

MANIPULATION



FESTIVAL ISSUE '88

AUSTRALIA'S PUPPETRY MAGAZINE

MANIPULATION

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WHO CARES ABOUT THE MAGAZINE?

Full of enthusiasm and a belief in Manipulation, I accepted the responsibility for this issue of the magazine. As I write this now, over two months since the closing date for written contributions, we are still waiting on five of the promised articles. (We have given up on some of the others altogether). This is particularly frustrating, as we go off on tour in two weeks and we must have the magazine at the printers before then. After all, it is well past the planned publication date already. I have spent the last two months reminding, prodding, threatening, and pleading - I am full of admiration for Maeve who persevered with this torturous process for all those years.

This lethargic, unconcerned response has prompted me to question the point of it all. The magazine is intended as a means of communication and a forum for the exchange of ideas, opinions, and philosophies

between puppeteers in Australia. What better way for the isolated freelance puppeteers, scattered around the country, to have a voice and a contact with their fellow puppeteers. But without everyone's support, both as subscribers and as contributors, the magazine cannot and should not exist. There is no point in having a magazine if there is no commitment to it. Don't Australian puppeteers have any opinions about the art-form? Aren't we interested in debating points of view? Don't we want to share experiences?

I believe we need the magazine. Australia is such a large country that contact between puppeteers is often difficult and irregular. With the magazine we can at least feel connected in some way, and have a means to express ourselves. If you think Manipulation is worth preserving, sit down now and write an article for the next issue. Let's hear from all those puppeteers outside the

arena of subsidized puppetry. Tell us about yourselves, and the work you do. Tell us about your problems, your triumphs, your needs, and your dreams. This is what Manipulation is for. Surprise the voluntary workers at Handspan by inundating them with copy for the magazine. And canvas around for more subscriptions! The more readers, the better-quality magazine we can produce. Let's continue to develop as a profession!

DAVID COLLINS

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A special thankyou must be extended to the Fremantle Arts Foundation for information and photographs from the Festival.



ARTISTIC DIRECTOR'S REPORT

In early 1987, the Bicentennial Authority called the artistic directors of the four major puppet companies together to work on ideas for a major bi-centennial event for the artform. Two ideas came forward - a large-scale event combining the resources of all four companies and the re-emergence of an artform festival. (The four yearly festival had been planned for Melbourne 1987 but had fallen through).

The logistics of bringing members of all four companies to work on a project seemed impossible. The companies all reflect their own individual styles and are all at different stages of development. Who would co-ordinate the event? Where would it be assembled? What resources would be required? Wouldn't the many smaller companies and individual artists feel they were not getting a look in. After all, 90% of the artform practitioners in Australia work outside the arena of government subsidy.

It was agreed to run a festival, the OZ Puppet Festival and it would be held in Fremantle, Western Australia. [The State of W.A. had already expressed support for an artform festival at the time of Melbourne taking up the challenge]. And so it began, the task of organizing a festival.

As the director of the festival I asked all the subsidized companies to be supportive of the venture and to programme the festival into their 1988 activities. The artistic vision of the festival was to be Australia celebrating twenty years of development in the artform. This had to be changed slightly when international companies - the Vietnamese Water Puppets and Eric Bass's Autumn Portraits became part of the festival programme.

In previous festivals a lot of financial resources had gone on the importation of international companies. As there had been a cry for master-classes and as it was the Bicentennial year I felt that the festival needed to leave something behind that worked for the future of the artform. The idea of international master-classes was born. It was to be an expensive exercise but one that was to be the most successful aspect of the festival.

I chose the tutors of the masterclasses for the contribution they had made to the artform internationally over the past ten years. Philippe and Mary Genty, Eric Bass, Margareta Niculescu and Jim Henson. It was unfortunate that Margareta Niculescu had to pull out at the last minute - but her replacement Josef Krofta from Drak Theatre in

Czechoslovakia inspired the participants in his masterclasses. Jim Henson sent Kermit Love - a long time designer and television producer with the Henson Organization and I am sure everyone who came in touch with Kermit, whether enrolled in his workshop or not was inspired by the history the man brought with him. Eric Bass's masterclass concentrated on manipulation technique and character development through movement. His workshop was closed to observers with the exception of myself and Noriko Nishimoto. Eric is a fine teacher and in the hour I was allowed to watch I picked up some extremely useful ideas for teaching technique and character development.

Reports on all the masterclasses are contained elsewhere in Manipulation. It was stated time and time again by participants that the masterclass should become an annual event and perhaps run for two - four weeks.

The programme for the festival was a much harder process. There were many willing to perform but financial resources and artistic standards had to be adhered to.

My vision for the programme was to have a representation of where the artform now stood and to reflect the

diversity of the artform as it had developed in Australia.

The inclusion of the Vietnamese Water Puppets, whilst being a most expensive exercise (cultural exchanges do not come cheap any more) was well worth including as it gave the festival programme a traditional aspect of the artform from which the rest of the programme could grow. At the appropriate end I balanced the programme with the very contemporary Four Little Girls by Handspan Theatre and in the middle placed Terrapin Puppet Theatre's Home is Where the House Is, a representation of that company's work in schools and Spare Parts Puppet Theatre's The Little Girl Whose Father Was a Rabbit as a representative of that company's children's theatre work.

It was unfortunate that the Marionette Theatre of Australia could not be involved due to their own timetabling difficulties.

The solo artists were again chosen to represent diversity, excellence and the contemporary. Richard Bradshaw and Eric Bass represented the excellent with Shadow Puppets and Rod Puppets, and Joe Gladwin and Spare Parts Puppet Theatre (with David Collins) as the contemporary. It was interesting to see Richard Bradshaw add new material to his show and for Joe Gladwin to have the critical eye of Kermit Love, Philippe Genty and Eric Bass cast over his performance. Joe Gladwin and The Professor certainly benefitted from being able to perform the piece in front of peers.

The outdoor programme was designed around the contributions of visiting puppeteers attending the

masterclasses and placed in the festival programme under the banner of "Theatre go round" - an outdoor stage in St. Johns Square, "The Punch and Judy Picnic" and "Mediaeval Easter" in Esplanade Park. I must thank the New Zealand contingent and Polyglot theatre for their overwhelming contributions to these events and the festival club.

The exhibition programme consisted of a "Retrospective of the work of Richard Bradshaw" at Spare Parts Puppet Theatre, "The Last Ten Years" - a photographic history of Handspan Theatre and "Halwala" at the Esplanade Hotel showing the work of Josef Krofta and Peter Matasek from DRAK Theatre. Spare Parts' own puppet collection has become part of a series of shopfront exhibitions in and around Perth and Fremantle.

And so it all happened for two weeks at Easter - Fremantle became a focal point for the artform, with protestors (Vietnamese Water Puppets) puppeteers and the public.

Ultimately, one has to ask who is the festival for and as its artistic director I can only say that the programme of performances, exhibitions and community events are for the public. Raising the profile of the artform in the eyes of the public is the only way the artform will continue to exist, as we need their support to make us viable. Masterclasses are for puppeteers and associated artists. Whether a festival of performances and masterclasses are compatible in the one event can only be answered by the participants attending. Certainly in future years if I am given the opportunity of directing such an event again it will be one or the other. The

organisation, administration and financial resources required will be beyond the scope of the artform in future years. I also feel that if festivals and masterclasses are to be an active ingredient of the artform then they must remain in one place and not move around the countryside from city to city. We keep building resources in one area only to repeat that process four years down the line. Also if practitioners knew there was an event every four years in a certain place then they would plan towards it. After all, the Adelaide Festival or the Australian Playwright's Conference doesn't move, so why should we?

Peter Oldham from Sydney has made an excellent documentary video of the festival. This is the best record yet of any festival held in Australia. Please support the artform and buy one for your own records.

As an artform we must thank the Australian Bicentennial Authority both federal and state (W.A.), The Departments for the Arts in Western Australia, South Australia, Victoria, N.S.W., Tasmania and Queensland and the Australia Council - Performing Arts Board for making the financial resources available to make it all happen.

And to Fremantle Arts Foundation for having faith in the project and taking on the massive task of administration of the festival and also its financial risk. Thank you Amanda and Priscilla and the Board of the Fremantle Arts Foundation, and Spare Parts Puppet Theatre for having the festival and making my services available to the festival.

PETER WILSON



MASTERCLASSES

JOSEF KROFTA

Oz Puppet Festival - now where to begin? Not at the beginning as this would end up becoming a book. Josef had delightful vision which built up over the week in a very laid-back manner. (Josef loved a glass of wine). Ideas from us were thrown backwards and forwards. Few were kept - most were thrown out altogether. The play we decided to do was The Snow Queen by Hans Andersen. Each of us had a copy of the story to study. The second day we were there, we went off to the tip. Some junk we brought back because we liked the look of it, some because we thought it might fit into the story. That afternoon Josef had us make sculptures of it all over the hall. After dinner that night we went back into the hall and it had all been lit. (Josef had rigged up the lighting). It looked fantastic!!! That sculptured garden was never used in the play but it is a vision I will never forget.

Back to The Snow Queen - we analysed the story line by line, often putting it into modern idiom. Josef felt when working in the theatre that we are all actors and that we have hands that can play music. We are puppeteers who sing. If a person is better than a puppet you never use a puppet. Never use an object/prop because it "sort of" fits into what we are trying to say. In short, don't

use the object for YOUR purpose. Listen to it, feel it, watch it and it will tell you if it is right.

