

# Manipulation

Number 3

..... AND IN THIS ISSUE, THE JEW-LOOK BUFFET\*STYLE EDITION,  
THERE'S A TASTY SELECTION OF BITE-SIZE NEWS AND NEAR-NEWS  
FROM MELBOURNE AND SYDNEY .....

## NESHER PUPPET THEATRE

Some comments from Roy McNeill.

The Neshet Puppet Theatre from Israel appeared at the National Theatre Melbourne in July. Overall the show was a disappointment. The first piece was a shadow show, a children's story called "The Onion and the Garlic", which was mildly amusing, but possibly one of the ugliest combinations of design styles I have seen, being a disturbing mixture of classical, Walt Disney and surreal. There was one effective moment when the live storyteller danced with a shadow puppet. This was followed by a rod puppet piece, "King Solomon and the Insects", based on a poem by Israeli writer, Chaim Bialik. This was performed on a bare stage with four-foot puppets and manipulators in full view. Unfortunately, the manipulation was sloppy, and the puppets rarely lived. The final piece was shadows, rather more energetic than the rest of the show, and filled with clever caricatures of world leaders. It could have been very funny, but I'll never know for sure, as the taped soundtrack was in German. The puppeteers were Silvia and Yair Neshet, assisted by their teenage daughter.

## EDITH MURRAY - the film.

A submission has just been made to the Women's Film Fund for a script development grant to begin work on a film entitled "Edith Murray -- Puppeteer". Edith, for those who don't know her, has been a guiding spirit for Australian puppetry for over 40 years. As a teacher and social worker she pioneered the use of puppetry in therapy and education, and 27 years ago founded the Clovelly Puppet Theatre in Sydney, which still operates on the same site today, as a venue for puppet shows and workshops for the children of the area. To famous puppeteers like Richard Bradshaw and Norman Hetherington, and to many thousands of others, she provided the training and encouragement that fired their interest in puppetry. As an active member of the NSW Puppetry Guild and UNLMA secretary, she has worked hard and long in the interests of our field. Now she's in her 80's, and it's time to document her work and pay tribute to her achievement.



## CLOWN SCHOOL

This year the Drama Action Centre, run by Bridget Brandon and Francis Batten, established a clowning course in Greenwich, Sydney. Kaye Tucker has been attending the school and reports on the year's activities so far :-

"First term was devoted mainly to mask work. We used three types :  
NEUTRAL mask - a non-performance mask aimed at centring and tapping into internal energies ;  
BASEL mask - a mask from Switzerland. Traditionally a festival mask. We worked with the basic white mask, focussing first on the creature elements and then the human elements ;  
COMMEDIA masks - a real performance mask. Big, expanded characters, needing good improvisation skills.

We also did improvisation, movement, acrobatics and psychodrama. In second term we've been focussing on mime and dance, and still more improvisation, acrobatics and psychodrama. For me this term has been a lesson in the art of perseverance !

In third term we will perform outside the course, doing street theatre, mainly. A group has also been formed from within the course as a result of a workshop with Playback Theatre, who visited Australia recently. This group will perform with a Dorothy Heathcote story-telling method - totally improvised, feeding off the audience's suggestions. "

The course looks like being repeated next year. Fees are high, but everyone attending this year is enthusiastic about the skills and development it gives them. If you are interested, further information can be obtained by writing to :

Kaye Tucker  
236 Forbes st. Darlinghurst, NSW

## THE NEW BEEB - Exchange Puppets - comments from Paul Voormans

A kindergarten show that illustrates the early steps in development of a newly-born creature, the New Beeb. It is a thoughtful and unusual piece, performed with gentleness, humour and clarity, and using some very exciting puppets. The Beeb and the mature M'Beebs are based on a simple bean shape, the M'Beebs being large clear plastic beans with coloured pieces falling round the inside and manipulated with two rods, the young Beeb a grey foam bean with the puppeteer curled inside. The shape was chosen " so the child is not confronted with a known life-form, nor with an overwhelming spectacle". The Mamom, a character which teaches the Beeb concepts of time, number and language, is a large red pyramid moved from inside by a tricycle, numbers, shapes and clocks being presented through slits in its sides. The language used in the performance contains no recognizable words, and is constructed with simple alphabet sounds - B, M, N, etc. The final utterance is the sound of the New Beeb speaking its name "beeb" for the first time.

Exchange Puppets toured this show round Melbourne kindergartens in August. Many thanks to Toni Bruns, Anne Ferguson, Lindy and the others for previewing the show to the last Co-op meeting.

#### GUILD MEETING

The next one will be held on October 2nd at 8.00 pm at Handspan's studio at 108 Gertrude St., Fitzroy. Bring food & drink.

PETER ILIFFE, from Brisbane's PUPPET PEOPLE, is performing at the Royal Show -- see the Age for details.

#### PRIME TIME - HANDSPAN THEATRE

Some of Handspan's newer members have devised a show for secondary schools called "Prime Time", and dealing with the role of mass media in our lives. The show centres on an adolescent girl who journeys through the world of television, encountering "The Perfect Family", "Disco Dilemmas", "The Young Dentists" and a few other abnormalities. There's one large puppet and four people -- Stephen Kearney, Janet Shaw, Carmelina di Guglielmo and Paul Adken.

OLDER TIMERS Ken Evans and Helen Rickards are back from performing the Bunyip of Berkeley's Creek in America and Europe, and are taking it to Brisbane for the Warana Children's Festival.

MARKING TIMERS Peter James Wilson and Andrew Hansen are touring their version of the same show with the Jolly Jumbuk Library van to Hamilton, Echuca and Moonee Valley through October.

NO MORE NEWS FOR THIS ISSUE. SEND SOME FOR THE NEXT ISSUE TO :-

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