

October 1986

# Manipulation

a magazine for puppeteers





# MANIPULATION

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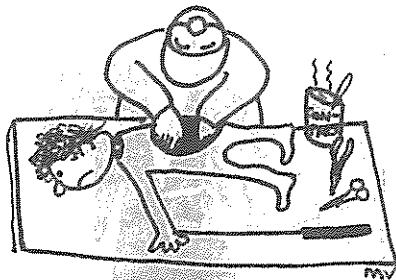
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Dear Readers ....  
Hope you enjoy this  
edition and write  
more for next edition.  
Send PHOTOS too. I  
want to thank the  
MTA for letting me prac-  
tically LIVE here while  
I produced this edition,  
and JANE DAVIES for  
putting in the odd song.  
Have a good summer,  
do good puppetry.  
Maeve

This edition was mostly typeset on a Macintosh computer kindly loaned by Entity Productions, laserprinted by Business Backup Services (BBC to their friends) and proper-printed by Breakout printers in downtown Sydney.

Cover:  
Puppets from Terrapin  
Puppet Theatre's "The  
Princess and the Echo"  
1985.



## Get well Bev!

Puppetmaker Beverly Campbell-Jackson recently underwent surgery at Fremantle Hospital and is now recuperating before returning to work at Spare Parts. All her friends send good wishes for a complete recovery.

## Melbourne: HANDSPAN APPOINTS ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

In July Handspan Theatre was ten years old. In August they got their birthday present: Trina Parker. Trina has been appointed the company's artistic director, initially under a six-month Special Projects grant from the Theatre Board of the Australia Council. In this period her task will be to develop an artistic policy for the company and a programme for 1987. Trina is a designer by trade, with many years experience designing for theatre companies in Victoria and interstate, including Arena Theatre, Toe Truck, Mad Hattie and Circus Oz, as well as events for the Victorian Arts Council and the Melbourne City Council.



## London: PUPPET CENTRE REGAINS FUNDING

We were all sad to hear earlier this year that the British Arts Council had cut funds to the Puppet Centre Trust in London. We can all cheer up again! They've got their funding back, not from the Arts Council directly, but from the metropolitan funding body that replaced the Greater London Council after its abolition.

## 1987 PUPPET FESTIVAL OFF

The Congress steering committee has been unable to secure funding from the State arts ministries for a Puppet Festival next year, ending hopes for a continuation of the four-yearly cycle of festivals begun back in 1979. Below is a full report from the committee ...

At the Forum it was decided that each state should set up a working group to consider the possibility of having a puppet festival/congress in their state in 1987, so that the four-yearly cycle should not be broken, and after it was considered by certain Forum members that Queensland was not the place because of its "style of government", although their government was willing to support it financially and with management facilities.

Western Australia had difficulty as it was at the same time as the America's Cup race, but Peter Wilson of Spare Parts Puppet Theatre contacted the WA Arts Council, who would favourably consider a grant and forwarded us a the necessary grant application forms. From South Australia, New South Wales and Tasmania nothing has been heard, so we in Victoria decided to try and organise it, especially as Mr. Chris Walsh of the Victorian Ministry of the Arts, who attended the Forum, was supportive.

A committee of puppeteers met and it was decided to approach Andrew Bleby, who had been involved in the Adelaide Puppet Festival and the Next Wave Festival in Victoria. Andrew Bleby agreed to help formulate a proposal and budget to be put to the Arts Ministers of all states in March at their conference, which would avoid individual state grant applications, and would have set up the Puppetry Congress financially. The aim of the Congress being to bring together puppeteers and have shows, workshops and discussions for all interested in the art of puppetry and thereby furthering the art.

A proposal and budget was worked out and forwarded to all the state ministers, but it did not get onto the agenda of the conference. Later we heard from Mr. Walsh and Ms. Greaves (and possibly others) that they considered the budget too high and recommended that it be amended. ....cont. p. 3

## PUPPETRY INSTITUTE

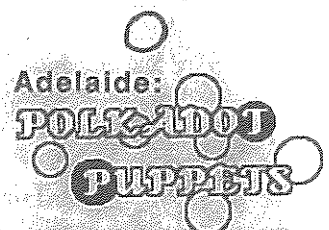
Research into ways and means of forming a puppeteers' association is now complete. The research committee has drafted a constitution and recommendations for structure. These are now to be printed, and will be circulated through the state reps to puppeteers for discussion and amendment at the end of October.

## Sydney: NEW DIRECTOR AT THE MARIONETTE THEATRE

Actually he's the new Artistic Director, but Michael Creighton prefers plain Director, and so be it. He was appointed in April, bringing to an end the long, dry spell at the Marionette Theatre of Australia since Terry O'Connell left the position vacant a year ago. What Michael Creighton and the MTA will be doing is described more fully elsewhere in this edition.

## FUNDING CHANGES?

It often does. Now there's the Macleay Report on arts funding and it makes a few suggestions the papers have called "time bombs" about who should really control policy. Check it out with your federal member and make your own suggestions.



Adelaide puppeteers Carys Penny and Beverly Thomson have teamed up to form Polkadot Puppets, a part-time venture playing metropolitan schools, kinders, libraries and birthday parties. Carys has recently returned from 12 months in Texas. She brought back a Texan puppet script called "Why do Cowboys Sing in Texas?", which she and Beverly are performing alongside a script by an Adelaide writer, "The Australian Bush Olympics".

England:

## Books for Sale

Ray da Silva has a number of puppetry books for sale or exchange. He sent his catalogue to Manipulation and it is now in the Marionette Theatre of Australia's library for anyone interested to peruse. (You'll find it in the box marked ENGLAND/AMERICA on the bottom shelf.)

Ray writes:

Since my retirement from Norwich Puppet Theatre I have been organising a collection of books gathered over 25 years puppeteering. During recent book-hunts to fill up gaps in this library I have noted that there are very few good puppet books in secondhand shops ... It therefore seemed a good idea to pick up as many bargains as I could, add these to duplicates already acquired, and offer them as "swaps" to other puppeteers who may be in a better position to fill up the gaps in my library or point me in the right direction elsewhere. Perhaps this is wistful thinking but that is the idea.

**Ray da Silva**

The Limes, Norwich Road,  
Marsham, Norwich NR10 5PS  
United Kingdom

Phone: Aylsham (0263) 733882

## Something new: A Foot-Puppet Show!

Earlier this year I saw an edition of the Johnny Carson Show on TV in the USA in which was featured a woman who performed a puppet show standing on her head, with puppets on her feet, while she narrated the story and provided a musical accompaniment by whistling!

Imagine my delight when some months later I saw her repeat the act at the recent Puppeteers of America Festival in Vancouver, Canada. In case you doubt me, I enclose a photo of this remarkable puppeteer, Sparky J. Roberts from Eugene, Oregon, caught in the act.

She was carried in from the wings, upside-down, by two helpers (one of whom was Jim Rowland, who worked with the Sydney Puppet Theatre on the first show for Australia's Wonderland last year) and proceeded to act out the story of "The Footprince". The play was short but witty, and she got quite a lot out of those puppets. The audience gave her a big hand. A big foot might have been more appropriate. Bravo Sparky!

PS: Do you think the Australia Council might fund a company called Footspan?

**Richard Bradshaw**



Sparky J. Roberts

## UNIMA NEWS

The Australian Centre of UNIMA is still alive and well, despite the UNIMA News not reaching Maeve for inclusion in last edition owing to postal confusion.

Since the last UNIMA Australia Newsletter went out in September, there is not much to add without being repetitive. Just a reminder that subscriptions will be \$15 for 1987, payable in January, with a \$3 joining fee for new members or those wishing to rejoin after a lapse in membership.

Since the Australian Puppet Congress has been cancelled the opportunity for a general meeting of UNIMA Australia members is also no longer possible. This meeting would have provided the opportunity for election of new office bearers for the positions of President, Secretary and Treasurer, held for the last 3 and a half years by Norman Hetherington, Annie Heitmann and Axel Axelrad respectively. At this stage it seems we will have to call for postal nominations.

Further details on this will be in the November-December Newsletter. Copy deadline (for anyone wishing to pass on any information in the next Newsletter) will be NOVEMBER 10th.

For further information contact:

Annie Heitmann  
Secretary, UNIMA Australia  
RMB Glen's Creek Road,  
Nymboida 2460 NSW



**Sydney:**

## Hiroshi Hori

Japanese puppeteer Hiroshi Hori was in Sydney in May this year to display his exquisite puppets at the Art Gallery of NSW for the Sydney

Biennale. He also gave a few performances with them. Photos kindly supplied by Jonquill Temple.



...from p.1

When a committee runs a congress, the majority opinion is followed, but there were some who considered the budget was too high as it was supposed to be a low-key congress because of the present economic conditions. This high budget may have been the reason that the congress did not get onto the agenda of the arts ministers.

The committee met in April, after one member returned from New Zealand, and a new, revised budget was formulated and forwarded to all the state arts ministers, with a request that grant application forms be sent, which we understood had been requested with our first submission. We then learned from the states that some of the deadlines for submissions had passed and from others that they could not guarantee that requested amounts would be granted because of the economic conditions and possible cut back in federal and state budgets. Meanwhile we organised the mechanics of the Congress.

When we met and talked with puppeteers and people interested in the congress it was felt that there was a movement against it, especially from those puppeteers who consider themselves as "professional" and seem to have gained a new lease of life since the Puppetry Forum. There was also little offer of help, especially if it was to be of a voluntary nature and for the good of puppetry. With a congress for 200 minimum it would have been economic with requested grants and registration fees and the committee felt it could take the risk. The committee was quite prepared to pay accounts personally, and with the help of UNIMA, until such time as grant money was received.

With the sudden downturn in the economic climate (Banana Republic) and the possible unavailability of grants, plus the groundswell against the congress, it was decided to cut our losses and cancel now, with our regret as we consider a congress essential to the art of puppetry. Every other puppet festival/congress had the backing of a government organisation such as Carclew, the Elizabethan Theatre Trust or the Tasmanian Fiesta which could absorb any losses. This type of government organization is not available in Victoria, so the committee would have had this extra burden.

Axel Axelrad, Katy Bowman and Greg Temple

## Eros

### Spare Parts Puppet Theatre

Writer-director: Noriko Nishimoto;  
Performers: Noriko Nishimoto, David Collins, Winston Appleyard;  
Puppets: Beverly Campbell-Jackson;  
Lighting & stage manager: Azima;  
Venue: Dolphin Theatre, University of WA, March 1986.

*Eros* played a short, one-week season during the Perth Festival. Serious adult material with puppets is always a risk, but this one paid off. Perth discussed it for weeks afterwards.

Part one was set in a Japanese bedroom; a rice-paper screen; a low table-lamp and some bedding; discreet Japanese music. The mood was quiet. A young man (Winston) prepares to sleep, but he cannot. Amorous thoughts occupy his mind and he begins to make love to his pillow. A beautiful, squashy, red satin pillow. And suddenly it responds. Much giggling and teasing as the pillow beckons with its pointy corners, cuddles him, and plays hide-and-seek behind the screen. Then a red kimono emerges, bodiless but very much alive, and sweeps about the stage, by turns coquettish and dominating. As the kimono finally hovers pumping over the prone young man, a fox head appears from its neck and turns to leer at the audience. Blackout.

I asked Noriko later what a fox symbolises to the Japanese. "Much the same as 'foxy' in English" she explained. "It was a bit sinister" I commented. "That's right" she replied.

In part two the setting is Western, the costuming 19th century and the mood bleak. The set is simply a window hung with lace curtains.

Noriko and David manipulate a man and a woman - pale, refined, stylized figures, a little larger than life-size. Their bodies have no legs, they trail off in a spiral shape. The pair hold hands, they sigh, they gaze at each other, but they are unable or unwilling to

express any passion. It could be comic, but it isn't, it's sad. A breeze disturbs the curtains and a creature enters through the window. A large, menacing, sleek black bird. It rapes the woman and makes overtures to the man. The couple are thrown into confusion, at once attracted and repulsed by the black bird's lust. When it leaves they comfort each other, but nothing is resolved. They are still as sad as before.

Both segments could have had a stronger ending. The first was sudden, the second inconclusive. But the body of each segment was powerful enough to override these dissatisfactions and leave a memorable after-image.

What did it all mean? There were as many interpretations as there were audience members. I found it a bit morbid for my taste. So much for the joy of sex.

But it was a joy to see three experienced puppeteers performing at their very best. Every gesture had the economy and clarity of meaning that is the hallmark of good puppetry. Noriko's style of manipulation is careful and deliberate. Her every movement is thought out, and this show definitely had her stamp on it. My only complaint is that occasionally things slowed to a pretentious pace. The flirtatious pillow was a wonderful piece of puppetry, although much to the displeasure of the puppeteers the critics called it a prop instead of a puppet.