When you are doing this, I might add, you are looking at an old 'S' bend of a toilet or a rusty old pile. Josef called it "The Matter". Thinking about it this way, there is no way that a puppeteer/actor could become self-indulgent, a sure killer for any show. The last day Josef pulled the five scenes together and then we really did see him as "Director of the Course".

We ran out of time so we made a video of each scene, (I have a copy) instead of doing a performance.

It was a week I'll never forget. Thank you, Josef and thank you to all at the OZ Puppet Festival.

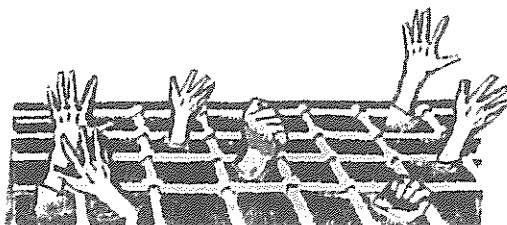
What am I thinking now? That I have a hell of a lot more thinking to do!

JONQUIL TEMPLE

Late one night at the Festival Club, David approached me to write a report on Eric Bass' masterclass, and I, in a fit of exuberance brought on by the whole festival atmosphere, agreed. It's become one of those decisions I have almost come to regret. It has both daunted and haunted me for many months now, hanging there in the recesses of my consciousness and occasionally in the forefront when David has politely asked me how it was coming along and I've had to make various feeble excuses. What always stops me even starting a report or review is wondering how to start, how to make it interesting, and in this case how to do it justice. Well the final deadline was yesterday and I know I'll feel much better if I write this thing and I won't have to avoid David any longer.

I've still got the rod puppet I used in Eric's masterclass. It's very simple - a circle of cloth; sponge head, nose and hand; a shoulder-piece and three bits of dowel - one for the head control and two to make the arm control; the puppet moved so well and was able to express so much.

On day one we each made one of these puppets. We could add things to it if we wished - hat, moustache, etc - Eric's one stipulation was that we not give them eyes or a mouth. What followed over



the next week were a series of exercises that steadily built on the previous ones. Each day we did body warm-ups, breathing exercises, exercises with the puppets for breathing and movement, and exercises that involved the puppet making a choice. The physical side included exercises to concentrate the breathing to the lower part of the lungs - filling them out; various tai-chi movements; isolations - head, neck, shoulders, chest; stretching exercises; and massages, oh those wonderful massages - feet, neck, arms, legs, back - heaven!!

With the puppets we developed various characters in the way they walked - whether they led with the head, pelvis or chest. A puppet's walk remained continuous even when passed on along a line of puppeteers, the motion not being disturbed. Types of walks showed how the puppet was feeling - depressed, angry, happy.

But what made this workshop special were those exercises involving the puppet making a choice. The rest of the group was the audience and it had to be clear to them what the situation was - where the puppet was, what choice it had to make, and what decision it came to. At first Eric gave us the situation (often a no-win situation which was frustrating). For example, whatever side of a line the puppet was standing in, it rained, whilst the other side was sunny, and the puppet had to resolve this somehow. Or a huge tidal wave was approaching the puppet lying on the beach - the initial beach scene had to be recognizable through the puppet's behaviour, as did the oncoming tidal wave; the thoughts of the puppet (indecision, possible choices) and most importantly, the

moment when a decision was made, and then what occurred after.

Over the week we were given more freedom in developing the situations ourselves - the circumstances, the character of the puppet, and what type of choice had to be made (actually in trying it out, the puppet made the choice, not you) and all of this had to be clear to the audience. I'll never forget showing a piece I'd devised and was feeling particularly pleased with, and then looking up to blank faces, and friends squirming because they didn't want to say they hadn't a clue what was going on. We all went through that and it was both humbling and helpful, because the criticism given was always constructive. This sounds clichéd, but it's true: each person in the group cared - all gave and were open to constructive criticism - the group feeling was special.

One fascinating exercise was to devise a piece but only present the first thirty seconds, and in that time the audience had to know what the situation was - it cut out a lot of 'waffle used to fill' and got straight to the essential elements.

We sometimes worked in pairs - on a piece using two puppets, or one person watching the other's piece and giving suggestions before it was presented to the group. Also sound, props, or the puppeteer being an active part of the scene were used.

Rod (Primrose) forced his puppet to choose between an obviously beloved doll and a beautiful vase of flowers. Bob's (Parsons) puppet couldn't choose between answering an incessantly ringing telephone and swatting a buzzing fly off the newly-made salad.

We'd each brought a puppet of our own and in the last few days we worked with them - not with our own but someone else's. We devised a biography of this puppet and introduced it to the group. The last exercise we were given was to have the puppet sing a song, but, although the puppet was showing a certain feeling, it had to be apparent to the audience that it was feeling something very different inside and trying to hide it - very difficult, but Bob (Parsons), Leonie (Fletcher) and others showed that it could be done.

All these exercises were challenging and required a great deal of thought and preparation, and a lot of discussion afterward.

Some of us couldn't or wouldn't let the puppet feel at times, because it was too painful, or because it showed a part of ourselves that we didn't want seen. I certainly did this, held back. Or we tried too hard and the scene just didn't work. But each person did have breakthroughs. Watching Rob (Tomaschewski) at Eric's gentle insistence, force his puppet to look at its own reflection when neither he nor the puppet wanted to, was an experience I find difficult to describe. I felt I was watching something very private, but also touched that I was permitted to do so. And Rob, in discussion afterwards, was very open, not embarrassed about what had happened. It moved everyone.

I can't say much more. Everyone in this group found Eric's masterclass a wonderful experience. We learnt a great deal and have much to think about and use in our work. Thankyou Eric.

BRUCE PATERSON

PHILIPPE GENTY

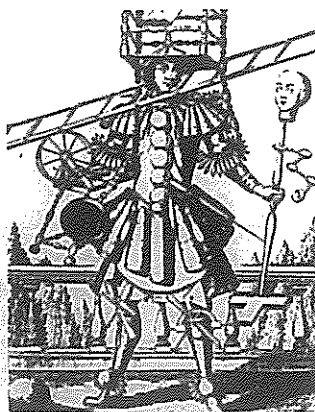
The Genty Masterclasses held during the OZ Puppet Festival attempted an impossibly compacted programme. What would normally be considered a five week class was reduced to a one week 'taste'.

Philippe and Mary Genty seemed such calm and amiable people. Why were we so tense?

The students were a strange mixture: enthusiastic new puppeteers, some working amateurs, jaded professionals. A veritable pot pourri, thrown into Fremantle's version of a frying pan, the Princess May Theatre, for 14 hours a day, sauteed, and served with a fatigue and tension sauce - puppeteer under glass.

At first the Genty teaching seemed a cynical excursion in humiliation. There were no precise explanations before an exercise, but detailed analysis following. Consequently many red faces, furrowed brows, and a conspicuous shortage of toilet paper; "Oh God, I'm next, and the star of my show is a toilet roll!"

However, as the week progressed, it became obvious that because of time and numbers (the Genty classes had the most enrolments), this method was the most pragmatic. Genty was trying very cleverly, and (I suppose) kindly, to focus our thinking towards Object Theatre. [Basic manipulation techniques were conducted in the mornings using some of Genty's own puppets - concepts such as 'ballet-age', impulse, 'pointe fixe', and double-takes, as well as exercises exploring the expression of emotion with a puppet, and teamwork when three people are animating the various parts of the same puppet].



Like all puppetry, object theatre requires a particular attitude on the part of the actor/puppeteer towards the object being manipulated. The workshop specified solo performances in order to achieve this attitude. For many this was an unnerving experience - forced to rely on one's own resources in rehearsal, then to perform in front of the class. A trip to the garbage tip, or in Genty-speak, "ze-dumps", provided the raw material for the afternoon's work.

The group programme which followed later in the week provided little respite, but was more challenging, and each group accepted and coped with this challenge in a different way. The dynamics in each case were affected by the nominated leader's concept of job delineation. Was it an oligarchy, democracy, commune, or autocracy? This created more tension and needed every ounce of diplomacy available. Philippe and Mary had suggested that this might be the case, and there were a lot of strong 'impulses' about.

A great week, I think, but very tiring. It was interesting to see the class develop a clearer understanding of Genty's work, as they chose greater simplicity in the final performances. And the objects we collected from "ze dumps"? They have stayed there to practice "pointe fixe".

PETER JAGGER

KERMIT LOVE

The report on Kermit Love's masterclass unfortunately became a victim of Australia Post's Bermuda Triangle, so all we can do for you is give you an idea of what the classes might have been like by describing the man himself and his history.

Kermit Love doesn't consider himself to be a puppeteer and never has. In his own terms he is "a creative designer in theatrical terms". "Puppet theatre is an area in which I've come to concentrate." In fact, Kermit is a man of many faces... a noted costume designer, a director, a choreographer, and an actor.

His design career has involved more than thirty five years for George Ballanchine's New York City Ballet as well as the wardrobing of productions for Twyla Tharp, Jerome Robbins, and Agnes de Mille.

