

# PUPPETS OF AUSTRALIA

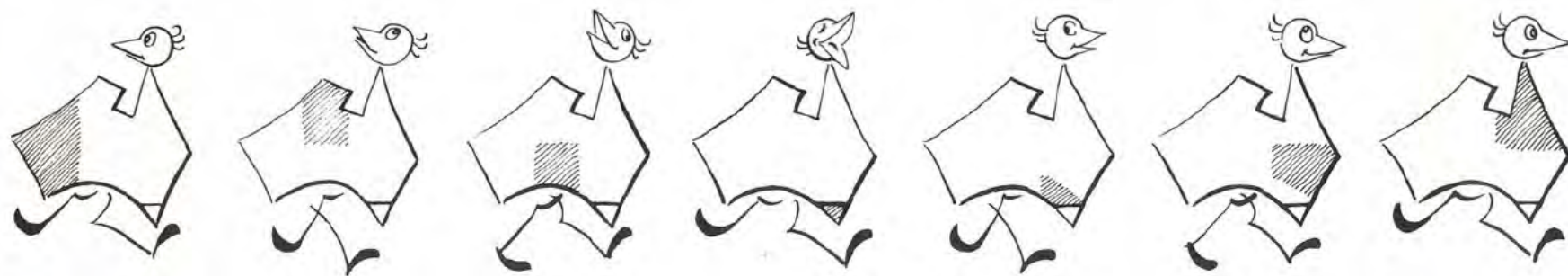
\$ 2.95





**PUPPETS of AUSTRALIA**

ISBN 0 642 94022 3



# PUPPETS of AUSTRALIA

COMPILED BY  
NORMAN HETHERINGTON



This publication has been made possible by assistance from  
**THE AUSTRALIAN COUNCIL FOR THE ARTS**

# PUPPETRY



# IN AUSTRALIA

The Art of Puppetry has had a slow growth in Australia. In contrast to the rich traditional heritage of folk heroes in Europe, and the use of puppets in Indian rites in North America, the Aboriginal culture included no puppets. So, apart from the occasional Punch and Judy show, it has remained for individuals in the twentieth century to establish the Art in Australia.

One early group in Sydney worked with an anthropologist, Elanora Langö, making the puppets for "Joseph and his Brethren", hand-weaving the garments of striped cloth; and presenting the show in a City church in the late "twenties". Some years later, Miss Langö took the puppets to New Guinea, left them with a mountain tribe, intending to return later to see how the primitives then regarded them. But the War intervened — so we don't know whether they had become "gods" or "devils".

A great boost was given to Puppetry in Australia when Joan and Betty Rayner (Directors of The Australian Children's Theatre) brought out from England first the Hogarth Puppets (Jan and Ann Bussell), and later Walter Wilkinson with his one-man Glove

Puppet show — to play not only in Sydney and Melbourne, but to tour through country towns in both States. These great puppet-masters undoubtedly kindled a spark in many future Australian puppeteers, and fanned into flame the spark already kindled in others.

Peter Scriven, earlier a sensitive manipulator in Bill Nicol's group, went overseas to make a further study of Puppetry — and after his return invented and established "The Tintookies", taking his company all over Australia, and making "Tintookies" a household word far and near.

Norman Hetherington, one-time cartoonist on "The Bulletin" and now puppet-master in the A.B.C., is the creator of "Mr. Squiggle" and of "Bill Steamshovel", as well as of a host of other superb puppets. Mr. Squiggle's 15th birthday, celebrated recently, establishes him as the ABC — TV's longest-running continuous programme. He is known and loved all over Australia and the Pacific Islands — and children send to him each week hundreds of squiggles. To "Bill", they send riddles to be solved.

Richard Bradshaw, inspired by the Hogarth's presentation of Lotte Reiniger's

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

- To Jacqueline Lewis for making the preliminary approach to puppeteers.
- To the puppeteers of Australia for supplying photographs and information.
- And to the Australian Council for the Arts.

"Happy Prince", came to the Clovelly Theatre to "cut his teeth", as it were. He has since specialized in Shadow Puppetry, and is today acclaimed in Europe and U.S.A. as a master of the Art.

The Marionette Theatre of Australia, established in 1965 as a national company by the Australian Elizabethan Theatre Trust, does not stand alone. "The Nutshell" in Perth (established by Nancy and Bill Johnston); the Performing Puppet Company of Peter Oldham, in South Australia; the Tasmanian Puppet Theatre, directed by Peter Wilson; the Jeral Puppets of John and Jacqueline Lewis, in Sydney; and on the Gold Coast, Q.T.O.P. (with Kay Littler's puppets and Gerda Pinter's production) surely attest the fact that Puppetry in Australia is passing from the "Craft Stage" into the realm of "Theatre". And it is growing more widespread each year, with groups springing up in far-flung areas — a mining town 700 miles N.E. of Perth — a small community on a North Coast river in N.S.W. — are just two recent examples.

In the early "thirties", two artists, Alan and Kay Lewis, carved about twenty marionettes — including Mr. and Mrs. Corncob — for "All Aboard for Happiness" — a trip round the world, which included scenes underwater and in Japan, Africa, London, and New York. They presented the show in a city store, and later in many N.S.W. schools. During the War, the American Red Cross engaged Alan and

Kay, who used Puppetry in re-habilitation work with servicemen, achieving some outstanding results.

In 1939, W.D. Nicol, lecturer in Puppetry and allied Crafts at the Melbourne Teachers' College, established Puppetry as an Education Activity; later founded the Puppet Guild of Australia, and in December, 1946, published "The Australian Puppeteer" — the first journal devoted to Puppetry in Australia. Unfortunately, only three issues eventuated from the over-busy volunteer staff. During the years from 1945 to 1968, Bill Nicol directed seasons of Puppet Plays in the Youth Theatre established by the National Fitness Council of Victoria. Trained in this group were several young people who have since made considerable contributions to Puppetry in Australia — Peter Scriven, who established "The Tintookies" — John Bisset, whose Puppet Club at Toorak Teachers' College did some exceptionally good work — and Robert Akins, now establishing a permanent Puppet Theatre in Melbourne in a massive, disused, stone church which he has purchased. From '68 to '70, Bill Nicol and his wife spent several months each year with tribal aborigines in the Northern Territory, introducing Shadow Puppets to illustrate aboriginal stories told by the elders to the young folk.

