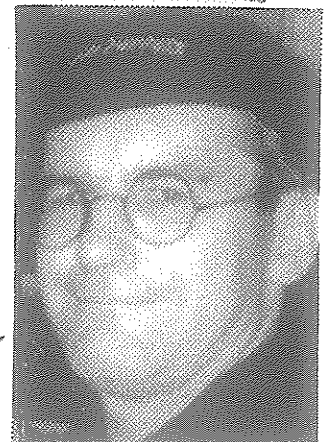
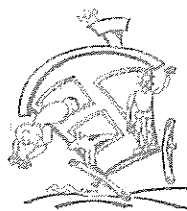
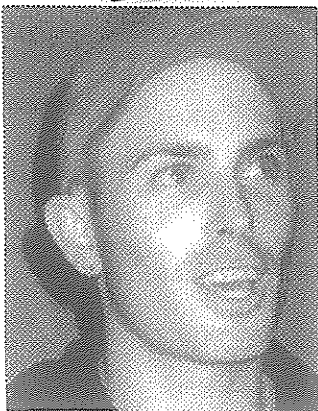
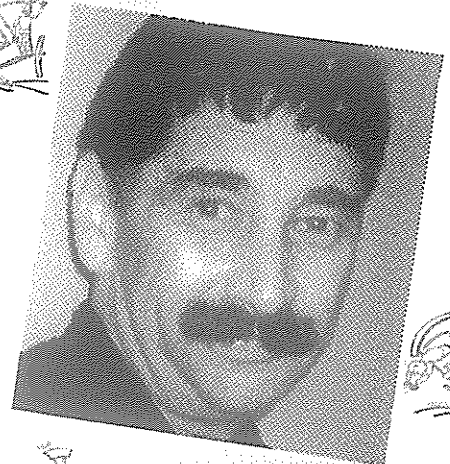


SUMMER 1999

# AUSTRALIAN PUPPETEER



FACES OF AUSTRALIAN PUPPETRY

**THE MAGAZINE OF UNIMA\* AUSTRALIA**  
\*UNION INTERNATIONALE DE LA MARIONNETTE

#### NOTE ON PUPPETS

... the original method of presentation introduced by Bob Bromley – that the puppet loses none of his appeal even when stripped of all his trappings of scene and theatre. . . . This idea of bringing on a puppet and manipulating the perch in full view of the audience. . . . adds to, rather than takes away from the sense of wonder and mystification.

... To some people the puppet show is something for the children. But these are the unhappy who never saw a good one when they were young, or have not since tried the experiment.

... By and large it's fair to say that male and female, child and adult, highbrow and lowbrow, rich and poor all fall for its charms.

*Jan Bussell.*

*From:*

*The Puppet Theatre,  
Faber and Faber, London 1948.*

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*Front cover photos from 1999 One Van Festival: Top: Rowena McGregor,  
Andrew McDougal, Margaret Bradshaw. Centre: Shona Reppe, Jonquil  
Temple, Jiri Vacek. Bottom: Gavin Sainsbury, Ann Davis, Richard Hart.*

# CONTENTS



## EDITOR'S PAGE

A Message from Anita Sinclair .....	2
-------------------------------------	---

## PRESIDENT'S PAGE

Sue Wallace Speaks .....	3
--------------------------	---

## SECRETARY'S PAGE

Richard Hart Reports .....	4
New Fees for Members .....	4

## REPORTS

One Van Festival Reflection, Anita Sinclair .....	5
The Hobby Horses, an Award Winning Performance .....	7
One Van Festival, Sue Wallace .....	8
Sydney Puppet Theatre, Sue Wallace .....	8
Richard Hart in Korea .....	8
Spare Parts Puppet Theatre, Noriko Nishimoto .....	8

## HISTORY

Professor Westen's Dogs and Puppets, Richard Bradshaw .....	6
Theatrum Cum Pimperlis, Jiri Vacek .....	15

## SPECIAL FEATURES

Peter Scriven, In Memoriam, Julie McNeill .....	14
Touring Tips, Dennis Murphy .....	18
The Funding Fight, name supplied .....	19

## WORKSHOP SPREAD

Centrefold Project Sheet: Manipulation, Lorrie Gardner .....	10
--	----

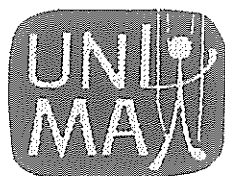
## PUPPETRY RELATED ARTS

Magic, David Brown speaks with Prodos .....	12
---	----

LETTERS .....	2, 3
---------------	------

LOCAL AND OVERSEAS NEWS .....	16
-------------------------------	----

SPONSORS' MESSAGES .....	21
--------------------------	----



**UNION INTERNATIONALE DE LA MARIONNETTE**  
FOUNDED IN 1929    MEMBER OF ITI (UNESCO)

## EDITOR'S PAGE

Welcome everyone to the *Summer* issue of *Australian Puppeteer*. We are well into the New Year now but it's never too late to say 'Have a Great 1999!'

You will find this issue of our magazine to be markedly different from our previous publications; this is due to some great difficulties faced by the Editor's office during this term, the silliest being that I had put a spade through three of my toes! This altered my point of view more than somewhat over four long months of healing. **Prodos** as always has been a great support, but since all of us on your **UNIMA Executive** are notoriously over committed, even he could not speed things up. So, we are late and we are simplified, cut back a bit, so that the *Summer* publication can reach you while it is still summer.

### ONE VAN FESTIVAL happened in January!

I'm happy to say I was there and had a whopping good time. The reports, reviews and photographs are not in yet, so you will have to wait until next *Australian Puppeteer* to find out all about it, but it will be worth the wait. However, I wanted to refer to it at least, since it was a resounding success, a major *coup* for **Sue Wallace**, **Steve Coupe** and the folk at **Blackheath Area Neighbourhood Centre**. Look for Sue's brief note on page 8 and mine on page 5.

There has been a lively response to the 'Ideas Review' by **Prodos** in the *Spring* edition of *Australian Puppeteer*. I have not received any feedback criticizing the article, or I would have been glad to include it as balance.

Thank you to the contributors who create a crisis of selection in the editorial line of things. You are so good. Please forgive my errors and omissions as you find them this time. Tell me if I have goofed badly and I'll apologize and clear it up in future. If your article has been omitted, believe that it was not a comment on quality, just space and time.

I have received some CV material from some of you that would normally become our 'Who's Who' segment. This will appear eventually. Thanks for offering it.

There is a lot happening out there in puppetry. May your work serve you well this year and may we all stay in touch,

Anita Sinclair.

## LETTERS

I enjoyed **Prodos's** review of 'Timebender'. (By *Polyglot, Victoria, Ed*).

I have no opinion of the show because I did not see it, but I appreciate his concerns with the underlying premises that children may adopt. I constantly find myself in a similar situation with my own children's attitudes and viewing, and feel myself more and more the victim of the 'generation gap'. I recently banned a TV show in our house, and being a person supportive of freedom of speech and artists' rights to present work however they choose, it is an act I thought I would never be capable of.

I know I am doomed to failure: their indignation and self righteous anger at my decision, and their easy access of the episodes through the internet, friends and merchandising make my protest seem futile. And yet I am convinced they are unable to see past the parody, that they are in danger of emulating the wrong things.

I actually began my work as a puppeteer because, as a grade 6 teacher, I found most students had already formed many of their basic attitudes. These attitudes and opinions were formed from parents' opinions, from TV, and friends. These attitudes had not set like concrete, but were more like a moulded jelly; they retained or returned to their original shape regardless of prods and efforts to reshape. I realised it was necessary to help younger children develop healthier attitudes, and began working with kindergarten children and puppets.

This brings me to your thoughts on the *Polyglot* show. Our first show set out to help children think about individual differences and helping others.

The main characters couldn't find anyone to play with, etc., etc., etc., At the end of the show the character had a friend. Although we intended the children to explore the different ways of playing together, the children honed in on the fact that the main bird found another bird to play with, and therefore they should look for someone like themselves to play with. VERY quick rewrite so that bird and tortoise got together, and bird had to give tortoise piggyback ride so he could keep up!

Which is a long winded way of saying I think it is very important to examine the messages - intended and unexpected - which the audience receives from our performances.

Jean Haughton Fiddlesticks Productions, Victoria.



## LETTERS

**Lorrie Gardner, Gardner Puppet Theatre, Victoria**  
I was delighted to read the 'Ideas Review' of *Timebender* by Prodos in the last issue of *Australian Puppeteer*. I have not as yet had the pleasure of seeing *Timebender* so I cannot comment about the accuracy of his ideas but only to say that I was pleased to find someone actually looking at the script of a puppet play.

So often I have felt critical of scripts of puppet school shows that I saw. I began to feel I was the only one who actually listened to the script since most reviewers only comment on puppets, manipulation, or sets.

Does everyone feel that 'scripts don't matter because puppetry is a visual medium' I began to wonder? I thought Prodos did an amusing and well written contribution that should make all us script writers think.