Born in New Jersey, he saw his first puppet show at age seven. It was Punch and Judy, and Kermit recalls that the idea stuck for years until he saw his first shadow play and became hooked. At twelve, he broke both legs when thrown from a horse and developed osteomyelitis. During the recuperation period he would draw his own renditions of prominent radio personalities.

In 1935, he got his first jobs making puppets for a Federal Work Projects Administration theatre. His first Broadway creation was a horse for The Taming of the Shrew. 1942 brought design work for Agnes de Mille's Rodeo - a now classic ballet.

The first giant leap into the television medium occurred in 1967 when Jim Henson first approached Kermit with an

idea for a "really big" bird character. That character obviously became Big Bird, and has gone on to become a household word and friend to millions of children who watch Sesame Street. Another of Kermit's Sesame Street stars is Mr. Snuffle-upagus, the very large friend of Big Bird, requiring a two-person operation. In the 1985 episode, Snuffy became visible to grown-ups after being seen exclusively by children for many years. "At first, I was unhappy with the size of Snuffy, now I appreciate his image as one of the most valuable on Sesame Street because of his slowness - or measured pace - with which he puts forth thought and reaction." He states, "puppets don't have to be fast to be interesting".

America's Sesame Street is not the only street for which Kermit has overseen design and construction of the characters. Worldwide versions in Germany, Israel, and Mexico possess puppet creations unique to their own nationalities by the Great Jones Studio under Kermit's supervision.

The Muppets are only a part of the work that he does. He acknowledges that after being active for more than fifty years in the theatre "I am largely recognized for my puppet work. But in the context of history, all of my work has contributed".

As much a philosopher as a puppet designer, he frequently offers advice in areas of expertise. "I hate to see people use puppetry as merely a stepping stone... it's a reality that puppetry has become a commercial vehicle rather than a pure creative expression".

(DETAILS COURTESY OF THE PUPPETRY JOURNAL, VOL. 37, NO.3, 1986.)



OUTDOOR EVENTS

The outdoor events at the OZ PUPPET FESTIVAL were fun and games and an opportunity to introduce the general public in Fremantle to puppetry. It obviously worked beautifully as the second Sunday people started arriving at Esplanade Reserve in the early morning and setting out their blankets waiting for the entertainment to start.

The feature event at the Mediaeval Picnic on 3rd April was the construction of two eight feet tall Straw Men modelled on the Mediaeval Easter tradition, with everyone from very small children to quite mature citizens helping tie on the straw and endow the structures with a personality. They were then lifted high and carried in procession to Bathers Beach where they were set alight and sent out to sea. The Department of Marine and Harbour had a few reservations about the procedure but as the straw was a little damp it wasn't really a high risk situation.

All the puppeteers joined in the activities on the two Sundays and Fremantle was treated to a continuous display of different techniques and approaches to outdoor puppets.

The Punch and Judy picnic held on the last day of the Festival was a pleasant blend of local puppeteers and those still managing to be here from the proceeding weeks, wandering puppets were a raging success with the small folk in particular and the more traditional theatre was just as eagerly watched.

One of the more lasting aspects of these outdoor activities are the Puppet Heads constructed and erected in Pioneer Reserve next door to Spare Parts Puppet Theatre. These large puppets were constructed for the Festival only but have now become an integral part of that end of town and a very visible landmark for Puppetry in Fremantle.

PAM PEACOCK

OZ PUPPET FESTIVAL VIDEO

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REVIEWS

I approached the recent International Puppet Festival held in Fremantle with a great deal of anticipation. Despite not being actively involved in puppet theatre, I have always been fascinated and excited by the theatre that puppetry can achieve. To be given the chance to view such a variety of styles and methods, including well known national and international artists seemed too good a chance to miss. In the end, unfortunately, I managed to see only four productions and of these four only two were of a standard I would consider high enough to be representative of an International Puppet Festival.

RICHARD BRADSHAW'S SHADOW PUPPETS

Devised, Designed,
Directed, Constructed and
Performed by Richard
Bradshaw

*'sensitive, intelligent and
funny. A master of his craft and
material'*

West Australian (4/4)

Richard Bradshaw's Shadow show was the first disappointment. A collection of short, unconnected sketches and traditional tales were expertly presented in a vein of wry, gentle humour. Unfortunately, this low key style was not enough to sustain the whole performance. There seemed to have been little thought given to the pacing or content of the show. It is perhaps not enough to simply demonstrate how adept

the puppeteer can be, nor how inventive the medium can be, without giving a shape and a coherence to a theatrical performance for a ticket buying public. Mr. Bradshaw is obviously a gifted storyteller, and it is surprising that he chose to perform such a loose, meandering show instead of an extended narrative making better uses of his talent and chosen medium.

HOME IS WHERE THE HOUSE IS

Written by Allen Harvey
Directed and Designed by
Jindra Rosendorf

Constructed by Jennifer
Davidson and Greg Methe
Music by Jaqueline
Verhaar

Puppeteers: Heather
Monk, Bob Parsons, Liz
Ertler, Kelly Wallwork

*'children's musical theatre of
an easygoing, happy kind'*

West Australian (7/4)

The second disappointment came in the form of the Terrapin Theatre's production Home Is Where the House Is. I find the worst form of children's theatre is the one which patronises its audience and feels it can make up in pure energy what it may be lacking in talent or intelligent comment. It is a pity Terrapin seemed to fall into this trap. The show was certainly loud and full of energy, but the volume seemed unnecessary and the energy misdirected. For a production

that relied heavily on acting skills and vocal talents, the small cast struggled to the best of their ability but ultimately failed on both counts. Even their puppetry skills seemed lacking at times, with very little subtlety of movement or expression being displayed. The young audience grew restless and talkative and I'm sure felt as relieved as I when the show ended.

By this time I was beginning to despair about the Festival, but thankfully the last night proved to be a theatrical treat.

AUTUMN PORTRAITS

Devised and Designed by
Eric Bass

Puppets by Eric Bass and
Elizabeth Stanley Berdann
Puppet Costumes by Bruce
Martin, Elizabeth Reece
and Cathy Lazar

Directorial Consultant:
Richard Edelman

*'moved us to a state where,
temporarily at least, we could
believe that inanimate objects
could possess human qualities'*
West Australian (6/4)

The first show, Eric Bass' Autumn Portraits, was a superb piece of sustained mood. I was captivated and enthralled by the range and depth of characters the puppeteer brought to life, and the stories they had to tell. Simple but imaginative, the piece presented the audience with challenging and thought-

provoking views on the autumn years of our lives. It was not, however, a totally sombre piece. Indeed, there was much humour and joy in the work, thoroughly complementing the sadder moments. The puppetry and manipulation techniques seemed almost non-existent, so expertly were they carried out, and the relationship between puppet and puppeteer was continually changing but always exciting and innovative. It would be unfair to single out sections in a show such as this, but the old Indian woman and the aging jester will long remain in my memory. A delight from start to finish.

AN OVERCOAT

Written by Peter Wilson
and Mary Hutchison
Designed by Beverley
Campbell-Jackson
Directed by Peter Wilson
Performed by David
Collins and Noriko
Nishimoto

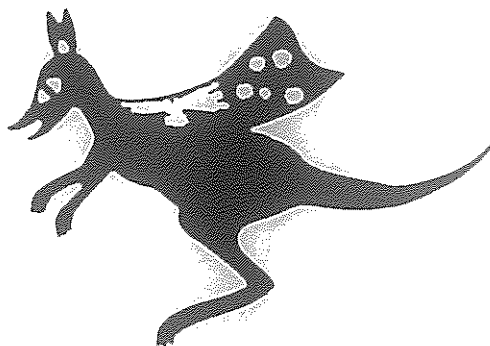
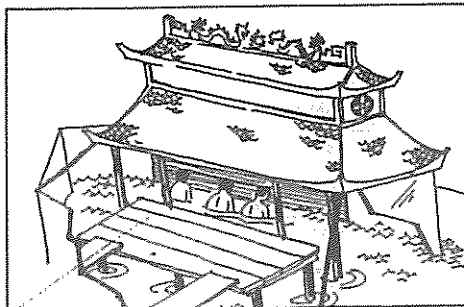
*'lively performance of a little
boy who spins his dreams in a
bedroom cupboard'*
Daily News (6/4)

Whilst not scaling these heights, David Collins' performance of Spare Parts' An Overcoat was also an engrossing and entertaining piece of theatre. It is not easy for adults to play children on stage but David gave a very credible performance as the young boy growing up in a world that doesn't easily accept his theatrical desires. Inventive use was made of simple props, and the Overcoat itself provided a strong central symbol/character for the rest of the show. At times a little too wordy and repetitive (particularly in the middle), the piece nonetheless held the audience, especially during the puppetry

sequences. These were very effective in extending the air of innocence and simplicity, and the close of the show was suitably magical and uplifting.

PAUL MACPHAIL

PAUL MACPHAIL majored in theatre arts for his B.A. from Curtin University (then W.A.I.T.) He has written and directed plays for Bus Stop Theatre and written for the Acting Out Company in W.A. He is currently resident director of Coco Theatre in Albany and a theatre-arts tutor at Curtin University.



