

manipulation



AUGUST 1982

A MAGAZINE FOR PUPPETEERS

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LETTERS

Dear friends, I write you this letter because I would stop for two or three years my "usual" activity as professional puppeteer in Italy and spend this time in another country for an exchange of experiences, traditions and techniques. I know pretty well English and French; I would like to come in your country for working as a puppeteer and making some research on marionette theatre in your country. I would also offer lectures and stages on marionette theatre in Italy with the help of slides. I will be available approximately at the beginning of October '82. My resume is as follows:

Born Ravenna, 1953 / High school: Classic Studies / Specialisation as Librarian.

1972/73 : Stages on children's theatre

1974 : Founder of COMPAGNIA DRAMMATICO VEGETALE / Starting of activity as puppeteer / 12 performances played in Italy, Luxembourg, Poland, Greece, Spain, France. Among other research activities, stages with JULIA OGNIANOVA (Marionette Theatre of Plovdiv), ALESSANDRA GALANTE GARRONE (clown) and DAVID SYROTIK (string marionettes).

1975 : Exposition at Cervia on "Traditional Handpuppets of Emilia Romagna"

1979 : Degree at Bologna University in Puppet Theatre (with MARIA SIGNORELLI), including research specializing in Italian puppeteers Presini, Otello Sarzi and Famiglia Ferrari.

1980 : Foundation of Italian UNIMA Centre, since this year member of the National Board; Editor of UNIMA-ITALIA BULLETIN.

1981 : Member of ASSOCIATION OF CHILDREN'S THEATRE COMPANIES (As.T.Ra Council); Co-founder of PUPPET THEATRE CENTRE, Ravenna; organization of a series of representations during winter: "PUPAZZI E IOVERIE" and of the 4th International Puppet Festival, "ARRIVANO DAL MARE" (They are Coming from the Sea) at Cervia.

ADDRESS: via Alberani 15,
48020 GIORTE DI BAGNACAVALLIO RA, ITALIA
Phone: 0544/411290 - 411031

Yours sincerely, SERGIO DIOTTI

Dear Maeve, your magazine "Manipulation" is of great interest to puppeteers, but because of that, and because you are in receipt of Australia Council funds, I believe you must endeavour to keep it as objective and accurate as possible. In the May 1982 issue you have published information about the MARIONETTE THEATRE OF AUSTRALIA which is either wrong or misleading, when the accuracy could easily have been checked with the principals involved.

Firstly, your report on "Clumsy feelers for the name Australian Puppet Theatre". At a board meeting before the reported call was made, there was a consensus on the opinion that there was little point in changing the name of our organization now, if ever. However, I had suggested that there could be confusion between the names "Marionette Theatre of Australia" and "Australian Puppet Theatre", especially if they were translated, for example into French, where the word for puppet is "marionnette" (with two 'n's). As you know, I was performing in Europe at the same time as "MOMMA'S" and I enclose a photocopy of reviews of the two shows by Marc Chevalier of ARTS magazine of Paris. In this case there was less confusion because I am referred to as the artistic director of "Australia's national puppet company".

It surely must stand to reason that there is little to be gained for us in changing the name from Marionette Theatre of Australia to Australian Puppet Theatre for the sake of greater accuracy, anymore than if Qantas changed its name to Air Australia. The company is already known internationally through its tours in Asia, articles in periodicals

and mentions in books such as A.R.Philpott's DICTIONARY OF PUPPETRY and THE PUPPET THEATRE OF ASIA by J.Tilikasiri.

I believe it was quite mischievous of you to record Frank Italiano's ill-considered interpretation of Philip Rolfe's inquiry without further investigation. I can assure you that we have no desire whatsoever to be associated with "MOMMA'S" because we had nothing at all to do with it! Our interest in what is happening to the APT and whether the name is to continue to be used or is available, is prompted by a desire to avoid confusion. After all, we might just as well accuse the APT of trying to cash in on the status of our company which has been built up over 16 years with 5 overseas tours and is measurable by the scale of our funding. This is as absurd as the original suggestion.

There is also information on the puppet exhibition at the Sydney Opera House on which I would like to comment. There is no truth in saying that the MTA's workshop was moved across to the Opera House because of the commencement of renovations, although it was certainly handy having it so near to where we were performing. Renovations were not due to commence until June, and the exhibition was closing on the 23rd May. Unfortunately, a statement made in jest was reported as fact.

Since there wasn't even a sink in the Exhibition Hall, there must have been some good reason to move there. You will recall from the information I sent you in November that we wanted things to happen at the exhibition in addition to a static display and were inviting people to become involved. We were not exactly inundated with offers and decided to install Ross Hill where the public could see our extraordinarily talented puppet-maker at work. The same area has also been used for performances by the Willoughby Puppet Group, Ross Brown of Seattle and two of our school shows. At other times, Michael Creighton's "A Puppet Pudding" and William Pitt's "Little Red Riding Hood" were screened on a TV set at the entrance to the workshop area. The workshop area was about one-sixth of the total area of the exhibition space and the description "huge" is surely an exaggeration.

It is true there were fewer puppets than we had at the last Opera House exhibition. This is because we had fewer to exhibit. Also, I was told that there had been criticism of the MTA for including so many of its own puppets in the last exhibition, so this time we held ourselves back. However, whereas there were Opera House funds available and full-time attendants for the last exhibition, this time we had to meet freight costs ourselves as well as providing people to look after the exhibition when Ross wasn't there, e.g. at weekends.

Here I would like to make special note of the tremendous contribution from Kay Littler and Alice Dawson of Queensland Theatre of Puppetry in the first week of the exhibition.

I was a little surprised to see an unauthorised report of an MTA company meeting in "Manipulation", but I would like to take this opportunity to comment on that too, because it implies new directions. The idea of a permanent core company was rejected at a company meeting of our four puppeteers in 1977, on the understandable grounds of dislike of continuous touring and the desirability of choosing the shows one is in, and this was the first company meeting since then in which the vote has been reversed. Again, the reasons are understandable because the company would be given less touring and more say in programming.

Furthermore, it has been our policy, at least since 1976, to encourage our puppeteers to develop their own one-person puppet shows. Three of our company left to do so, without requesting funds through us. Another chose to request assistance for developing a night-time show (for four puppeteers) from the Theatre Board through us. When no Special Projects funding was made available, we accommodated the project within our own

NEWS

Training opportunities are top news locally and overseas at the moment. PAPERBAG THEATRE in Adelaide have just received a grant of \$5,000 from the Theatre Board to engage an apprentice puppeteer for one year - an excellent enterprise with which to mark the occasion of the company's 10th Year of operation. Paperbag have long aspired to expanding their company, but have lacked the means to do so - this is the solution to the problem, I feel. And the apprentice who joins them could not help but benefit from exposure to the talent and experience they offer. THE PUPPET CENTRE in London has announced its second annual bursary scheme - for two experienced puppeteers to expand their horizons undertaking classes, apprenticeships, projects and research for 42 weeks, with a personal mentor each to assist their endeavours. The scheme is funded by the Arts Council of Great Britain - we had a similar one here in 1975, when three puppeteers - Mary Travers, Sue Bradbury and Michael Creighton - were funded for one year which extended to almost two by the Theatre Board of the Australia Council. Mary Traver's account of her experiences on the traineeship indicate it was an exciting and productive project, but unfortunately, it was not repeated. In the next issue I hope to bring you news of the courses conducted in France at the INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTE OF PUPPETRY, as I'll be visiting it during the Puppet Festival in Charleville. There is a thorough-going account of the Institute's first course, offered last September, in the Spring '82 edition of A PROPOS, the American UNIMA Centre's magazine, which I recommend to readers.

Aussie Kids On The Block

"The Kids on the Block" are six Muppet-style puppets - "just ordinary kids who are disabled in some way but haven't accepted their handicaps as making them different."

They appeared last year in a participatory show devised by American Barbara Aiello, designed to promote acceptance and discussion of the problems of disabled people among children. Now CRINKLE CREME CREATIONS - a company of teachers, actors, directors and writers - is performing the show in NSW schools. (CRINKLE CREME are based at: 3 Browns Lane, North Sydney 2080, phone 922 7718) The performance is aimed at stimulating schools to devise their own "Kids on the Block" shows, using kits - puppets, scripts and follow-up material - available from NSW Regional Special Education Consultants. A number of kits have been purchased by the NSW Education Department - one for each region of the state.

