



GENTY MASTERCLASS

GIVING OF LIFE

LEARNING IN JAPAN

SCRIPT DEVELOPMENT
GRANTS

KI-YI MBOCK THEATRE OF
ABIDJAN - GOD THING

REVIEWS

COMPANY REPORTS

UNIMA

Manipulation

Greetings to all, and welcome to the Winter edition of 'Manipulation'.

We at the New Zealand Puppet Theatre are pleased, relieved and excited that it is now in print. We would like to affirm that this magazine is a great service we do each other in networking and co-operation. And a great tool to inspire, encourage and stimulate each other. Thank-you contributors.

The Genty workshop also strengthened those links for us, not only with the New Zealanders but also with our two Australian participants. It was a pleasure having Sandy McKendrick and Jane Davies over here with us. Which leads to the thought that it would be great to have more Aussie puppeteers coming over here to work. How about it?!

We are about to start work on a new adult show inspired from our work with the Genty's. We hope to tour Australia in 1992, if not we'll see y'all before then!

A note concerning copy for the next edition: Please send typed, edited copy for the next edition, and also black and white photos if you want them included. Most of the copies received by us needed extensive sorting and editing, and was, frankly, a nightmare. It delays publication and sends stress levels through the roof. The individual effort required to do this is minimal compared to the accumulated work required of the publishing company. We think this courtesy will help ensure the continuing survival of our magazine. Please heed this request for the benefit and health of our friends at the Sydney Puppet Theatre.

Happy Dolly Wiggling!!

Anne Forbes
Mark Larkin
Lynette Ross
Rebekah Whiteside

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Special Topics for the Next Edition

Writing for Puppetry - a follow-up to the forthcoming "Writing for Puppetry" forum organised by the Australian National Playwrights' Centre.

We welcome contributions from forum participants and from anyone who wishes to express their experiences, insight, difficulties or knowledge of helpful people or publications on the topic.

Anecdotes - a section on any humorous or horrific experiences relating to puppetry ... the sorts of stories that reveal themselves at a dinner party with like-minded friends.

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COVER

PHILIPPE GENTY
Photo: Florian Tiedje

The death of Jim Henson?

An Obituary by
Richard Bradshaw

At 1.21 am on Wednesday, 16 May 1990, in New York Hospital, Jim Henson, the famous puppeteer, died. That seems a terrible final statement, but on the following Monday a celebratory Memorial Service in New York City was proof that, while Jim no longer treads the earth, he is still a continuing presence here.

His widow, Jane, suggests that Jim didn't think he'd live to be an old man and, as if with the feeling that he wouldn't be around much longer, he had already begun to ensure that things would continue without him. Four years ago, on a holiday in the Riviera, Jim wrote a letter to his children that was not to be opened until his death.

"I'm not at all afraid of the thought of death and look forward to it. I suggest you have a friendly little service of some kind. It would be lovely if there was a song or two ... and someone said some nice, happy words about me ... It feels strange writing this while I am still alive, but it wouldn't be easy after I go ... Don't feel bad that I've gone. I look forward to seeing all of you when you come over. ... This all may sound silly to you guys, but what the hell, I'm gone — and who can argue with me?"

These words were in excerpts of his letters read by his son, Brian, at the Memorial Service.

The Service took place in the Cathedral of St John the Divine which was almost filled to its 5000-seat capacity. People had been asked not to wear black. In his letter, Jim had asked for a "nice, friendly little service" with a "rousing" Dixieland band, and at the end of the two and an half hour service, the Dirty Dozen Brass Band led the way out with "When The Saints Go Marching In".

Early in the service mourners fluttered coloured butterflies on rods as Harry Belafonte, with three others, sang "Turn The World Around". With the butterflies, programs had been distributed quoting Jim: "Please watch out for each other and

love and forgive everybody. It's a good life, enjoy it".

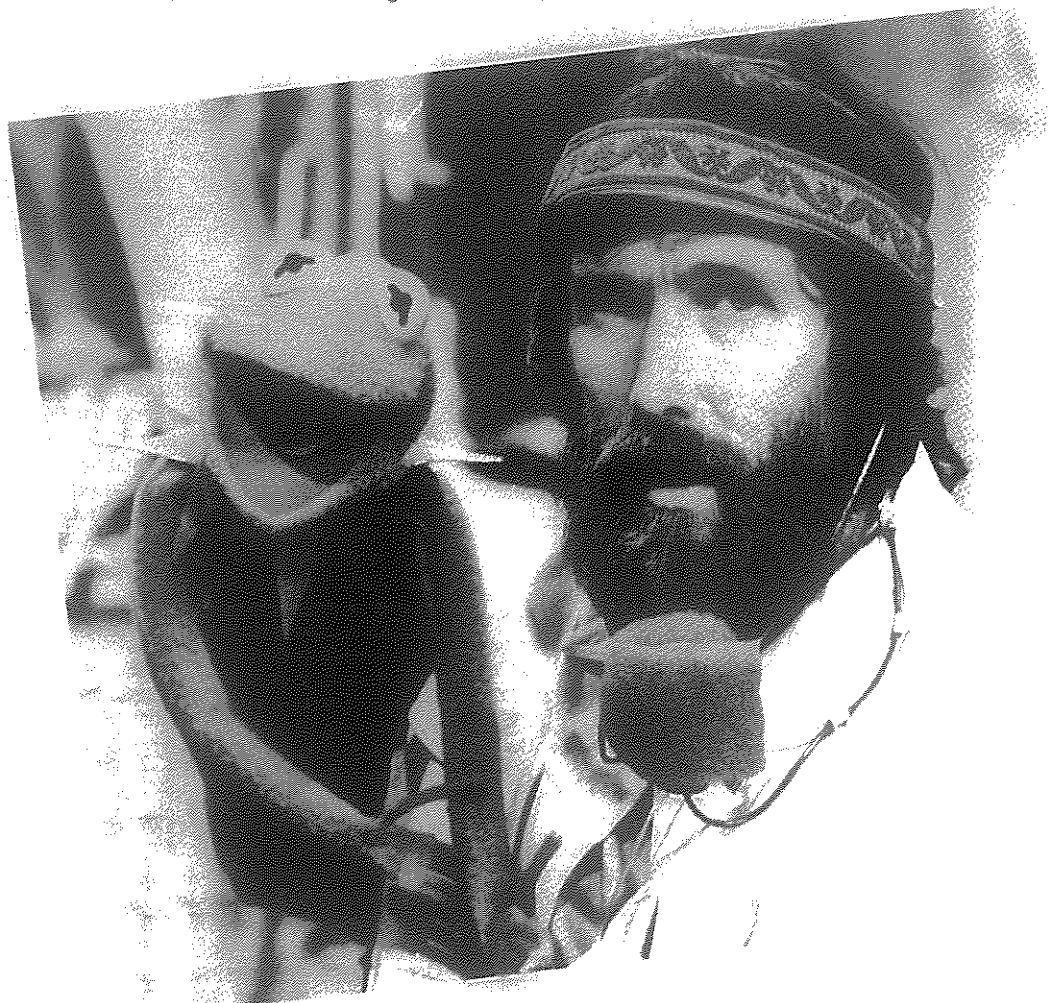
One of the speakers at the service was Allelu Kurten, General Secretary of UNIMA-USA who was asked to speak on behalf of puppeteers throughout the world. In her tribute she said: "Jim was unchanged by success. I never knew anyone who had such a quality of attention and concern. He had respect for every human being and he respected the artist's right to be himself. He had made his own personal statement in puppetry: his Henson Foundation and his many personal contributions gave other puppeteers the same possibility".

"We had such great silly fun together" said Frank Oz, a loyal and devoted colleague

head low and slowly walked away. At the end of the service Muppet performers sang a medley of songs and finished by waving their Muppets in the air to the cheers of the congregation.

It was an extraordinary tribute to a remarkable man.

Some months ago there was a merger of the Henson groups with Disney which was celebrated by a Muppet special which went to air in the US on 6 May. Although Jim died before the final agreement was signed, this will mean that Muppet characters, other than those on Sesame Street, will now be featured at Disney theme parks, notably the new park being



who had joined the family during their vigil at the hospital. He recalled the joy of watching Jim laugh until he cried. "It would start in that high voice, and he couldn't speak, and the tears were rolling down, and he tried to add a joke and just couldn't do it".

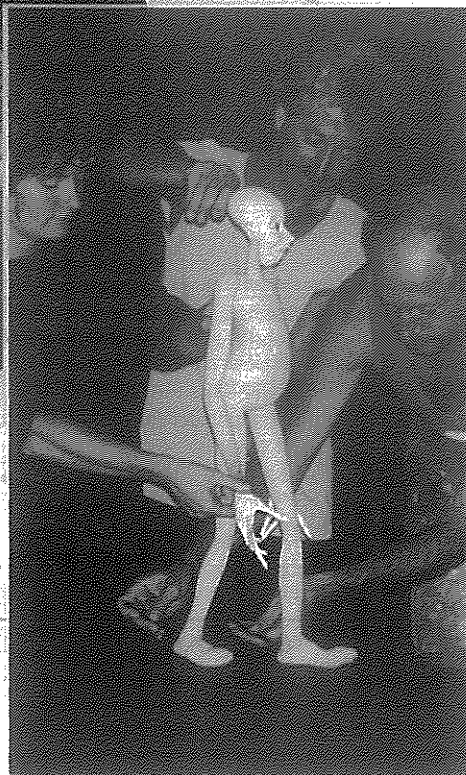
Jim's voice was then heard, as Kermit the Frog, singing "Rainbow Connection". And Big Bird, played by Carroll Spinney, sang Kermit's song, "It's Not Easy Being Green". At the end of the song Big Bird looked up, said "Thank you, Kermit, then bowed his

built near Paris where Muppet characters are now better known than the Disney ones! And apparently Kermit will continue to appear on Sesame Street, with someone else working him. Meanwhile the Henson Foundation will go on giving support to puppet projects in America. Jim will be with us for some time yet!

We share the sadness of all those who worked closely with him, his wife Jane, and his children Lisa, Cheryl, Brian, John and Heather... but we also share their celebration of a great and continuing spirit.



NICK BLAKE EXPLORING INNER-SPACE WITH HIS EGG DURING THE GENTY WORKSHOP



IANE DAVIES, BRYAN DIVERS & PETER TAIT BEING TAKEN FOR A WALK BY "ALBERT" AT THE GENTY WORKSHOP.

Genty Masterclass

INTRODUCTION

Philippe Genty Workshop
by Rebekah Whiteside

Early this year, the empty top floor of a Glen Eden warehouse was host to a series of extraordinary and unusual events. Every morning several vehicles pulled up, some painted with distinctive "Puppet" signs, and out would climb an odd assortment of actors, puppeteers and mimes. Leading the group was a mysterious figure in sunglasses and overcoat, with a hat pulled down low over his face. The group would disappear up the stairs, and during the day sounds of music, laughter, anguish and wonder drifted out to perplex the neighbours. Long after darkness fell the same people would stumble back out to their cars, bound for obscure Japanese restaurants or wild parties, only to reappear the next day for more of the same.

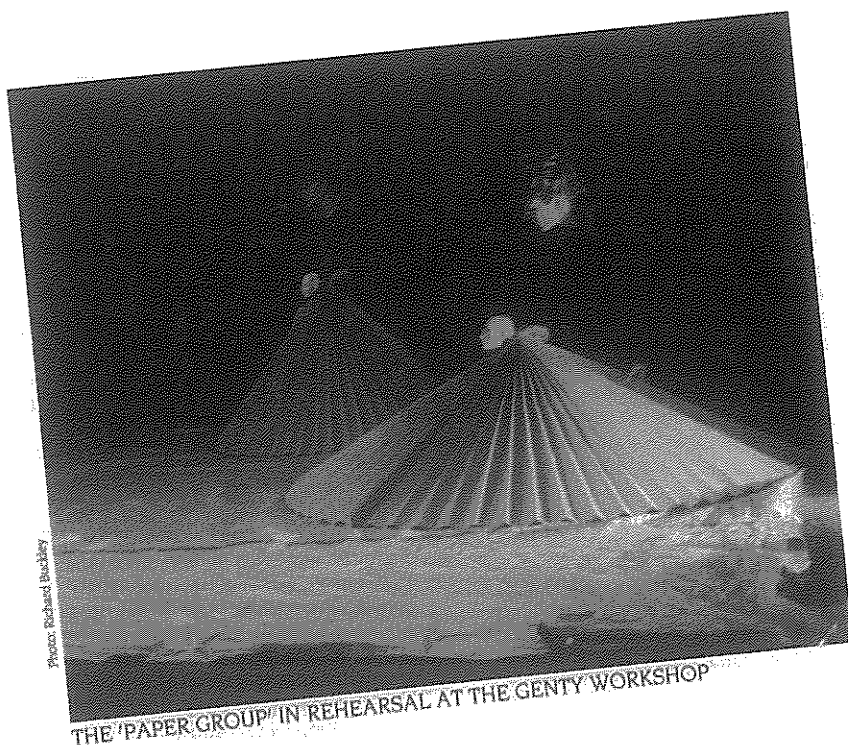
NICK BLAKE'S REPORT

From mid February to mid March 1990 a master class for puppeteers, actors and dancers was given by Philippe Genty and Mary Underwood at Glen Eden, Auckland. Eleven performers participated. The structure of the workshop was this: A physical warm-up led by Mary for one hour, then a two to three hour class in puppet manipulation focused on two kinds of puppets: The marionette portee, a puppet suspended from its head, which is in the manipulator's hand. There are no legs, so the puppet glides on the floor with the puppeteer in full view. This is extremely challenging, since the performer not only imbues the puppet with life, but ALSO interacts with it, a process called disassociation. The other type of puppet we learnt to manipulate had articulated limbs requiring three manipulators, somewhat in the style of Bunraku, though

the puppeteers were present in the scene. This work required a refined 'listening' and attuning to other performers' movements and rhythms to co-ordinate hands, feet, body and head in credible movements.