THE WATER PUPPETS OF VIETNAM

Directed by Nguyen Duy Phi

Musicians: Le Xuan Thinh,
Nguyen Van Su, Tran Van
Cuong

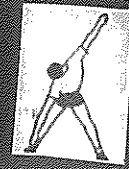
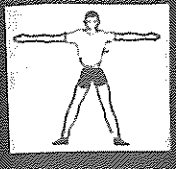
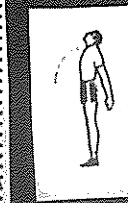
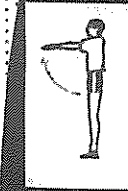
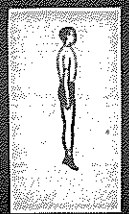
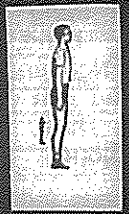
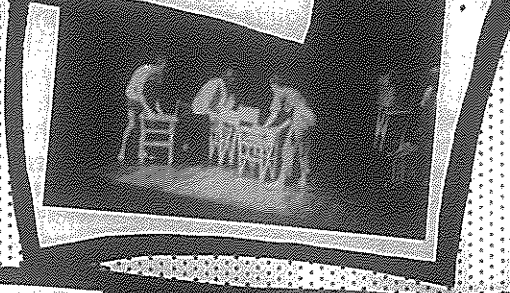
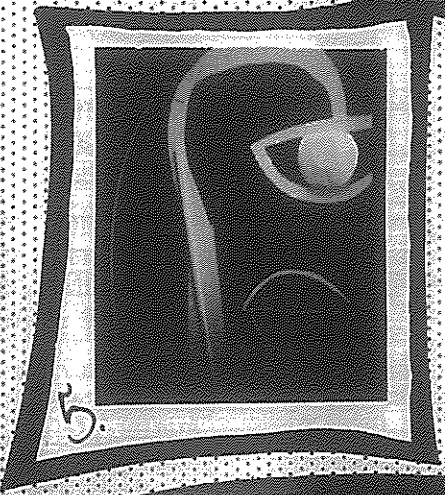
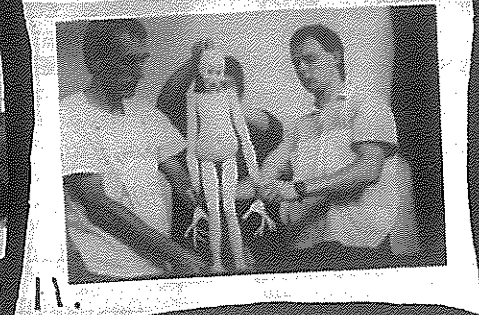
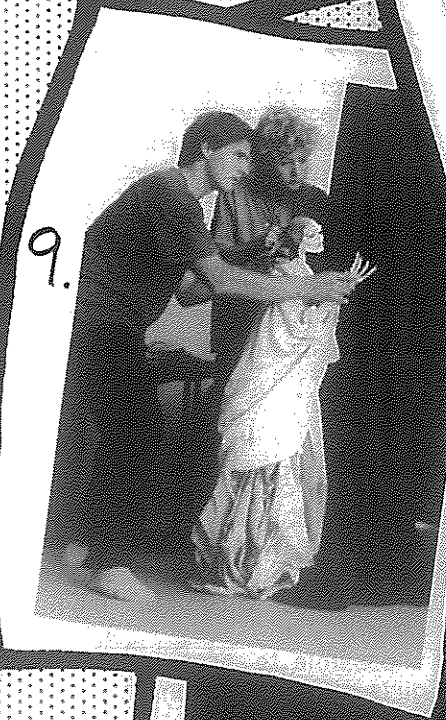
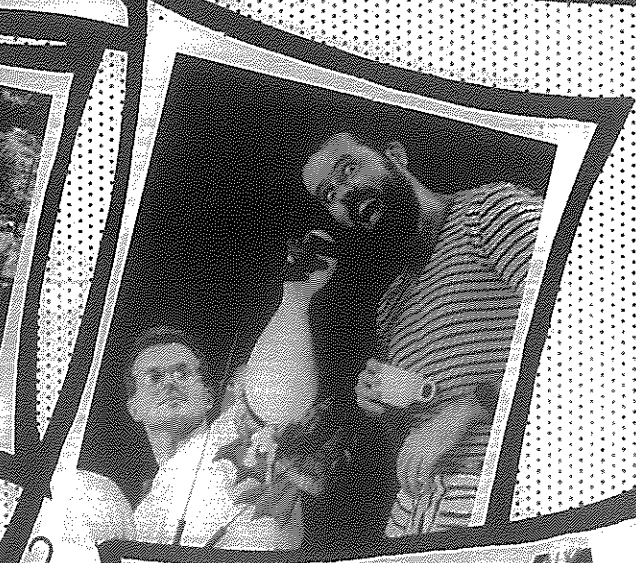
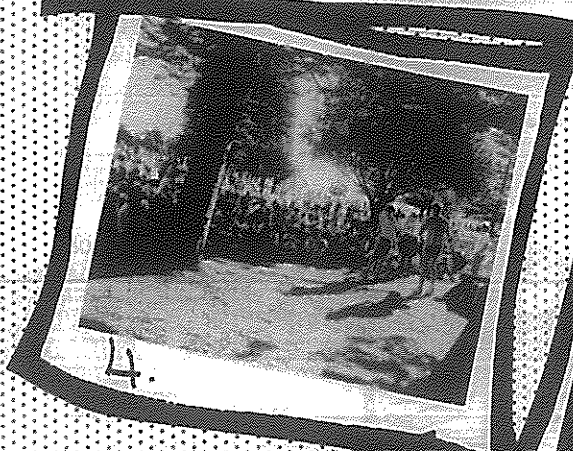
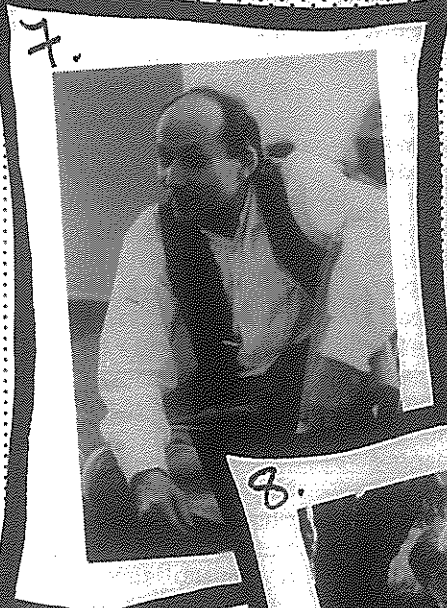
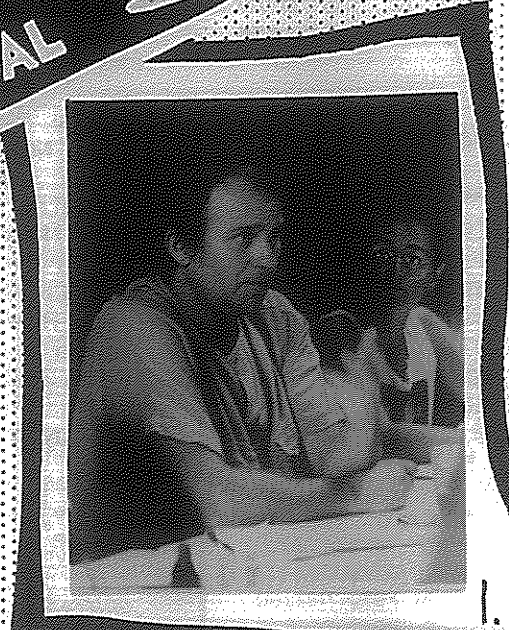
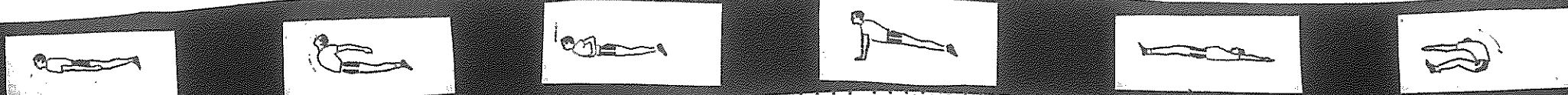
Singers: Nguyen Thi Minh
Thu, Nguyen Thi Minh
Nguyet

Puppeteers: Ha Nguyen
Tri, Nguyen Van Tien,
Dinh Trong Dung, Nguyen
Thi Chanh, Tran Dang
Trac, Hoang Khai Thung,
Nguyen Hai Luu, Nguyen
Hong Hang, Luong Thi
Hang, Pham Thu Thuy,
Nguyen Phu Cuong

