him a plaster Alsatian dog which had recently overpowered a panther (with illuminated red eyes) in a good-versus-evil battle.

In her piece, "Vingt minutes sous les mers", Katy was a decidedly evil ogress leaning over a water-filled aquarium singing as she made merry hell with denizens of the sea. A diver drowned when she removed

Charleville-based photographer Philippe Mangen was his fascinating video of the dalang Asep Sunardar. This brilliant wayang golek performer has introduced new characters, new techniques and new contemporary themes, dealing with politics, religion and sex.

Significantly there was an absence of more traditional puppetry at the festival. In fact, the object theatre people often feel excluded from the puppetry world, although that is usually where they started. Several of the shows invited us to look differently at the "things" about us, elevating the mundane to the theatrical. What they had in common with traditional puppetry was that they were theatre of the "Manufactured Article". Maybe that is what the MA in UNIMA now represents?

years since the end of slavery. Two guys on top of a truck played didgeridoos, one of which was metallic and branched into two horns at the end. Another performer rode a fire-breathing dragon built on the carcass of an old "deux chevaux" Citroen which he moved by pedals inside all the way to the beach. After the fireworks people were able to eat at tables set up by the local restaurants on the main highway. A good time was had by all ... including, it is hoped, some of the Manufactured Articles.

Richard Bradshaw

Another performer rode a fire-breathing dragon built on the carcass of an old "deux chevaux" Citroen which he moved by pedals inside all the way to the beach.

his air source, and a bathing "Barbie" was deluged with little plastic babies before all were devoured and the blood-stained water was drained from the tank!

A very different "marine" show was that of Colette Garrigan, an Irish graduate of the Charleville school who now lives on the slopes of Reunion. "Apré la Pluie" was the story of an Irish seaman who reappeared after being lost at sea. Like the Bounty story this was a narrative, and like the object shows it had a solo actor interrelating with objects and set, but this time the objects were theatre props made to look like real things ... not found objects.

At an exhibition of photos of Indonesian puppetry by the



We had missed the opening of the festival, but it was closed in a similarly spectacular way. Highway Number 1 which circles the island was blocked for a procession which led from Komeia's theatre to the beach. It was late afternoon, and after various performances there was a spectacular fireworks display supervised by Baguette. Many joined the procession. One Creole group wore T-shirts celebrating 150

The Dog Ate My Diary...

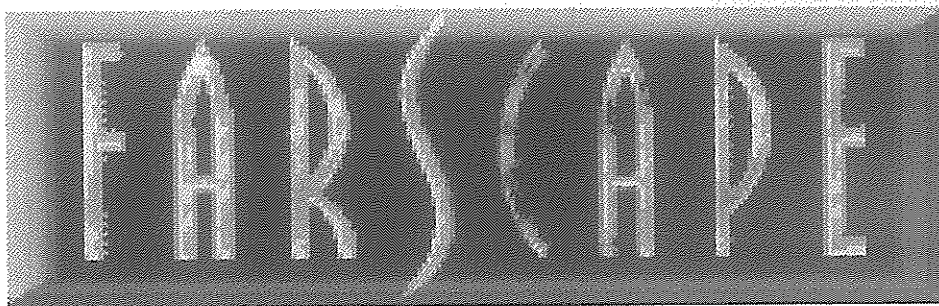
Some random days from life on the Farscape set
by Tim Mieveille

THURSDAY 18TH FEBRUARY

Both puppets up for this shot. We'd decided to get as many puppeteers in as the office would allow, to increase the possibilities for varying the action – if the director wanted one puppet to pick the other's ear-wax and eat it we'd be ready – but with limited space under Pilot (big puppet) ironically the more puppets we use the more cramped it is and the less we'd be able to do. We decide on five extras (ten all up) so Mario, Matt, Fiona, Emma and BJ get the call. Things to watch – so many puppets that the monitors (AV) could all be obscured at any one time – we have four monitors always set up behind Pilot – one for whoever's inside the body (Mario today) and three spread between the four arms so we can

always see one when we're on the move (reversed screen of course – Bwana Henson insists they leave then straight in the States and that we should learn – hmm, I need a little more convincing). John's hand is inside Rygel (little puppet) with Emma hugging him trying to keep one of Rygel's hands alive, and David out the front riding the joystick for Rygel's eyes and ears. Pilot is fixed to a ring which enables him to spin on a track left and right very quickly. Rygel has been placed tight in to Pilot between two of his arms so that will limit the rate and range of Pilot's movement. 1st AD says he doesn't have to spin fast, just survey the scene. The story dictates that Pilot is in his usual lair when the other main characters suddenly appear all at once from different dimensions into the same time and space – so there is much confusion then a bit of cheese as they all realise their ordeal is over and the commercial break is on the way. Pilot is simply perturbed which I'm sure suits Seanie down to the ground as chuckling isn't Pilot's strongest point. Sean does Pilot's

mouth via a Waldo Hand control (open and close palm of hand correlates with Pilot's jaw, then sliding whole control in four different directions gives lip shapes) which is linked to the Henson-patented Big One (or new lap top system) which allows a visual display of the limits of the servos that move each facial feature – simple and fast way of editing facial expressions required for each shot. Graeme (Pilot's eyes) could help sell the laugh but the Tarzan Finish* is for the other cast members anyway (*end of each episode in Tarzan – chimp mugs;



everyone look at chimp; Tarzan say "Oh Cheetah!"; everyone laugh and clap 'em belly!) Good – that means we on Pilot's arms can concentrate on clearing the set, the actors and each other. We are aided by a decision to use some CG credits and do three passes on the scene – us first then the actors in two groups. Complicated (well, more than usual), so much setting up, then chat, then tea, then lose focus, then oops! did he just say... "ACTION!" Suddenly, Seanie's counting down in our Comms "Three, two, one..." Mario grips the handle bars and Pilot's head swings to the right dragging the body around, all four of us on arms clearing the console in front to land decisively at the end of the move for Grae to no doubt go through a range of eyebrow manoeuvres that would give Roger Moore the hissy fits! Slam! John tenderly brings Rygel into play, whipping Emma into a crevice created between Pilot Arms two and three. Dave kickstarts Rygel's ear-brows up to their fullest, archest height before lowering them, and closing the eyes for the Grand Guffaw.

"CUT!" Let's look at it back – hmmm, arms not so decisive, Rygel partly obscured, not enough laugh. That was #*@*! There'll be another... In fact, another three.

TUESDAY 23rd MARCH

A joyous confetti-filled, balloon-strewn, dove releasing, cork-popping day for us today – they've raised part of the set for us. TV and film rips the puppeteer back into hide and seek territory (CG removal is too pricey to do on every shot) and this stirs up a few issues. Of course one of the main skills required is to work off monitors – doing something up here while you look down there (or over your shoulder). So then, to camouflage or not to camouflage? Whether 'tis nobler to drape our-

selves in the same material as Rygel's cloak so the puppets doing his arms do not pop into shot, or not. Is it better to try to disappear into the shad-

ows, or should we put on a bright hat and stick out like dog's bones so it's easier to see that we popped into shot and can we reshoot that please? Surprise – the budget usually decides. They'll go with the action they like best so for God's sake duck and cover – drape and hide! So what about raised sets! A big issue for us. By spending the extra bucks at construction stage maybe they could have saved that amount plus more by eliminating time spent repositioning three superbly proportioned but nevertheless prominently visible puppeteers for every shot Rygel is in. Still, the milk is spilt and out of our hands. Today's shot is the little slug sitting on a couch, eating alien fruit smugly while Bad Guy No 2 tries to unsettle him. John's right hand is through the bottom of the couch and inside the puppet doing jaw, his left hand working a gear stick (lip shapes) on his belt. His script is taped all over the monitor and the inside of the couch. I'm squashed into the same cavity working Rygel's right hand. My right hand works his elbow trigger, and my left hand is inside a

mechanism which is cabled from my fingers to Rygel's fingers – when I point he does, when I grip he does – very responsive. Fatu pah! (Alien swearword!) They want him to use an alien fork (a sawn-off splade actually) which means I'll be gripping for the next hour or so – oi vay! ('Puppeteer' is from the latin 'puppus quo' meaning 'state of contortion'.) Sean is doing left arm from outside the cavity stretched around John's body – he has his own monitor but is limited by the set so it might be "just-keep-it-alive" time. Graeme (eyes) is up above us just outside the room they're shooting in. It's important to have someone up there, linked to us with Comms (headphones and mic units), relaying info between us and the shooting team and this soon becomes obvious. They want to get a second camera in – we've been through this before and it's always problematic. The concept that a puppet has no vision but has eyes (and must connect with whatever it's looking at) is lost on some people. It's impossible to get eyelines correct with two cameras in a limited amount of time, but if you add the fact that the puppeteer