Other mornings we had sessions on dramaturgy in which Philippe explained in depth his process of creation. The stages of this process are:

1. **FORMULATION** of the idea. Identification of the problems: thematic, technical, economic.
2. **IMPREGNATION** - digesting the theme to create a magnetic field to attract desires, impulses, dreams and conflicts, culminating in a 'quasi-neurotic obsession'.
3. **ELOIGNEMENT** or distancing. Using analogy, association of images, improvisation, automatic writing, analysis of conflict in each scene, emotion memory exercises.
4. **INTERSECTION** of ideas that emerge in sections 2 and 3 with formulation, so



The workshop culminated in a public performance at the Little Maidment Theatre on March 12th.

Philippe Genty has made very definite choices in his work and taken his creation to a point of great refinement. Though we all often disagreed with ideas or ways of doing things, his extremely honest feedback and microscopic perception were of great value. He always spoke his truth about our work with no attempt to protect our egos, and this took us all to new edges in our work. The workshop opened up for me a rich new direction in my work which will keep me occupied for some time.

The Genty's were selfless in their dedication to the workshop, and were putting in ten hours a day-plus even before they recovered from jet-lag. By the end of the workshop we were working closer to twelve hours a day, not a moment of which I regretted. It was a great workshop.

REPORT:

NORBERT HAUSBERG Strings Attached Puppet Theatre

Every morning started with a good warm up and group work and after a short time a good group feeling developed. After some experimenting with object theatre we split into two groups to work on a project to be performed at the end of the workshop. This part of the workshop, which was every afternoon, turned into a thrilling tour of how to create, of the learning of the creation process with all its pitfalls and trapdoors. Thinking back, it was great, how our group of six slowly drifted into a discovery of 160 gram brown wrapping paper as the base for our play and how conventional we were when we began, however Philippe guided us away from the conventional towards a totally new concept.

As well as with paper, our group worked with fibre glass to create the heads that would accompany the paper shapes. This material was not new to our group members, but most had never actually gone through the whole process of making a clay form and taking a plaster of Paris mould, etc.

I think to participate in such a course you cannot help but to be influenced and your work is sure to change. However, things might take a long time to filter through, since economic pressures very often do not allow us to be as creative as we would like to be or as avant-garde as we desire, there is usually the need to present what is saleable. But a lot of seeds were planted, a lot of creativity unleashed during this month, and it will manifest itself again in the work of members of our group, maybe in ways as yet unknown by all the participants.



that formulation can grow and adapt.

5. EVALUATION - presentation of work in progress to a non-theatrical audience to receive their feedback, but not to enter into discussion with them.

Other areas of exploration were the dynamics of the stage space, creation of focus, and the fabrication of puppets. In the afternoons we divided into two groups to work on separate projects. One group used the story of 'The Shadow' by Hans Christian Anderson as a provocation for their work. This started as a very broad exploration to find language, using brown paper and puppet heads. A world of brown paper sea and parcels which unfolded to become hollow, floating bodies emerged. Heads attached to organic or geometric forms and disappeared back into their own bodies. Five black-clad manipulators crested this world in an expanse of crumpled brown paper. In the three-and-a-half week creation process this piece went through

many changes, discoveries of fantastic fragments, and times of complete blockage, before a final, quite simple idea emerged. It was very much an exercise in faith that a limited material can produce an expressive image language. (This is an outsider's view, I was in the other group).

The rest of us worked on Theatre d'Objets using the biblical story of Sodom and Gomorrah as our main project. We found it very difficult to work together on such an elusive form of theatre, and after two weeks we split into three groups. One group continued with Sodom and Gomorrah, using fruit for the main characters and a table of sand as the stage. Another group recreated scenes from the French revolution set in an office, the Bastille being a filing cabinet. I worked on a solo piece about an egg who thought he was unique and set off on a journey through his past to find his true identity.

We worked a couple of hours a day each with Philippe, but our projects tended to progress only fitfully as he was forever knocking us back to square one. Often his concept of Object Theatre felt narrow and confining. He sees it as most suitable for deriving epic works such as the Bible, mythology or anything with a 'Cecil B de Mille' sweep to it. Using everyday and used objects as protagonists serves to debunk and satirise the story. I thought the work that emerged on the workshop showed that there are many more possibilities than this. Key points of Object Theatre are an absolute conviction in the life of the object by the performer, and a fluid ability on the performer's part to become the object, then to detach from it and relate to the audience.

Company Reports



REBEKAH WHITESIDE -
PUPPETEER WITH THE
NEW ZEALAND PUPPET
THEATRE

NEW ZEALAND PUPPET THEATRE

by Rebekah Whiteside

1990 has been a year of many changes, much excitement and not a little stress for us! The company now has four permanent staff who have committed to (and are currently evolving) a three year plan of artistic development and growth. These members are: Anne Forbes, Artistic Director; Lynette Ross, Administrator; Rebekah Whiteside, Puppeteer; Mark Larkin, Puppeteer. Lynette and Mark both joined the company this year, Lynette replacing Shona Roberts.

The big event of this year was the Genty Workshop held in February/March. Through Anne's foresight and determination, the Genty's spent a month in New Zealand training and inspiring a group of actors and puppeteers in object theatre, animation, performance and much more. (A report of the Workshop is included in this magazine). The Workshop culminated in a performance at the Little Maidment which enraptured the over-capacity audience. We hope the Workshop will lead to many exciting and innovative performances in Aotearoa. Philippe and Mary were brought out with assistance from the QEII Arts Council WaeWae Tapu scheme.

Directly after the Genty Workshop, Anne's solo show "Out Of Hand" began a most successful season at the International Festival of Arts in Wellington, receiving great reviews and excellent feedback from Velo Theatre and an invitation to tour Georgia from members of the Georgian Actors Studio! Anne felt this feedback to be of tremendous value and most

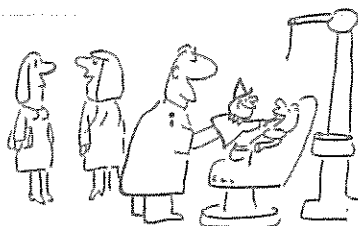
encouraging.

In April it was straight back from Wellington and into rehearsals for "Billy Fire Blues", the theatre's current Theatre-in-Education programme - written and directed by Anne with assistance from Kerry Harvey and Sally Markham (both of NZADIE) and performed by Rebekah and Mark. It is a new direction for our TIE programme, involving mostly acting, with puppetry, stilt walking, juggling and ventriloquism also appearing. The show involves the audience in establishing the characters and setting the scene for the play, as well as providing a chance for the children to talk with and question the characters. It tells a story of two travelling show-people, Barney Whiterats and Jenny Anderson, both unusual characters for their era. In the school holidays the company performed public seasons of "Jackie And The Beanstalk" and "The Kawau Connection" - both of which have had a successful season at the Waikato Art Museum.

Currently we are putting our energy into finding a new sponsor, new premises, new holiday show and a new adult show. The latter has a working title of "Double Take" and features the marionette-a-porte, introduced to us by the Gentys. Oh - and the Three Year Plan - aiming towards more adult productions, overseas touring and a stronger training programme.

NZPT

P.O. Box 6895
Wellesley St, Auckland



'he has such a way with children.'

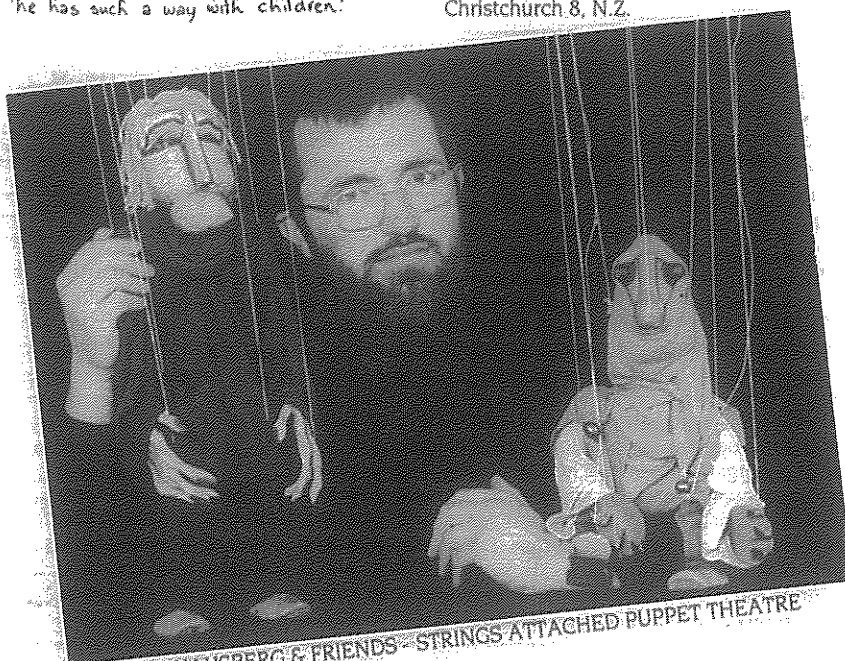
"STRINGS ATTACHED PUPPET THEATRE" - A PORTRAIT

Strings Attached Puppet Theatre first performed in New Zealand in May 1984 at the MacDougall Art Gallery in Christchurch. The venue was filled to capacity and people had to be turned away - it was a great start for our work in New Zealand we thought. We were immediately booked again for repeat performances. Yes, it was a great start with a classic of the Brothers Grimm, Rumpelstiltskin. The play is still in our repertoire, but the list of plays we tour throughout New Zealand has grown considerably longer. There has been work commissioned by the National Art Gallery - these were educational plays to support exhibitions, commissions to create a series of plays in German to be performed for high school students (an on-going project), productions for secondary schools, various primary school productions including "Mustava And The Moon", written by Norbert Hausberg which is touring currently and proving to be very successful.

So far we have worked exclusively with hand-carved marionettes designed and created by Norbert Hausberg who learned his skills in puppetry in his country of birth, West Germany. Besides creating them for our theatre, there is a slow but steady demand by collectors for commissioned puppets which is very pleasing.

As well as our work in schools and galleries throughout New Zealand there are appearances on Television, at Festivals, etc - one of the highlights was to be one of the invited performers for the 1990 Waitangi Commemoration on 6 February.

Strings Attached Puppet Theatre
30B Kinsey Tce
Christchurch 8, N.Z.



NORBERT HAUSBERG & FRIENDS - STRINGS ATTACHED PUPPET THEATRE

LESLIE TROWBRIDGE PUPPET OPERA

Wrote play "Libretto" for Kostas Zougenelis, Sydney. Also opera version - and English and Chinese version for Liu Jii, China Arts Troupe Beijing. my puppet in Swedish Marionetten Museum - engaged for second International Puppet Festival Tehran. I ran with "Romeo and Juliet" nurse in colour of the year - Indian Midnight Blue. Three puppet orchestra for puppet opera. Writing new puppet opera own life story history with old King Cole - did two Russian operas videos - tale of invisible city of Kitesz and Russian and Ludmilla - two puppet ballet huge success also acitate screens - shadows -hope to perform Shakespeare opera in Wellington Aid of Funds for Wellington Shakespeare Society Shakespeare Globe Theatre New Zealand. Wall Hangings, London. Hope to have old workshop turned into puppet opera house in future if I can sell my property. News Later. Just visited Melbourne. Greetings from leading soprano.