So much of Australian puppetry is based on classic tales, or on what we perceive our audiences want to see. That is fine, but I believe there is also room for the personal voice, for shows that speak honestly of what is nearest to the writer's heart. *Eros* is one of these. It is an independent and original work. I applaud Noriko's courage in presenting her ideas onstage undiluted. We need more writers in puppetry willing to do the same.

Maeve Vella

## The Murray Raine Puppets

I first met Murray at a NSW Puppetry Guild meeting in 1978 when he was still a high school student in Newcastle. I was very impressed by his puppets. He had most of the classic marionettes - the trapeze artist, the dissecting skeleton, beauty-into-beast. They were lovely puppets and Murray showed a real flair for puppetry. I made note of his name.

During the May school holidays I saw in the local paper that "The Murray Raine Puppets" were performing at a shopping centre so I went along. I was not disappointed. Murray's puppetry has developed and he has a very good show. His female puppets are his great strength. They were all decked out in feathers and sequins, with long curled eyelashes. His ballerina goose was brilliant. Murray has devised his own stringing and controls for some of the puppets and they had great variety. It was good to see marionettes being used. I hope string puppetry is having a comeback.

I felt that some of the marionettes might have had more movements than Murray was getting out of them and I'd like to see him work more on his showmanship. The complexity and difficulty of the puppet controls built to a technical climax but the build-up was not appreciated by non-puppeteers, and

I think this weakened the ending. The show's soundtrack was entirely on tape but at the end of the last song Murray spoke for the first time and, unamplified, announced that that was the end of the show. I would have liked to have seen a more definite ending.

I enjoyed the show and the audience was rapt. Murray Raine - make a note of the name.

Dennis Murphy

## Asylum:

Impressions of Vincent van Gogh

**Marionette Theatre of Australia**

**Writer:** Bruce McKendry; **Director:** Peter Barclay; **Puppetry direction:** Joe Gladwin; **Performers:** Ralph Cotterill, Bronwyn Fullarton and Brandon Burke; **Design:** Anthony Babicci; **Puppets:** Tina Matthews, Angela Berrigan and Joe Gladwin; **Lighting design:** Bruce McKendry; **Venue:** The Rocks Theatre, Sydney, June 1986.

*Asylum* is basically a monologue, a long-drawn scream of anguish as the writer imagines Van Gogh looking back on his life while he prepares to end it. There is a strong, if over-long text, and this first production had an equally strong performance from the principal player, Ralph Cotterill.

Major figures in Van Gogh's life - his lovers, his brother, his colleagues and even himself as a child - were represented by puppets.

Eye-line is crucial in puppetry. When puppets are conversing together, or an actor is conversing with a puppet, it is reasonable to expect that they will make eye-contact. When they don't the puppets are robbed of life. Whole scenes were played this way in *Asylum*, with puppets looking blankly at nothing.

Most were small rod puppets, and very lively in appearance, with bold eccentric faces and bright Post-Impressionist colouring. At first their movements were too busy, but as the season progressed the manipulation became more careful. One - the Art Critic - didn't improve. It was the top of his head that flapped when he spoke, rather than his bottom jaw - a fault in construction rather than the manipulator's.

The three life-size puppets - Paul Gauguin, a skeletal Death, and a woman - were disappointing. They

stood and moved their arms about, but there was very little meaning in their gestures, and scarcely any attention to the positions of their bodies, which seemed more an impediment to the puppeteers than a medium of expression. These characters could have been better played by the performers themselves.

There were moments when the puppetry worked. The figure of Sorrow was admirably brought to life in latex from one of Van Gogh's sketches. She simply lifted her head from her knees and complained of the cold. She wasn't made to do anything else. An exceptional moment where things were honed back to essentials.

Maeve Vella

## The Wind in the Willows

**Marionette Theatre of Australia**

**Writer:** Val Donlon, adapted from the book by Kenneth Grahame; **Director:** Michael Creighton; **Voices:** Gordon Chater, Tony Harvey, Peter Barley, Joe Gladwin; **Puppeteers:** Joe Gladwin, Susan Coward, Maria Slabacu, Rob Matson; **Storyteller:** Marg Higham; **Design:** Norman Heatherington; **Puppetmakers:** Tina Matthews, Angela Berrigan, Roz Foley, Rob Matson; **Production Manager:** Bruce McKendry; **Venue:** The Rocks Theatre, Sydney, August - September 1986.

This premiere production of *The Wind in the Willows* has attracted capacity houses at every performance. We should, however, be seeing better puppetry from the MTA.

The puppets have some design problems. They lack sufficient



flexibility in their head movement. Their arms frequently twist backwards at the elbow. Badger's eyes are set so high in his head he cannot look at the other, shorter characters when he speaks to them.

The puppeteers seem quite alienated from their puppets and their manipulation often lacks sensitivity. Lip-synch is inaccurate. The puppets frequently bump into each other, without appearing to notice. Ratty could be more in tune with what he is saying on the dialogue track. His movement is often frantic when his dialogue is quite the opposite.

Toad in jail is operated by three manipulators, but his limbs are not in tune with the rest of him. His feet do a lot of fancy work when he should be standing still. The Weasels' movements often lack precision.

The fight in Toad Hall is punctuated by the glorious hurling of Weasels and Stoats into the air, but is otherwise rather muddled and in need of more choreographing.

The sets are beautifully painted, particularly the River scenes and the Wild Wood. But there are all too few of them. A number of scenes are played in black theatre, simply using the puppets against black velvet. Without any set-pieces at all to indicate locations like Mole's burrow or Toad's jail cell, these scenes must be confusing to anyone not familiar with the story.

The Narrator all but disappears in front of the set, dressed as she is in a black frock. She appears to have some difficulty maintaining a connection with the audience. Her speaking voice could be more resonant, though her singing voice is pleasantly full.

The music has bounce, but the tunes are largely indistinguishable from each other and there are too many songs. Sometimes they interrupt the flow. The Road Song for example brings what should be a fast-moving scene to a standstill smack in the middle. A lot of the subtext and some of the story is contained in the lyrics of the songs, but without clear visual reinforcement in action and set the impact is often lost.

There are some nice moments. Mole trailing his hand in the water, the Narrator pushing the boat off the riverbank, the fish that leaps gracefully from the water in a spray of real bubbles, the outrageously long silhouette car crashing into the telegraph pole, the feeling of space when the set is fully opened.

No doubt improvements will come as the show continues and there will be many more such moments. It is a great shame, however, that the show could not have been more polished for its opening season.

Maeve Vella

## Dear Mole,

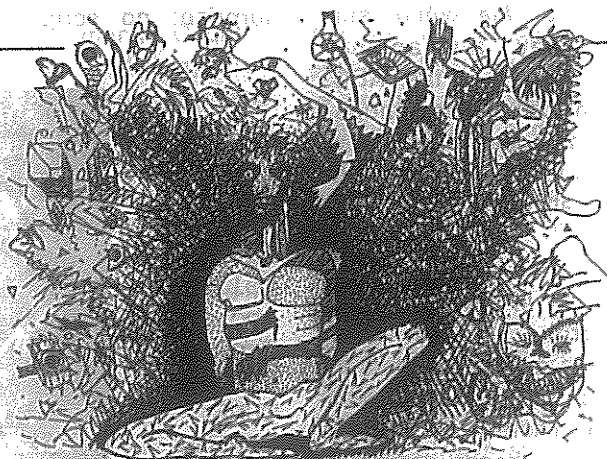
You shouldn't have gone to the Wild Woods by yourself. Ratty told you not to go there. But I still enjoyed your show. My favourite part was when you, Ratty and Badger hit the weasels. The weasels deserved it.

Rosanna Zinghini,  
Sacred Heart School, Cabramatta

## GOODBYE KEVIN

Puppeteers will be sad to hear of the sudden death of Kevin Scanlon, one of the medium's young talents, in May 1986. Kevin was a keen student and practitioner of the art of puppetry, having worked with Handout Theatre, the MTA and the Mike Carlton puppets. He was a talented sculptor and skilled graphic artist whose work was of the very highest standard. Well remembered by all his friends.

Christine Woodcock



TO KEVIN LOVE ALWAYS MARGOT \*

# Taking Part: a season with

## SPARE PARTS

I hadn't worked with a big company for some time, so when I was offered a three-month contract with Spare Parts I leapt into the air and would have flown to Perth under my own enthusiasm. But they bought me a plane ticket instead.

I arrived at night, in time for Lyn Robertson, Spare Parts' administrator, to drive me to the Dolphin Theatre where everyone was just emerging from a performance of *Eros*. There was Peter Wilson, Spare Parts' director, looking pretty proud. *Eros* was a success. Then a stream of familiar faces and faces that were to become familiar: puppeteers Noriko Nishimoto, David Collins and Winston Appleyard; Azima the stage manager; Geoff Gibbs from the WA Academy of Performing Arts; and more puppeteers: Joanne Foley, Bruce Paterson and Janet Ashelford. I would be taking Janet's part in *Play a Tune for Me* while she went to Sydney for another *Blinky Bill* shoot at the ABC. Reunions, introductions, hugs, handshakes, shop gossip and a few beers ... and I fell asleep that night feeling not at all homesick for the distant east.

Things were busy in the studio next day. Lyn drove me in and disappeared into a pile of papers in the office. Back of the building was the workshop. There was Beverly Campbell-Jackson, hands and brain engrossed in a mechanism for a four-legged animal. No, not a

character in *Play a Tune for Me* but something for an outside contract, a TV special in Sydney. Wire and bits of wood strewn over her drawing board. I was introduced to Ann Ratty, another visitor from over east, mouth full of pins and dressed in blazing colours. She was setting up an exhibition of the work of Australian puppet-makers for the company. The display stands she was making were as dazzling as her clothes. Assistant puppetmaker Kerry O'Connell was just visible in a cloud of sawdust. Wardrobe mistress Cath Ashton peeped over glasses from behind the ironing board. Dana Read, Spare Parts' secretary, distributed the mail like Santa Claus.

Rehearsals began. The puppets were all there, no waiting for them to be finished because *Play a Tune for Me* had already had its first season last year. But here's a surprise: no script. The original

cast had worked it out ensemble-style from a scenario Peter had written, and somehow no-one had got round to writing it all out. Well, ensemble shows do have a way of escaping fixity. I had my own problems. *Play a Tune for Me* is the kind of play that showcases a series of carefully set up manipulation tricks. Timing and precision placement were essential. I found this difficult. I felt walled in with strictly set manoeuvres at every turn. I'd arrived oozing with spontaneity. I had to save it for the pub.

Another interesting problem came up when we had to work a *la Bunraku* with three people on the same puppet. The puppet had to walk a tightrope strung mid-air across the stage. Now this was okay in principle - the snag was that though it was my puppet, the character I played through the show, I wasn't leading. Bruce was leading, on head and right arm, because he was tall enough to reach them; Joanne was doing the left arm and back rod; I, short person that I am, was working the feet. Did we have some struggles with this bit! Joanne and Bruce were pretty new to puppetry, and I was new to three-person manipulation, but the worst of it was that part of me, the part that was engaged with the puppet's character, always wanted to lead. Terrible external struggles for the puppet, and internal ones for me. I used to get so angry, but there was no-one I could justifiably blame, except perhaps my family for the shortarse genes they gave me.

David Collins and Brownie: *PLAY A TUNE FOR ME*



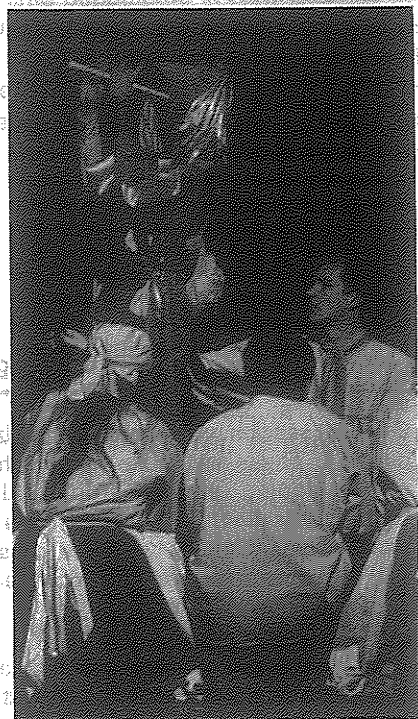
I did enjoy many parts of the show. Most of the time our puppets spoke in grunts and gobbledy-gook, with the occasional distorted word of English. I swear Noriko slipped in some Japanese there too. Some days I could really let go, when my character lost its temper or ran in terror from the stage. There were lots of terrifying bits, which everybody took much delight in. Like the scene of the magic act



gone wrong, where the puppet sliced in half really does come apart. Spine-tingling chords on the keyboards as the pieces drift across the stage and the hapless "magician" tries to get them to join up again.

Spare Parts produces on average three new productions per year, as well as return seasons of shows in repertoire. Styles vary considerably, depending on personnel and the venue for which the show is intended. In the last week of my stay rehearsals began for the next new production, *The Pied Piper*.