Meanwhile, in N.S.W., interest in Puppetry had been steadily growing. Through the encouragement of Mr. L.F. Keller (in charge

of Drama in the Education Department) Courses for teachers were arranged some during Vacations, so that country teachers could attend. In 1948, the Puppetry Guild of N.S.W. was established, and met each month in one of the Centres run by The Creative Leisure Movement. There were active Puppet Groups for children in several of these Centres; and in 1949, the Puppet Theatre in Burnie Park, Clovelly was established, and directed by Edith Murray.

What of the future?

There is certainly variety — Hand Puppets, Rod Puppets, String Puppets, Shadow Puppets — Puppets carved, modelled, made of junk, stuffed and modelled with the needle — an infinite variety. But what of standard of production? This is an area where there is ample room for improvement. Nevertheless, we should beware of thinking that "bigger" is "better". The too large puppet may lose some of its charm. The too big company means great expense, and limited presentation because it requires big halls for setting up its big "theatre", and so on. Practically, the "one-man show" is ideal; not only from the point of view of expense — but because it is "a personal statement" — a unity very seldom achieved en masse!

For some years past, there has been noted in Europe a general tendency towards "stylization" and "symbolism" — after all, the puppet is a "symbol" — why chain it to

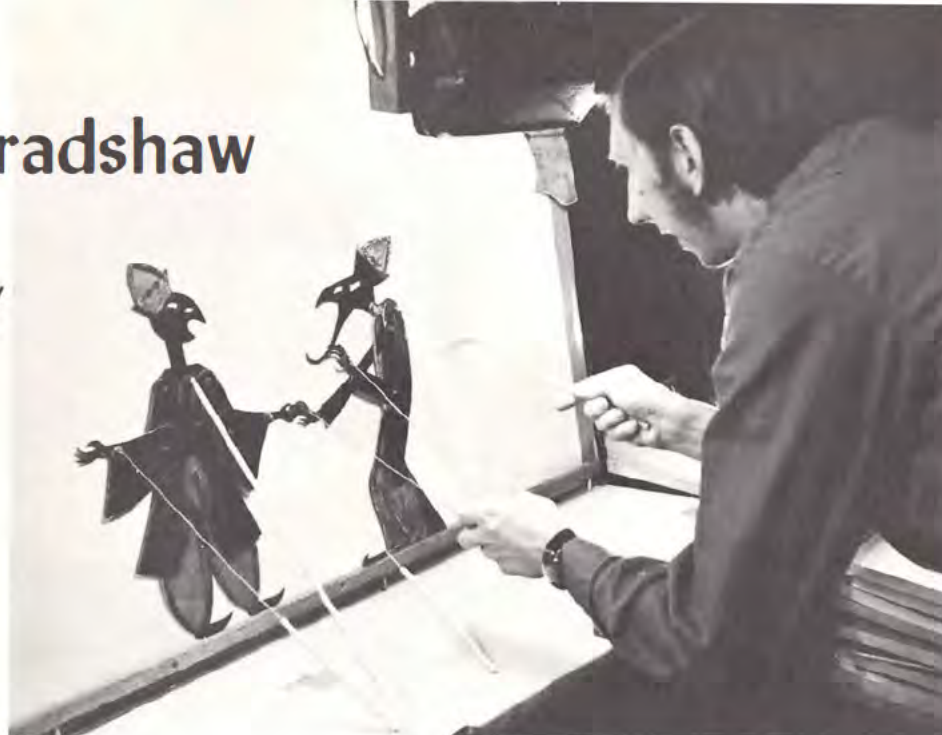


reality? Like the cartoonist, the puppeteer should search out and express the essence of the character he is to present — whether it be human, or beast, or a creature of fantasy. It would seem that very few puppeteers in Australia have reached this stage; most are still at the “literal” stage. But we are lucky, perhaps, that many of our migrants have actually had firsthand experience with Puppetry overseas, not only as spectators, but in practice. Some have even had several years of training in the Art. Several of our own puppeteers, during the past year, have had a quick gallop around the world — “to see puppetry” — and their “pooled” observations could be very valuable to us all. But let us not slavishly copy what others have done. Let us strive for excellence in diversity! And since Australia has no “folk tradition” of Puppetry, we must beware of adopting uncritically the traditions of a culture other than our own.

*Edith C. Murray*

*Secretary Australian Centre  
of U.N.I.M.A.*

# Richard Bradshaw



*The Spaceman enters his rocket*



*The Emu, Brolga and the Kookaburra ...*



*("How the Sun was Made")*

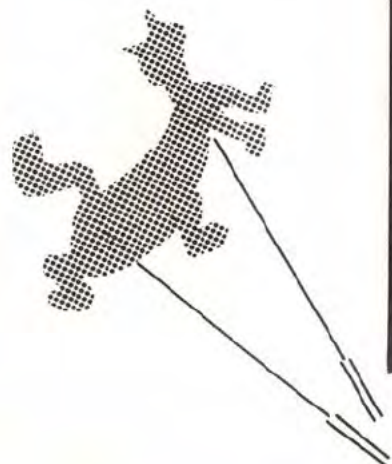
*The Bandy-Legged Bandit conniving with Big Chief Tom ("A Western")*



Richard joined the Clovelly Puppet Theatre in 1952, during his second High School year. By 1953 he had made his first marionette production, and 1956 he created "The Mobile Mib", which used several levels of glove puppet stages in front of a marionette theatre. Glove puppet cavemen with Davy Crockett hats, and the Mib, a fantastic marionette with a mobile of baubles in his body, established Richard's status as an original and creative puppeteer, and he has continued to experiment and to evolve.

He became seriously interested in shadow puppets after he had finished his science degree and begun teaching. With the help of Edith Murray he performed at the First International Festival of Amateur Puppetry, in Czechoslovakia in 1964. This was the first of Richard's overseas successes and has since been followed by tours in several European countries and the United States of America, with many festival appearances.

After his return to Australia in 1964, he did some A.B.C. television, and then toured for Joan and Betty Rayner's Australian Children's Theatre. Since then he has worked as a solo performer and fully professional puppeteer whose standards have earned admiration from the general public and from his fellow-puppeteers.





# The Clovelly Puppet Theatre

(Director: Edith C. Murray)

Clovelly Puppet Theatre (one of the Centres run by the Creative Leisure Movement) was opened on Saturday, 28th May, 1949. The intention was to have an eight-week Season of Shows, using sets of marionettes on loan from W.D. Nicol of Melbourne. But so popular did the weekly shows prove, that "the season" lasted until the heat of summer became unbearable (in the tin Army hut, given by Randwick Council, and erected by volunteers in a corner of Burnie Park). For nine years a show was presented each Saturday from Easter to November. In 1958 the Theatre was re-organised, and since then shows are given on the first Saturday of each month from April to November. On other Saturdays in the month children over five years come to learn to make puppets or to enjoy other creative activities — Painting, clay-modelling, collage etc. — and to do impromptu puppet shows themselves in a special small theatre.