Leslie Trowbridge
P.O. Box 30
Franz Josef Glacier
New Zealand

THE PUPPET GANG

The Puppet Gang is a new kind of theatrical enterprise for Wellington. The Puppet Gang is interested in puppetry as an entertainment; as a research into what puppets can say and what they can do.

The Puppet Gang has been created by Ramon Aguilar. The idea is based out of many years of experience in his home country of Mexico in the art of puppeteering.

After establishing space, he then collected 10 people, who are puppeteers or actors, to be a part of The Puppet Gang.

Puppet Gang
14/72 Brougham St
Mt Victoria
Wellington, N.Z.

MUSTAVA AND THE MOON

- a limited edition of 500.

A play about the first New Zealander in out of space, written by Norbert Hausberg for Strings Attached Theatre. It is a 24 page booklet with one colour and one black and white photo.

Cost is \$6.00 inclusive of postage within New Zealand and Australia. Anywhere else please add \$2.00.

Orders to
Norbert Hausberg, 30b Kinsey Terrace,
Christchurch 8, New Zealand.

PETER GRASSHOPPER

Five years ago, Peter Grasshopper was putting the finishing touches to a Report to the New Zealand Q.E.II Arts Council, who funded the first New Zealand Puppet Festival. He and Rose Beauchamp organised and staged the Festival, which resulted in the formation of Puppeteers in New Zealand (PINZ/UNIMA), the voice-piece of New Zealand puppetry.

Now "GRASSHOPPER'S PUPPET & WOODCARVING STUDIO" enters its third year of carving wooden puppets, specializing in the marionette. Commencing without any capital in a friend's vacant shop-front in Braidwood on the New South Wales Southern Tablelands, with only 3 chisels and initially no electricity, Grasshopper started carving marionettes. When the building was auctioned 4 months later, he rented a main-street flat, kept the front room and porch as a Studio and sub-leased the remainder. With the flat came a telephone. It took twelve months to make the first sale, and now another year later, the Studio is fully equipped and making a profit.

Despite the fact that the town of Braidwood has only 1100 people, 90% of his business in the last year came from either locals, or Canberra people stopping at Braidwood on the way to the Coast. Now Grasshopper has opened a Showroom for his painted puppets, and his natural wood, sculptural pieces go to a local Gallery who also take them to the Sydney and Canberra Craft Fairs.

All his work is in wood, and due to the absence in the Tablelands of stands of his favourite wood, beech (*Nothofagus*). Grasshopper draws from a large variety of local fruit woods (pear, apple, plum, orange, apricot & peach), which combine strength with workability. Much of his wood is given to him by locals feeling that it's too good to burn, and it's normal to find branches left at his Studio door. He's just finished carving a head out of one such piece of the spectacular Atlas Cedar (*cedrus atlantica*) finished with Dannish Oil and Finishing Wax.

Although he enjoys the craft aspect of puppet-carving, he'd love to make puppets again specifically for professional performance. Grasshopper carved his first marionettes for performance in Braidwood in 1982, and since then has carved approximately twenty-five puppets for his own performance. He has developed for the string puppet an extra sensitive arm and leg jointed system based on the Burmese marionettes, and modified an upright eastern European-type perch. His paint is a very effective matt gouache, and the heads and trunk are hollowed. Delivery is 8-10 weeks and he'd love the chance to quote for puppeteers on either glove, rod or string wooden puppets.

Grasshopper

Box 155
Braidwood Tel: (048) 422-148
NSW 2622 Fax: (048) 422-646

MURPHYS PUPPETS

Are the creation of husband and wife team, Dennis and Janice Murphy in Sydney.

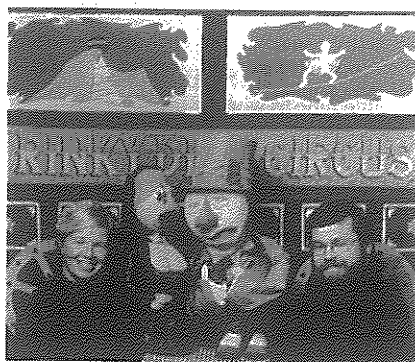
With three shows and several character pieces in our current repertoire, we have been performing in lots of different circumstances and venues lately.

Though we will, in weak moments, agree to do video/film work, we both prefer live performance. (Better to be broiled in the sun at an Agricultural Show than cramped behind a chromo-keyed backdrop manipulating a puppet you cannot even see).

Last year saw our first production in a foreign language: "Arlekeno la Dentisto" was produced for the NSW Esperanto Federation in December. In my method of character voice production, I "hold" the puppet's voice by slight muscular tension in the face and mouth. This helps me to keep in character. But I also "hold" a language in virtually the same way. So it was a challenge to maintain the five voices and rapid voice changes while all the characters spoke Esperanto.

The playlet was based on our "Commedia dell'Arte" skit from "Murphy's Mob", translated with the addition of satire about the Esperanto movement itself.

I did not know much about Commedia but having lived in part of Italy where it flourished, I was curious enough to start reading up on it a couple of years ago. Not a lot is known about the actual performances. There were no scripts as such and the art is no longer alive in Italy. The research took me to the antecedents of Commedia, back through Boccaccio, Rabelais and the Spanish picaresque novels. I quite enjoyed myself.



DENNIS & JANICE MURPHY WITH THEIR CIRCUS FRIENDS

I was astonished as I read about the Commedia players' methods of improvisation around a basic plot outline and about the creation of the character's speeches and pieces of business. I realised that was the technique I was already using with my puppet-character work, right down to the love of language and dialect. Mask work is quite different to puppetry, of course. Where the mask has its best impact is stillness, the puppet cannot rely

on that kind of power. Still, the idea of a "Commedia dei Burattini" (Puppet Commedia) intrigued me.

A casual conversation in Newcastle with Ross Brown revealed that he had studied Commedia Masks Working In Papier Mache; he produced brilliant glove puppet heads for us, each with a vestige of its masks still visible. The bodies and costumes were made by Janice Murphy while Richard Hart did the Veneto-style scenery. I have written three plot outlines and we are hoping to get Jonquil Temple as Director.

We have also been busy conducting Puppets-and-Storytelling Workshops on the library circuit, showing librarians how to incorporate puppets into their storytelling sessions. Establishing a garden around our new home takes up a lot of time as does keeping up with our Lady Hortense's speaking engagements.

Current plans are that sometime between the Adelaide Fringe Festival, school tours and watering the garden, our spare time this year will be concentrated on the Commedia puppetry. Dennis Murphy Owner/Trainer Murphys Puppets.

Murphy's Puppets
79 Binalong Road
Old Toongabbie 2146

POLYGLOT PUPPET THEATRE

A MATTER OF LIFE AND DEATH. By Helen Lunn and Ariette Taylor.

When you are young, it seems you will live forever, that nothing will change, only you: You will get bigger, more clever, move on, move away, change the world!

But growing up is not only looking forward it is also saying goodbye. Movement is not only IN you it is all AROUND you.

A MATTER OF LIFE AND DEATH gives us a little time to wonder together about the mystery of life and it's other face: death.

The production does not impinge on any cultural perception of the hereafter but aims with the help of teachers notes to facilitate discussion in the classroom.

Polyglot Theatre
No. 2 Henham Street,
Hawthorne 3122.

QUEENSLAND THEATRE OF PUPPETRY

Q'TOP has now started rehearsals for 1990 public performances in June and September. During the 'hot weather break' we have held three script writing/ideas workshops where we script our own plays and work on props.

It has also been our pleasure and lots of fun to work with the Gold Coast Little Theatre in their production of "Carnival". This play called for four puppets and

Q'TOP's puppet creator made them especially for the occasion. Gerda Pinter, our Producer/Director of Q'TOP was the Producer of "Carnival" so we watched it from auditions night to a successful conclusion.

Q'TOP's programme for 1990 includes "The Ginger Bread Man", "Aesops Fable", "The Lion And The Mouse", "Granny's Tree" (a story about vandalism and a bully) and "Cindy's Cellar" - about a jazz band. In conclusion - congratulations to the producers of the Opening and Conclusion of the Commonwealth Games. It was very spectacular and we liked the 'puppet birds'.

Queensland Theatre of Puppetry
P.O. Box 437
Southport
Queensland

SPARE PARTS

by Don Smith

Peter In Shanghai

On Friday, May 11th Peter Wilson flew out on a week long cultural exchange with the Shanghai Puppet Theatre. He will be in China as an observer for their Shanghai International Spring Theatre Festival, and also to discuss further skill exchange between Spare Parts and the Shanghai Theatre. This is a direct result of the successful cooperation last year, between the companies in mounting the production of the "Monkey King".

The first step in establishing this skill exchange programme will be, hopefully, to set up a provisional teaching facility in both theatres.

Spare Parts gratefully acknowledges the assistance of the Department of the Arts,

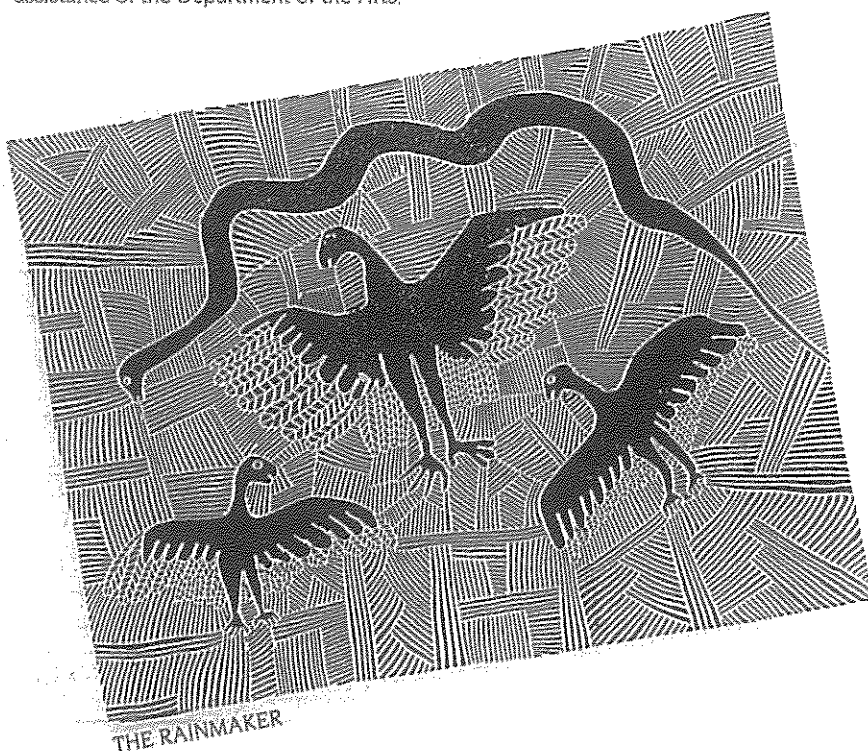
and the Shanghai Cultural Bureau for their help in the funding of this trip. There will be a complete report in the next issue.

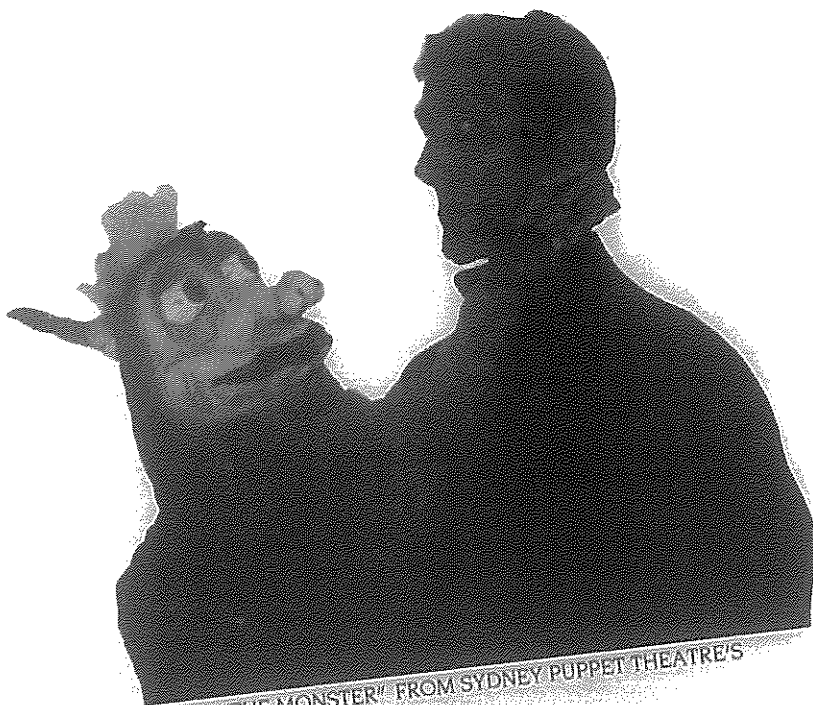
The Bandicoot Speaks

A diverse mixture of skills and experience were brought together for the production of "Rainmaker". Written by Aboriginal writer Jack Davis, and directed by dancer and choreographer Chrissie Parrot, the production included two dancers, a puppeteer, an aboriginal actor/dancer, and an actor. This diversity made for an interesting rehearsal process. Warm ups have never been quite so rigorous and inventive. As one of the non-dancers in the group, I've discovered parts of my body I never knew were there. The holiday audiences have comprised a wide range of ages, from tiny tots to adults. It was great to hear the sighs of appreciation when the lizard raised her frill, or when the rain fell from the sky.

