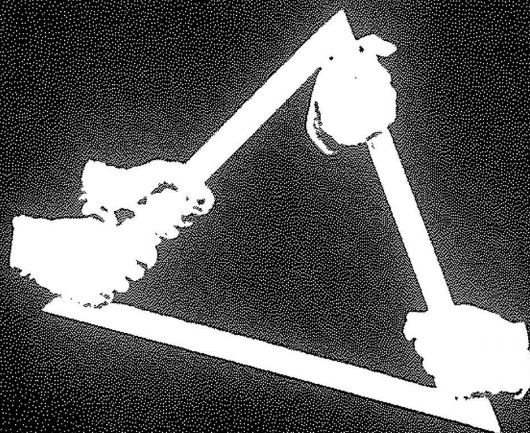


manipulation

\$1⁰⁰



april

1981

Australian puppetry is an uncomfortable game. Among theatre forms it rates about as low a status as hopscotch in sport. As a profession it's regarded as an eccentric hobby. As an entertainment it's always expected to be funny. And as a business venture it never makes money. Puppeteers are haunted by the suspicion that no-one's really taking them seriously, except other puppeteers. The Australia Council abolished its Puppetry Board, Pilgrim and the Tasmanian Puppet Theatre went down without a sound. Nobody noticed, except other puppeteers. TV and advertising constantly use crew to do the "dolly-wagging" for them, instead of puppeteers. There's a lot of work in the schools, but precious little pay. There are plenty of actors these days who don't scorn to act with a puppet, but there aren't yet many writers and directors who don't think it beneath their dignity to be involved with a puppet play.

An ungrateful art, a defensive stance. We should all go out and cut our throats -- if it wasn't for MOMMA.

Momma's Little Horror Show, Nigel Triffitt's creation realised five years ago by the Tasmanian Puppet Theatre, packed away and resurrected twice, born again at the Last Laugh this year with the faith and finance of John Pinder and Roger Evans, boosted now by Edgley's for goodness sake, is soon to leave Oz for Europe with the blessings of the Australia Council. Call me sentimental, but as I say goodbye to Momma I realise she has meant quite a lot to me as a puppeteer.

I first heard about the show over a dinner table in 1977, when I was starting out in puppetry. One of the guests had just come from a job in Hobart with the Tasmanian Puppet Theatre. I forget her name, but I haven't forgotten her excitement as she told me about a puppet show that stood two stories high, a main character that was simply a huge face, a cast of manipulators who walked freely about the stage unprotected and uninhibited by a playboard, and a soundtrack of very loud electronic music. A puppet show? No big noses, no squeaky voices? The realisation came to me then that the puppet theatre was a theatre of no rules: its dimensions are elastic, its subjects limitless. That idea has nourished me ever since, and I have Momma to thank for it. So do a lot of other people.

Editorial

For once, an Australian puppet show has transcended the usual prejudices of audiences and critics against puppetry and been considered on its own merits. Those prejudices are quite considerable. In a review of a 1977 performance of Momma in Theatre Australia, Launt Thompson could only praise the show after he had dissociated it from his concept of puppetry. He wrote: "We were ushered into the theatre and it WAS a theatre, in the legitimate sense, not the puppet sense ... It was billed as an adult puppet show - whatever that is! ... To refer to Momma as a puppet show is a gross misnomer. It is clearly a contemporary attempt at a classical mode." (Whatever that is!) I can't resist quoting the unkindest cut of all: "... the performers (to refer to them as puppeteers would not only be unjust, it would be unfair discrimination)..." !?!

To their credit, those associated with Momma did not succumb to the temptation of achieving 'legitimacy' by pretending that 90 minutes of manipulating objects wasn't puppetry, and four years on, the poster outside the Last Laugh still says AN ADULT

PUPPET SHOW. Critics today don't waste time trying to think of new names for Momma's form, and Leonard Radic, writing in the Age, can describe Dolly as being "manipulated at every turn by her black-clad handlers" without apologies or qualifications. The concept is now accepted and understood, that object and manipulator are not separate and distinct entities.

Seeing Momma, an audience's appreciation of the puppetry form goes deeper than the puppet to a pleasure in the manipulation of any object in the hands of a skilled puppeteer. Their notion of what is a puppet has been E X P A N D E D.

Momma's popularity and financial success have set a precedent in Australian puppetry. After Momma, puppet show doesn't have to mean cute and small, and children's theatre doesn't have to be our sole source of income.

Puppeteers have always known that, now maybe everyone else does too.

COVER: 'ACT WITHOUT WORDS'
A 1980 PRODUCTION by ADELAIDE'S
ANIMATE OBJECTS THEATRE

VIC. GUILD

The Victorian Branch of the Australian Puppetry Guild would like to announce new dates and venue for meetings this year. They will be held on the last Wednesday of each month at the Drama Resource Centre 117 Bouverie Street CARLTON, at 7.45 pm.

UNIMA

UNIMA Australia has just had elections for its three executive positions, and the proposed new position of State Representative in each state. Results next issue.

KOOKA

There'll be a new show available in May from KOOKA. It's SWITCH OVER, about what's good and bad about television. Contact: Michelle Spooner or Jenny Fogarty on MELB. 862 1479 or write to 88 Walpole St. KEW 3101.

australian puppet theatre

They plan to write a new show while on tour in Europe with Momma's.

"Whatever happens next, it won't be like Momma. That'd be like Kubrick trying to do 2002 - who'd believe him? We'll keep the things we believe makes our company different. We aim to create fantasy, not to imitate reality."

FRANK ITALIANO

STOP PRESS: polyglot again

Star Child is about to take off on his third journey in Polyglot's new show, STAR CHILD GOES BUSH. Since Manipulation last went to press, he's changed his direction slightly. At least, scriptwriter Dot Rickards has removed him from the company of that itinerant Beekeeper, discovering that there have been earlier puppet journeys with beekeepers.

