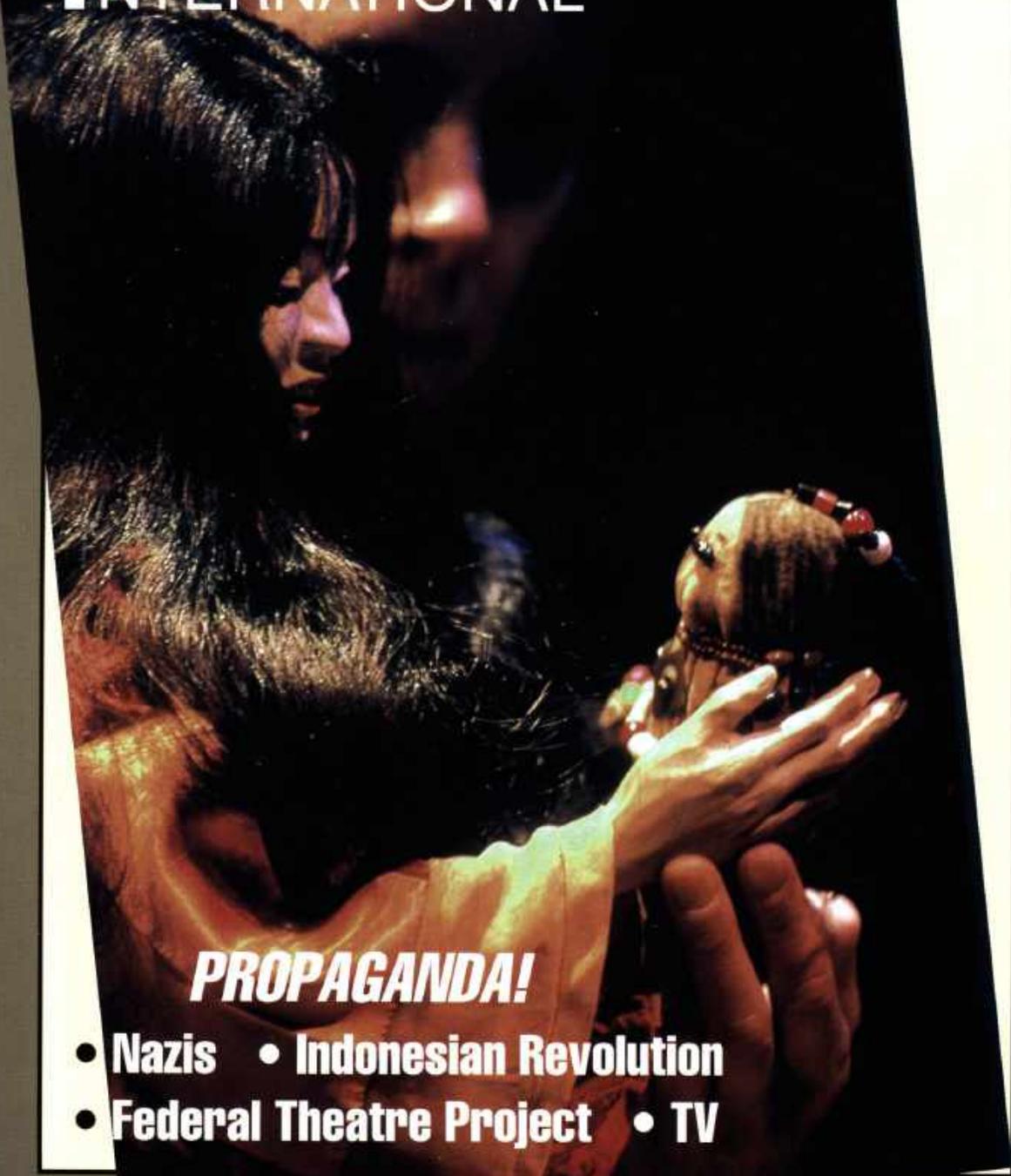


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PROPAGANDA!

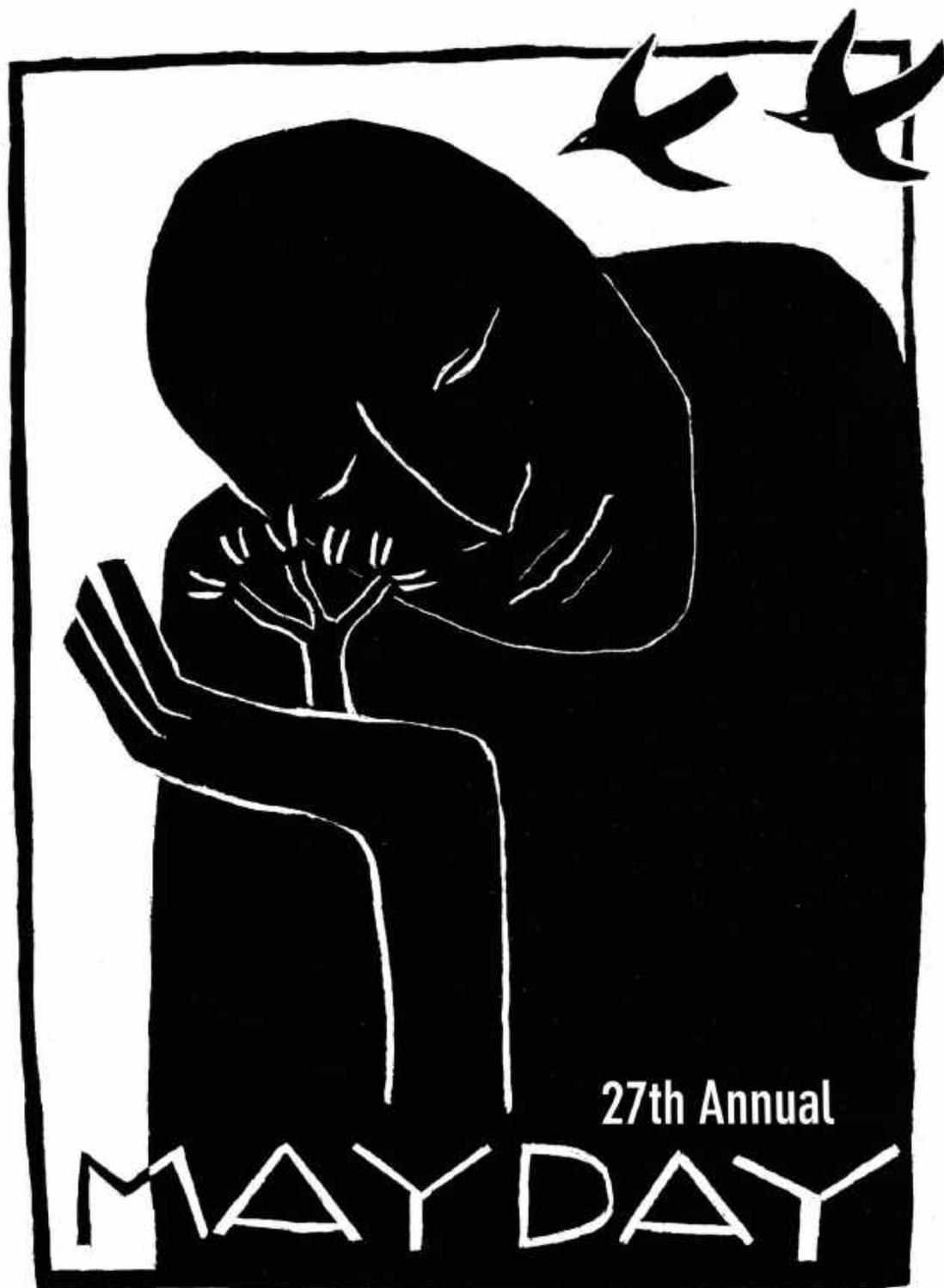
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issue no. 9

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ON THE COVER:

From *She-Who-Loves* by
Figures of Speech Theatre
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Editor's Page –

Welcome, dear readers, to our 9th edition of *Puppetry International*. Our focus in this issue is on PROPAGANDA, and, more specifically, on how propagandists have used puppetry over the years to achieve their goals. As the term propaganda encompasses a range of activities, perhaps a brief explanation would be helpful.

"Propaganda is the more or less systematic effort to manipulate other people's beliefs, attitudes, or actions by means of symbols (words, gestures, banners, music, clothing, insignia, hairstyles . . . and so forth)."¹

The propagandist always has a goal, or set of goals, he wishes to achieve, and to that end will use facts (selectively), arguments, rumors, half-truths and even outright lies in order to sway the intended audience to his point of view. The goal in a propaganda campaign may range from the promotion of a relatively safe product to gaining public support for a war or even global annihilation.

The word propaganda, in its modern sense, seems to have its roots in the *Congregatio de Propaganda Fide* (Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith), which was "an organization of Roman Catholic cardinals founded in 1622 to carry on missionary work." Clearly, though, efforts to indoctrinate the masses into a be-



May Day Parade, New York City, 1936 (see page 14)

lief in the supremacy of a particular leader or deity (often embodied in the same individual as in the God-Kings of early Khmer society) go back to the earliest archeological evidence of tribal organization. Puppetry has always been part of this equation; masks, totems, fetishes and other performing-objects were the Shaman's stock in trade. They were, indeed, often the conduits through which gods, angels, or spirits of the dead reached out to the living in order to instill religious or moral education, settle questions of law or justice, or to enforce other sorts of social controls.

Puppets have also been used for propaganda counter-measures. The nineteenth century saw the birth of Guignol in Lyons, France. Dressed as a silk worker, he soon became a powerful symbol. The downtrodden weavers were able to haul their little puppet shows to the cafés and bars to present propagandistic satire which would have landed flesh-and-blood actors in jail.

Education, ideally, should present all sides of an issue and encourage critical thinking—just the opposite of the propagandist method. Nonetheless, propaganda is often employed to achieve goals of which the majority of society might approve. For instance, the TV anti-smoking campaign

in which a puppet—a pair of blackened lungs—is seen puffing away while hacking uncontrollably was, perhaps, heavy-handed, but made its point quite effectively. One might say that it was a needed counter-measure to years of commercial propaganda on the part of the tobacco industry. Another instance of a constructive use of propaganda in education was the campaign "Save Our Sahel", in which troupes of African puppeteers went village-to-village educating (through their performances) the rural populace in ways of halting the desertification of their precious land.

Our consideration of the use of puppets in propaganda is limited to work done in the 20th century. Hanne Tierney examines the use of puppets in Nazi propaganda leading up to World War II (*page 4*). Less well-known was the use of puppets during the Indonesian Revolution; as a young girl, Tamara Fielding was there, and she provides stunning photos of



1930's poster for a handpuppet troupe in Mainz (see page 4)

shadow puppets as well as personal memories of that troubled time (page 8).

We have three articles related to the Federal Theatre Project of the 1930's. Lynnne Raybuck looks at productions of *Pinocchio* and *Revolt of the Beavers*, and the fear on the part of certain bureaucrats that such work might be spreading communist propaganda (page 20). Seunghei Hong examines the work of Yun Gee and

his landmark puppet piece *Kuan Kung's Generosity*, in which Yun's native China is painted with nationalistic pride in an unmistakably rosey light (page 22). John Bell tells the fascinating story of the May Day parades for which puppeteers created powerful anti-Fascist propaganda (page 14).

Leslee Asch recalls the early years of television and the prominent use of puppets for both entertainment

and commercial advertising (page 28).

Finally, Liz Joyce looks at the "Puppetistas"—contemporary agitprop performers influenced by groups like Bread and Puppet Theatre—newly radicalized by such events as the arrest of puppeteers and destruction of puppets at last summer's Republican National Convention [see Editorial, PI#8]. This might well lead to what is known as "propaganda of the deed", in which the action taken has its own value as propaganda irrespective of any content. In other words, puppeteers may find that it is more effective to be arrested, than to be allowed to stage a political demonstration (page 30).

This is a subject too broad to be covered in a single book, let alone a magazine. Our hope, as always is, in some small measure, to push back the darkness by turning on delight.

There's More:

Reviews of new books by John Bell and Silvia Brendenal, and Dover's re-issue of George Latshaw's *Puppetry: The Ultimate Disguise*, an artist's book/shadow theatre issued by the National Museum of Women in the Arts; *She-Who-Loves*, a fabulous new production by Figures of Speech Theatre, has its roots in Japan, and Freeport Maine; Chilean Puppetry, Toy Theater, and a preview of the Puppeteers of America national puppet festival. Enjoy!

—Andrew Periale

¹ All quotes, unless otherwise noted, are from the Encyclopedia Britannica On Line (www.britannica.com). The site includes extensive essays, as well as links to related topics and to pertinent articles and books.



Backstage at one of many presentations by the Hitler Youth; Hamelin, 1938

Puppetry in the Third Reich

by Hanne Tierney

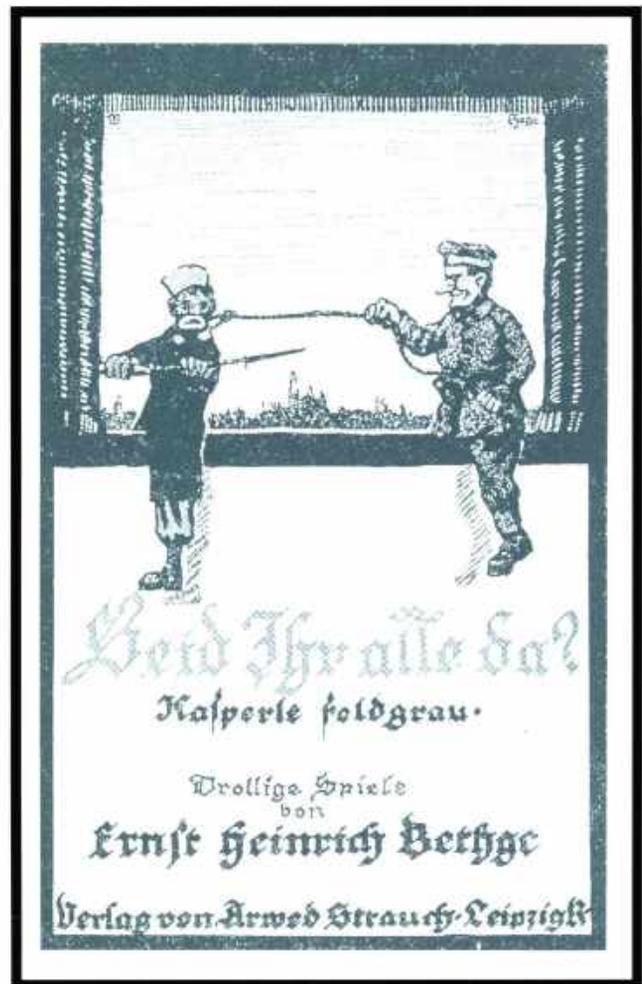
Indoctrination of one kind or another has been one of the many jobs with which Western Puppetry has been saddled throughout its history. Perhaps because puppets lend themselves so well to stereotyped caricatures, or perhaps because anything is easier to swallow if accompanied by laughter, no other art form has been applied so liberally in the service of politics, advertising, and education.