**Phillip, Kirstie and Greg from Terrapin, Tasmania.**

A big hello from Terrapin in Taiwan. Enjoying the mixture of chicken testicles, intestines and rice and blood. The language is a challenge and the interpretation of our Australian humour is a little lost on the average six year old Taiwanese child, but they are enjoying the visuals and some puppetry they have never seen before - objects, marionettes and actors talking to puppets. It's fun, hot and a cultural feast.

**Olga Murray, Victoria**

Thank you Prodos and everyone else involved with this magazine - it's terrific!

**Jean Haughton, Fiddlestick Productions, Victoria**

The magazine goes from strength to strength. The last issue was fabulous, the amount of valuable contacts and references invaluable to someone like me, who works mostly under my own steam. Whenever I receive the mag I feel not alone, which is different to feeling a strong sense of unity with other puppeteers, because I so seldom meet others, but I love the comfort of knowing others also spend hours fiddling and creating.

**Ann Davis, New South Wales.**

(To Prodos) . . . Am I still eligible for membership? I am no longer working full-time, after fifty years with no time off. . . . I've just read your review of 'Timebender', and I agree with every word - where is puppetry going?

Ann, yes, you are eligible for membership, Prodos.

SUMMER 1998 - 1999

## PRESIDENT'S PAGE

The twentieth century is almost over and even with the enormous technical changes that have happened in the last one hundred years, puppetry, even at its most simple, is still delighting audiences all over the world.

During 1998, the Executive of UNIMA Australia continually reviewed the effectiveness of our organisation both nationally and internationally. This included looking at the relevance of UNIMA to Australian members. Nationally, UNIMA has been effective in providing a point of contact for anyone interested in the art form. There have been formal and informal meetings in various cities and members are continually encouraged to use the organisation to help themselves and other members. We still have some way to go in promoting puppetry to the wider community and this is the challenge for 1999 and beyond.

Internationally, UNIMA provides puppetry contacts for members travelling overseas. It has also given international visitors to Australia the opportunity of meeting Australian members. Thank you to Jen Pfeiffer for her continued work with the Asia/Pacific Commission in maintaining communication with our nearest neighbours.

UNIMA Australia is growing stronger all the time and this is due to the willingness of the Executive and the membership to give of their time and energy. Thank you for your commitment and enthusiasm this year.

I would also like to relay, in public, to Anita and Prodos the many enthusiastic comments I hear about the quality of this publication. On behalf of the membership thank you for your enormous amount of work.

### Other Matters

I had the pleasure of meeting Gen Yo Fujiwara, the secretary of *UNIMA Japan*, while we were performing at a festival in Tokyo. At the opening night party he gave me an entertaining manipulation workshop in the art of using chopsticks. Slippery mushrooms are still a challenge.

While in Tokyo, Steve and I also visited the Puppet House owned by UNIMA member Takuro Fukazawa. He has a beautifully decorated shop with some exquisite individual creations and good quality puppets from commercial producers in the USA and Germany among other places.

Sue Wallace.

AUSTRALIAN PUPPETEER 3

# SECRETARY'S PAGE

from Richard Hart.

Hello members.

I am sitting at home on a rainy Sunday morning in Melbourne reflecting on how eventful 1998 had been for our organisation and for Australian puppetry. 1998 commenced with the *'One Van' Puppet Festival*. A rare event in Australia. What's more it has happened again in January 1999! This may be the beginning of Australia's first ongoing, annual, national Puppet Festival. Truly a major development for our art form.

This year we also saw a change in the membership of the executive committee, including the addition of the Editor to the executive.

Once again this year quite a few of our members performed their work overseas with acclaim and a growing number of young enthusiasts joining us. Our membership has further extended across the Tasman as New Zealand UNIMA disbanded.

1998 was also the first year we offered a scholarship!

Finally for 1998, at least two members won awards for their work: Congratulations to Jonquil Temple and Polyglot.

## So what of 1999?

Pretty much more of the same I suspect (except for radical executive changes). As we have increased subscriptions by a minimal amount we will be able to offer more service to our membership and Australian puppetry.

Thanks to a generous donation from Terrapin Theatre, Tasmania, a couple of years back, \$300 is allocated for the UNIMA website this year. Webmaster Joe Sutherland has done wonders in creating this site and we are most fortunate to benefit from his skills, generosity and enthusiasm.

In all, what a milestone of a year 1998 has been and I'm sure 1999 will be just as exciting.

Richard Hart

## CONTACT LIST

Last issue saw an update of the list of contact names and addresses. We still receive friendly complaints about errors. You yourself might not mind too much, but the people trying to contact you do! KEEP US UP TO DATE PLEASE!

## AUSTRALIAN CENTRE OF UNIMA NOTICE TO ALL MEMBERS

**THERE WILL BE AN INCREASE  
IN ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTIONS TO  
\$ 25.00 PER YEAR, EFFECTIVE  
MARCH 30<sup>TH</sup> 1999. THE \$5  
JOINING FEE STILL APPLIES.**

IN ORDER TO DEVELOP OTHER  
SERVICES TO MEMBERS,  
ALONG WITH OUR MAGAZINE,  
WE DECIDED ON THIS SMALL  
INCREASE. AS A MEMBER YOU  
ARE PART OF THE AUSTRALIAN  
AND INTERNATIONAL PUPPETRY  
NETWORK, PROVIDING  
INFORMATION AND CONTACTS  
FOR FESTIVALS, TRAINING AND  
TRAVEL.

THIS NEW FEE WILL INCREASE  
OUR EFFECTIVENESS IN TH  
SUPPORT AND DEVELOPMENT  
OF PUPPETRY ARTS IN  
AUSTRALIA.

## USEFUL O.S. CONTACTS

Puppeteers of America's  
**THE PUPPETRY STORE**  
1525-24<sup>th</sup> S.E.  
Auburn WA 98002-7837. USA.

British UNIMA and also DaSilva Puppet Books  
Both contacted at:  
Ray DaSilva  
63 Kennedy Road, Bicester  
Oxfordshire OX6 8BE United Kingdom

**The Puppet Centre**  
BAC Lavender Hill, London SW11 5TN  
United Kingdom



# ONE VAN FESTIVAL

JANUARY 1999

BLACKHEATH, NEW SOUTH WALES.

By Anita Sinclair

At the end of January, hot on the heels of our Christmas and New Year celebrations, a lively and vital bunch of puppeteers converged on the small mountain community of **Blackheath** in New South Wales, two hours by train or car west of **Sydney**.

This event was brought together by a fiercely dedicated team made up of the directors of **The Sydney Puppet Theatre** and the Principals and staff of the **Blackheath Area Neighbourhood Centre**. I will not list names here for dread fear of missing someone out and this would be a very bad thing, the organizers and helpers at this festival carried all the work, and were seen to be driving themselves mercilessly every hour. A better report from more informed reporters will appear in another publication when all the reflections have had time to come in.

**This was the second ONE VAN FESTIVAL ever.**

I had not attended last year's event, but received excellent reports both written and verbal.

A significant feature of the festival was the participation at all levels of Australia's small companies: the 'One Van' performers, with their small outfits, portable set-ups and their impressive self-sufficiency. The name of the festival tells us that this was what to expect. This was a showcase of the work of the intrepid, the independent, the entrepreneurial spirit on a small scale materially but on a massive scale in human terms.

'Midst rain and sleet . . . the mail must go through . . . **THE SHOW MUST GO ON!**' It poured buckets in **Blackheath** as the vans pulled up by the double doors to unload and set up. Drenched puppeteers and their faithful helpers protected their puppets, sets, costumes from the elements. Not long after the weather would lift and the workers could go to the nearest coffee shop and recover.

**The constructive, happy, excited spirit shown by all is the stuff that made the festival fly.**

The spaces were great, more than adequate, although it becomes apparent that the organizers have a successful festival on their hands and will need more space. No,

this is not a negative, this is an accolade! We should have more problems like this – the need of yet more room for the huge audiences. The need of more times, repeats of popular shows, the need to fit in the wide range of keen performers.

It really is a case of 'be there or be square! This festival is a 'don't miss'. Any number of the older and younger brigade in attendance have been seen at other Australian and World festivals. We know how they go. We know the benefits and the disadvantages. For us in Australia, money for travel is a big one; transporting our equipment and our cast over land or overseas costs time and money.

**Here we have a festival that serves us on our doorstep! It lacks nothing.**

Of course you could add services; this is good, the thing can grow. But on its present scale it is a ripper event for the contact-hungry puppeteers and for the fun-hungry general public.

The local people supported the festival solidly for the length of its weekend run. The weather permitted plenty of lazing around on grass and wandering outside in the breaks between shows, having saved the rainy bits for the inconvenience of the performers. (Nobody minded, they're all used to this sort of thing) Shopkeepers participated with window displays and with vouchers for the (impoverished?) artists. We were not too proud to cash in our vouchers, it was fun!

We had ample time to get together with each other, eat together, party on. . . . The benefits of feedback, recognition of good work, thoughtful criticism, exploration of ideas are immeasurable for those of us who want to learn. Those who needed support for their monumental output, the acclaim, the applause from their equals or their guides, heroes and leaders were able to find it in generous quantities in **Blackheath**. Those who needed to ask questions, find resources and meet teachers found answers.