*The Pied Piper* was designed for performance in Spare Parts own premises in Fremantle. The building itself is an old, barn-like structure, with roughcast white walls and a high, heavy-beamed ceiling. Cleared of office and workshop equipment (these were housed in a temporarily rented building next door) it was ideally suited to the period and setting of *The Pied Piper*. The show was performed in the round. Raked bench seating was installed against three walls, leaving a generous sweep of space at floor level for



David Collins, Joanne Foley, Hugh Simpson, Bruce Paterson and (in blacks) Noriko Nishimoto in *THE PIED PIPER*.



Joanne Foley in *THE PIED PIPER*

the playing area. Puppet styles varied, from a tall, three-manipulator *Pied Piper* to hand puppet rats. A large wooden cart was constructed and used in various ways as a major set piece. The interior of the building was dressed to represent a medieval village street, and the six puppeteers were cast as a troupe of players arrived in town to perform the story of the *Pied Piper* of Hamelin. The script was based on Robert Browning's poem of the same name. Some parts of the story were told through dance and most dialogue was in song. The puppeteers also played musical instruments.

The company is currently negotiating with Fremantle Council, who own the building, for renovations to turn their premises into a permanent children's theatre and resource base for puppetry.

The company is five years old this year. It was established in 1981 by director Peter Wilson, puppet-maker Beverly Campbell-Jackson and writer Cath Robertson.

Spare Parts' origins go back to 1979 when Peter Wilson, then director of the Tasmanian Puppet Theatre, came to Perth for two

months as artist-in-residence at the West Australian Institute of Technology. Here he worked with theatre students to stage *The North Wind* and *the Sun* for children and *Pandora's Box* for adults. The students were inspired.

They turned up again when Peter, Beverly and Cath came to W.A.I.T. the following year to produce *Faust*. A surprising number of them went on to pursue puppetry professionally, and provide a pool of local puppeteers on which Spare Parts still draws today.

In addition the company imports puppeteers, writers, designers and directors from interstate and overseas.

Touring is an essential part of staying afloat, and the state of WA is as big as - what is it? Texas, Britain, Canada and a bit more - so most tours are arduous for performers and crew and an organizational feat for office staff.

I was spared the delights of such touring, however, as the *Play a Tune for Me* schedule kept us close to Perth. I hope sometime to get back there, and see a bit more of WA., always supposing there's a part for me to play.

Maeve Vella

## PUPPETRY AT NEPEAN COLLEGE

In July Sydney's Nepean College of Advanced Education introduced puppetry as a subject in its BA Performing Arts degree course. Students can take puppetry for one semester as part of a Community Theatre option. Under the direction of Gordon Beattie, classes run for four hours each week. Final year student **Leigh Campbell** is enthusiastic about the new course, and has chosen the Marionette Theatre of Australia as the subject of her major thesis. Below she reports on the course so far.

**Session one:** After discussing the concept and role of the puppeteer, which fundamentally is the hands because it is the hands that bring life to the puppet, we then experimented with hands in the raw.

It began with a basic communication of hand gestures with sound. We arranged a space with one light and a horizontal stand which gave us our barriers and we concentrated our attention on just the hands. We improvised small scenarios which we video'd. The basic scenario was one teaching another how to do something. The improvs mainly revolved around sexual interest and conflict.

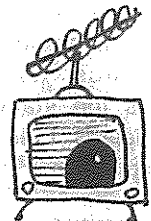
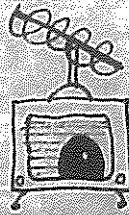
Then we played with structuring a scene and the use of a ribbon as a prop. One pair of people did the balcony scene from Rapunzel, using the ribbon as hair. Others used the ribbon as a belly dancer's scarf and a baby's blanket. I found problems using the space. Reaching over too far revealed my arm and took away the illusion.

It was interesting to convert your whole communication and thinking into hand movements, trying to be concise and clear, not always knowing the effect you'd get if you placed your hand in a particular way, using the hands as a means of creating magic, life.

In session two a Gamelan group from Armidale University performed for us. There were 10 or 12 musicians, playing drums, gongs and xylophones of various types. The music was Javanese, and it was quite wild. Like reggae, it made you feel like moving. A dancer performed a story about a man getting dressed to please his woman, playing both characters. Then he

## Video Puppetry at Australian Film & Television School:

March '87



### TRAINING FOR OUR MARKET

Peter Wilson, director of Spare Parts Puppet Theatre, had some interesting things to say at the National Puppetry Forum earlier this year. He talked about taking responsibility for the future of our artform, having a vision and setting goals. Bravo.

Inspired by Peter's remarks, I began to conceive of ways in which I could assist in creating training opportunities in the areas of film and TV. I made a proposal to the Australian Film and TV School in Sydney, which I'm happy to announce they have accepted. They have commissioned me to design and direct a practical workshop in TV Puppetry. It's scheduled for March 1987 (dates to be finalised) and will run for two weeks.

### ABOUT THE WORKSHOP

The course is designed to develop a working knowledge of the primary elements which are needed to create a TV puppetry project.

The aim is to bring together puppeteers, directors, puppetmakers, camera operators, scriptwriters, designers and technicians to share their experience and develop new directions for puppetry in television.

performed a shadow puppet show, a comedy with nine characters.

Back in class we were given some reverse garbage materials, foam blocks, fabric, threads, buttons, black plastic sheeting, glue, scissors and a carving knife, with which to make a puppet of any description. It was fantastic. Most people used the foam blocks for heads. They cut a slit for a mouth and a couple of slits in the back for the fingers to operate the mouth. I made a Cheshire Cat, which sort of resembled what it was supposed to.

### STRUCTURE

Most of the time will be devoted to workshopping in the studio using the AFTS's extensive facilities. There will be lectures given by leading exponents and open forum discussions. And we will spend some time analysing videos past and present.

### HOW WILL THE WORKSHOP BENEFIT THOSE WHO ATTEND ?

It will be a valuable opportunity to develop skills, showcase our wares and make much-needed contacts. The workshop will also activate a cross-fertilisation of ideas and generate better understanding between the creative and technical people in the team.

In the long term it will enhance the Film and TV industry's awareness of our professional presence.

### AN INVITATION ...

To puppeteers, puppet makers and scriptwriters - If you would like further information and application details, please contact me at:

B.E. Puppet Management  
49A Station Street  
Pymble NSW

**before 30th December**

**Ross Browning**

Our next session will be making life-size puppets. These we'll take around the college doing what Gordon calls "terrorist theatre". I'm going to make a female blues singer. My plan is to use her in auditions next year so I don't feel so shy.

I don't know where the course will lead after that. Because it's the first time it's all experimental, we're feeling our way.

**Leigh Campbell**





Five days before Wellington's International Festival of the Arts opened, the curtain went up on the first New Zealand Puppet Festival, held in a small community theatre on the Polynesian side of Wellington.

Puppets chattered during the opening speech by the Minister of the Arts, and applauded during the speech of the Attache of the Consulate of Greece (who brought over Greek shadow puppeteer Kostas Zouganellis from Sydney).

Rose Wedde welcomed the puppets, and Grasshopper welcomed the puppeteers and their dogs (2).

February 28 to March 5 1986 was a historic occasion, being the first time puppeteers in New Zealand had come together on a national basis. 45 puppeteers from both Islands, 12 puppet enthusiasts and 3 Australian puppeteers came, to meet each other, to share their skills and to see what each other was doing.

The idea of a national festival was conceived 20 months before by Grasshopper, a Wellington string puppeteer. After joining forces with Rose Wedde, a Wellington shadow puppeteer, they managed to secure \$10,000 from the NZ Arts Council, and the Festival was on.

The venue was a 120-seat theatre with a very deep stage, with adjoining halls, kitchen and dressing rooms.

## 1st New Zealand Puppet Festival

The first 4 days of the Festival saw shows at 10am, 1pm, 3.30pm and starting 7.30pm in the evening. The film, seminar and "talk" slots allowed 1-hour take-down and 1-hour set-up between shows. The deep stage enabled shows to be set up both in front and behind the house curtain, so two 30 min. shows could play in a one-hour slot.

Every show brought to the Festival was performed. It was a "state of the art" for puppetry in New Zealand. Everyone was amazed by the diversity of the puppetry. Puppeteers, operating in isolation from each other, had developed very individual styles. The full gamut of glove, rod, shadow and string puppetry was there, including large image (stilt puppetry) puppet opera, Kostas Zouganellis' ALEXANDER THE GREAT AND THE DREADFUL DRAGON (the

first time traditional Greek shadow puppetry has ever been performed in New Zealand) and Annie Heitmann's PUNCH & JUDY.

The fifth day was spent on workshops, and a talking session on "where now?". At this it was decided to form a national body - **Puppeteers in New Zealand** - and a NZ office of UNIMA, giving us PINZ-UNIMA. Axel Axelrad, treasurer of UNIMA Australia, was invaluable in advising us in this area.

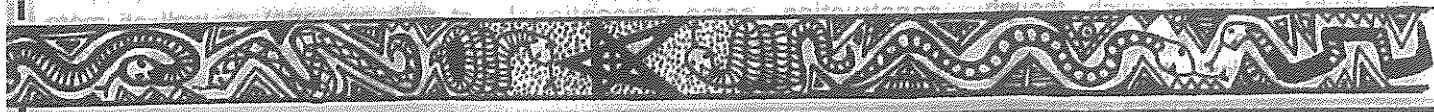
A group of puppeteers from Christchurch undertook to organise the next Festival.

The aim of the first puppet festival was to bring puppeteers together. The next festival will emphasise gaining skills through workshops, and a higher performance profile to educate the public.

Budget turnover was \$12,000, full-time puppeteers were given "back-home" expenses of \$150 for the 5 days, and all puppeteers received free travel and billeted accommodation. Participants numbered 70, plus an extra 40-50 in and out for the shows.

Maybe one indication of the success of the Festival is that the New Zealand Arts Council have transferred puppetry now, from their dance section to their theatre section.

**Grasshopper**



# N.Z. Puppetry: a brief history

Before the 18th century arrival of Europeans in New Zealand, the native Maori people used puppets called **karetao**. They were clearly not just playthings, but belong within a serious tradition of carving and making. They were probably used to impart knowledge in the form of **haka** (challenging dances) and **oriori-karetao** (songs of instruction, often for the young).

The puppets were carved in-the-round from wood and have arms that attach by cord through the shoulders. These two cords are fastened behind the figure. The operator holds the puppet in an upright position with one hand while controlling the cord with the other. By alternately pulling and slackening the cord, the arms are made to assume different positions, projecting both forwards and backwards. The holding hand can meanwhile shake the puppet, causing the arms to quiver in imitation of the haka movements. This characteristic technique led to Europeans calling the karetao by the name of "jumping jacks". The puppets had probably, by this post-missionary stage, become somewhat debased to plaything status.

It is also reported that during wars in the 19th century an outsize karetao figure was erected above a stockade - a clear indication that its power as effigy was not limited to a nursery role.

Unfortunately the art of working these powerful and mysterious puppets has been lost, though both male and female karetao survive in museums. Careful research could no doubt rediscover much, though links with the rest of Polynesia would be difficult to follow, and

connections further afield, for example through Micronesia and Melanesia towards Southeast Asia, impossible to verify. The Maori karetao puppet will probably remain a sadly forgotten casualty of colonialism.

Other traditions of puppetry have found their way to New Zealand. Large Chinese dragons appear in the streets every year. Popular street parades with floats preserve a commercial variation on outsize effigies and carnival figures. Proximity to Southeast Asia has had its effects: a gamelan orchestra plays regularly in Wellington, and a set of Javanese shadow-puppets awaits its operator.

The **Goodwin Marionettes** were not only the first professional puppet theatre in New Zealand, they were the first professional theatre group of any sort. Founded by Arnold Goodwin in 1937, the company took on the ambitious task of doing Shakespeare's **THE TEMPEST**. The company of 5 - 7 members survived professionally for 20 years, developing their own unique style with a high standard of making and performing evident.

No doubt the major influence has been a variation on the Punch and Judy tradition - folk technique that could be easily transported around the world from a mother culture.

In the 1950s **Sunnhilde** made a complete tour of New Zealand schools over a period of about five years. Using glove puppets, she presented simple plays and songs. Her charming personality, as well as her puppetry, was long remembered.

During the late 1950s and early '60s **Raymond and Geraldine Boyce** worked in glove, rod and shadow puppets for a number of years, and were able to survive professionally. **Greer Twiss**, who soon moved on to sculpture, spent some years as a puppeteer, constructing some exceptional marionettes, and carving a set of very fine Punch and Judy puppets.