In Germany, the folksy, crude wit of Kasper had told the people what to think and how to act for several hundred years. In the beginning of the 18th century, with the appearance of the newly established newspapers, travelling puppeteers found plenty of opinionated material to pass on to their audiences: battles won and lost, kings crowned and deposed— any kind of contemporary event reported on in the papers. In these "newsreels" Kasper, inevitably, played the hero who fought for the Fatherland, and if the Fatherland wasn't involved, he fought on the side of the conquering white races. During the Boer War, for example, Kasper hung little black puppets from the gallows or beat them to death with his stick. Before the First World War, around 1910, puppet plays were published in Germany with obvious military and nationalist messages. Kasper wore a Prussian uniform, the devil resembled the Tzar, and the rest is history.

Small wonder then that the Nazi government, after it came to power in 1933, realized the importance of the puppet theater as a propaganda tool. A brochure with directives for German puppeteers published in 1934 does not mince words: "Wake up. Our neighbors in the East have created thousands of puppet theaters for the specific purpose of fighting German folk culture. Puppetry's strong influence, especially with the uneducated, is being mobilized, beginning with the children, to grow subversive political thoughts in the (Russian) masses. We therefore can no longer look at puppetry as a harmless play. The time has come to realistically use its political potential for the education of the German people."

Before Hitler's takeover, approximately 300 puppet theaters, mostly hand puppet theaters, existed in Germany, of which 149, after 1930, had loosely organized themselves into the German Union of Puppeteers. Of these companies, 26 theaters became the focus for artistically excellent high-quality Puppet Theater. This group very quickly caught the interest of the new powers in Germany, who, through an organization called Combat Union for German Culture and master-minded by the marionettist Georg Deininger, booked extensive tours for these companies according to a centrally designed program. The Combat Union, after merging with the important organization German Stage, an underling of Goebbel's Ministry for Culture, insisted on membership of all puppet companies, and thereby effectively gained complete control over all puppetry performed in Germany starting in 1934.

In the beginning the anti-Semitic content of, especially, Georg Deininger's performances was by no means imitated by all other theaters. Well-established puppeteers such as Max Jacob, the founder of the Hohnsteiner Buehne and Gerhard's Deutsches Kuenstler Marionettentheater continued to perform their established repertoire on the tours organized by the Combat Union for German Culture. After the announcements of the race laws in 1936, however, anyone who continued to perform their usual repertoire saw themselves increasingly confronted with the following repressive letter, received by the puppeteer Hermann Rulff from the Ministry of Culture: "We ask you to refrain from any further performances of the Faust play as performed by you recently in the town of Muenden. We do not only judge puppetry from an artistic point of view, but also judge it for its political world-view. It is not necessary to present Dr. Faust historically, but to present him as a politically clear thinking man of the present . . ."



Nazi puppet propaganda had its precedents: Title page to a collection of puppet texts from WWI

From 1936 on, puppeteers were required to carry a passport identifying them as Aryans. They also had to prove their competence as puppeteers through extensive testing. Failure to pass either requirement meant denial of membership into the Union, and the ruin of a company. It equaled professional boycott. All this effectively eliminated Jewish puppeteers, companies with liberal leanings and unacceptable artistic innovation. Most puppeteers necessarily more or less adjusted to the status quo, trying to avoid blatant propagandizing without jeopardizing their bread and butter.

Not only the content of the plays came under scrutiny; the physical manifestations of the puppets were prescribed as well. Kasper's traditional hook nose, considered too Jewish, was transformed into a stub nose, the princess acquired long, blond braids and blue eyes, and nagging Gretel turned into an Aryan housewife. All this still did not seem enough to make the point clear for the average spectator. The race laws freed latent anti-Semitism and more and more disfigured caricatures of Jews appeared in puppet performances. These characters usually ended up beaten to death by Kasper for stereotypical Jewish crimes, such as wanting to rule Germany and marrying the princess. No government directive exists demanding this innovation. Obviously, some puppeteers felt called upon to add their voice to ethnic cleansing.

In 1938, another offspring of Goebbel's Ministry of Culture, the State Institute for Puppetry, formed a commission with the express purpose of publishing texts for professional stages as well as for amateur players. After that, any notion of non-propagandized puppet performances no longer existed. On the contrary, the propaganda capability of the puppet theater became of immense importance to Hitler's program of annexing border provinces. Puppet companies were sent into the conquered regions of Poland and Czechoslovakia, and after the Jewish and undesirable local population had been duly dispensed with, those left were given the pleasure of seeing German folk art at its best. The authorities felt certain that these freshly incorporated Germans, through Kasper and the devil, would come to appreciate their new masters. An official report in 1941 talks of the gift the occupying Germans were giving to the Danish population: the chance to see first rate German artists perform in Denmark.

With the beginning of the war, puppet theater was very quickly utilized to entertain the armed forces. Many puppeteers were enlisted, along with the rest of the



population. This left 30 pared-down companies to be sent to the front, with properly tested texts, to uplift the morale of the troops. It made complete practical sense. These small theaters could travel easily to outlying posts, such as Lapland or a Greek mountain village, they could set up their stages quickly and take them down just as quickly in case of sudden shelling. These companies usually included only two or three performers and could fit into one car or van, an important consideration as all cars were confiscated for the war effort. The Germans' love for Kasper and his associates came in handy here as well. Kasper brought laughter and humor into the soldiers' daily routine, he never failed to beat the enemy single-handedly, thereby indicating that anyone could and should be a hero. He dared talk back to superior officers (considered a helpful outlet for the common soldiers), and he generally brought home a little closer. Kasper stood for the Fatherland. Puppet theater also eased the ongoing conflict between the military authorities and the troops as to whether women

and sex or high culture entertained the soldiers in the field more profitably. Puppetry, after all, could function in the vast area in-between, and at the same time keep the soldiers reminded of the larger picture they were fighting for: a healthy, happy Germany, greatly expanded and racially pure.

The unresolved question here is, of course, the usual question in any art or field: To do the work, how far are we willing to stretch our moral responsibilities? We don't know the answer until we are in a position that leaves us few choices. The puppeteer Max Jacob, who performed throughout the entire Nazi period, became the President of UNIMA in 1957 until his death in 1967. In this position he zealously worked for the good of puppetry in both the East and the West, a proof of the totally abstract nature of the human brain.

Hanne Tierney is a well-known puppet artist from New York City.

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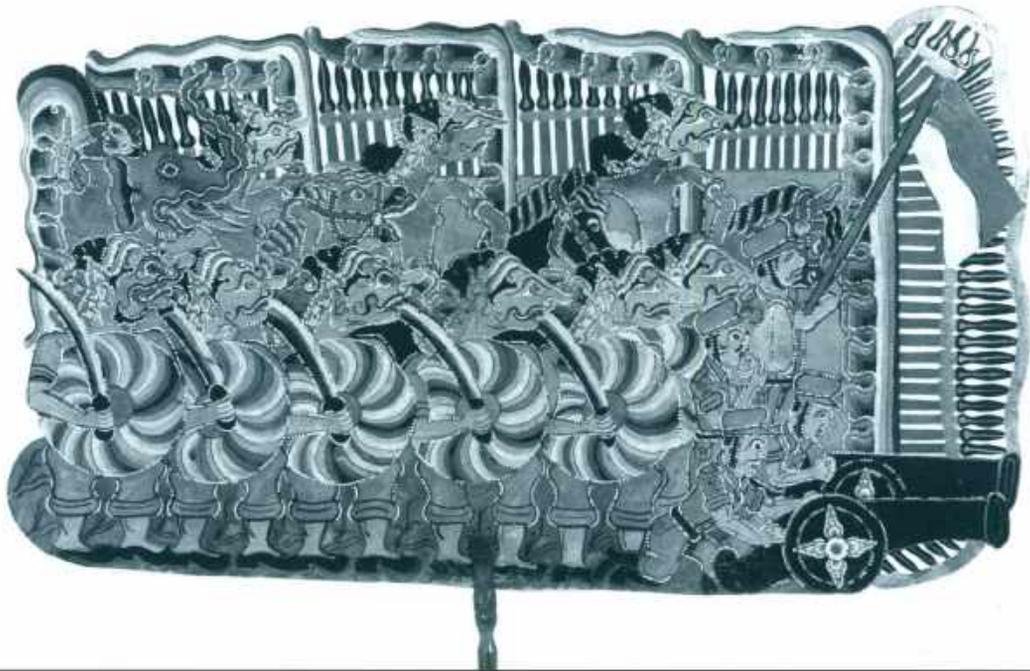
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Remembering Puppetry as a Call for Revolution

by Tamara Fielding

JAVA, 1945-1949

Life was chaos. I was always hungry. We lived in fear of the roaming bands of Indonesian rebel fighters, "freedom fighters" they called themselves. They were heavily armed with guns which the Japanese soldiers had bestowed upon them when it dawned on the Japanese that Japan had *really lost the war*. Some high ranking officers committed hara-kiri (ritual suicide) others vanished into the jungles of Borneo, awaiting the call of their Emperor to return to duty; but most Japanese soldiers just handed over their guns to the Indonesian rebels to finish what they themselves had failed to finish– the genocide of all Western people in Asia. Their promise, "Asia for the Asians," had yet to be fulfilled.



"March of Indonesian freedom fighters"

A shadow figure 22" X 13" from "Wayang Revolusi" (Revolution for Independence), spanning tumultuous years 1945-1949. Uniformed Japanese soldiers behind cannons, march with pink-faced (angry) farmers, armed with machete knives, into battle. Their kings [with gold faces as in traditional Wayang], lead their forces into attack. The elephant symbolizes the Revolution's strength. Pointy spears frame the battle scene. A Japanese soldier waves Indonesia's new red and white flag.

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propagandize social change. New wayang stories with realistic looking puppets were created. Old familiar Wayang characters from the Panakawan, such as the much loved *Semar* and his sons, *Petruk* and *Gareng*, were re-designed in a more contemporary style. They had pink faces and wore modern Javanese dress but their features were easily recognizable, and their revered status in the Wayang *lakon* (story) remained unchanged. Relying on his audiences' pre-disposed acceptance of the Panakawan family and their trust in *Semar's* supreme wisdom, the Dalang successfully delivered his political messages through these familiar mythological characters.

Contrary to the traditional Wayang Kulit form, "Wayang Revolusie" was watched exclusively from the color side of the screen. Here, *realism* was the point. Calling for young boys to join the revolution, Indonesia's charismatic leader, President Sukarno, leads his new nation to independence.

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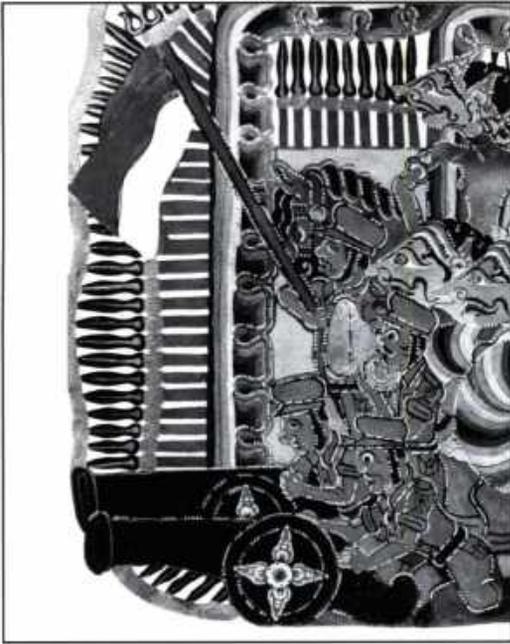
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DETAIL: Uniformed Japanese soldiers leading the march with their guns.

One soldier waves red and white Indonesian flag.

On August 17, 1945, two days after Japan capitulated to the Allied Forces ending the war, Sukarno was proclaimed President of Indonesia. A new war began. Indonesian bands of armed rebels burned down Dutch-owned homes, confiscated plantations and government buildings and called for the Dutch to leave. A more than three hundred year-old colonial empire was crumbling. The voice of Indonesia's revolution could be heard everywhere and no one was safe.

Hate and revenge seemed to be the order of the day. My first weeks experiencing freedom, after surviving three and a half years of my early childhood in a Japanese prison camp for women, became a nightmare with little hope for survival. Many innocent men, women and children who had survived the horrors of war, were brutally murdered during this four-year revolution, for ethnic and political reasons.

Puppet theatre turns agent for social change

With the high rate of illiteracy of that time and no radio broadcasts available to most Indonesians, Java's *Dalangs* (story tellers) became an important agent to interpret and propagandize social change. New Wayang stories with realistic looking puppets were created. Old familiar Wayang characters from the Panakawan, such as the much loved *Semar* and his sons, *Petruk* and *Gareng*, were re-designed in a more contemporary style. They had pink faces and wore modern Javanese dress but their features were easily recognizable, and their revered status in the Wayang *lakon* (story) remained unchanged. Relying on his audiences' pre-disposed acceptance of the Panakawan family and their trust in Semar's supreme wisdom, the Dalang successfully delivered his political messages through these familiar mythological characters.