Clovelly can thus claim to be the oldest established continuously-running Puppet Theatre in the British Commonwealth (London's "Little Angel" and Colwyn Bay's "Harlequin" being twelve and seventeen years respectively).

Until recently, the Theatre has been run on a voluntary basis, giving training in return for service, and over the years many local folk, both adults and children, have enjoyed giving their time and talents, and sharing experiences with their fellows. During the earliest years, Isobel Ferguson wrote many plays and made many puppets for the Theatre, many of which are still in use. The native genius of Richard Bradshaw was apparent in his boyish experiments in the early fifties at Clovelly, until now he is acclaimed for his Shadow Puppets, at International Festivals in Europe and in U.S.A.

From the beginning, children have been encouraged to participate, not only as spectators, but in creating plays, designing and making puppets. "Sea Fantasy", with



*"WORMY WILMA, the WITCH".  
Sawdust and starch paste, 1968.  
Made by Joanne (12 yrs.)*

*"HARLEQUIN and COLUMBINE" ... 1961.*



*Made by Edith Murray.*

Photography: Catherine Warne



*"Sea Fantasy"—about 1952. Based on Debussy music ..... Many children helped in making and manipulating the sea creatures, and speaking the dialogue.*



*"Circus" ..... Elsie the Elephant, 1951 and Clumsy the Clown, 1968.*



*"Mr. Corncob"—an early marionette made by Alan and Kay Lewis, 1936, now used at Clovelly in "The Rain Dragon" (written by Heather Giffin).*



*"The Moon Play"—scripted, designed and made by children (from 9 to 13 yrs.) with an original dance tune for violin and cello, also by children. (1971)*



*"Hippy and New Guinea Native" — 1970 — soft-bodied Marionettes — made by Susan (12 yrs.) and Michael (11 yrs.), who also wrote and produced the play.*



*"Fiddlers Three" — Rod puppets made from "junk" ("Nursery Rhymes") 1970.*



*Natty and Slim*

its background music of Debussy's "Sunken Cathedral" and a Scottish "Cockle Gatherers' Song", is an early example, still as popular with adults and children as when it was "created" by a group of children, more than twenty years ago. In 1971, "The Moon Play" was invented and designed by three twelve year olds, and the making of puppets and scenery involved many children (from nine to twelve years) for many weeks. Glove Puppets, Rod Puppets from "junk", as well as some very effective Marionettes have been made by children, and are used continuously in the Theatre, as well as the hundreds made by the Director, Edith Murray, over the past thirty five years.



*Puppets from "Peter Pan"*

## Dale Woodward Theatres of Puppetry

Dale and Helen Woodward and David and Sue Sabben

Dale and Helen became interested in puppets as a result of their work in religious instruction. They have now moved on to more ambitious projects, and joined by David and Sue Sabben, they have entered the always fertile field of puppetry as a learning aid. They have worked with Migrant Education television on regional stations, and for children's shows ask for much audience participation.

The group uses all forms of puppetry.

**(David Collins and Mark Wager)**

Whilst still at High School, David and Mark began making marionettes, writing puppet plays, and composing for their puppets.

They are now Arts students at Queensland University, continuing with their puppet productions and running puppet workshops. Mark is puppet tutor at Brisbane's Twelfth Night Theatre.

*Rosine, Felix and the Whistling Storks*



D  
A  
M  
A  
R  
I  
O  
N  
E  
T  
T  
E  
S



*"Colonel Koala" — manipulated from side or below by strings that pass down through a trouser leg.*

## The Stuart Esplin



*"Wacky Wombat" Controlled by wires passing through the surfboard to 12" underwater, then forward to the manipulator in a motor launch. ("The Billabongoes")*



*The Cast*

## Puppets

Stuart's interest in puppets began when he was eight. At nineteen, with his younger brother Trevor he was making the "Billabongoes", a series featuring Australian Animal puppets which was shown on A.B.C. television. He also created the durable "Owly" of "Owly's School" and puppets and animal costumes for "Zoopops", which he co-produces.

Stuart has also designed and made special automated and radio controlled puppets for theatrical productions, films and advertising.



*Eeney Mouse and Meaney Cat*



*Queen of Night and Papageno ("Magic Flute")*

## The Gardner Puppet Theatre

Laurie Gardner, a graduate of Cornell University, U.S.A., has been doing puppetry in schools since 1968. She uses gloves, rods and marionettes and encourages her audiences to join her in "do-it-yourself" puppet making.

The emphasis has always been educational.

Laurie is now experimenting with glove-puppet opera and is expanding into the pre-school field.



*Cowboy and his Pony.*



*Aboriginal Grandfather*

## JOHN GRANT PUPPETS

John, a marionette maker, worked for several years with groups of teenagers in the Port Adelaide area. He married fellow-puppeteer Heather Giffin in 1968, and as a team they did puppets for "Here's Humphrey" for several years. They are now more interested in glove puppetry for young children. For his marionettes John follows the European tradition of carved wood, with marionettes from nine inches to five feet in height.



*"Honey-Pot"*

*"Avarice"*



*Mr. Owl ("Owl's Place")*

## ROSS HILL

Ross became interested in puppets when he was six. In his teens, influenced (as were so many budding puppeteers) by the "Tintookies", he began making marionette animals and showing them on regional television. He is at present working with the Tasmanian Puppet Theatre.

# The Griffiths Marionette Theatre

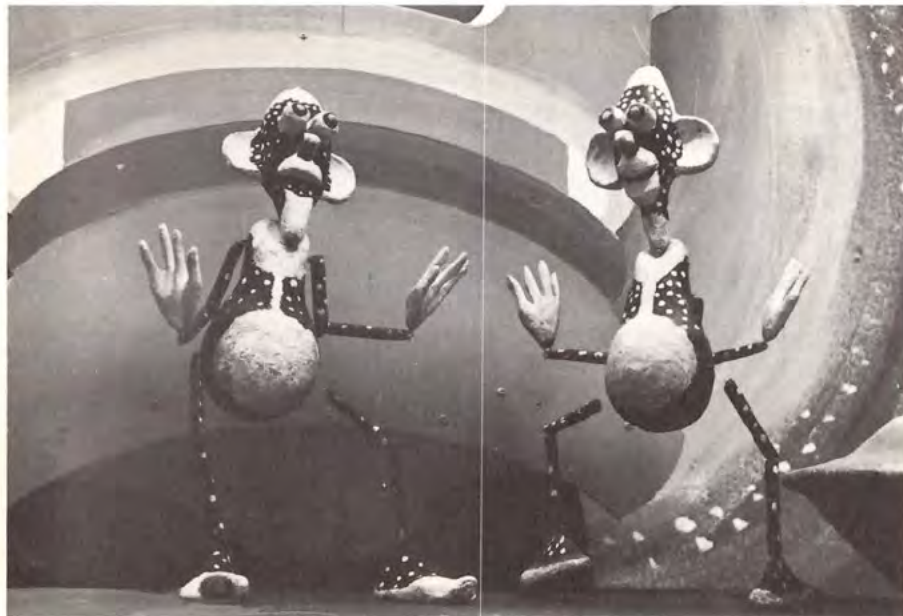
Raeburn and Freda Griffiths were originally New Zealanders, with a theatre and radio background. They have been a puppet team for over thirty years, and came to Australia in 1949.