Discussion after the show had been interesting. "Are you a real Aborigine?", was often asked of Nigel Wilkes, the Aboriginal dancer. He usually responded by rubbing his skin, just in case it was all a big hoax. Parents have been very appreciative, many of them being aware of the need to translate and transpose aboriginal culture in a way that can be understood by non-aboriginal children. In this regard "Rainmaker" has most certainly achieved its aim.

Spare Parts Theatre
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P.O. Box 897
Western Australia





STEVE COUPE WITH "THE MONSTER" FROM SYDNEY PUPPET THEATRE'S PRIMARY SCHOOL SHOW "UP & JUMPING"

SYDNEY PUPPET THEATRE

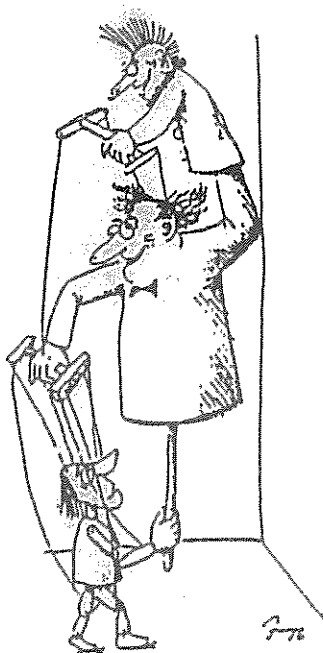
by Sue Wallace & Steve Coupe

The Australia Council has supported us this year with two grants, one for Creative Development and the other for Health and Safety. We have recently completed ten weeks of 'investigation' developing a two hander suitable for a general audience but aimed more towards the adult psyche. The new show that has emerged is currently titled "Reactions". It is still in its infancy and I'm sure will undergo many changes before production which we hope will be early 1991. Just applying for the Health and Safety grant increased our awareness of our working environment and the success of the application means we can install dust and fume protection mechanisms.

We are continuing our school touring programme with our current show "Up and Jumping" and are in the process of writing a new show "Roald Dahl's Shorts" based on his life and just a few of his works.

Our "bread and butter" income comes from a puppet building and show operation contract that we have had with Australia's Wonderland for the last four years. We hope to begin production on their next one-person marionette show by May.

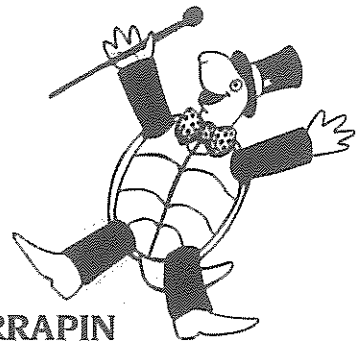
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P.O. Box 152
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NSW 2016



Australian Puppetry Guild
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Handspan Theatre
108 Gertrude St
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Australia

Real Fantasy Theatre Inc
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TERRAPIN

by Bob Parsons

Well its 1990 and this year heralds the close of Terrapin's first decade ... wow doesn't time fly when you're having fun! "Ice Palais" (Terrapin's long awaited adult production) had a successful season in December. Houses were small but the general audience reaction was really great. We are currently negotiating to take it to the mainland but due to a large cast and crew, money is the (usual) problem.

At the start of 1990 Noriko Nishimoto joined us to direct "Kaguyahime", a Japanese folk story about a princess from the moon. For our production she adapted the story to suit lower primary. It was performed in Fremantle for an upper primary audience. It was great to have Noriko with us yet again ... this was her third trip to Terrapin and the puppeteers learned a great deal from her visit. "Kaguyahime" is currently touring and being very well received throughout the schools.

Last year Terrapin met with a number of writers one of whom, Peta Murray (of "Wallflowering" fame) has produced a fun script "The Flying Flopps", about a spotty little lad in a family circus. Construction is well under way. I've never toured with a Hills Hoist before! The puppets are about two feet tall and are doll-like, in that their appendages won't have controls. They'll be operated by one or more puppeteers. Rehearsals begin in May with a cast of four directed by Jindra Rosendorf.

In 1989 the Terrapin puppeteers began formulating and workshopping ideas for a secondary/adult production utilizing black theatre techniques. 1990 sees the continuation of scripting and devising, culminating in a performance season during third term. The piece relies on music and sounds, with little or no dialogue ... the puppeteers are also producing the sound track. The show looks at individuals as part of an overall society, and explores this theme through bizarre and exciting images.

In August 1990 Terrapin is taking a two hander "The Great Gooble Strak" to Victoria for a four week tour. "Gooble" had a successful season in Tasmania in 1989. The tour is being organized by the Victorian Arts Council, taking in a lot of Victorian country schools.

Terrapin
P.O. Box 23
Sandy Bay
Tasmania

Giving Of Life

by Emma Neale

those visions and ideas together into the form of a stage piece".

The result is sometimes unsettling, often comic look at the experiences of birth, babies and baking. In the opening section, dressed in black hood and gown,

In "Out Of Hand", when the character "M" tries to use a potato masher, the audience can see it for what it is and at the same time see it has a personality of its own. Trying to separate these layers of seeing



Photo: Richard Buckley

ANNE FORBES IN MARMITE ECSTASIES

Over the years Anne Forbes has been moving away from having her puppeteer hidden behind a screen to exploring the relationship between puppeteer and puppet.

Her definition of the art has gradually evolved to the "animation of inanimate objects", where the whole field of animism (attributing inanimate forms with a living soul) is explored. Objects are invested with a life beyond that of the puppeteer, and an identity beyond that of the simple insentient 'thing'. With this perception puppetry becomes a tool for exploring areas of the psyche which can't be approached in the same way in straight theatre.

For her latest piece, "Out Of Hand", director Nick Blake took Forbes into a deep meditation during its scripting. "I was awake, but right into the subconscious. I verbalised the dream while he wrote it down, and asked me questions about it - like what are you wearing, how are you feeling, what's happening - so he could really understand it. His job was to pull all

a gigantic woman figure wrestles with kitchen utensils which take on minds of their own and she prepares a loaf in which the yeast seems as active as the baker. After a baby has been kneaded from the dough, the mother figure in the second section builds an elaborate amusement park out of hundreds of different sweets and chocolates for her child's birthday. The gold-covered, foetus-sized baby is kept on a perch in a canary's cage, but in rapid proportion to the mother's care, it grows away to leave the mother to die and re-emerge naked from the obese, eider-down quilted body she has taken on. Through this piece, Forbes has become far more interested in working with her own inner resources than taking a written script or finding a story that she can adapt for the stage. "Theatre d'Objets", which she was introduced to by French puppeteers, Philippe and Mary Genty of "Desirs Parade" fame, is well suited to delving into the subconscious, as objects can take on the emotions of the puppeteer. The art form has layers of meaning, and allows for free entry into the surreal and the bizarre.

can be part of the fascination of the production.

Even when there is a basic outline for a show, once Forbes starts playing and working with the objects needed for a scene, she finds that they have a language of their own. Following her training with Philippe and Mary Genty, she sees day to day objects in a different way, involuntarily investing them with a certain life. She finds herself drawn to certain objects; even when walking down the street, one will catch her eye and start her thinking of how it could be manipulated. Forbes found that her perception of objects also changed when she became a mother. "One enters into a world of play, creating interesting experiences for the child. It's a very creative process being a mother". Forbes prefers to say that "Out Of Hand" is a woman's perspective on certain experiences rather than a feminist one, but says "It has come from me, and I do have feminist politics, so they have probably influenced my experience and my way of seeing things".

She steers away from analysing the dream too closely, for the moment concerned simply with her interpretation of the symbols as they appear on the stage. She has been intrigued by audience response to her work; realising the images must tap

in on some subconscious level as well.

This aspect of performance must be far flung from the shows put on by the original professionals who left their legacy to the New Zealand Puppet Theatre. The NZPT began in 1984, when Forbes was commissioned under a PEP scheme to restore a puppet collection. The collection was donated by the Goodwin Marionette Theatre (which started up in the 30s and 40s), to the Auckland City Council.

The Goodwin Marionette Theatre was the first professional theatre company of any kind in New Zealand; when they disbanded their hope was that someone else would eventually revive the theatre. Dr Rodney Wilson from the Auckland City Art Gallery along with Anne, thought that there should be a permanent troupe set up to keep the puppets alive, rather than just restoring the marionettes and leaving them to catch borer and wood lice in some city council cupboard. The United Building Society was approached for sponsorship; and agreed; it now has regular funding from QEII Arts Council, enabling four fulltime workers to be employed permanently.

Educational programmes in kindergartens, schools, centres for the disabled and psychiatric units are a major aspect of NZPT's role in the community. Workshops are run for children and teachers, where the craft work and manipulative skills of puppetry are taught. The teaching scope in puppetry is vast: children learn coordination, but will also practise language skills and encounter new topics through the shows presented by the puppeteers.

Anne Forbes loves the workshop aspect of the NZPT. Working in psych hospitals with puppets gives people an opportunity to express themselves with a protective distance. For many people the idea that it is the puppet onstage, not themselves, can be incredibly liberating. "Because of the remove, they can say and do things they can't normally. We have worked in a large institution for intellectually handicapped people - time and time again we got the response from staff members, "Oh, we didn't know that person could talk". People would get up with a puppet and be really fluent, until then these people had elected to be mute. Basically they had been so disempowered in their lives that the only power they had was to choose not to speak.

On another occasion a girl had a puppet on her hand and she started talking about being touched. They investigated and found some person from outside the institution was breaking into the hostel at night and molesting this girl. She could only reveal the whole thing through the puppet.

Also people who are seemingly in a catatonic state will communicate through a puppet to another puppet, but won't make any eye contact with the other person."

Talking about how in a short space of time, children can become very attached

to a puppet character, and commenting on the strength of their belief in its life outside the puppeteer, Anne also confesses that, in a way, it can happen to the performer. "Especially if you're involved in making it, it's like giving birth to it. You invest it with its character and personality, and it's a terrible thing to see someone else use the puppet when you don't feel they capture the right personality - or even to have to leave the puppet behind can be hard.

"The NZPT is exploring so many new directions at the moment, that puppets are being made for every show. Once their 'season' is over, these are stored, or shown at the Museum of Puppets in Auckland. "It holds a different exhibition every year, aiming to show the various aspects of puppetry and puppets from different countries. It's quite an unusual idea for a culture to see puppets as for children only. A lot of the overseas puppets have a religious or spiritual significance. One from Vanuatu, for example, was used in male initiation rites. It is a rare piece, because they used to be burnt at the end of the ceremony. There is also a Maori puppet, which was used by women to teach the family their genealogy".

Finding people to play puppeteer is a complicated task. "A puppeteer needs all the acting skills that a professional actor needs, as well as manipulation skills; and we work with a variety of materials, from foam to wood to papier mache, rubber latex and plaster and clay, so you have to model and sculpt, as well as sew ... and build sets, fix things, and fix the van, and drive, and deal with kids and principals, be able to work in a closely knit group ... "the list is exhausting.

The Wellington season has been exhausting; packing in the set only one night before the opening performance, five hours' sleep, then more set work right up until the next evening. Audience response and the variety of professional theatre in Wellington, however, makes "Auckland ... a desert in comparison. "The suggestion of a relocation to the capital earns a sparkle. "In puppetry, anything's possible".



ANIMISTIC TUSSLES - OUT OF HAND

Reviewed by Paul Day (Waikato Times)

A Performance For Objects. Performed by Anne Forbes, directed by Nick Blake for the New Zealand Puppet Theatre.

Puppet performances keep alive a tradition as old as theatre itself - a valuable one in that they depend on an audience with a vigorously active imagination.

This particular show invests everyday kitchen objects with life.

It begins by portraying a series of animistic tussles between utensils and human operator.

Nick Blake and Anne Forbes have provided an effective initiation for spectators: a mysterious, sparsely furnished stage - all in black, low intensity lighting, hypnotic music, a darkly clad, slow-moving figure.

Like Alice emerging from the tunnel we emerge into light which reveals an absurd wonderland where a pierced spoon tyrannizes over its owner, and a potato masher disobeys orders.