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Three contemporary puppets from the Shadow Theatre of Indonesia's Revolution, 1945-49. President Sukarno delivers fiery speech calling for an end to more than 300-years of Dutch exploitation.

Right: A Japanese soldier backing Sukarno's political speech.

Left: Single puppet 30" X 17". Twenty members of Government, in varied regional dress, attending Sukarno's political speech.

Wayang Sulu

"Sulu" means "torch" or "light". Wayang Sulu was first performed in 1947 at a youth congress held in Madiun (East Java) with puppets that were hastily and primitively made, mostly cut out of cardboard and pasted over with newspaper images of real people. Its sole purpose was to inform, explain and to propagandize Indonesia's point of view. In spite of its lack of artistic rendering, "Wayang Sulu" proved successful.

The stories of "Wayang Revolusi" and the later created "Wayang Perjuangan" (Struggle for Independence), produced hundreds of realistic-looking puppet characters made of traditional buffalo hide.

The Dutch East Indies Empire collapsed and Dutch citizens, including those of mixed-race parentage, had to flee the country. I was uprooted and separated from my homeland because of politics and racial prejudices. I left Java in the midst of its revolution.

"Wayang Revolusie", Semar (front) and Petruk (rear), in affluent, traditional Javanese dress.





Contemporary puppet 18" high x 22" long. Family values are discussed among four generations. Great-grandparents at head of table.

Right: Grandparents. Left: Parents. Front: children.
Only males have stick attached to hand for conversation.

Traditional arts teach contemporary family values

Children question their elders. Four generations are gathered around the table for an afternoon tea. The Dalang creates a conversation in which family values are discussed and explained.

In a single puppet, a family of eight are seated around the table. Only the males have a stick attached to their hands and will lead the conversation.

Indonesia's Women's Movement

The characters of *Srikandi* and *Sumbadra*, two of Arjuna's seven wives in the Javanese/Indian epic "Mahabharata," have gained significant meaning for Indonesia's modern women. Srikandi is portrayed as intelligent, assertive, combative, courageous and beautiful. In traditional shadow theatre, the combative female Srikandi, earns her husband's wrath for habitually questioning male authority and being too independent and outspoken. The Srikandi Women's Movement in West Java proudly took its name from this rebellious mythological character. In Jakarta, a parent may opt to enroll her daughter in the Srikandi Montessori School to assure her a good start. I have occasionally been called a Srikandi by Dalangs who thought I argued too much!



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TAMARA
AND THE SHADOW THEATRE OF JAVA

In keeping with the changing face of contemporary Wayang, however, I have been accepted by my "fellow Dalangs" in Java as the "woman Dalang from America" who has helped popularize Wayang outside of Indonesia. In Yogyakarta, East Java, aspiring young male puppeteers are given the opportunity to enroll in Government-sponsored Dalang schools. There they can study traditional Wayang art and qualify for certification. As a certified Dalang, the puppeteer gains prestige among his spectators and his repertoire may include contemporary issues that deal with birth control and pollution in addition to traditional stories.

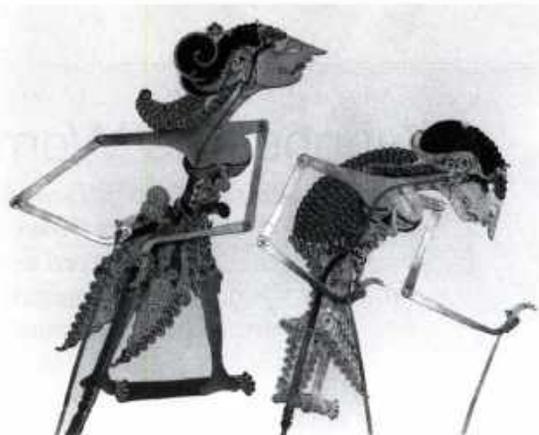
TAMARA was born in Chimabi, Java, of Dutch and Indonesian parents. She is a lecturer and professional Dalang with a contemporary style. She performs regularly at Universities, Museums, Schools and Festivals.

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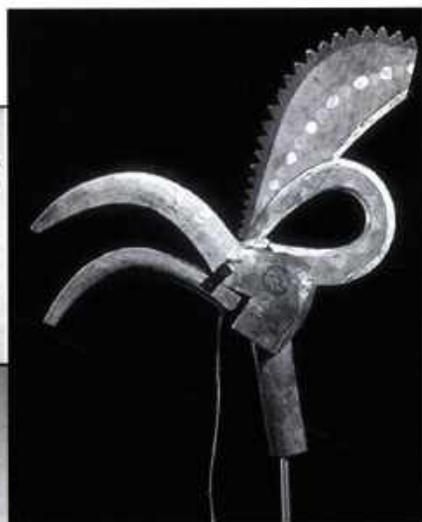
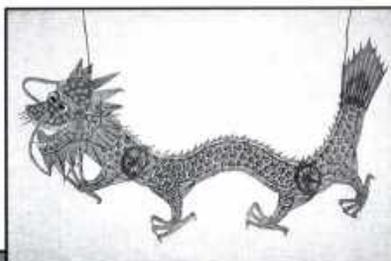
Left: *Srikandi*, assertive female.
Right: *Sumbadra*, submissive female.

Srikandi's image shows an upright body posture. She holds her head high and looks one straight in the eye, (confrontational). She walks with a wide step, wearing pants cut above knee and she carries a "kris", a man's dagger, in her belt. A flower adorns her hair and she appears confident. Sumbadra's body image is submissive. She does what she is told and does not look a man straight in the eye. She is "alus," refined. She is Arjuna's favorite wife.

In Indonesia, a woman's role as a Dalang is generally not taken seriously.



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Photographs by Richard Termine



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Puppets and Propaganda: *May Day Parades in Union Square*

photos by John Albok, text by John Bell



In one of Albok's images from the parade, a row of seven marchers in everyday dress stride down Fourth Avenue at the north end of Union Square. They have mounted nicely modeled handpuppets on yard-long sticks, turning them into a bold floating line of political caricatures, absurdly tall and small. The puppets seem to be modeled on well-known political figures: a cop; two African-American men with high collars and suits (imprisoned Communist heroes?); Mussolini; an African-American woman (another leftist hero?); and a top-batted capitalist. Some of the puppets wear identifying signs, no doubt referencing a panoply of urgent leftist issues of 1936. Who are these men and women? Activists who were banded the puppets moments before the march began? Politically committed professional puppeteers on leave from WPA Marionette Unit jobs?



Albok, who this year has found a fourth-story perch atop a building looking west across Union Square, catches a float labeled "Hitler's Horror Land": Hitler himself (standing near a box of "Poison Gas") gives the Nazi salute as an SS man with a whip drives on the team of enslaved Germans pulling the float (one wears a sash labeled "Labor").

Despite, and in fact because of the Depression, the 1930s were an amazingly vibrant time for all kinds of performance, and especially puppet theater. Remo Bufano headed the WPA's New York Marionette Unit, which employed scores of New York puppeteers, and the possibilities of puppetry in general had become increasingly intriguing— a new kind of modern performance form, perhaps?

In New York City, all art forms were affected by politics, and especially leftist politics. The most impor-

tant elements of the "new" theater movements—which reflected the influence of Stanislavsky's acting theories, European innovations in stage design, and a sense that theater was not entertainment, but modern art— were in these years largely imbued with an activist political zeal inspired by Marxist ideas and the worldwide crises which would eventually lead to the Second World War. In this fervid atmosphere puppets and over-life-size processional images played an important role as vivid public articulations of leftist political views.



Later in the afternoon the long procession brings by a group of nine over-size backpack puppets depicting men in suits. Are these characters labor heroes? Evil capitalists? European leaders insufficiently anti-Fascist? A militant group follows them, in white berets and red sashes, demanding "Raise Pay."

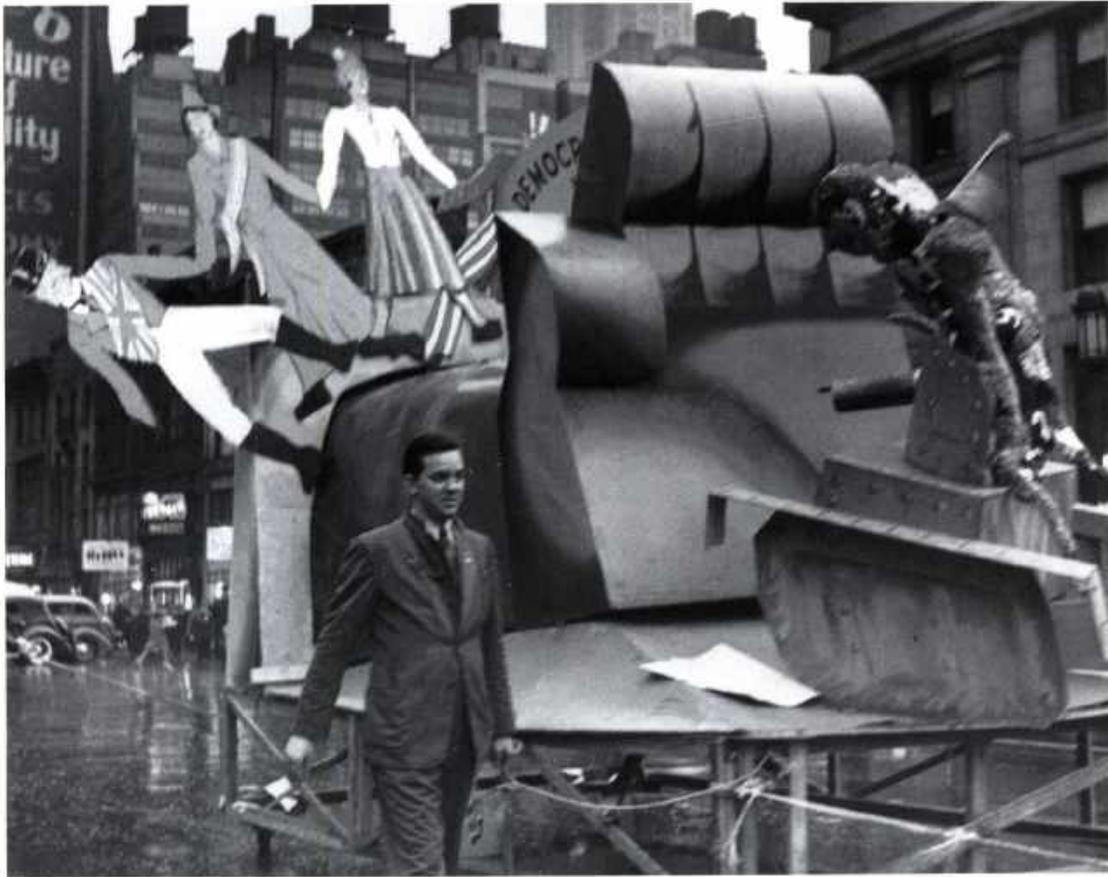
(It was in New York as well that Edward L. Bernays, the legendary public relations man, had employed a similar zeal, not for politics but for marketing. In 1929 he had helped usher in a new era in tobacco sales by organizing a "Torches of Freedom" march of ten young women who brazenly broke public etiquette by smoking cigarettes while walking down Fifth Avenue. Bernays was working for the American Tobacco Company at the time, and was using what he called "propaganda" to convince a new generation of American women that they should smoke in public just as men did.)

As an international celebration of leftist solidarity, May Day in the 1930s drew together Communists, Socialists, Anarchists, and other factions who celebrated the workers' holiday, above all with parades. The parades were an occasion to

create big political propaganda images, maybe almost as big as the advertising billboards (also propaganda images, in Bernays's sense) which looked down on the same New York streets.

In order to show a united opposition to the rise of Fascism in Spain and Italy, and Nazism in Germany, Communists espoused unity with Socialists and fellow leftists in an era of "Popular Front" coalition making. And in New York on May Day, a rich array of puppets, floats, banners, and costumes were an essential element of the annual workers' parade.

Photographer John Albok photographed and filmed the May Day events, and the images here appear through the courtesy of the Robert F. Wagner Labor Archives in the Tamiment Library of New York University.



The suited man helping pull a dolly-mounted platform float looks a bit uncomfortable; he's clearly been soaked for many blocks. The float wants to represent international unity fighting Fascism: flat cutouts representing England, Russia, France, and the United States are hand in hand atop a giant forearm, which stretches out a machine-smooth band against an almost ridiculous Fascist tank. This must be about Spain. (Stalin's forces have ordered a purge of non-Communist leftists there, and in a year Franco and his Fascist forces will defeat the Spanish Loyalists.) The papier-maché tank and its crew is dissolving in the rain.

May Day 1936

By May Day 1936 Hitler was re-arming Germany, Mussolini had invaded Ethiopia, and the Spanish Civil War would start in three months. Mexican artist David Siquieros had led a political art workshop in New York in previous weeks, in which the young painter Jackson Pollock helped design and build giant floats for the May Day parade (images which we don't have here). In the parade, placards and signs celebrate Langston Hughes, and call Hitler and mass-media publisher William Randolph Hearst a "Sister Act." Some May Day marchers carry the banner "Progressive Women," and others use placards to protest housing conditions— "Away with Fire Traps!"— or low pay: "\$9 for 7 hours!"

May Day 1937

A year later, the same kinds of issues are addressed with greater intensity. Mussolini had defeated Ethiopia, Hitler was consolidating his power in Germany, and the Civil War in Spain dragged on. One float urges watchers to "Join Friends of the Abraham Lincoln Brigade!" and another addresses domestic racial politics, proclaiming "White Labor Will Never Be Free With Black Labor Enchained!" Banners declare that "Labor Can Crush War," and announce "We March Against Fascism" and "We Demand Unemployment Insurance." One group of Communist Party members carries scores of American flags alternating with red hammer-and-sickle flags; but in another section of the parade there is, amazingly, a traditional maypole, calling attention to the day's roots in pagan fertility rituals.