I must favour two festival organizers over others in this column (with the caution that this must not take anything from the other workers and leaders). I believe it is appropriate to thank especially first **Sue Wallace** for the initiation of this event and then **Steve Coupe** who has clearly been a right hand in the creation of it with her.

**CONGRATULATIONS FOR YOUR MAJOR ACHIEVEMENT!**

# PROFESSOR WESTEN'S DOGS AND PUPPETS

## HISTORY OF AUSTRALIAN PUPPETRY

By Richard Bradshaw

Just after Christmas 1875 the Theatre Royal Adelaide reopened with "*Westen's theatre Mechanique and Troupe of Comiques from the leading Theatres of England and America*". Only a month earlier the celebrated Madame Ristori and her large Italian dramatic company had been performing (in Italian!) on the same stage. It was something of a surprise then to discover that the entire program was carried out by Mr Westen himself, with a supporting cast of dogs (or perhaps this time just one dog) and puppets.

Mr Westen began the show with a number of well-known magical tricks and then two figures about a foot high appeared in a *Punch* booth and danced an imitation of "*The Golden Show Dance*". Another sang a song and fired a gun! After a long interval (advertised to be only ten minutes) Mr Westen attempted to recreate the sound of church bells, but the resemblance was minimal. Then, according to advertisements, the evening's entertainment closed with a "laughable drama, *First Play*, the full strength of Westen's Royal Marionette Company, entitled '*Punch and Judy*'." And that is what it was. A *Punch* and *Judy* show.

Only a fortnight earlier McDonough and Earnshaw's Royal Marionettes from America had completed a month of well acclaimed performances in White's Rooms in Adelaide. that show had trick marionettes, a minstrel show and an elaborate pantomime with a final transformation scene. Anyone who had experienced a show of that scale or calibre would have been surprised to discover that Westen's Royal Marionette Company consisted of the stock glove-puppet characters of *Punch and Judy*!

The critics from *The South Australian Register* conceded that "at least a portion of the audience applauded heartily at times and seemingly approved of (Westen's) efforts to amuse them", but did not feel the Theatre Royal was the place for such an entertainment.

He wrote that "The most unpleasant feature of the whole affair was the introduction of a poor trembling frightened little dog, which certainly went through some clever saltatory exercises, but in a spiritless and weebegone manner . . ." "In this nineteenth century" he added, "it is surely time that this class of exhibitions of performing animals should be discouraged." The show ran for a week.

JG Westen's *Punch and Judy* and performing dogs were around for fifteen years or more. A detailed report

of one of his shows tells how, after an initial dialogue between *Punch* and the showman, *Punch* and *Judy* sang "*Love among the Roses*", dancing "spiritedly, if not gracefully". They quarreled, and *Judy* was killed "behind the scenes". The two babies were then tossed out of the window. (If the report is accurate, Westen's show was unusual in that there were two babies, and *Judy* was killed offstage, and before either baby was thrown out.)

There followed serio-comic (and no doubt politically incorrect) exchanges between *Punch* and *Jim Crow* (a black), a Chinaman (sic) and a London clown. The dog *Toby* now appeared, and in this case, in keeping with tradition, he was a live dog. A puppet *Tom Sayers*, presumably named after someone well known at the time, argued with *Punch* about the ownership of *Toby*. *Punch* then encountered the ghost of *Judy*, the *Doctor*, the *Policeman*, the *Beadle*, and finally *Jack Ketch* the hangman, thrashing and disposing of each in turn. Finally the *Devil*, "The Gentleman in Black", took *Punch* below.

This is from a description of a show given at the Trinity School in Lower Fort Street, Sydney, one evening in 1871. Following *Punch*, one of Mr Westen's assistants, Mr J Oaten, performed "with much taste and skill" on the concertina, concluding with an imitation of the bagpipes which brought howls of delight from the pupils. A "pretty little terrier (apparently *Toby* without his robes) then performed a variety of tricks, jumping through hoops and small drums, and standing on his hind legs, on the back of a chair, & c." Mr Oaten was joined by Mr Norton on the violin.

The report continues, "*The Golden Shoe Dance*" by two marionette figures succeeded, and met with the applause it well deserved. the last thing was the singing of a comic song by an inimitable (*black, Ed*) marionette, whose life-like activity and moving mouth elicited much merriment." Finally Mr Westen announced that half of the proceeds was to go to the school's prize fund.

These later figures appear to have been true marionettes, so if they could be presented in a *Punch* booth (as reported in Adelaide some years later) the strings were probably very short and the booth a bit higher than usual. In the same period Westen also gave performances at St Benedict's School, in what is now Broadway, The Temperance Hall, the New Oddfellows' Hall in Elizabeth Street, and the Oddfellows' Hall in Balmain.

Westen had arrived in Sydney in 1871 after a four months overland trip from Victoria, where he had performed at the Manchester Unity Sports in Melbourne on Boxing Day, 1870.

In Sydney, he advertised that he had just arrived from London and was "Under Royal Patronage". In 1880 he appeared, as **Professor Westen**, at the **Egyptian Hall** in George Street, near King Street, with *Punch and Judy*, performing dogs and monkeys, and those imitation church bells. He claimed then to be under the patronage of "HRH the Duke of Edinburgh, the most noble The Marquis of Normanby, Governor of Victoria, and the Nobility and Gentry."

There don't seem to have been monkeys in his show at the **Swiss Fair** in the Exhibition Building, Melbourne where **Professor Westen** performed for two weeks in 1885, nor for his performances in the same venue at the **Victorian Poultry and Dog Society Show** later that year. But that is the last news I have of him so far.

**Perhaps the dogs got him in the end?**

**Richard Bradshaw.**

## FIVE SQUARE METRES: THE HOBBY HORSES

**Clare Bartholomew, Michael Hurwood and Sandra Pascuzzi** have created an eccentric performance piece for Roving performance in Parades and Festivals.

**There are three riders and three horses with three bouncy tails.**

The Hobby Horses made a big impression at The Melbourne Fringe Festival in 1998, taking off the *Best Outdoor Theatre Award*.

The horses themselves were built by **Andrea Osman**, a puppet, mask and costume creator in Melbourne of twenty year's standing.

Congratulations to all! (see picture below, Ed).



*Clare Bartholomew, Michael Hurwood and Sandra Pascuzzi with The Hobby Horses.*



# REPORTS



## ONE VAN PUPPET FESTIVAL

By Sue Wallace, Festival Director.

*(Apologies to Sue for the minor changes to the tense of her article since the magazine is now following the festival in sequence. I thought readers would still like to see her comments, Ed).*

The Festival began on the night of **Friday 22<sup>nd</sup> January** with an official opening to welcome the puppeteers to **Blackheath**. It was also a chance to say thank you to the sponsors and supporters of the Festival. During the weekend of the 23<sup>rd</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup> there were nineteen events including workshops for children and adults and fourteen different performances. *(Again, there may have been later developments, more in next issue, Ed).*

In November we had heard the wonderful news that the **New South Wales Ministry for the Arts** had granted **\$8,000** towards the Festival. We breathed a collective sigh of relief. The Festival was set to proceed with or without the much sought-after funding but this grant meant that the artists' fees and accommodation were assured.

The Festival has been surrounded by an enormous amount of generosity and good-will. Many people, including puppeteers, offered their goods or services free of charge or have given direct financial support.

I heard a wonderful quote recently that **"results require commitment and your results show what you are committed to."** Many people are committed to seeing this Festival grow into a regular international puppet festival. With such support it is possible.

Sue Wallace, Festival Director

## SYDNEY PUPPET THEATRE

A year in review

1998 has been a year of flux for the **Sydney Puppet Theatre** and a good lesson in the value of persistence. As with all performers there were times when we looked down the gaping hole of no prospects but having decided that puppetry was what we were committed to, many opportunities have come our way.

The **Rocks Puppet Cottage** has reopened by public demand and we have been asked once again to be artists-in-residence and to manage the venue. It has to be one of the smallest theatres in the world and it is a challenge creating works that suit the space. However, the intimacy provides a very special relationship between audience and performer. The **Cottage** is open every weekend and every day during the school holidays. A number of artists have been performing including **Richard Bradshaw, Dennis Murphy, Gavin Sainsbury, Bill Jackson** and the **Sydney Puppet Theatre**.

In September/October we were invited to perform **"Oh Rats!"** at the **Love and Courage Festival in Tokyo** run by the **Hoshikawa Yoshio Art and Education Institute**. The two other invited companies were **Nikolai Zikov**, a marionettist from **Russia** and **Compania Tragaleguas** from **Mexico** who bravely performed their hand puppet show in Japanese. Two students from a puppet theatre in **Taiwan** were a fantastic help to the performers. We hardly had to carry an item. We gave 5 performances in 3 venues. A fast set-up and being able to perform in a variety of spaces really helps with this kind of touring. Three of our performances were in one of Tokyo's major art houses, the **Tokyo Metropolitan Art Space**. What a pleasure it was to be in such a well-equipped theatre. The technicians and staff could not have been more helpful. The next day we were driven to a kindergarten to perform but even here the facilities were good with the ability to darken the space. Our last performance was in a small cultural centre outside of **Tokyo**. This was so much fun. Many of the audience had some knowledge of English and were so supportive. It was great to see how the humour translated across cultures. The whole audience then welcomed all the performers from the festival into an adjacent room for a closing night party.