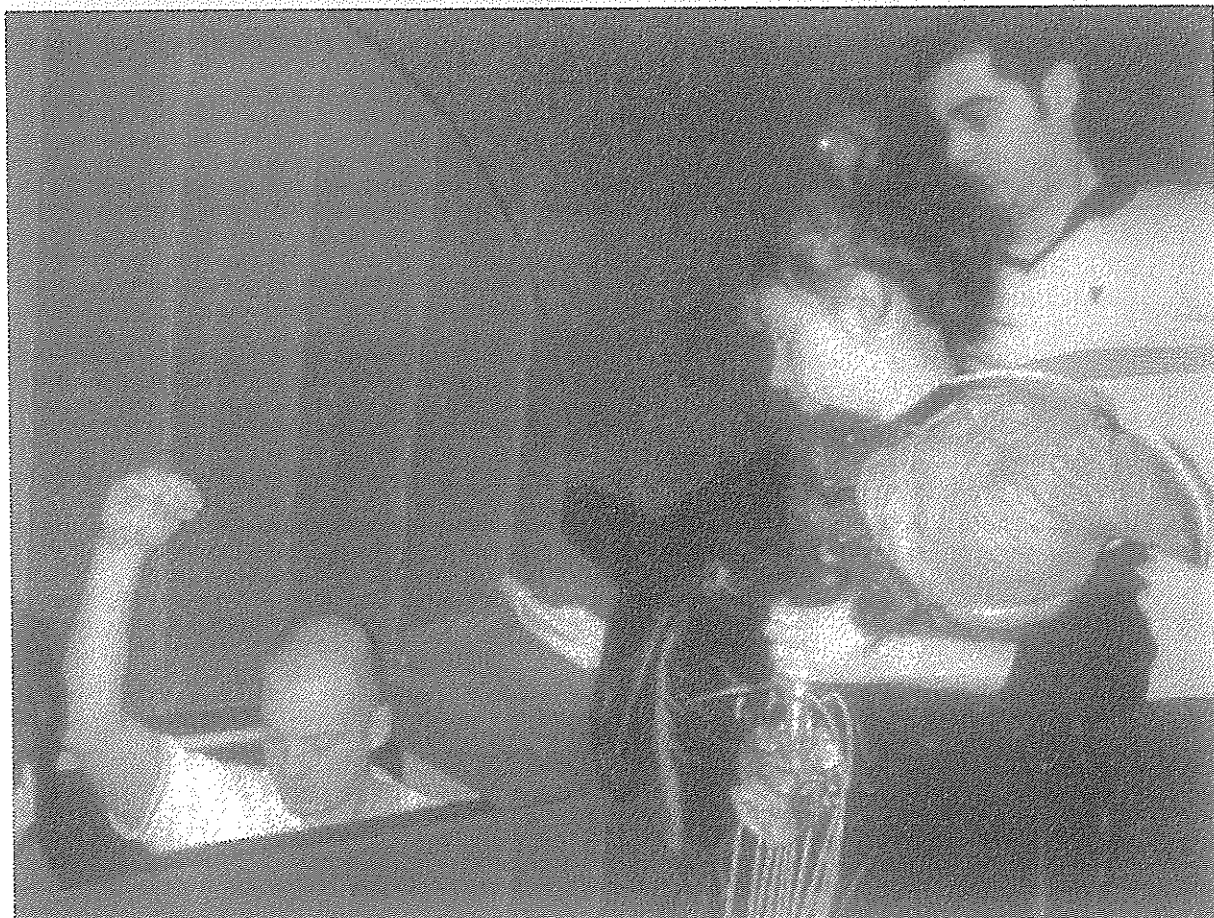
is under the set and can't spot the shot and that there isn't enough room to get two monitors under there to see both camera angles, then Lady Luck better be directing. After a tad of debate, John wipes the spit off his mic (and the camera-man), Graeme steps in for a quick explanation (actually slow and pointed – got it now?!) and we go back to just one camera. Aah – the fact that the pupp's agenda is hardly understood by anyone else on set is best counteracted by deft teamwork once again – many layers of support are needed in this job. We get the shot in two. The actor gets it in five. Wrapped right on time.

TUESDAY 27TH APRIL

I've woken up on the wrong side of the planet and decided everyone's going to pay! I'm not sure why - but it's Trelkez day so the opportunity is ripe. Maybe it has to do with the fact that they keep dubbing over our department ("let's give them a character that REALLY needs dubbing!") or maybe it's the eight month blues. Either way Graeme and I bounce on set this morning with our futabas primed and ready (remote-control

units usually used for model planes, but nifty at controlling simpler puppets with only a few servos, at a distance). Our mission – make a two headed caged alien bird (Trelkez) sing realistically enough to draw lots of wonder and a bit of pathos out of our two heros as they walk through a crowded market. The Sound Editors need a guide track so we're going to have to actually do the singing – judging by the look Graeme's just given me, I'll be doing the singing. Hmm, something simple, sync-worthy, and cyclical (we should be able to repeat just a few bars for the whole shoot as the camera should hopefully not be on us for long – as superb as Trelkez looks, it is small and has few servos so its action is limited)... old "Kum Baya" always leaps to mind... "Mamma Mia"? No... "Popcorn"? Theme from "Titanic"? No, no... The chorus from "Brazil"? In falsetto, over and over for three hours? Yes, that should do nicely. By the end of the first hour all the extras are either grinning or shaking their heads at us. By the end of the second, one of our heros is asking the director if a bit of twelve bar isn't more appro-

John Eccleston, Zoe Springer (holding Rygel) and Mario Halouvas prepare for a take.



priate, or could we at least change the song? "No, it needs to be repeatable action so you can cut it when you like – and it's a tune I know well," I helpfully offer. By the third hour even the Nurse was trying to steal our batteries. Can't wait to view the finished scene to see what alien melody they find to fit over my vocal ukelele. Chased back to our rehearsal room for more tea and standby.

Picture L-R
John Eccleston, Tim Mieveille,
Sean Masterson

point being my visual to the mannequin with the false chest, playing the part of our alien. We rehearse the moves a few times and I'm just starting to think how our hero would do this convincingly – tough, uncompromising hands to start with, definite broad strokes, an action jock's grip as the alien is slammed back and then Oh my God, what's this?! – confused, vulnerable, hesitant, maybe even trembling a little as I pull away or is that allowing too much humanity into the prime time hero's lexicon of gestures? Maybe I should...

MONDAY 10TH MAY

Nothing up all day. Wrapped early. Other's gone home. Second unit finds me in the carpark trying to kickstart William (my Holden – I do miss Betty Ford). Called back to be our hero's hand double for a "simple four second shot". Director (Rowan Woods) – "We want to see you grip the guy's chest, flinch as you push him against something, rip a piece of flesh away from his chest, and drop it when you realise he's alien – it's really tightly shot but I want your hands to dirty the frame even when we're focussed on the chest so please hit your marks, and we want to see lots of guts and plasma on your hands when they're in the foreground... Oh yeah and can you start by masking the shot with your whole body."

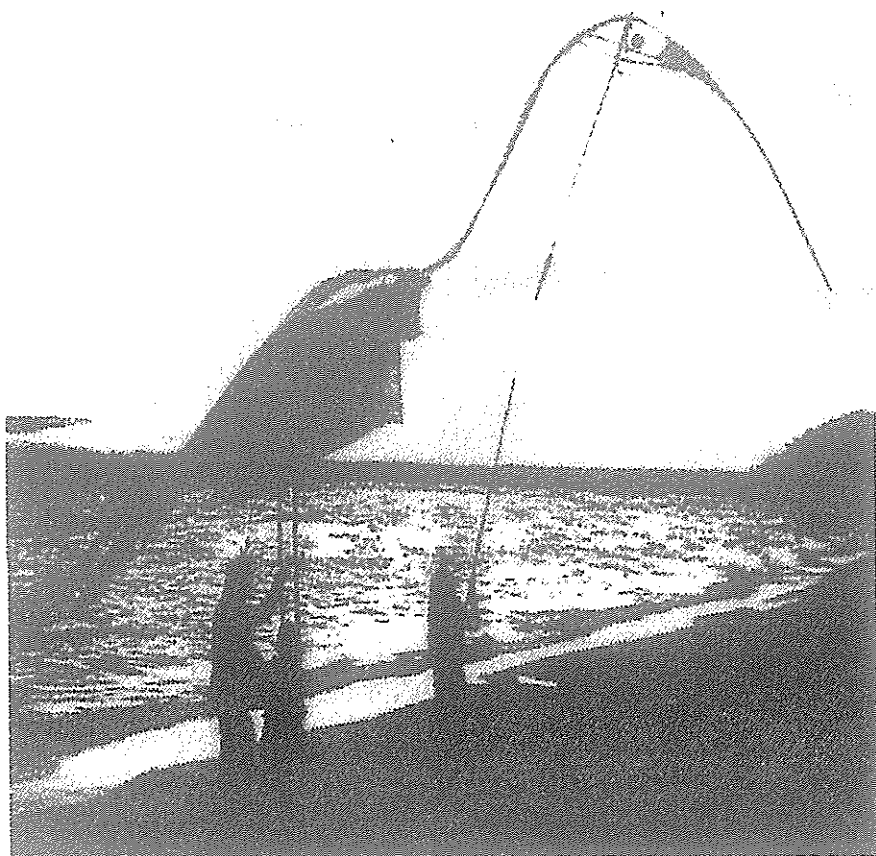
Simple?
Hmmm. No pressure but we've got about five minutes to do it. Creature Shop have Alien Gloop #2476 ready to go so we organise a second masking point using my body when I push the alien, for Damien to fire a syringe of gloop at the hand – good luck 'cos my hands will be doing a choreography in space with the only reference

"ACTION!" Wha... ? I mask, move in for the push, grip, get glooped, when suddenly inside my right ear a syllable explodes – "AAAAH!" I drop it and recoil instinctively to hear, "Bewdiful! Loved it!" by Rowan and "It's a wrap" by Chris our 1st AD (who had been quietly primed to motivate me into a realistic drop). See a replay. Yep, that worked. Leave set rubbing my ear.