Film & Video

If you're casting about for inspirational films to show at meetings or classes, or if you just need a bit of inspiration yourself, here are two that have recently come to light, as Mr. Lumiere would have said:-

"HERE COME THE PUPPETS!" is a US video documentary on the 1980 Washington Puppet Festival, showing the work of a host of American and European puppeteers, including Trangel, Babsinhaz, Bruce Schwartz and Peter Waschinsky. There are also interviews with many of the puppeteers, conducted with grace and intelligence by Mr. US Puppetry himself, Jim Henson. It's on VHF tape; it's a dub, so picture quality is less than perfect, but the content more than makes up for that. It was kindly sent by Henson to Axel Axelrad, and Axel will lend it, provided you can pay freight costs. Contact him on (03) 751 1144 or write to The Puppet House, Coonara Rd., Olinda VIC 3788.

"INTERLUDE BY CANDLELIGHT" was recently screened at a NSW Guild meeting, and is reported to be beautifully filmed. It's a documentary on the work of Dutch puppet-maker, Harry van Tussenbroek, who makes macabre puppets from found objects like bird skulls and driftwood. The film is available from the NSW State Film Centre.

The archival footage of EDITH MURRAY - AN AURAL AND VISUAL HERSTORY, in which Mrs. Murray talks about her life teaching puppetry to children and fostering the art Australia-wide, has now been completed. It was funded by the Australia Council for its Arts on Archive series, and Mrs. Murray is the first puppeteer to be included in the series (how about some more, Australia Council?) It was producer Christine Woodcock's original intention to cut this "talking head" footage into a larger film on Australian puppetry, but funding and production difficulties prevented this. The film is lodged with the National Film Archive, available for use in future documentaries.

Don't forget too, that "A PUPPET PUDDING", produced by the Marionette Theatre of Australia's Special Projects Person Michael Creighton, is available for hire or purchase from the Tasmanian Film Corporation. It's on the making of the MTA's 1980 production of "The Magic Pudding", and comes on video or 16mm film. And if you want a seal of approval, this year it won the newly-created ATOM AWARD from the Australian Teachers of Media association for the best educational short film on the arts.

"RUBBISH", Creighton's latest film, has been in production this last year and will soon be released. It's a fantasy about the puppet-making ventures of a small boy, and contains some spectacular scenes and some wierd and wonderful puppets.

Once "RUBBISH" is away, Creighton will be starting work on his next film, a documentary on Asian puppetry called "THROUGH ANCIENT EYES".

While visiting the "Puppet Stars" exhibition at the Sydney Opera House, I was intrigued by three small puppets titled "Cystitis, Thrush and Herpes" - beautifully nasty little creatures worthy of their names. On further enquiry I learned that they were made by Tina Matthews, a New Zealand puppeteer who has come over "to try my luck". You'll be seeing them at the Puppet Festival, because they star in two videos that Matthews and her associates are working on in Sydney and plan to bring to the Festival.

Situations Vacant

SPARE PARTS PUPPET THEATRE, the regional theatre based in Perth, requires the services of a PUPPET-MAKER for a six-month period during 1983. The contract will run from March 1983 - August 1983. Return airfares provided. Salary commensurate with experience and skill. Applicants should forward their curriculum vitae to:

Peter Wilson, Artistic Director,
Spare Parts Puppet Theatre,
P.O. Box 897, Fremantle WA 6160

SPARE PARTS PUPPET THEATRE is offering contract employment to experienced puppeteers to supplement the theatre's own contingent of puppeteers and guest artists for its 1983 programme. Full details are available by writing to:

..., Spare Parts Puppet Theatre,
P.O. Box 987, Fremantle WA 6160.

JIKA JIKA PUPPET COMPANY needs a puppeteer to join the company in 1983. Contact:

Roy McNeill, Jika Jika Puppet Company,
75 Delbridge Street, N. Fitzroy VIC 3065
Phone (03) 489 0088.

Spare Parts

SPARE PARTS PUPPET THEATRE, based in Western Australia, has recently completed an eight-week tour of country areas in WA. To combat the isolation so often affecting long tours, the theatre divided the Company into two so that no member of the theatre did any more than four weeks out in the country. However, the distances travelled by the Company were enormous, taking in half the State in a circular route that ran from Perth to Dalwallinu, Kalgoorlie, Esperance, Albany, Perth. The performances on tour were "IL MONDO MARIONETTA" with performers Noriko Nishimoto, Peter Wilson and Ian Treginning and "FINGS AND FACES" with Frank Italiano and Chris Warne. The day Noriko arrived back in Perth she barely had time to pack before heading off to Sydney to conduct workshops for the Liverpool Education Authority in Japanese Puppetry.

The Company, now all together in Perth, are working toward a school holiday season at the Princess May Theatre in September; development of "THE MAGIC CUBE" for Pub audiences; and preparation for the South Australian Tour commencing on October 4th. Beverly Campbell-Jackson arrives back in Perth (Beverly was a foundation member of SPARE PARTS) for designing and workshops at the beginning of September for one month.

SPARE PARTS has instigated a performance-free day as from the beginning of May this year to afford staff the

opportunity of having a training day each week. Training days are scheduled thus:

- 9 am - Voice Class with Anne Annear
- 10 am - Mime Class with Rae Gibson
- 11 am - Puppet Techniques with Noriko Nishimoto
- 1 pm - LUNCH
- 2 pm to 4.30 pm - Programme development and application of technique

The system is working extremely well, and both trainee and senior staff are happy with the project.

Public classes are also held in Mime, Mask and Puppet-Making each Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday nights, at which staff can also attend if they wish.

During September, craft workshops for staff will be conducted by Beverly Campbell-Jackson and Jas Cartwright (props maker at National Theatre Company).

1983 looks like being an exciting year providing funding can be maintained, with plans for the development of a new adult programme called "3 SUITES" - an evening of short pieces linked thematically and directed by John Catlin, Peter Wilson and Cath Robinson.

A production of "KULLENER" written by John Lonie with music by Ian Clyne; the "BANJO PATTERSON SHOW" by Richard Tulloch; and a possible joint season with the National Theatre Company of "FAUST".

PETER WILSON

UNIMA Projects Need Your Photos

The UNIMA Publications Committee is calling for photographs for the third UNIMA PICTORIAL VOLUME OF INTERNATIONAL PUPPETRY, to be published by Henschel-Verlag, Berlin, and released at the next World UNIMA Congress in 1984. The final date for submission of material has been fixed for the end of this year. Send material to:

AUSTRALIAN CENTRE OF UNIMA

17 Sirius Cove Road Mosman NSW 2088

The new volume will be divided into chapters, each chapter introduced by an expert dealing with specific subject matter. Possible chapters will include:

1. New artistic trends in puppetry today - pictures should be of productions created since 1974.
2. Living traditions in still active puppet theatres of today.
3. Puppets in variety, cabaret, etc.
4. Puppet plays in film and video.
5. Puppets and animated figurative elements in the Actors Theatre, Musicals, Ballet, etc.
6. Puppets as mediators of social or political aims (hygienic, demographic, sociological, political agitation, propaganda, etc.)
7. Puppets in education.
8. Puppets used in psychodiagnosis, therapy and special education.
9. Puppets in advertising (film and TV commercials or any type of display advertising).

TYPE OF MATERIAL NEEDED

Black and white prints, minimum format 9 x 12 cm
 Colour prints, minimum format 9 x 12 cm
 Transparencies, minimum format 35mm slide, but bigger formats preferred.

All material will be carefully treated, returned if rejected or kept until the completion of the editorial work. Pictures chosen for publication will be paid for according to the standards customary in the publisher's country.

Please attach information as outlined below. Do not write on the backs of photos, as this might damage them.

PHOTOGRAPH IDENTIFICATION

- | | |
|--|-------------------------------------|
| *Name and address of proprietor (theatre, institution or photographer) | |
| *Title of production | |
| *Author | *Date of first performance |
| *Director | *Information on content of photo |
| *Designer (puppets) | *Name and address of photographer |
| *Designer (scenery) | if not already given as proprietor. |

Each year the UNIMA Publications Committee produces a full-colour glossy calendar with photos from all over the world on a specific aspect of puppetry.

The 1983 Calendar, on Classical Fairy Tales, is now out, and can be ordered in bulk through UNIMA Centres. Individual copies can be obtained from:

PUPPEN UND MASKEN, Eppsteinerstrasse 22,
 D-6000 Frankfurt/ M, West Germany

(Cost: approx. 14DM + postage; specify English text when ordering)

The 1984 Calendar, on Puppets in Variety, has been completed, and now is the time to place your order with the Australian UNIMA Centre, so they can send a bulk order to the distributors in East Germany - it's cheaper than ordering individually through booksellers.

Material is being sought for the 1985 Calendar, the subject of which is Children playing for Children - showing children's productions, preferably puppets/sets made as well as manipulated by children. The closing date for material is 10th OCTOBER, 1982. Collection has now begun for the 1986 Calendar, on Mask, Mime and Puppets, showing multi-media productions using these elements together.