As always, one of the delights of international festivals is the meeting of puppeteers from other cultures. We had enough language skills amongst us to be able to communicate. One of the best encounters was a dinner given over to hearing how the various cultures interpreted animal noises. How does a Japanese dog go "woof"? To my disappointment I learned that I would never be able to call a Russian pig – my uvula and tongue just couldn't do it!

After **Tokyo**, we performed at the **Hong Kong Cultural Centre** on the foyer stage. This performance was on a public holiday and was very well advertised. We had an audience of 500 adults and children, Chinese and tourists from many countries. For some of the elderly men, their greatest entertainment was in watching us set up and bump out. After the performance we tried to get a taxi in the



# REPORTS

pouring rain. This proved impossible. We were accompanied by the friend we were staying with and his children. How to get home? On this day, touring in **Hong Kong** meant 3 adults, a child, a baby in a pram, 3 pieces of show luggage and no car. Luckily transport in Hong Kong is fantastic and our friend guided us all home via foot, ferry and finally, taxi.

Shortly after our return, we began work on a pilot for a new preschool rated television series. We worked with puppeteers **Terry Ryan, Emma de Vries, Mal Heap, Melissa King** and trainee **Andrew McDougall**. It was good to work in a larger ensemble with such talented artists. **Sue Wallace**.

What will 1999 bring? It started with full-time at the Puppet cottage and merged into the "One Van" Puppet Festival. We are itching to create new work for the Cottage. This is on the drawing board.

**Sue Wallace.**

## RICHARD HART IN KOREA

In early November 1998 **Dream Puppets**, comprising **Richard Hart** and **Ian White**, travelled to **Kyongju**, a city five hours drive southeast of **Seoul, South Korea**. The mission: To perform *Dreamer* nineteen times over six days to audiences averaging three hundred to four hundred each time, as part of the **1998 Kyongju World Culture Expo**.

The show, weighing 43kg was packed in two units: A large plywood box for the puppets and a bag for the dismantled stage. It was so compact it travelled on the bus between **Melbourne** and **Sydney**. Not bad for a show which fills a stage 2m high X 3m wide X 1.5m deep.

The Expo went for two months with a range of cultural activities including the large inflatable theatre dedicated entirely to puppetry. Prior to our season, puppet companies from **Austria, Russia, Japan, China** and of course **Korea** had performed in the unusual venue.

**Richard Hart.**

Richard Hart has received an invitation to perform at the **International Puppet Festival** in **Miki Town, Japan**, in **May 1999**. He has prepared a new 'Dreamer' show, *'Dreamer in Space'* which he premiered at the **ONE VAN Festival** in **NSW** in January this year. We can look forward to his report and photographs.

## SPARE PARTS PUPPET THEATRE

By **Noriko Nishimoto**

This has been a challenging year for me as the second year as Artistic Director of **Spare Parts Puppet Theatre** in **Freemantle, Western Australia**. My vision for Spare Parts is to produce work for children and for family audiences.

In 1998 the company produced two adaptations of powerful Australian classics: *'The Bunyip of Berkeley's Creek'* by **Jenny Wagner**, and the unique comedy, *'The Bugalugs Bum Theif'* by **Tim Winton**. Both these productions allowed me to work with wonderful Dance and Music artists, **Taryn Fiebig** and **Claudia Alessi**.

As part of my vision I would like to develop more productions for youth.

The company produced an Australian historical piece, *'Wrecked Dreams'* by **Phil Thomson**, in partnership with the **West Australian Maritime Museum** during the **Freemantle Festival** in November 1998.

This is a dynamic collaborative work by designer **Tish Oldham**, performers and co-directors, **Joanne Foley, Warrick Williams** and **Phil Thomson**.

During the creative process there were some difficulties, but at the same time these provided a valuable and exciting experience and contributed to a new approach when considering future productions. All ages were able to enjoy the wonderful venue of the **Maritime Museum**.

The local community continue to be involved in the **Spare Parts School of Puppetry** which **Joanne Foley** co-ordinated.

I am looking forward to the artistic challenges in 1999.

**Noriko Nishimoto, Spare Parts, Western Australia.**



# WORKSHOP

## SPREAD No 5

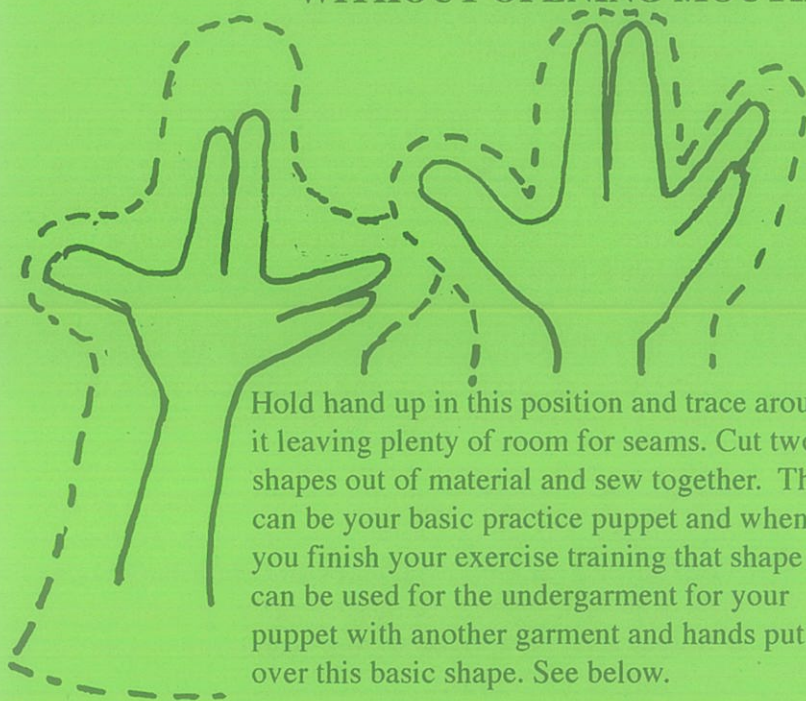
Australian Puppeteer  
Summer 1999

### MANIPULATION

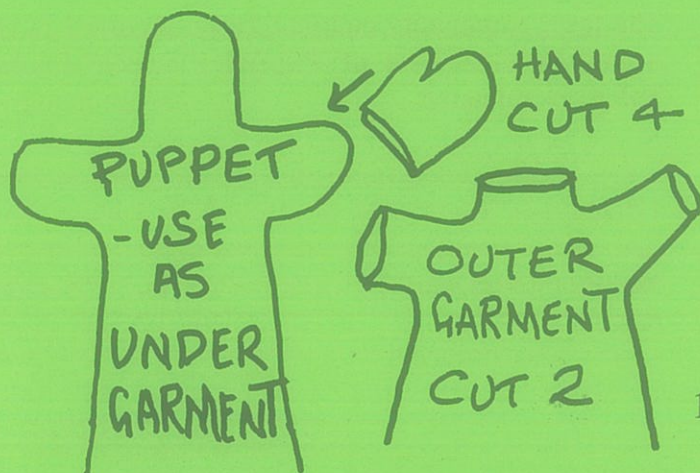
#### Hand Puppets

Let's assume by now you have some basic hand puppets created and maybe even a script written. The puppeteers have moved, looked at and used their hand in different shapes and ways. Now lets do some basic exercises.

#### SIMPLE HAND PUPPET WITHOUT OPENING MOUTH



Hold hand up in this position and trace around it leaving plenty of room for seams. Cut two shapes out of material and sew together. This can be your basic practice puppet and when you finish your exercise training that shape can be used for the undergarment for your puppet with another garment and hands put over this basic shape. See below.

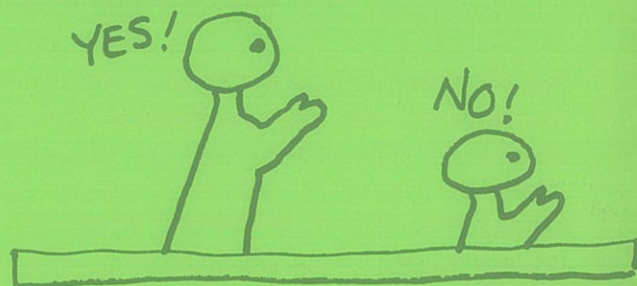


The two fingers next to thumb go to form the head of the puppet. First practise holding head upright and folding thumb (one hand of puppet) and little finger and ring man held together (other hand of puppet) down over palm of hand (body of puppet). Next raise thumb only (one puppet hand) and wave with it. Move it around in a circular motion. Now fold it back down and wave with other hand of puppet (the little finger and ring man joined together).

A POLYSTYRENE BALL CAN BE PLACED OVER THE TWO FINGERS OF HEAD LEAVING A NECK. TWO EYES ON THE BALL CAN HELP THE PUPPETEER MAKE HIS PUPPET LOOK IN THE RIGHT PLACE.