Workshop Spread #8

CURLEW

a practical guide - part one by Ian Cuming



The Eastern Curlew resides for six months of the year throughout coastal Australia along with many other waterbirds that migrate from Japan and Siberia as they have done forever. They depend on our coastal wetlands for survival as a species. They are in this respect indigenous to Australia.

FIELD

These birds live in remote places. Venture out and find them. Speak to an expert who can tell you what they know. Find out exactly where to go, at what time and how to approach. The Curlew is especially sensitive to people. Once you have sight of the bird just be there with it.

Allow yourself dreaming space. Absorb the atmosphere of this place. Nestle in quietly beside a rock. Crouch behind a shrub.

CURLEW SONG

*Eastern Curlew from Siberia
Begins life in the arctic
First the young then the adult birds
Travel 13,000 miles
Across China and Japan
To Australia's coastal wetlands*

*By November we see them here
On the rocks near the mangroves
They go probing with their long beaks
Down the burrow of the ghost shrimp
Along mudflats foraging
Seagrass meadow is their lifeblood*

Greg Stebbing / Ian Cuming 1989

INTRODUCTION

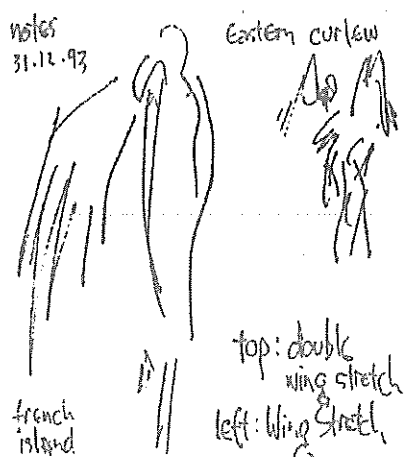
The following instructions describe the making of one six metre tall, bamboo, cane and fabric Eastern Curlew bird puppet for two to four person operation. Whilst it works well as a solo ambient image, silent or accompanied, it is well suited to being one member of a flock.

The construction process itself is really only suitable for adults, however it can be constructed on a smaller scale for smaller adults and children to operate.



Breathe openly and freely. The bird will signal disturbance by preparing to take flight. Settle in. Signal respect. Have a cuppa and a sandwich. Acknowledge the occasion of being in the company of this creature on the planet. Be impressed.

A flock of Eastern Curlew abide with infinite sensuality a moment of refined scrutiny on the Westernport mudflat. The pencil's light sweep on palmed pad sets air to move in sound. The stroke of one a beak; the next a wing and another leg accompanies a silent outbreath dance. Draw the postures. Record the repertoire of movement. Feel action in the bird as emotion in yourself. Give this form as pencil strokes. Leave your ego out of it. The birds will trust you immediately. Become a curlew for a moment. Become the entire flock. Standing, walking, bending, probing beyond vision for living food source. Preening and stretching a wing then a leg before ruffles to be upright. Individual birds enjoy diverse foci yet all together a settled mobile and dynamic group.

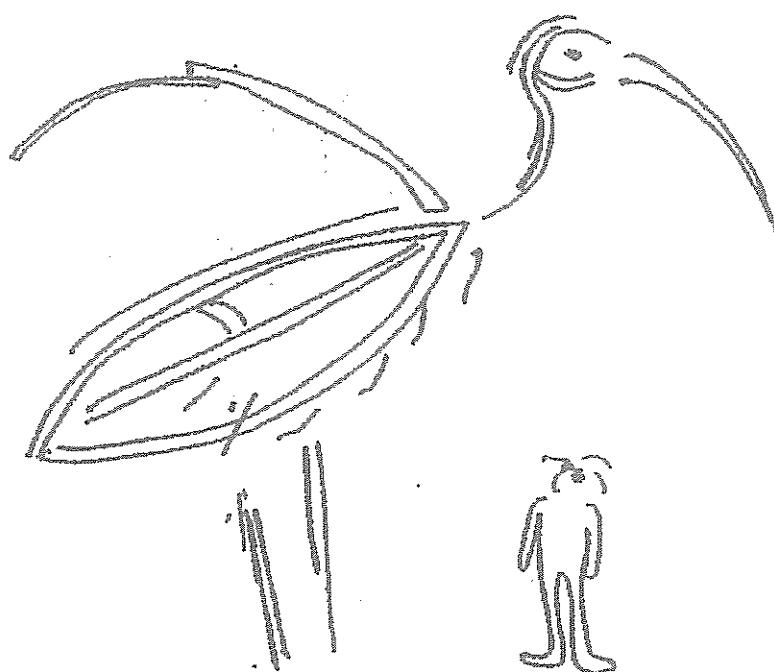


PATTERNS

Wings are observed only ever in movement alive. The wing of a bird registers a pre-memory shape. Observe the patterns in the air. Enjoy the turn and flow of the body movement in flight. Take-off, wing-flapping, gliding, banking, pulling-up and landing are valuable processes to follow. Every species of bird has its own behaviours; every individual when you really come down to it. Pattern implies consistency. Establish this and discover more. What strikes you about this bird?



What shapes define the bird for you? Legs in flight register little. Look for them anyway. How do they rest beneath the body? Are they prominent in landing? What does a walk look like? Balance is one clue. Focus another. Direction. Intention. Labour. Compassion.

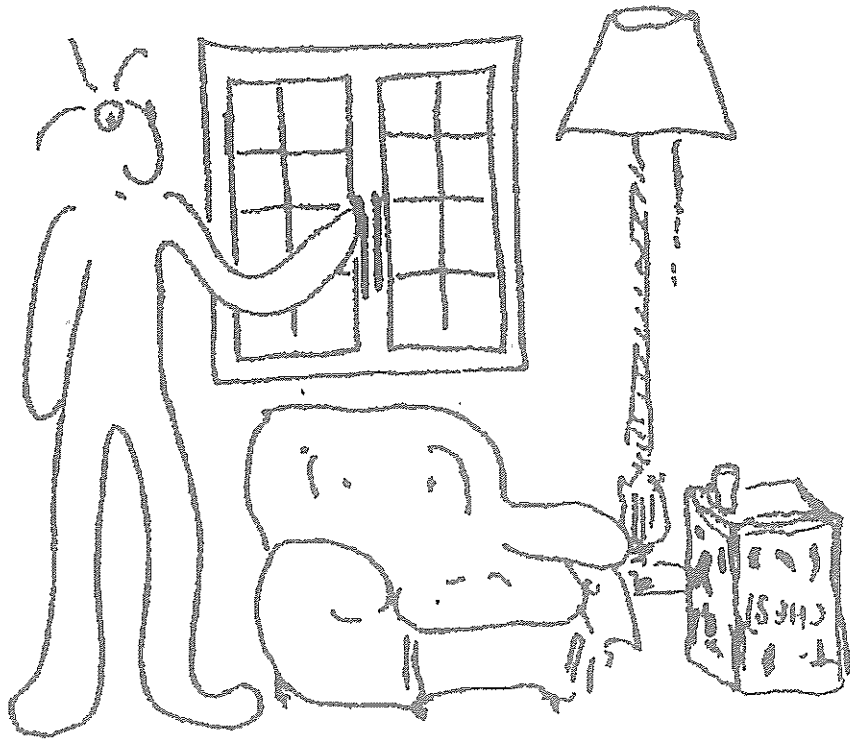


FUNCTION

Clarify the intended functions of the puppet in preparation for dynamic and informed play. Consider that the object of the exercise is to express something for yourself. Abandon any concealed intention you may have to represent or recreate the creature itself. Give up. Don't bother. Curlews are remarkable in themselves. Acknowledge a feeling as you work. Be emotional first. Throw reason to the wind. Soar with a spirit. Play with an essence.

MATERIALS

Gather or buy the materials. Zone in on them as opportunity permits. If there is no ready supply of natural materials it will be necessary to find a commercial supply. It is important to take care in handling these products as they have often been treated with chemicals.

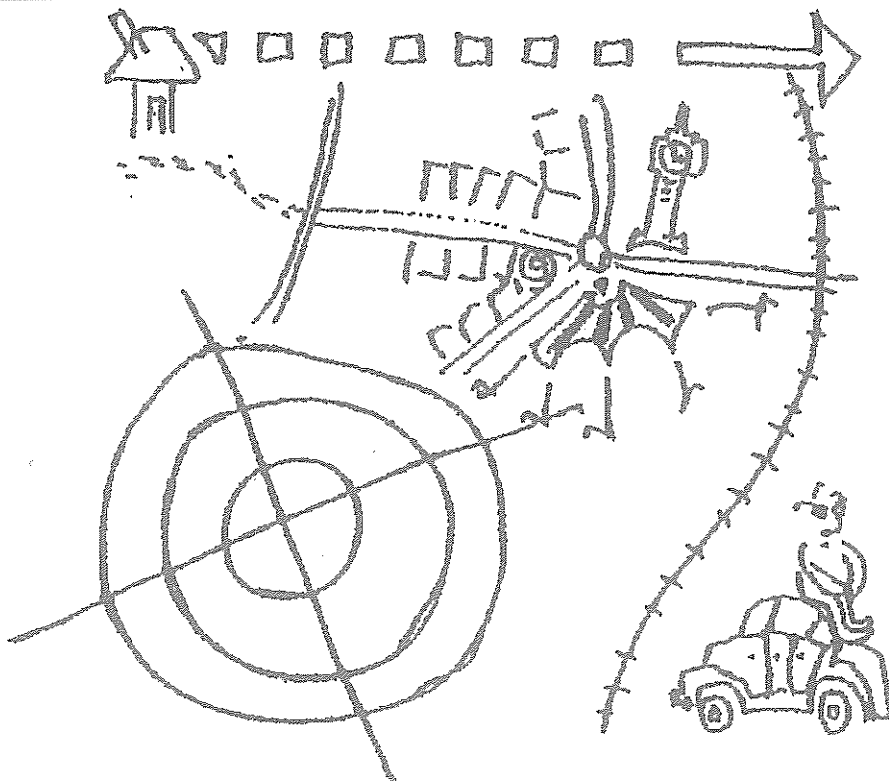


Set up a clear workspace. Secure this for the duration of your project. Storage of materials will occupy at least 3m x 1m indoors. Construction demands more like 6m x 3m indoor or outdoors. Create this as a living space. Install creature comforts.