**Jim and Edna Burton** worked full-time in educational puppetry using rod puppets to present costumes, customs, music and folktales of many countries. They gave demonstrations; creating puppets from ordinary everyday materials, and using these puppets immediately in simple plays. They made and manipulated marionettes in 1964 for a TV series from WNTV1, and in 1969 for **MASTER PETER'S PUPPET SHOW**, Manuel de Falla's opera, with the New Zealand Opera Company. The Burtons represented New Zealand, by invitation, at the first Asian-Pacific Puppet Festival held in Tokyo in 1979.

**Lorna Hope** was the first person to bring puppet theatre into the professional theatres of New Zealand. She had several seasons at Mercury Theatre presenting large productions of **ALICE IN WONDERLAND** and **PETER AND THE WOLF**. She attempted to establish a new aspect of children's theatre in New Zealand by presenting the classics of drama and literature through the medium of puppetry. Her shows were large scale, with the Auckland Symphony Orchestra providing live music. In the 1960s she also had the first puppet characters in New Zealand Television, "Quack" and "Bimbo".

In the 1970s, the **White Rabbit Puppet Theatre** earned a precarious living in schools and by touring, using mask and all forms of puppetry, sometimes in conjunction with adult cabaret shows.

Two groups developed significant styles in the seventies. Firstly, **Theatre Action** stimulated theatre here, blending European-style mask, mime and puppetry with a New Zealand context. **Red Mole Theatre**, which grew out of White Rabbit, developed a high energy style of political cabaret and musical theatre, often using large scale puppet effects (10-metre puppets at rock concerts) as well as more intimate shadow and glove techniques.



Jonathan Acorn worked in glove puppetry and with large rod puppets. Since the late seventies there has been an increased interest on the part of many individuals in puppet-related theatre.

In the eighties exciting work is in the context of street theatre with a political base. Debra Bustin's NUCLEAR HORROR SHOW of 1983, prepared for the visit of a naval vessel from the US fleet, brought together conventions of popular street parade, and political theatre with a strong emphasis on outdoor puppet techniques.

The visit during 1982 of two members of Welfare State International (Britain) gave stimulus to many local theatre workers, and a greater status to the puppet maker and performer. Increasing numbers of performers are contributing to the medium in schools, at festivals and in theatres. Hard financial times for established community theatres is resulting in increased interest in puppetry and the related arts.

In February 1986 there was held in Wellington the first ever New Zealand Puppet Festival. A get-together of New Zealand puppeteers, some seventy people attended. There were performances, talks, films and workshops, and a great fund of enthusiasm was created.

This most successful Festival was brought about by the hard work and dedication of two Wellington puppeteers, Rose Wedde and Grasshopper.

Having met at last, the puppeteers who had come to the Festival wished to keep in contact with each other. To have a national centre of UNIMA appeared to be the logical answer for most of those present. So it was, that the ending of the first Festival became the beginning of the national centre of UNIMA New Zealand.

Rose Wedde and Edna Burton

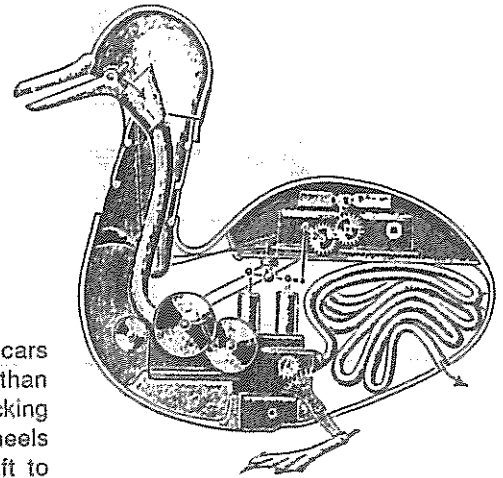
## Puppets with Electric Muscles

The servo motors used in model cars and planes are blocks a bit smaller than a matchbox, with a short shaft sticking out of one side. Various arms, wheels and other fittings go on the shaft to transfer the motor's movements to a plane's rudder or wings, or to a puppet's limbs or eyes or whatever. The rotation of the shaft is set by the position of a joystick on a transmitter control box. "Servo" is the technical term for the electronics which cause the motor's shaft to accurately follow the movement of the joystick. Hobby shops sell kits of 4-channel radio control with motors for about \$300.

The dog in the ads for Grosby shoes is a hybrid puppet using rods as well as electronics. Two puppeteers hidden below the rostrum operate the hands, feet and body, while the head, neck and shoulders are operated by two others on radio controls. The mouth runs from pulses laid on the same tape as the voice soundtrack to avoid any lack of sync between them. Inside the dog there are 16 servos.

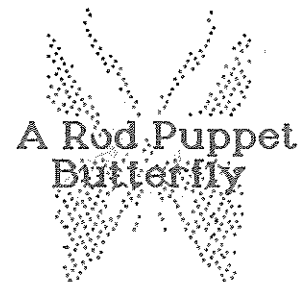
The storyboard and economic requirements of designing a puppet who sells shoes on TV has led to a range of interesting electronic developments. A factor we have not included, however, is any possibility of his being controlled exclusively by electronics. The motors and the transmitter are used only as another type of string or trigger. Anything the puppet does is totally in the hands of the puppeteers.

Entity Productions is a newly formed puppet-film company with strong ties with the MTA and traditional puppetry. We have been developing an unusual angle on the use of computers and other hi-tech toys. Instead of dragging puppets into the super-real universe of "Gremlins" and "Dark Crystal" and such (and leaving puppeteers behind), we're taking electronics back a few centuries to join in with the bits of wire and string and carved wood lying around the workshop.



The computer is only an editing and memory unit. Like with the Grosby dog the puppeteer uses a joystick panel. The movements are memorized then played back while recording the movements of other limbs or features. It operates like a multi-track tape recorder in allowing in-sync record and playback as well as drop-ins and sound track sync. The puppet's routines, fully or partly composed, are stored on disk for later playback. At any time any function can be run manually or from memory. The puppet itself is a puppet, just like any ol' puppet.

Gary Luke



## A Rod Puppet Butterfly

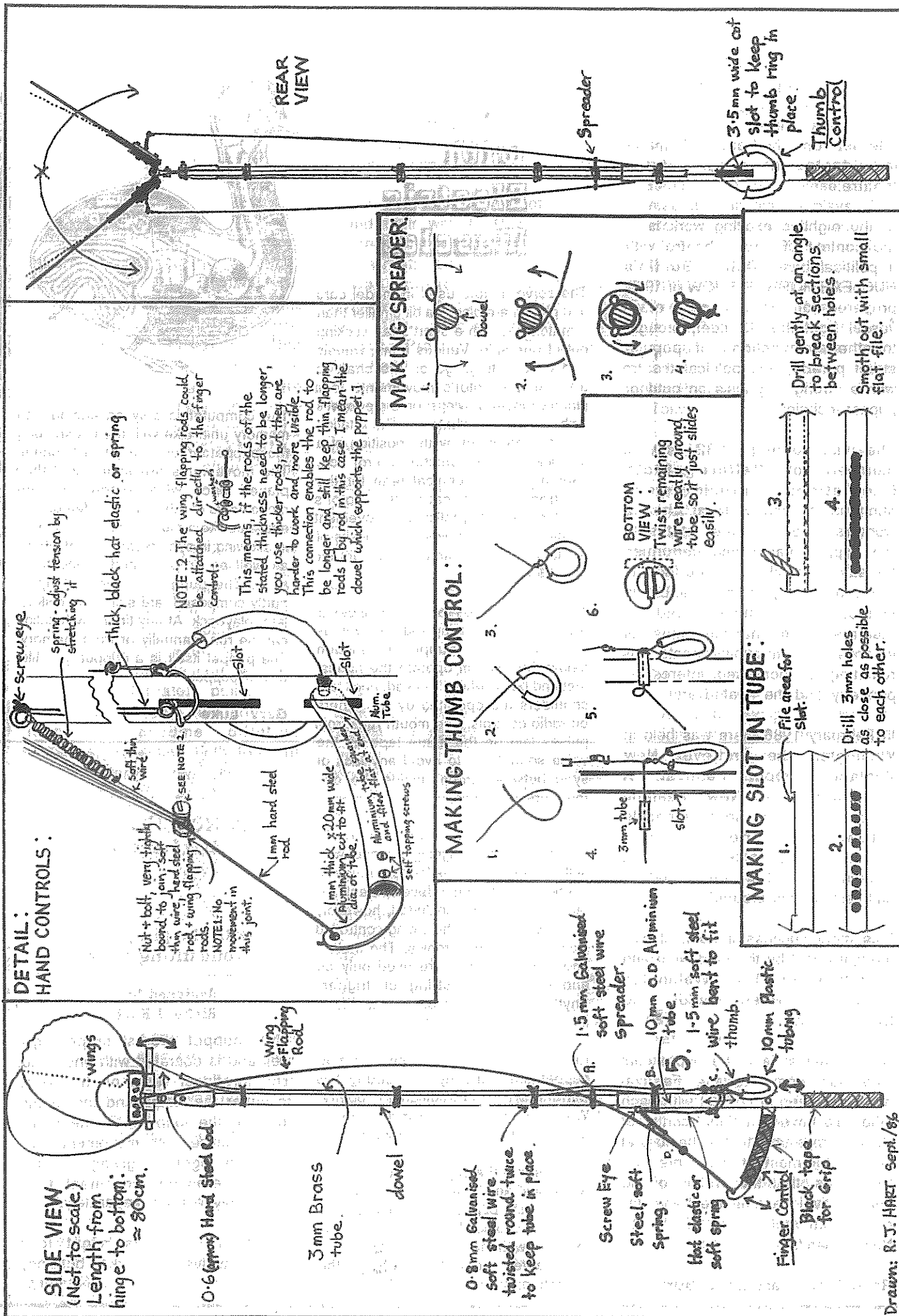
with flapping wings  
and tilting body

designed by  
Richard Hart

This puppet works surprisingly well and is operated with one hand. The forefinger rests on the lever to flutter the wings and the thumb fits into the loop to tilt the body. With practice both movements can be done together, giving a much more interesting movement than when they're done separately.

Some of the parts might look rather involved to make, but they

....Cont. p.13



**SIDE VIEW**  
(Net to scale)  
Length from  
hinge to bottom:  
≈ 80cm.

0.6 (approx) Hard Steel Rod

3mm Brass  
tube.

dowel

0.8mm Galvanised  
soft steel wire  
twisted round twice  
to keep tube in place.

Screw Eye

Steel, soft  
Spring

Hot elastic  
soft spring

Finger Control

Black tape  
for Grip

**DETAIL:  
HAND CONTROLS:**

Nut + bolt, very tightly  
bound to join soft  
thin wire, hard steel  
rod + wing flapping  
rods.  
NOTE 1: No  
movement in  
this joint.

SEE NOTE 2

1mm thick x 20mm wide  
Aluminium tube, square,  
dia. of tube.

1mm hard steel  
rod

Alum.  
Tube

Self tapping screws

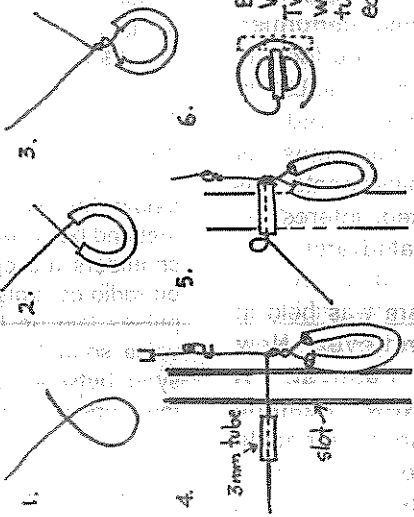
Slot

Slot

Thick, black hot elastic or spring

Spring - adjust tension by  
stretching it

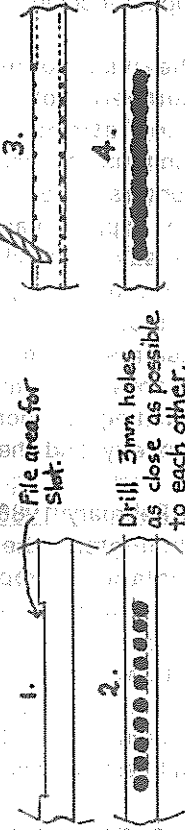
**MAKING THUMB CONTROL:**



**BOTTOM  
VIEW:**

Twist remaining  
wire neatly around  
tube, so it just slides  
easily.

**MAKING SLOT IN TUBE:**



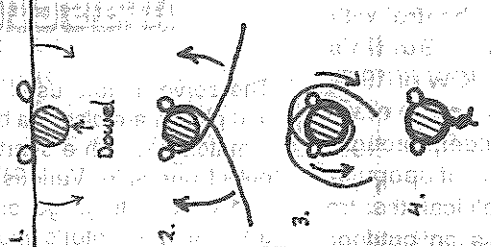
1. File area for  
slot.

2. Drill 3mm holes  
as close as possible  
to each other.

3. Smooth out with small  
flat file.

Drill gently at an angle  
to break sections  
between holes.