Anne Forbes's continuing theme is woman's experience of creation both biological and culinary. Hence the leech-like dough that won't let go, and eventually forms itself into a baby, the jar of marmite enveloped in a nappy weighed and measured.

Anne Forbes's mastery of movement, expression, and timing, makes us smile - often makes us laugh outright.

When, in the second half she embarks on what is, in effect, a mother's meditation of time and change, she generates just as much laughter, but along with it a growing sense of pathos.

It is a triumph of minimalism: her control of rhythm, her metamorphosis in appearance, her expressive gestures, command the audience response.

This is unusual, highly disciplined theatre, well worth a visit.

RED MOLE'S COMRADE SAVAGE LESISLATIVE CHAMBER

by Norbert Hausberg

The performance in an old parliament building in Wellington took place a few days after the anniversary of Savage's death. Because Savage's voice must have been heard in these chambers so often in the past I found the venue was very appropriate for this play. It gave me a nice feeling and immediately a sense of history. The benches were filled with a collection of parliamentarians, bureaucrats and normal New Zealanders.

The whole play, though not always understood by myself due to a lack of historical knowledge of the time, had a lot of very powerful images that made me think about the time of Savage - the social situation and the turn of history that transformed "his" labour party, born out of the need of the times and the suppression of the working class, into the "yuppie" party it is today.

The need for social justice at the time was nicely translated and interwoven with Savage's life story and made me think about present times. It was a play about our history and a politician's life and although there was no obvious mentioning of the present political situation, I found it quite powerful political theatre in the context of the setting and the audience.

The most significant images for me were the moments where objects were incorporated into the play, for example, the three small wagons with the paper mache figures, the house that was busted and the costume with the figures sewn into it. The ease with which the performers could jump from people theatre to object theatre and back and be convincing was great - I enjoyed it a lot.

MATTER OF LIFE AND DEATH - POLYGLOT PUPPET THEATRE

Reviewed by Susan Lintern Coward

Directed by Ariette Taylor. Written by Helen Lunn and Ariette Taylor. Puppet Realisation by Philip Millar, Rob Matson and Mary Sutherland. Set Design by Trina Parker. Sound Track by Nigel Frayne.

Ariette Taylor and Polygot presented us with a show which tries to isolate the experience of another's death from the ritual ways of coping found by different religious cultures, by expressing only how one child lived it.

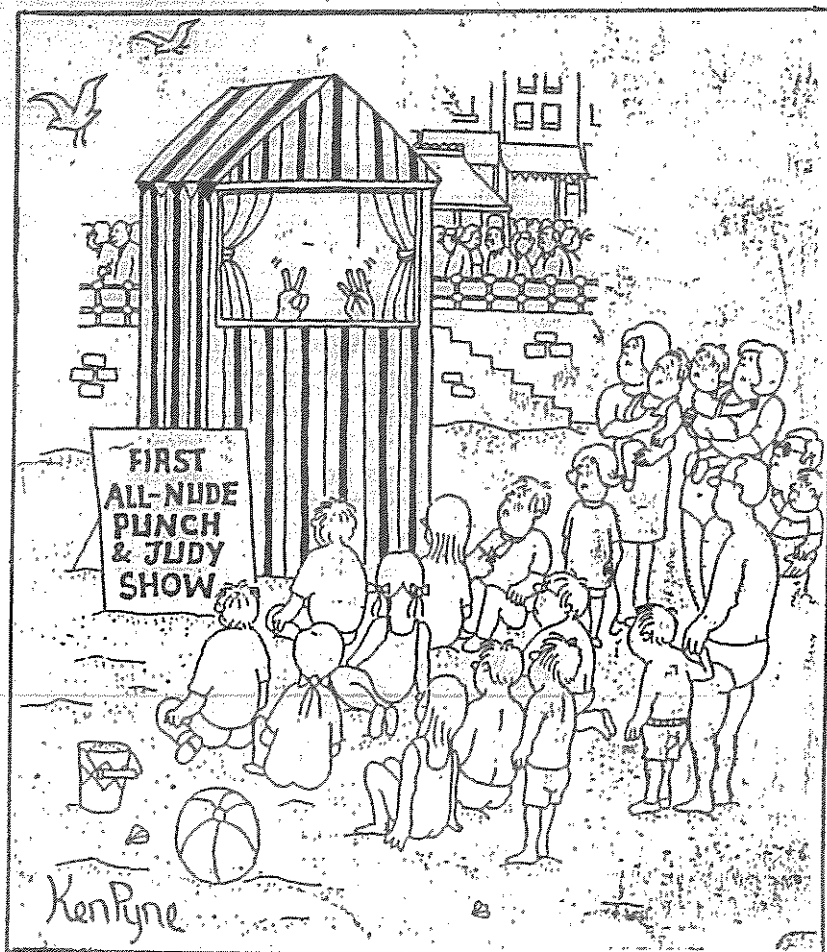
The structure of the play was nominally sequential, following Nicholas to his holiday at the beach, home again to learn of Charlie's death in a car crash, and finally back to school. This was interspersed with fragmentary episodes following the painful process by which Nicholas develops an acceptance that his friend is not coming back, except through his own memory and feelings.

The episodes centred on those objects which from a child's usual introduction to the concept of being dead; from war toys to a dead bird, a fish on a plate and maggots eating (thankfully) an apple. The soundscape of children chanting "When you die, you rot", expresses a robust playground appreciation of the matter, but this is no longer enough for Nicholas when he loses his best friend. Through him, the show asks, "What else?"

To prevent the piece being cold and abstract, merely a series of images of things that were alive and are now dead, it

was essential that we should be drawn into the heart and mind of Nicholas and make his journey with him. This had to happen despite the convention of distancing the puppet from its operator, and was a real test of the puppeteers' art. David Collins achieved it through the skill of his manipulation, but mostly because of the sheer intensity of his performance - making this piece of theatre exceptionally strong at a few key moments when Nicholas' extreme distress and grief came

follow-up work for teachers. The final product however, bears the distinctive style of Ariette Taylor, co-writer and director - and really doesn't try to do more than to show how ONE child coped. The symbols may be universal, but the impact of the journey is wholly a personal one. No attempt is made to ask that most unanswerable of questions, "Why did it have to happen?" other than in the strictly practical terms of "his father was driving into the sun and must have been blinded.



straight through the forest of symbols of Life and Death to catch at our hearts.

If I have dwelled too long on a description of the intricacies of this production, it is because I know many of you will not be able to see it, since this is a schools show, and probably a Melbourne Metropolitan one at that. But it is partly because this is TIE (or PIE) that it is remarkable - it certainly asks a great deal of the children in the audience; not just by dealing with an intractable subject, but doing so in an allusive manner and taking the risk that they will not understand everything on offer but still be sufficiently gripped to follow a long silent sequence in silence themselves.

I believe that it was Helen, one of the show's two credited writers, who originally conceived the production of a show which would help children come to terms with death, and to that end researched and compiled some very comprehensive

No-one really knows". Given the avowed intent of the company "Not to impinge on any cultural perception of the hereafter, but ... to facilitate discussion in the classroom", that was probably the only possible way.

Congratulations to all concerned for having the courage to present this - I think it is an important step in the evolution of puppetry for children.

TAKE HEART IN SIMPLE FANTASY - OUT OF MIND

Spare Parts Puppet Theatre - by Ron Banks, The West Australian

Parents often complain that kids these days lack creativity; that those grinning hyperactive comperes on the

Saturday morning TV shows have turned children into spiritless sponge, absorbing, rather than creating playtime images of their own. It is true that the stuff served up on so-called children's television programming is for the most part appalling rubbish, but parents take heart from such ventures as Spare Parts "Out Of Mind".

This little play, devised by Spare Parts with the help of children from Lance Holt Primary School, is an exercise in creativity of the gentlest, non-technological kind.

It will make parents think back on the wonders of childhood and leave young audiences with a good deal of satisfaction.

It is a simple one-act play about a nine year-old boy's trip into a fantasy world of his own imagination. Left alone in the school holidays, he has only his own creative resources to keep himself amused.

He stands at the front gate and imagines the letter box as a monster, he grapples with the newspaper which turns into a man-eater, a letter becomes a person by sticking two fingers down the envelope. When he pegs out the clothes the bright beach towels and the memory of his penfriend's trip to Hawaii send him into his own fantasy world of beaches and boating. In the cellar, PVC pipes become a periscope and a submarine.

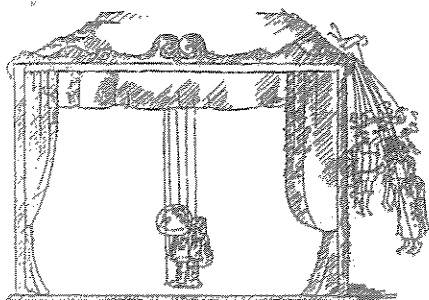
The boy played by Sean Masterson, is the only human character onstage, but he is able to fashion a funny, offbeat world of the imagination by the deft manipulation of everyday objects. To keep the invention bubbling along, Spare Parts adds some by-play with shadow puppets.

Director Peter Wilson says the play has been road-tested on various age groups and he's confident its appeal is mainly for seven to nine year-olds. It will be on offer to schools from this week.

One of the problems for schools is gaining objective information about the dozens of school drama works on offer each semester.

The more professional groups, such as Spare Parts, have previews for teachers, and in this case they have produced a winner.

And the irony is that they've done it in the simplest way possible. Who says children's drama needs to be full of expensive gee-whiz effects to be enjoyable?



Learning In Japan

A Three Month Puppetry Exchange by Rose Beauchamp

In 1988 when a group of us attended the UNIMA World Puppet Festival, I came home with many memories, and the images of Snow Woman, a production by Musubi-Za unreeling in my head. It was hard to forget, and when I learnt that money was available through the Education Department, I jumped at the chance to return to the scene.

So in October of the following year, with a grant from the NZ-Japan Exchange Programme, International Division, I headed back to Japan for three months. There were three aspects to the trip:

1. To learn from observation of the work of Musubi-Za, especially Yuki Onna (Snow Woman).

2. To perform my solo show "The Blue Shoe Show".

3. To research the connection between MAORI puppets and JAPANESE puppets. Before leaving I remade "The Blue Shoe Show", studied Japanese language and worried about the ambitiousness of my aims. But somehow it all fell into place!

MUSUBI-ZA ("to bind people together with love") is a professional puppet company of 55 members with SIX current shows ranging from kindergarten to adult theatre. It is situated on the outskirts of Nagoya with cabbages, orange groves, electric pylons and electric bullet trains surrounding it. Most of the company live nearby but they travel all over Japan performing. I saw all their work which is of a very high standard and acknowledged within Japan and overseas where they have been invited to perform twice, most recently for the Vancouver Children's Festival with "Monkey King". On joining the company, the puppeteers, sometimes with no previous experience of puppetry, enter immediately into making, rehearsing and performing shows. They have training in traditional dancing, games, voice and gymnastics and, as well, must learn a musical instrument. The Director, Mr Tange, is an ex-chef with a dedication to the work which pervades the whole company including the office staff, sewing women and production people.

YUKI-ONNA is a traditional Chinese story retold by Lafcadio Hearn in Japanese. It tells of a spirit woman - Snow Woman - who comes during a snow-storm and freezes a man to death. She pounces on his servant to devour him but falls in love and spares his life, with the proviso that he

must never speak of having seen her. She later returns to him in human form, marries him, has many children and even makes him a rich man with her expertise in making paper. He gambles and womanizes, and finally breaks his promise not to speak of her (not knowing that his wife, is in fact, Snow Woman). She turns back into her spirit self, vapourising into snow, and leaving the husband to care for 10 children. What drama!

This show is performed using puppets made with hard foam carved for heads, dressed in hand-made paper, rope joints and some simple mechanisms for moving hands etc. (a simplified Bunraki style). One or two operators are used depending on the action. The characters are both within the puppets (from the maker) and highly developed through manipulation. The puppets seemed to quiver and breathe with life.

During the rehearsal, puppeteers and the director worked closely with a teacher of classical Japanese dance to refine all movements precisely to express love, jealousy, the rowing of a boat, the serving of tea etc. Japanese people work to perfection and our "She'll be right" attitude was never in evidence.

Yuki-Onna is staged with a narrator/shamisen player, a magnificent performer who also works in Kabuki and Bhuto. The puppeteers work closely with him so that their timing is perfectly attuned to him. Two comic characters, as well, give light relief to the high drama.