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and gilded warriors on fiery
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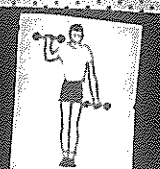
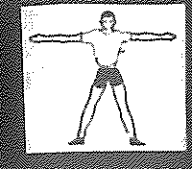
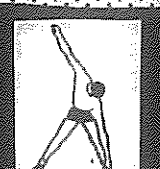
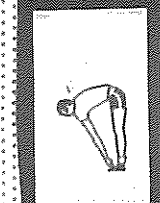
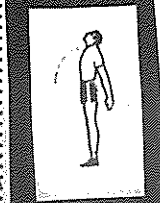
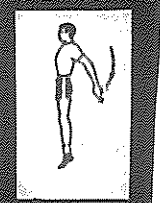
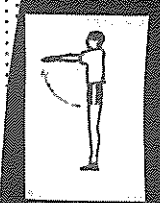
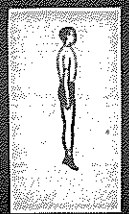
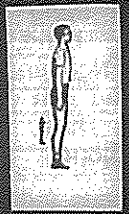
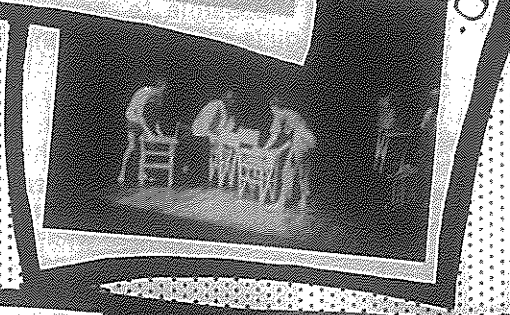
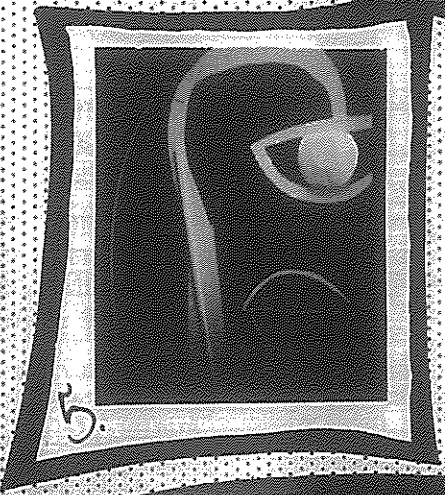
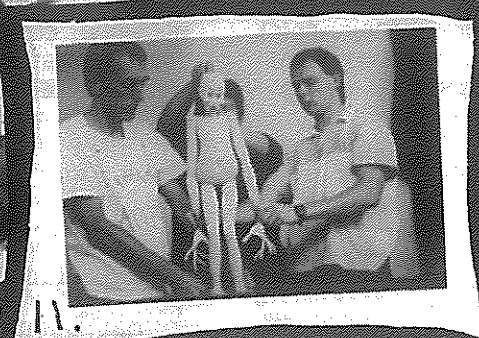
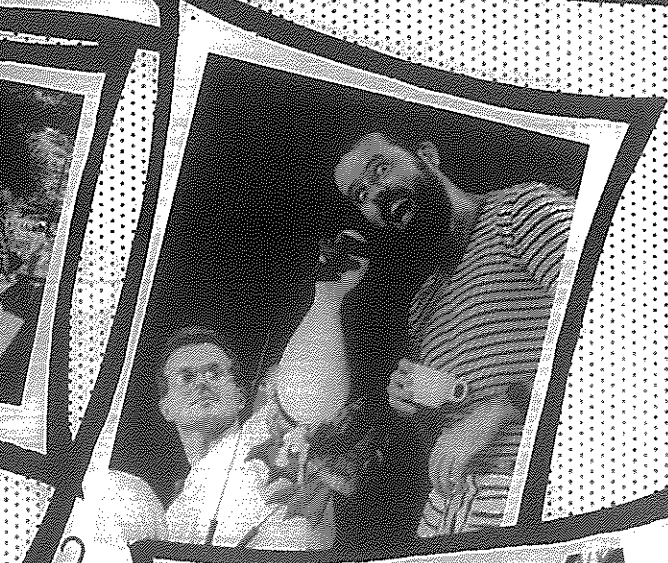
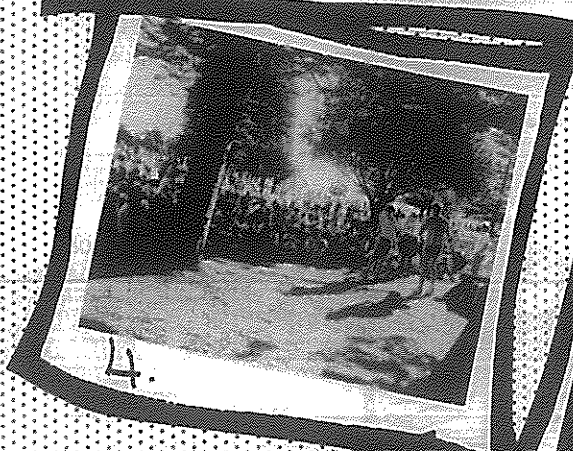
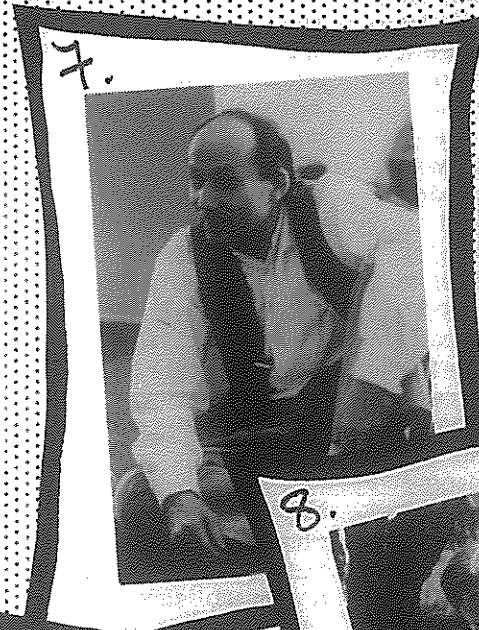
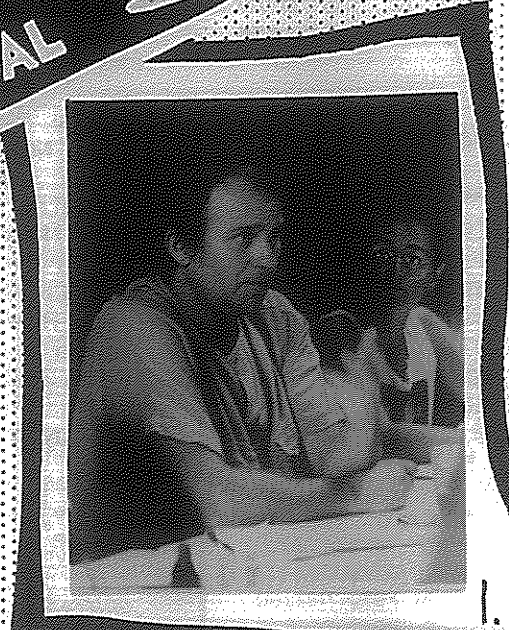
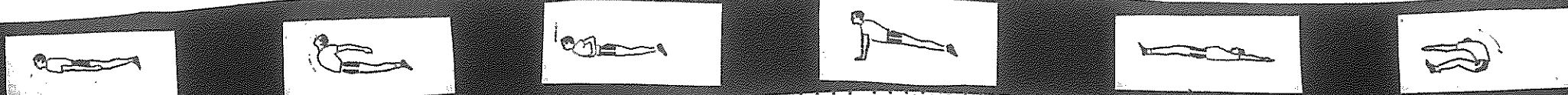
Sunday Times (10/4)

The first thing I have to say about the Vietnamese Water Puppets is my utmost admiration for the people who came and made up the audience despite all the odds. The first obstacle for me was lines of screaming Asians that flanked the footpath like some kind of bizarre tunnel ball. I found my partner's nails slowly digging into my arm and my own heart pounding. "Relax, I thought to myself, "This is Australia. This is a Democracy. I have a perfect right to go to the theatre, no matter what country it's from, and enjoy it". Nearly at the entrance one white face stuck out from the crowd. I smiled at him out of relief I suppose, and to say "Yes, I agree you have a cause to protest." He matter-of-factly chanted something in my direction about it being un-Australian to attend this performance. This stopped me dead in my tracks. My mouth opened but (CONTINUED ON PAGE 14)



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PUPPET FESTIVAL



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I suppose beneath it all most people who attended that show are very sympathetic to their case. What defence can you have to the facts coming out of Vietnam today? In my book, however, ignoring a country's cultural heritage, is not a good way to come to understand them.

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Of all the traditional ethnic puppet performances that I have seen I found the Vietnamese Water Puppets by far the most accessible. Hell, it was actually entertaining! Previously I had almost come to thinking that seeing traditional puppet forms was a kind of medicine - good for me but something that had to be endured. The use the Vietnamese made of special effects such as fireworks and popping-up flagpoles was delightful. As usual the storyline went straight over my head. The program notes weren't much help either, but that didn't lessen my enjoyment of the piece. The puppets were interesting and well made, and expertly manipulated, considering the difficulties of the technique. The design of the puppets is not my cup of tea, but I suppose that has more to do with tradition than this company.

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Designed by Kenneth Evans

Music by Peter Crosbie

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Maybe it was the humanising element of the little girls, or that the design was based on an established style, or that they used a text that had passed the test of time. I found this piece had depth and a perception about humanity. The imagery was rounded and balanced, and somehow more logical. It must be said that the girls were great. The director Ariette Taylor's experience with working with young people really showed through, and they performed well under what must have been trying circumstances. It also must be said that the sound system for this show was diabolical. If someone designs a cheap system that's transportable and works well, no matter what the acoustics of the hall, they would make a fortune. With the music playing, it was almost impossible to hear what the girls were saying on the night I went. Fortunately this didn't really matter as there was more than enough in the beautiful and often striking imagery to entertain. I remember thinking to myself at one point, "What does it all mean?" I answered myself immediately, "I don't really care, this is great!" The Red scene for me was a highlight. The images of hell brought to life for us on stage were at

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how fast a change of puppet or the puppeteer's aspect can draw an audience through a scene change, but the transitions from one scene to another seemed to me to be unnecessarily drawn out on occasions. Dialogue seemed to be implanted to hold the threads together where none needed to be. I also feel that this will be ironed out as the play is 'run - in'.