**MAKING SPREADER:**



1. Dowel

2. Spread

3. Spread

4. Spread

3.5mm wide cut  
slot to keep  
thumb ring in  
place.

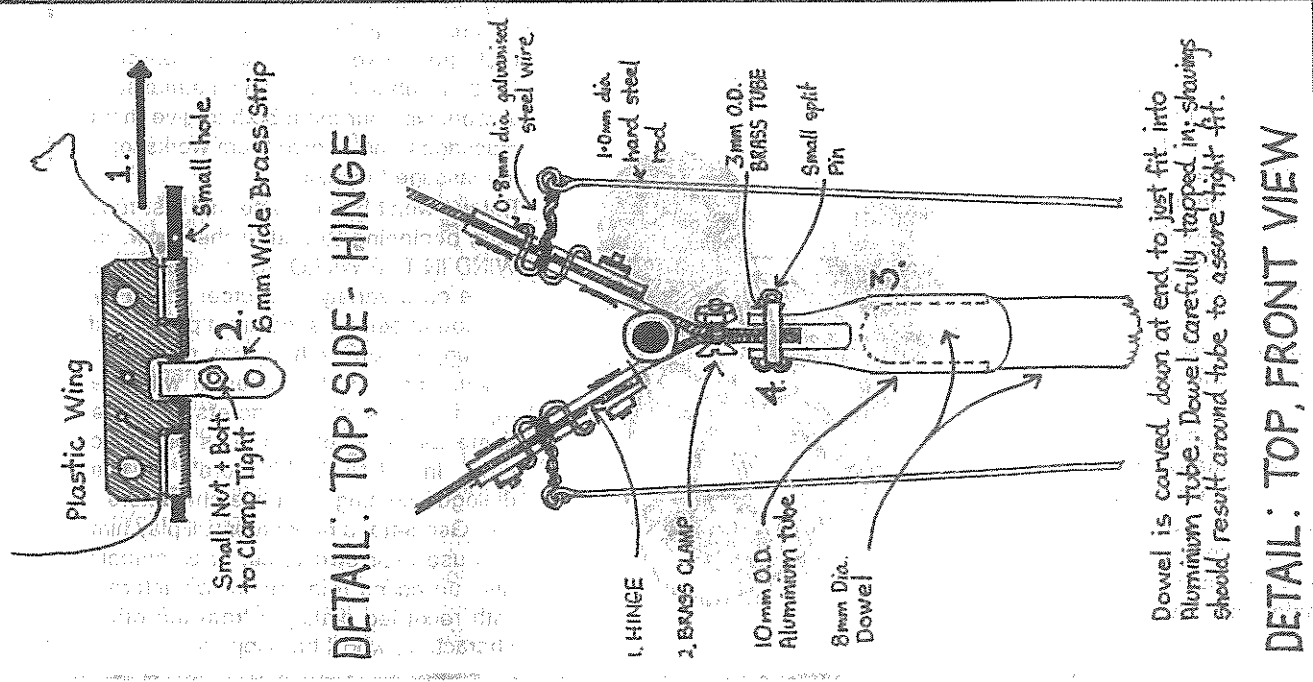
Thumb  
Control

**REAR  
VIEW**

Drawn: R. J. HART Sept./86



# A Rod Puppet Butterfly



Note: The drawings aren't to scale. the rods because they are so thin The bend in the wing-flapping rods and are being pushed up from the is exaggerated in the drawing. spring below. However there is a natural bend in

...from p.11

are sturdy, reliable and easy to replace without having to unglue or tear apart, e.g. the brass clamp and the split pin/tube axels.

Not everything is explained due to space limitations. I will be co-running an advanced puppet mechanisms workshop at the forthcoming Summer School in December/January. This butterfly mechanism, along with a range of others, will be available for you to have a go at making, and of course I and others will be there to help you.

Most of the work is in metals, so you will need:

- Metal working vice
- Hacksaw
- Range of metal files (set of very small files makes life easier)
- Blunt and pointed nose pliers (sharp-pointed pliers are best for bending loops in wire)
- Small tube cutter (costs around \$12)
- Hand-drill
- Range of steel bits
- Screwdriver
- Hammer

Sources of materials: Brass tubes, hard steel rods, brass strips - available from Hobby Shops.

Everything else is found in hardware shops, except plastic for the wings, which I got from Reverse Garbage in Sydney.

Happy hacksawing,  
Richard Hart

## 1. HINGE

**SMALL BRASS OR STEEL HINGE:**

Cut out hole for 6mm Brass Strip.

NOTE: Accuracy more likely if Cut SMALLER then filed out, checking with brass strip until wide enough for it to fit SMOOTHLY + FREELY.

Tap out axel. Find replacement axel a bit longer than the hinge: A Nail, brass rod or mild steel

Drill small hole near one end - See drawing.

HINT: To drill a hole thru rod, file a small flat area in the spot so the drill can bite easily. Then use a HAND DRILL gently with rod firmly held in a Metal Working VICE.

## 2. BRASS CLAMP

Clamp metal axel firmly in METAL VICE, with some protruding over end. Bend strip with hands to form shape B.

A. 6cm.

B. Take off axel and bend with pliers. Bend here.

C. Squash together a little and secure horizontally in vice. Drill hole thru both flaps close to curve, to take 3mm bolt + nut, 1cm long. Drill and hole 8mm centre to centre towards end.

Smooth off with fine metal file (flat). Cut off bottom excess with wire cutters 2-3mm from edge of hole and round off. See E.

## 3. ALUMINIUM SLEEVE

A. 1.5cm of tube in a VICE, but not completely flat. Cut out shape shown in C. Smooth off with file. Place metal piece slightly thicker than BRASS CLAMP in resulting slot & hammer gently into flat shape on both sides. DRILL 3mm hole about 1/3 way between tip and widening of tube.

## MICHAEL CREIGHTON

Michael Creighton became Director of the Marionette Theatre of Australia in April this year. Maeve Vella interviewed him in September, and this is what he had to say ...

### What does the job involve?

It's different for every company. For the MTA I feel what's required is to be able to generate a marketable programme and to be very rigorous about the profile of the company so there's no confusion about what the company is and what it does.

To succeed at this venue I feel we have to focus our activities totally on being a children's theatre, a producer of family entertainment. There was a need to get rid of some confusion about what this building was and about what the MTA was. In the past I felt the theatre had tried to do too broad a range of productions. Predictability is a key factor in the success of a company. If the Australian Opera decided to do a Bruce Springsteen concert it would create enormous confusion. So my first job was to come up with a policy that would create a definite and specific image or expectation for the company. It's a basic tenet for marketing any product, be it Porsches, puppetry or take-away pasta.

The broad decision was to produce puppetry for the whole family. Then, more specifically, the classics - something people could immediately identify with and recognise. We can help kids become aware of the cultural traditions to which they are heir. Of course there is an economic argument in here, as well as an artistic one - you can't separate the two. I see no distinction between art and commerce.

### Are you planning to develop a company style at the MTA?

The main change here is that since the early '70s this and many companies have focussed largely on variations of so-called Bunraku style, where puppeteers are visible along with the puppets. My main decision in that area was that I didn't ever want to see puppeteers!

One of the things that appeal to people about puppetry is a sense of "how did they do that?" I want to preserve the mystery of what is going on and not reveal the bones of a production where you see people moving things about. That's the base-line of the style: concentrating on illusion and mystery rather than revealing the techniques.

I don't want to concentrate on any one technical style, i.e. shows that use only rod puppets or whatever. I want each production to incorporate a multitude of styles of puppetry. The first problem then is coming up with a staging system that allows us to move seamlessly between styles of puppetry. It's not easy. In *WIND IN THE WILLOWS* we used black theatre, overhead rod puppetry and shadow/silhouette puppetry. In the next production, *PINNOCHIO*, we'll use those four style plus marionettes for some sequences. In the Ken Done thing we'll use all of that plus computer controlled electronic characters.

The crux of it all, though, has to be not the way things are moved around but the creation of appealing characters. So as far as house-style is concerned, we'll use whatever is appropriate to get the story across and bring life to the characters.



I want to keep exploring the use of recorded dialogue tracks. The base line is that a set of puppets and a recorded soundtrack is a very marketable commodity. It's possible for us to sell that production to other venues very simply and very predictably. What they see is what they get and we can negotiate cleanly and simply on that basis.

I also want to be able to use the finest character actors who are available at a given time - e.g. we had Gordon Chater for *WIND IN THE WILLOWS*. It's not because puppeteers don't necessarily have good voices. There's no guarantee, however, that they will have appropriate voices. For example you couldn't have had Maria Slabacu vocalising for Ratty with her Roumanian accent. It would have been a bit silly.

I also feel that the physical demands of the puppetry we are now doing are so great that it would make it impossible for puppeteers to vocalise while performing. The shows are incredibly physically demanding and it would be like asking the Sydney Swans to sing *Rigoletto* in the middle of a game - they're two quite different activities. In fact just like any self-respecting football club we've employed a masseur to work with our team both to give them massages and to give them workshops in massage technique.

But we won't have a tape that just runs from beginning to end of the show. In *WIND IN THE WILLOWS* the soundtrack came off a variety of sources, cued by the sound person at different points and in conjunction with a live narrator's voice. The narrator cues in with the taped voices of characters. It's the same as using effects cues or music cues. In *PINNOCHIO* there'll be live dialogue coming from live characters - e.g. Geppetto: a puppeteer will play him and use their own voice, or Stromboli: also an acting role. These will interact with recorded dialogue from the other characters, who'll be puppets.



WIND IN THE WILLOWS has a narrator at the side of the stage, but that isn't very satisfying - it doesn't integrate well. In PINNOCHIO the three live characters will take up the story at different points and tell it from their point of view, and maybe the Blue Fairy - a puppet - will do the same. In KAKADU later next year we'll probably have a storyteller in the traditional sense of being outside the action and the show will illustrate what she tells. There'll be no puppet dialogue, only music and sound effects. The narrative and "dialogue" will come from the storyteller, she'll speak for the characters.

We've ripped out the entire stage that was in the theatre. It had been put in because so many different things were going in and it worked well for drama. But now we're not compromising the stage for puppetry for the sake of it usefulness as a drama venue. Now that we're solely a puppet theatre there's no need for that.

So now there's a pit from which to work rod puppets?

Yes. Also, we're exploring a playboard on a winch that moves quickly through different heights. Eventually we'll have a system where that can happen in different parts of the stage and theatre - as one section is acting as a rod booth, so another section is dropping away to become a black theatre area.

What are the plans for the future?

The main thrust of the theatre's activities are now set in train. We know what productions we'll be doing over the next three years and barring major catastrophes we'll stick to that. Next priority is to develop a second company to take productions on tour.

Will the company still tour schools?

No, we've moved right out of the T.I.E. field. All our productions are now designed for larger theatres. The WIND IN THE WILLOWS is touring with the same puppeteers who performed it in Sydney. Next year we will have two companies - the Home Company and a company that picks up every production as soon as it finishes here and takes it out on the road, touring capital cities and regional centres. We're trying to come up with a name for that company. It might eventually be quite separate, with its own sponsors, its own administrative and technical staff. We're contemplating calling it The

MTA Road Show - when we get a sponsor for it of course it will be Brand X Roadshow, and hopefully everything - transport, accommodation, etc. - will be tied into the one package.

This year we're touring Sydney, Canberra and Melbourne. Next year add Adelaide and Brisbane. By '88 I hope the company will return to being a truly Australian company and have a regular annual season in every capital city plus periodic appearances in regional centres, particularly in NSW. It gets back to predictability - people will know that at a certain time of each year they'll be able to see the MTA's new production in their city. These will all be shows that have premiered at this theatre, so the theatre in the Rocks becomes a showcase for our work...but most people will see our productions somewhere else.

Disney on Parade? In a sense, yes.

What other plans are there apart from productions?

Firstly, a museum of puppetry, but I don't want to call it a museum, it'll probably end up being called something like "The Magical World of Puppetry". More Disney influence maybe, but I do think in many ways Disney is the model for a lot of what we're trying to do here. What I don't want is a collection of puppets in perspex boxes. The model is a combination of the sort of things that happen at children's museums in the US with elements of Luna Park, backed up with a hefty archival research resource facility so that even though it all looks a bit loopy and whiz-bang there's quite a serious focus behind it all. The ultimate model for that sort of environment is Disney's Epcot. It's got a strong educational emphasis, e.g. the Energy Pavilion has a ride with animatronic creatures, but they are themed along a historical continuum - what it was like in the Paleolithic era and so on. It introduces kids to energy uses. So here we'll have a journey through the history of puppetry. We might go for a regional approach - e.g. puppetry of India, etc. And hopefully they'll be combined with audio-visual imagery to give a sense of the culture that the puppets grew out of. We'll be creating environments that go with the characters, e.g. the MAGIC PUDDING puppets would be set in an Aussie environment with sights and smells of the bush.