I observed the rehearsal period of two weeks which was followed by performance in Nagoya itself. Later, I travelled to the South of Japan to see a week's season in Fukuoka of "Yuki-Onna". It was performed not only for adult audiences but also for Oyako Geki Jo groups. This is a national group for promoting theatre amongst Japanese children. It was snowing outside and snowing in the show. Snow falls from a plain black box and is made from fine Japanese paper cut into tiny triangles - this way it falls best. Every performance was as captivating as the first time I had seen it! I began to see further levels of puppet performance, both in the resonance of the story, its universality, and also the place of work within the culture. This was made even more evident when I started to perform "The Blue Shoe Show". I'll write about this in the next issue!

Pekan Wayang

Indonesian

5th Tahun

Part 2 Daniel Rehorek

Right upon its heels come the Wayang Kulit Betawi in the theatre opposite in the TIM Complex. Betawi is a much more traditional and primitive style from Java, complete with flickering oil lamp. The excerpt involved two humorous dialogues between the gods and then between the god-like clown characters Gareng and Petruk. Your Bahasa vocabulary is certainly stretched to its limits here, although I'm still not too sure why the gods were animatedly discussing chickens at one stage.

After the midday pause came the mysteriously titled Wayang Sandosa. This had to be the highlight of the festival. It is a new variant on the Wayang kulit, where a large ensemble works together actually using the shadows of the wayang kulit. Coupled with a dozen coloured spotlights, some reflectors, taped narration and impeccable timing they produced a dazzling effect. On the giant screen shapes and sizes of all dimensions whirled across dramatically in a breath-taking display that almost had the Japanese tourists stop their incessant photo taking with flashlights, but not quite.

I thoroughly recommend this troupe for western audiences, they have succeeded in combining the traditional and the modern with perfection. Next was the first of three English spoken Wayang performances, a novelty at the Wayang festival. Any initial misgivings about Americans (or other non-Indonesians) attempting to be dalangs proved to be correct. The fact simply stated is that anyone with money enough to come and live for several years in Java for the studying is not very likely to be a puppeteer to begin with. The Doctor of Musicology proved this point rapidly, she espoused no particular talent in the dramatic arts. And since in a Wayang Golek/rod puppet the dalang's face is visible, her lack of self-control and contorted features spoilt the whole show. (She needs to read Obraztsov on how to channel her feelings into the puppet itself, where they belong). She threw in whole armfuls of risqué jokes in Bahasa which the audience as usual enjoyed, but it was ultimately nothing more than amateur performance. That I don't mind, but it shouldn't be part of a major festival. And one can see that she isn't going to devote her life to this either, but go off on another

piece of asiatic study or the like. And to make matters worse, the fierce troupe from the isle of Lombok didn't appear and their awaited performance was cancelled.

The third day resumed with more kulit, this time the Wayang Wahyu, the special wayang devoted to Christian stories. The Indonesians simply adapt everything to their needs, and this shortened version of King Herod and the slaughter of the Innocents certainly took on a new aspect for me. The lady dalang dispensed with the considerable sections of talking that playing the Bible entails, had a quick fight between one of the three kings and a completely unidentifiable devil and then had little puppets of babies being brutalized by Herod's army. Wild, astounding, but done in good taste.

Not surprisingly the Wayang Wahyu went overtime and we only saw part of the following performance of Wayang Kulit Sunda from Bogor. The monkey Hanuman was busily bowing to all the assembled nobles and by that stage the next performance was due to begin. Talk about a tight schedule!

The next English spoken (Wayang Ingriss) performance was the best of the three foreigners, Wayang Kulit Purwa by the American Marc Hoffman. Although he has a way to go to reach the standards of the Indonesian Masters, his manipulation was competent and it was a pleasant change to be able to follow all the dialogues. By the end of the 90 minutes he was rapidly running out of gas, and had to stagger to the finish before exhaustion claimed him. Still, his rendition of the Pandavas in hiding was cohesive and although an experienced Indonesian audience might regard him as a novelty, for an initiated western public he is more than suitable.

And that turned out to be it for the third day, the Wayang Kulit from Cirebon failed to materialize and the overnight performance of Wayang Kulit Purwas was located outside, seating available on the ground in the organization (just take one look at Jakarta), but in lieu of all their other gifts it doesn't seem to matter.

The next day came an early performance of 'real' Wayang Golek, from a cycle of stories unknown to me. Never mind that you were never sure who was who, the handling was excellent by the experienced dalang, and the story of revenge is easy to

follow in due course. A top notch performance, and they didn't print the dalang's name in the guide book! Following was Wayang Kulit Banjar, another of the older and more traditional styles, and the dalang proved to be the wildest of them all, at one stage one of the rods from the hands flew off his puppet in all that furious action. Not skipping a beat he continued merrily on his way. Mystifying and rivetting.

Another cancellation, Wayang Sadat (now I'll probably never know what it was meant to be!) had a hasty note scrawled on the door, and the Wayang Orang dance wasn't to figure either. That group had been heard rehearsing furiously all week, I can only suppose they never managed to make it all in time. The last of the three Wayang Ingriss was to be Wayang Kulit bali, and this fellow was probably even worse than the grinning musicologist. One could see that he had immersed himself fully in the philosophy and ideology of the Balinese wayang, but he certainly couldn't do anything with the puppets! That is the difference, the Indonesians can do the theory, but they can also do the practical side of puppetry. That was really a very dull performance without ever threatening to show signs of skillful manipulation.

And then we learnt, scrawled on the festival poster with a pen, that a replacement for the Wayang Orang had been arranged, Wayang Kulit Yogyakarta. In typical fashion, out of chaos came a masterful performance of the traditional, with the pandava hero Bhima going about and demolishing rakshasa/demons left, right and centre.

Closing day of the festival, with ceremonies at the Presidential palace, we had to forego as our flight was leaving that day. Two impressions made the biggest impact on me at the Festival, that the Indonesians always manage in brilliant fashion to update the Wayang (viz. Wayang Sandosa) so that it will certainly be around for years to come. Also, that the dalangs are foremost puppeteers of first rank who are fully versed in the amazing mysticism that accompanies the Wayang epics. And if the puppeteers from the rest of the world could get together meaningfully with them, then the exchange of ideas and techniques both ways would be vast.

1990 Playwrights Conference

Canberra 18th - 21st April 1990 As part of the National Playwrights' Conference this year a national workshop to introduce leading Australian Playwrights to the medium of puppet theatre was held over four days in Canberra. Writers Clem Gorman (WA), Andrea Lemon (Victoria), John Romeril (Victoria), Richard Tulloch (NSW), Peter Copeland (NSW), Peta Murray (NSW), Mary Hutchinson (ACT), Hilary Benton (Qld), Verity Loughton (SA), Susanna Spinner (NT), Heather Nimmo (WA), Mary Morris (WA), Ken Kelso (WA), Justin Fleming (NSW), worked alongside representatives of Australia's major puppet theatre Spare Parts (WA), Handspan (Victoria), Sydney Puppet Theatre (NSW), Queensland Theatre of Marionettes (Qld), Terrapin Puppet Theatre (Tasmania), Carousel (SA), Polyglot (Victoria), Skylark Theatre (ACT). Noriko Nishimoto and Peter Wilson represented Spare Parts at the conference.

The workshop has created an ongoing forum for writers and puppeteers and in the next few years as a result of this first workshop many of Australia's major playwrights will be seen working within the art form. The conference sought to define the processes for writers wanting to work in the artform. It has long been a practise for puppeteers to write their own material. Spare Parts Puppet Theatre has had a long history in assisting and developing writing for the artform.

Tintookies Came to Town

Spare Parts Theatre

The Tintookies came to town. Watching the magic cast by these mythical creatures were two young boys in Hobart. How they dreamed of one day being up there on the stage creating the same illusions to an audience. Dreams do come true and at least one of those young boys watching that day was to be onstage ten years later working in

that company and indeed was to go on to become one of Australia's finest solo puppeteers. The other boy, whilst not ever working in the Tintookies was to follow a path that would push him to the limits of the artform. Dreams do indeed come true.

I am now asked what my dreams and aspirations are for my artform after the year 2000. I could well answer that many of my dreams still haven't come true for the 20th century. But if you don't dream, then you can never have a dream come true.

Looking forward to the 21st century I hope our artform is still dreaming. They will be different dreams to the ones we have all been dreaming over the past thirty years.

The world is changing around us. One of the dreams for puppet theatre was for it to be a vehicle for the telling of the stories of our place and time; as I write I see that happening around me, but I am also aware that our place is changing. Australia over the next twenty years will experience a huge change in our population mix. With those immigrants, will come new skills, old traditions and a different way of thinking. This will all be absorbed into our art. Over the past two hundred years we have gone from a mixed society of white Anglo-Saxon and Aboriginal Australians to one of the most multi-cultural nations on earth. We already see Japanese, Indonesian, Indian, Chinese, Czechoslovakian and Romanian puppeteers working in our companies. What will the mix be in the next two hundred years?

The artform WILL BE WITH US. It will survive. Already we are experiencing a renaissance, much the same as the artform had one from time to time over the past 2000 years. Our greater population base will provide more work - possibly work of a different kind as the artform finds its place. Television, videos and other media not yet invented will add variety to our existing places of work. More and more Australians, no matter what their ethnic background are moving out into the space that our continent provides - outdoor performance could become much more a part of our artform as they already do in China, India and Indonesia.

The most important aspect of our artform that must be carried forward, are its traditions. Our art will undergo considerable change, but change can only occur if there is a solid tradition upon which to base that change. I hope we do not see a dilution of skill, a dilution of resources. Our society works at such a pace that it often does not provide enough time for a resource to fully develop. Lets dream form for time - more creative time to develop our art.

I am constantly reminded of the "miracle" that occurs in puppetry - that of creating the animate from the inanimate. That is the essence of puppetry. Its not mechanized dolls or animated cartoons but that miracle quality which allows us to suspend our disbelief for a moment when

that solid lump of wood, plastic, metal or paper take on a life of its own. We the passengers to the 21st century must carry this with us so that future generations can experience a suspension of disbelief that epitomizes the reality of their world or whisks them away to a place of their dreams.

Our future world will provide more leisure for society. We must equip ourselves to make full use of that leisure.



69 Professor Hoffman's instructions for home puppet-making, 1879.

List of International Puppet Festivals 1990

Making Unima User Friendly

CHARLEVILLE-MEZIERES, FRANCE

16.6 - 23.6 International Meeting of Schools of Puppetry, 7 Place Winston Churchill, 08000 Charleville-Mezieres.

BEKESCSABA, HUNGARY 25.6 - 30.6 IX Festival of International Marionettes. Luth u.6., H - 5600- Bekescsaba.

TEHERAN, IRAN 13.7 - 19.7 2nd International Puppet Theatre Festival of Teheran. The Centre of Dramatic Arts, Vahdat Hall, Hafez Avenue, Teheran.

MEXICO, MEXICO 20.7 - 29.7 Tercer International Festival of Puppet Theatre. Herchel No 26, 11590 Mexico.

PERNAMBUCO, BRAZIL 21.7 - 22.7 Exhibition of Marionettes and 'Namulengos'. Madame Armia Escobar, Rua Jose Osorio 124, 50711 - Recife - Pernambuco.

PERNAMBUCO, BRAZIL 16.7 - 18.8 International Courses of Marionettes at Recife. Madame Armia Escobar, Rua Jose Osorio 124, 50711 - Recife - Pernambuco.

ZAGREB, YUGOSLAVIA 31.8 - 4.9 International Puppet Festival (PIF). International Cultural Centre, Postbox 499, Amruseva 5/1, YU - 41000 - Zagreb.

BOCHUM, WEST GERMANY 13.10 - 21.10 International Puppet Festival (FIDENA). German Institute for Puppetry, Hattinger Str 467, 4630 - Bochum 1.

BRATISLAVA, CZECHOSLOVAKIA

22.10 - 28.10 'Scenicka Zatva 1990'. The Theatrical Gathering. Ivica Czabalova, UNIMA Slovak Section, Pugacevovo 2, 81357 - Bratislava.

MISTELBACH, AUSTRIA 23.10 - 28.10 12. International Puppet Festival of Mistelbach. UNIMA Centre, Austria, Klaus Behrendt, President, 3 Invalid enstrasse, 1030 - Vienna OR Ludwig Kronsteiner, Hauptplatz 6, A - 2130 Mistelbach.