Star Child feels very much at home with the Muddle-headed Movie Mogul and his crew, with whom the puppets are currently travelling. In the process another language - German - has been added to the show in the person of puppet-maker Nancy Akins' attractive small blond bloke, Hans. NAOMI TIPPETT

SITUATIONS VACANT



punchtucker

performing arts company

Joseph Newey is setting up a new company in Adelaide and seeks three people to join him. He wants dedicated people prepared to work hard at self- and group-development.

Punchtucker will explore different styles of puppetry and incorporate lots of other forms: mime, magic, music, dance, animated graphics, lighting and voice work. Contact: G.P.O. Box 974, ADELAIDE 5001.

* * * *

The Eyre Region office of the S.A. Education Dept. is seeking a puppeteer to live in Port Lincoln for three to four months to train teachers and curriculum advisers in the use of puppetry as a teaching medium in traditional subject areas such as Social Studies, English, Science and Mathematics, and to conduct school holiday workshops in puppet craft and production work. The project to begin June 1st

Contact: Mostyn Coleman,
Education Officer, Eyre Region,
34 Oxford Tce. PORT LINCOLN 5606

(I have a copy of Mr. Coleman's letter outlining the project in more detail which people are welcome to drop in and read, at 28 Macarthur Place, Carlton 3053. Ed.)

M.T.A.

THE MAGIC PUDDING will be on at the Sydney Opera House from May 11 - 23, and at the Orange Civic Centre from June 1 - 6.

ROOS is currently touring Sydney schools.

TOP END TALES has been re-worked, and will tour NSW schools in Terms II and III.

TIM GOW, MTA's inimitable company manager, has left and is replaced by NEIL SIMPSON.

Special Projects manager MICHAEL CREIGHTON has followed the success of the PUPPET PUDDING movie with A LOAD OF OLD RUBBISH a film about a kid who makes puppets from back-street trash. (Available for hire)

Work continues on renovating the Old Sailors' Home, now the MTA's home. There's a puppet exhibition set up there that's worth a visit.

The MTA produces a newsletter detailing all their activities. Contact: Philip Rolfe, Marionette Theatre of Aust 106-108 George Street Nth. THE ROCKS, Sydney 2000.

HANDSPAN

HANDSPAN is taking two shows to Adelaide's COME OUT festival - THE BUNYIP OF BERKELEY'S CREEK and BEASTLY COMBINATIONS. You can see them at various places in Adelaide's suburbs from May 11 - 15. Contact Festival Centre, on ADELAIDE 51 0121 for details.

TASMANIAN CO.

Jenny Davidson has set up a new company to tour Tasmanian schools.

Spare Parts - on the move in the West

PETER
JAMES

SPARE PARTS Puppet Arts Theatre is a new company formed in Perth, late 1980 with the assistance of the West Australian Arts Council and the Theatre Board of the Australia Council to develop performances and workshops in puppetry and related fields.

Director of Spare Parts is Peter Wilson, formerly artistic director of the Tasmanian Puppet Theatre. Beverley Campbell-Jackson from Sydney is designer and puppet-maker. Cathryn Robinson from New

Zealand is writer and administrator. Two trainee puppeteers - Clelia Tedeschi and Chris Warne - are both graduates of the West Australian Institute of Technology's Theatre Arts course.

Spare Parts, now into their sixth month of operation, have recently completed a 4 week season of Faust at the Perth Festival. The show was part of the mainstream of the Festival and was received with great success. a sellout one would say.

Spare Parts were also a billing at the Childrens' Festival of Performing Arts which was also part of the Perth Festival.

The company is now working on a primary school programme entitled "A SHAPE AND A PROMISE", which tells the story of how Grovelly, a simple shapeless creature, climbs from his dark valley to seek light and discovers a shape, a face and a name for himself. Based loosely on an idea from a West African legend, the story has been scripted to illustrate, in particular, the use of masks and large rod puppets, and invites children to participate in the final shaping and naming of Grovelly.

A Shape and a Promise uses adaptations of Bunraku and European rod and glove puppets, and lasts 45 minutes with time for discussion.

Spare Parts has established a workshop base in Fremantle at 251 South Terrace, and have been able to acquire rehearsal space at the P.I.F.T. studios.

A one-person show to be directed by Greg Shears (Sullivans director) is the next

production the company is going to tackle.

It is great to see a new puppet company opening in Perth. Although Perth does have one small puppet group, the opening of Spare Parts has aroused much interest on the theatre scene in W.A.

For those interested in finding out more about the company, you can phone them on (09)335 3533 or write to P.O. Box 897, Fremantle 6162.

FAUST - some impressions MAEVE VELLA

..black stage white pentangle on the floor ...
Faust's study tiny corner of mellow light his
face smooth, sad, already lost ..BATS WHISPERS
Faust is a man in a mask Faust is a puppet,
dancing with two tricksters Faust is torn in
two Faust mourns his broken image .. conjure
a butterfly from the empty air Faust the
magician MEPHISTOPHELES mock-crucified,
raised by ropes and pulleys from his smoky
dungeon under the stage, monsters spill out
slither at Faust's feet SIGN HERE .. Faust
and Mephistopheles ride in a dragon's belly
over the audience's heads to the black spaces
at the back of the theatre.. INTERVAL

Seven tall cardboard ladies in an arthritic
minuette fussing over Faust SEE THE FUTURE a
graph lights up COMPANY PROFIT horse politic-
ians leap and stomp at a banquet table, dev-
ouring sheep YOU ONLY HURT THE ONE YOU LOVE
their theme song... a curtain falls painted
with identikits of dangerous men REAGAN, HITLER
STALIN, KHOMENY... Faust is given Helen gold
faced woman, delicate puppet in six black vel-
vet hands ... THE SEVEN DEADLY SINS vacuous
pierrots, a tumbling knot of bodies imprisoned
in white rope... undulating cloth drowns Faust
he screams for REDEMPTION... Helen spins in
the vacuum of his study... Helen and Faust...
two masks each side of prison bars... Faust
slides to the floor... Mephistopheles slowly
extinguishes flaming torches at the edges of
the stage.....