Photos for calendars should be TRANSPARENCIES, minimum format 6 x 6 cm, of top professional quality, in the shape of a rectangle, a little higher than broad, or nearing the shape of a square. They should be sent to:

Gustav Gysin, UNIMA Publications,
 Roggenstrasse 1,
 CH-4125 Riehen, Switzerland.

unima

UNION INTERNATIONALE DE LA
 MARIONETTE - the worldwide
 association of puppeteers.

Membership \$10 pa from Australian Centre

Adelaide, South Australia, January 21-30, 1983 Australian International PUPPET FESTIVAL



Limited single rooms in a university residential college can be reserved as soon as the program is released, although the Festival cannot guarantee to find accommodation for everyone.

The complete program will remain under wraps until it is announced to the media by South Australian Premier David Tonkin, but we can expect visiting companies from Czechoslovakia, India and China, plus solo performers from Holland, New York, and California, along with a visiting lecturer on Indonesian Wayang.

The Australian program will include at least two full-scale pieces for adult audiences, new productions for children, and a "rotating" program of up to ten different children's performances from all over the country.

Cabaret performances will also be featured, and workshops will include such topics as: Designing for the Puppet Theatre, Puppet Mechanisms, Techniques for Filming Puppets, Rod Manipulation, Marionette Manipulation, Large-scale Outdoor Puppetry and several others.

It is not too late, however, to present any thoughts, ideas or proposals for inclusion in the Festival.

Artistic Co-ordinator Andrew Bleby would like to be contacted by anyone who would like to perform or conduct a professional workshop. He would also like to hear any thoughts or comments about the shape of the Festival or any other aspects of its organization.

A number of full-scale professional seasons will be presented by overseas and Australian companies, organized at a fully-professional level. All other performances presented to the public (outdoors or in the rotating season) will be contracted at a fee for performance and provided with a venue, staff and promotion. Other performances, for registered participants only, will not be paid for.

Financial assistance for the Festival is so far assured from the Theatre Board of the Australia Council, the South Australian Government, the Department of Foreign Affairs, the Australia-China Council and the South Australian Education Department. Other assistance is coming from the Malaysian Airlines System and NWS Channel 9. Major private sponsorship is being sought to cover the rest of the Festival's costs, which are budgetted at over \$200,000.

It's now less than six months until the AUSTRALIAN INTERNATIONAL PUPPET FESTIVAL begins in Adelaide on January 21st.

The complete program of performances and workshops will be published in October. The program will include dates, times prices and descriptions of all Puppet Festival events.

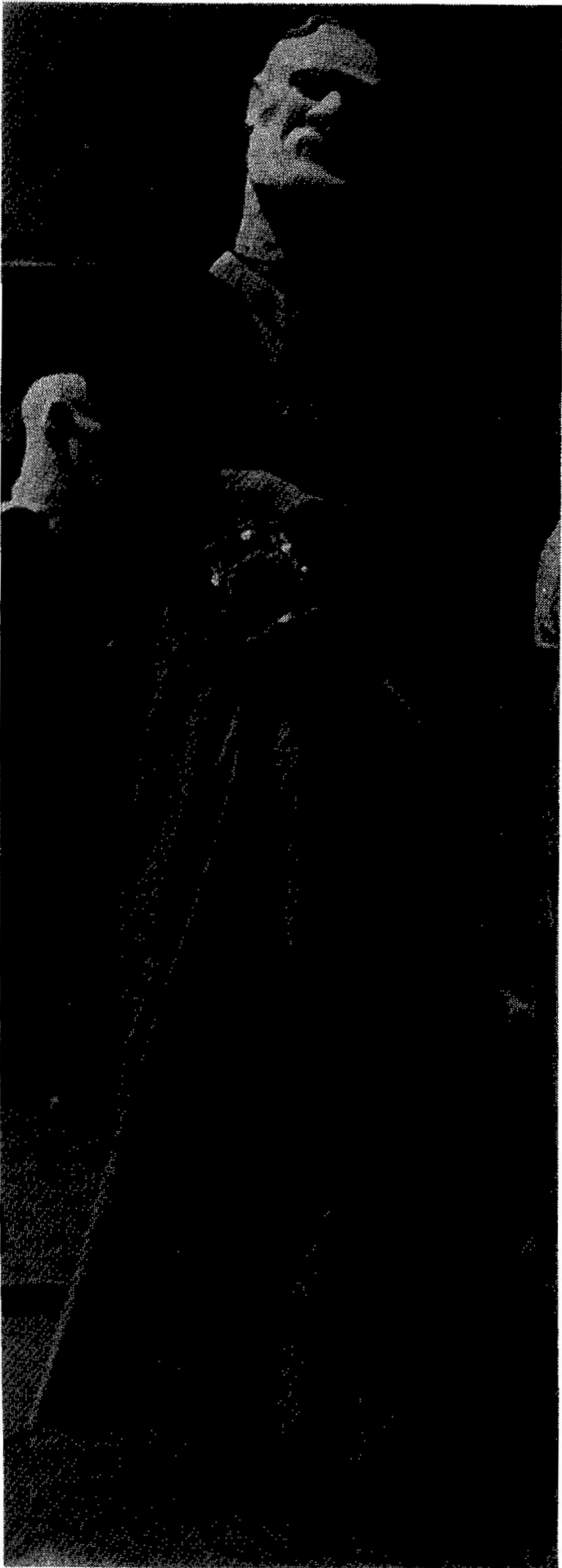
A registration fee will entitle people to free tickets to some performances and concession prices on all others, invitations to specific events, free admission to all seminars and workshops, concession prices on evening meals and cabaret nights, and admission to the final puppet party by the sea.

Andrew Bleby has recently visited many people around Australia to discuss their ideas and proposals, and the performance and workshop content of the Festival should be settled by early September.

If you know of any people who would like to be added to the Festival mailing list to receive up-to-date information, please contact:

The Australian International Puppet Festival,
Carclew Youth Performing Arts Centre Inc.,
11 Jeffcott Street,
North Adelaide SA 5006

Phone: (08) 267 5111



Puppets on stilts: THE PARLIAMENTARY MEN.

THE PARLIAMENTARY MEN is a piece of street puppetry that explores the tools of stilts, masks and drums for effective outdoor performance.

The show was originally conceived around the image of six parliamentary men in search of a minerals boom, and it comprised six stilt figures costumed with variations of a Malcolm Fraser mask cast by Francis Batten, two unstilted drummers-cum-sticklers and another stilt character called Minerals Boom. The show has since been reworked and at the time of writing concerns six parliamentary men disputing a Peacock leadership challenge. Whatever the story, the strength of the performance derived from the power of the images and the drums to fill a space and stop a crowd.

THE PARLIAMENTARY MEN was put together as a research project within the Drama Action Centre in Sydney in February, 1982. An intense training schedule, 7.30 - 11.30 pm five days a week for four weeks, was set to acquire the necessary physical skills, endurance and group finesse. In the afternoons we worked at mask and costume making, which took longer than expected and was finally completed in the woolshed of Blue Folk Farm during the Canberra Festival in March.

The Canberra Festival paid a \$2,000 commission, half in advance, for the show and this was used to pay for material costs and travel expenses. No actors were paid during this period although it was expected that the show would gain bookings at other festivals and so generate future income. So it goes - no gold in the streets of street theatre.

THE PARLIAMENTARY MEN worked marvellously in festival crowds in Canberra and in the Adelaide Mall where we performed as part of the Adelaide Fringe Festival. "Frightening" and "awesome" were the common responses. There were also comments about the lack of clear story and the primitiveness of the polemics.

These comments were few but they relate to a problem of this kind of theatre. The problem is the expectation of theatre critics that theatre should be about words. THE PARLIAMENTARY MEN was exploring something else - visual theatre. We aimed at a play of images in public space which evoked a mood rather than proscribed a plot. That THE PARLIAMENTARY MEN created a here and now presence, a memorable and shared event in an otherwise anonymous crowd, was sufficient excuse for it.

The experience taught us some things - for example, that street drumming is ever a powerful device for controlling and inspiring moods (the sound of the French Revolution was drumming) ; that one-metre high stilts seemed to be optimum and that taller stilts restricted our ability to dance ; that the actor's voice even as a group chant could not match the size of the puppets ; and that crowds fear for a stilt-walker's fall , they tend to stand clear during performances and be shocked when we did fall both by accident and design.

The conception of THE PARLIAMENTARY MEN derives from an ongoing concern in my work which is to research and refine the tools, theatrical and other, for making effective celebrations of community. In THE PARLIAMENTARY MEN was the question: "how does one fill a space and evoke a mood on a grand scale out of doors?"