TOOLS

Discover how to use your tools. Accept that this is a personal process. Importantly so. Exempt yourself from the helpless category. Introduce yourself to the hammer and machete. These implements become an extension of your creative will. The way you handle the tools will carry through to the way you play. It is one continual process.

"Exempt yourself from the helpless category"

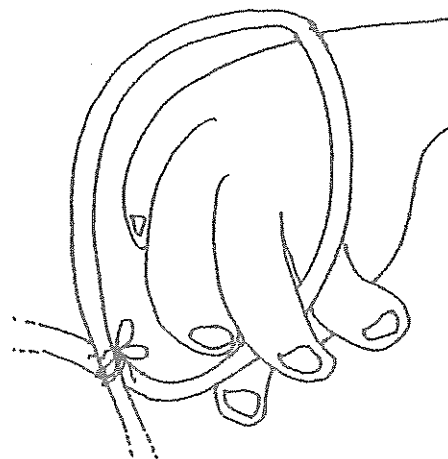


hammer
machete
secateurs
pliers
scissors
drill



CANE

Red Pahang Cane of 8mm - 12mm diameter is strong, light and flexible. Work with it dry. Beware of your own and other people's eyes. Spring it. Whip it. Flip it about. Flex it. Bind it with string. Fix it with tape. Tie it with wire.

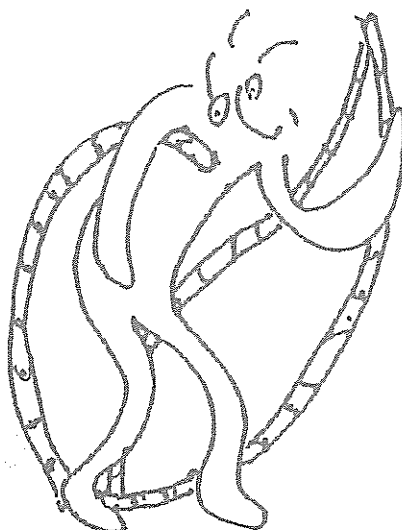
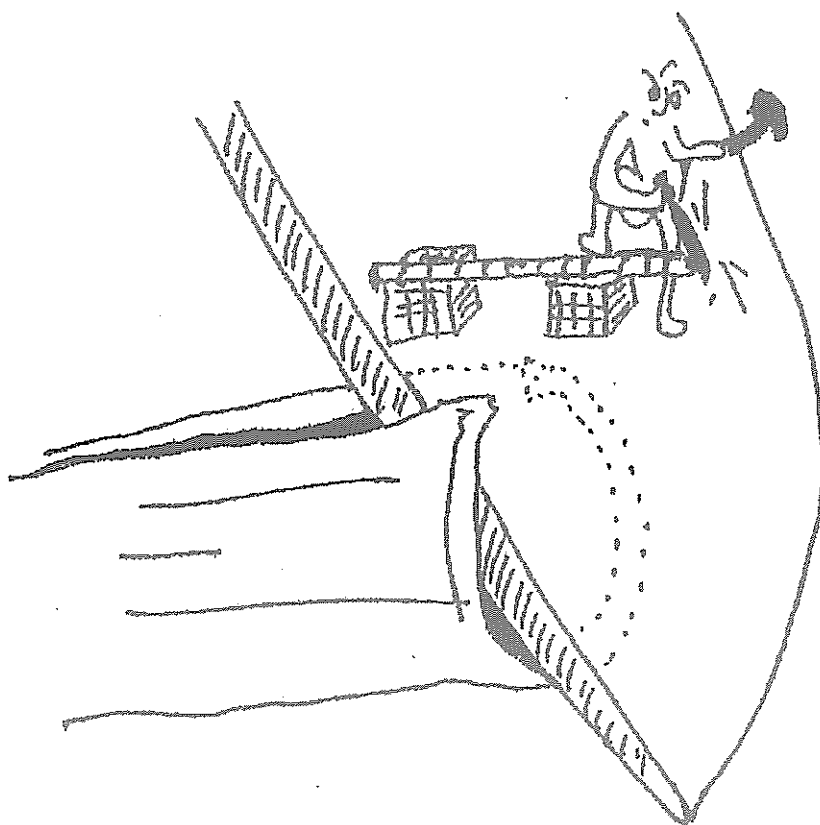


BAMBOO

Split some bamboo. Start with this relatively simple step. Learn what you can about the stuff itself. It is light. It is rigid. It splinters. Select a 3m pole that is at least 30mm in diameter. Place the machete carefully at the start. Lay the blade edge of the machete neatly across the middle of the pole end. Clonk it with the hammer so that the bamboo begins to split.

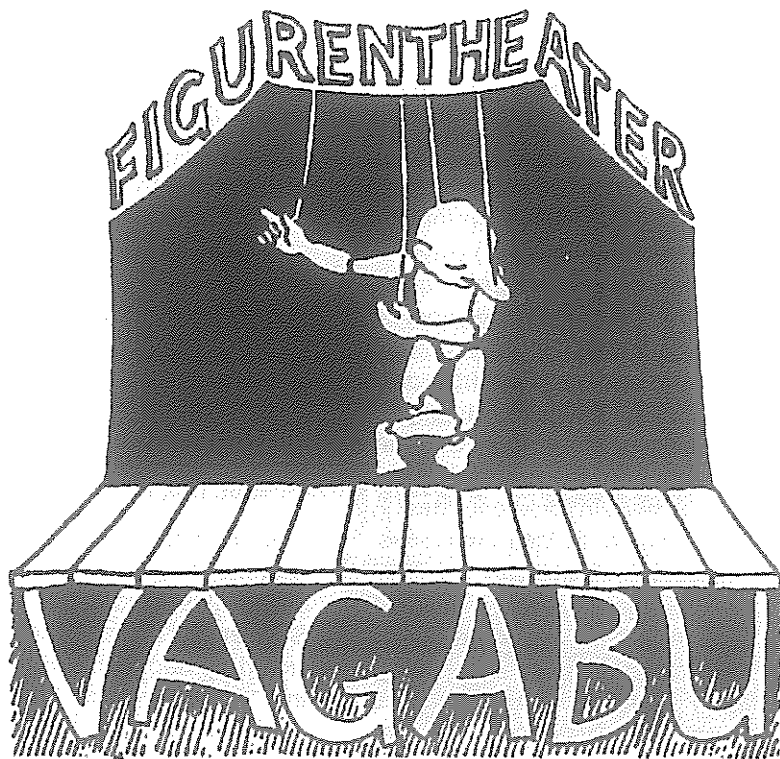
CLONKING

Continuing clonking until you split your way through a knot. Go with the flow. Split the pole in half by clonking through all the knots. Split the half poles again so you end up with quarters. A pole of 50mm diameter will split into eighths. These split lengths are called ribbons. They bend easily one way. They are rigid the other way. Very handy shape makers.



Curlew - a practical guide - parts two and three will be published in the next two issues of Australian Puppeteer.

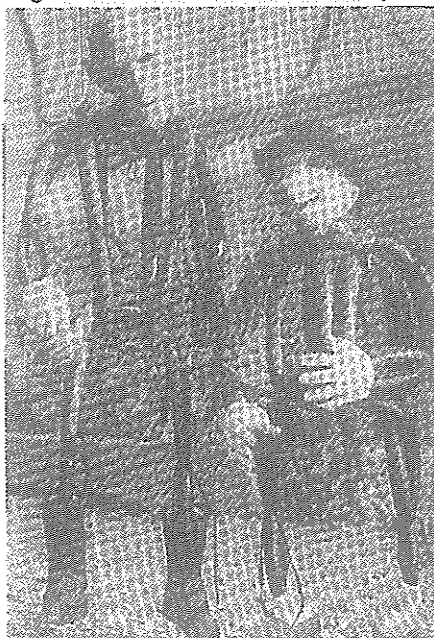
Company Profile by Karen Pfister



What does Puppetry look like on other spots of this planet? With this question in my mind I headed overseas earlier this year. On my visit back home in Switzerland, I arranged to visit a puppeteer couple, whose company is well established in the area around Basel, Maya and Christian Schuppli-Delpy. They live next to their workshop and rehearsal room in a suburb a bit outside town. Christian is the founder and director of the "Figurentheater Vagabu", a puppet-company which is running several shows each year and has become a well known name in Basel since its formation at the end of the seventies.