(Helen Rickards' review of FAUST is held over
till next issue.)

The West German company, Puppenzentrum Frankfurt, has just completed a tour of Australia with assistance from the Goethe Institute, performing two plays and doing workshops in making and manipulation.

Dieter Brunner and Barbara Scheel are the mainstays of this company. They are assisted by an apprentice who works with them for a six-month period, and stays on for a further six months if both parties are happy with the work. They employ a part time secretary and use on a regular basis the services of a freelance director. They also have a close consultative relationship with Dr. Hans Purschke, leading authority on the history of German puppetry.

The plays were Dilli Hickelstein (translated to Hickelstone and rechristened Billy to avoid the associations of 'dill') and Tiger Dreams. I saw these at the Toorak Teachers' College Theatre, the first in english for small primary school children and the second in german for high school language students.

Both plays were visually simple, with small hand puppets against a set of dark grey drapery. There was a playboard at head height, a box with removable lid at waist height, and curtains behind, standing on a dais about two feet above floor level.

The puppeteers were involved as characters in both plays. In Billy Heckelstone they were two low-key clowns in striped tunics and bowler hats. The play began with some simple clown business - bumping and blowing raspberries sort of thing - nicely paced in the

puppenzentrum FRANKFURT

classic clowning style: an action, a moment for it to sink in, then reaction. In fact, I was impressed with the timing in both plays, refreshingly unhurried throughout. Only once was it too slow - when Billy talks from way over one side of the set to his grandfather (pictured right) on the box in front. The dialogue at this point was too prosaic to stand without action.

I liked the unusual methods they chose to introduce the puppets. In Billy Heckelstone, the two clowns are fighting over a big soft pillow. In their tug-o-war the pillow suddenly bursts open, emptying a rain of puppets onto the floor. They're all small, soft objects. One clown would pick up each item and move it upside down or backwards or some such, making a weird noise for it. The other clown would snatch it and do the right thing like mincing and meowing with it if it was a cat. Soon all the characters were tried out and introduced, and then the story could begin.

In Tiger Dreams the puppeteers begin the play as themselves. The puppets are brought onstage in an ordinary cardboard box - not all of them actually, just the main character, a tiger cub, in amongst some old toys. They're Barbara's old toys, and the puppet play is presented as an enactment of a dream she had as a child, to illustrate a point she wants to make to Dieter.

There was some good knockabout stuff involving puppets and puppeteers. At one point Billy orders another puppet to take a step back, then another step, and another until he goes so far backwards that puppet and puppeteer fall straight out the side

of the set onto the floor. At another point there's a chase through the audience clown chasing clown driven on by the tiny cat and dog on their hands.

In Tiger Dreams, Dieter's head appears above the playboard as a firechief in a helmet. His team of firemen are 2D cutouts on a single control, just the legs moving to his "Hrrup" as they march out from a 2D truck much too small for them. Effective sight gags performed with the simplest of means.

I believe the Goethe Institute is a bit disappointed with the style of the plays. The audiences I was part of were not ecstatic, I'll grant, but neither were they bored. Not all theatre needs to be an overwhelming experience - quiet enjoyment and simple entertainments have their place. Both plays dealt with

issues universally relevant, and were performed with wit and skill. As well as contact with the general public, the puppeteers made many fruitful associations with Australian puppeteers. I think their visit was definitely worthwhile, and urge the Goethe Institute not to be discouraged from bringing out similar German puppet companies when the opportunity arises.

MAEVE VELLA

Dieter Brunner was recently elected to the UNIMA training commission, and promises to send information to Manipulation on the various schemes being arranged worldwide by UNIMA. He and Barbara are members of the Verband Deutscher Puppentheater, an organization of professional puppeteers in Germany. Below they describe the activities of the VDP and their own work as the Frankfurt Puppenzentrum.



The Verband Deutscher Puppentheater has been in existence 13 years. There were similar organizations before, but they broke down over conflicts about standards. Now the organization doesn't do that - every puppeteer can join, as long as they are professional, that is, as long as they derive the main part of their income from puppetry.

The organization deals with problems - financial, taxation, training, status in the community. (All professions are registered in Germany, but puppeteer is not one of them. We are fighting for that.)

In our annual meetings, puppeteers play for each other and constructive criticism is offered.

We believe everyone has to be well-informed, so we produce a newsletter every month, usually about 30 pages long.

We run a cuttings service, culling items on puppetry from all the German papers.

Another service is the arrangement of replacement puppeteers when someone is sick or in trouble. This is an important measure in maintaining the credibility of puppetry with the various cultural institutions that book puppet shows.

The organization also supplies information to the media, maintains a travelling exhibition, and a library.

Members' dues are about \$160 Aust. annually.

We established the Puppenzentrum Frankfurt five years ago. Dieter has been a puppeteer for fifteen years, Barbara for five.

We don't have a theatre at the centre, we perform where we are invited.

The centre houses a workshop for our use and for classes. There is an exhibition comprising about 450 puppets and maquettes of stage designs, which is constantly changing, and which is set up so that visitors can handle the puppets. There is also a library of books, slides and videos.

We have eight plays in repertoire at present. Philosophically, they all deal with basic human problems - being afraid (Tiger Dreams); to find and to love a friend (Dilli Heckelstein); being selfish (Oscar Wilde's Selfish Giant); changing one's mind and freedom from repression (The Life of the Tomanis) - and we also try to point out the fun of making stories together.

We try to make our plays work like very clear mirrors. We take parts of children's and adults' lives and make them bigger, more abstract but more precise. The audience takes part with their feelings. We make an idea transparent to children so they can feel it when they watch the play, then later on when the situation happens to them they remember.

We do workshops with able and disabled people, with the assistance of two teachers' college students interested in puppetry.

ADDRESS: Diemelstrasse 9
FRANKFURT
West Germany

Teaching my grandmother to suck eggs

DENNIS
MURPHY

I think I can speak as an outsider to Australian puppetry. I have been a puppeteer for only about a year and a half and I am a new Australian. As such I pass the following comment on the Australian puppetry scene I have witnessed.