Previously I had worked with big rod puppets, as when Greg Temple built his big birds for the CITY OF DREAMS project for the Canberra Festival in 1977. This research showed that big rod puppets are cumbersome to handle and pall quickly from characters into mere props because of the limitations of their animation.

During 1981 the Community Arts Board and the Gulbenkian Foundation funded me six months training in community theatre techniques in the U.K. I worked principally for Welfare State International in the north of England and on a three-week project with members of Odin Teatret in North Wales. Both were stimulating experiences.

From Welfare State I learned lots about visual theatre techniques. Welfare State is a makers' company and the strength of their performance derives from the talent and effort they put into generating images. One, for example, involved a huge fish which I built for them during the season. The fish was a bamboo and calico monster on bicycle wheels, 7 metres long, 2.5 metres in diameter, with an opening mouth, swishing fins and tail, and internal lights. It was used as theme for two days' activities which climaxed with the fish returning to the sea via a 200m diameter spiral of fire cans with fireworks and a full moon rising. A holy moment.

By contrast Odin Teatret was an actors' company in the mould of Grotowski's Laboratory Theatre. Based in Denmark, their tours to Italy and South America had forced their theatre out of doors, and they researched and developed a stilt show, called ANABASIS.

In stilts I saw the possibility of actors being in the puppets rather than under them and that was a major breakthrough for me. I was also influenced by the research approach of Odin and the dedication they put into perfecting their craft as actors. This together with the visual theatre of Welfare State produced the synthesis expressed in THE PARLIAMENTARY MEN.

But there is more to it than that. During our training we did our warm-ups under enormous skies, on hilltops in a brown and yellow vastness. The sense of space that is so intrinsic to Australian landscape filled us and when we performed to crowds we realised that huge space was our performance domain. We reached over the tops of heads to the architecture and to the hills and knew our context. Here we knew we were onto a style of theatre relevant to this land and its grandness.

And in the background of that realisation is another, and it is this: that the tools that make for effective celebrations of community are the same that make for effective defense of community. Just as they can be used to enrich and validate the crowd experience of a festival so they can be used to achieve the same ends for a public protest if the protest is conceived as celebratory theatre rather than an amplified committee meeting. The same tools can be used to gain access to mass media by presenting visual expressions whose quality of imagination and image is such that it can slip past the gatekeepers, the word-bound status quo preservers, to explode in popular consciousness a la the mind bombs referred to in "The Greenpeace Chronicle".

So this is the vision and the challenge of the work - a theatre of power for the streets.

Graeme Dunstan



Elizabeth Paterson

THREE MASQUERADES

I see myself as a creator rather than an interpreter in theatre, and I like the harmony and unity that is gained by making and performing alone. It can be satisfying to an audience to see the whole world that comes out of me in my work. The content deals with subjects that are of central concern to most people: old age, work, daydreams and fantasies.

I work in simple materials, mainly cloth. There is no technological mystery about them - everyone can see how the masquerades are constructed. We are too much involved with objects like cameras and tape recorders that we don't know how to make ourselves. Everything I build extends off the human body and uses simple structural techniques. The mystery is not in how they work, but the life in them.

I am particularly interested in a theatre of images. I don't know how to explain this, except to say that there is something about seeing which gives me lots of energy, my sense of being alive. I seek immediate recognition from an audience by presenting a single literal image with a simple structure.

Elizabeth Paterson

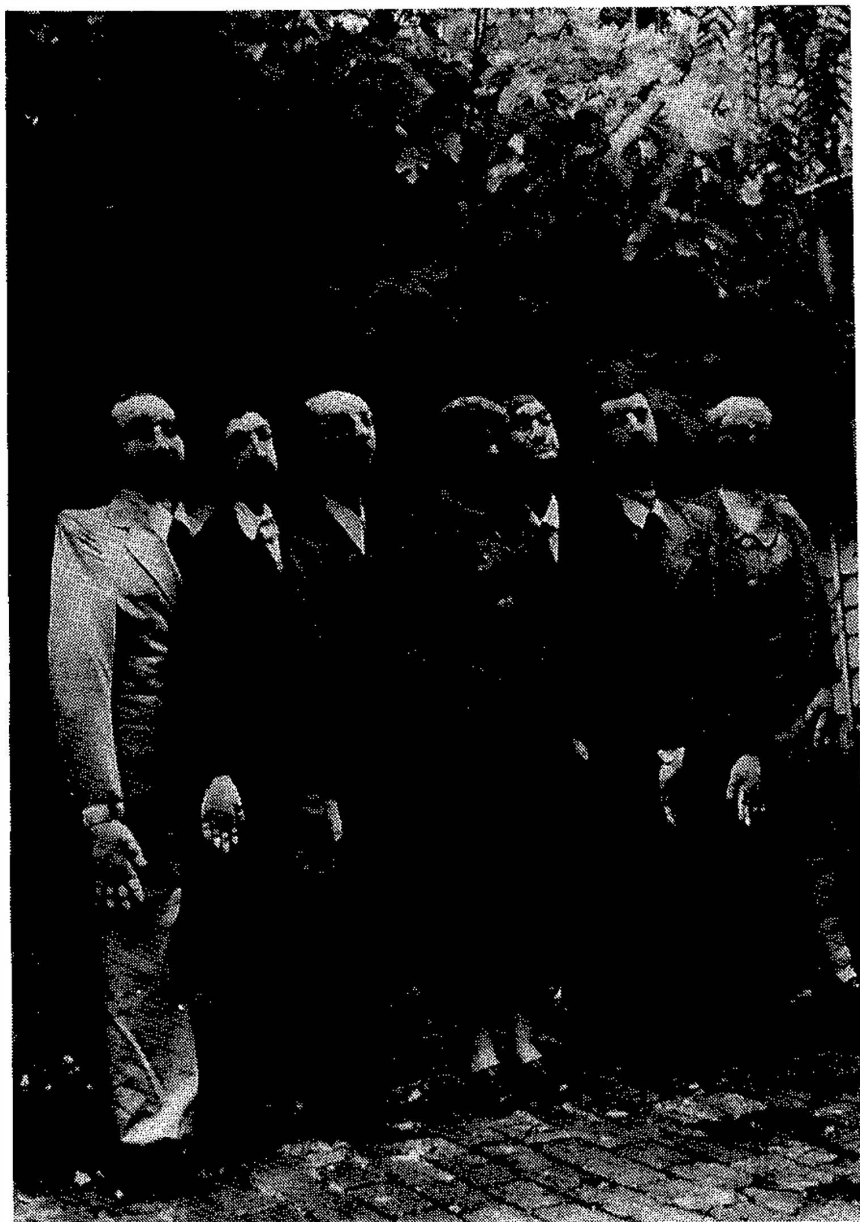


Photo NY



Photo Jeff Busby

In each of the Three Masquerades Elizabeth Paterson wears both a character and its environment on one extended costume, an idea she derived from reading about the Ergungun tribe in Africa, whose masqueraders use the same unity of forms.

"THREE MASQUERADES" begins with The Nine-to-Fiver. Paterson straps herself onto a plywood board, to which several stuffed life-size figures are attached. She covers the straps with a floral print dress and her face with a cloth mask and becomes one of a crowd. The figures have wheels on their feet, and as Paterson walks the crowd moves with her in a tight, rigid unit. There's no speech or plot, but there is sound, rumbling train-like rhythms from a tape, and the scrape of the wheels on the stage floor. The crowd moves up close to the audience, stops, Paterson becomes agitated, pulls off her mask and looks at the immobile faces either side of her, then replaces the mask and the crowd moves back away from the audience, turning at the end to reveal a two-dimensional city-scape applied in cloth on the back of the board. Paterson steps out of the Nine-to-Fiver and throws a sheet over the crowd.