Maya Schuppli-Delpy has written many of the shows, and has done puppet manipulation as well as directing. She is also working as a psychiatrist. Christian Schuppli has created the majority of the puppets and also acted as a puppeteer. Asked about his "career" as a puppeteer, he said that he had been carving puppet heads ever since he was a boy. He has always preferred natural materials, especially wood, and therefore he first created mainly classical, wooden marionettes. After some time abroad and his training as a child carer he started working as an assistant at the "Basler

Marionettentheater". He stayed there several years during which he had the opportunity to develop his marionette making and manipulating skills participating in many shows. Together with Maya, whom he had met at the "Marionettentheater", they planned to open up their own company together, the "Figurentheater Vagabu" in 1978. Since then, they

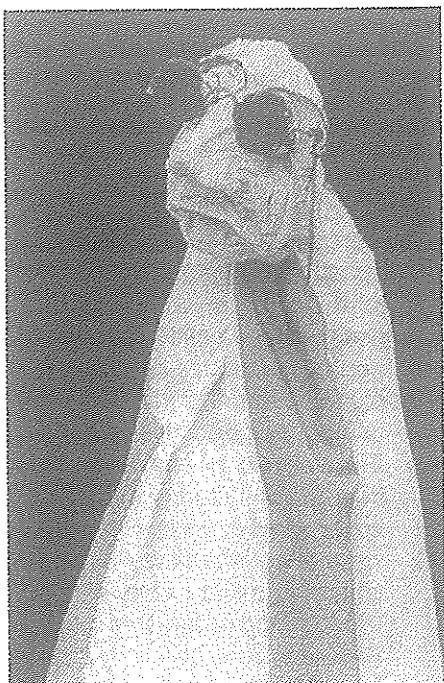


have run a great number of shows, in schools and child care centres, in theater venues, as well as workshops and open-air street performances. I would like to give you a rough idea about their work:

The "Figurentheater Vagabu" engages in a vast variety of shows, those aimed at children, connecting educational purposes with storytelling and interactive part-taking. Many mixed public shows and those designed for adults, dealing with more philosophical contents, taking up pre-existing texts, themes related to mythology as well as modern stories, but also political issues. In fact, part of "Vagabu's" activities took place outdoors within street manifestations, or independently. The diversity of audiences implies that also the stories they performed cover a wide range. Firstly there were adaptations of well known stories whereof I might name Alice in Wonderland as an example. Featuring a mixture of puppet styles, including fine wooden humanette-style puppets using real instruments.

Or Cervante's Don Quijote, where most figures are not only (as you know) a kind of fantasy made up by Quijote's brain, but also physically consist of "harmless" recycled everyday objects. Master Quijote and his servant are marionettes made of interestingly arranged bicycle tubes, so that you can actually see through their bodies, suspended in and made of air (inside and outside of the tubes!)

More recent shows were the Swiss writer Friedrich Dürrenmatt's "Das Sterben der Phytia" (a text on the Oedipus theme). For this performance Christian Schuppli created, in cooperation with puppet maker Sybille Gutzwiller, extraordinary hand puppets inspired basically by little balls of crumpled paper. Another very experimental show named "Ikarus" turned around that well known theme - with a slightly different view, however: what if Ikarus wasn't interested in flying, but his father tried to force him into it? This Ikarus loved to spend his time at the sea, gathering found objects and changing them into figures that would play according to his will. In this piece, the characters are themselves minimally represented by found objects, only hinting at their existence as persons. And Ikarus himself for instance is a "puppet" consisting of a head only.



Or I could name the story of "Schorschi", adapted from a childrens book written by Florence Parry Heide. There the main character, young Schorschi, lives several mysterious events. For instance, he suddenly notices that he is shrinking, and nobody takes his problem seriously. Or he discovers a money-tree, and a real magic Dshinn who can fulfil his wishes.

However, not all the stories are pre-existing ones. For the political performances, the kids-shows as well as the adult-theatre, Vagabu has also created its own scenarios. "Madagaskar", is a recent one of them. Based on letters, that Christian's family collected while he spent one year working at schools in Madagascar in the early seventies, hardly 20 years old. This is a story played by both a human actor and almost man sized puppets with carved heads and bodies suggested by loose fabric.

As a last example, I would like to talk about the ongoing show "Leo Leu". It shows a little insight into two families, the lion family and the bear family. The lion family consists of the two parents and their daughter, the bear family comprises the mother with two little sons. Those two families are good friends. While their parents are tea-chatting, the kids spend a lot of time with having fun and playing together. Of course, there are also minor arguments, or problems that need to be solved. A

project in connection with child care and community centers throughout the region, this show was designed for kids to experience playing, recognise conflicts and deal with them. According to Maya Schuppli-Delpy, who wrote the script for "Leo Leu", the idea is, that the development of these qualities help building up self confidence and therefore attributes to violence and drug prevention as well as general prevention. It aims at pre-school aged children with their parents, and it contains two parts: the show part, where the spectators can mainly watch and enter the mood, and the interactive part, where kids and parents participate in two separate rooms, bringing up their own ideas and playing them through. Puppetry once more convinces to be a medium with an enormous potential of possible usages, addressing different people for different purposes, dealing with vast ranges of topics, asking questions or revealing messages and magic atmospheres, and definitely showing many many faces - almost as many as there are puppets....

All facts and picture material are published with Figurentheater Vagabu's friendly permission. For people interested in further exchange, here is their address - Figurentheater Vagabu
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You are welcome to get in touch with me for inquiries about Puppetry companies, theatres and venues in Switzerland or surroundings. (I would be happy to provide you with info. I'll do my best - but of course I can't guarantee....)
Karen Pfister, 4/15 Pine Ave,
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k_pfister@hotmail.com



Alice in Wonderland

Robert Heller

History of Australian Puppetry by Richard Bradshaw

Robert Heller (1830-1878) was a famous magician and pianist who toured in Australia and New Zealand in 1869-71 for the Melbourne-based entrepreneur George S. Coppin. In some of his performances he included Punch and Judy and marionette minstrels.

Investigation of Heller has been made easier by an account in Charles Waller's book "Magical Nights at the Theatre" [Gerald Taylor: Melbourne, 1980] and the Coppin letters in Melbourne's La Trobe Library.

Robert Heller was born in 1830 in Canterbury, England, where his father was Cathedral organist. His real name was William Henry Palmer. A child prodigy at the piano, as a teenager he was twice King's Scholar at the Royal Academy of Music. Inspired by the French magician Robert-Houdin he copied his show and presented it in London, at first with little success. He had more success at 539 Broadway in New York in 1852-3 and then on tour in the U.S. with "Heller's Wonders".

For several years from 1854 he was a fashionable music teacher in Washington, D.C. He married the daughter of a German banker and they had three children. "Heller's Wonders" resurfaced in 1861 when he recommenced touring, perhaps after his marriage failed. In 1864 he began a year-long season on Broadway, in 1867 he was at the Great Exhibition in Paris, and in early 1868 he was back in London.

It was in 1869 when Heller was performing in San Francisco that Coppin's agent there, Andrew Birrell, engaged Heller for a tour of the Australian colonies and New Zealand.

Heller is best remembered now for his mind-reading act, based on Houdin's, in which a blindfolded assistant with her back to the audience was able to identify objects given to Heller as he moved amongst the audience using clues encoded into Heller's questions to her. From 1868 this assistant was

list but not with the arrivals in Sydney, so he apparently decided to quit Heller at the last moment. Throughout the voyage they had gales, rough seas and rain.

"Heller Wonders" was a mixture of magic (including the mind-reading) and piano- playing accompanied by a witty commentary and the program was changed several times in a season. In his third week at the School of Arts in Sydney the "Famous Wood Minstrels" appeared. These were ten black marionette musicians first used in New York in 1864. They

performed an overture, the song of "Ten Little Niggers" and "Chorus from Faust (a Long Way)".

There is an illustration of these figures in a copy of "Robert Heller, His Doings" in the La Trobe Library. Printed in Melbourne, such booklets were sold at performances. They contained a quirky biography of Heller and ways of doing simple tricks. A great mystery is how these puppets were worked and who provided the sound in these pre-phonograph days. Waller says that Heller travelled with puppet workers but there is no evidence for that. Birrell had arranged passages for only three people. Nor was there any band or orchestra for his performances as far as I can tell.

Punch and Judy first appeared in the fifth week in Sydney, and for the last performance of

that first season the great George Coppin appeared on stage to sing "Villikins and his Dinah" and to act the part of the Punch and Judy showman. He was to do this for Heller in other cities. Heller was later to claim that he had introduced Punch to Australia but that was not so, nor was his show markedly different.

Sometimes Heller introduced "Mons. Leotard", a figure which performed on a trapeze. At times referred to as an "automaton", this may have been some kind of marionette. (On its first



La Trobe collection, State Library of Victoria

"Haydee (or Haidee) Heller" whom he had recruited in London. She also featured in various illusions and was billed as his sister.

After an eight weeks journey from San Francisco in 1869 Heller arrived in Melbourne with Haydee and W.A. (Willie) Chapman. Coppin had expected them to arrive in Sydney and had sailed up there with his wife and young child to meet them for the opening season. The Coppins had to sail back to Melbourne and Coppin alone returned to Sydney with the Hellers on the same ship. Chapman is listed on the departure

appearance in the 1871 return season in Sydney after "a few graceful gyrations" it "got out of order".)