Now use your wrist and make the puppet bend over. A good idea is to make a "playboard" - some sort of floor for the puppet to work with and put things onto. For practice this can be only a plank of wood put between two chairs. This will give the puppeteer some idea of what level to hold the puppet. The further the puppet moves back from the playboard the higher it must go to remain at the same level as viewed by the audience. Practise walking your puppet along the playboard without having it sink. **To walk hold the puppet upright and use a gentle back and forth arm movement as you glide puppet across stage.**





Now have the puppet look at an object on the playboard -(bend the neck fingers down-wards). Next the puppet picks up the object (bend from wrist and hands of puppet clasp object keeping head of puppet upright). Object used by the puppet is called a "prop" and should be larger than life (in relation to puppet) so puppet can handle it easily and audience can see it.



Now let's have some fun with two or even three puppeteers behind the playboard at once. To have three puppeteers together and do some mime exercises for two puppets would give the puppet not in action practice in one of the most important things **STANDING STILL BUT AT THE SAME TIME SHOWING INTEREST IN WHAT IS HAPPENING ON STAGE!** Do all these activities in **mime** at first only later add voice to them.

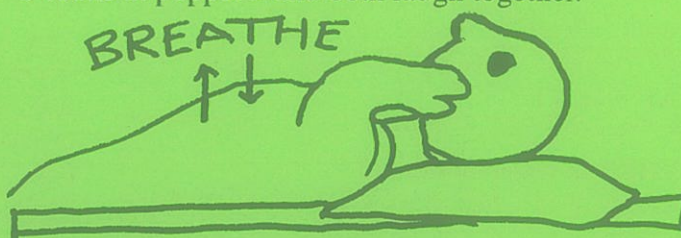
a. Puppet 1 stage right watching. Puppet 2 also on stage right (on right hand of puppeteer) walks along stage toward left. Puppet 3 enters stage left (on left hand of puppeteer) and walks toward right and bumps into puppet 2 and knocks him down. Puppet 3 picks up puppet 2 and dusts him off, puppet 1 watches and reacts in horror but does not move to help.

**HAVE VIEWING AUDIENCE DISCUSS EACH SKETCH - REPEAT WITH OTHER PUPPETEERS.**

**CHANGE HANDS FOR THE PUPPETS IN SKETCH "a" AND DISCUSS WHICH HAND IS BETTER FOR WHICH MOVEMENT**

b. Puppet 1 comes onto stage, rubs eyes (acts sleepy) Puppet 2 enters with pillow and gives it to puppet 1 and leaves. Puppet 1 puts pillow on stage and lies on stage, head on pillow, to go to sleep. (Puppeteer keep hand in puppet and make puppet breath gently so he is still

**alive even when asleep!)** Puppet three can enter and poke puppet 1 so he jumps up quickly. Puppet 2 peeps in to watch and puppet 3 looks at puppet 2 and both laugh together.



By now maybe you have got the idea. Make up your own little acts. Take turns at doing them and discussing them together.

**EXPLORE THE MOVEMENTS YOU CAN GET FROM YOUR PUPPET. TRY MIMING EMOTIONS - SAD, HAPPY, SHY, DEJECTED, FRIGHTENED, THINKING.**

## A VOICE FOR YOUR PUPPET

Just because your puppet is speaking does not mean it does not have to use movement. Get the habit of folding the two puppet hands across body of puppet when at rest and then hand movements will be more visible when you use them to gesture in speech



Pitch in voice is most important to tell one character from another. Also the puppet speaking should have the gestures. Other listening puppets are still with just small movements, such as a tilt of the head, to show they are alive and attentive to speech.

Practice speaking high, low, growling, sweet.  
**Find a voice for your puppet and stick to it.**  
**Above all have fun!**

**Lorrie Gardner**  
**GARDNER PUPPET THEATRE**



# PUPPETRY RELATED ARTS MAGIC

Prodos interviews David Brown,

**David Brown:** There is magic for magicians. And there is magic used as a form of ENTERTAINMENT.

**Prodos:** WHEN is Entertainment?

**DB:** Entertainment is when you've got an ACT. Let's put it this way - you can take a five dollar trick and make it into a grand scale piece of entertainment and everybody loves it, roars with laughter and has a lot of fun with it. And you can also take a five HUNDRED dollar piece of magic and bore the pants of everybody. One of the classic pieces I use in my show costs \$1.95 - What you see is interaction with the audience and comedy.

**P: (laughs)** You place that as a high priority?

**DB:** Entertainment has got to be - using magic to entertain people with rather than for trying to fool them. If you don't entertain them then all you're doing is just a bunch of tricks that you've put together that you're showing them.

**P: With Puppetry you've got a similar situation. You can have a very simple puppet.**

**DB:** Jay Marshall is a US ventriloquist who has traveled the world. He has got a thing on his left hand called 'Lefty', and it is a white glove with two buttons sewn on for eyes. I draw the analogy here that Jay has got a glove on his hand and he's doing ventriloquism. And it's entertaining. But you can get someone who pays fifteen hundred bucks or two thousand dollars for a good vent doll - top shelf doll - with all the actions and all the wiz kid things of eyes and blinks and eyes left and eyes right and a squiggly nose and a sneer and flapping ears and what does he do? And this comes back to puppetry, it's the character you put into it and the character that you're able to transcend and that is your entertainment value.

**P: A very strong link between puppetry and the art of magic. . . in both cases it seems to me the artist is relying on his audience's imagination, fantasy .**

**DB:** . . . to create reality out of an illusion

**P: There's a kind of awakening of a sense of magic and a sense of delight - that's where the entertainment, to some extent comes from I would think.**

**DB:** The entertainment is THE ENTERTAINER. The puppet is a prop. The apparatus or the tools of the trade that they use they are just tools of trade. It is the entertainer who entertains. And that's always got to be.

**P: I wonder if you might comment on this way that both magic and puppetry bring to life people's sense of wonderment and sense of mystery.**

**DB:** Well, expectations, yeah

**P: People love to see their own imagination ignited and I think that magic and puppetry do that for them. In fact all entertainment does it in some way.**

**DB:** Yes, of course it does. And that's the bottom line of entertainment - breathing life into people out there that have come to be entertained and what is entertainment? All those things that make up a human being.

**P: So entertainment is not just about comedy and laughter. You can have other emotions that you evoke in your audience.**

**DB:** Oh hell yes! You can create fear. So that's one aspect. You've got comedy which we're all too well aware of but comedy can transmit various ways. There's a lot of entertainers who will tell story after story and joke after joke and still just do a little magic but they bill themselves as an entertainer - not as a magician. Like **The Amazing Jonathan**. He cuts his arm and swallows razorblades and all this sort of stuff - all 'geek' stuff - blood and guts - but he treats it all as a big, giant joke all the way through.

**P: What's the main difference between entertaining children and entertaining adults?**

**DB:** (long pause for thinking) It's difficult to put it into just simple terms. I mean kids are difficult in many respects to entertain because they don't have the . . . they don't sit back and sort of take it in and enjoy the act. They either believe it and they're trying to find out how the hell you did it - as there are a lot of adults that do the same thing - and then there's the little, little kids that say 'Well of course, it's natural you can do that because you're a magician!'. Again it comes back to entertaining, understanding the psychology of children or understanding the psychology of adults and knowing how to talk to them, how to relate to them. And then getting your stuff across. You've got to establish a rapport with the audience. If the audience doesn't like YOU it doesn't matter what you do, they won't like it.

**P: What do you personally do to make sure the audience does like you and has a rapport with you?**

**DB:** One of the things I probably believe is my choice of the material that I work with has been carefully pruned and selected over many, many years so that I know that it works with my style of presentation and my personality.

**P: Could you give an example of what you do either whether with children or adults?**

**DB:** With children - something going wrong with you. Like the balloon smacks you in the face or the wand



goes up your nose. Where something goes wrong and the trick doesn't work - it's all fun, fun, fun stuff.

**P: And what about adults?**

DB: This is an old adage of showbiz: Your first trick has got to be your best trick and your last trick, that guarantees the effect of 'hey, this guy's good - watch him'. You do your best first and you do your second best last. And provided you've entertained them in the middle they'll remember you as a good magician or a good entertainer. Your first image when they come in and they see your stage - it's nicely put up and it's satisfactory lighting - it looks great. And people get, oh! this is going to be good. Now, again, when you walk on stage or walk in front of an audience you've got to look clean, smart, well polished, presentable, your props have got to be clean and smart and well done. The show that you do then has got a flying start.

This excellent first up presentation assures the audience that they're now in good hands, they can relax and enjoy the show, as the saying goes and there's not going to be any amateurish, embarrassing moments.

'Well, the guy knows what he's doing'.

**P: He knows what he's doing so hand yourself over to the expert now.**

**P: It seems that schools hire puppeteers but they don't seem to hire magicians.**

DB: There are a lot of magicians that do a lot of school work.

**P: Are there? I'm glad to hear that.**

DB: There are more magicians out there than there are puppeteers. To my knowledge and I'm reasonably *au fait* with it there are quite a few that do magic shows and I do quite a bit. I know there's a lot more work there if you wanted to go out and get it.