THE PUPPET PARADOX A nearly universal puppeteers' lament seems to be "What a pity puppetry has come to be regarded as exclusively for children." Nearly all the lamenters, however, have gone on to do exclusively children's shows. I have seen only two adult oriented puppet shows. One, Captain Lazar, I liked very much. The second I thought wasted the money and effort of the Theatre Board, the Marionette Theatre of Australia and the others mentioned in the credits. Because of this widespread lament I was surprised to learn that the show I submitted for Education Department approval will be the only puppet show to be presented to secondary students in N.S.W.! I think we puppeteers are feeding the puppetry-is-for-children myth.

CROWD/RIOT CONTROL Why is this vitally relevant topic never discussed at puppetry workshops? More under Science and Magic.

CRAFT/PERFORMANCE DICHOTOMY The split between those approaching puppetry from the craft side and those coming from the performance side. The craft side is in such a majority that a "puppetry class" is assumed by the public to be a puppet-making class with no thought of a performance. The N.S.W. Guild's Puppet Festival in October 1979 was a welcome exception. At a day called "Performing Arts Workshop Day" I still had a couple of people disappointed to learn we wouldn't be making puppets. I think we need to correct this imbalance.

WORD OF MOUTH I am amazed at the power of word-of-mouth, not just in puppetry but in Sydney generally. Great as a recommendation for a show, terrible as a means of communication.

OVERSEAS PUPPETS "It's Australian but it's good!" I have noticed that this even works interstate. That somehow drawing from other states has to be better than using anything local.

GRANTS Another dichotomy: between bludgers (pro) and rugged individualists (con) -- neither of whom can exist in a country with such a small percentage of theatre-goers in such a small population.

SCIENCE AND MAGIC Science has attempted to explain everything in the full daylight of REASON-REALITY-PROGRESS-AND-KNOWLEDGE. In doing so it has overcome the black magic of superstition. It has also had the effect of destroying white magic. The baby out with the bathwater. Puppetry is a survivor of the purge. There is still magic in it. The magic of an inanimate object coming alive and expressing itself; the real purpose of papier-mache, fibreglass and celastic. The magic that makes crowd control unnecessary. It can be augmented (but not created) by lighting, staging, closing off backstage, etc.

MEANING Another paradox; the injection of meaning or statement into a puppet show is often talked about, its absence apologized for or even incorporated into the title of the show. But when it comes to doing it.....

Next Issue - "After Teaching My Grandmother To Suck Eggs" by Richard Hart.

Dennis Murphy and Richard Hart are organizing a loose confederation of independent, innovative puppeteers to be called the SYDNEY PUPPETRY PUSH (double entendre). Its first meeting will take place two weeks after publication of this issue of Manipulation. For information ring (02) 798 7807. Note Bene: puppeteers should be clean-cut, well-groomed and have a pleasant telephone personality as they will give the public their first impression of the Push.

B.Y.O.P.

EVA: All our puppets are very simple, made mostly from paper and plywood. There is so much you can do with paper bags: we use them for puppets, costumes and sets, along with drapes. In a show we did for Come Out we pinched cardboard boxes from the supermarket, and the rest was big paper bag masks. The budget for that show was \$300. In the schools just Karel and I perform, but in the public shows our children, Ivan, Daniel and Susan perform with us. Ivan is at art school now, and also helps with the designs.

A lot of our school shows are language projects. The way we work is this: The children see the show in the morning and then for the rest of the day, because we have got five hours, we have a workshop in the classroom. Every child makes a puppet from cardboard, so at the end of the day they have got a working model of a puppet from the story. We print the scripts, and give the teacher a copy so they

can do the play. We usually have about a hundred children, and help them all so every puppet can move. The scripts contain pictures of the characters, and a vocabulary. They're an introduction to a culture, and a lot of work goes into them. Teachers offer to help, but unless you can pay someone, you can't expect much work.

KAREL: We started in 1972 with an Innovations Grant from the Federal Schools Commission. We called the project 'Schola Ludus', teaching by playing, based on the ideas of the Czech philosopher, Comenius. The project was so successful, they extended the grant three times. We got from them about \$40,000 in past years. We bought a van and materials, and we toured to Tasmania three times, we went to Broken Hill, Mildura, Ceduna, Coonibah, Aboriginal missions, everywhere. So we spent that money completely, to the last cent.

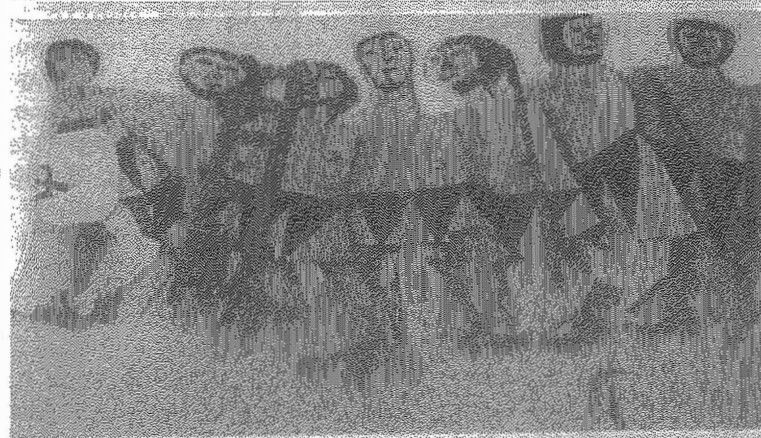
With a successful project, they like then to pass it on to your State Government. So now we are assisted by the S.A. Education Dept.

EVA: We have got a following in the schools, that is what we have built up here in nine years of existence. If not for the support at grass roots level, we would not be here at all. The Schools Commission grant was extended because we had so many letters from the schools saying it was the best project they ever had. And then they said, now your department should look after you.