Not only did Joe have to contend with 'the runners' (the people who walked out noisily) on the night I went, but at one stage a dog made a brief cameo appearance. Just as I was thinking how clever it was to train a dog to be in the performance, a very embarrassed owner came from the audience and retrieved the dog. I gather Spare Parts now has a policy of keeping the back-door to the stage closed during performances. Again Joe's professionalism showed through. After a minute to collect his thoughts, the performance continued and the audience soon forgot the incident. I wondered, if I had been in Joe's place, how I would have handled the situation.

IAN TREGONNING

IAN TREGONNING graduated from W.A.I.T. (now Curtin University) with a B.A. majoring in theatre arts. He was a puppeteer with Spare Parts for four years before going to England to work on the films; Labyrinth (Henson), Little Shop of Horrors (Warner Bros.), and Who Framed Roger Rabbit? (Disney, Spielberg). He currently runs his own company, the 'Unknown Puppet Company' in W.A.

THE STORY OF THE LITTLE GIRL WHOSE FATHER WAS A RABBIT

Written by Goesta Kjellin
Directed by Eric Bass
Designed by Beverley Campbell-Jackson
Music by Helena Hendel
Performed by Jane Davies, Frank Italiano, Peter Jagger, Jenny Davis

'combines robust humour, warmth and tenderness in a mix of puppetry, acting, music and pantomime'

Sunday Times (10/4)

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Spart Parts' guest American director, Eric Bass, chose to present The Story of the Little Girl Whose Father Was a Rabbit. It was a surprising title, matched by plenty of surprises within the play. Elephants make telephone calls, school buses career across the stage, and oversized rabbits thump out a soft-foot shuffle.

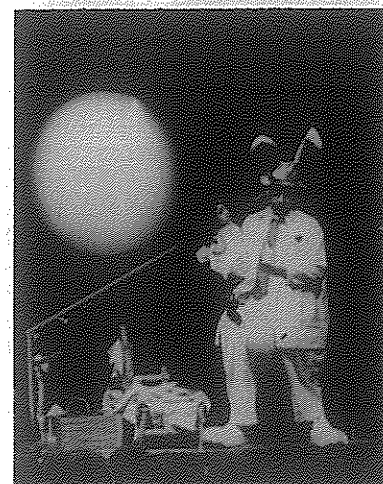
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INTERNATIONAL PUPPETRY ORGANISATION

UNIMA CENTRE AUSTRALIA

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Olinda Vic 3788
Ph (03) 751 1144

Secretary:

Annie Heitmann
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Nymboida NSW 2460
Ph (066) 49 4129

Treasurer:

David Poulton
26 Angler Street
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The Australian Centre of UNIMA was formed in 1969. The main driving force for the first decade was the late

Edith Murray. She was rewarded for her efforts as 'fostering mother' of Australian puppetry with a British Empire Medal and honorary life membership of UNIMA. In the early 1980's Edith, who was by now approaching her 80's, stepped back to allow others to take over. Hers was a hard act to follow and for a few years the Australian Centre suffered the ebbing of energy created in her absence. The Executive elected at the 1983 Festival in Adelaide resolved to make it their business to pull UNIMA Centre Australia out of the doldrums, since it was (and still is) the ONLY functioning association of Australian puppeteers at a national level. To some extent this aim has been achieved with regular quarterly Newsletters and membership coming from a reasonable cross-section of Australian puppetry enthusiasts, from the so-called 'funded companies' to amateurs and interested persons. The Secretary's desk has seen a steady flow of letters passing on information to both members and non-members. Australian Centre of UNIMA seems to be flourishing as a result of this new injection of energy, yet with a membership figure that includes no more than half the practising puppeteers in Australia, I'm sure I can be forgiven for calling them fickle.

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how fast a change of puppet or the puppeteer's aspect can draw an audience through a scene change, but the transitions from one scene to another seemed to me to be unnecessarily drawn out on occasions. Dialogue seemed to be implanted to hold the threads together where none needed to be. I also feel that this will be ironed out as the play is 'run - in'.

Not only did Joe have to contend with 'the runners' (the people who walked out noisily) on the night I went, but at one stage a dog made a brief cameo appearance. Just as I was thinking how clever it was to train a dog to be in the performance, a very embarrassed owner came from the audience and retrieved the dog. I gather Spare Parts now has a policy of keeping the back-door to the stage closed during performances. Again Joe's professionalism showed through. After a minute to collect his thoughts, the performance continued and the audience soon forgot the incident. I wondered, if I had been in Joe's place, how I would have handled the situation.

IAN TREGONNING

IAN TREGONNING graduated from W.A.I.T. (now Curtin University) with a B.A. majoring in theatre arts. He was a puppeteer with Spare Parts for four years before going to England to work on the films; Labyrinth (Henson), Little Shop of Horrors (Warner Bros.), and Who Framed Roger Rabbit? (Disney, Spielberg). He currently runs his own company, the 'Unknown Puppet Company' in W.A.

THE STORY OF THE LITTLE GIRL WHOSE FATHER WAS A RABBIT

Written by Goesta Kjellin
Directed by Eric Bass
Designed by Beverley Campbell-Jackson
Music by Helena Hendel
Performed by Jane Davies, Frank Italiano, Peter Jagger, Jenny Davis

'combines robust humour, warmth and tenderness in a mix of puppetry, acting, music and pantomime'

Sunday Times (10/4)

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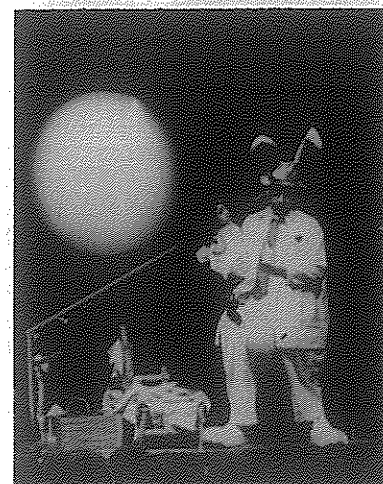
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Terrapin puppet theatre

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Enquiries welcomed to: Grasshopper's Puppet Works, Braidwood P.O., N.S.W. 2622.

OZ Puppet Festival Fremantle

Meeting fellow puppeteers is always a most interesting and stimulating part of every puppet festival and this gathering of artists was no exception. Seeing work produced by others, both individuals and companies, brings with it a new impetus and enthusiasm to try new approaches and tackle ideas that arise from the interaction that takes place.

Taking part in the first week of Master Classes was a refreshing time, when basic techniques in manipulation, presentation and methods could be explored.

In the workshop with Philippe Genty, the most challenging exercise was the demand made upon us to take an idea of our own and in a short preparation time, to find a way to express that idea in a dramatic form. The need to use an idea to create a scenario with a found object and clearly convey what we wish to present was a most exciting and basic exercise fundamental to the development of every puppetry production.

The opportunity to take part in this process in a supportive situation where constructive criticism was freely given was in itself a justification for gathering puppeteers together for the festival.

In the second week, the performance week, there was a variety of work presented in the new Spare Parts Theatre where the organisers remained cheerful and efficient throughout the Festival. The building served us well being

an information centre, space for workshops, a performance venue and in the evenings, home for the Festival Club where we shouted to each other over the sound of the band, watched video and more puppet shows.

The Handspan production of Four Little Girls was the most memorable of performances during the Festival; dynamic, imaginative and with wonderfully choreographed use of the Little Girls. This was a very professional production with images that remain in the mind long after the performance is over. Among other performances that remain in memory was Eric Bass's moving plays, small in scale but large in content; Joe Gladwin's sustained portrayal of a rather unpleasant Punch and Judy man, the little girl puppet in her house and the red masked figure in The Girl Whose Father Was a Rabbit; the simple puppets so skilfully manipulated in Overcoat; Richard Bradshaw's intelligent shadow show and more. All this in the painted streets and heat of Fremantle.

Terrapin Puppet Theatre performed Home Is Where the House Is at the Festival. This is a puppet play for children of 6 - 9 years old set in the Tasmanian mountains 100 years ago.

We brought this production to the Festival even though we were aware that it would have to be performed in a theatre, because we knew that professional puppeteers would understand the changes this displacement would make to the whole performance and its relationship to the

audience. We believed that in many ways this change would be an interesting example of the structuring of a play in relation to the method of presentation and the venue.

Normally Home Is Where the House Is would be performed in an intimate space with the audience seated on the floor close to the performers making interaction easy. Naturally the acting area has to be raised 60 cm from floor level so that all the audience have a clear view

The presentation of the play has clearly been structured to work with the children in their venues where it was to be performed. Had the play been produced for the "stage" with its stage lighting effects and its different relationship between performers and audience, it would have been written, directed and designed differently.

There are some regrets about the Festival. There were few performances for children and no opportunity to discuss this important area of puppetry. Puppeteers cry out that our theatre is for adults as well as for children and in the same breath that work for children is as important as for adults. But when it comes to Festival time, scant attention is paid to performances for children or the writers, directors and the trained puppeteers that are needed.