**P: That brings me to the next question. How does a magician and an artist get work. ?**

DB: "A" you've got to work out what market you want to work in and that's very important. And then you've got to say, OK, well how do I get to that market? Now, you mentioned schools

P: Also there's shopping centres and parties

DB: Well there's shopping centres and parties. One of the first things that probably that the average person would do starting off would be getting a decent brochure together.

**P: Do you believe in promoting yourself or going through an agent?**

DB: Most of my professional life I've worked from my own self-generated lines. I've had agents before. You get work from them but you've either got to be the number one hit on their list or just sort of taking whatever comes. You've got to promote yourself.

You'll get some work from an agent but you wouldn't get all your work.

**P: Do you think there could be an argument for having a tertiary level drama course to include magic as part of understanding entertainment?**

DB: Yes I do. Where and how you bring it about there are so many facets to magic and there are so many - shall we say - secrets to it . . .

**P: Secrets? Do you mean that literally?**

DB: Yes there are, there are a lot of things within the magic fraternity where there are moves and there are subtleties and there are things and ways of achieving an effect that some guys - you tumble onto something - I've got stuff I use that I don't teach anybody.

**P: Are there people who you would exchange that information with?**

DB: Oh, there are people, some people, SOME fellow magicians - not all.

**P: For someone who want perhaps to start doing some magic properly what would you think would be a basic beginner's kit or a first step that they should take?**

DB: The first step is to learn some of the basics and a little bit of the history or a little bit of basic knowledge about magic. I liken it to - and I explain it to young kids when they come in here - Unless you know your ABC you don't know how to form a word. Most people start off learning and buying some of the simple stuff.

**Puppeteers are looking for different things that they can introduce into their acts. They shouldn't ignore what can be found in a magic shop. There are things that can be done - if there's a certain effect required or that needs to be created the methodology of magic can be utilized to create some of those things.**

Or you can use some magic to embellish your show - it creates entertainment.

**P: So you don't have to be a full on magician to use magic to benefit your act.**

DB: Certainly not. Magic is an art. You can borrow from the Art of Magic without making yourself a magician.

**I still like to think that the Art of Magic is entertainment.**

**David Brown runs The M Spot & Abracadabra Studios, 720 Burke Road, Camberwell, Victoria, which has one of the largest ranges of magic in Australia.**

# PETER SCRIVEN

## A LEGEND

By Julie McNeill.

A Brisbane funeral parlour - **Remembrance Day, 1998** - a small group of friends and colleagues gather to pay their respects to **Peter Scriven MBE**, visionary puppeteer and entrepreneur.

"He influenced a whole generation" says **Roy McNeill** who got his first job as a puppeteer in **1968** (aged 18yrs), with the **Marionette Theatre of Australia**, based at their workshop at the **Elizabethan Theatre Trust, Potts Point**.

"Can you believe Puppetry and the M.T.A. was equal to the ballet and the opera?" says Roy.

It wasn't until **1970** that Roy met **Peter Scriven**, who had come up with a most original and innovative idea for *"Tintookies 2000"*.

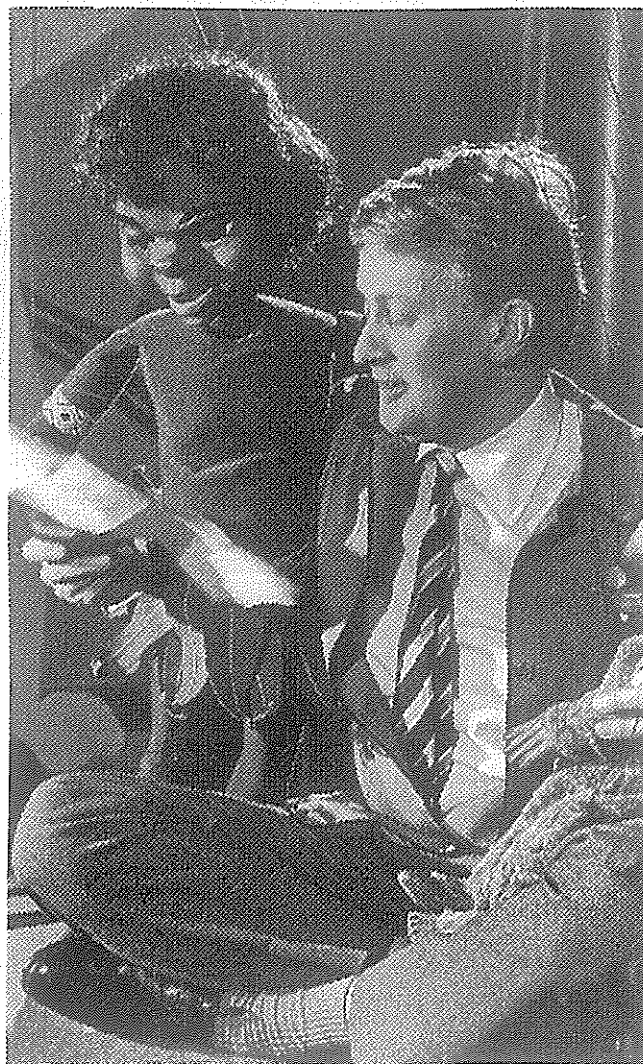
"I thought he was an inspirational director," says Roy, "the theme was the evolution of man and puppet; very modern in design, and he told us he didn't want us to rehearse, he wanted it to be a movement piece, a ballet...there was no dialogue, an original soundtrack, and we worked with a mime artist who was the central figure representing man."

Not only was Peter's production innovative for the time, so was his ambition to tour neighbouring S.E. Asia, including representing Australia at **Expo 70 in Osaka, Japan**.

"It was a powerful and innovative, new style of puppetry", says Roy, "but unfortunately *"Tintookies 2000"* didn't go very well for a home audience. I think they wanted to keep seeing cute, furry little animals. It wasn't fully explained in the promotions that this was a puppet show suited to an older audience".

**Peter Scriven** left **The Marionette Theatre of Australia** not long after, and Roy continued to tour with the company until he had saved enough of his touring allowance to go on his own individual puppetry-inspired journey.

Whilst Roy went on by himself to incorporate his experience working with marionettes and seeing the art of **Bunraku** in **Japan**, to develop his own style, if it had not been for Peter setting up the famous puppet



company, and advertising in the *Melbourne Age* for a young person interested in the theatre and travel, he wouldn't have been able to leave his apprentice sales-position at McPherson's hardware store so quickly!

Many other youngsters like **David Hamilton** and **Philip Edmonstone** felt their head and heart strings plucked when seeing **Peter Scriven's** productions and wanted to build theatres of their own. Roy's current trainee, **Ros Childers**, had seen the *'Tintookies'* in **Brisbane** circa **1960**, and had turned to her mother and said, "Mummy, I want to do that!"

So many years later, and Peter Scriven's influence is still resonating in Australian puppetry.

**Julie McNeill.**



# THEATRUM CUM PIMPERLIS

## A HISTORY OF MARIONETTES IN EUROPE

By Jiri George Vacek.

(This is the final part in Jiri Vacek's three part sequence.)

### THE CLASSICS

The usual themes of the European repertoire appeared also in the traditional repertoire of the Czech and Moravian marionettist. The oldest plays were based on Biblical stories and on Roman Mythology. Many plays were preserved up to the nineteen fifties.

Most popular were the plays on *Vain Amon*, *the King Ahasverus*, about *Esiher*, *Aaron The Wise* and about *Courageous Judith*. The most successful, guaranteeing a full house was the *Story of Genevieve*.

Among the Mythological texts, the marionettists preferred the *Story of Hercules*.

To the classical repertoire belonged *Dr. Faustus*, *Emperor Maximilian* and *Don Giovanni*.

The Principal operated the marionettes and narrated their parts. Women and children would work back stage as assistants during the late nineteenth century. The pronunciation of voices for the puppets petrified into a rather queer style, with unnatural intonation, deformed stresses, prolonged syllables, characterising the speech of Royalty, Dukes and Nobles generally. Working people spoke the colloquial language of the period; some of them, *Kasperi* and the peasants, were sometimes rather vulgar.

Leading literary advisor, **Zdenek Bezdech**, wrote:

'The marionettes of the period of the Czech national revival did a lot towards the cultural development of the Czech countryfolk. . . . They liked the plays presenting the struggle between good and evil.'

The first marionette to arrive at the collection of the **Moravian Museum in Brno** (now exceeding 1,000 items) came in on foot.

**Dr. Jirina Telcova**, the Director, described the event to me like this:

' . . . and there was a knight in his armour entering the corridor; he was more than one metre tall; he sported a helmet, a cuirass high boots with spurs and a velvet cloak, and there was a sword in his hand. The colourful costume, the details of the armour and the essential presence of an elderly gentleman skillfully walking the figure from behind made it a unique happening.

'I was most surprised by the beautiful face of the knight. The face was skillfully carved, it had the

swimming eyes of the daydreamer and pale lips under the chestnut coloured curls of his full beard.