We had difficult talks with the Education Department at first. "Oh, your degrees are from somewhere else, you have got no future here. Go home, we will never recognise you." But they had to do something, because there was



Interview: Karel and Eva Rehorek Paper Bag Theatre



ABOVE - WORKSHOP PUPPETS FROM 'HELEN OF TROY'.
OTHER PHOTOS FROM 'ADAMEK AND THE BEETLES'.

an order from the minister and there was a salary available. They worked out what to pay us by questioning us on how many minutes we take for teabreak, how long it takes to drive to the school (because that's not paid for) how long we are facing the children, and they finish up with five hours per day. It's at the lowest rate of salary, because to them it is just like we're teaching the children to make cookies. Now they might be cutting even that.

KAREL: We do simple stories that everyone can understand. We tried a more intellectual story years ago. It was about General Never-smile. He was a paper sack, a shopping bag, and he came onstage and built up, from paper bags, his army. And every soldier had to be the same. All the same faces, and all with brown eyes. But one soldier had blue eyes. He said to the soldier "Change them by tomorrow 4pm!" He built up a cannon, weapons, all that, and we decide with the children that we don't want to live in a world like this. So we set up a Good Witch, she puts a spell on him, and changes his army into an army of poets. Everybody was different, smiling faces, green eyes, yellow eyes, brown eyes, rosy cheeks she changed a gun into an ice-cream cone, a prison into a dog. And the General was mad, and he said "If I can't have it, I will destroy it!" And he created an atom bomb. We decide with the kids that we don't want that, and we put a spell on him and change him into an ordinary shopping bag. But that bag was torn on the bottom, my hand went through. So sometimes when you're shopping and you see a torn shopping bag - watch it, that's him. Put it straight in the rubbish. We played that story only about fifty times. We couldn't do

very often in S.A. because not enough people understood it. For them, soldiering was a glamorous thing. We present that killing people stinks. To kill a person is a stupid thing. But they see on television someone goes BANG and everyone falls down. Killing is nothing. Funny thing, though, in Tasmania we got a fantastic response, the kids understood everything.

For the past nine years I have done the shows solo, because our daughter was small and Eva had to stay home with her. She wrote and designed the plays, and rehearsed with me, and I went in our old car all over the State. You get tired of working solo; you're independent, but you're limited. You want to put three puppets on your hand but you can't, so you play harder and give more. One year of solo is like five years of group work because it takes so much from you physically. Theatre is a collective thing. So now Eva performs with me.



You need a company, and that's what we miss here. Nobody seems willing to work with us.

In 1969 we were in the refugee camp in Austria, trying to decide where to go, America, Canada or Australia. We chose Australia, because it's a new country, we thought we could start something there, but also there would be puppeteers who might know something of our work, so the ground will be broken. But when we came, we found only cold stones.

In Czechoslovakia there are 17 companies we could go to and be engaged. When we came to Australia I wanted very much to work with the Sydney company, the MTA. I got in touch with Leslie Hammond who was in charge then, and we got very badly turned down. I don't know why. I think people were afraid of us. But there is no need to be afraid of experts.

We are professionals. All our lives we have been in the job, 26 years. We worked in puppet and theatre companies in Czechoslovakia, companies like the Black Theatre of Prague. We

gained the Master of Arts Degree in puppetry from Prague University. I did playing with puppets and all the technical and practical stage things. Eva did dramaturgy and production and psychology. She can write plays, she can dramatize anything.

Imagine how much we cost the Czech government - four full years of study. Imagine how angry they are that we are not home.

Our knowledge and skill that we have gained in all those years are like a box of treasure, but nobody wants it, so we keep it for ourselves. We play only with our family. But we still would like to work with a bigger company.

EVA: In the schools we like to build up a continuity, but that is absolutely against the wish of the Education Dept. They say "Only go to a school once, then go to another one. Once is enough". That's so inefficient. You must progress in theatre education as in any other subject. We have got one or two kindergartens that we go to more than once a year, and they have learnt to understand material written for middle primary children.

KAREL: You teach children 3 Little Pigs, then Treasure Is-



land, then Shakespeare and so on. If you decide to stop at Little Pigs you have a nation that can't understand anything past Little Pigs.

EVA: We used to do all the work at our house in Fullarton

Now we are here in the premises that Unley Council are kind enough to rent to us. It's a community project, all the houses on this block are rented out to clubs, craft and theatre groups. We share this house with a group of Bush Nurses. The S.A. government pays the rent, and we get a bit of money for furnishings and for the resource centre.

The resource centre is mainly a library that we began when the Schools Commission gave us a grant for a travelling library. Now we have the house open on Saturday mornings, and teachers and students can come here for information. In S.A. you can matriculate in puppetry. It's funny, to matriculate in music you must know quite a bit about music, but you can matriculate in puppetry not knowing much at all.

Students come here because they have to know a bit of history, and they are surprised at how much there is. We subscribe to many puppetry journals, and as well as books on puppetry and related arts we print a lot of material ourselves.

There are puppetry courses at the tertiary colleges here, but so often they are not taught by puppeteers. They often spend a lot of time in making puppets that are beautiful to look at, but don't work or are never performed with. We saw one course outline once that made us laugh: "The History of Glove Puppets, The History of Marionettes, etc - but history was never divided this way. It's like teaching The History of the 2nd String of the Violin or The History of the Left Hand in the Theatre.

We know we could do this job well, but we're never offered

a lectureship in a college, only the odd workshop. What good is that to us or the students?

KAREL: We don't have as much contact as we would like with other puppeteers in Australia. We wanted to join UNIMA here, but we were refused, we don't know why. We have lots of contact with puppeteers overseas. But in Australia we feel like ugly ducklings.

We find that migrants are put into boxes here. Greek? Fish and chips! Italian? Building industry! German? Heil Hitler! And these boxes are actually in puppetry.

We have heard people say about us "Oh, these non-english-speaking people only make trouble," and "Influence from Europe is not good, we must find our own way."

But I think art is international. Parochialism stinks. You can't stay always with native animals, like we can't stick only with Czech folk tales. We do bible stories, although we are not a Christian theatre; we do Russian, German, French stories, anything, because puppets belong to everyone.