From Sydney in 1869 Coppin and the Hellers went to Melbourne where Willie Chapman had already begun rival performances at Weston's Opera House a week earlier, doing a show using Heller's tricks. In a letter to Coppin from San Francisco, Birrell had said Willie had been an important part of Heller's show and I suspect it's possible that he had done the "mind-reading" before Haydee arrived on the scene. Chapman toured elsewhere in Australia and performed a mind-reading act assisted by another "Willie"!

At an 1870 performance of "Chapman's Wonders" in Hobart, before Heller got there in 1871, he even introduced "Chapman's Wood Minstrels"!

Heller's first performances in Melbourne in 1869 were at the "Temple of Magic", otherwise known as the Apollo Hall, at 172 Bourke Street. They lasted ten weeks and a final "benefit" performance for the Hellers was given at the Theatre Royal. P.T. Barnum's famous midget "General Tom Thumb" and his wife also performed.

Coppin's letters to his wife from Sydney and Adelaide reveal a stormy relationship between "the Hellers". They regularly got "tipsy", quarrelled, agreed to separate, then patched it up. Soon after arrival in Sydney Miss Heller announced that she had accepted a proposal of marriage from a fellow passenger (then in N.Z.) who insisted she give up the stage. After one great row between the Hellers at their hotel in Adelaide she stood screaming in her nightgown on the stairs, drawing requests for their departure from other lodgers. During that Adelaide season Coppin once had to fetch a doctor to her hotel to get her out of bed in time for a show.

Haydee certainly liked a drink or two. On a picnic to Parramatta she ordered wine followed by ale and then brandy. She insisted on stopping at a pub for brandy and water on the way home, and back in

Sydney downed another half-tumbler of brandy.

In Adelaide she again threatened to leave the show but nevertheless went on with it to Geelong. She does not seem to have been with the subsequent tour of New Zealand where her part in the mind-reading was taken by the tour manager, Coppin's brother-in-law, Charles Hillesden.

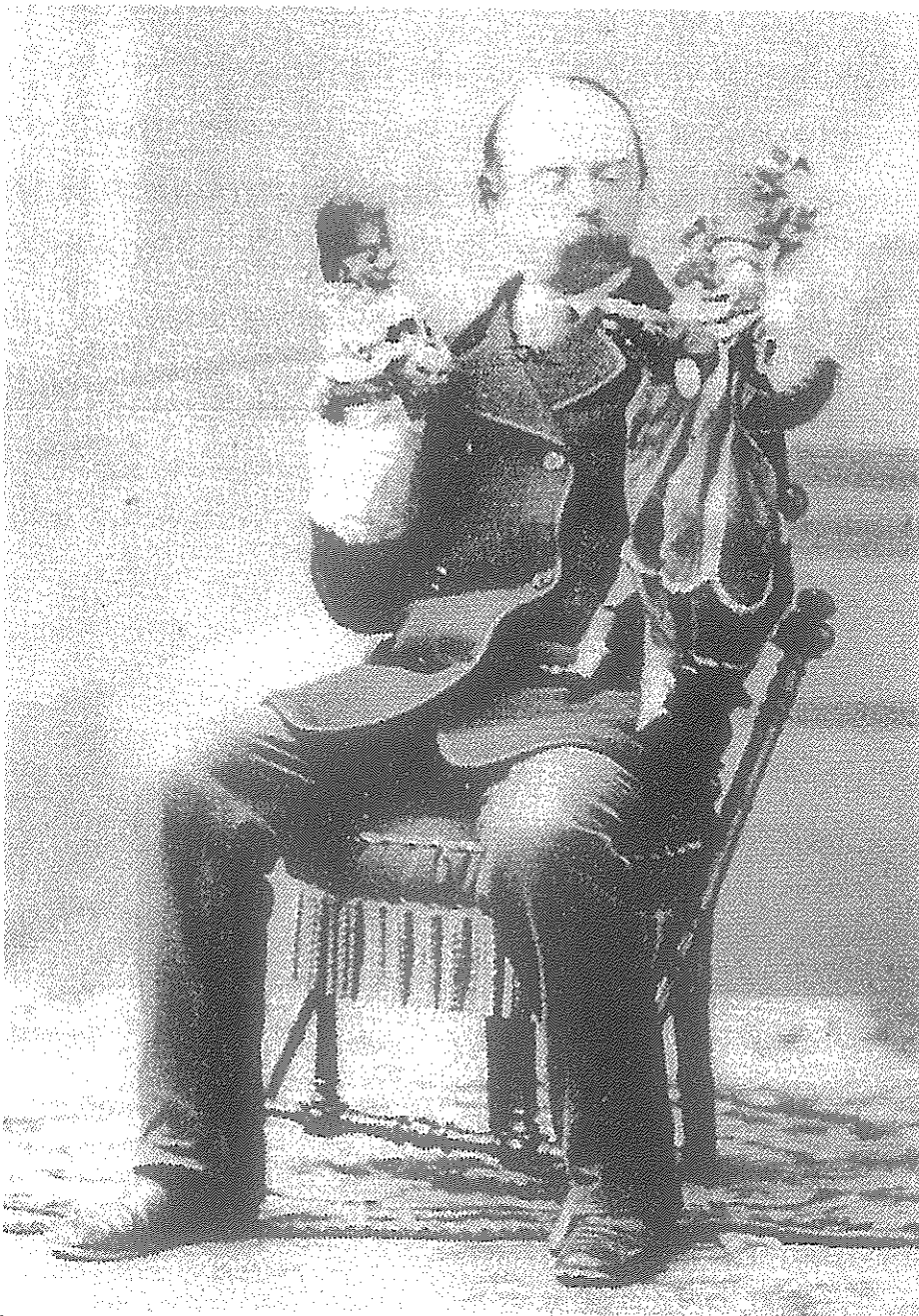
Haydee was definitely back with the show for the return seasons in Sydney in Melbourne, and with the following Victorian tour in 1871 to Bendigo, Sallarat and Geelong again. There they announced they would perform in India en route to England. Waller reports that Haydee was with Heller until his death from

pneumonia in Philadelphia in 1878, after which she returned to England.

She was clearly an able performer, and during the 1871 seasons she presented Heller's Portfolio of Living Pictures, which were her impersonations of performers known to audiences here. These included "General Tom Thumb".

Waller records that A.C. Palmer, Robert Heller's brother, had come to the Castlemaine goldfields in 1853 and later became a respected lawyer living in Hamilton, Victoria from 1862 until his death at 88 in 1912.

Richard Bradshaw



REVIEWS

**LITTLE RED
A TERRAPIN THEATRE
COMPANY PRODUCTION**

REVIEW BY RICHARD HART

LITTLE RED is a very contemporary adaption of the very old fairy tale **LITTLE RED RIDING HOOD**. It has been part of the TERRAPIN repertoire for a while and this is a review of a morning performance at the **GEORGE FAIRFAX STUDIO**, **VICTORIAN ARTS CENTRE**, during the last school holidays.

At the time, no program was available, so I don't know who was involved in the production other than one of the two very excellent performers. On entering the theatre one sees an array of biggish wooden boxes in different colours with names of places around Australia, including Woy Woy, NSW, (I lived there for a year). Their size and arrangement indicated to a puppeteers mind that they were to be used as stages at some point. I don't think the general audience would have assumed that however. As it turned out they were very nicely used as stages and I don't recall any boxes being moved during the show. There was only one point during the performance where a gap between two boxes was too wide, allowing a performer to be clearly seen crawling behind one. It created a brief, but unnecessary distraction from otherwise very good, hip, energetic and polished performance.

Without going any further, I really enjoyed the show, especially the puppetry skills of both performers. It warmed my heart to see such artful and entertaining manipulation. The puppets were beautiful, had stage presence and moved very well.

Attention to how the queen and king marionettes walked gave them great character and a witch, barely 100mm tall had wonderful arm movements,

There were a variety of objects such as a plastic rubbish bin (the **BIG BAD WOLF**), a red suitcase, a small old style electric jug turned upside down to make a fantastic grandma and even a desk lamp as the wood-chopper. I thought the desk lamp was a very funny idea, with a light on inside it. In this performance, the lighting cues were out and the lamp was dimmed fully up when it was facing the somewhat startled audience.

So, here we are with excellent performers, great puppets, inventive use of objects, good humour and a cool version of an old and too well known story which respects the intelligence of the audience, yet there was another ingredient which was not working for the whole as well as it could, the script.

The basic synopsis is as follows. At the start, the performers discover, to their horror, that the director is in Perth with all the puppets. They thought they would have to cancel the show until they decide to carry on with objects they could find around, hence the black bin as the wolf, the red suitcase as little red riding hood and so on. Some other well known stories were included as well, not just **LITTLE RED RIDING HOOD**. The Three Little Pigs, Hansel and Gretel, Billy Goats Gruff (and Alice in Wonderland?) were all

adapted and melded into Little Reds journey to Grandma's house. Mind you, Hansel and Gretel, the goats and Alice were not present, but characters and situations such as the Bridge Troll, the Witch and Royal couple became characters in little Reds adventure.

The first two minutes were very disconcerting. So convincing were the performers that some members of the audience started to get up and leave believing it really was cancelled.