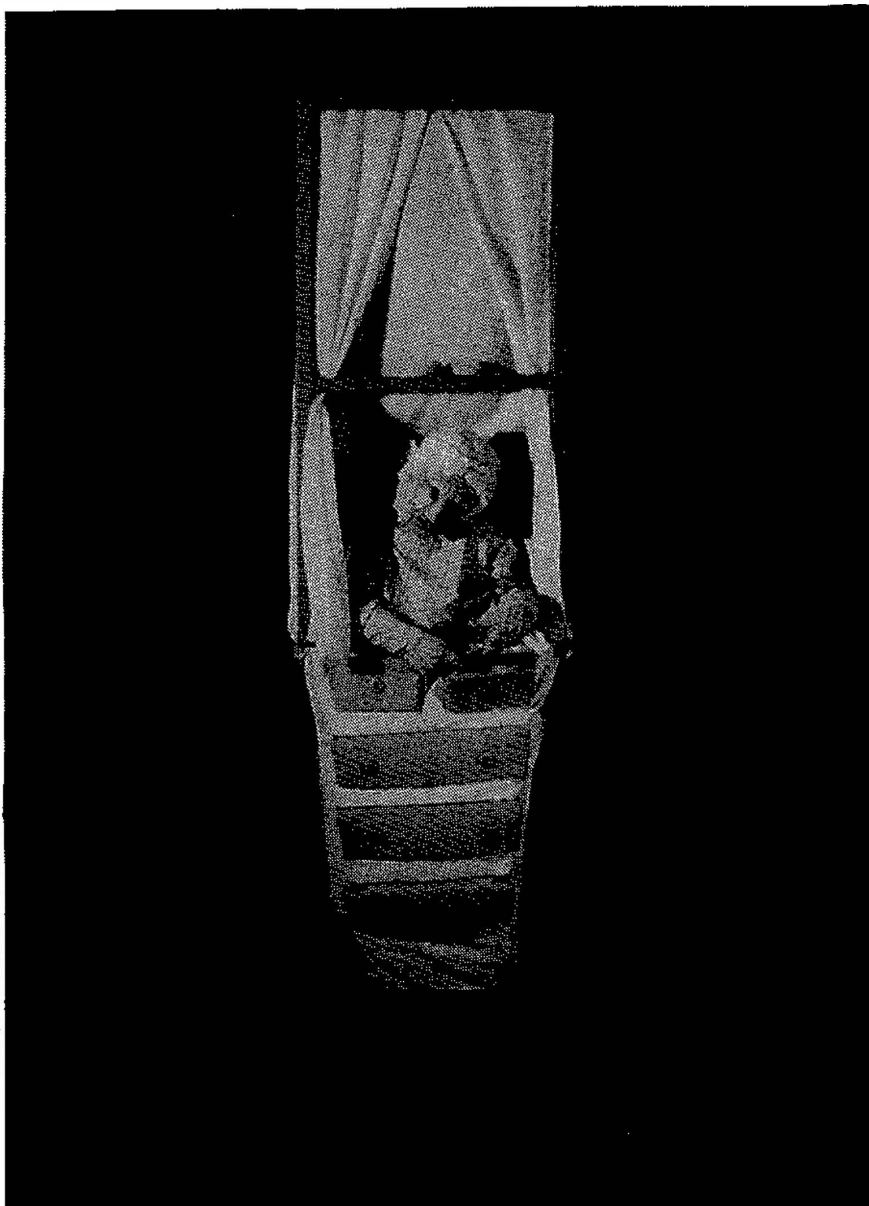
Next comes The Merry-go-Round Person. Paterson is in plain white underwear after stepping out of the Nine-to-Fiver, and now an assistant helps her into the Merry-go-Round

costume: a bright blue dress with a full, stiff skirt and a large carousel head-piece, with a battery attached. She settles herself onto a stool, applies lipstick to her mouth, and then she's ready to begin. From the pockets of her skirt she takes tiny creatures: a doll with hair full of eyes, a fish with a mouthful of minute heads, another doll with a pram full of cats. Each one is spoken to, and speaks back, with the manic seriousness of childhood. (Paterson explained to me later that the point of the piece is to show an adult playing - a concept that puppeteers will readily understand) Each gets a ride on the merry-go-round hat: a press of a switch and around it whirs; and then each is put back, protesting, into its pocket. Paterson leaves the stage to get into the Old Woman at the Window costume.

The Window comes onstage backwards and stops close to the audience. Paterson, inside, lowers her backside slightly, as if easing herself into a chair, and then turns to begin the piece. The Old Woman draws the curtains and looks out, talking to herself about the weather and the street. She opens drawers in the costume, takes out letters from relatives and friends and muses aloud over them. She's lonely, tired, but the piece is poignant rather than bleak. The Old Woman carefully replaces her letters, and the show ends, quietly. MV



Photo Brendan Lavelle



THE OLD WOMAN AT THE WINDOW

Photo Sandy Edwards



I count myself fortunate that I was able to go to Sydney to see "SMILES AWAY", because it won't be coming to Melbourne. The Victorian Arts Council has decided not to tour it here because they don't think it would draw sufficient audiences. "It's a family show rather than a kids' show" the Council director Don Mackay told me, "and we have trouble selling family shows in Victoria".

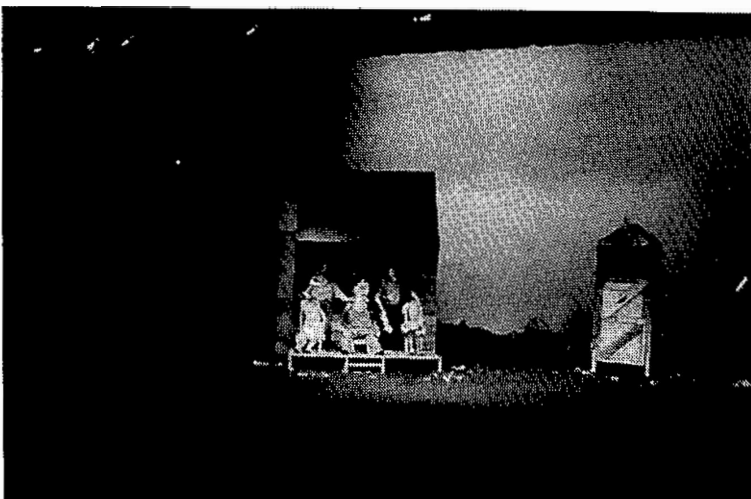
That's a shame, because "SMILES AWAY" is a very good show indeed. On every level- design, construction, scripting, direction, staging and performance- its achievement is excellent, and the enthusiasm it generated among audiences and critics in Adelaide and Sydney was fervent. One critic claimed it relieved a tension headache just five minutes into act 1 ; complete strangers leaned across their seats to exchange exclamations - "Wasn't it wonderful!"-"Wasn't it just!"; it sent me bounding from the Opera House blissed out with good cheer. It WAS wonderful - quite simply, it made everyone happy.

It was created ensemble fashion from the various ideas and specific talents of the company members. Production meetings from late 1980 yielded a collection of disparate items which were then placed in a narrative framework. The fairy tale of the princess who wouldn't smile provided the ideal structure in the series of "turns" put on for her amusement. The story was Australianized, its sexism pointedly removed, and the role of the puppeteers expanded to make them the servants of the puppets they operated - "Hey Yobbo! Can you do us a Punch & Judy show?" Role subversion went further with different puppeteers operating the same puppets. Dialogue was live, and occasionally extended to interchanges with the audience. Music was a mix of taped and live segments.

Onstage the show is irresistible, uproarious pleasure, but at the box office, it's a more serious matter. The high cost of tickets into major theatres places it \$\$\$\$ Away beyond the reach of most families. When the MTA opens its own theatre next year, it will be able to charge more reasonable prices. Roll on the Salors' Home !

MV

Photo MV



Most of the stage; there was a crow on the right that didn't want to be in the picture. On either side, at the opening of act 2, were also placed the Newsreader above (underneath the mask, Ross Browning) and the bedroom in which Willy awakes to the AM News and hears that the hand of the Princess,"and the rest of her as well" is on offer to whoever can make her smile.

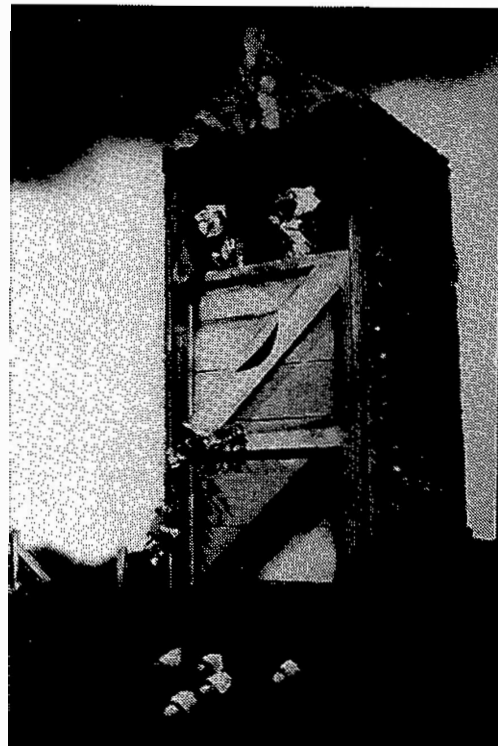


Photo MV

This is the dunny-booth, an invention which affords the P & J practitioner the luxury of performing from a seated position, but the Princess couldn't see the joke herself. The white things on the ground are babies.