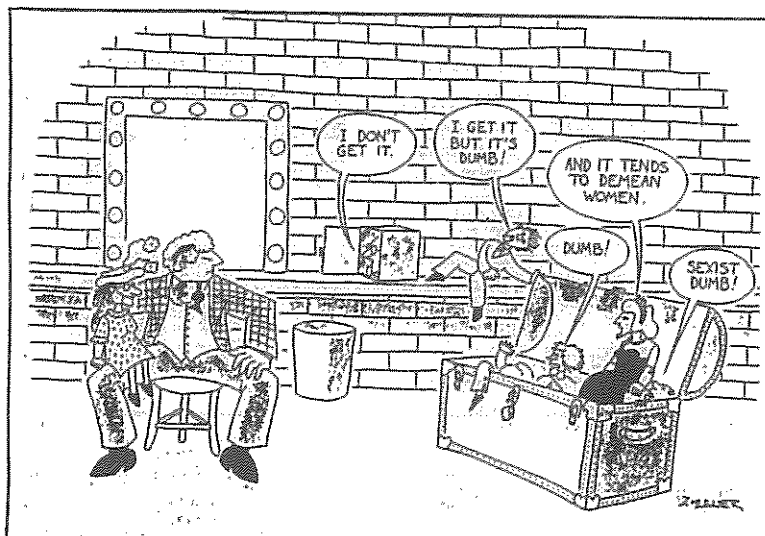
BRATISLAVA, CZECHOSLOVAKIA 28.10 - 2.11 Professional Marionette Theatre of Slovaks. Ivica Ozabalova, UNIMA Slovak Section, Pugacevova2, 81357 - Bratislava.

OSLO, NORWAY 9.11 - 12.11 Symposium for Marionettes in Education at Oslo. Teatersentrum, Nordal Brunsgr 13, 0165 - Oslo - 1.

SEOUL, KOREA Date not decided exactly. Festival of Marionettes to commemorate the 10th anniversary of UNIMA/KOREA. Mm. Jeung-la Oh, c/o UNIMA-Korea, 327-9 Seokyo-Dong, Mapo-Ku, Seoul.

The Unima Council

1. According to the Register of Members the General Secretary confirms how many deputies from one country can sit on the UNIMA Council.
2. The Council sitting according to the terms of the Constitution, elects a Chairman and a Vice Chairman who conduct the meetings of the UNIMA Council until the Executive Committee is elected. After the election, the President and the Vice President of UNIMA take over the duties of the Chairman and Vice Chairman of the Council.
3. The election of the auditing Committee takes place after the election of the Executive Committee.
4. The election of the Executive Committee and of the Auditing Committee is carried out in the following manner:
 - a) The election of the Executive Committee may be carried out in two stages. The UNIMA Council decides, if necessary, how many members have to be elected in the first stage. The remaining members will be elected in a possible second stage in which the total should not surpass 15 to 18.
 - b) Every member of the UNIMA Council has the right to propose candidates for the Executive Committee and the Auditing Committee. These nominations are all incorporated in a list. With this list in mind, each member of the Council fills in his own voting slip, taking into account principles of parity and the maximum number of members of the Executive Committee and the Auditing Committee. All names must be written in capital letters and in the latin alphabet.
 - c) Candidates on the list who are present should express their assent or dissent to nomination and if they are elected they should promise to fulfil their obligations conscientiously. The same is, of course, true of the candidates for the Auditing Committee.
 - d) The UNIMA Council is obliged to examine whether the constitutional conditions for nomination of the candidates to the list of candidates have been fulfilled.



e) The organization of the election is the task of the Electoral Committee, the members of which are not on the electoral list.

f) Those candidates are elected who have the highest number of votes, which must, however, amount to at least a quarter of the total of the votes cast. In a possible second stage of election, this stipulation does not apply.

5. The UNIMA Council informs the Congress of the result of the election. When these results are made known, the number of votes cast - both for the elected and unelected candidates both for the Executive Committee and the Auditing Committee has to be declared.

The Executive Committee and the General Secretariat

1. The date and place for the meetings of the Executive Committee are decided by the Executive Committee. The General Secretary, with the consent of the President, calls the meetings.

2. The Executive Committee is entitled to appoint special Committees for dealing with special tasks which the Congress, or the UNIMA Council, or the Executive Committee have decided should be carried out. Members of the Executive Committee may take part in meetings of these Committees.

3. The meetings of the Executive Committee are not public (except for UNIMA Council members; see paragraph 9 section 6 of the Statutes). The President, however, may invite other people to the meeting as may be required.

4. If a member of the Executive Committee retires the unelected candidate with the highest number of votes at the last election takes his place.

5. The General Secretary is responsible for the work carried out by the Secretariat. He is continually in contact with the President. He is entitled to sign current correspondence. Very important correspondence is signed by him in association with the President. He reports to the Executive Committee on the activity of the General Secretariat. He submits the budget of the General Secretariat for approval to the Executive Committee. He supervises the budget of UNIMA and has to account for this to the Congress and the Executive Committee. He is in contact with the National Centres, the Representatives and the Committees. He coordinates all UNIMA activities, and publishes the UNIMA Bulletin. He is in charge of UNIMA publicity, the list of members, and the central archives. He makes arrangements for Congresses and meetings of the Executive Committee.

The Auditing Committee

1. The Auditing Committee has three functions. It reports its views on the financial measures undertaken by the General Secretariat, and examines the books of accounts.

2. The members of the Auditing Committee are entitled to take part in the

meetings of the Executive Committee. Subject to the consent of the Chairman, each member of the Auditing Committee has the right to inspect the books and inform himself regarding the management of the funds of UNIMA at anytime.

National Centres and Representatives

1. Normally all members of UNIMA living in any country are members of that national Centre unless they have informed the General Secretary that, for very important reasons, they prefer to be direct members of UNIMA.

2. The Chairman of the National Centres and the Representatives are obliged to forward all UNIMA information and newsletters to their members.

3. The National Centres are obliged to inform the General Secretary by February 28th of any year of their activities during the past year and their plans for the current year. They must also inform the General Secretary of new and lapsed members.

The Language of Discussion

A National Centre or an organization which arranges a UNIMA meeting of any kind is, in principle, obliged to provide interpreters for all the authorised languages.

Financial Measures

1. The membership subscriptions are sent once a year to the central bank account of UNIMA and this must be done by March 31st of the current year.

2. In exceptional cases a National Centre can ask the Executive Committee for a reduction in the subscription or for a delay in payment.

3. In countries without National Centres the members of UNIMA send their subscriptions either directly to the General Secretariat or through the Representative. When the Representative collects these membership subscriptions and sends them to the central bank account of the General Secretariat he subtracts, with the consent of the General Secretary, all the administrative expenses he has incurred in connection with UNIMA, but not exceeding 25% of the total.

The Master

by David Collins

It's a dusty staircase. I'm used to it, though. I've visited Geppetto countless times and it's always the same. Housekeeping's not one of his concerns, he doesn't see the point of it. I must admit, the dust isn't out of place here, it's almost expected. The entire building hasn't seen much maintenance over the years. It's one of those buildings that you could never imagine as new. Either it was built this way in the first place - complete with dust - or its youth was so short-lived that it's but a memory from a far-distant past. A bit like Geppetto, really. No one knows how old he is. He's been building puppets for as long as I can remember and he's always been old. Of course, he was a lot older when I was a child. I wonder if he's like Merlin, King Arthur's magician, who lived his life backwards. I must ask him one day. But not today! Today I have more pressing matters on my mind. I hope he's in a good mood. He gets impatient with my questions if something is bothering him - like Pinocchio going missing again. You'd think he'd be used to silly questions with Pinocchio around. He says I should know better at my age. At my age! Indeed! Just because I'm thirty-five doesn't mean I know everything.

It's a long staircase, isn't it? Do you want a rest? I wonder what he's working on today. I'm always amazed at his work. Since he gave up making marionettes he has experimented with all sorts of things. And he won't use power-tools. I keep telling him that we're living in 1990 so he doesn't have to do everything by hand anymore but he won't listen. He still uses wood too. I remember when I brought one of my puppets made out of foam-rubber and latex to show him, he just stared at it. His already rosy cheeks went quite red, his eyes watered, and then he burst out giggling. Giggling, mind you! An old man giggling like a teenage girl. I still don't know what was so funny. He wouldn't stop giggling long enough to tell me. I ended up leaving in disgust and he's always avoided the topic ever since. I can't hear him whistling. Perhaps he IS in a bad mood. I wonder why the door's closed. He usually works with the door open. The door's only ever closed when . . . Dam! Pinocchio HAS gone missing again. It looks like we'll have to come back another time. We'll just catch our breath for a minute and then start down the stairs again. Did you want to say something?



Script Development Grants:

By David Collins,
Director of WIDARTJI

(For WIDARTJI, In Particular) A Workshop with Polyglot Puppet Theatre

As a long-standing (and long-suffering puppeteer), I must applaud the Australia Council for its policy of offering Script Development Grants for new projects. Puppetry in Australia, and indeed throughout the world, has been thwarted in its evolution as an art-form by the death of good, workable, and socially relevant scripts. Whereas mainstream theatre has ever-expanding wealth of accumulated works at its disposal, the puppetry larder is bare. Who can name a puppet play that has become a classic piece of theatre? Where are the playwrights writing specifically for this medium? More often than not, puppet theatre is distinguished more for its production values than the content or quality of its scripts. Perhaps the reason lies in the visual nature of the art form - it is not primarily word-based. In my fourteen years as a professional puppeteer, I have seldom started rehearsals with a finished script. The shows usually evolved through workshopping in the rehearsal period, and the result was invariably structurally flawed, with themes and/or story lines muddled and ill-conceived, and exhibiting a distinct lack of stylistic unity. As a bulk of puppet theatre is in the realm of children's theatre, there has been little incentive to explore alternative means of script-creation - after all, who takes children's theatre seriously?

Luckily, the Australia Council does. Polyglot Puppet Theatre had a dream of commissioning Jack Davis to write a puppet play for children around the theme of environmental protection from the perspective of a living Aboriginal culture. Jack was interested, but concerned that he had little exposure to puppet theatre and no experience in writing for it. He wrote three drafts of WIDARTJI, a new Dreamtime story, with revisions based on suggestions and guidelines given by the artistic team at Polyglot Puppet Theatre. By the time the third draft was complete, the play was looking very strong - the story-line was logical and dramatically exciting, the characters were interesting, and the theme well-defined. The draft was essentially a sequence of events; there was little dialogue, the emphasis being on visual communication.

Using the third draft as our starting-point, Polyglot conducted a three-week workshop in January courtesy of a Script Development Grant that the Australia Council had so generously and wisely allocated. The aim of the workshop was to develop this draft into a tight, workable script in the context of the proposed production. The director, the writer, a dramaturg, four performers, and a team of puppet-builders were assembled to

participate in the workshop. In the first week we very roughly blocked the script as it stood with the aid of a set cobbled-together from past Polyglot productions. This process enabled the director and the performers to establish how the script flowed, where there were illogicalities or confusing sections, and where dialogue maybe needed. It also assisted in identifying any technical difficulties in the staging and illuminated how the puppets and set should be technically designed and constructed to best serve the demands of the script. We performed this rough version for the writer, the dramaturg, and the puppet-builders and discussed our discoveries. In the second week we started again from scratch. The puppet-builders began making proto-type puppets for our experimentation, while the rest of us set about analysing the script in fine detail - the writer's intent, the director's interpretation dynamics, character development, clarity of story-line, thematic strength, etc. The dramaturg was an invaluable asset in this endeavour, mediating between the writer and the director. The performers improvised dialogue which was then re-shaped by the writer and the dramaturg. By the end of this very intense and exhausting second week we had developed what we believed was the definitive script. The third week was the proof of the pudding. We re-blocked the revised manuscript and then performed it to an invited audience of puppetry colleagues, informed friends, and a small group of children. The feedback was very positive, with the few reservations relating more to the staging than the script itself.

The importance of such script-development workshops in puppetry cannot be overstated. The technical nature of the art-form dictates that a script and its visual realization evolve simultaneously. Both the writer and the production team benefit from this process: proven writers, who may or may not have had experience writing for puppetry, can glean a greater insight into the intricacies and idiosyncracies of this form of theatre; the production team can make important staging decisions, and solve technical problems well in advance of the rehearsal period. This will inevitably save time, money, and much frustration, which must surely lead to a higher standard of production of a better-quality script.

The Australian Council has shown long-sightedness in the implementation of the Development Grant policy and may it reap a harvest!

Puppet Script

RESOURCE GOING TO WASTE

by Andrew Hansen

Puppeteers need scripts. Scripts cost big bucks. The SALAMANCA NATIONAL SCRIPT RESOURCE CENTRE is in Hobart to serve Australasian puppeteers.

Many tried and true puppetry scripts are devised at great expense to individuals and companies. After a run in repertoire, they are abandoned at great cost too.

The SALAMANCA NATIONAL SCRIPT RESOURCE CENTRE was established in 1980. It is based in Salamanca Place, in Hobart, Tasmania, adjacent to TERRAPIN PUPPET THEATRE and SALAMANCA THEATRE COMPANY.