I'll say one thing very strongly: it is not possible to check us or put us in the rubbish. Put me in the rubbish and I will fight back, I will start something else. But I would much rather be peaceful, and work WITH people.

PAPER BAG THEATRE can be contacted at:

76 Edmund Street,
UNLEY S.A. 5061

Phone (08) 798 030.

Letters

Thanks for the February edition of Manipulation, a great source of information on puppeteers and their aspirations. It's certainly encouraging to know there are so many people in Australia interested in widening this form of theatre. I liked the Annie Heitman article in particular, and was really excited to see that next issue contains articles on Momma's Little Horror Show (an experience which still shines strong in my mind) and Peter Wilson's Faust, which sounded just as brilliant. I hope the production makes it to Sydney and doesn't just fade into oblivion as a one-off for the Perth Festival - a great shame if it does. Can't wait to read the latest in the April issue. Keep up the good work.

HUGH DRAKE

I cannot agree with the review comment on the Magic Pudding in Manipulation No. 4, and must congratulate the Marionette Theatre of Australia for staging a classic piece as the author intended it to be presented. I am sure the children felt as one with the characters.

ELMA McNAMARA

Thank you for the copies of Manipulation, I hope it proves to be a great success. Do let us know if you would like an article from Britain at any time. Best wishes and love to all our friends out there.

PUPPET CENTRE, LONDON

While travelling in Indonesia I came across some interesting news. There's a Wayang Kulit (shadow puppetry) institute that has just been set up in Jogjakarta to prevent puppetry losing a following. I'll quote a few lines from the item:

"Javanese culture flourished under royal patronage prior to World War II. With the war, the feudalistic structure changed, and the dalang (puppeteer) has lost ground in society ever since. The chairman of the Dalang Association predicted that the Wayang Kulit would die in the 80's unless measures were taken. The Agastya Art Foundation was formed in view of reviving the art. Funds are being raised through every possible means, and premises have been secured to train dalangs, and is accompanied by a Gamalan orchestra. There is a workshop where the puppets are made to be supplied to the foundation.

Through developing this institute, it is hoped that public support will continue, especially the younger generation in this branch of the art." Coming home soon.

PETER JAMES

FRED WALLACE:

Momma's Little Horror Show has undergone many changes over the years. Nigel Triffitt is the designer and director of the show, and this is Mark 6 - it's gone through six major metamorphoses, and this is his definitive version.

The set is basically four ladders and a scaffold construction in which there are two distinct levels. You can't see much of the upper level because it's heavily black velvett. It takes two days to set up this steel structure, then several hours to dress the set. This is an eternity when you're touring, so for the European tour we hope to have an aluminium structure we can throw together in an hour and a half.

It's a complex show to perform. So much is done in the pitch black. Some of the props have 'braille' messages, touch bits and pieces so the cast can tell where to marry bits of prop up. Most of the show is done with their hoods down. There's a see-through visor, but it cuts visibility about 40%. The performers

light bulbs and fittings. These are an extension on the last version, and a very useful way of lighting various parts of the show.

The disc is the major set-piece of the show, and an excellent way of bringing people and things on and off in different ways. Jenny Davidson and Ross Hill designed its initial Momma Face, and it's now been recovered and reworked by Laurel Frank.

The lighting is an extremely important part of Momma. I look on it the same way the cast looks on the props and set - as a puppet to be manipulated. By changing colours, changing angles and creating shadows I can change to mood of the Face. I can make objects appear and disappear.

We use a great deal of smoke to give the light something to go through, to give it structure. (And it also covers up things we want to hide)

We use quite a few portafloods. They're 150w and they only cost \$12 each. There are a number of them under the Mc's platform to light action

momma's little horror show

TRANSCRIPT OF A LECTURE GIVEN BY THE CAST TO THE THEATRE TECHS UNION

move around the stage in complete darkness and a sea of smoke.

The set is covered in black velvet. Momma's is in a sense a black theatre piece, but we don't use UV lights, we have normal incandescent lamps, with rich coloured filters. These mirror the effect of UV and fluorescent paint, with the added factor of being able to change the colours. All the costumes are black velvet, to absorb light. The props are covered on one side with black velvet and the other side is usually painted white and given colour by the lights.

The structure in the middle is a 12 foot disc which we turn around. All the action downstage takes place in a 7 foot semicircle. One of the interesting things that happens is that the sense of space and distance gets somewhat lost. You easily forget that this is a very small space in which we're working.

On the top half of the set, where the MC spends his time, is a 'diving platform' area, which has at the front a large quantity of

downstage, with purple, red, turquoise and blue gels. There are rings of white and red 40w house hold bulbs round the edges of the platform. Behind, on two doors, is a heart shape in 40w bulbs on a three-channel chaser unit.

There are three sets of floor lights: purple, red and blue. With the smoke, these effectively hide setups going on behind. They're CCT Minuets.

On the disc, the lights in the eyes are hotspots - we'd like a lot more of these, but they cost too much. With the smoke there's a good strong beam from them - a lighthouse effect.

Out front there's general cover from some Pattern 23's with amber, and some 1k Strands. There are more portafloods above the disc - their light just catches it to give it form as it spins around. Lights under the catwalks do the same job.

The key light in the performance is this spot from above, used mainly to light Dolly. Another light on a low check picks out things in the mouth and gives extra definition to things in

front of the face. The red bulbs all around the face are 25w. They're on a chaser unit made by Robert Hall and Peter Freeman of PANTRONICS. It can do lots of things, like forward and reverse, bouncy-bouncy, and a few others.

In the trapdoor there's a small green CCT Minuet to light Dolly as she goes in or out. We use the Last Laugh mirror ball once in the show - when the smoke fills the room you get nice thin pencils of light reflecting from this. There are two blue lights up above centre stage that we use to give a sense of height - the movement of the show is mostly vertical.