This Disneyland approach is also leading to some interesting ideas for

productions...sometimes moving away from "theatre length" productions to twenty minute "quick-hit" shows, things that tourists in the Rocks can visit as part of a trip to the area. This company ultimately has more in common with Disneyland than with the Sydney Theatre Company.

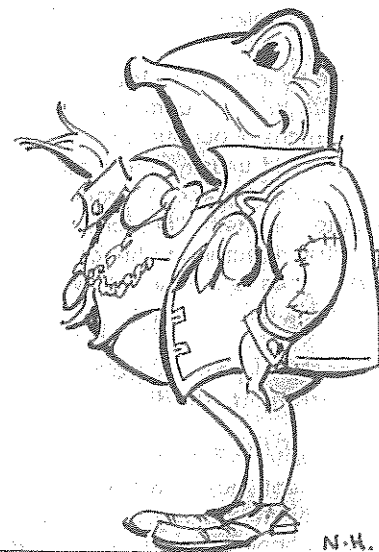
We've also started developing a programme of workshops for children, for other puppeteers and for other adults who might find it useful. Eventually we hope that these programmes will lead to small public performances at this theatre for the participants and their families.

Research and development of puppetry techniques is a priority, and one step in this direction will be "What If..." days. These are workshop sessions to explore new techniques. The first one, in September, will look at integrating black theatre technique with three-D image projections. We're also experimenting with robotics and animatronics - i.e. electronic, radio and computer controls.

And what about the puppeteers?

I've deliberately chosen people whose major career is puppetry. I didn't want people for whom it's just a sideline.

I'm eager that all those puppeteers develop one-man shows if they want to - we'll support them if they want to do that. Joe Gladwin is developing a show with our support and guidance where necessary, based around his Punch and Judy show, which can be performed in the theatre here. →



## INTERVIEW

Also our shows are being developed keeping in mind areas of special expertise that the puppeteers might have, so they can continue to develop their particular skills. For example PINNOCHIO will use marionettes and Maria Slabacu will have a lot of input into the string sections of the production because that is her area of expertise.

### What problems does the company face?

The major problem is understaffing. Everyone has to perform too many different roles. This is exacerbated at the moment because we're entering a period of rapid expansion of activities, and it can place extreme demands on people. This is not a company for the faint-hearted.

The cost of carrying this building is enormous. If we didn't have that responsibility we would at this point be \$800,000 better off, which could have gone into production. But it's something we're willing to wear because it's such an important focus, both for this company and for puppetry in general. It's important that there be a few high profile centres of puppetry in this country. I can think of no other centre of puppetry activity that is located in such a position: slapbang in the middle of a major tourist area and the most historic part of the city. In fact now that the shipping terminal is being partly demolished, the first building the tour ships coming into this country will see as they dock is the puppet theatre. An extraordinary state of things. We shouldn't ever forget that we're resident in one of the most valuable pieces of real estate in the country, and that's the reason behind making this an ultimately, monumentally mainstream general public company.

I have no interest in attracting just small sectors of the community. A large percentage of our audiences are people who would usually run a million miles from a theatre and I'd probably be the first to join them. I'm probably the only theatre director in the country who never goes to the theatre. Many would say it shows.

### What's your position on government funding?

It can distress me. I would not be willing to accept government funding for something that has only a limited market appeal. I can't accept that as a

valid reason for funding. I feel it should be for things which have a demonstrated wide appeal. The only justification for this company accepting funding is to keep our ticket prices at a level acceptable to the large numbers of people who would like to see us but may not be able to afford it if we were not

supported by the taxpayer. We want to reach a large market at a reasonable ticket price. It would probably be possible for us to run this company without government subsidy but our ticket prices would then be so high that our audiences would only come from wealthy families.



In 1987 we will be performing ...

**THE WIND IN THE WILLOWS** - return season of Kenneth Grahame's beloved story adapted by Val Donlon  
February 24 - April 10

**PINNOCHIO** - adaptation of Carlo Collodi's tale of a wooden puppet who yearns to become "a real boy"  
May 5 - July 3

**KAKADU** - Dreamtime tales from the Kakadu region  
Design by Banduk Mariki from Yirrkala  
July 28 - September 11

## AUDITIONS

Auditions for puppeteers will be held in November.  
Enquire for further details.

## WORKSHOPS

We're planning a programme of workshops for kids, adults, teachers, puppeteers and all interested people. Ring and leave your particulars if there is something you would like to learn or teach.

## LIBRARY

Our collection of books is now available for public reference during office hours. \$5 joining fee goes towards purchase of more books. Sorry no borrowing due to heavy losses in the past.

106 GEORGE ST, THE ROCKS 2000

Box Office 273 274 Administration 241 1391



## A Galanty Show in Sydney in 1804

Some years ago a historian mentioned to me that there may have been a shadow puppeteer performing in Sydney about 1803. Well, the good news is that I believe I have found the appropriate reference ... and the bad news is that I don't think it was a shadow puppet show.

The Sydney Gazette of Sunday, June 10, 1804, announced "the safe arrival in the Colony of a Galanta Show, which we suppose to be the first ever yet imported."

The Shorter Oxford Dictionary defines a galanty show as "A shadow pantomime produced by throwing shadows of miniature figures on a wall or screen", and the galanty shows of late Victorian times, often given in Punch and Judy booths, were true shadow-puppet shows.

However, in the early part of the 19th century the term seems to have been used for shows using images projected by "magic lanterns". The magic lantern dates back to 1646 and in the 18th and early 19th centuries showmen wandered the streets with their equipment which usually included a barrel organ as well as the magic lantern itself.

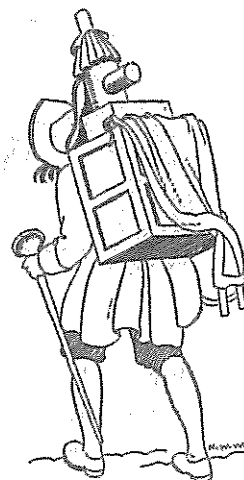
Despite a reference to what seems to have been a shadow show in Ben Jonson's A Tale of a Tub, the significant year in English shadow puppet history is 1775 when Ambroise (an Italian whose name was originally Ambrogio)

started to display his "Ombres Chinoises" in London. This term, or its English equivalent, "Chinese Shades", was used for shadow shows for many years, although it is unlikely that the Chinese Shades became a street show before the early 19th century. Henry Morley in Memoirs of Bartholomew Fair refers to the "Italian shadows by the best masters from Italy" who were in England in the first half of the 18th century. As W.H. Whanslaw notes in Shadow Play we cannot be sure whether these were images projected by magic lanterns or true shadow shows.

Henry Mayhew gives us a clue as to what may have happened to shift the meaning of the term "galanty". In the middle 19th century he interviewed "an Old Street Showman" who refers to the "galantee show of a magic lantern", while in another interview the proprietor of "The Chinese Shades" says of his shadow-puppet show: "We call it the Chinese galantee show". (My emphasis)

It does not seem unreasonable to suggest that the original galanty shows were magic lantern shows while the images produced by shadow-puppets on a screen were called "Chinese" galanty shows. Then, as the itinerant magic lantern shows started to disappear in Victorian England, the "Chinese" was dropped and "galanty show" came to refer to a shadow-puppet show. (In fact, The Oxford Companion to the Theatre refers to the street shadow-puppet show as the "English Galanty Show")

It has been suggested that "galanty" (which has a variety of spellings) comes



French galanty showman, 18th century (from Shadow Play)

from the Italian "galante" meaning "elegant" or "fine". Altick, noting that the term dates from at least 1788, suggests it might come from the Old French "galer" - "to make a show". But we wonder whether the term comes simply from the street-cry of "Magic Lantern Show!" which could easily begin to sound like "Magic Galanty Show!" (especially if shouted by an Italian showman).

In his book The Punch and Judy Show Robert Leach reproduces a picture of "Punch and his wife in a galanty show, c.1806", showing an image being projected by a magic lantern. I am pretty confident that the "Galanta Show" in Sydney in 1804 was also a magic lantern. As Mr. Punch would say: "What a pity, what a pity, what a pity!"

Richard Bradshaw

### What was the show Sydneysiders saw in 1804?

Perhaps it was similar to that exhibited by one M. Philipstal in London in 1802. Sir David Brewster has left us this eyewitness account, quoted in Olive Cook's book, Movement in Two Dimensions ....

"The small theatre was lighted by only one hanging lamp. In this semi-obscurity the curtain rose and displayed a cave with skeletons and other terrific figures in relief upon the walls. The flickering light was then drawn up beneath a shroud and the spectators, left in total darkness, found themselves in the midst of thunder and lightning. A thin transparent screen had, unknown to them, been let down and upon it flashes of lightning and all the subsequent appearances were represented ... the figures of ghosts, skeletons and known individuals whose eyes and mouths were made to move by the shifting of combined slides. After the first figure had been exhibited for some time it began to grow less and less, as if removed to a great distance, and at last vanished in a cloud of light. Out of this same cloud another figure began to appear and gradually grew larger and larger and approached the spectators ..."



# BACK SOON, E.C.M.

Edith C. Murray introduced thousands of children to puppetry over the twenty-odd years she taught at the Clovelly Puppet Theatre. Some went on to make puppetry their career. John Lewis was one of them, and these are some of his memories ...

My earliest childhood memory is of a seemingly enormous octopus and mermaid in "Sea Fantasy" at the Clovelly Puppet Theatre. I suppose I must have been three or four at the time. My memories as I grew older include going with my seven year old brother to learn how to make papier mache puppets, and having to convince them that at the age of five I could make a puppet and not just a clown or a fairy like the other children but a fire-breathing dragon. The rather formidable lady said I would have to paint a dragon first, to show I really knew what one looked like. I painted it and they were impressed, so I made my dragon head. Over the weeks I covered him with textured paper, painted him and glued in a fiery red tongue. Mrs. Murray made him a splendid green costume, which even had spikes down its back. A dragon was born, and so was the next generation of puppeteers.

At the end of the year my brother and I put on a puppet show. Something to do with dragons and pirates I think. All I can remember was being held up by some of the other boys (presumably Arthur Cantrill and co.) since at five I was about two feet too short for the very high puppet stage at Clovelly. And so from then on Saturday afternoon meant going up over the hill and down to Clovelly Puppet Theatre in Burnie Park.

From about the age of eight I used to make up puppet shows to put on at the end of each afternoon's craft activities, for the children there to watch. I would work all week making puppets. It mattered not if the puppets fell to bits during the show. What mattered, I can see now, was the process of doing the show. Mrs. Murray was a very stern critic, and would call out "Could the puppets speak a little louder!?" if our

voices faded away. Her criticisms over the years disciplined me in terms of my design and my approach to puppetry.

When I was ten she decided that I should make a marionette the "correct way", and so I embarked upon a very complicated and tedious method with chisels and screwdrivers, etc. My impatience was tempered by the fact that she insisted that everything be done methodically, and, horror of horrors, that the mess of woodshavings and sawdust be cleaned up and the tools put away.

As I grew older and became more involved in professional puppetry, and as the children helping at Clovelly seemed to get younger and younger, I became disenchanted with the quality of the puppetry there, often at times embarrassed. I would wonder whether what we did long ago was as amateurish, or whether the new kids were just less talented and less disciplined. Perhaps the audience at Clovelly was just secondary to the process of allowing children to express themselves through puppetry. I became somewhat of an outsider at Clovelly.

I think the constant newspaper publicity that my puppets achieved made me "respectable" in her eyes, another one of "her boys" along with Arthur, Richard, Greg and Bruce. In my late teens and early twenties I became a regular "visitor" to Clovelly, dropping in for a social chat, when I knew she would not be too busy ... more like a social call to a "relative" than a puppeteering visit. Of course I would show her the new puppets as they were made, and she would comment. As time passed, she would ask my advice about this or that, either respecting what I had to say or perhaps becoming a little unsure of herself and needing reassurance.

She would always be doing the same old plays with the kids: "The Willow Pattern Plate", "The Frog Prince", "The Cobbler and the Elves", "Little Black Sambo" ... always lamenting their being under-rehearsed.

On reflection I feel the devastating effect that the untimely death of Rhonda, a girl of my age who helped at Clovelly, was the start of the downfall at Clovelly in about 1967. I don't think I can remember anything ever affecting her as much. Things were never quite the same. She would always have a new cast of kids, with the younger ones graduating to different roles as they grew older, just as we did. But something seemed to be missing. There was very little new puppetry being created.

The Puppet Seasons at Clovelly became more sporadic, more dependent on "guest puppeteers". Mrs. Murray eventually retired. I would often call in to see her on my trips to the Blue Mountains. We would have coffee in her living room, surrounded by myriads of puppets, all waiting somehow to return to Clovelly and do another show ...