This created a strong sense of disappointment at a time when the audience needs optimism about what they are about to experience. However, credit is due because the performers were able to rescue the situation, but I thought the whole exercise was unnecessary. It needs to be toned down and I was left with a mild disappointment that I would not see that beautiful marionette on one of the posters in action. But, surprise, surprise! It does appear along with a few other puppets. Hang on. I thought they were all in Perth. What's going on! A combination of relief, joy and confusion. I'm wondering what a five year old would make of it all.

I think this show has a lot going for it and as I said before, I really enjoyed the performance but, what could have been a gem, lost its lustre due to scripting problems which could be changed without too much work.

Vertical Challenge
Studiopolyglot
Review by Anita Sinclair.

Studiopolyglot is an initiative of Polyglot Puppet Theatre, a Melbourne based company well known for its regular output of children's puppet theatre pieces. Studiopolyglot is described by the company management as aiming 'to offer an opportunity for artists connected with the company to explore the artform further and to develop their skills and interest in puppetry and visual theatre. All the works are conceived, realized and performed by the artists themselves. . . .

There are few training opportunities for puppeteers in Australia and Polyglot is one of the few companies to offer extended contracts via which performers can develop and refine their skills'

Gilly McInnes, Artistic Director, Polyglot.

Bravo Polyglot! for offering this window of opportunity. Vertical Challenge, an evening of four unconnected, independent pieces, was not created for children. Indeed, it was created in the main, to be unsuitable for children. It may not be judged with a child audience in mind. It is very likely that the artists involved said among themselves, 'Hey, we're free of the mould, the constraints that naturally go with a child or mixed age audience. Let's go for it in the other direction!' And they did, some more than others.

Amongst the constraints of working to a young audience is that of making the material comprehensible, even 'obvious' or literal. Linear stories are not unheard of, blatant images, simple ideas, obvious solutions and outcomes. The brief assumed by Studiopolyglot people for this new project would enable them to shed some of the devices leading to the clarity required by children. This must have been very liberating for a group that possibly lives within those limits most of the time.

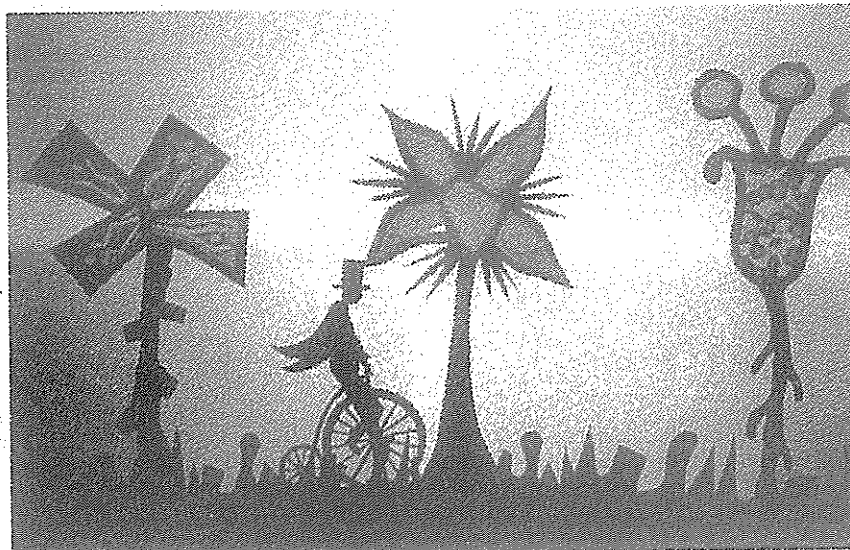
In addition, being free of the need to meet anyone else's artistic direction

or writing preferences, they could 'do as they pleased', follow any day-dream of their own, interpret it in their own way and work it up by their own standards.

Again, **bravo Polyglot!**

My lengthy lead-in deals with the context of the performances. Now to the pieces themselves, watched by me with an audience densely peppered with experienced puppeteers, parents, friends and one adult who had brought very young children with her.

The first piece, 'Around the corners of the mouth I Ride!', created and directed by Tiresa Ballard, was exclusively shadow puppetry, though supported and enriched by musicians offstage. The show started with vocalist Betty Sargent singing a simple ditty around the words, 'I



"I want to ride my bicycle..."

like to ride my bike'.

The screen images were starkly simple, shadow puppet rods cheerfully in view, techniques not mystifying. Opening images signaled that 'we are not being realistic here', that the surreal and the impossible would be shown - shadow puppetry is almost wasted if this is not used, since the opportunity for illusion is so great, not to mention that the whole field of puppetry offers this. I noted in the conversations after the show that members of the audience, myself included, had taken from these first images the feeling that the girl on the bicycle seemed to have popped something hallucinogenic before she left. Was this intended?

After departing from her house by lifting its 'lid', the girl on the bicycle travelled first through familiar, believable terrain, meeting familiar city

types (even if we include a chap on a penny-farthing bicycle and another on a unicycle!). The device of bringing in the scenery and 'waltzing' it around back and forth with the girl was attractive and worked well. Soon she, having taken off from a cliff, was travelling in impossible terrain. Images now were juxtaposed surrealistically.

While the piece was eminently watchable, taken the structure and the opportunity for the 'plausible impossible', I believe more could have been done with what were intended as fantasy effects. The division between the realistic and the surreal could have been played with more. Good work was tried by introducing live actors in shadow for certain effects. This might have been better exploited with manipulation of lighting

- it just looked too much like a girl and a bloke in ordinary shadow - no magic.

The central figure travelling on her bike had no movement at all within herself - not consistent with the 'real' movement of the wheels. Had the wheels not turned, we might not have looked for life in the girl. I was comfortable with the flat cut-out of the other figures, but needed help to 'believe in' the girl.

The central figure of a travelling cyclist created a natural flow to this sweet piece with lots of potential.

'Anyon Escapes The Ladder', by Lally Katz was the second item on the programme.

This simply realised piece was a shining example of both puppetry and theatrical story telling. Anyon herself is a hand (moppet style) puppet of middle size. Definitely odd in character and style, having a lovely whimsical presence, she was handled expertly by Darcy Neave, who operated in full view of the audience without upstaging her - very nicely done.

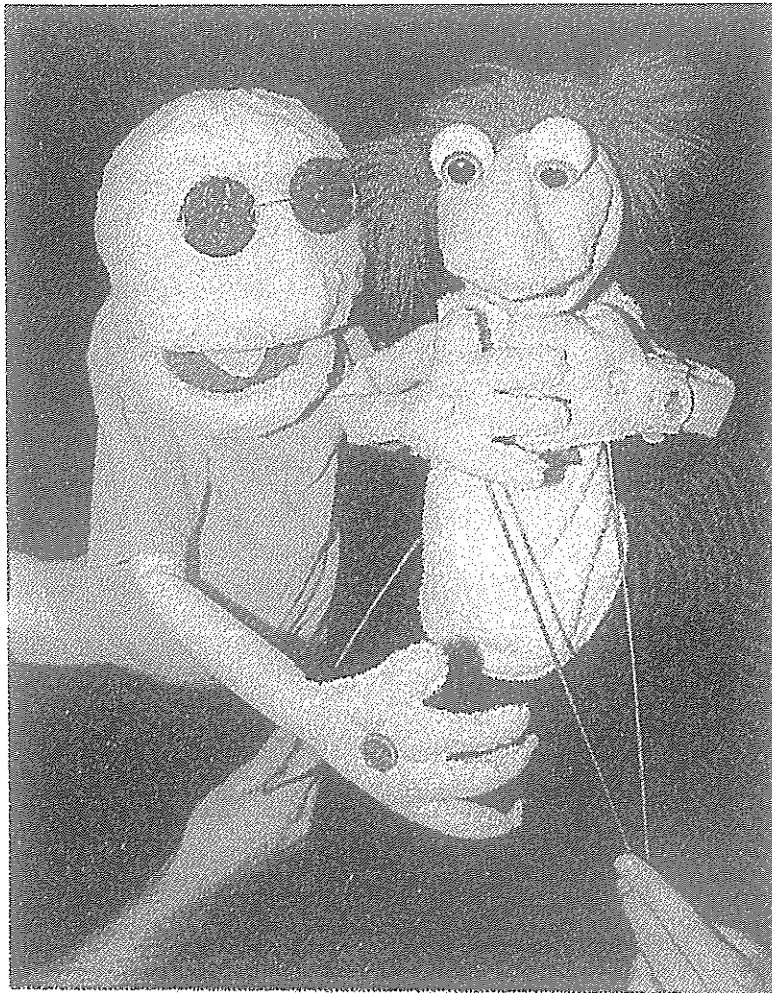
Nick Barlow, who designed and built Anyon and the other characters, directed the piece. Introducing simple but balanced use of a ladder, a slide projector, hand shadows on a

screen, he provided a context for *Anyon's* experiences. He also operated the excellent black panther puppet, one of the most convincing of its type - built more or less around the arm with the puppeteer's hand working the mouth. 'Convincing' not by its copying of nature, but rather in the congruity of its forms, colours, textures and movement. Simple but good. His other character, *The Director*, was an especial delight for me, as it illustrated my much repeated view that 'it's not how fancy it's made; it's whether you can believe it or not'. Carved blatantly with scissors out of yellow foam rubber, having a nearly non-existent face behind spectacles, this gentleman emerged pretentious and self-absorbed, vain and egotistical. Good puppetry.