'His eyes were set at something very distant behind me, and it was clear at first sight that he shared something in common with the sculptures in village churches. . . .'

The knight ended up in wrapping paper as one of the finest specimens of the collection that once belonged to the famous **Berousek** dynasty. His name was *Bretislav*, a romantic Czech hero.

The whole collection was carved by **Johannes Flachs**, and it included fifteen extraordinarily tall marionettes.

This collection contains the tallest known marionettes in central Europe. The nearest territory having marionettes of similar dimensions and similar carving techniques is **Sicily**. It was this combination of events and fact that prompted the Histrionic Department to launch a research project on Popular Theatre.

In the first phase they collected marionettes and other puppets, later their interest was extended to scenery, props and costumes used by living and wooden actors. They concluded that it would not be correct to hang the marionettes away and let them fall into oblivion.

**They decided to clean and restore all that beauty and to try to perform some traditional plays in the style of the popular marionettists.**

Since then they made many performances. They have presented the puppet opera called '*Rualka*'. Many of their performances have been adapted for National Television. Marionettes were presented at a number of exhibitions in **Paris, Crakow, Warsaw, Budapest** and at the **World Festival Of Marionettes** in **Charleville/Mezieres** in France.

The **Moravian Museum in Brno** (Czech Republic) dedicated great effort to the restoration and conservation of Marionettes. They made copies of the most precious items.

Of course the research goes on; they are preparing new performances for adults, along with on-stage discussions and lectures on popular and contemporary Marionette Theatre.

Most of my research for putting these three chapters in the *History of Marionette Theatre in Europe* came, in addition to my own knowledge from my schooling, from this perfectly organised museum.

**Jiri George Vacek.**

## POLYGLOT PUPPET THEATRE

Victoria.

Carole Lander reports that she decided to leave Polyglot at the end of 1998. We wish Carole well in her new directions and hope that she will let us know what she gets up to.

Paul Sladden has taken the position of General Manager of Polyglot. Congratulations Paul, good luck for the future

## WILLY WONKS

Another November Teddy Bear's Picnic over! This was the nineteenth annual picnic held at Parramatta Stadium (New South Wales, ED) on Sunday 1<sup>st</sup> November 1998, and was enjoyed by 10,500 people. It was an overcast day with a nippy breeze blowing. The funds raised on the day reached One Hundred and Ten Thousand Dollars and this will go towards the needy departments of the Children's Hospital, such as Oncology, Cardiology and the Kidney wards. We put on two shows on the day, The Willy Wonks Fun Show and the old Punch and Judy. We also had a great day.

Bill and Joan Jackson. New South Wales.

## HAND IN GLOVE,

Janet Dalglish and Hugh Simpson have been collaborating with Animation Company Act 111 for about three and a half years on a system to enable performance of 3D computer-animated characters using puppetry controls. In March 1998 we finally got the system running. We have brought several incredible people on board to work on the business and marketing side of things, which has been great.

With our new company, Hand in Glove, we are specializing in offering high level performance skills, particularly in Special Effects, Animatronic and Animation performance; plus directing, writing and training skills in areas as diverse as puppetry and interactive multi-media.

Janet Dalglish and Hugh Simpson, Victoria.

## LONG DRIVE THEATRE

Peter Fernon and Donna De Palma are the principal puppeteers in the production, 'Zanaqui Jones'. Long Drive Theatre was founded in 1992; it has been producing shows for children and adults since then. The 1999 program will include 'Zanaqui Jones', a poetry, music and shadow play journey about a boy grieving for his grandmother, and 'Tomfoolishness', based on the nonsense verse of Edward Lear and Lewis Carroll, which extols the virtue of courageous imagination.

Peter Fernon, Victoria.

# LOCAL AND

## BUSINESS UN USUAL

Last year Business un Usual toured successfully in the Northern Territory with 'The Fine Greenbird' a puppet, mask and physical theatre show and I have set up a tour for the new show for 1999. I am now looking for a performer/puppeteer, (see below). I will be moving down to Melbourne in mid March and would love to meet people.

## SITUATION VACANT

Business un Usual is an independent small theatre company that operated in the Northern Territory in 1997/98. I am looking for a puppeteer/performer for a tour in the Northern Territory for mid year 1999. The tour is for schools in Darwin, Katherine and Tennant Creek and some aboriginal communities in Arnhem Land. The show will combine mask, puppetry and visual theatre. The show can be rehearsed in Melbourne or Darwin. Please call Tania Lieman on (08) 8948 2753 or leave a message on 0419 802 879 if interested.

## MR SQUIGGLE

Norman Hetherington informed the delegates at the ONE VAN festival that the beloved character Mr. Squiggle turns forty on July 1<sup>st</sup> 1999.

Impossible, he doesn't look a day over three! Mr Squiggle is one of those surprise success stories - at least for the creator, Norm produced him, he said, as a one-off piece!

## SHONA REPPE IN AUSTRALIA & AFRICA

This Scottish puppeteer has been touring the world and appeared briefly at the ONE VAN Festival with a totally charming, outrageous and skillful story-telling puppet piece. She is off to Africa very soon. Let's hope we get to see her back here again.

## SKYWORKS

'Wake Baby' was a very large hit in New York (1998) with sell-out audiences and a wonderful New York Times review. I have recently been working with the Sydney Dance Company doing some puppetry for a pre-Christmas show called 'Party' and I've just returned from Perth where I was working with a dance company Skadada-a assisting with their production, which includes four short puppetry pieces.

Happy 1999, Peter Pann Wilson, New South Wales.

# OVERSEAS

## THE PUPPET FOR URUGUAY

I have had one response to the request from the embassy of Uruguay for a puppet to contribute to a permanent puppet exhibition in that country. This response came from **Leslie Trowbridge** in New Zealand. Please keep it in mind and let me know if you wish to make an Australian contribution.  
**Sue Wallace**

## BELGIUM

**Europees Figurentheatercentrum** in Ghent is reporting the winners of their previous Theatre Poster competition and announcing the next contest on the theme: 'PRODUCTIONS FOR ADULTS' (1989-1999). Companies or designers can send their posters (in three samples, protected in a cylinder) before **June 15 1999**, to:

**Europees Figurentheatercentrum,**  
**Trommelstraat 1, B-9000 Gent. BELGIUM.**  
For Information: telephone +32 9 223 12 15.  
Fax: +32 9 225 45 45.  
Email: [eftc.gent@skynet.be](mailto:eftc.gent@skynet.be)

The winner for 1998 was German artist **Ulrich Otte**, with poster art on the theme of 'Productions for Children'. Congratulations Ulrich!

## INTERNATIONAL PUPPETBUSKERSFESTIVAL 1999

6<sup>TH</sup> Festival of this name will be held from 18<sup>th</sup>-25<sup>th</sup> July 1999 in Ghent.

**Freek Neiryck**, Artistic Director of Theater Taptoe tends to select companies for this on his visit to festivals around and about, but he is interested in other offers of involvement. Contact him at the above addresses for **Europees Figurentheatercentrum**.

## WORKSHOP: WALKING ON STILTS

Five members of a French company, **Begat**, will conduct a course on 'Figure Theatre on Stilts' as part of the above Busking festival.

The dates for this are: 14<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> July 1999. For Information contact the addresses shown above.

## PUPPETRY INFO NEW ZEALAND

Letting you know that the 1999 Calendar of International Puppet Festivals is online at our PINZ site: <http://www.pinz.org.nz/festivals.html>

Please feel free to copy it, distribute it, make a link to your web site, whatever. If you notice a missing festival, please let me know!

**Ramon Rivero, PINZ, New Zealand.**

## INTERNATIONAL PUPPET OPERA

**Leslie Trowbridge** pours out information and chat regularly. He has contributed to a puppetry display on the North Island (of New Zealand) and has been busy sewing Japanese Brocade for new costuming.

\*\*\*\*\*

## MORE LOCAL SNIPPETS

### PUPPET COTTAGE TALES

Before the shows at The Rocks Puppet Cottage (in Sydney, Ed) children are invited to take a puppet from the basket and have a go. One day two boys, aged nine and ten, came in with the latest merchandise from the movie 'Small Soldiers'. They ignored my invitation to play with puppets, preferring their new toys. So I then announced that children were welcome to play with our 'Animal Action Figures' in the basket. The boys immediately got up and each took a puppet.

**Dennis Murphy, New South Wales.**

## LETTERS (children's spelling as shown)

'Dear Puppetman,

You're show was a ray of sunshine in my life. If I was allergic to laughter I'd be dead. You're a great actor and I'm sure you'd be a great cosmetic surgeon with your sense of humor'. . . Michele, Year 6.

'Dear Puppetman,

I loved your show. The masks were fantastic. So were the puppets'. . . from Tom. 'P.S. You have got me back into puppets'.

'Dear Puppetman,

I thought the show would be good but it wasn't. It was wonderfull! The characters were so good and I thought you moved them well. It looked like the invisible dog really was there. Was he?' . . . Phoebe.



# TOURING TIPS

By Dennis Murphy.

## SOLO ACT

Including choosing how best to tour solo.