Their marionettes, averaging thirty inches in height, are designed for large audiences, and they show in shopping malls, night clubs and cruise ships. They have also made puppets for films, fashion shows and have done some television work.

Their programmes have a wide range. Fairy tales, variety programmes, Gilbert and Sullivan's "Mikado", and Shakespeare's "Tempest" have all been presented on their puppet stage.



*Trinculo, a court jester ("The Tempest")*



*Space Creatures ("Asteroid 71")*



*"Winjie" the Lion*



Two scenes from "The Day the Mail didn't get Through"



Photographs: Douglas Thompson



## The HARTLAND MARIONETTES



Harold Holt, Arthur Caldwell and Sir Robert Menzies.

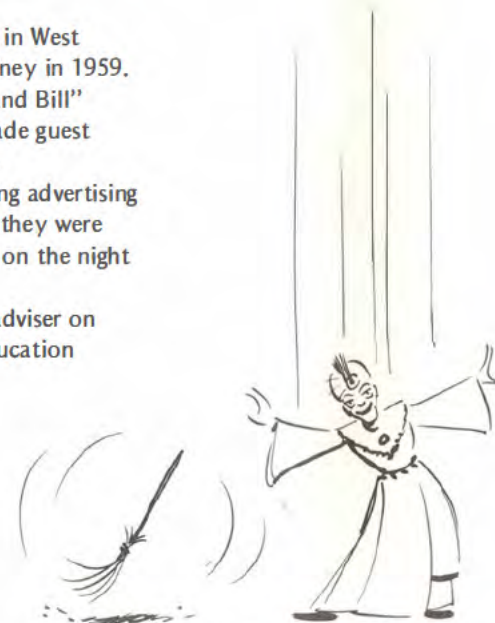
Photograph: John Pearson

Lorna and Peter Hartland lived and worked in West Australia for some years before coming to Sydney in 1959. Their puppet series "Little Ali" and "Dudley and Bill" appeared on A.B.C. television and they also made guest appearances on various "Tonight" type shows.

Some years ago they created the long-running advertising show "Magic of Milk" for the Milk Board, but they were best known for their "political puppet" shows on the night club circuit.

They are now back in Perth where Peter is adviser on Puppetry and Crafts in the West Australian Education Department Schools.

"Dudley and Bill"



Marco the Magician



*Mr. Squiggle.*

# NORMAN HETHERINGTON PUPPETS

Norman began puppet-making in 1952, with encouragement from the Clovelly Puppet Theatre. He became increasingly involved with his own puppet productions, and throughout 1956 he worked intensively with A.B.C. workshops, preparing for the introduction of television. He appeared on the opening programmes of two of the three Sydney television stations, and has since done many programmes for the national network. His Mr. Squiggle is at the present time the longest continuously appearing character on Australian television.

In 1968 he made and produced a Dental Health puppet show for the Dental Health Education and Research Foundation of Sydney University, and this has since been showing continuously in schools.

Norman's early stint as a staff cartoonist on the "Bulletin" has always been put to good use in his puppetry, and he tries to make his puppets engaging and entertaining.

*Prologue. ("The Gooseberry Mandarin")*



*St. George ..... and .....*



*King Bobble ("St. George and the Dragon")*



*Chinese Juggler. ("Aladdin")*

*Frog Acrobats.*



# The Jaeger Marionette Theatre



*Puppets from "LULU IN PARIS" and "THE WICKED WITCH"*

**(Walter and Melina Jaeger)**

Walter worked with the original "Tintookies" company and later with the Australian Elizabethan Theatre Trust before starting his own marionette theatre with his wife Mēlina in 1963. Walter is the puppet-maker, and with Mēlina handles all other aspects of their productions. For some years now they have worked in conjunction with the Arts Council of New South Wales.

Walter, with an assistant, tours schools in New South Wales and Tasmania, presenting shows that have some emphasis on the traditional European fairy tales.



*Wackety Witch and her Flying Chair.*

## David Kirby

David, his wife Vivian, and their daughters Robin and (later) Denise, have worked as a team since David first became interested in puppetry in 1959. In 1961 they presented a series on Perth television and since then have been busy with fetes, shopping centres and performances and workshop courses at the Fremantle Art Centre.

# The JERAL Puppets

(John and Jacqueline Lewis)

John is yet another graduate of the Clovelly Puppet Theatre, which he discovered at the age of five. At sixteen, assisted by his brother Phillip, he was giving shows for department stores and birthday parties.

John prefers large colourful glove puppets and uses much audience participation. He is now married to Jacqueline and with her presents daily puppet segments on commercial television. He has also played several seasons in Sydney theatres.

His interest in puppets continues a family tradition as he is a grand nephew of Alan Lewis, an Australian pioneer puppeteer.

John is an architecture student with an exceptionally good academic record.

*Troll and Billy ("The Three Billy Goats Gruff")*



*ERICH ("The Saga of Erich the Viking")*



*Bushrangers ("DINKUM FAIR")*



*Captain Roger Blud ("Coconut Island")*

*George and the Dragon*





*The Dodo Bird*

Axel's background is aeronautical engineering, and his interest in puppetry grew from work with youth groups during the London Blitz. When he came to Australia he found it difficult to buy puppets for such work, and gradually became a manufacturer. With his wife Janet, he has made many special puppet displays for Myers store in Melbourne, and puppets for such national television shows as "Kindergarten Playtime", "Magic Circle" and "Adventure Island", all well loved by many children.

He is still a manufacturer, with an export business and a Good Design award from the Industrial Design Council of Australia as proof of good puppetry.