Though clearly in view, Nick was something of an 'invisible presence' moving through the action, which is a credit to his sensitivity and focus. The piece had the feeling of an excerpt, which it may have been, but was acceptable in itself. I was happy to take it as 'intending to seem to be an excerpt'.

'*Absence and presence*' by Sarah Jean Kriegler, was more demanding of the audience than either of the two preceding pieces, in that its images and events were more drawn out and less literal or obvious. Combining the use of objects, human figures, costume and fabrics with musical composition by Daniel Dinuen performed live by Dinnen and Anthony Olsen, a montage of images passed through the stage, either isolated or washed freely with a variety of lighting effects. A sense was created of the passing of time. Each of these images was well conceived, often powerful, often beautiful. Separately they worked extremely well. Strung together in a long performance they asked too much of even an artistically inclined audience. In addition, an image, no matter how apt, loses impact very quickly once the audience feels they've 'twigged' it, they've 'got what you're meaning'. Nothing kills an image like over exposure.

I wonder what might be achieved with some further manipulation of lighting? And some savage cutting?



Anyon Escapes the Ladder

The final performance of the night was *Kiss*, , devised and performed by Clench Object Theatre.

These guys don't muck around when they mean to be sexual in their symbolism. Mighty great monsters lumbered around the space with eye-popping references to anus, phallus and yoni. (*So look it up*). Fabric was used liberally for construction, with various stuffing and padding, painting and decorating. The objects are wonderful, they fill one with wonder. Very suited to outdoor work, they shone in the Melbourne Fringe Festival Parade this season.

Two 'Dames' featured as the kissers. Equipped with formidable bosoms and bustles, they postured and grimaced among tree stump and what? - I don't know what the phallic shapes were, but they and the tree had puppeteers within causing odd and familiar movements. The climax (sorry) of the show came (arrived? help!) with the Dames hiking up their skirts and bending over.

Now, I could have done without the next bit myself, as could the child behind me (who should not have been there). Who decides what is obscene or pornographic? As a puppeteer, trainer and director I can say this: The images created, revolting or not, funny or not, worked through their outrageousness, not through their excellence. If the thing I was looking at was supposed to have transformed into a, perhaps, fly or perhaps, a monster, sorry, it did not LIVE.

So folks, your morality is your own as regards what you think you are saying to an audience. However, shocking or frightening the audience does not compensate for an image that doesn't quite cut it. Change the lighting. Get some taste. Whatever. What is it we want to say to an audience? Where do we want to take them? What can they take from us?

Congratulations to all who took part in this developmental project. May you prosper - and do it again soon.

What's On

TERRAPIN

Artistic Director Jessica Wilson's first work with Terrapin, 'ALICE', is the product of a collaboration between a group of exceptional artists from diverse creative backgrounds.

Written by Sue Giles and designed by Greg Methe and Hanna Parssinen, 'ALICE' features the work of dynamic performers Tania Bosak, Jo Pollitt, Kirsty Grierson and Philip Mitchell.

With original music composed by Don Hopkins and a lighting design by Philip Lethlean, ALICE combines puppetry, dance, design and music.



DREAM PUPPETS

Currently on tour in NSW, Richard Hart will be back in Victoria with a new show 'DREAMER IN SPACE' for 2000

SNUFF PUPPETS

Forest in the Night

This year the dynamic giant puppet theatre company transforms the Sailyards (cnr Swanston & Little Lonsdale Streets) into a sculptural installation of three towering mountains. When the crust of this new world breaks open, creatures emerge from the subterranean.

Awkward but beautiful Snuff Puppets combine live music, anarchic theatrics, innovation and imagination.

28 and 29 October at 8.30pm

Late night show 30 October at 10pm



SPARE PARTS PUPPET THEATRE NEWS

2000 National Tour-

The Bugalugs Bum Thief

After hugely successful seasons in Japan, Western Australia, Noriko Nishimoto's production of "The Bugalugs Bum Thief" will be touring the east coast in 2000. Based on the novel by Tim Winton, "The Bugalugs Bum Thief" will tour to Victoria, Canberra, New South Wales, Queensland, Northern Territory between May and July.

Triennial Funding

Spare Parts Puppet Theatre has been allocated Triennial Funding from the Australia Council Theatre fund. Absolutely fantastic news - the funding basically provides the the foundation of a whole new range of works.

Peter J. Wilson

Artist in Residence

Skyworks Artistic Director Peter J. Wilson is currently mid way through a three month residency with Spare Parts Puppet Theatre. Funded by the Australia Council, Peter has been in creative development with Noriko Nishimoto, conducted workshops for students from WAAPA and various Master Classes for professional and developing puppeteers. The final section of his residency is focused on developing a workshop

presentation for AWESOME - the International Festival for Young People (Nov 7-14)

Entitled 'Object Based Steet', the project involves Peter working with Joanne Foley, Sanjiva Margio and Justin Cheek to create a fresh look at objects on the move. Doors, mannequins and mattresses are the puppets - the results will amaze.

In Development

Productions planned for 2000 include:

EAT THE MOON

A brand new work directed by Noriko Nishimoto, original script by writer Heather Nimmo and designer Zoe Atkinson (June/July at SPPT)

MIDNIGHT GANG

A co-production with the West Australian Symphony Orchestra for Awesome 2000

CAT BALLOON

A refreshed look at the Cat on the Moon (March/April) with a possible Japan tour in November.

Coming Soon

Following her initial season in April and performances as part of the Sydney Carnival, Spare Parts Puppet Theatre Associate Jane Davies is presenting her production of FORTUNATA at SPPT as part of the Fremantle Festival.

Eugene O'Neill
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Tenth Anniversary!
**NATIONAL PUPPETRY
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Richard Termine
Artistic Director

We are pleased to announce the collaborative Production Workshops for Summer 2000: Acclaimed Guest Artists Ann and David Powell of "PUPPETMONGERS" will create an ensemble production. Another guest artist will be announced shortly.

Emerging Artists Projects, an opportunity to create your own performance pieces with the support of puppet artists Pam Arciero, Bart Roccoberton and resident playwright Annie Evans.

Puppet Anarchy with Martin Robinson, a highly experimental workshop; exploring beyond the boundaries of traditional puppetry form and function.

An intensive Playwriting Workshop taught by Annie Evans and Lenny Pina, designed specifically for people who wish to write new puppetry pieces to be presented during the conference.

Marionette Workshop, instructed by Jim Rose and Fred Thompson. Participants will learn the Rose style of marionette construction and manipulation.

Application Deadline April 1, 2000
For more information:
Bobbie Nidzgorski,
General Manager
The National Puppet Conference
41 White Birch Circle
Niantic, CT 06357
bnidz@aol.com

Funding Update

The Australia Council has recently released details of Grants for 2000 and triennial grants. Congratulations to all recipients, particularly Spare Parts Puppet Theatre and Polyglot. Both companies received triennial grants for activities from 2000 through to 2002. Puppetry related grants were as follows:

Snuff Puppets Inc for 'Cruelty of the Body' and 'The Original Brown Brothers Show' production - \$27,000

Eliza Tobin to undertake a Puppetry Workshop with Alison Bogg and Andrew Hansen - \$7,813

Handspan Visual Theatre Ltd for 2000 activities - \$100,000

Polyglot Puppet Theatre Ltd for 2000-2002 activities - \$300,000

Spare Parts Puppet Theatre Inc for 2000-2002 activities - \$240,000

If you would like a copy of the Australia Council's **SUPPORT FOR THE ARTS HANDBOOK** call toll free 1800 226 912 or email a request to handbook@ozco.gov.au
The website address is <http://www.ozco.gov.au/>

"Is It Going To Stay That Colour?" (A competition.)

Rob Matson tells an excellent story of going to a production meeting for a pilot TV show, armed with an unfinished, unpainted Celastic puppet to show the progress of the build. At the end of the meeting, the executive producer, who had looked keen, if somewhat confused throughout, approached Rob. After expressing enthusiasm about the show's progress he pointed to the puppet, obviously worried.
"Is it going to stay that colour?"
To his credit, Rob quietly explained that the puppet would in fact be painted to match the approved designs and so, no, it wasn't going to stay that colour. The producer was greatly relieved and Rob exited shaking his head.

Some people who encounter puppets offer pertinent observations, intelligent and considered constructive criticism and show a real and abiding understanding of the artform.

Others do not.

I'm keen to hear of other's experiences of bizarre, stupid, funny, obscure or weird comments, questions or observations that people have made to them. What is the strangest comment you have received about a puppet? What is the most stupid thing someone has said to you after a show?

Please send all brief amusing anecdotes, wacky commentary or pithy, wry observations to the "Is it going to stay that colour" competition c/o Australian Puppeteer.

And yes, you read the cover correctly, I'm offering a whole week's supply of glitter hot glue (that's TWO STICKS!) for the funniest entry.

Next issue I'll announce the winner and offer another outstanding prize.

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Coming Soon! The Summer 2000 issue!

Features include:

- *On the road with The Hobbit, a puppet diary by Heath McIvor
- *Interview with Mo winner Murray Raine
- *Part Two of Ian Cuming's Curlew
- *How to smooth foam, a handy guide for sculptors
- *Puppetry on the WWW, an update on internet sites of interest
- *and of course, much, much more!

The deadline for the first Australian
Puppeteer for the new millenium is

JANUARY 10

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competition entries and so on reach
me by the deadline.
No, really, I mean it.
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