Marionette Theatre of Australia:

SMILES AWAY

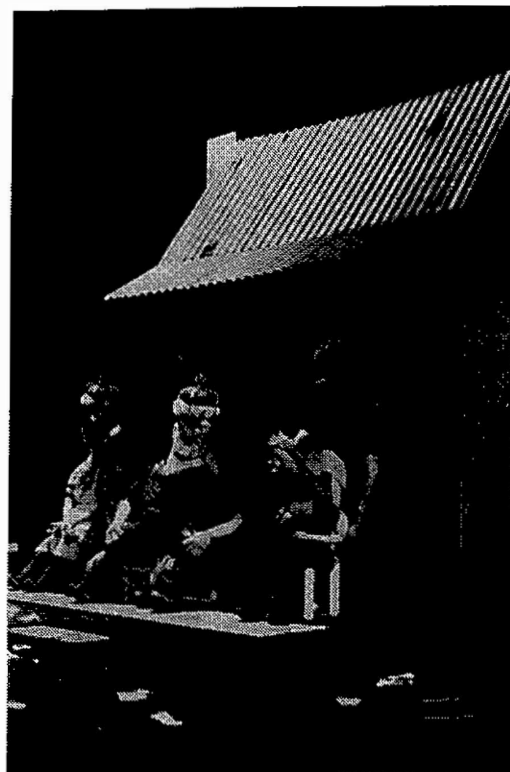
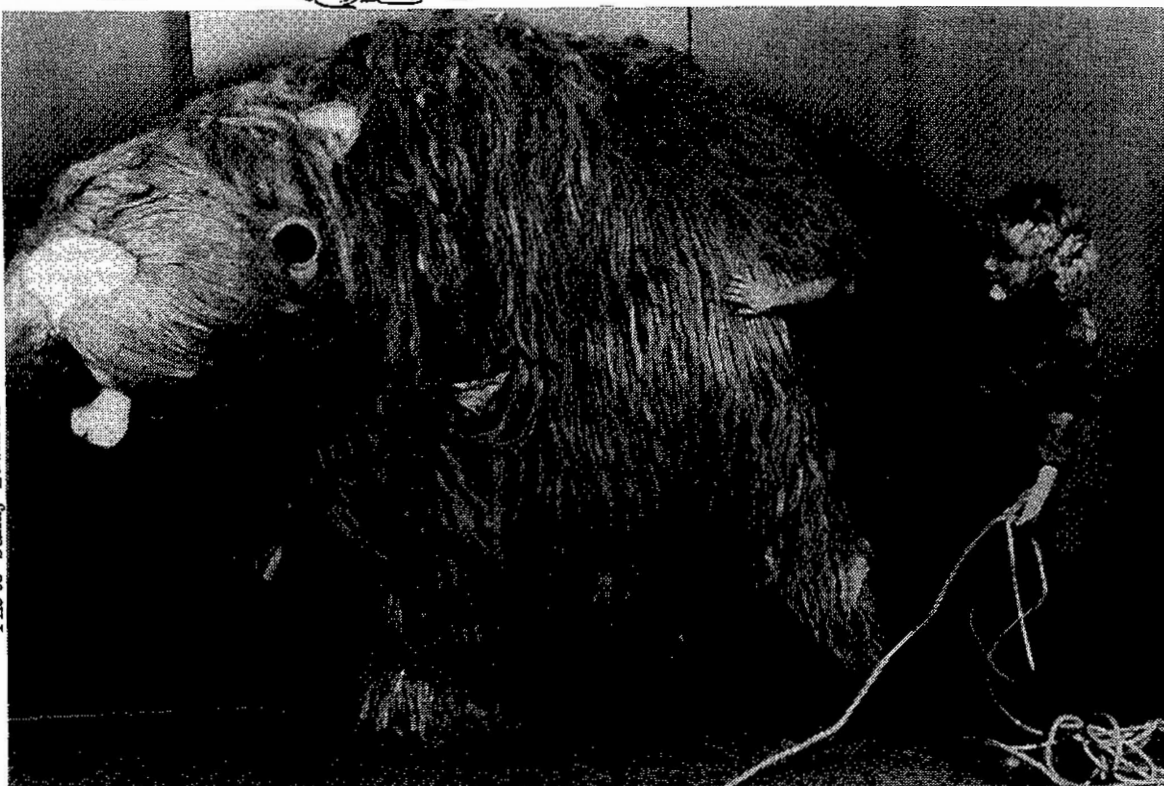


Photo M.V.

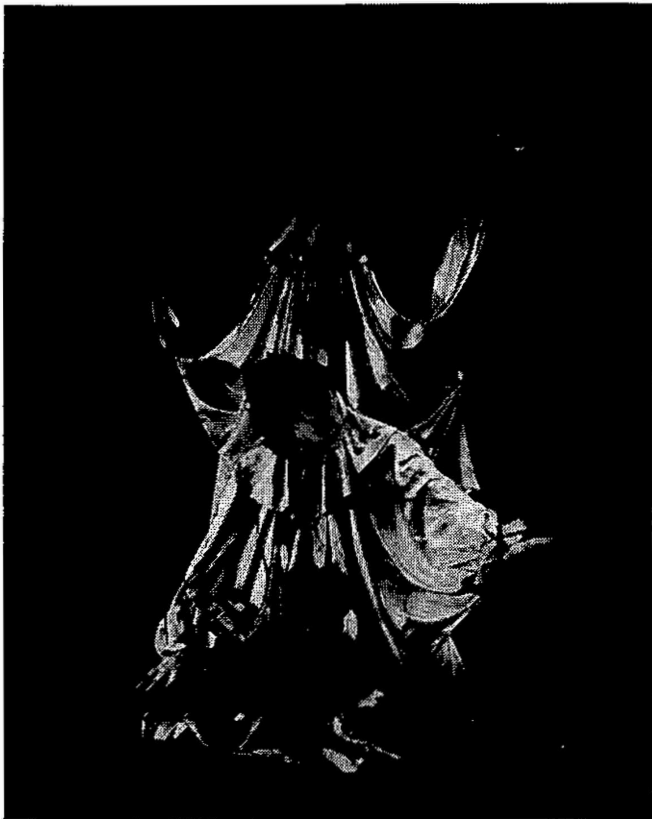
The Royal Family on the steps of Bucking-Lamb Palace: Queen Madge, King Roy and the Princess, operated by Yobbo Blackwell and Seaborn, thier humble servants.

Direction: RICHARD BRADSHAW, with DASHA BLAHOVA, PENNY CHATER and MARGUERITE PEPPER. Design: PATRICK COOK. Puppet Construction: ROSS HILL, KEVIN SCANLON, JANE DAVIES and MATTHEW MAURER. Costumes: KIM ROYLE. Set Construction and Lighting: NEIL SIMPSON. Musical direction: ROSS BROWNING.

Photo Sandy Edwards



Remember the Diprotodon, the Giant Prehistoric Wombat Ross Hill was pictured constructing in last August's edition? Here it is in full hairy glory. Its specialty, the soft-shoe shuffle, must be a hit at parties, even if it didn't make the Princess smile. Sue Winter stroking.



Spare Parts Puppet Arts Theatre MASKED



Guildford Grammar School, located in Perth's rural outer suburbs, is a school fortunate enough to be equipped with a small but well-appointed theatre. Its semi 'in the round' structure, with raked seating and total black-out facilities, provided ideal conditions for Spare Parts' performance of "MASKED" for students from Years 9 to 11.

Spare Parts is a recently-formed company, having been launched in early 1981 from Peter Wilson's artist-in-residence production of "FAUST" with West Australian Institute of Technology students for the '81 Festival of Perth. "MASKED" was devised as a programme for secondary students in response to enquiries and interest in puppetry and related techniques, received since "FAUST".

The programme is presented in two parts. Part One is designed as an introduction to the art of puppetry. It demonstrates the use of primitive and character masks, hand and rod puppets, glove and string puppets and Bunraku puppetry techniques. Part Two uses these techniques in a story form, telling of Wouter Loos, a Dutchman exiled on the coast of Western Australia in 1629.

The first part is a delightful exploration of puppetry techniques. Puppeteers Peter Wilson and Ian Tregonning, wearing black velvets with hoods, are visible all the time in the dim curtain of light. This allows the audience to be aware of each technical device as it is adopted. The piece is accompanied by a music soundtrack which complements the mimed humour and pathos of the characters presented.

The puppeteers begin by donning blank white masks which are then characterised by the movement of their wearers; rapidly, they are transformed by additions to their blankness; and suddenly, the masks disappear to be replaced by Punch and Judy. At Guildford, a flicker of instant recoil could be felt in the audience as these figures - stamped with preconceptions in Australia of being 'kidstuff' - appeared. This was almost immediately dispelled, however, as Punch and Judy, in accordance with their traditional natures, mimed a slightly bawdy encounter which ended in their own destruction and the appearance of Pierrot. The Pierrot image presents techniques of Bunraku and string puppetry, and then returns to the mask, this time with a full character face and costume attached. Part One ends on a whimsical note as Pierrot explores his own identity.