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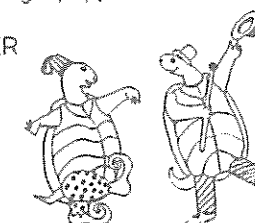
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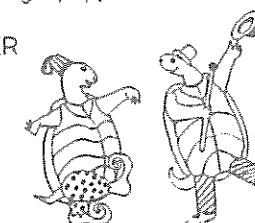
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Spare Parts

puppet theatre

1 SHORT STREET, FREMANTLE, WESTERN AUSTRALIA 6160
P.O. BOX 897, FREMANTLE. TEL: (09) 335 5044

Spare Parts Puppet Theatre has had an extremely busy and diverse year to date. The year commenced with Noriko Nishimoto's production of Kaguyahime for the 1988 Festival of Perth followed very quickly by Eric Bass's residency with the company and his production of The Little Girl Whose Father Was a Rabbit for the OZ Puppet Festival.

Then came the OZ Puppet Festival and a new production of An Overcoat with David Collins playing the character assisted by Noriko Nishimoto and directed by Peter Wilson.

The whirlwind of master-classes and Puppet Festival was soon over and the company found itself in the middle of rehearsals for Pied Piper and the impending North American Tour of seven weeks. Whilst most of the company were away playing full houses in Vancouver, Seattle, Pittsburgh, Prince George and Calgary, Frank Italiano was busy devising the company's new schools programme Hands Up - a combination of workshop and performance for performances in classrooms and isolated country tours.

In the middle of all this the company somehow managed to open its new theatre in time to house the OZ Puppet Festival.

Now we are all back together, life doesn't seem to be getting any easier. Pied Piper is playing its

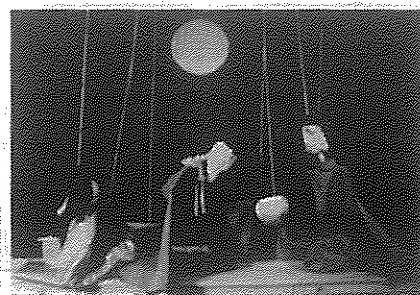
final season at the Adelaide Festival Centre, Kaguyahime has been re-rehearsed for performances in the company's new theatre and for a country tour of regional centres, An Overcoat is back in the repertoire and getting ready for performances at the World Puppet Festival in Nagoya before touring China and Korea under the auspices of the Department of Foreign Affairs. In August the company settles down in the new theatre and prepares for 1989.

1989 whilst not so busy will again be an exciting year; commencing with a new production of Boos by Richard Bradshaw whilst Noriko Nishimoto and Peter Wilson are in Czechoslovakia directing a new production for DRAC Theatre. On their return the company will commence a season of a new Australian work Alice Down Under, not to be confused with a production under the same name by the Sydney Puppet Company in 1985. This is then followed by a joint Australian / Chinese production utilising artists from both countries. The company is hoping to open this production up to other puppeteers and members of companies. In 1988, Heather Monk was seconded from Terrapin Puppet Theatre to work on the production of Pied Piper, and it is planned to enter into further secondment arrangements. More details on the China project will be known when the company returns from its

1988 China Tour in August. The company is particularly interested in designers and puppeteers who may wish to work alongside their Chinese counterparts.

As the Artistic Director of Spare Parts Puppet Theatre I am particularly pleased at the exposure the company has received both nationally and internationally and the opportunity afforded the staff of Spare Parts Puppet Theatre to learn from this exposure. Whilst it has been a busy and exhausting year, the company have more than answered the challenges that were facing them.

PETER WILSON



The Puppets in Kaguyahime

IMPRESSIONS - CANADA/ U.S.A. TOUR OF THE 'PIED PIPER'

Vancouver - Seattle - Pittsburgh - Vancouver - Prince George - Calgary.

A seven week tour of the PIED PIPER which included a quick trip to Banff National Park where one member of the company spotted a lone moose grazing by the side of the road.

The preparation for such a complex tour began months before our performing team set out for America in May. Due to the efficient planning

and organization of our Administrative team the tour was a successful and productive time for all concerned.

We spent one week in each of the above-mentioned cities, performing two shows per day which left part of the day to attend a selection of the other performances. Some of the highlights included:

Ningxia Yinchuan Beijing Troupe (China) - The Monkey King meets the Dragon King Under the Sea
Kaze No Ko (Japan) - The Magic Pick
Gare Centrale (Belgium) - Le Petit Pois
Kokoro Dance (Canada, BC) Japanese Drumming/Dance Arena Theatre Company (Australia) - The Women There
Elizabethan Theatre Trust (Australia) - Honeyspot
California Theatre Centre (USA) - Most Valuable Player
Ra Ra Zoo (Great Britain) Circus - Vaudeville Theatre Centre (Great Britain) - Whispers in the Dark

..... and the list goes on. The line-up of companies each festival acquired was quite stunning, presenting a healthy balance of large-scale productions through to smaller intimate companies of 2 - 3 performers, solo acts, and roving musicians, jugglers and clowns who conjured up the 'Festival Spirit' for each venue.

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Spare Parts

puppet theatre

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Spare Parts Puppet Theatre has had an extremely busy and diverse year to date. The year commenced with Noriko Nishimoto's production of Kaguyahime for the 1988 Festival of Perth followed very quickly by Eric Bass's residency with the company and his production of The Little Girl Whose Father Was a Rabbit for the OZ Puppet Festival.

Then came the OZ Puppet Festival and a new production of An Overcoat with David Collins playing the character assisted by Noriko Nishimoto and directed by Peter Wilson.

The whirlwind of master-classes and Puppet Festival was soon over and the company found itself in the middle of rehearsals for Pied Piper and the impending North American Tour of seven weeks. Whilst most of the company were away playing full houses in Vancouver, Seattle, Pittsburgh, Prince George and Calgary, Frank Italiano was busy devising the company's new schools programme Hands Up - a combination of workshop and performance for performances in classrooms and isolated country tours.

In the middle of all this the company somehow managed to open its new theatre in time to house the OZ Puppet Festival.

Now we are all back together, life doesn't seem to be getting any easier. Pied Piper is playing its

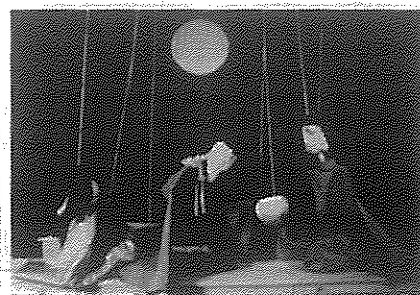
final season at the Adelaide Festival Centre, Kaguyahime has been re-rehearsed for performances in the company's new theatre and for a country tour of regional centres, An Overcoat is back in the repertoire and getting ready for performances at the World Puppet Festival in Nagoya before touring China and Korea under the auspices of the Department of Foreign Affairs. In August the company settles down in the new theatre and prepares for 1989.

1989 whilst not so busy will again be an exciting year; commencing with a new production of Boos by Richard Bradshaw whilst Noriko Nishimoto and Peter Wilson are in Czechoslovakia directing a new production for DRAK Theatre. On their return the company will commence a season of a new Australian work Alice Down Under, not to be confused with a production under the same name by the Sydney Puppet Company in 1985. This is then followed by a joint Australian / Chinese production utilising artists from both countries. The company is hoping to open this production up to other puppeteers and members of companies. In 1988, Heather Monk was seconded from Terrapin Puppet Theatre to work on the production of Pied Piper, and it is planned to enter into further secondment arrangements. More details on the China project will be known when the company returns from its

1988 China Tour in August. The company is particularly interested in designers and puppeteers who may wish to work alongside their Chinese counterparts.

As the Artistic Director of Spare Parts Puppet Theatre I am particularly pleased at the exposure the company has received both nationally and internationally and the opportunity afforded the staff of Spare Parts Puppet Theatre to learn from this exposure. Whilst it has been a busy and exhausting year, the company have more than answered the challenges that were facing them.

PETER WILSON



The Puppets in Kaguyahime

IMPRESSIONS - CANADA/ U.S.A. TOUR OF THE 'PIED PIPER'

Vancouver - Seattle - Pittsburgh - Vancouver - Prince George - Calgary.

A seven week tour of the PIED PIPER which included a quick trip to Banff National Park where one member of the company spotted a lone moose grazing by the side of the road.

The preparation for such a complex tour began months before our performing team set out for America in May. Due to the efficient planning

and organization of our Administrative team the tour was a successful and productive time for all concerned.