At a different moment, five young marchers carry a black-shrouded skeleton madonna, adorned with swastikas. The marchers appear energized, even jaunty, in the rain! The kerchief-beaded woman in the right of the photo points out something to the young man with the service cap. But the woman with the pillbox hat looks right at Albok and smiles. There is a confidence in her smile, matched by her purposeful stride through the rain.

May Day 1938

By 1938, Bufano has quit the WPA, charging political interference with his plans to produce Carel Capek's alarming robot drama R.U.R. In Europe, Hitler's aggressive plans for a Third Reich are answered by the democratic countries' practice of appeasement politics. The May Day parade that year includes a group of Socialists calling for "A Life With A Purpose;" other marchers urge parade watchers to "Support The Heroic People of Spain." Albok is again on the east side of Union Square, facing the building on which he stood the year before. The rain is really coming down on the marchers as they pull or carry their floats down Fourth Avenue.

Who is this young woman? An artist? Activist? Puppeteer? What is the impetus for her smile? I think it is some unerring confidence she feels in the strength of the active street spectacle she and her companions are making: the dramatic power of their moving sculpture denouncing Nazism as a force of death. The scale of the image is small, especially compared to, say, the General Advertising Company ad looking down from Union Square North, or the ten-story Sterling Furniture advertisement which looms behind the rain-drenched marchers, proclaiming "Furniture of Quality at Prices of Economy." But the young woman must know that the ten-foot-high skeleton, wrapped in the unsettling dark sheet, is indeed powerful enough (in the way that all puppets have access to unlikely and uncanny dramatic strength) to conquer Nazism by means of theater, at least on the first of May, 1938.

John Bell is a founding member of NYC's Great Small Works and is on the faculty at Emerson College

THE JIM HENSON FOUNDATION 2001



The Jim Henson Foundation Announces its 2001 Funding Cycle

The Jim Henson Foundation was established in 1982 by Jim Henson to develop and encourage new work in the art of puppetry. The Foundation is dedicated to bringing high quality puppet performances to the American public. Our first priority is the development of puppetry as an art form. Towards this end, we have primarily funded innovative works for adult audiences.

The Jim Henson Foundation awards grants for the development and creation of new works of puppet theater by American artists. Project Seed and Project grants range from \$1,000 - \$5,000.

*Letters of intent must be post
marked by June 1st, 2001.
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on or before July 16, 2001.
Full proposals will be due on
September 1. Decisions will be
announced in late December.*

For a complete copy of our funding guidelines,
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Dangerous Theatre and The Death of Pinocchio

by Lynnie Raybuck

The United States' recurring antagonism between socially conscious theatre and government support was clearly delineated between August 27, 1935 and June 30, 1939, the birth and death dates of the Federal Theatre Project. Established by an Act of Congress during the Great Depression to employ theatre artists (including puppeteers), the FTP was an administrative unit of the WPA (Works progress Administration: April 1935-1941). Each unit within the FTP was expected to produce work for children by adults, pioneering the form in the United States. At least twenty marionette units were also established, developing work for both children and adult audiences.

Without original scripts, many of these early children's productions were based on folk and fairy tale adaptations. Yasha Frank, appointed by FTP director, Hallie Flanagan in 1936 as national consultant for Children's Theatre, directed and freely adapted Collodi's *Pinocchio* which developed an enthusiastic adult and youth audience after its opening in Los Angeles in 1937. Returning audiences included Walt Disney and members of his tech staff who attended eight different performances. *Pinocchio* became their next cartoon feature.⁽¹⁾

Our American collective memory conjures the 1950s Republican Joe McCarthy as the prototype for the publicity seeking government official who attacks government from the insider's position of power, attempting to arouse hatred and fear by connecting a person, group or idea to a perceived threat. But there was an earlier incarnation in 1938, when Congress convened the House Committee to Investigate Un-American Activities (HUAC) with Texas Democrat Martin Dies as chair.⁽²⁾

Hallie Flanagan was finally allowed to testify before the commission in December of 1938, four months after it began hearings and two months after Dies began issuing public statements accusing both the Federal Theatre and the Federal Writers Project of spreading Communist propaganda. After a remarkable exchange between Flanagan and Representative Joseph Starnes, in which he demanded to know if the Christopher Marlowe she referred to was a Communist, she realized that "eight



thousand people might lose their jobs because a Congressional Committee had so pre-judged us that even the classics were communistic". The final report was anti-climactic; the FTP was dealt with in one paragraph of non-specific conjecture. But six months of headlines had done their damage; the Federal Theatre was given one month to close down and pack up.

An original children's play by Oscar Saul and Lou Lantz, *The Revolt of the Beavers*, was one of the Dies Committee targets. Opened on May 30, 1937, the musical play was shut down by the FTP after a successful month because of incendiary reviews labeling it as Marxist propaganda and Flanagan's own institutionalized self-censorship.

The story is of two hungry nine year olds who dream they are transported to Beaverland, where the Chief Beaver and his toughs wear warm blue sweaters, eat ice cream and zip around on roller skates. The exhausted worker beavers (wood strippers) are faced with violence when they try to request changes and are re-

placed with "barkless" beavers, even poorer, who will work without complaint. The kids help band the workers together, forcing the Chief to "bend over" to be kicked from power. Children interviewed thought it was about selfishness and being good instead of bad and happiness. ⁽³⁾

Meanwhile, Yasha Frank's *Pinocchio* had opened in New York on Christmas Eve, 1939, to run until Congress killed the FTP in June of 1938. For the final performance, Frank wrote a new ending in which Pinocchio "having conquered selfishness and greed, did not become a living boy. Instead he was turned back into a puppet." ⁽⁴⁾ He was laid in a pine box, while children held signs reading "Who Killed Pinocchio". The stagehands demolished the set, which had been featured in LIFE magazine in March, in front of the spectators. ⁽⁵⁾

Funding for puppetry continued until 1941 but was withdrawn from public performance and given to amateur therapeutic, recreational and educational projects. ⁽⁶⁾ The course of this shift in emphasis may have affected the course of U.S. puppetry.

The decade old controversy surrounding the National Endowment for the Arts resulted in a similar refocusing from process to projects. Although no studies have been made, there is a perceived emphasis on educational outreach. In 1940, Hallie Flanagan clearly communicated the dangers of treating theatre, "not as a human issue or a cultural issue, but as a political issue." ⁽⁷⁾ The more things change. . .

Lynn Raybuck directs Small Beer Theatre and teaches college theatre courses in Washington, D.C.



RITZ THEATRE
48TH STREET, WEST OF BROADWAY
MADE IN HOSTED BY FEDERAL THEATRE PROJECT

- (1) Lorraine Brown and John O'Connor, *Free, Adult, Uncensored: Living History of the Federal Theatre Project* (Washington, D.C.: New Republic Books, 1978), 125-6.
- (2) *Ibid.* 195.
- (3) Hallie Flanagan, *Arena: The Story of the Federal Theatre* (New York: Limelight Editions, 1985. Copyright: Hallie Flanagan, 1940), 343-347.
- (4) *Ibid.* 365.
- (5) Brown and O'Connor, 128.
- (6) Michael Malkin, *Puppets: Art and Entertainment* (Washington, D.C.: Puppeteers of America, 1980), 48.
- (7) Flanagan, 335.

Seducing American Eyes: *Artist Yun Gee and the Federal Theater Project*

by *Seunghei Hong*

edited by *John Bell*

One of the most prolific moments in American puppet theater was in the 1930s, in the midst of the Depression. The federal government's Works Project Administration (WPA) created the Federal Theater Project, one of whose important elements was a nationwide network of marionette units. The marionette units utilized the talents of many great American puppeteers, but it is not widely known that they also saw the introduction of classic Chinese literature to American audiences, probably for the first time in American history. This important moment in American culture came about because of the inspired efforts of a Chinese-American artist, Yun Gee, and the willingness of the New York marionette unit's director, Remo Bufano, to support Gee's inspiration. In the following article Seunghei Hong recounts the story of *Kuan Kung's Generosity*, the landmark work Yun Gee created for the American puppet stage.

It was with the radically innovative marionette unit, and under the patronage of the Federal Theater Project, that a traditional Chinese puppet performance could be staged in the thirties; it marked an invaluable chapter in the history of American theater. The Federal Theater Project's marionette unit was by far its most popular division; in its first year it gave over one thousand performances to more than 182,000 people in New York City alone, a success owed in great measure to its Director and Managing Producer, Remo Bufano. With a bent for innovation and novelty, and a belief in moving forward and moving fast, Bufano experimented with groundbreaking aesthetic principles and ventured into new themes and manipulation techniques.



It was under the experimental spirit of Bufano, from 1935 to 1937, that the marionette unit staged its most successful and significant performances, including not only such familiar tales as *Oliver Twist*, *Alice in Wonderland*, and *Treasure Island*, but also, for the first time in the American theater, *Kuan Kung's Generosity*, a puppet play based on a classic Chinese epic. *Kuan Kung's Generosity* did not follow the typical forms of American puppet theater. Instead, it was a wholly different puppet performance with new themes, characters, backdrops, and music.

The history of the American response to Chinese immigration and Chinese culture best explains why *Kuan Kung's Generosity* seemed such a daring and revolutionary production. In the late nineteenth century the concept of an ameliorative multiculturalism did not exist. Racist sentiments abounded, and the lynching of Blacks and Asians was met with complacency and without remorse all over the country. During the 1870s, Chinese immigrants were routinely assaulted, usually by Irish and Italian immigrant workers who feared losing jobs to them. In 1882, as a wave of anti-Chinese attacks spread through American cities, the United States government, egged on by the popular press, prohibited Chinese immigration with the Chinese Exclusion Act, even though Chinese constituted only .002 percent of the entire U. S. population.

Under the Exclusion Act only a handful of Chinese were legally allowed into the United States, but many entered illegally. In part through solidarity, but also out of necessity, Chinese immigrants began to create their own enclaves in American cities. Even after Chinese immigration resumed in the twentieth century, most Chinese continued to be isolated in urban "Chinatowns." Within these enclosed communities, theater was extremely popular. Performed in its native language, traditional Chinese theater helped people hold onto their heritage while they accommodated themselves to the changing conditions in their new homeland. From drama to opera to puppetry, a variety of traditional Chinese performances were staged by professional troupes.

Although immensely successful within Chinese communities, Chinese theater remained invisible to the general American public. What Americans did encounter on the popular stage of the time were caricatures of the Chinese: sometimes farcical, sometimes villainous, but always degrading, and always played by white actors made up to represent the racial type. African-American actors on the minstrel circuit occasionally portrayed Chinese as well, resulting in a double parody of identity: a black actor, working within the self-denigrating codes of minstrelsy, invited laughter through the demeaning representation of a Chinese character. It was in the midst of this complex and difficult legacy that Yun Gee, a talented Chinese-American modernist painter, proposed to Bufano's marionette unit that it produce an original puppet performance that could both enlighten and inform the American public about Asian traditions. Bufano agreed, and with the marionette unit Gee created *Kuan Kung's Generosity*. A 1935 Federal Theater Project newsletter gives an intriguing description of the show:

Puppeteers who are out touring know very little about what is happening inside the marionette workshop. There is Yun Gee's Chinese marionette show, with its authentic Chinese heads, costumes, and scenery, which can be seen in rehearsal at the Leroy Street Library. The Chinese marionette show will be played by the Treasure Island Unit, which will alternate performances of both plays during the summer.

Kuan Kung's Generosity was indeed performed that summer, to full houses not only in New York but in other FTP districts as well. Gee was a second-generation Chinese-American, literally by accident. His father had entered the United States illegally and worked menial jobs while in hiding. In 1906, after San Francisco experienced one of its worst earthquakes, the elder Gee walked into the Naturalization Department and demanded his citizenship, claiming he was a United States citizen whose records had been lost in the earthquake. He was issued a citizenship card and, consequently, in 1921, his son was shipped over from China at the age of fifteen as a legal Chinese-American. Yun Gee's American passport allowed him to be visible; to step freely out of the enclaves of Chinatown; it would also become his ticket to join the marionette unit.

A passionate aficionado of art, Gee studied painting at the California Institute of Fine Arts. A modernist painter with very personal views on painting, he believed art depended upon an understanding of, and reaction to one's society. Gee drew upon this notion in his paintings: his colors, lines, subject matter and technique were a reaction to the dominant style of American art in the twenties—social realism. In San Francisco's Chinatown Gee formed the Chinese Revolutionary Artist Club with some friends. The club members started to exhibit their work at a co-op gallery in 1925, and the following year presented a solo exhibit of Gee's paintings. As a result Gee became acquainted with several aristocratic Parisians who, captivated by his markedly modernist style, invited Gee to travel to Paris and work with other artists at the center of the modernist art world.

From 1926 to 1931 Gee worked in Paris, and its modernist atmosphere inspired some of his finest landscape paintings. In spite of success and recognition in Paris, however, Gee continued to struggle financially. Finally, after four happy but poor years, Gee left Paris and came to New York with hopes of finding a job and earning a living. Upon arriving in New York, Gee was immediately welcomed by and established within New York art circles.

His paintings were displayed at the Museum of Modern Art, the Brooklyn Museum of Art, and in various reputable art galleries. However, this reputation still did not provide him with the financial support he needed and he looked for other means of income.

With the onset of the Depression in the 1930s, Gee became an artist on relief. His fame as a modernist painter had provided Gee with some prominent connections, and so with a letter of recommendation from First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt in one hand, and his American citizenship card in the other, Gee joined the Works Progress Administration in 1935. He worked first with the Federal Theater Project's marionette unit, and then, in 1936, with the Easel Project, a program specifically devoted to the visual arts. Gee left behind an interesting legacy with the Easel Project, but it was his work with the Federal Theater Project that broke new ground in the history of the American arts, and specifically in puppet theater. Unlike most second-generation immigrants, who, in trying to assimilate into American traditions, eagerly renounced their own heritage, Gee constantly strove to display Chinese traditions and philosophies in all he did. For Gee, paintings, writings, and even dinner parties were not complete unless they contained a certain Chinese element. He took great pride in his Chinese origins, and throughout his life he would refer to his elementary education in China as his most edifying experience. It was in fact during these elementary years that Gee had become familiar with *The Romance of the Three Kingdoms*. As a young boy, he was captivated by its plethora of never-ending battles and cunning intrigues, which painted a fantastical world in his creative mind. As Gee grew older, his understanding of Confucianism and Taoism helped him realize the full significance of the epic.