Part Two is less successful. Its greatest difficulty is that it does not follow easily from Part One. There is a break in the performance while the stage is rearranged and then the audience, after being absorbed in a lyrical first half, is jerked into a harsh documentary narrative.

The tale of Wouter Loos' exile is heavy. It has been written by Cathryn Robinson, combining extracts from Commander Pelsart's diary with the imagined ravings of Loos as he confronts his solitude in a strange and uncivilised land. Together with cabin-boy Jan Pelgrom, Loos was convicted of mutiny and murder on the Abrolhos Islands, following the shipwreck of the "Batavia", a Dutch East Indies vessel. They were cast ashore by Commander Francis Pelsart and although subsequent trading vessels to the area searched for them, both vanished without a trace.

Ian Tregonning reads diary extracts that explain the story and Peter Wilson plays the part of Wouter Loos. Jan Pelgrom does not appear, but images of his bloodstained coat appear, and as Loos' ravings increase Pelgrom's skeleton materialises.

The images presented are powerful, but the narrative structure of the piece, combined with the fact that it is staged with only two performers, hamper its dramatic momentum.

MASKED is exciting in terms of its technical explorations in puppetry: Part One is a successful and accessible presentation of the potential of

these techniques to secondary students ; and Part Two, although it has limitations, is a worthwhile extension of these techniques in a presentation and dramatisation of local history.

The programme has been developed over the past year, and Spare Parts intend to continue its development - perhaps to add a third part which may help to integrate the performances as a whole. It is part of the company's policy that "if puppet theatre is to develop as a viable art form in Australia, then the time must be made to constantly review and extend the work the company is doing."

HELEN RICKARDS

(Reprinted with kind permission from LOWDOWN)

Outlandyshe Puppet Theatre: BUY BUY BABY.

The Outlandyshe is housed in the Wayside Chapel at Sydney's Kings Cross, and opened early last year. Aside from the usual problems of attracting audiences to a new venue, it has been caught in the cleft stick of its location. People expect to be bludgeoned with religious propaganda, and the Cross itself, the heartland of Sydney's demi-monde, seems an unsavoury place to take the kids (and a very difficult place to park the car). But if you overcome your resistance and visit the Outlandyshe - and some do: the seats were half-filled with 20 adults and children when I saw "BUY BUY BABY" - then you'll be amply rewarded by a stimulating show in a pleasant theatre. The Wayside Chapel allows Dennis and Jan Murphy the use of the theatre because their shows are concerned with socio-political issues which happen to be what the Wayside's Life Education Programme is all about. The Outlandyshe is not a "Christian Theatre".

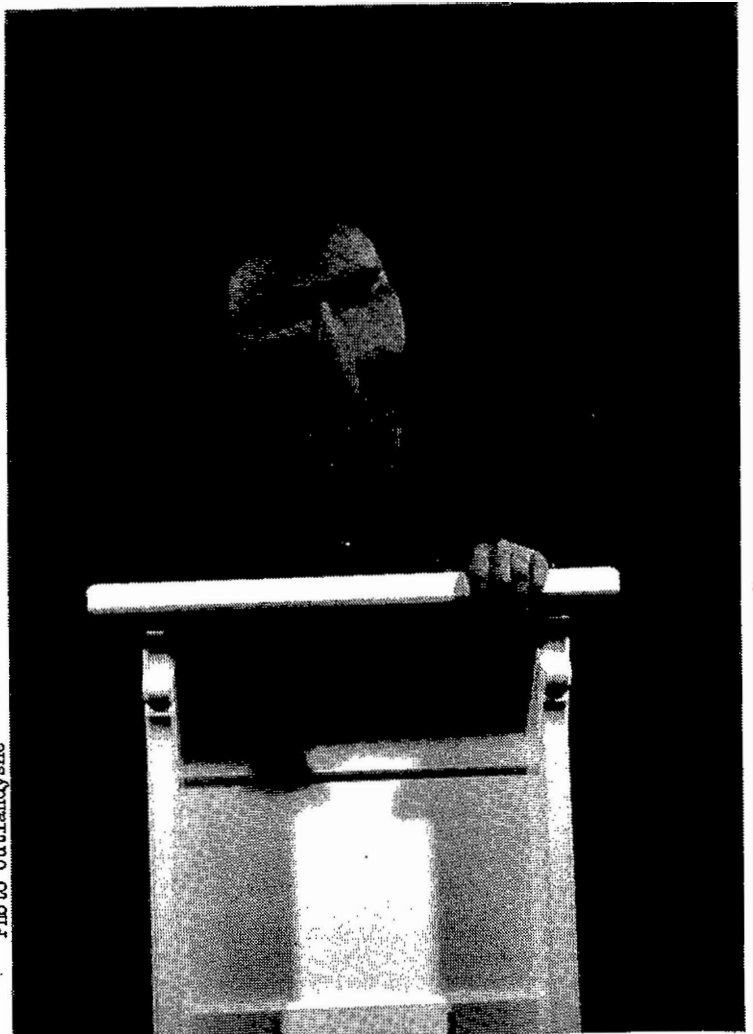


Photo Outlandyshe

CRANSHAW at the pulpit: a parody of the haranguing evangelist

"BUY BUY BABY" deals with the manipulative methods of those who would have us buy what we don't need. It opens in a simple but rivetting scene, an entr'acte to the main story, with a young puppet caught in the beam of a TV set, vacillating between resistance and surrender to its blandishments. In the course of the story that follows we meet Cranshaw, a fashion salesman who uses the techniques of the hell-fire evangelist to sell clothes to the gullible consumer; J.B. Moneygusset, corpulent capitalist who puts profits before people and cigars before anything; and Lady Hortense, twitty aristocrat in a constant state of agitation at the commonness of the common people. Creating setstock characters and improvising with them is what the Murphys do best, and most of the characters in "BBB" have appeared in earlier shows. Lady Hortense, partic-



Photo Outlandyshe

J.B. MONEYGUSSET and LADY HORTENSE: the ruling classes dissemble.

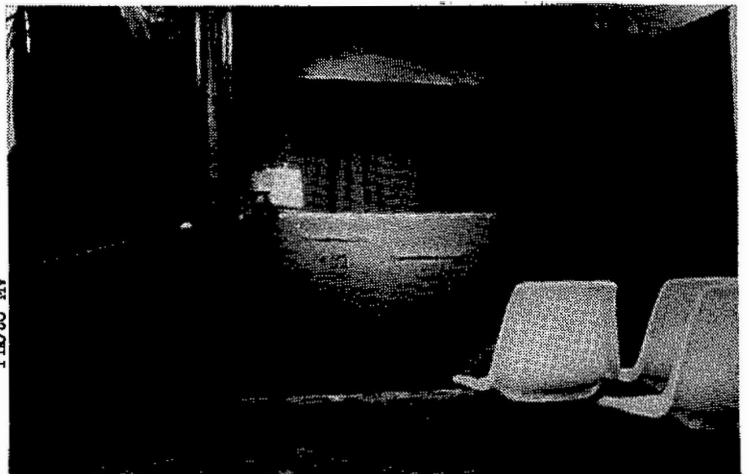


Photo MV

Inside the OUTLANDYSHE: the opening scene takes place in the light of the portable TV on the playboard.

ularly, is a highly-developed character, and Dennis Murphy is clearly very comfortable with her. Cranshaw is a newcomer to the Murphy menage, and I hope we see more of him. Unlike Moneygusset and Hortense, who are soft satirizations of ruling class foibles, Cranshaw is portrayed with much more of a cutting edge. He uses the mannerisms and inflections of the fanatic evangelist to perfection.

The story itself was a rather flimsy vehicle for such well-delineated characters. They were great at dialogue, fine with verbal humour, but the plot gave them too little to do. A few scenery changes and more props to handle would have helped. The entr'acte, on the other hand, was superb, and perhaps it is in vignettes loosely linked, rather than in narrative and plot development, that the Outlandyshe will find its forte. And I hope that more people will find the Outlandyshe - those who brave the twin perils of the Cross and the Christians will find their fears ungrounded. MV.

Letters Cont.

annual funding. We are always willing to be approached for help or involvement in other projects but are obviously not always able to assist. Nevertheless, it is still possible for puppet shows, especially those with only one or two puppeteers, to make their own way without funding, and I never cease to paint a rosy picture of the independence - and reduced accountability - one has when NOT funded.

May I remind you of what we did when you and others made strong and reasonable criticism of one of our shows? We found someone else to re-write and re-direct it with a new cast. We would appreciate it if you would display a similar respect for objectivity by publishing this letter in full in your next edition of "Manipulation".