We spent one week in each of the above-mentioned cities, performing two shows per day which left part of the day to attend a selection of the other performances. Some of the highlights included:

Ningxia Yinchuan Beijing Troupe (China) - The Monkey King meets the Dragon King Under the Sea
Kaze No Ko (Japan) - The Magic Pick
Gare Centrale (Belgium) - Le Petit Pois
Kokoro Dance (Canada, BC) Japanese Drumming/Dance
Arena Theatre Company (Australia) - The Women There
Elizabethan Theatre Trust (Australia) - Honeyspot
California Theatre Centre (USA) - Most Valuable Player
Ra Ra Zoo (Great Britain) Circus - Vaudeville
Theatre Centre (Great Britain) - Whispers in the Dark

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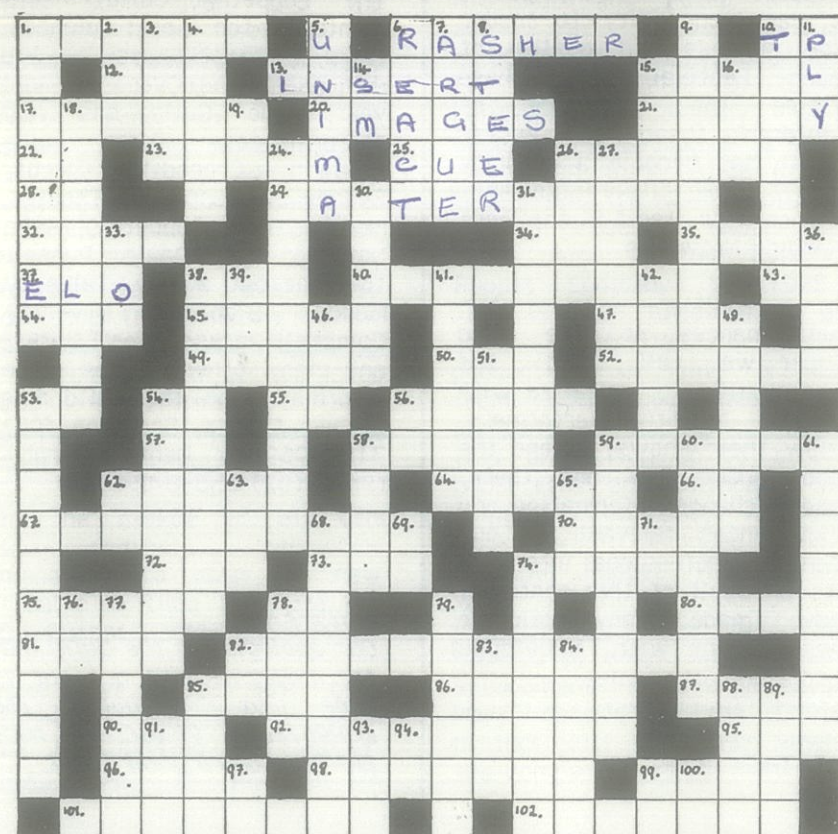
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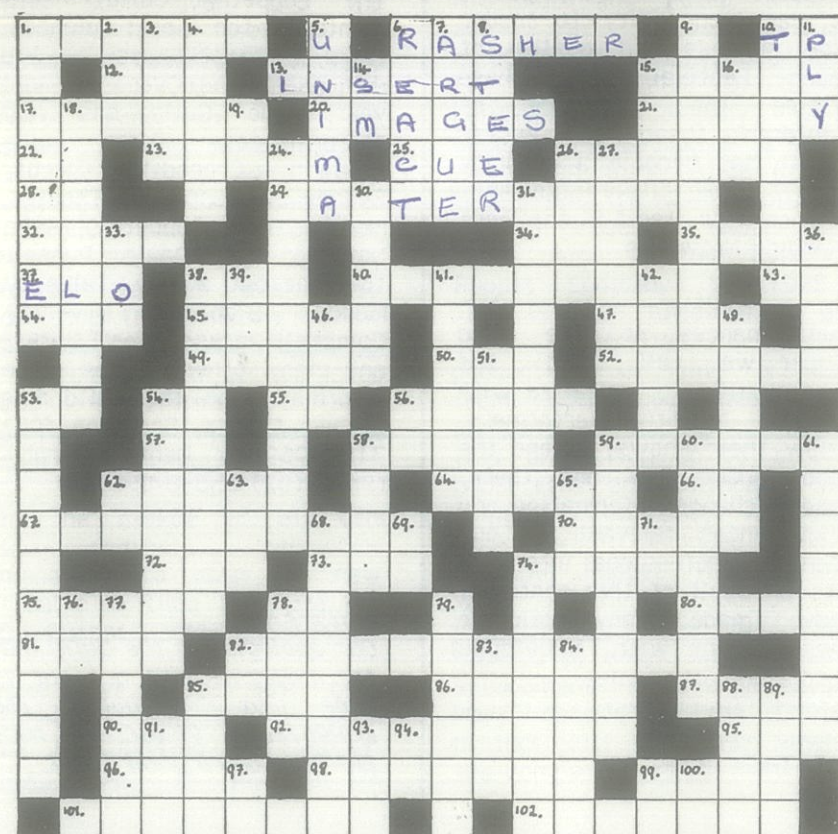
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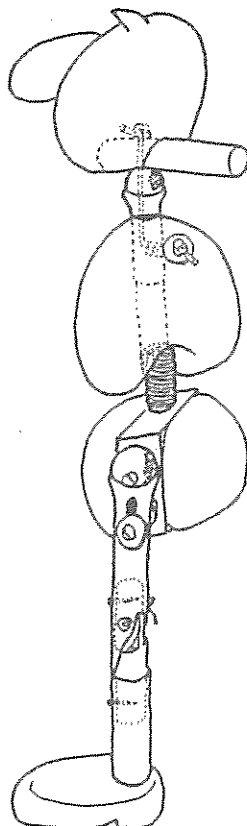


SELF-STANDING PUPPET

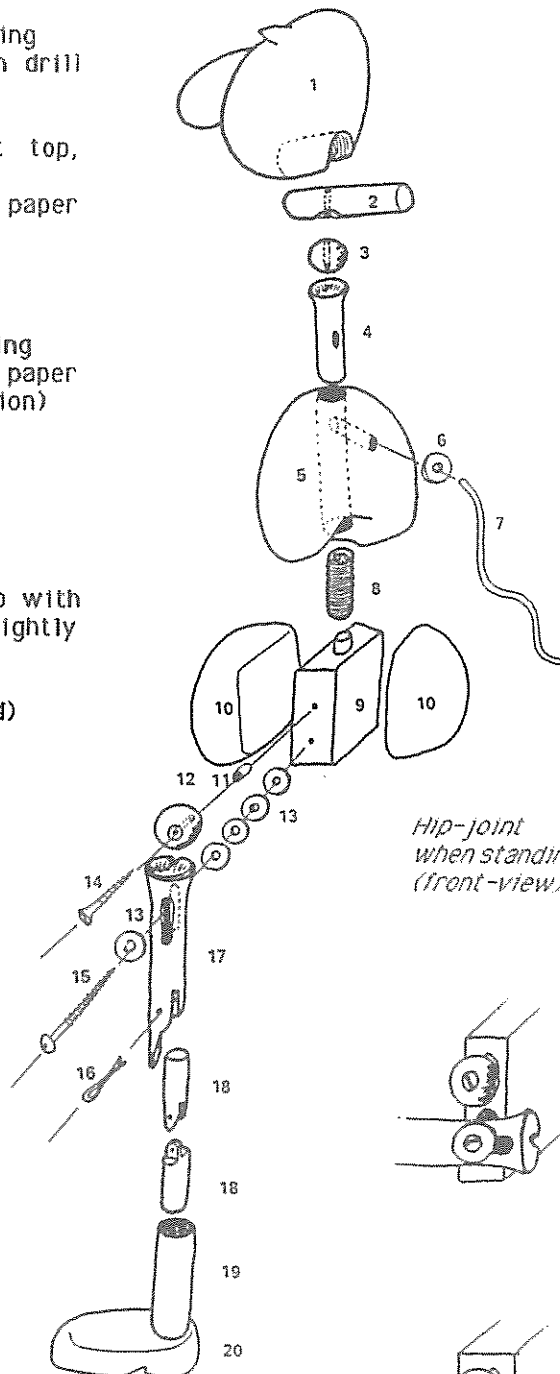
Developed by Barbara Scheel (Babuschka-theater, Frankfurt) with assistance from F.H. Wolf and M. Benecke.

BODY PARTS

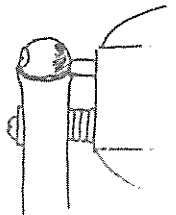
1. Head - Styrofoam with paper covering
2. Control rod - honed for ball, with drill hole
3. Wooden ball with large hole.
4. Plastic tube (conduit) splayed at top, with drill hole
5. Upper body - Styrofoam with paper covering; two drill holes
6. Nylon washer
7. Silicon rubber (elasticized rope)
8. Tension spring (coil spring)
9. Hip-piece - Wood with plug for spring
10. Lower body - Styrofoam with paper covering (lead weighting in front section)
11. Spacer (wood or plastic tubing)
12. Wooden ball with drill hole
13. Nylon washers
14. Flat-head wood screw
15. Round-head wood screw
16. Cotter pin (for knee joint)
17. Upper leg - conduit, splayed at top with loose vertical slot for hip-joint and slightly forward drill hole for the knee-joint.
18. Knee-joint (wood)
19. Lower leg (conduit filled with lead)
20. Foot (wood) - no ankle joint



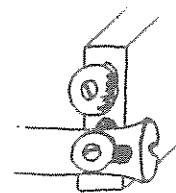
Assembled Puppet



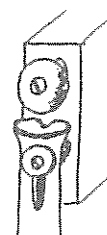
Hip-joint when standing (front-view)



Hip-joint when sitting (side-view)



Hip-joint free-moving (side-view)



Drawings by Jojo Ludwig
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Design courtesy of Jojo Ludwig