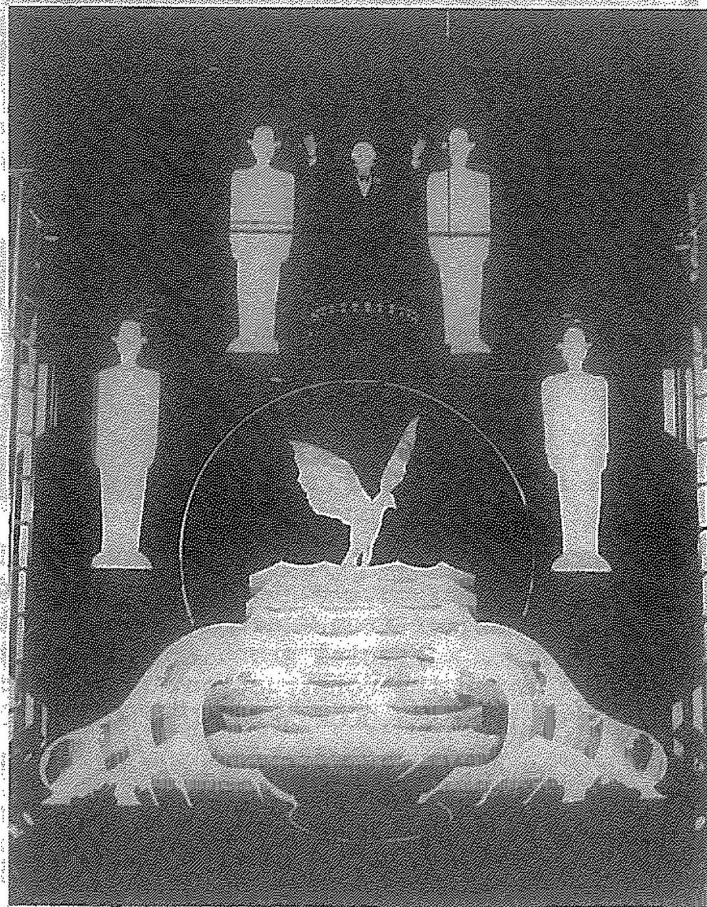
The ISN'T IT ROMANTIC? sequence has been expanded by the addition of music from CLAIR DE LUNE and 12 red Chinese lanterns. It's very complicated to achieve because not only do the lanterns have to be connected to long black poles onstage, but there are also light bulbs inside which are operated at the dimmer board, so the cast has to connect plugs to each one in the darkness.

The most important thing to say about this show is that you can create quite significant theatre magic without spending a million dollars. A lot of big shows in town use expensive machinery to create effects. In Momma, there's nothing really expensive apart from the chaser units. We create illusions quite simply by hand - a lot of simple things adding up to a complex performance. Everything you see moving is done by the performers with poles or strings, or walked across the stage, or lifted from one level to another. By people, not motors.

QUESTION : How is Dolly made ?

PATTI DE FOIE : Styrene and plywood, covered with lightweight towelling with the smooth side facing out. The mask is celastic.

FRANK ITALIANO : The style is Bunraku, with three manipulators, but slightly modified. In Bunraku the head is controlled by the hand going in through the back to the neck, but we have a rod to the back of the head to get a wider and more direct movement of the head, and a separate rod to the back, to hold the body steady as it moves. There's one person to head and left hand, one person to back and right hand, and one person to the feet.



BURT COOPER AS M.C. - INVISIBLE MANIPULATORS:
WINSTON APPLEYARD, NIGEL COX, IAN CUMING,
PATTIE DE FOIE, FRANK ITALIANO, DAVID OGILVY &
JOHN ROGERS. PHOTOGRAPH BY CATHY KONING.

The hand control is a Czech one. (a.k.a. Coad control, ED.) There's a $\frac{1}{4}$ inch dowel into the hand to move it up and down, and a wire connected to that by a wheel to move it from side to side. So we get a lot of movement from the combination of up, down and around.

PATTI : It's taken a while to get the movement coordinated between the three of us. Frank, Winston and I have worked this puppet together on and off for three years now, and we're still developing it.

QUESTION : Do you have a stage manager ?

FRED : Not exactly. I share that function with one of the cast, John Rogers. I do the lighting, John gives the cast their calls and makes sure they are onstage at the right times. We don't want to stick just to the traditional roles.

In rehearsal, some of the cast have gone up into the lighting box and I've had a turn down on the stage, which opened my head considerably. We like to overlap functions, and step into each other's roles occasionally.

QUESTION : What happens if someone gets sick ?

FRED : We couldn't do the show. The cast are busy 99% of the time. In fact, in rehearsal, if Nigel found out that someone wasn't doing anything at a particular moment, he would give them something to do to expand the image that was being created. So everybody is working nearly all the time to set something up or to do something onstage. Hence it takes a considerable time to rehearse people into the show. When we're in Europe, we have a clause built into the contract that says if someone can't work, we have x number of days to grab someone and teach them the show. If I was sick - well, the lighting is all in my head, it can't be written down and it can't be put into a computer (I use a manual panel with 36 channels). I'm a part of the process - if something goes wrong the lighting has to cover it instantly. You could not get it out of a computer fast enough.

Momma's Little Horror Show plays Her Majesty's in Melbourne on May 8th and 9th and the Scott Theatre in Adelaide for two weeks from June 2nd. At the end of June they leave for several months of touring in Europe.

LITTLE PATCH THEATRE was established in Adelaide in 1968 by Morna Jones. Morna retired from the company this year, due to ill-health. Current personnel are: Tony Strutton, director; John O'Connor, Janeen Brian and Rainer Jozeps, performers; and their administrator, Margaret Bennett.

Little Patch moved from their original farmhouse theatre in January last year, into a cottage at the Brighton-Seaforth Community Centre in Somerton Park, Adelaide. With assistance from the S.A. government, Lions Club and several private foundations, the cottage was renovated to accommodate a theatre, office and workshop space. The theatre is designed to be as flexible as possible, with collapsible tiered seating and a full-ceiling lighting grid. Optimum audience size is about 170.