The Romance of the Three Kingdoms was written in the fourteenth century by the scholar Luo Guanzhong. Based closely on historical events (seven parts fact and three



parts fiction), it is a mainstream historical work detailing the rise and fall of the Han Dynasty from 189 to 265 A.D. While the dates seem questionable, the people and events are factual. A national epic, *The Romance of the Three Kingdoms* renders a rolling panorama of passions and ambitions that brings readers to all realms of human experience. It is said that in Asia children read the book for its fairy-tale qualities; rulers embrace it for strategies; scholars, wisdom; parents, guidelines; and laypeople, entertainment. Its precepts of morality, honor, loyalty, virtue, and duty to country and friend probe into Confucian philosophical questions, while its elaborate and descriptive renditions of court conflict, corruption, banditry, rebellion, intrigue, battles, and ambitious warlords draw the reader into its fantastic world.

In the eyes of Remo Bufano, the director and managing producer of the marionette unit, all these traits gave *Romance of the Three Kingdoms* the potential for a highly successful puppet performance. In a *Little Review* article of 1926, Bufano had written that "wherever the supernatural or the elaborate or symbolical is aimed at, the marionette has no rival," and Gee's adaptation of a part of Luo Guanzhong's epic, which he titled *Kuan Kung's Generosity*, played upon just the elaborate and symbolic elements Bufano prized.

So Gee was commissioned by the marionette unit to pursue his Chinese play. Gee wrote his original script in Chinese and translated into English with the help of some friends. In the preface to the English script Gee wrote the following:

This drama is founded upon one of the most stirring episodes in Chinese history, which occurred in the year 208 A.D. The battles depicted in the play happened right after the battle of the Red Cliff was fought in the present province of Hupeh. In this battle, Ts'ao Ts'ao, the usurper of the Empire Han, north of the Yang Tze, was defeated, and his fleet of 1000 vessels burned by Sun Chu'uan, the emperor of Wu, who together with Liu Pei, the emperor of Shu, conspired to overthrow Ts'ao Ts'ao, emperor of the Wei Empire. The standing army of Ts'ao Ts'ao numbered 830,000 men.



Beneath the title are two simple but revealing subtitles: "A Chinese Drama for Stage" and "Puppet Show in Four Acts by Yun Gee." It is both significant and poignant that Gee chose to focus on this particular chapter of *The Romance of the Three Kingdoms*. According to legend, Luo Guanzhong composed his novel of high Han nationalism while under the tyrannical Mongolian occupation of the fourteenth century, and the epic revolves around three friends and blood brothers and their struggle to restore their nation against an avaricious emperor. Ts'ao Ts'ao, a highly decorated general of the Han Empire, betrays the trust of the young Han Emperor, usurps the empire, and establishes the Wei Kingdom in the north of China. Liu Pei, using his questionable imperial blood to legitimize his claim of restoring the Han Dynasty, establishes the Shu-Han Kingdom in the west of China, and with the help of his best friends Guan Yu and Zhang Fei, wages war against Ts'ao Ts'ao. The theme of loyalty to country and restoration of a glorious dynasty must have tugged tenderly at Gee's heartstrings. Fiercely nationalistic, his play suggests a strong protest against the racial prejudices prevalent toward the Chinese in the thirties. In a time when Chinese were depicted in demeaning and farcical stereotypes on the popular American stage, Gee managed to produce an image of the Chinese as descendants of a glorious empire with a magnificently rich history. The story is also poignant to those who know the entire *Romance of the Three Kingdoms* because in spite of his efforts, Liu Pei fails to restore the Han Kingdom, loses his two best friends in battle, and eventually retreats to a small village in the west. Gee's focus on a particular battle which Liu Pei wins suggests a determination to depict a romantic vision of his own situation: one nationalistic individual triumphing over a tyrannical nation. Gee drew a number of elaborate watercolor sketches for each of his characters and for the set backdrops; he even created a blueprint for each marionette figure, complete with details on how the strings should be attached. From headpiece to costumes and weapons, Gee painstakingly duplicated the images he found in traditional Chinese pictures, and he made sure that every detail would be rendered clearly and correctly by the workshop. One blurry photograph of the production exists, but it is hard to decipher the figures and costumes in their colorful array of pink, green, blue, red, and yellow. However, Gee's widow, Helen Gee, is certain that her husband, with his meticulous working methods, would have insisted upon every detail being produced as he designed. Little information remains on the actual production of *Kuan Kung's Generosity*. In addition to performances in English by the FTP marionette unit in various New York boroughs, the production was

A'PROPOS

UNIMA-USA News
Vol. 1 No. 4
March 2001

COMMUNICATION IS THE KEY

Flooded by faxes, engulfed by email, worried over web pages... Enough, already - or is it? Are we being pushed over a cliff by relentlessly evil technological demons who rob us of our time and bury us in trivial details? Or is this an era of unparalleled opportunity to connect and strengthen world wide communities?

The sharing of knowledge and resources on many levels is what UNIMA was created for. And we can choose to further those goals through options now available to us. Please contact the A'propos editor and web page editor, as well as UNIMA-USA board committee chairs with your news, needs, announcements, resources. Let's celebrate our part in this world-wide community!

Karen Konnerth, Editor
calliopepm@aol.com



Paper cut design by Randel McGee, sent as gift in celebration of 45th anniversary of UNIMA-Nederland, featured on cover of Dutch puppetry magazine "Wij Poppenspelers".

These are certainly exciting times in the world of puppetry. We are seeing the installation of new leaders on the international level of UNIMA, and there are plenty of projects and concerns to keep us all involved. Welcome to the 21st century!

Randel McGee, Board President

INDIA EARTHQUAKE RELIEF

Nancy Staub has made contact with the Darpana Academy, Ahmedabad, India. Director Mrinalini Sarabhai wrote to Nancy that the Academy is all right. There is a puppet division that was led for many years by former UNIMA Vice-President Meher Contractor, now deceased. Dadi Pudumjee, a current UNIMA Vice-President, ironically was there during the earthquake to accept the first Meher Contractor Award. The Academy proposes to help artisans throughout the devastated villages in Gujarat State rebuild their lives.

DONATIONS CAN BE SENT AS FOLLOWS:

Make checks out in the name of ICA or Indians for Collective Action, with a memo on check saying Darpana or Darpana Earthquake Relief.

Send to: Abhay Bhushan, ICA Darpana Project Coordinator
3838 Mumford Place, Palo Alto, Ca 94306, (tel 650-424-8110).

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WHAT'S INSIDE

Education Opportunities*Scholarship Awards*News Bits*Touring News*Classified Ads*Travelogue Reports

WOW! NEW WEB MASTER BRINGS MUCH NEEDED CHANGES

UNIMA-USA welcomes Donald Devet, new web master for the UNIMA-USA web site. He will keep current the annual changes, such as the UNIMA-USA Board, UNIMA-USA Citations announcements, the Touring Directory, as well as incorporating more up-to-date news. Donald is designing an improved navigation system throughout the site as well as making the site more visually appealing. Membership sign-up may be made available on-line, also. Check it out! www.unima-usa.org

Contact the A'propos editor and/or Marianne Tucker, web page editor, with news to be posted on the web page as well as in A'propos.

SCHOLARSHIP AWARDS ENHANCE OPPORTUNITIES

STUDY IN BALI

Vivian Appler from Oakland, CA received an UNIMA-USA scholarship for \$700 for her study of wayang kulit shadow puppetry through the Dell' Arte School of Physical Theatre's study program in Bali. The intensive 3 month course staffed by both Balinese and Dell' Arte Instructors began in Jan 30 2001. With background from the College of William and Mary and Dell' Arte International training program in physical theater in Blue Lake, CA., Vivian has been a member of the company Lunatique Fantastique, performing nonverbal table top puppetry with "found "objects. Vivian's current project is Puppets Rorschach, a company whose mission is to create new and exciting puppetry combining

unconventional puppet styles with live, original music. She will benefit from her studies in Bali in not only expanding her own puppetry knowledge and skill, but also will return to teach and expand the scope of puppetry in America.

CHARLEVILLE-MEZIERES SUMMER PROGRAM

Emily Wilson received an UNIMA-USA scholarship for \$700 to study at L'Ecole Superieure Nationale de la Marionnette in Charleville-Mezieres this summer. She will attend a July course taught by Philippe Genty, and the two-week course taught by Donato Sartori. After College, Emily worked at the Oddfellows Playhouse Youth Theater in Middletown, CT for two years as an Americorps worker in the arts, organizing and teaching programs for at-risk youth in theater and puppetry work. Emily was a participant in the O'Neill

Puppetry Conference at the Eugene O'Neill Theater for two consecutive years and was invited to showcase two pieces developed there as part of the "Puppetry from There to Here" series in New York in 1999 and 2000. During the past year, she had the opportunity to attend two international festivals and to work for the Forman Brothers in Prague building "The Purple Sails." Working on a French-Czech collaboration strongly reinforced her desire to develop and improve her own work and to feel challenged to strive for greater precision, richness and depth in the execution of her ideas.

For scholarship information, UNIMA-USA members may download an application from the web site at www.unima-usa.org

NEWS BITS

THE NEW "UNI"

The new nickname for the Citations award is the "UNI" .

UNIMA-USA Mid Year Board of Trustees Meeting will be held at site of Puppeteers of America

Festival, Tampa FL
July 7 and 8, 2001

NEW NOMINATIONS COMMITTEE APPOINTED

The new Nominations Committee, for UNIMA-USA Board positions is: Robin Holm, Chair, along with

Preston Foerder and Travis Bowen, members. They will be submitting a list of potential candidates for the up-coming elections. Many thanks go out to our previous nominations people, Michael Nelson, Mark Levenson, and Monica Leo.

UNIMA-USA CONTRIBUTORS

(October 1, 2000 to Feb. 16, 2001)

Contributions may be made to general fund, or to specific funds, such as the Scholarship Fund.

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Carol Fijan
Hudson River Theater
Allelu Kurten
Michael T. Lamason & Karen French
Jean M. Mattson
Jewell Perkins
Myrna Peterjohn
Pied Piper Puppets
Frances Preimsberg
Lettie C. Schubert
Sigrid A. See
Carol Sterling

FRIEND

Adzooks Puppets
Dr. Henry W. Aherns
Joyce Bailey
Malcolm S. Beaudett, MD
Mildred Berry
Travis & Lewellyn Bowen
Bob Croghan
Das Puppenspiel Puppet Theatre
David Smith Marionettes
Eulenspiegel Puppet Theatre Co.
Tom Fogarty

Kathee Foran
Jack Fredricks
The Hunter Marionettes
Jerry Juhl
Stephen J. Kaplan & Kuang-Yu Fong
Rose Veselak Land
The Mark Levenson Puppets
John Mayer
Robert J. Mills
Gundela Muthesius
George Neff & Ann Szabo Neff
The Puppet Company
Puppet Divas
Puppet Pizzazz
Gigi & Glenn Sandberg
Karen L. Schnitzspahn
Society of the Educational Arts, Inc.
Brian F. Steimel & Raymond Masters
Alice Swann
Richard & Vickie Vincent
Paul Vincent-Davis
Lea Wallace
We're Holden Puppets
Peter & Jarmila Zapletal

FRIEND

Vincent Anthony
Toby Armour
Loyce Arthur
Robert Beuth
Evey Brown
Mark Brown
Mara Cary
Marcia Cohen
Linda Dryden
David C. Goldman
Carl Harms
Esther Heydt
Robert Howard
Katia Petrova
Robert Petza
Puppetree People
Dorothy Scullin
Mark Segal
Lee Wagman
B.T.Whitehill

EDUCATION

Spring Course Offering by Toronto School of Puppetry
 Contact: David Powell, The Toronto School of Puppetry, & Puppetmongers Theatre.
<http://www.pathcom.com/~pmongers>

International Perspectives
 Penny Francis of the Central School in London is forming a group of those interested in higher education issues on Puppet Training. If you have experiences, requests, ideas and goals, contact her, or James Hawkins will forward information to her.
hawkins@cwu.edu

Help From Foreign Exchange Programs: Reach Out Internationally and Find Connections.

Central Washington University has many foreign exchange students from pacific rim nations, notably Japan where sister university at Anouï engages in curricular and cultural exchanges. Presently, through this exchange, a Japanese student is acting as a consultant for the spring actor and puppet production of The Honorable Urashima Taro. Satoshi Yamamoto has come all the way from Tottori City to

immerse himself in his studies in the English language and to explore his interest in theater. He graduated from Tottori Higorshi High School where his varied interests included puppetry. As a child he did attend some Kabuki Theatre, but "mostly American films". His input ranges from sharing stories of the folk hero Urashima Taro in his youth, to helping with pronunciation and interpretation. The American students are delighted to have the connection and the help.

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T-shirts, Totes, Pins, Luggage Tags, past issues
 Puppetry International, [Language of the Puppet](#)

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unima@mindspring.com

MEMBER BENEFITS

Members of UNIMA-USA will receive discounts on tickets at the following theaters:
 Puppet Showplace Theatre
 32 Station Street
 Brookline, MA 02445-7338
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In the Heart of the Beast Puppet and Mask Theatre
 1500 East Lake Street
 Minneapolis, MN 55407
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Center for Puppetry Arts
 Spring Street N.W.
 Atlanta, GA 30309
 404 873-3089
 UNIMA-USA thanks these theaters for their support.

PASSAGES

In this part of the newsletter, members may share information on deaths, marriages, openings of puppetry centers, etc. Please contact the editor with events of note.

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Please notify the UNIMA-USA office at the Center if your address changes. Please forward:
1.) Your old address and telephone number.
2.) Your new address and

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UNIMA-USA, Inc. web server:
Mindspring/Earthlink.