# lamont puppets

(Axel and Janet Axelrad)



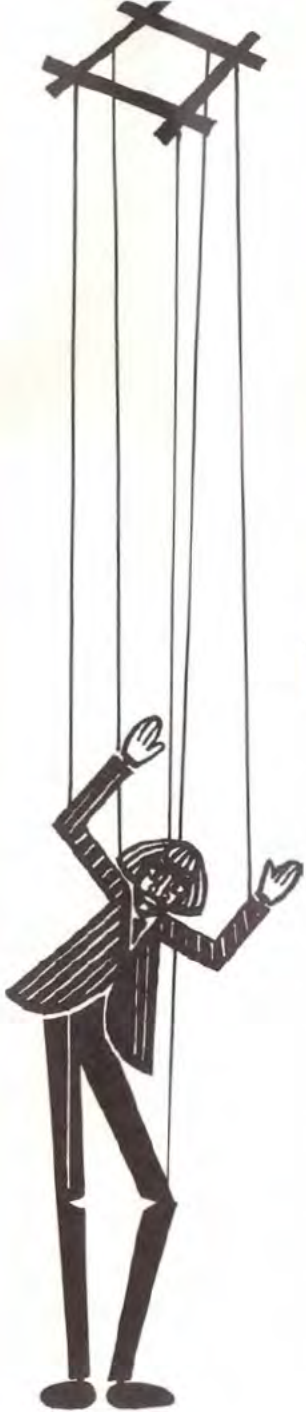
The first toy in Australia to be awarded the Good Design Label.

*Rod Puppet Kits*



*Leonardo de Funbird and Cassius Cuckoo ("The Magic Circle")*





("Böhmische Schneider" by Günter Eich)



Čurček, the Tailor with six arms and Rosa Rosa the Camel Lady

## The Macquarie University Puppets

(School of Modern Languages)

This is one of the most interesting of the newer groups of puppeteers, formed by three members of staff in the School of Modern Languages. Dr. Marlene Norst produced the German Morality Play "Jedermann" in the Denneborg version; Guy Neumann wrote the script and produced "Le petit prince" after the story by Antoine de Saint-Exupéry; and "Böhmische Schneider" (Bohemian Tailors) by Günter Eich was produced by Gerda Prior.

Their puppet shows followed in the university tradition of dramatic performances, in the foreign languages concerned, aimed at student and Senior High School audiences. The foreign language students of the University made, manipulated and spoke for the puppets, and both puppetry and foreign languages benefitted. School audiences have been appreciative, and puppeteers hope the group will continue to flourish.

Kasperl rescues Jedermann from Hell Fire ("Jedermann" by Denneborg)

The Little Prince and the Snake ("Le petit prince" after Saint-Exupéry)





Photography:  
Ern McQuillan  
Dalman E. Smith Pty. Ltd.  
Herald-Sun

*"Little Fella Bindi"*



*The Cockatoo ("Little Fella Bindi")*



*Panjee Possum, Wilpy Wombat and Krumpy Koala ("The Tintookies")*

## The Marionette Theatre of Australia

The Marionette Theatre is, with the Australian Ballet and the Australian Opera, one of Australia's three national performing arts companies. The Company was formed in 1965, building on the foundations laid by Peter Scriven, who blazed a new trail and whose name is synonymous with puppetry for most Australians.

Peter had presented his first large scale production "The Tintookies" (the little people who live in the sandhills) in 1956, and its ambition, scope and verve made it an instant success, and created a completely new audience for puppet plays. In 1958 he created "Little Fella Bindi", and large scale puppet productions were established as both possible and successful.

In 1965, under the direction of the Australian Elizabethan Theatre Trust, the Marionette Theatre was launched as a full-time professional performing company, its first two plays being new productions of "The Tintookies" and



*The Brolga Dance ("The Explorers")*

"Little Fella Bindi", followed light-heartedly by "The Explorers".

The Company's first Asian tour (1966-67) to thirteen countries, and its second Asian tour, which included performances at Expo 70 in Osaka, successfully presented Australia's claim to be taken seriously in an art-form which is traditional and important in the East.

Throughout each year the Marionette Theatre tours Australia, performing in capital cities and





*Platypus and Kookaburra ("The Tintookies")*

in remote outback areas. There are eight puppeteers, a Stage Manager, an Advance/Tour Manager, Publicity Director, Secretary and Administrator, and it has become a training ground for puppeteers and theatre talents.

The strongly Australian flavour of the Company was continued with their production of the Australian classic "The Magic Pudding" by Norman Lindsay. In 1972 the Company brought out puppet-master Jan Bussell, and he, with his wife Ann Hogarth, gave us the very English production "Water Babies", but with "Tales from Nonameena", the first puppet production at Sydney Opera House, and the new production of "Tintookies", the emphasis has been once again on a distinctively Australian puppet theatre.



*Possum, Rooster and Parrot ("The Magic Pudding")*



*The Pixie Man and his son ("The Tintookies")*



*Possum, Watkin Wombat and Albert the Pudding ("The Magic Pudding")*



*"Bunyip Bluegum and Uncle Wattlebury"  
an original Norman Lindsay sketch from  
"The Magic Pudding"*

## Marti McClelland

Marti studied singing and graduated as a specialist high school music teacher at the New South Wales State Conservatorium. She toured Britain in Musical Comedy, and there, in 1963, she worked with British ventriloquist-puppeteer — Dennis Spicer. Back in Australia she toured again, then marriage took her to New Guinea where she began giving school shows for Papua—New Guineans.

She is now back in Newcastle, busy with teaching, workshops, school performances and holiday shows.

Her walking puppet theatre (pictured) is of a style used by 18th Century showmen in Europe, where quick dismantling was essential if the Law appeared. Marti has re-created it for use in open air shows and festivals.

*"Up jumped the troopers one ... two ... three ..."* (Banjo Paterson recital)



*"Wally Wallaby"*

## Lyn Myers

Lyn Myers is a ventriloquist who creates her own shows and her own puppets, usually from re-cycled clothing materials, two of which puppets are illustrated here. She also uses her own recorded banjo music as accompaniment to her shows, and varies these shows to suit the occasion.



*"Winkle Mouse"*



# Sydney Teachers' College

(Graham Morley, A.S.T.C., M.I.A.)

Graham is Lecturer in Industrial Arts at Sydney Teachers' College. He makes use of a wide range of rod and glove puppets, which have proved successful in teacher-training, post-College and In-Service courses. One type of puppet used is illustrated — it is designed to be made quickly and easily by children and then used immediately.

Subjects such as English, Social Studies, Maths, Health etc., can be the basis for puppet plays and poems, where the children spontaneously express their thoughts and feelings and integrate their knowledge in a group performance.