The time she devoted to my nurturing as a puppeteer could not be imagined. She would write me criticisms of the shows I did, as I grew older, listing their good and bad points ... no polite remarks but good solid considered criticism. While she may have rubbed a few people up the wrong way with her outspoken school ma'am approach, those with receptive minds wanting to learn found in her a fountain of puppeteering knowledge. Her criticisms were sometimes a little pedantic, however. Like the time she insisted that the princess in "St. George and the Dragon" have a mouth, and I refused, saying that the character had nothing of

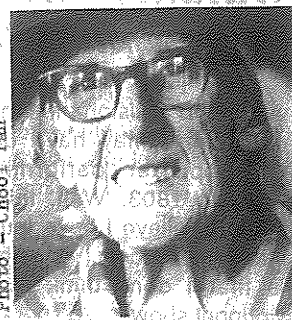


Photo - Choo Tan

importance to say. Who won that round, I'm not quite sure, but nowadays all our puppets have mouths.

At first I think she was a little surprised when at sixteen I began doing puppetry professionally in department stores. Was I deserting her and Clovelly? She never could reconcile puppetry and the making of money. Although university educated, money never seemed very high on her priorities, but she was extraordinarily generous with what little she had. Mrs. Murray lived frugally but well, enjoying every little thing she had. I think she must have invented recycling long before it became fashionable. Everything had a use for her, and very little could not be re-used. Cornflakes boxes for cardboard puppet cylinders; newspapers for papier mache; buttons for puppet eyes; plastic bottles in later days for "junk puppets" and so on. She would proudly show you this or that puppet and tell you whose coat or jacket it was made from. It was as if the history of her life was written in all the puppets people had made with her and left for safekeeping at Springwood.

My last memory of Mrs. Murray (in all the thirty years I had known her I never called her "Edith", but always "Mrs. Murray" as I had done when I first met her at the age of five), was when her daughter-in-law brought her to see a show and she had great trouble remembering who I was, and asked me who had taught me to make puppets.

When I saw the film of her reminiscences last year I felt very proud that this extraordinary woman had been a part of my life for nearly thirty years. I thought it appropriate that the title of this piece be "Back soon, E.C.M." for my over-riding memory was arriving at Clovelly Puppet Theatre and finding a little piece of recycled cardboard stuffed into a hole in the corrugated iron door, which indicated that she was up at the shops or making a telephone call and to wait for her: "Back soon, E.C.M."

John Lewis  
B.Sc.(Arch.) B.Arch.(Hons)

Mrs. Murray has now retired, and lives in a nursing home in Sydney.

## CHANTICLEER SHADOW PUPPETS

Michael and Elaine Collins are a young couple in their late twenties. They live in the Perth suburb of Bayswater. They are about to launch into their first collaboration as **Chanticleer Shadow Puppets**. They hope their relationship survives.

Elaine is a school teacher with an interest in music and singing. Michael is a freelance graphic artist, whose association in recent years with C.A.T.S. and Spare Parts has led him to an interest in theatre, and particularly shadow puppetry.

C.A.T.S. projects occasionally involved integrating puppets into drama performances. Spare Parts were interested in Michael's graphic style, and engaged him to design puppets for "The Magic Shadow Show" three years ago. Here he learnt the mechanics of shadow puppet design, and he expresses gratitude to Spare Parts director Peter Wilson for his instruction in that area, and for continuing advice and support in this new venture.

Why "Chanticleer"? No particular reason, it's a nice name. It also leaves plenty of scope for different kinds of material.

At this stage they have a lot of ideas. Shadows combined with dance. A science show for schools about the behaviour of light. Abstract shows. Shows without narrative. Bawdy shows for adults. A project bringing kids and elderly people together to make a shadow history of their suburb. A shadow history of clowning, hopefully with local clown Alan Brown out front. Gingerbread men or maybe damper kangaroos for the audience to eat at birthday party shows. And maybe, just

think of it, a huge shadow show on a drive-in screen.

Why shadows? "Shadow puppetry is not very well-known in Perth" says Michael. "We want to show people how simple and elementary a shadow puppet is. We want them to think: I can do that." When I met them in May they had just arranged their first booking, for August 9th in the Perth Concert Hall foyer. "We needed a deadline" explained Michael.

They were planning a show with two stories, one about robots, the other about a dinosaur dance competition, and a demonstration of shadow techniques afterwards. They planned to use a lot of colour, with transparent gels, and through line and angles of view to create a comic strip feel in the composition.

After that launching performance they'll play birthday parties. Some people might think birthdays are pretty small beer, but Michael and Elaine don't see it that way. They expect it will test their mettle as performers and be a good proving ground for their material. They've both worked a lot with kids - Elaine in school and Michael in arts workshops - and they feel they know their audience.

They hope someday to get project funding for shows, but they know they have to prove themselves first. They talk of collaborations with other artists and other artforms, artist-in-residency projects and occasional theatre performances.

They contemplate the future with a level gaze. "We don't expect to make a living out of performance. Perth couldn't support another full-time puppet theatre, and anyway we don't want the pressure. We have other lines of work, and we want to start a family as well."

Maeve Vella

### AUDITIONS!

Spare Parts is looking for puppeteers for a short contract in early '87 - especially females. Write now to Spare Parts Puppet Theatre P.O. Box 897 Fremantle WA 6160



## Philippe

## Genty

In September 1985 Peter James Wilson and Michelle Spooner attended a course in visual theatre given by French puppeteer Philippe Genty at the Institut International de la Marionnette in Charleville-Mezieres. Peter took the opportunity to interview Philippe for *Manipulation*. Part 1 was published in the October '85 edition. This is the second and final part.

**PW: Have you always directed your own material?**

**PG: Yes.**

**PW: Have you experienced direction under another person?**

**PG: No.**

**PW: Was there any period of time over the last twenty years of puppetry that you felt you wanted to leave it? Has there been any other love in your life?**

**PG: Sailing, for a while. We bought a schooner and we sailed for several years on different seas around the world. But one day Mary and I were crossing the Atlantic and we'd been 15 days without land, and I realised that finally I was not happy with this life and that I would definitely choose puppetry because you can't do both. You can't have two mistresses at a time. But now I also want to go into movies, not that I have overcome certain problems in communicating with people. I am trying to open a new door into films.**

**PW: Do you think puppetry should be subsidised? What are your feelings on the process and the time involved in preparing visual works?**

**PG: It is always dangerous to be assisted. On the other hand it is very difficult to survive now without help, considering the tremendous amount of time it takes and the competition from the audio-visual media. I feel I should try to be self-supporting, but I've discovered how difficult that is, so in our company we have a sort of rule, that though we have subsidies from the government we always try for tours to be self-supporting. Except for instance, if we go to China and the Chinese say they can't pay us, then if the French government is willing to pay for the tour that's okay. Generally we**

prefer not to use subsidy for touring, but for creation time - rehearsal and so on.

One problem is that the French Cultural Ministry asks how many shows we will create in a year. But in our type of work we won't create a show from A to Z in one year. We take two years because visuals take time to achieve. Plays with words are much faster to stage. We deal with images and we have to change the images at tremendous speed to be competitive with the world. If I say "To be or not to be" I am giving a concept which is full of meaning. We have to throw out images at the same speed and change them as fast as we can with words. The text of visual work takes ten times longer to create. People think puppetry is a cheap means of production but it is actually quite expensive. We have to build and we have to experiment continually with materials, new chemicals, etc. This takes time. Finally we convinced the Cultural Ministry to accept our terms: that we would do one production every two years.

**PW: What do you think is the public's attitude to puppetry?**

**PG: To perform puppetry for children between the ages of 7 and 16 is an act of devotion, of sacrifice, because in this period they tend to reject puppetry, they think it's childish. Puppetry is infinitely more interesting for small children and for adults. Some adults accept puppetry very easily because they have formed a certain balance between their conscious and their subconscious, or their instinct and their rationality. The symbolism of objects in puppetry relates on both levels.**

But some adults reject the instinctual part of themselves, become too intellectual and try to control everything through rationality. You find this often with critics. They start a review with "If you like puppetry..." which means they were prejudiced before they even came to the show.

Nowadays puppetry has an important place not only on the stage but on TV. We are in the era of the image. We used to say of history that it is only what is written that remains. Now not only the writing but the image can remain. This is revolutionising things, the image is becoming stronger and stronger. Puppetry definitely has its place in this.

# ART HAZARDS

## KNOW YOUR STUFF

Maeve Vella

"We're all in a poker game, and we all know we're going to lose the last hand. But we want to feel good when we play that last hand, don't we? That's what it's all about." The words of Monona Rossol, president of the Center for Occupational Hazards in New York. Monona toured Australia in July and August, lecturing on the hazards of artist's materials for the Crafts Council. The tour was organized at the suggestion of the Hazardous Materials Committee of the Artworkers Union in Sydney. I attended a seminar Monona gave at the Design School, Sydney College of the Arts, in July. I learnt a lot.

The fact of the matter is that too many art workers are using chemicals they know nothing about. And there is no-one looking out for their safety. In most other industries it has been possible to conduct scientific studies of materials and their effects on workers. In the arts the usual methods for measuring exposure to hazardous materials are difficult to apply. Few artists work with the same materials all the time. Most use a variety, and change frequently during their careers. Studio and workshop locations change. Chemical safety standards in industry are generally based on the 8-hour working day. Industrial exposure limits allow for recovery time before the next shift. But how many artists work regular hours? How many work at home? And what about those 48-hour binges to get the show ready for the opening?

Union pressure and the logic of efficient productivity have caused most industries to operate under safety codes with regulations enforceable by law. But in the arts there is no united front to pressure for safer working conditions. Awareness is growing. Some organizations, like the Crafts Councils, the theatrical unions, community health centres and the Artworkers Union, are collecting information on materials and precautions.

They shouldn't really have to. The products we use should be clearly labelled as to their chemical ingredients, their hazards and the exact precautions required for their safe use. And some products should be taken off the market. Did you know, for instance, that artist's paints are exempt from lead content laws? Benzidine pigments and dyes cause bladder cancer. Paper and printing unions refuse to work with them, but they are still manufactured. Who buys them? Artists.

We owe it to ourselves to find out more about the materials we use. Many of them have been the subject of studies in other industries, and the information is available. It's a question of digging it out. Most manufacturers in the USA, the UK and Canada supply Material Data Safety Sheets on their products. Write and ask for them. Badger Australian manufacturers for the same and they might eventually comply. Don't be put off if they tell you the formula is secret - you have a right to know what's getting into your lungs or your liver. Sic the Consumer Affairs Bureau onto them, get your union if you're in one to hassle them. Consumer pressure brought about compulsory labelling of food products. We can do it with arts products too.

Say you do identify the chemicals in the product you're using. But you were so busy poring over art books at school you didn't have much time for chemistry, so you don't know what all those funny names mean. Some might kill you, others might be perfectly harmless. The hard truth is you've got to go and look them up. What chemicals are solvents? What is the difference between a vapour and a fume? (Monona asked us this one. We didn't know. A vapour behaves like a gas. A fume reacts with air to form particles. This is why fumes can be stopped by filters, but vapours generally can't.) Better late than never to learn some chemistry.



## ART HAZARDS ...

A little knowledge is something to build on. The more terms and concepts you know in a particular field the better equipped you are to ask questions and get answers. This was the main value of Monona Rossol's seminar for me.

Aside, that is, from the entertainment value of her New York chutzpah, e.g. "Five minutes exposure to this stuff and you're pickin' it out of your teeth" and "Their products are really safe. You can eat some of that stuff."

Here's a summary of my notes ....

**ACUTE and CHRONIC hazards:** It's useful to know the difference. An ACUTE reaction is immediate. Lead cholic, or dizziness after inhaling solvents - these are acute reactions and the connection between cause and effect is clear. CHRONIC illnesses, on the other hand, develop from small doses over a period of time. Early symptoms might be as commonplace as fatigue, constipation, sleeplessness and headaches. By the time you begin to show pronounced symptoms, you've got it bad. This is the problem we face. The materials we use without obvious effect now could cause serious illness and disability later in life. So we need to ask what are the acute hazards, what are the chronic hazards. Some product labels indicate acute hazards. Five US states, Monona reports, are now pushing for chronic hazard labelling.

**CUMULATIVE and NON-CUMULATIVE poisons:** Monona defined a poison as a substance in a quantity which exceeds the body's ability to handle it without harm. CUMULATIVE poisons go into the body easily but come out slow. Lead is one substance for which the body's excretion mechanisms are slow. NON-CUMULATIVE poisons go in and out of the body quickly: solvents and alcohol are examples. But the damage is left behind.