1999-00 UNIMA-USA Final Financial Report

Income:	
Membership Dues	\$17,435
Contributions	8,015
Int'l Member Postage	332
Advertising	6,325
Puppetry Int'l Sales	1,932
Ventures	184
Treasury Bill interest	1,620
Lang. of Puppet Sales	1,012
	\$36,855
Expense:	
Office Expense:	
Telephone	\$ 207
Postage	2,733
Office Supplies	498
Copying	1,567
Legal/Accounting	308
Bank Fees	70

State Registration	50
Office Help	1,000
Publications:	
2 Puppetry Internationals	16,512
Typeset/Misc. printing	7,156
Language of the Puppet	2,500
Public Relations:	
Receptions	400
Advertising	45
Miscellaneous:	
Unima Int'l Dues	635
Board Meeting	536
Video Awards	123
Ventures	1,271
Website Registration	36
	\$ 35,647

TOURING NEWS



Please contact the Editor with any news or announcements of foreign troupes touring in the U.S.

in order to further opportunities for cultural exchange.

Sumandhi, an Indonesian dalang, will be in the US again from September to early November 2001, and is hoping to tour. He is being sponsored by the Center for World Music in San Diego, CA. The San Diego Guild of Puppetry co-sponsored several of his performances in conjunction with the Center for World Music last year in the Puppet Theater. The S.D. Guild would like to have him again, and are helping spread the word.

For more information, contact Lynne Jennings: Lynnejenn@aol.com.

Producciones Mario Donate (Puerto Rico) present Titirifiesta, New Orleans Jazz & Heritage Festival, New Orleans, LA May 5, 2001
 Richard Bradshaw (Australia) presents shadow show, Center for Puppetry Arts, Atlanta, GA Sept. 7, 8 and 9 '01
 Salzburg Marionettes (Austria) present The Magic Flute, Center for Puppetry Arts, Atlanta, GA,

Nov. 18,'01

The Forman Brothers (Czech Republic) present Baroque Opera, Center for Puppetry Arts, Atlanta, GA, Jan. 10-20, '02
 Richard Bradshaw (Australia), Carlos Alvarez (Columbia), Robert Poulter (Great Britain), Puppetmongers Powell (Canada), Puppeteers of America Festival, July 8 - 14, 2001

TRAVELOGUE REPORTS

Have YOU had an interesting experience while touring outside of the US, or while hosting a foreign troupe here? Have you tips for puppeteers touring abroad?

A'Propos offers UNIMA members a chance to share stories and information. Please contact the Editor with your travel itinerary.

STREET THEATER IN ITALY

Talib and Olivia Huff of Sacramento, CA spent the holiday season visiting Italian puppeteers in Northern Italy. Olivia responded to the following questions:

Where did you travel?

This past year we went to Italy two times.

When and how long was your trip?

In what role did you go (performer, student, etc.)?

This past year we went to Italy two times. The first time was in June for 3 weeks. Our goal was to make some puppetry contacts and bravely perform on the streets of Italy and for our family and friends. We put together a short (10 minute?) story of universal appeal and without words. We made a contact with a puppeteer in Vicenza, Silvia Brunello, who insisted we meet and see a puppeteer that she was collaborating with, Gigio Brunello (no relation) who is a master at Commedia dell'arte puppetry. We did succeed in meeting her and him, and seeing his show, although our time together was VERY limited (we only spent 3 hours at her house, and that was from 3-6 AM !!) We also met a crafts woman who made puppets whom we befriended (She lives in Empoli near Florence). And yes, we bravely performed on the streets of Italy (after my husband checked with local authorities in one city, using his

very broken Italian). We never had a problem, and were well received by the children of all ages who stopped to see our show.

The second trip was over the holidays. To make a long story short, we had an opportunity to go again, but we had to do it at a certain time. So I contacted Silvia, and she graciously invited us to stay with her family for 8 days, go with her when she performed her new show, and asked us to perform ours in a school. We also had the opportunity to see two other puppet companies and visit the laboratory of one of them (in Padua). We performed at Silvia's Christmas party (27 guests!). And we bought some puppets to sell over here from our crafts woman friend.

Describe briefly the planning process (from initial contact in foreign country, to arrival in country)

We aren't a "big" company and don't do "big" shows, so we had a hard time getting contacts for our first trip. We weren't interested in performing for festivals because we didn't want to lug around a lot of stuff on our first trip (these trips were also a bit personal--visiting family and friends that I had met on my first trip to Italy 2 years prior), but pursued trying to meet some of the puppeteers who do. In the end we went the more personal, friend-of-a-

friend approach, which I guess is the Italian way, anyway. (We made contact with Silvia through our activities and interest in Waldorf education.) We see these trips as laying groundwork for future work/contacts.

How was trip funded (grant, performance fees, scholarship, savings, etc.)?

Unfortunately, we funded these trips ourselves, although we tried to get a grant from the National Italian Federation.

What was the most valuable part of the experience?

INTERNATIONAL PUPPETRY IN CHARLEVILLE-MEZIERES, FRANCE

Ann Mesritz responded about her international trip to a world renowned festival.

Where did you travel?

To Chareville-Mézières for the International Puppetry Festival.

When and how long was your trip?

September, 2000, trip to festival was 6 days; but entire trip was 3 weeks, beginning in Germany to visit Berlin & friends in Passau; then to Paris for a few days after the fest.

In what role did you go?

Audience member; tourist.

Describe briefly the planning process (from initial contact in foreign country, to arrival in country)

I did all I could over the internet; I also speak French which made it a bit easier. Phone calls where necessary. Most significant "leap of faith" was in finding a room to stay - hotels were filled, so the Festival Committee gave me the number of the local tourist office, who assigned me a room in a small pension about 10 minutes' taxi ride from town. It was inexpensive, clean, very nice people, and no one spoke English. I enjoyed it thoroughly, for I felt immersed in a non-American world, but I think it would be hard for someone who doesn't speak the language. The most challenging part was choosing what shows to see, since I knew virtually none of the companies and there was no information about them. I chose not to order the catalog, and

The value to us is on many levels. Personal—learning a new language, negotiating every part of one's life in a new country, having the courage to persevere to make contacts. Professional—it is always inspiring and eye-opening to see other people's work and have a chance to discuss their work with them, their struggles, their intentions, etc.

What would you do differently next time?

Each trip is so unique and offers its own lessons and experiences. But definitely... remember to take business cards along at all times!!!!

"guessed" based on the list I found on the internet. Once I was there, and had a chance to look at the program book, I realized it would have offered little help in choosing anyway. So, I chose according to a couple of things: shows that had only one or two performances; intriguing titles; object theater, table top, mixed techniques and hand puppet shows, shying away from strings and rods. These were a matter of taste in style. I was incredibly lucky, and wound up having chosen some of the really outstanding performances. In fact, for the first few days, I was astounded at the almost routinely superb quality of the shows. By day three, however, I'd run into the horrible ones. Next, time, I'd avoid the guignol type hand puppet shows.

How was trip funded (grant, performance fees, scholarship, savings, etc.)?

Savings.

What was the most valuable part of the experience?

Hard to pick any one thing. I loved it all - the experience as a whole, the lovely medieval town in a beautiful setting, the shows, the many good restaurants that weren't outrageously expensive, the charming and colorful character who sold medieval snacks and drinks in a corner of the square and hearing his stories; talking with a lovely Greek couple who were there to visit their son, who is in the puppetry program there and to see the shows . . .

What would you do differently next time?

Start making plans sooner.

also performed in Chinese for a mainly Chinese audiences in Chinatown. According to Nancy Gonzalez, Gee's biographer, a variety of Chinese newspapers from 1935 included laudatory reviews of these performances: the show was exactly what people had seen in their homeland, or at least what they heard was being done in China. Garnering success from both American and Chinese audiences alike, *Kuan Kung's Generosity* continued as a touring production. Americans had rarely seen such elaborate marionette shows before, had certainly never seen a Chinese marionette show, and were instantly fascinated by *Kuan Kung's Generosity*. However, amazingly enough, the entire production—puppets, sets, and props—was lost in the midst of travels between different cities. Gee never saw his marionettes again and Helen Gee assumes they no longer exist, since so much of what the WPA commissioned was eventually destroyed or, as she puts it, "sold at five dollars a pound to scrap-dealers."

In addition to writing the script and designing the costumes, Gee also operated marionettes when the play was performed. Considering the size of the cast—eight main characters and six supporting roles—it seems quite likely that Gee performed with other puppeteers. Yet a small black-and-white photograph of Gee manipulating the strings from above the stage shows him standing alone. Moreover, in a short home movie he made of *Kuan Kung's Generosity*, he operates all the marionettes himself. Helen Gee adds that Gee's marionettes were very large in size—almost human-sized. Is it possible that Bufano inspired Gee to work in this scale?

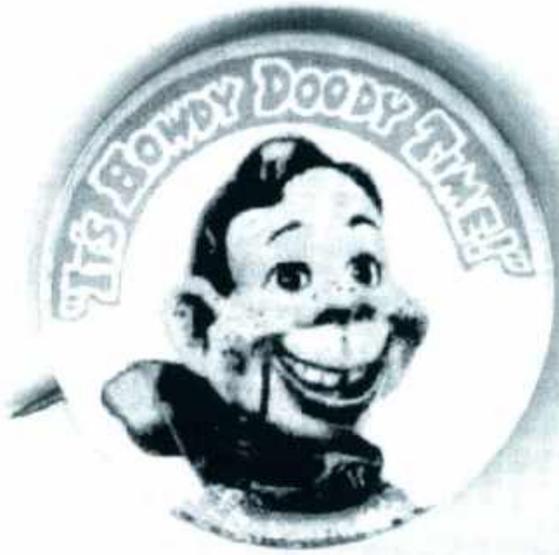
How Chinese or American were Gee's marionettes in terms of style and technique? Traditional Chinese marionettes are noted for the great number of strings—in some cases as many as forty—used to control them. An average Chinese marionette stands about twenty-four inches high and is sometimes equipped with a wide range of expressive motions. The mouth, eyes, individual fingers, even the eyebrows in some instances may be made to move. On the other hand, American marionettes are generally simpler, and Bufano in particular felt that puppets should be kept simple. He encouraged the least amount of strings possible to make the marionette work. Most likely influenced by both traditions, Gee formulated a compromise. The designs for his life-size marionette show an average of six strings: fairly simple and Bufanoesque. Yet Gee's costumes and ornaments reveal an elaborate intricacy typical of the Chinese theater. In other words, Gee was able to create an original Chinese-American marionette form.

Although Gee was happy working with the Federal Theater Project, he yearned to paint again. So when the WPA Easel Project was established in 1936, Gee left the marionette unit and went on to participate in painting commissions around New York City. Together with Stuart Davis and Georgia O'Keefe, Gee was voted one of the top five artists of the period by the *New York Times*. He even competed with Diego Rivera for the commission to paint a mural in the lobby of Rockefeller Center.

It was also in 1936 that he met and soon married Helen Gee. Exhibiting his work at the Museum of Modern Art, performing traditional Chinese dance and music at the Brooklyn Museum of Art, cooking Chinese meals and organizing dinner parties for friends and fellow artists, teaching art at WPA art schools, and living comfortably on the WPA's twenty-five dollars weekly payroll, Yun and Helen Gee enjoyed what would be the happiest days of their lives. However, towards the end of 1936, Gee began to feel that the American art world was stifling and constricting, plagued by politics and racism. He believed he was not being given equal treatment or equal opportunities, and in 1937 he once more left for Paris.

During his three years in Paris, Gee wrote Helen Gee approximately 450 letters, and in one of them he discussed *Kuan Kung's Generosity* for the last time. In 1938 the French government had invited Gee to participate in a traveling puppet showcase. His marionettes had earlier disappeared in the United States, but because of what Helen Gee terms "his exceptional organizational skills," Gee still had his marionette sketches with him, neatly arranged in leather-bound books he had made with his wife. So, in lieu of the actual puppets, Gee exhibited his marionette designs, and they were warmly received in Paris.

Gee returned to New York in 1939, but was no longer the multi-talented creative genius of before. Helen Gee noticed a change in his personality, which was immediately reflected in his paintings. His colors grew dark and his work did not match the brilliance of his earlier years. Something had gone terribly wrong in Paris, but no one, not even Gee himself, seemed to know what it was. Depressed and frustrated, he eventually fell under the spell of paranoia-schizophrenia. Helen Gee remembers his tragic downfall: "He went from this handsome man with dark gleaming black hair and dressed in dark suits and bright ties to a grotesque human being." He degenerated slowly until his death in 1963.



The Use of Puppetry in Early Television Commercials

by Leslee Asch

For those of us who are not true football fans, but consider it un-American to skip the Super Bowl, conversation centers on the new crop of high-priced commercials. But where did this begin? Since puppetry was at the forefront of early TV, it stands to reason that it was also at the forefront of its commercialization.

In his entertaining and informative 1981 book, *Saturday Morning TV*, author Gary Grossman chronicles the early days of television. The chapter entitled "Batteries Not Included" focuses on the birth of television commercials. According to Grossman, a popular marketing technique of the 1950's was the self-liquidating premium. He quotes Buffalo Bob Smith, the acknowledged guru of the form, "We used them a great deal. For example, we'd tell kids to buy a box of Kellogg's Rice Krispies, then send in a box top with fifteen cents and we'd return a punch balloon. If they're making even one-and-a-half cents on each toy and they have five million replies, then they've made a tremendous deal." Howdy Doody still

holds the all-time record for successful self-liquidating premiums. "We'd plug the hell out of them," said Smith. "We used the punch balloon throughout the show and then I'd say, 'And here's how you can get yours...!' There'd be a flood of mail, all handled by the premium company." This practice lost favor in the 70's with rising postal costs and regulation by the Federal Trade Commission.