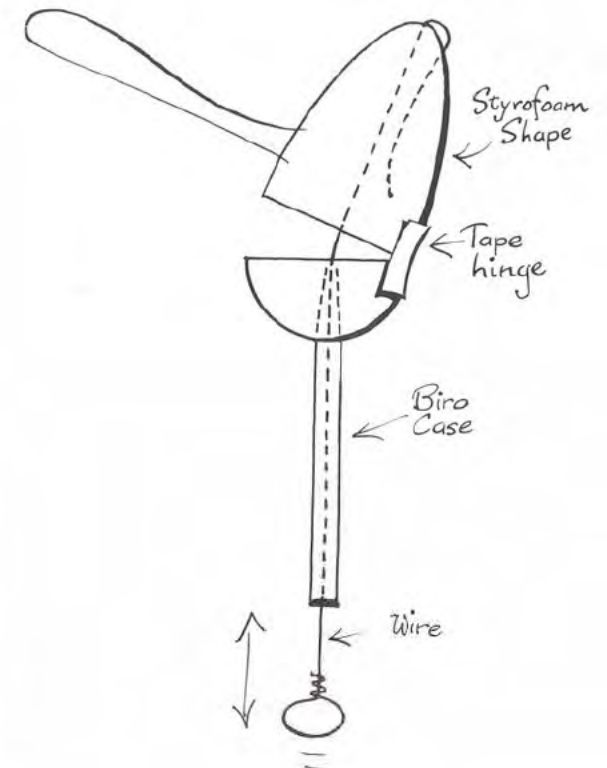
• *"Conical Witch"*—Costume and hair from crepe paper, paper hat, mouth sliced out.

• *"Bill Egg"*—Hair and features cut from coloured paper, pinned and glued. Costume, crepe paper.

• *"Egg Carton Dragon"*—by teacher trainee students. Head and features cut from egg cartons. Costume, fabric and felt painted.



*"EGG HEAD DRAGON"—Polystyrene foam shapes, with features pinned and glued, and cloth costume. Mouth articulated as below.*





*Hans and Schwartz ("King of the Golden River")*

## NEWCASTLE MARIONETTE THEATRE

(Bruce and Alice Rowland)

Bruce and his wife Alice are the leaders of this group, the other members being University and Art students keen to work in puppet theatre. Bruce trained with Peter Scriven and the Marionette Theatre of Australia, and worked with the Theatre during its first Asian tour in 1966-67.

In August 1972 he formed his own company, with the eventual aim of a permanent puppet theatre based in Newcastle and reaching the whole of the Hunter Valley Region. His present interest is full length productions of lesser-known fairy tales. The puppets are approximately two feet tall with fibreglass heads and carved wooden hands.

Bruce is a lecturer at the National Art School, Newcastle, and puppet productions are staged during holiday periods.

*Lester the Jester ("Mona and the Morgan Prince")*



*The Black Brothers  
("King of the Golden River")*

Photography: Bruce Rowland

# William Dalziel Nicol

William Dalziel Nicol is a pioneer figure in Australian puppetry, who has actively engaged in teaching, producing and proselytising puppetry for many years.

In 1939, while a lecturer at the State College of Education, Melbourne, he introduced puppetry as an education activity, and as a member of the Board of Studies, University of Melbourne, he sponsored Puppetry as an approved Art subject for Intermediate and Leaving Examinations. A statement of achievement which must mask much hard work and informed enthusiasm.

From 1945 to 1968 he was director of the "Littlest Theatre", a professional group which trained many fine puppeteers, including Peter Scriven.

Touring Victoria, conducting seminars, and directing groups meant continual puppet activity, and in 1962 he published "Puppetry" in the Oxford University Press series "Experience with Materials". It was illustrated by his daughter Jennifer, and is an excellent handbook on the subject.

From 1968 to 1970 there was the exciting new activity of using puppetry as part of a teaching course for tribal Aboriginal young people in the Northern Territory. The aim was to develop their potential as teachers in aboriginal schools, and stories told to aboriginal children by their tribal elders were recorded and made into Shadow Puppet plays.

*"St. George and the Dragon"*



*"The Owl and the Pussycat"*  
(Shadowplay)



*Beetle scene from the insect play,  
"And so ad infinitum" by the Brothers Capek*



*Mandarin, Willow and Princess ("The Gooseberry Mandarin")*

# THE NUTSHELL

(Nancy and Bill Johnston)

Perth is extremely lucky in having Nancy and Bill Johnston, who have created "The Nutshell" Puppet Theatre from a seventy-year old house in an inner suburb of Perth.

Nancy first became interested in puppets when she was a lecturer training pre-school teachers. As her interest deepened, she conceived the idea of a permanent centre which would be open to anyone with an interest in any aspect of puppetry. So, in 1971, the "Nutshell" was born.

It is a small theatre created exclusively for puppets. It seats forty-nine people, has storage for puppets, props and scenery, an office cum puppet library, workshop, meeting rooms, carpark and kitchen. It also has an enthusiastic group of members who see puppetry as an activity for adult audiences, and who hope to educate audiences to share this view.

Norman Hetherington and Richard Bradshaw have both given successful seasons in the theatre.

*The Priest ("The Bush Christening")*



*Mother and Father ("The Bush Christening") by Banjo Patterson*



*Alfred and George, the Yeomen Warders*



*Anne Boleyn and Sir Walter Raleigh*



*Father and Son ("The Bush Christening")*



("The Surprising story of Alfred, Warder of the Tower")



*Rod puppets from "Aladdin"*

## The Parry-Marshall Puppet Theatre

The Parry-Marshall family came to Australia from England in 1955. Parry-Marshall had worked as actor, producer, freelance journalist and radio dramatist. Combining these activities in a puppet group, the Parry-Marshalls worked in town and country areas of South Australia, West Australia, Victoria and New South Wales, becoming full time puppeteers in 1962, and establishing permanent headquarters in Victoria in 1966.

The group presents shows in schools, in shopping centres, and in theatres and halls. Most shows are two-person performances, but three or four people are sometimes involved.



*Liberace at his piano*

## Little Palladium Marionettes

(Doug and Phyl Aspland)

Doug and Phyl began making puppets whilst students at Art School in England. During the war years there, and after their migration to Australia in 1948, it was a hobby, but in 1966 they began presenting shows on a more business like basis, and in 1970 became full time puppeteers.

They play in schools and shopping centres and on regional television, using puppets made of wood.



## Little Patch Puppets

This puppet group is part of the "Little Patch Children's Theatre" in Adelaide. It is directed by Morna Jones, a producer and teacher experienced in drama and music, who has worked on A.B.C. educational programmes.