They are a children's theatre troupe, funded as a general grant company since 1974. They are not exclusively a puppet company, but usually one of the three new productions they mount each year mixes puppetry with human action.



In previous years they used shadow and black theatre techniques. This year they decided to investigate rod puppetry. Sue Bradbury, puppet designer from Queensland, joined the company for four weeks under a special grant from the Australia Council, to work with them on the construction of a set of rod puppets for a new show entitled MR. COOK-A-BOOK'S SOUND RECIPE.

The show has been devised by company member, Janeen Brian.

Janeen plays Sam, a traveller who collects sounds. Sam meets Mr. Cook-a-Book (a puppet manipulated by Rainer Jozeps) a rotund and disgruntled refugee from the City of Sound (or more appropriately, Noise). Together they find the Cave of Sound Dreams, where they conduct sound experiments to investigate the possibilities of a city where sounds are harmonious, and city people are still a part of the natural world.

Their imaginary city is peopled by puppets who converse in non-verbal musical sounds, and who look a lot like the sounds they make. Inside a factory, we see Mr. Curved and Miss Straight try to assemble a car together (with much confusion), big boss Mr. High appoints a foreman, Mr. Low, and stylish Mr. Smooth chastises Mr. Rough on a number of counts.

In the course of their imaginings, Mr. Cook-a-Book and Sam's sound discoveries help them to solve some of the noise problems

JANEEN BRIAN,
RAINER JOZEPS
& SUE BRADBURY
MAKE ADJUSTMENTS
TO MR. COOK-A-BOOK.



of the city they left behind them. Sam concludes the show by drawing attention to the noise problems of Adelaide, and suggests to the audience that they write their own "sound recipe books" to solve them.

Teachers receive follow-up notes which expand on the themes presented in the show. There is a resume of key words and ideas, further sound experiments to conduct, musical instruments to make, nonsense lyrics and original music, information on noise pollution, sound/imagination ideas to write about, enact or verbalise, and instructions for making puppets.

The show has been designed to tie in with subjects studied in the primary music, science and social studies curricula. Teachers can book MR. COOK-A-BOOK'S SOUND RECIPE between June 22nd and July 31st by phoning Margaret Bennett at Little Patch on 294 3287.

The show will also be presented as part of the COME OUT festival of children's theatre in Adelaide, from May 11th to 23rd. Bookings for these performances can be made through the Festival Centre, Adelaide, phone 51 0121.

INDONESIAN TOUR

Last year Little Patch toured Indonesia on a cultural exchange programme arranged through the Foreign Affairs Department. They took their production of EVERYTHING UNDER THE SUN, translated into Indonesian. The show uses shadow puppetry and black theatre puppets with human action. As well as performing, they conducted workshops and discussions on drama-in-education techniques at universities and teachers' colleges. Aware of the pitfalls of merely promoting their own product, they adopted the method of pausing during their explanations to ask their questioners - "Why do you ask such and such? How would you do it?" - and they report that this made for much valuable exchange of ideas. They would like to express their appreciation to the funding bodies that made the trip possible, and recommend other troupes to apply for funding to do likewise.

MYERS PUPPETS on the road

Lyn and Tony Myers have been touring the West Australian countryside with their variety puppet show for the past few years. In June this year they intend to rent out their house in Scarborough, Perth, pack their puppets into a caravan, and set out on an Australia wide tour for however long it takes.

Lyn has been performing her own shows as ventriloquist and puppeteer for many years. Tony has recently retired from executive work with IBM to join her, adding his skills as a jazz musician to the show.

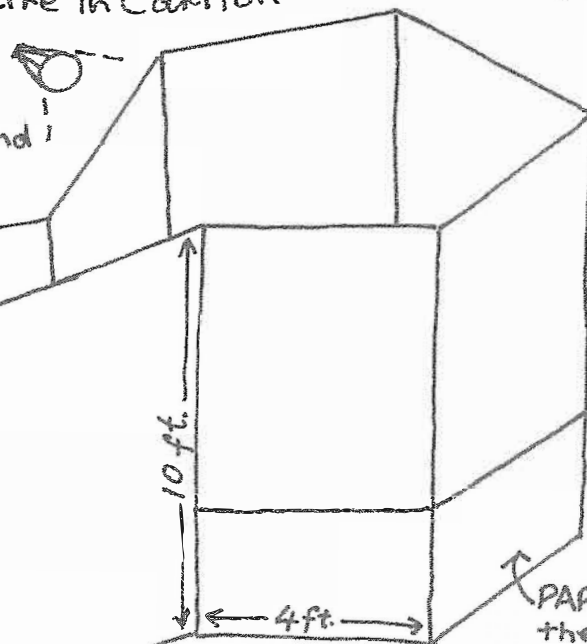
Best wishes to both of them for an adventurous journey.



A RATHER WONDERFUL SET DESIGNED BY ROY McNEILL

This is a shadow screen set used in the WHY NOT/JIKA JIKA PUPPETS production of The Kangaroo That Lost its Tail at the Why Not theatre in Carlton in January 1981.

MATERIALS: Wood and (water-damaged) calico.



LIGHTING: one projector at different angles and a ground-row with coloured gels at the corridor, plus portafloods.

PAPER OVERLAY hid the manipulators.

The audience entered through this corridor and watched the show from the centre of the set.

MUSIC accompanying the show was provided by a cardboard didgeridoo and a piano without keys.

fillers

NEXT ISSUE

We begin a regular feature entitled A WORD FROM THE WORKSHOP edited by KIM ROYLE and containing TIPS, HINTS and REVELATIONS for all puppet-makers. Readers tips can be sent to Kim at 77 HARGREAVES STREET PADDINGTON

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ARTICLES AND PHOTOS



SEND 'EM IN/ ANYTHING WHICH IS OF INTEREST TO YOU IS GOING TO BE OF INTEREST TO OTHER PUPPETEERS, AND WHERE WILL THEY READ/SEE THEM IF NOT IN 'MANIPULATION'?