**CARCINOGENS and SENSITIZERS:** With some chemicals the size or frequency of dose is irrelevant. CARCINOGENS are one group. These cause cancer. One molecule of a carcinogenic material in the right person at the right time can do a lot of damage. In this area there is no such thing as zero risk, so if you have something known to be a carcinogen in your workshop, get rid of it, because someone at some time is going to have a problem with it. SENSITIZERS too are not doseage-related. These are chemicals that cause allergies. Epoxy Resins, for example, cause allergic reactions, particularly asthma and dermatitis, in huge numbers of people. So can Turps and the ingredients used in making Polyurethane Foam. You can work with a sensitizer and not feel any reaction, but it can happen at any time and once you have that allergy it's a lifetime problem. Some people become sensitive to smaller and smaller amounts. Others develop allergies to a range of similar chemicals as well.

**ADDITIVE and SYNERGISTIC combinations:** Some combinations of chemicals will work on you in an ADDITIVE way. For instance, inhaling turps fumes then nipping over the pub for a whisky is going to put stress on the same organs - in this case the liver and some of your brain cells. Others work SYNERGISTICALLY. Their combined effect is many times greater than the sum of their effects separately. Smoking plus almost any inhaled dust or particle is synergistic. This is because smoking paralyses the hair-like follicles inside the lungs that operate to clear foreign substances. Smoking and inhaling asbestos dust together render you 90 times more liable to develop lung cancer than they do separately. Combining an asthmatic's vaso-dilator with inhalation of particles has a synergistic effect because the vaso-dilator opens the bronchial passages, thereby allowing more foreign particles to be absorbed.

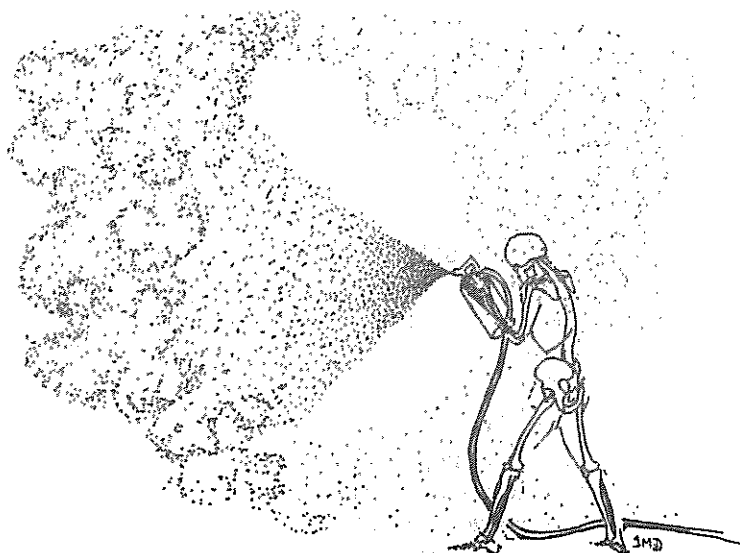


## LABEL WARNINGS

Some of the terms manufacturers use on labels need translating. Take "non-toxic". Means safe as houses, right? Wrong. On US, UK and Canadian labels it means that the product has been tested for acute hazards. The standard test, Monona told us, is to give a bunch of rats a single exposure to the material. Two weeks later the rats are examined. If more than five are dead, the product has to be labelled "toxic". But if less than five are dead ... "non-toxic". Not very comforting. "For industrial and professional use only" doesn't mean it's cool if you've got your diploma. It means you can't use the stuff safely without additional information. It's not meant for the home or the classroom - you can get sued if it does anyone damage in those places. "Use with adequate ventilation" - the accepted meaning of "adequate ventilation" is whatever ventilation is necessary to keep dosage below the Threshold Limit Value. What's that? The Threshold Limit Value, or TLV, is the standard industrial limit set for exposure to a specific chemical, but since it's arrived at through studies of industrial workers, the frequency and dosage might be different from the conditions under which you're using the chemical. Only use the stuff if the ventilation is sufficient for you to be unable to smell it. In other words, it's dangerous.

And products without warnings on the labels? If you're a trusting soul you might think that's because they're safe and buy them in preference to the brands covered in alarming signs. Don't.

Be aware too that suppliers sometimes buy in bulk and re-package without transferring the warnings from the original labels. This can happen with school supplies in particular.



## VENTILATION

Ventilation deserves more of our attention. It is not the same as air-conditioning. Air-conditioning recirculates air, heating or cooling for our comfort. But hot or cold it's still the same air. And any poisons coming out of the workroom will get distributed through the whole building. The people to go to for advice are not the air-conditioning engineers, but industrial ventilation engineers.

The key term to know here is LOCAL EXHAUST. Some workrooms, quite sensibly, are equipped with exhaust fans, and some work processes are enclosed with a hood and exhaust system. But it's no good unless these are close to the work. It's no good if the fumes or gases are being dragged past your nose. The air in your breathing zone should be fresh. How close do you need the nozzle of a vacuum cleaner to pick up a cigarette paper? That's how close you have to have your exhaust device. Slot hoods are available that suck air in through a slot down at bench level. Some exhaust systems use flexible ducts with a scoop end, so you can move them to different spots. The really expensive models have a light in the scoop so you can get very close and not have to worry about blocking out your light.

It's not necessarily all hi-tech. Monona showed us a slide of one woman's solution to the problem of fumes from her silk-screen drying rack. The rack was built high. In the ceiling above was an exhaust fan and attached to the ceiling was a plastic curtain able to be drawn right around the drying screens. Thus she was using local exhaust ventilation and enclosing the process, and she could breathe safely elsewhere in the room. **BUT GET INFORMATION FIRST ABOUT WHAT'S APPROPRIATE FOR THE MATERIALS YOU ARE USING.** Some solvents have low flashpoints. Plastic dust and sawdust don't take kindly to sparks in electrical appliances. Static electricity in enclosed areas can cause some materials to become explosive. Make sure the material of the duct won't be damaged by the materials being sucked through it. With ducts round is better than square. Square ducts create turbulence. And be aware of where that contaminated air is going when it leaves your building. Straight in the window of the building next door is impolite. Into the faces of passers-by in the street is downright mean.

## ART HAZARDS ...

### SOME PRECAUTIONS

Know the chemicals you are dealing with and their hazards.

**Protect your lungs** - use local exhaust ventilation wherever possible.

Eating, drinking and smoking around hazardous materials is not on. Dusts settle on everything, they won't avoid your coffee cup or cigarette. Solvents absorb into oil - including the oil in your salami sandwich. The mucus you swallow when you clear your throat will send some of whatever you've inhaled to your stomach.

**Protect your skin** - wear gloves and cover cuts and abrasions. Some chemicals do direct damage to the skin, others are absorbed through the skin into the bloodstream. Hand to mouth contact, like licking your finger to turn a page, can send any nasties to your stomach.

Keep respirators wrapped up and inside a cupboard when not in use. Hanging them on the wall where fumes continue to pass through them uses them up.

Solvent-soaked rags continue to give off fumes, so don't leave them lying around. Solvents need to be stored in metal cupboards, not on open shelves. A metal cupboard will delay fire reaching them, perhaps long enough for you to get out of the building before they explode. Store solvents away from exits, and away from possible fire sources, like rubbish bins.

Ear protection is necessary with noisy tools. The rule is if you have to raise your voice to be heard two feet away, you need ear protectors.

### EMERGENCY DEVICES

A cut-off switch will stop every power tool in the workroom in case of accident.

**Eyewash taps** - two-nozzle ones are preferable to single nozzles, to avoid delay.

**Emergency showers** - Install them in a safe spot. Monona showed us a slide of one art school workroom where the emergency shower was installed right above an electrical switch. What a choice!



### MORE INFORMATION CAN BE OBTAINED FROM ....

**Manufacturers** - Chromacryl and Winsor and Newton, for instance, supply information booklets on their paints. Some companies supply Material Data Safety Sheets about specific products on request.

**The Australia Council** - a report has recently been completed on OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY IN THE ARTS by Dr. Ben Bartlett, and will be published soon. It covers many materials and processes, plus ventilation. Order a copy from John Hunter, Publications, Australia Council, PO Box 302, North Sydney 2060, phone 923 3333.

**The Crafts Council of Australia** - 100 George Street, The Rocks, Sydney 2000, phone 241 1701

**The Artworkers Union** - 11 Randle Street, Surry Hills 2010, phone 211 4334.

**Lidcombe Workers Health Centre** - 27 John Street Lidcombe 2141, phone 646 3233. In conjunction with the Artworkers Union they have been collecting information on materials and hazards.

**The Art Hazards Information Centre** - 5 Beekman Street, New York NY 10038. They publish a regular newsletter called ART HAZARDS NEWS. Books available from them include STAGE FRIGHT by Monona Rossol and VENTILATION by Nancy Black (The Crafts Council is investigating the possibility of distributing these books in Australia - see address above for inquiries.)



## SUMMER SCHOOL

A Puppeteers' Summer School is being organised for the week of  
28th December 1986 to 4th January 1987.

It will be an opportunity for puppeteers to share skills and information.

There are two tutors for the week:

**RICHARD HART**, creator of "The Angler Fish Ballet", will teach  
**Construction for Movement**

Looking at everyday objects as a valuable clue to building a moving part, including soft and hard materials. e.g. a vacuum cleaner hose, which bends but keeps its shape. Making mechanisms for rod puppets and trick puppets. Assistance in making simple components with metals.

and

**ANN DAVIS**, marionettist, will run workshops on  
**Controls for Marionettes**, particularly for **Trick Marionettes**.

Please note these classes are for advanced levels  
there will be no beginner's classes.

The fee for the Summer School will be \$40.

The school and the local council have scheduled a public **PUPPETS IN THE PARK** session for New Year's Day. This will be an opportunity to perform and to see others perform. It also gives us a discount on the rent of the workshop premises, as arranged with the local council.

A private evening's Cabaret night is planned as well.

Other features of the Summer School will be a video deck to show your puppet videos on (VHS) and a Puppet Clinic - bring along that puppet or act you've been having trouble with and gets LOTS of advice.

The location is in Richmond, 70 kms west of Sydney. All types of accomodation are available here. The cheapest is on-site caravans on a share basis at \$25 - \$35 for the week and these can be booked through the Summer School. Or you can book your own hotel, motel, or whatever.

The success of the Summer School will depend very much on its participants. It's a do-it-yourself affair. It's like the proverbial Spanish Inn. At a Spanish Inn, you only find what you bring yourself.

The Summer School is being organised by Dennis Murphy of Murphy's Puppets. It's being done without grants or paid administrators, so please help keep things simple by sending your booking form and deposit ASAP. Space is limited and will be allocated on a first-come first-served basis.

Please fill in the booking form enclosed with this edition and mail to:

**Puppeteers Summer School**  
c/o Murphy's Puppets,  
14 Harney Street, Marrickville NSW 2204

**Deadline: 15th November**



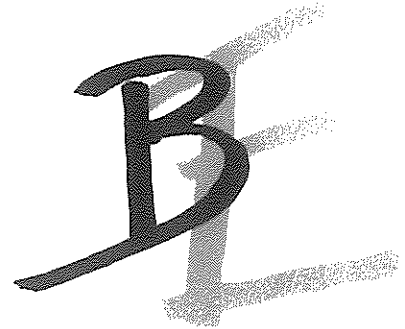
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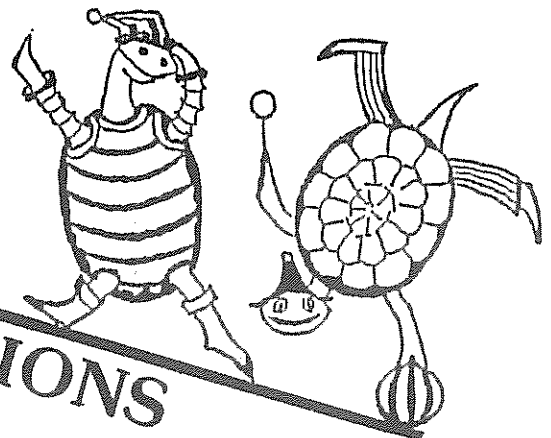
**BROWNING ENTERTAINMENT.** For professional puppetry advice phone Ross Browning (02) 44 5867 or write 49a Station St., Pymble 2073. Australia. FAX: (02) 449 1991

\*Puppet by Beverly Campbell-Jackson, who is represented by B.E.

## Terrapin puppet theatre

### AUDITIONS

### PUPPETEER



We are looking for a person with enthusiasm for puppetry, and with some previous experience. Someone with a commitment to the art form of puppetry as a profession.

Terrapin Puppet Theatre tours throughout Tasmania and to mainland states. The company has a commitment to quality performance; working with writers, musicians, composers, directors and designers, to create new works for audiences of all ages, from the very young to teenagers and adults. Training and development of professional skills with specialist tutors is a vital part of each years work.

The appointment as puppeteer would be for a twelve month period from January 1987. Salaries are at union rates plus a loading for experience.

Applications with a contact phone number, photo and names of three referees to:

The Artistic Director, Terrapin Puppet Theatre  
P.O. Box 23, Sandy Bay Tasmania 7005. Applications close November 14.

*Terrapin Puppet Theatre is an equal opportunity employer*