The group has recently begun experiments in shadow puppetry with music for very young children, and the photographs above are from (top) their production "At Widdicombe Fair", and (lower) "The Seven Foolish Fishermen".

## PARVATI

(Ann Davis and William Pitt)

Ann, a professional puppeteer for twenty-two years, started in England with the B.B.C. and continued her career in Sydney. She worked with the "Tintookies" and for some years was a regular performer on Sydney television presenting "Amanda" the Cat.

She combined this with night club shows, shopping centres and party shows.

In 1973 she joined with William Pitt, to form Parvati Puppets. William has had experience in all areas of entertainment and the group presents performances in primary and high schools, shopping centres, and regional television. They also conduct puppet workshops.

*Devils ("Faust")*



# PUPPETS

*"Petrushka the Clown"*  
(adapted from Stravinsky's ballet)



*Ossie, in 1895, travels from Brisbane  
to the Gympie Goldfields in .....  
"Journey on a Cobb and Co. Coach".*

*"The Firemaker"*  
... backstage, during a performance



## The Performing Puppet Company

(Peter Oldham)

This company was formed by Peter Oldham in 1972, with the original aim of doing night club acts and school shows. Peter had worked with the "Tintookies", then with the Da Silva Company in England, and then again with the "Tintookies" before starting his own group.

Peter is now based in Adelaide and tours in South Australia, West Australia and Northern Territory. An interesting change in their aims has led this company to isolated settlements in Northwest areas of Australia, playing aboriginal legends to aboriginal people there, and travelling widely by chartered plane.

# Popeye Puppets

This group is part of the theatre group "Pram Factory" of Melbourne. They use life size or larger than life size puppets and glove puppets, as well as actors performing with the puppets.

They tour as a Community Theatre Troupe, taking the performance out to meet the audience, usually at hospitals or schools. Workshops are organised in the style of the theatre which is experimental and audience-involving.



*"The Owl and the Pussycat"  
Scenes from a Community Workshop project.*



*"Bunyip"—created from banksia and gumnuts by a 12 year old boy.*

## Puppet Theatre Productions

(Mildred R. Clark)

Mildred has been involved with puppets since 1964, and has always been very actively engaged in Puppet organisations. Primarily a glove puppeteer who works alone, she also enjoys working with other groups. Workshops for children are another part of her activities. She has successfully interested the Fremantle City Council in her plans and her eventual aim is a permanent puppet theatre in its own building, with activity areas for young children, to be situated in Fremantle.

*Koala, Moon and Nifty Eucalypt ("Koala Cuddles Tumbles")*



*"Captain Cook"*

## May Robinson's Puppets

May Robinson's puppet interests started during the war years, a painfully acquired expertise eventually resulting in a successful show in 1947.

In 1960 she appeared with Rolf Harris on Perth television. The same year "Taffy the Welsh Pony" started a weekly television series, which continued until late 1962, while at the same time other shows were presented.

May Robinson's preference is for plays and her programme always includes one. She likes old Nursery Rhymes and fairy tales as source material.

*"Mr. Perth", Strongman*



*Miss Shivre-Mi-Timbre and Ali Khan Swalla*





*King and Jester ("The King of Ballyhoo")*

Photograph: Courtesy "Gold Coast Mirror Newspapers"

Kay Littler, the founder-director of Q.T.O.P., has built on twenty-five years experience in puppetry to achieve a puppet company with community backing. Q.T.O.P. was formed at a public meeting on 3rd March, 1971, and its first production was staged in the following June. Puppets are made under Kay's direction, and two experienced producers and the group's own playwright help in the successful staging.

The group performs for schools and kindergartens, and in theatres and halls, both on the Gold Coast and in Brisbane. Kay and assistants also hold regular workshops for children.

Their aim is to become a statewide movement with headquarters on the Gold Coast.

*The Cast. ("The Three Little Pigs")*

# Queensland Q.T.O.P.

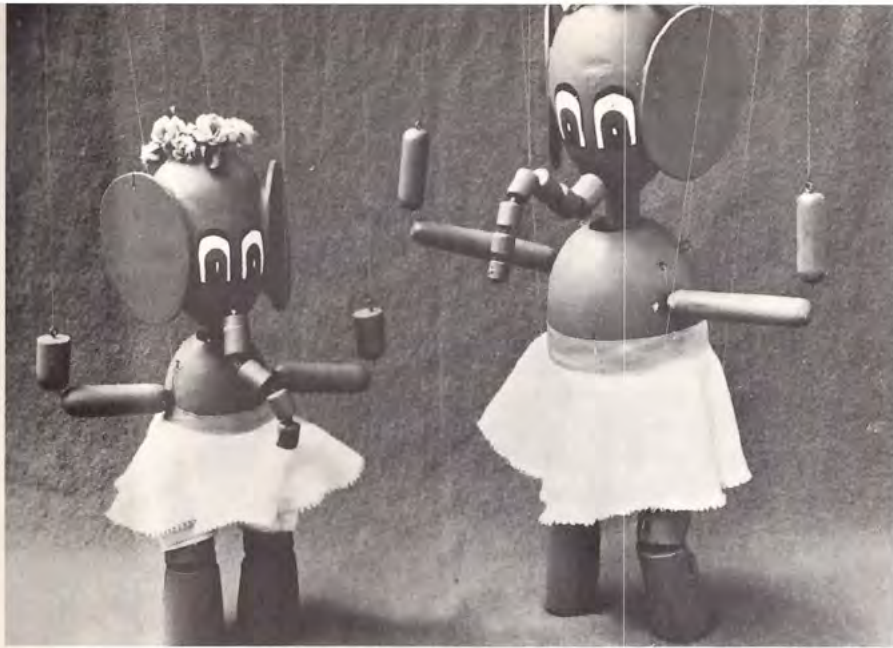
Theatre of Puppetry

*"Cassidy", the marmalade cat*



*The Cast. ("The King of Ballyhoo")*





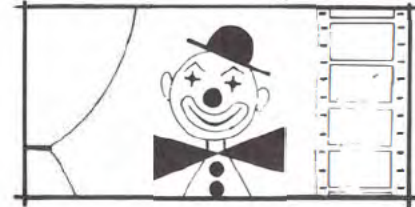
Gwen and Peter, with their mobile self-contained Caravan Theatre, average 20,000 miles and two hundred and fifty performances per year. They present variety programmes, using mostly string puppets, and performing to recorded Hi-Fi music. Their setting is usually outdoors, at festivals, carnivals, fetes, playgrounds and showgrounds.