The first consideration has to be the artist's preferred comfort level. Some puppeteers find touring exhausting and crave a comfortable motel bed from which to watch TV and rest.

Others are stimulated by touring and use the time to really get into their art and create new works. They tend to be fairly unconscious of their immediate surrounds. For them a motel is an unneeded expense when a pub room would serve just as well.

My tips are aimed at the latter type of tourer and takes in the 'Dismal Science' - the Economics of it all.

One way is to use ON-SITE vans in caravans parks. These can be as expensive as a motel but offer you the chance to save money by doing your own cooking. You get more space than a motel room but you do have to carry sheets and make up your own bed.

There are vans, cabins and 'units'. Some are basic and require a long walk to the amenity block; some are deluxe with en-suite. (Sometimes a private toilet and shower are built just outside the van and have come to be known as "exterior en-suites".)

My preferred option is the good old PUB ROOM. But here we have to look at a personality profile: Subject finds motels boring, hates cooking, and is oblivious to surroundings once nose is inserted into a book or he is thinking about a new show.

The pub offers rooms at \$20 even \$15 quite often. I found pubs to be invariably clean, abundant even in small towns and there's no need to book ahead. The bistro offers a decent evening meal at around \$10 - \$12 and you get salad all year round. (Lunches are cheaper but who has time for lunch on tour?)

**A WORD ON NICE RESTAURANTS:** They too often aren't worth the money and even if you do happen on a good one, you will probably have moved on to another town by the next evening.

Pubs have disadvantages. Watch out for 3am licences and "Live Bands". Most female performers I know don't feel comfortable as pubs are pretty blokey. I find I

can get around most disadvantages by carrying some extra gear with me:

- A robe and shower thongs (the toilet and shower are down the hall).
- A blow heater in winter, a fan in summer.
- A four-in-one power board (there's only one power point and it's always in the worst possible location).
- A clock radio/alarm.
- A reading lamp (not the clip-on type. Take a small flood and light the whole place up so you can read anywhere in the room.)
- A small cappuccino machine (you're a long time dead so have a really good coffee now)
- A small library (with a range of books from heavy to light reading so as to match your mood and fatigue level).

**A WORD ON THE SAVOY HOTEL, ROCKHAMPTON:** The name sounds good and seems like it would be a lark to be able to say you stayed at the Savoy. But don't.

With good coffee and some bikkies for breakfast, a sandwich for lunch (time permitting) and a pub meal, you can tour rather cheaply. Save \$25 a night on accommodation (pub vs motel), do that for 22 weeks a year and you've saved \$3850.

The *Lonely Planet Guide* books are good for ideas on where to eat and unusual places to stay. Backpacker places can make a nice change from pubs and motels. They now offer single rooms, en-suites, pools. (Backpackers don't seem to rough it much anymore.)

## A WORD ON TAX-DEDUCTIBILITY:

I have known artists who confuse the concept 'Tax-Deductibility' with the concept 'Free' as in the statement "I might as well stay somewhere expensive as it's all Tax-deductible." Or worse: "I'll get it back on my tax."

At the risk of sounding like an Economic Rationalist or a Sado-Monetarist, I have to say - the bottom line is Profit, Profit, not tax-deductibility, is the economic goal. A lot of people have the two confused. Better to spend less, make a higher profit and pay the bit more tax. (The general rule here is you don't spend money to get tax-deductibility, you invest money to get tax-deductibility.)

And drive carefully.

**Dennis Murphy**  
Economic Philosopher  
(Peripatetic School)

# THE FUNDING FIGHT

## SOME THOUGHTS

*(This article came in with the name and contacts of the contributor, but with a request for anonymity, perhaps this in itself is a comment on the touchiness of the issue, Ed ). To preserve the identity of the writer, some lines in this article have been omitted.*

My own experience of government funding was when I was coordinator of a large community arts performance in 1994. *(The production)*, an incorporated organisation, applied to the **Australia Council** (Federal Government Arts Organisation responsible for administering Federal arts grants) for a grant to help with the running of the project.

... it was decided to arrange an appointment with the relevant person in the community development section of the Australia Council to find out why four applications, 1988, 1990, 1992 and 1994, were not successful. During a very brief meeting we were told that because the Australia Council put in a very small amount (around 500-1000 dollars) to help the first (show) in 1986 and because (the show) was still going in 1994 it was deemed as a success and therefore should stand on its own two feet. I guess it was a fair enough comment except that the artists connected with *Homage* were citing examples of other festivals which were ongoing and still funded by the **Australia Council**. Unfortunately I do not have any evidence to support this but subsequent conversations with various artists brought this subject up time and time again. It seems that there was an inherent unfairness and favouritism in the system.

My present view on government funding is that there appears to be a top heaviness to the system. For example **The Australian Opera Company** receives a vast amount of funding and appeals to quite a narrow and affluent part of the population, whilst productions such as *Les Mis*, *Cats* etc don't appear to receive government funding and rely on popular appeal and market forces. If it don't work then it don't make a dollar.

Unfortunately when private backing is involved it seems that what is produced tends to be safe fodder for the masses and doesn't always push the arts forward.

In puppetry it appears that there is very little funding available from governments at all levels and what funding is available seems to go to three or four puppet companies. If funding of performances produces quality leading edge work and is monitored and reported on correctly or goes into training new puppeteers and furthers the art of puppetry; or widens its appeal in Australia or raises the profile of Australian

puppetry overseas, then I really don't have a problem. What I do have a problem with is grants put into a performance which is then toured around and charged for. Two bites at the cherry is wrong, especially if the production is mediocre.

At the moment I have a project in the pipeline with (town) Tidy Town Association and a local High School which if it gets going will enable a group of High School students to write, produce and perform a puppet performance based on environmental issues. I decided to apply for a grant from **Artstart**, a NSW government initiative for youth. Applications had to be in to our local arts organisations by November 6<sup>th</sup> and we were told that a decision would be forthcoming by Christmas. Of course now it is early new year and I expect the excuses for a decision of one sort or another to keep continuing. Is this because the local arts organisation relies on funding to keep it going so it spends time justifying its own existence? The amount applied for was \$2600. I only need \$1800 or so but you have to ask for more. It may have been less work to approach local business, certainly more clear cut. Quick answers are often forthcoming.

On the other side of the funding coin I applied to **NSW Arts Council** for a **Country Arts Support Grant**. Only for rural areas, deadline 24<sup>th</sup> December. I expect to hear in January. Very clear guidelines and what you can or cannot apply for. Much easier but for a smaller amount (\$800).

So to wrap up, my views are:

- Funding to training of puppeteers is acceptable. Very hard to get private sector funding
- Furthering the art of puppetry by exposing people to facets of puppetry through festivals and community projects is acceptable. Very hard to get private sector funding.
- Funding performances that are at best mediocre is not acceptable
- Dependence on funding, much like a drug, is not a good thing. It could dull the creative edge if you have a safety net to all into all the time.

Funding to further a puppeteer when they are at a stage of their career where they need a good period of time to expand their art such as the **Keating** awards of the Labor/Keating years when artists at the peak of their career were paid approximately \$50,000 per year for two years to enable them to further themselves and the field in which they were practicing in with little financial pressures. This kind of funding can only be to the good. Unfortunately our present Prime Minister cut this funding as soon as he got into office.

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These extra amounts are estimated and we hope that we have guessed correctly as the magazine does vary a little in size and weight issue by issue.

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**YOUR CONTRIBUTIONS ON FLOPPY DISK WOULD BE APPRECIATED. PLEASE INCLUDE A HARD COPY PRINT-OUT AS WELL.**

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**John Lewis,** New South Wales.

## LOST SHEEP FOUND

We don't usually list these, nor will I now (you know who you are) but readers should know that Prodos did a remarkable job before the end of last year with a mail-out. Many unfinancial members got it all together and sent their money in! We are naturally grateful that they did. Thanks Prodos; thanks members!

## DEADLINES

After this issue's late appearance, you must wonder if the deadlines mean anything. Yes they do.

Where-as late submissions are treated generously (especially if they report recent important news), the submission of regular features or large articles ON DEADLINE mean that work can start early on formatting and editing. Ring Anita if there is a problem, otherwise do YOUR bit by complying with deadlines, please!

**AUTUMN issue deadline February 24<sup>th</sup> 1999**

**WINTER issue deadline May 24<sup>th</sup> 1999.**

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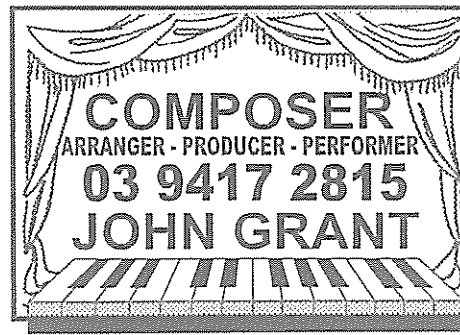
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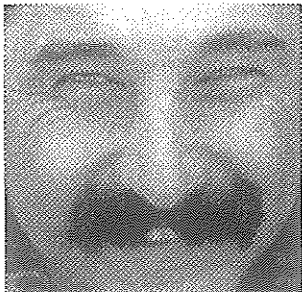


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