The daytime Howdy Doody was dropped in 1956 and the program was relegated to 10:00 a.m. Saturday morning because the daily time slot could generate more money with a program for adults. Again Smith said, "Naturally we wanted the daily slot because merchandising was stronger five days a week than just Saturday. But we had no voice in the matter." In 1960 NBC cancelled the show altogether because it wasn't bringing in enough money, but today any merchandise with the character's name on it is worth a small fortune.

"We worked the commercials right into the plot," said Burr Tillstrom about his work on Kukla, Fran and Ollie. "They just gave us the facts and said use it anyway you want to. Sometimes they were getting five-minute commercials, and that's why our shows couldn't be repeated." However, it was a doll, not a puppet, that kicked commercials into high gear and started a new style of hard sell. In 1959, a Mattel creation named for the daughter of owners Ruth and Elliot Handler, changed the entire Saturday morning TV advertising picture. Barbie quickly proved that a toy without a TV show tie-in could still be a big hit with children, and set the tone for the era of high-pressure, tightly edited commercials.



Today, unfortunately, television shows like *Pokemon* take it many steps farther by designing shows based on product.

That said, much creative talent is devoted to clever persuasive advertising and my son and I look forward to the commercial breaks in the football action to critique the latest entries.



Children's costumes fashioned after Burr Tilstrom's OLLIE and KUKLA puppets from the 1950's show, "Kukla, Fran and Ollie". Fran was Fran Allison, Ollie was Ollie Dragon [q.v.], and Kukla was the headlining clown.



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THE PUPPETRY YEARBOOK seeks submissions for future volumes. Submissions are sought for Volume V (an eclectic issue featuring essays on any aspect of puppetry) and Volume VI (devoted exclusively to Edward Gordon Craig's interest in puppets).

FOR MORE INFORMATION, CONTACT:

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PEOPLE BEWARE!
*Hide your puppets and
 bite your tongues!*

Dangers of Modern-Day Puppets

by Liz Joyce

Your cardboard symbols are dangerous and will be seized and destroyed. Does this seem a little far-fetched? If you had been involved in political protest or street theatre including puppets recently, it might not.

Historically, the harmless and delightful medium of puppet theatre has often been used to mask a political agenda. It has enjoyed much more freedom and less censorship than other theatre. Aside from the seldom seen Punch and Judy Show, where is the puppet found in our culture today? Since most traces of the Town Square are long gone, one won't find many there. Perhaps the television is where most of the contemporary puppets can be seen, filling young minds with rapid images of the alphabet and zoo creatures. If one searches, they may find children's theatre involving puppets and puppet shows, telling the usual fairy tales to young audiences. Look harder still and you may find a new breed of puppeteer on the streets, creating quite a stir. Groups from all over the country, ultimately combining to create a large collective, are the modern day puppeteers, the "Puppetistas." They are armed with puppets and, to some danger! These roving tribes of activists didn't exist a decade ago. Taking to the streets in the form of large political protests, these puppeteers are joined by many other activist groups in their plight. The Puppetistas will be found standing out in a crowd of

thousands, their giant puppets towering colorfully above. To challenge the ethics of Corporate

Globalization is one of their main objectives. The little guys kicking the giant in the shins, right? Well, these aren't the puppets you used to make in kindergarten.

The term Puppetista was coined in Seattle. Participants consisted of groups from Bread and Puppet, Cry of the Rooster, Mad River Puppeteers and independent puppet groups from around the nation uniting for the sake of political protest. The loosely organized Puppetista collective has been causing a ruckus for the past few years, fighting for social justice. Most of us were probably barely aware of their existence before they shook the world in November 1999, at the Seattle meeting of the World Trade Organization.

The city was inundated with people from all over the country protesting the issue of Corporate Globalization and its impact on the environment and society. These were people who valued the diverse cultures and environments on this planet. They gathered, believing the WTO to be concerned more with money than with people. In opposition, artistic blockades were created, made up of drummers, dancers, puppets, masked and costumed people, flooding streets, stopping traffic and bringing the city to a halt.

"We won in Seattle. It was a surprise! The tactics [we] used in Seattle will never work again," said Ruby, of Wise Fool Puppet Intervention.

The goal of Ruby's organization is to educate groups and individuals to make their own puppets, to teach activists to start their own groups of artistic activists, or Puppetistas, making the numbers grow exponentially. Solidarity on their side, they are not violent, but peaceful folk who speak through this visual language of puppets. This type of event was termed a "Convergence." A few days prior to the protests, a Convergence Center was established where people could come to help build puppets, receive information and learn how to get involved.

The surprise Convergence in the streets of Seattle stopped the opening ceremonies of the WTO meeting and created five days of heavy policing, protesting and politicizing.

"There was beauty, humor and pageantry," Ruby said of the streets surrounding the WTO meeting center.

For the protestors, there was victory. There were also injuries and a lot of fear brought on by heavy police activity. The Puppetistas and the many other groups present made an impressive impact on the Seattle Convergence; they put the issue on the plate for the rest of America by interfering with the WTO meetings, even if they weren't given proper press. Throughout

their protests, the Puppetistas have remained virtually invisible; only rarely has the public seen the image of a puppet on mass media. Why? The puppets rise above and draw others in, engaging the public. Does this make them somehow threatening?

Seattle was just the beginning. On April 16, 2000, when the IMF-World Bank convened in Washington, DC, there were 16 representatives from different puppet groups present. The Puppetistas were charged up from the "Battle in Seattle," and ready for Round Two.

Increasing in numbers, the Puppetistas migrated to Philadelphia in August for the Republican National Convention. The streets were lined with police in anticipation of their arrival. The two Convergence Centers were under surveillance by the Philadelphia Police force. The centers were forcibly closed down, hundreds of puppets were confiscated and destroyed, and many protesters went to jail, arrested by undercover cops posing as union workers. The Puppetistas who were arrested are currently involved in a civil suit against the City of Philadelphia for violation of their civil rights and destruction of their artistic property.

The Puppetista movement has been modeled after the 30 years of Bread and Puppet protests, circuses and pageantry with help from Art and Revolution's example of direct action. During the 1960's Vietnam War protests, Bread and Puppet's street theatre took protesting to an artistic level. The puppet images added an engaging element to the protests—where they brought creativity and a strong visual component to the usual banners and buttons

and told stories which left lasting impressions. The Vermont-based puppet group created by Peter Schumann has invited puppeteers and artists worldwide to join them in their political puppet spectacles involving thousands of people. This template has evolved quietly over the past few decades with the vision of artists like Ruby, who started Wise Fool, and David Solnit of Art and Revolution. Ruby believes that her organization has kept civic puppetry alive for the past 10 years. With the help of her book about creating puppets for political protest, Ruby has continued to inspire artists to create puppets for social change. Art in Revolution has organizations in Portland, Milwaukee and San Francisco that encourage the combination of art and political protest. The Puppetistas have taken this model to new heights—thinking globally, acting locally and using the puppet as their inspiration.

Spiral Q Puppet Theatre, of Philadelphia, has assisted with several Convergences both in its own backyard and out of town, although the theatre's focus involves issues closer to home.

"People get it right away. It's accessible," says "Mattyboy" Hart, speaking of his organization's work with community groups. "We work with five to eight different groups a year to design and develop pageants."

His dream is to create an Urban Arts Democracy. In this "democracy," people in the disadvantaged areas of Philadelphia represent themselves, their concerns and their visions of their neighborhoods, within a "congress," using the universal language of puppets.

He continues, "We lost a lot, but the puppets add to the success of our mission."

The mainstream media reader/watcher/listener may glean the barest hints of this activism, but the Puppetistas are out there in the trenches, fighting for the little people with giant puppets. Why Puppets? Puppets inspire a lighter side to an otherwise bleak endeavor. They are symbols of hope for a wave of people fighting peacefully for social justice. They remind us that humans are intrinsically creative beings, not just consumers.

When asked, Ruby of Wise Fool said, "The puppet is the antithesis of corporate power. It is made from garbage by the hands of many humans. They are simple, human, and from the heart."

When making their puppets, the Puppetistas frequently rely on the use of cardboard and papier maché. To maintain contact with each other, they rely also on technology of the internet—the people's media. For the presumed privacy of their personal computer, the voices of both the oppressed and the radicalized can be heard loud and clear. The peoples' protests against Corporate Globalization couldn't happen without this unifying tool. The Independent Media Center and Pacifica Radio are smaller media sources known for current, up to the moment coverage of activist and environmental news. These liberal organizations offer alternatives to mainstream media news. They invite feedback and dialogue on the issues. Unlike the major media sources, visiting these and other websites, one can find the powerful images of puppets in protest mode, human chains blocking WTO officials from attending their meetings

during the Battle of Seattle, and protestors fleeing from pepper spray and tear gas.

Why do the protesters inspire such fear? They are just people with puppets. Are they being quarantined to protect the rest of society from exposure to their ideals? Speaking out passionately about current issues, they find themselves increasingly at loggerheads with law enforcement. The Puppetistas and their powerful, animated symbols and numbers of other protest groups are perceived by some in power to be a threat to the system. So, the numbers of police per protestor is on the rise (at the cost of millions of taxpayer dollars) to enforce and control people who are peacefully exercising their freedom of speech and freedom to bear puppets.

At the most recent Convergence, Bush's inauguration, protestors were sequestered in protest zones, far from the inaugural parade route. Restrictions were made as to the size of their banners and signs and, to top it off, under the pretext that they could be used to conceal weapons, puppets were banned entirely.

Liz Joyce is a puppeteer on Long Island, NY

Marlboro College and SANDGLASS THEATER to Hold Summer Institute

MARLBORO, VT –Sandglass Theater is teaming up with Marlboro College to offer an intensive training workshop in puppet theater. The summer residential institute will run from June 18 to July 8, 2001, and is offered to puppeteers, teachers, actors, directors, designers and writers who want to expand and deepen their skill in the art of the puppet. At the institute, Eric Bass, the artistic director of Sandglass Theater, will teach a method of manipulation that Sandglass has developed in over 18 years of workshops in Europe and America. Bass has also been teaching his internationally acclaimed brand of puppetry to students at Marlboro College for several years.

Institute participants will live at Marlboro College, taking classes in Marlboro's Whitemore Theater for five and a half days per week. During that time, participants will take part in sessions of physical training and breathing discipline. This physical training will relate to puppet manipulation and

improvisation work, with the goal of developing understanding of expressive theater. Workshop attendees will have the opportunity to rehearse and develop their own pieces, possibly leading to informal showings, and to participate in discussions of theater with each other and with guest artists. They can also take home three college credits.

The deadline is fast approaching, so call or e-mail right away!

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time puppeteers we haven't seen perform at festivals, lately: Jim Rose, Tanglewood Marionettes, Randel McGee, Lee Bryan, and Blair Thomas. There are some new programs, too, including pieces developed at the O'Neill Theater Center's National Puppetry Conference, and a series of short films featuring 3-D puppet animation (a big hit at last year's Northeast/Mid-Atlantic Regional Festival). North American performers will be joined by Australia's delightful Richard Bradshaw.

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-Justin Kaase

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Puppetry Arts in Chile: Resisting the Notion of "Theatrical Colonization"

by Carolyn Roark

A recent *El Mercurio* article featured the eyebrow-raising headline "Chile: Theatrical Colony of France?" Gracing the cover of the weekend magazine produced by Chile's largest newspaper, the piece primarily chronicled the extensive ongoing artistic exchange between France and Chile, but it is hard to ignore the barely veiled accusation that the headline carries. In a continent that still stiffens at the mention of the term "colony"-bearing as it does multiple implications of dominance and subordination, of mandate and conformity- in countries that still struggle with pervading foreign influence in their economic and political workings, to evoke the term is, in a sense, to once again be relegated to the socio-political margins of our increasingly connected world.

The article makes no mention of the current puppetry scene in Chile, but the same implications of colonization might easily apply. Paul McPharlin's *The Puppet Theatre in America* conceives of pre-20th century puppetry in Chile as an extension of Spain's theatrical practice; available historical records do support the assertion that most, if not all, of the first puppet performers in that country came as touring companies from Europe, most notably Spain and France. Though Chilean-born performers and groups had established themselves by 1920, the styles on which they were modeled and the standards by which they were judged were based upon tastes fostered in the European-dominated market of previous epochs.

As the native peoples withdrew from spreading settlements and increasing foreign encroachment, taking their practices into hiding with them, we know very little about the indigenous forms that might have included or approximated puppet manipulation. There are no records of Ayamara or Mapuche puppetry, though archeological findings show dolls and totemic figures that served ritual and entertainment purposes. Chilean puppeteer and puppet historian Ana María Allendes indicates that the ancient peoples of Rapa Nui (Easter Island), the same

tribe that built the famed Moai, used smaller ritual figures, some of which were manipulated by rods or strings ("Titeres precolombinos de Chile," unpublished notes for *Revista Titeres*). However, the details of this and other indigenous practices remain largely undetermined. Thus, it is difficult to characterize Chilean puppetry as any kind of *mestizaje* between European and pre-Columbian forms.

In the latter half of the 20th century, Western European troupes have a continuing presence in Chile, especially in the cosmopolitan capital city of Santiago, generally finding enthusiastic audiences and playing to packed houses. Prague's Magic Lantern Theatre (also called the Prague Black Theatre) and Philippe Genty and his troupe have both made repeated visits to Santiago. Michael Meschke successfully produced his version of *Don Quijote* there, and perhaps the largest-scale single puppetry event of the last decade was the Festival of French Marionettes, which brought 3 avante-garde troupes (including Genty's) to Santiago in 1990. During my stay in Chile, the Italian group El Buratto gave an extremely successful weekend of their bunraku-influenced "Fly Butterfly." In general, foreign puppeteers have enjoyed great popularity with Chilean audiences. Chilean street puppeteers Omar Salas and Monica Cardín lament what they perceive as a public preference for imported performance, stating that "for Chileans, everything that comes from Europe is better." They add that visiting troupes (presumably with deeper pockets and thicker dossiers of press clippings) have access to the bigger venues and better publicity. (personal interview, 1/8/00).