Yours sincerely, RICHARD BRADSHAW,
Artistic director, Marionette Theatre of Australia.

EDITOR'S REPLY: Richard is quite right about the handling of the first item: it was inapt, inept, and I am abject; I apologise to the MTA and Frank Italiano for any distress it might have caused them. I thank Richard for pointing out the inaccuracies in the other items, and I hope that other readers will do likewise so that accuracy, even if falteringly, can be attained. But objectivity - if I aspired to that I'd have to change the name of the magazine!

Maeve Vella

The following letter is in reply to Peter James Wilson's Adelaide Arts Festival remarks in last issue

Dear Peter James Wilson, we have read your article about the Adelaide Arts Festival and we are sorry you have not seen any puppetry in Adelaide. We would like to point out that you perhaps looked in the wrong direction.

The Adelaide Festival has the Official part (heavily subsidised), the Fringe, and another group, unrecognised and unknown; the local professional children's theatre groups that work in schools, building audiences for others as well as themselves. For this group the official Festival is just an ordinary working time. The Fringe always asks the local companies to participate in its programme - but its organization is costly and somewhat inefficient for us (i.e. by the time the Fringe starts first bookings we are fully booked for the rest of the year).

We wrote in "Manipulation" last year that any interstate puppeteer is welcomed. The Hills called us on the way from Mildura and came to see our show in a school, they saw Little Patch, and we had an evening together. Jika Jika came to the Puppet Centre at the

end of their stay and they spent an evening at our place (one of the little ironies of life - they actually lived around the corner during the whole Festival).

We were playing every day during the Festival, we had two world premieres, we had every Friday school groups at the Puppet Centre and we were there even on Saturdays. We were willing to organize all the puppeteers, if necessary, to meet others - but there was no interest. We certainly could not compete with the Festival in advertising and marketing, but we are very much alive here; there are about 7 - 9 practising puppeteers and groups working in South Australia.

Yours sincerely, KAREL and EVA REHOREK,
Paperbag Theatre Company.

Dear Maeve, preparations are already underway here in Britain for the 1984 Puppet Festival in London. It promises to be an exciting one. At present a committee is working through a shortlist of names to decide what two people will receive bursaries from the Puppet Centre to provide an income to work in puppetry. This is the second year since the bursaries' instigation, and the recent one was a great success.

The festival "Bania Iuka" in Bielsko-Biala in Poland was an enormous success. It was well-represented by both Polish and western theatre companies. There seems to be a trend among the Eastern Block countries nowadays to sprinkle the stage liberally with puppeteers rather than puppets. This is a little sad in a way, as these countries possess a great deal of the life blood of puppet theatre. Some excellent companies performed at the festival though, most notably the Sicilians. They used large 4 - 5 foot versions of their famous marionettes and handled them with much gusto. A Hungarian company broke the ice with an astounding glove-rod show. It was a large company, perhaps 15. The story line was easy to follow despite the obvious language barriers, their timing was split-second, the puppets brilliantly manipulated, and it was compulsively enthralling. All accommodation for visiting companies was provided, and also interpreters. Festivals on this scale are extremely exciting, and for feedback and nurturing of ideas and new friendships they are invaluable.

We are busy at the LITTLE ANGEL THEATRE at the moment, rehearsing three shows for our weekend afternoon shows. The most important of which is "Noah", a rod show utilising the words of an old medieval mystery play. We are using live voices. This has proved quite a challenge and is very satisfying. On a weekend we have a show for the very young on Saturday morning, comprising three twenty-minute shows. So that totals six different shows - quite an experience!

Yours in puppetry, PETER LUCAS, London.



The QUEENSLAND GUILD is sponsoring a puppet-making competition for school children as part of the Brisbane Hobby Show which is held in November at the Wool Pavilion in the Brisbane Exhibition grounds.

There will be three sections, with two prizes awarded in each section. First prize is \$20 and an encouragement award of \$5. The sections will be as follows:

- GRADES 5/6/7 - any puppet
- GRADES 8/9/10 - choice of (a) 3 glove puppets (b) 2 rod puppets (c) 2 marionettes
- GRADES 11/12 - same as above, with stage set.

There will be no entry fee; puppets will be judged by a panel of Guild members.

Enquiries: Lola Watts, 143 Oxlade Drive, New Farm 4005.

Phone (07) 358 3732

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SECRETS

premieres **january '83**

Photo Kaye Tucker

WHAT'S ON

NSW

"FORBIDDEN FRUIT"

Based on a poem by Christina Rossetti. Presented as part of the Women and Arts Festival in Sydney in October.

Details: Festival Director, Jo Caust, Export House, 22 Pitt St. Sydney 2000
Phone (02) 277 235

"DRAGON'S JOURNEY"

Presented by Richard Hart, Joe Gladwin and Tony Miles. A powerful adventure on an enormous scale, using the ENTIRETY of St. John's Hall, 263 Oxford Street, Paddington. Bookings: (02) 560 2367.

24th - 29th August at 8 pm
Tickets: \$6.50 and \$4.50 concessions

"ALADDIN AND HIS MAGIC UFO"

Every Saturday at the Outlandyshe Puppet Theatre, Wayside Chapel, 29 Hughes St., Kings Cross. Enquiries: (02) 358 6148

August school holidays: "BUY-BUY BABY" on daily, Mon - Sat at 2pm.

Commencing 18th September, a new Saturday show: "THE LOST CITY".

(All shows start at 2 pm)

REDFERN CREATIVE LEISURE CENTRE

Shows at 2 pm every Saturday, devised at the centre and often using puppets.

117 Young Street, Redfern
Enquiries: (02) 699 6279 / 698 4364

"BOTTERSNIKES AND GUMBLES"

Presented by the Marionette Theatre of Australia at the Everest Theatre, SEYMOUR CENTRE, August school holiday season.

Enquiries: (02) 241 1391

VIC

"PUPPETS ON PARADE"

Full-scale marionette variety by the QUEENSLAND MARIONETTE THEATRE. Touring Melbourne and Victorian country towns 13th September - 22nd October

Further details: QUEENSLAND MARIONETTE THEATRE, 2 Crofton St., Geebung 4034
Phone (07) 265 5052

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10.30 am and 12.30 pm daily, 23rd - 28th August

Enquiries: 124 Boundary Rd. Tingalpa 4173
Phone (07) 390 4595

"THE MAGIC PUDDING"

presented by the Marionette Theatre of Australia for the BRISBANE COMMONWEALTH GAMES, September school holidays

Enquiries: (02) 241 1391

SA

"BOMBORA - the Dreamtime Wave"

A combined Handspan/Mushroom production at the Space Theatre, FESTIVAL CENTRE, August 30th - September 10th

10.30 am and 1.30 pm ; Tickets: \$4 & \$2

Touring Schools

VIC

JIKA JIKA PUPPET COMPANY

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"The Four Chinese Brothers"

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NSW

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"Yours and Mine"

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"The Kids on the Block"

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TAS

TERRAPIN PUPPET COMPANY

"Tanglefoot"

"The Three Pigs"

Enquiries: P.O. Box 23, Sandy Bay TAS 7005

SA

PAPERBAG THEATRE COMPANY

"The Grateful Dragon"

"Pan Twardowski"

Enquiries: (08) 798 030

PUPPETFOLK

"The Tree that wanted to see the sea"

Enquiries: (08) 261 4364

ELDRIDGE PUPPETS

"Clown and his Apprentice"

"The Elderly Gardener"

"The Cheeky Little Fish"

Enquiries: (08) 261 4364

What's Not On

THE GARDNER PUPPET THEATRE

is on holidays, to resume touring Melbourne schools and kindergartens in OCTOBER. Enquiries: (03) 870 8998

Meetings/Classes

NSW PUPPETRY GUILD

7.30 pm 16th August

Subject for discussion: FABRIC PUPPETS

Also a talk by OLIVER SUBLETT on his recent engagement in New Guinea.

VENUE: Outlandyshe Puppet Theatre, Wayside Chapel, 29 Hughes St., Kings X.
Phone (02) 358 6577 or 560 2367

VICTORIAN PUPPETRY GUILD

7.30 pm 26th August

Talk/slides from Axel Axelrad's recent trip to Europe.

VENUE: Drama Resource Centre, 117 Bourverie St. Carlton.

Phone (03) 751 1144

REDFERN CREATIVE LEISURE CENTRE - Evening craft classes for adults, including puppetry.

117 Young St., Redfern
Phone: (02) 699 6279
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Cover:

Paul Blackwell and Peter Seaborn with Willy and the Princess from "SMILES AWAY" by the Marionette Theatre of Australia, Sydney Opera House, May 1982
Photo: Maeve Vella.

MANIPULATION

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