## Rees Puppets

(Gwen and Peter Iliffe)



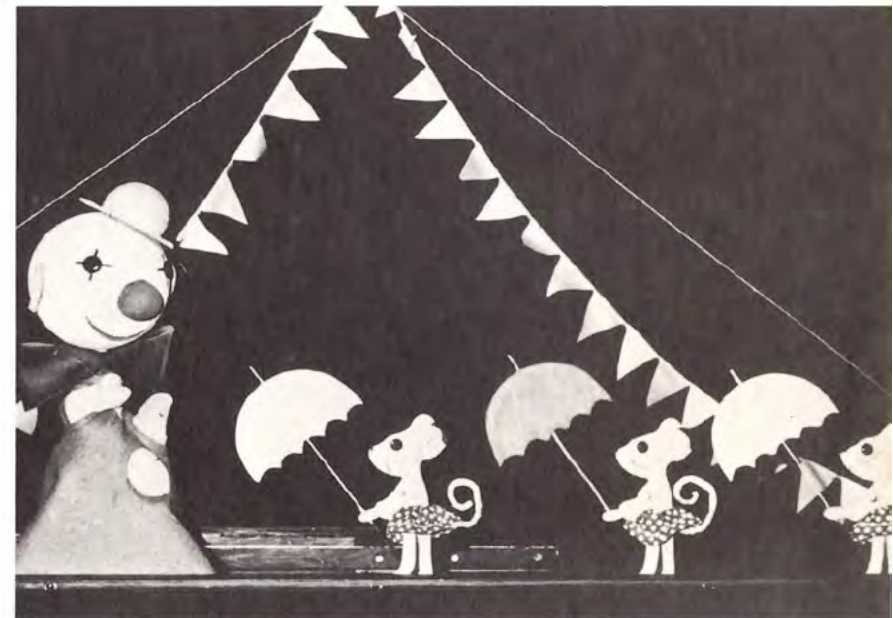
## Sydney Magic Puppets



*Backstage*



This group was formed in 1970 by former Czechoslovakian Milena A. Valis, who had been an active member of puppetry organisations in Europe. They give indoor and outdoor performances usually with rod and glove puppets, and their aim is entertainment combined with gentle teaching.



*"Clown in the Toy Circus"*



..... from "Concert at Clingoon Castle"

## The REMHETTES

Bernie and Max Ehmer and their wives Eileen and Joyce work together as the "Remhettes" and have done so for the past seventeen years.

In that time they have handled all aspects of their puppet productions, and continue to do so. They have done T.V. work, stage productions, commercials, store shows, cabaret and workshops, including two in conjunction with exhibitions at the Queensland Art Gallery. In the late 1950's they made a documentary film on the creation of a puppet which won several awards in its category.

The Remhettes work with marionettes, rods and hand puppets, some of which they have generously sent to overseas exhibitions.



The Cast



Feather Duster Bird

Photographer: Graham Radley



## TASMANIAN PUPPET THEATRE

(Peter Wilson)

This group was formed in 1969 by Peter Wilson, who had been working with puppets since he was fourteen years of age. From modest beginnings the Theatre has grown in size, with a musical director, a designer, and six manipulators, playing seasons at Hobart's Theatre Royal and touring throughout Tasmania, Victoria and Australian Capital Territory. All types of puppets are

*The North Wind and The Sun*



*The Swaggie in, "Once a Jolly Swagman"*

used for their plays, which are usually based on animal tales and folk lore, and aim to educate through entertainment.

Performances, where possible, are followed up by puppet workshops.

In 1972 Peter received a Churchill Fellowship and travelled overseas for study.

Photograph: Courtesy Bendigo Advertiser Newspapers



*"..... go, and never darken my door again". (Melodrama, "Ah, Cruel Fate")*

## Una Vincent

Una is yet another puppeteer who came to puppetry through the Clovelly Puppet Theatre and the Children's Library and Crafts Movement (now the Creative Leisure Centres). She has been an active member of puppet organisations since 1955, and does mainly glove puppets for fetes and children's parties.

Photograph: Catherine Warne





## CONTRIBUTORS

BRADSHAW, Richard (N.S.W.)	7	McCLELLAND, Marti (N.S.W.)	22
CLOVELLY PUPPET THEATRE (N.S.W.)	8	MYERS, Lyn (W.A.)	22
DALE WOODWARD THEATRES OF PUPPETRY (N.S.W.)	10	MORLEY, Graham (N.S.W.)	23
DAMAR MARIONETTES (Qld.)	10	NEWCASTLE MARIONETTE THEATRE (N.S.W.)	24
ESPLIN, Stuart (N.S.W.)	10	NICOL, William D. (Vic.)	25
GARDNER PUPPET THEATRE (Vic.)	11	NUTSHELL THEATRE (W.A.)	26
GRANT, John (S.A.)	12	PARRY MARSHALL PUPPET THEATRE (Vic.)	27
GRIFFITHS MARIONETTE THEATRE (N.S.W.)	13	PALLADIUM MARIONETTES (S.A.)	27
HILL, Ross (N.S.W.)	12	PATCH PUPPETS (S.A.)	28
HARTLAND MARIONETTES (W.A.)	14	PARVATI PUPPETS (N.S.W.)	28
HETHERINGTON, Norman (N.S.W.)	15	PERFORMING PUPPET COMPANY (S.A.)	29
JAEGER MARIONETTE THEATRE (N.S.W.)	16	POPEYE PUPPETS (Vic.)	30
JERAL PUPPETS (N.S.W.)	17	PUPPET THEATRE PRODUCTIONS (W.A.)	31
KIRBY, David (W.A.)	16	Q.T.O.P. (Qld.)	32
LAMONT PUPPETS (Vic.)	18	ROBINSON, May (W.A.)	31
MACQUARIE UNIVERSITY PUPPETS (N.S.W.)	19	REES PUPPETS (Qld.)	33
MARIONETTE THEATRE OF AUSTRALIA (N.S.W.)	20	REMNETTES (Qld.)	34
		SYDNEY MAGIC PUPPETS (N.S.W.)	33
		TASMANIAN PUPPET THEATRE (Tas.)	35
		VINCENT, Una (N.S.W.)	36





This book has been prepared entirely from photographs and information supplied by the various puppet companies and puppeteers of Australia.

**Designed by NORMAN HETHERINGTON**

*President Puppetry Guild of Australia*

*Chairman Australian Centre of U.N.I.M.A.*

**Assisted by MARGARET HETHERINGTON**

Wholly set up and printed in Australia  
by PRIOR PRESS Pty. Ltd.  
Brookvale. N.S.W.  
1974