This script resource aims to service Australian writers and performers in the area of youth performing arts. By creating a national archive, the SNRC preserves a wide range of plays, and makes them available to the public.

The process is this. Completed scripts, whether published or final writer's drafts, are lodged with the SCRIPT CENTRE. A catalogue of scripts is circulated, giving details of each script including cast size, length, age group of audience and a brief synopsis.

Upon application, individual scripts can be sent to subscribers. Published scripts are available at recommended retail price plus postage, while unpublished scripts cost photocopying, postage & handling (usually around \$0.28). Loan copies are available to subscribers for - \$1.02 plus postage.

At present, ten puppetry scripts are lodged with the SNRC. These include scripts by L. Peter Wilson & SPARE PARTS, Roy McNeil, Orrie Gardner and Andrea Lemon. John Lonie's KULLENER is also available.

Performance ready scripts should be sent to Hobart. They should be well typed and presented for easy copying. To efficiently promote and advertise each script the following information should be included:

- * a brief synopsis
- * estimated length of play in minutes
- * age of target audience
- * number in cast
- * any other relevant information
- * availability of follow up material, audio cassettes of music, videos etc.

Authors are requested to give their signed permission for work to be reproduced & sent out.

Purchasers of scripts are advised that copyright and royalty details and permission to perform, must be obtained from the author.

The author is notified when his/her script is sent out. Authors may withdraw a script or substitute a revised version at anytime, if they wish.

Low cost subscriptions are welcomed. The subscriber receives a complete catalogue containing 100's of plays, a quarterly newsletters, and various discounts.

The SALAMANCA NATIONAL SCRIPT CENTRE is funded by the Performing Arts & Literature Boards of the Australia Council, the Act Government through its Arts Development Board, the Government of W.A. through the Department of the Arts, the Northern Territory Government through the Office of the Arts & Cultural Affairs & the N.S.W. Government Ministry for the Arts.

Enquires should be directed to JENNIFER BEITH, Administrator, on (002) 23-4675 or Fax 24-0245. The address is 77 Salamanca Place, Hobart 7000.

Paperbag Funding

by Andrew Hansen

State funding for the Paperbag Theatre Company of South Australia is currently under review. Karel and Eva Rehorek's puppet company has operated in SA for over 18 years. The family based company is the third largest client of the newly structured SA Youth Arts Board (SAYAB).

Faced with an immediate 30% funding cut at Christmas 1989, the Paperbags have continued to rehearse two new shows for 1990. A third community orientated show has had to be abandoned for the time being. Performances at the 1990 Adelaide Festival were minimal due to the crisis.

The Conditions of Review were supplied to Manipulation by the Rehoreks. This public document states: The Youth Arts Advisory Committee believe that Paperbag does not satisfy the following assessment criteria for General Purpose Grants.

Is this programme exciting? Will it stimulate audience/participants through interesting and innovative themes and techniques?

Has the organisation demonstrated commitment to the pursuit of high standards of artistic achievement and management performance?

YAAC advises Paperbag to address the following issues:

1. Paperbag must make changes to its current artistic policy. Aspects Paperbag should consider are:

- * to incorporate interesting and innovative forms of puppetry into its artistic program.
- * to involve in new projects professional designers, composers, and other artists from outside the present company structure.
- * to demonstrate evidence of the relevance of shows to the contemporary values and interests of young people.
- * to present the program to the youth community outside the school system.

2. Steps should be taken to expand Paperbag's support base. Paperbag should seek private sponsorship and/or support from other Government agencies (eg The Australian Council).

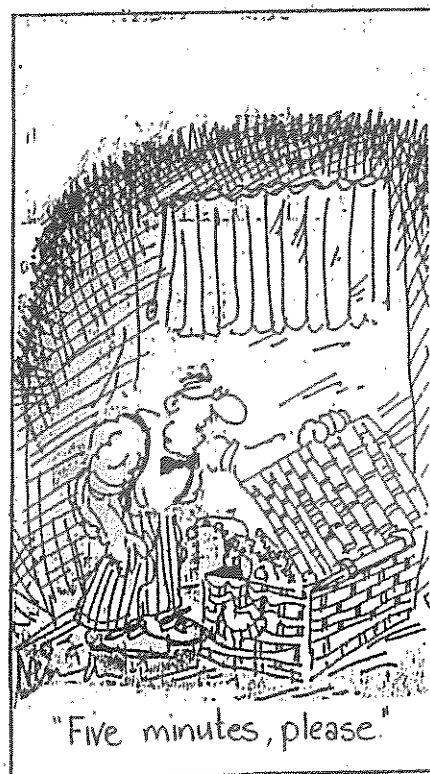
3. Paperbag should take steps to extend its contact with the broader youth arts community through the dissemination of its skills and knowledge.

A letter writing campaign to state bodies, the Premier, Mr Bannon, unions and schools has begun. According to the company, Carclew Youth Arts Centre has been unresponsive to their letters.

Paul Smith, Director of Carclew, said he feared for any company which gains 100% of its funding from one source in the current political and economic climate facing arts organizations.

The "conflict of interest" question of one of the members of the assessment panel reviewing the Paperbags was not felt to be a problem. Mr Smith said most companies welcome "free access to peer group assessment". He indicated there is "no distinction in performance areas" in SA's youth arts funding priorities. Monies withdrawn from one company are not

automatically allocated to other companies working in the same discipline. The Paperbag funding loss may not directly benefit a rival puppet company. The YAAC seeks evidence by 31 December 1990 of significant and constructive action to address the issues raised if funding is to be continued in 1991. Eva Rehorek writes: We are not about to lie down and die: artists are stubborn people at the best of times.



Ki-Yi Mbock Theatre of Abidjan - God Thing

by Werewere-Liking

The experience of the Ki-Yi Mbock Theatre of Abidja or opening onto the human puppet.

The Ki-Yi Mbock Theatre was born in 1985 in Abidjan (Cote d'Ivoire). It is part of the Ki-Yi Group - a private group consisting of a cooperative of 15 artists of all types: actors, writers, producers, painters, sculptors, dancers, choreographers, musicians and singers.

The group is trying out an experiment in professionalism, taking their inspiration from the methods of traditional actors, ie. by 'inventing daily the methods of its action, in a context where no structure exists enabling an artist to reach a professional level, unless he belongs to a national theatre.

The group lives in a place called the Ki-Yi Villa whose purpose is to be a centre for

cultural exchanges. As well as the room necessary for the artists, the villa has a gallery space which exhibits not only their creations but also all the ancient and modern arts which may participate in the movement of cultural rebirth and revival of which the Ki-Yi Mbock Theatre is part. Three spaces - terraces - garden are used for a stage. At least twice a week (Wednesday and Thursday), the group meets its public with shows of tales and 'café-theatre' followed by African gastronomic dinners, cooked by the group itself.

Shows are also given outside the villa, in yards, concessions, or in private homes for marriages, christenings, funerals or any other ceremonies where the solidarity of the groups is evident, in the manner of traditional artists.

God Thing is the third show created by the Ki-Yi Mbock Theatre (April 1987, French Cultural Centre in Abidjan). Production: Werewere Liking, assisted by Bomiou mama-dou. With: Rod puppets, percussions of water and fire, the languages and the dances of the gods and authentic malipuppets.

Content: A mad woman joins the parish choir and goes to rehearsals. But the choir changes before her astonished eyes into a chaos which swallows up singers and officiators to turn them into god and devil Adama and Awa, beings and animals from the first days of creation. A priest confesses her about these sacrilegious visions.

He also becomes metamorphosed into the tree of knowledge of good and evil and proclaims himself 'eye witness of the beginnings' and tells her of the Genesis in his own way: the birth of gods and devils, man: image of god and devil, the dealings between them, power jealousy. But also love, temptation and aspiration.

The mad woman (poor Nemy) wonders who is god and who is devil, who is creature and who is creator, who is manipulating who? The human puppet? The god puppet? A mad satire on the human visions of God which could explain the tepidness and the death of faith. It's as if we were making a robot portrait of God, from subconscious images which all humans have of Him. A juxtaposition of unlikely and contradictory ideas made extreme in the mind of the mad woman by a mixture of narrative and dream.

Reflection: The experience of the Ki-Yi Mbock Theatre or the opening onto the Human Puppet. The experience of the Ki-Yi Mbock Theatre started from a reflection on a certain 'philosophy' which comes from the Malian puppet. These puppets are not always articulated. They only become puppets when they are 'inhabited by their manipulator'.

So, who is the creator, who is the creature?

Who is the manipulated, who manipulates?

Who is flesh, who is spirit? Who is the initiator, who is initiated?

The Ki-Yi Mbock Theatre wondered about these questions in 1985 already. And the reply was laconic: 'The Human Puppet'. It is this path of exploration which they tried to continue with their new performance 'God Thing'.

The vision of this fixed puppet, which could not be moved by a chance breath of wind and which can only articulate and move by the articulations and the movements of its 'manipulator' has led the Ki-Yi Mbock Theatre to a rather anguished questioning about the relationship between creators (God or Man) and creatures (men or puppets).

The approach to the relationship between God and Man does not appear to be different from the relationship between men and puppet in conception of Powers today, whether political or religious.

In this end of century, when power wants to be spontaneously absolute, always tending towards dictatorship, more especially in the context of 'poor countries', the liberty of the individual is so little regarded that he can be compared quite naturally to an unarticulated puppet, only animated by the impulsion and the directions of those 'higher' than him.

Indeed, the puppet seems to have been created precisely to undertake nothing on its own. It has not been created with impulsions and personal needs. It has neither the wish nor the possibility to move itself, nor consciousness of movement. It is therefore absolutely incapable of assuming the responsibility for its movements (*) as all these qualities were reserved for the creator, for the one who has the power: 'We could even say that the creature has only been made for the needs and pleasures of the creator. To enable the creator to constantly 'exercise his wits' to find the best means of making his creature more beautiful, to train him, educate him, teach him, develop him, perfect him, in short, to bring him to life, (*) Which should not be the case for man, but is not that often forgotten?

In doing this, the creator himself develops at the same time, as he makes his creature develop. So it is not foreseen anywhere that the creature ever stops anything but the 'image' of the creator. It is the natural order of things, the dice are loaded in advance.

However, in reducing in this way man to the simple role of puppet, we are not reducing God to the simple role of man and we are not putting him in a situation where it is he who becomes the most manipulated, he who has the greatest need to be initiated to arrive at greatness?

In its total destitution, the puppet may 'stagnate' in semi-life for all eternity. It is man who should struggle (for his own evolution) to invent life, movement and a semblance of freedom for his creature. And here man straining to invent the techniques of subtlest manipulations, with the simple intention of telling himself that his creature lives, and that it is a 'mystery'. And the powerful bargain with the poor,

proposing the best formula for cooperation those which would be 'bilateral' still keeping the dice loaded. And the churches sell their blessings for power, honours and riches. And God must make do with sheep and flattery.

For God becomes a very small thing, less important than man.

Thus we have the drama of faith, which does not find the image of a God big enough to justify it and give it roots, perhaps explaining the lack of pure fervour in present religious practices which, to survive, only have fanaticism, one of the elder sons of ignorance... This lack of fervour which is spreading into all social activities and the fervour that young people can only find in drugs...

Who is manipulated, who manipulates? Who is the initiator, who is initiated?

'God Thing' replies the Ki-Yi Mbock Theatre of Abidjan which goes back to Genesis to find the origin of the loaded dice. Genesis as it told in the Bible, read by Genesis seen through the puppets of mali. And the show uses real malian puppets to recreate man's beginnings and goes on to the robotisation of man and the manipulation of God by the human puppet... a God created in the image of man. Man is reduced to the dimensions of a thing.

WANNA JOB?

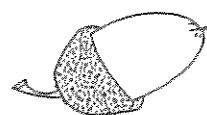
The New Zealand Puppet Theatre is seeking expressions of interest from professional puppeteers, directors, writers and puppet makers in Australia.

Our 1990-1993 programme includes mainly adult productions, main stage holiday season shows and various touring programmes (not T.I.E.).

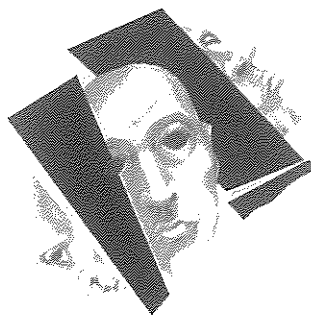
We are interested in hearing from anyone who would like to work with us on short-term contract or project by project basis.

Please send C.V. and indication of availability and preferred areas of interest to Lynette Ross, Administrator, P.O. Box 6893, Wellesley Street, Auckland. Phone: (64-9) 395-755.

Jonathon - are you out there?
We want to know!



(we have saved you a space).



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