What of the Chilean troupes? Records of performances by European imports abound in the Universidad Católica's periodical archive, indicating that their cultural influence is still strong despite the long-dissolved economic and political ties, and perhaps suggesting that art is the last stronghold of Empire. How have the home-grown artists, the actual producers of South American regional art and culture, fared in the postmodern world of puppetry?

The profession of puppetry in Chile has much in common that of the United States. The number and variety of practitioners is wider than the public initially suspects; however, few performers succeed in supporting themselves solely by the fruits of their artistic labor. Little government funding exists to foster creation and experimentation, but the *Ministerio de Educación* does make it possible for some troupes to tour with puppet productions to various regions without strong theatre bases. Different cultural centers also provide space and funding for performances and workshops in varied techniques, and private donations from corporate sources sometimes supplement an artist or troupe's production budget. The competition for these funds is relatively fierce, however.

Performers seem to divide themselves according to two schools of thought: puppets as artistic expression, and puppets as a means to supplement income. The latter most frequently perform at birthday parties and celebratory events (Christmas festivities, company picnics, etc.). Many members of the "artistic expression" school of thought express a barely masked contempt for the "birthday party" set.

Most theatre-goers continue to consider puppets a children's entertainment, though a few highly visible adult troupes offer regular productions in Santiago. Companies *Equilibrio Precario*, whose work features found object and recycled material puppets, and *La Orkesta*, whose

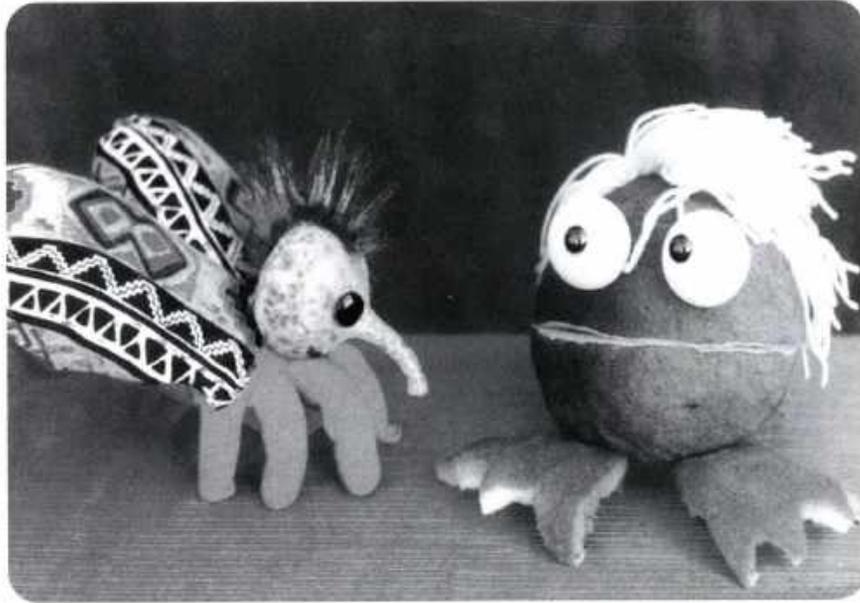


Italo Carcamo in "El Ultimo Queneva"

most recent work featured the manipulation of articulated dolls, both proved popular during the most recent January *Teatro a Mil* festival, which dominates the Santiago cultural scene every summer. Both *Equilibrio Precario* and *La Orkesta* express a preference for performing stories written by national authors, and/or based on regional culture and folklore. Ana Maria Allendes prefers to work with traditional marionettes, and has established a reputation for her productions of García Lorca's plays for puppeteers. She is perhaps the best-established practitioner currently working in Chile, and has an almost twenty-year history of adult and child-oriented productions in a variety of styles. She is also the most widely traveled,

having held office in UNIMA and attended their events in Japan, India, and Western Europe, as well as multiple countries in South America.

Until recent years, Helma Vogt, a member of the abundant community of German-Chileans, produced full-scale puppet productions of classic opera, reminiscent of the Salzburg Marionettes. Director Gonzalo Ruminot collaborates with different groups to create shows that combine live actors with puppets, often constructed from found objects. He also works with groups like *La Orkesta* on "pure" puppet events. Solo performers like Italo Carcamo give shows in non-traditional venues, such as local bars, as theatrical spaces prove expensive and dif-



Payasiteres

photo courtesy of
Sergio Herskovits

difficult to fill with an audience for a puppeteer working alone. He often mixes several styles in the same show, using a table top rather than a traditional puppet stage or curtain, usually performing alongside his puppets as a character or observer within the context of the scene. His work rarely features dialogue.

Additionally, multiple children's troupes move through the circuit of public schools offering pedagogical puppet shows, like Alejandro Mateluna's "Pagina Magica." The troupe *Payasiteres* gives productions both in local community venues and in schools; they occasionally collaborate with the *Ministerio de Educación* and other public service organizations, using puppets as tools of intervention with at-risk youth, particularly regarding drug and alcohol abuse. Troupe member Sergio Herskovits is also a prolific and well-informed historian of puppets in Chile and South America. In the city of Concepción, Lientur Rojas has performed primary school oriented puppetry with his troupe *Pirimpilo* for two decades, and teaches puppets and children's theatre at a local college. Schools also invite performances from manipulators that emphasize aesthetics and entertainment value over educational content, as a means of awakening children's cultural and artistic awareness.

Street performers like Oscar Salas and Monica Cardín give pass-the-hat performances in Santiago's city parks on the weekends. In the port city of Valparaíso, the local authorities sponsor a weekly *Calle*

del niño (Children's Street) event that features many performers, including local marionette troupe *Corazon de Madera*.

Among all of these diverse performers there exists a colorful variety of techniques, performance styles, and opinions about the art and craft of manipulating puppets. Their personal aesthetics, experiences, and development produce a puppet theatre that goes far beyond the artistic colonization that seeded the cultural soil of Chile. Most notable of its qualities are the innovation, energy, and commitment to building a tradition based in national culture, identity and folklore. Almost unanimously, the practitioners with whom I spoke (I conducted 19 interviews over 5 months) throughout Chile agreed that the most necessary elements to building a vital, vibrant puppet theatre are: more access to performance spaces and times, training programs in the various methods at Chilean universities or conservatories, and a continued commitment to producing quality work that reflects Chile's current character. Additionally, Allendes, Herskovits, and Rojas are collaborating to develop a book about the history and practice of Chilean puppetry, filling the current intellectual gap in the topic. Though the exotic glamour of touring European troupes often steal their thunder, Chilean puppeteers continue to work at developing a theatre that is uniquely theirs, and look forward to the time when their audiences will cultivate a taste for the homegrown.

Sandglass at Marlboro Summer Theater Ins



"Eric Bass is known all over the world today for having brought puppets out of their traditional toy closets... The magic is born of gesture, from the movement of these dolls, as if they were animated with the real breath of life." - Le Courier, Geneva



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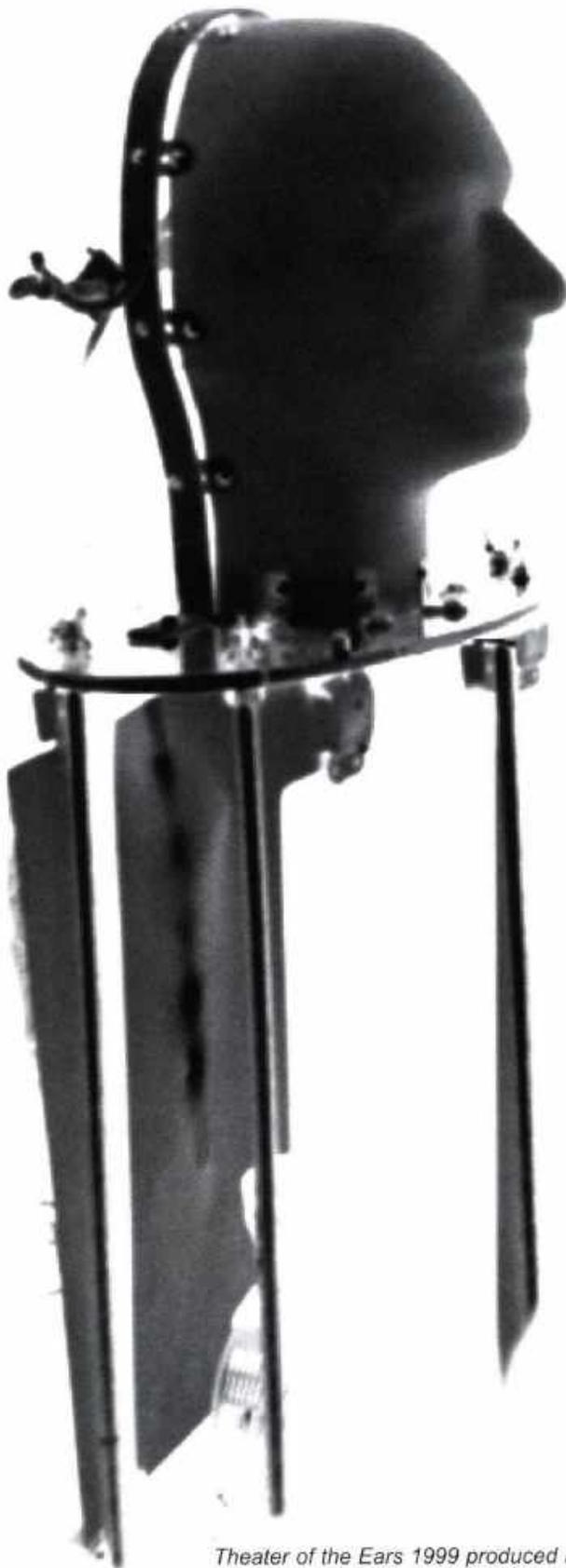
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She-Who-Loves

—reviewed by Andrew Periale

The theater only seats about 30, and to get there, one must drive up the Maine coast to Freeport, down a country road, and up the snow-packed drive past house and shed and chicken coop to the big, red barn which houses Figures of Speech Theatre. This journey feels to us like a pilgrimage, and as we enter the dark theatre, we feel we are in sacred space.

The play tonight is "She-Who-Loves"—a tale from the Comanche tribe about a young girl in a time of severe drought. Her parents, along with many others, have died. Their Shaman is told, in a vision, that the tribe's only hope is for someone to sacrifice their most important possession. The girl, known as She-Who-is-Alone, knows that it is her doll, lovingly made by her parents, which she must bring to the mountain as an offering. Thus the drought is ended, and she becomes known as She-Who-Loves-Her-People.

For John and Carol Farrell, the directors of Figures of Speech, this is also the end of a journey—one which took them through Japan, Peru, and a great deal of collaborative exploration at home. Their collaborators—Andrea Goodman, Carl Dimow and Delia Farrell—have joined them in this work to create a piece which exists at the intersection of Art and Nature, of Earth and Spirit.

The theater space itself is simple—rustic but elegant—with high ceiling, black-draped walls, a large sandbox at table height, and long plank leading from an upstage corner to the box, center stage. The play is performed largely without words, to a spare soundscape created by Goodman and Dimow, using voice, flutes, recorders, and ukelele. Narration (spare, as well) and a few songs add meaning to the action, without explaining it.

The landscape is formed and re-formed by the puppeteer's hands (the "sand," we learn later, is actually red clover seed). Species flourish and then sink into the earth, disappearing without a trace. Eventually, it becomes home to She-Who-Loves.

The style of performance, as well as its aesthetic, was influenced profoundly—though not exclusively—by Japanese Noh Theatre. The spoken text was culled from old Noh scripts. There were also a few shadow scenes in which two clownish characters comment on the production in a fast-paced *lingua franca* that is pure *wayang*. Except for one fabulous sequence in which Dimow and Goodman join Carol Farrell at the "sand" box, forming and reforming landscapes as they all sing a haunting



canon, the action is performed primarily by Carol and her daughter, Delia. They are also playing Mother and Daughter, and if Delia's She-Who-Loves sacrificed her doll for the good of the tribe, then we understand that her parents sacrificed, too, saving the last of the food and water for the girl, that she might live.

In the end, She-Who-Loves, having made the desert bloom again, removes her mask. The ghost of her Mother removes her mask as well, and now Delia and Carol don rubber boots and slickers, walk upstage and open a small door. The scene is dazzling—snow-covered trees illuminated in the dark, Maine night.

It takes a moment to sink in that I am actually looking out into nature. As I watch mother and daughter, standing for a moment in the quiet night, the clouds of their breath hanging in the crisp air, I hear the quiet sobbing of those around me, touched deeply by this moment of surpassing beauty.

The enacted notion of selfless sacrifice has dropped like a pebble into a dark pool. The ripples move outward from the tiny theatre into the real lives of the actors, and further still into the hearts of the audience. And further still... This is the purpose of such rituals; to transform and enlighten us before we, too, sink back into the unsentimental sands.

John and Carol Farrell first met Master Puppet Sculptor, Toru Saito, in 1987, while touring Japan with their production, *Anerca*. Saito was impressed with John's carving skills. In 1999, the Farrells lived in Japan for six months on a creative artists' fellowship from the Japan-United States Friendship Commission. There, John had the honor of staying ten days in Saito's home with him and his wife, Yukiko. The following is excerpted from John's report on that remarkable visit.

I had imagined spending some time observing Saito at work, asking questions, perhaps doing some sanding or tool-sharpening. But after breakfast on my first day at his home, Saito put himself entirely at my disposal, asking me simply what it was I wanted to learn.

For the next ten days he unstintingly shared with me his phenomenal technical know-how, his skills, his theoretical knowledge, his advice. We peered inside Bunraku heads, arms, shoulders and their controls, as Saito showed me every detail of construction, the materials used, and little tricks like burning the edges of holes through which control strings pass to minimize fraying.

Saito demonstrated techniques of puppet-building, carving, wig-making and painting, showed me how to select and sharpen carving tools, how to choose wood for puppets. He gave me materials particular to making Bunraku puppets, told me where in Tokyo to find chisels, weasel-hair paint brushes, handmade papers and silk string, sharpening stones, wood and more.

We also talked about the Zen notion of *mu*, an elusive but critical quality that translates as "nothing" or "emptiness." *Mu*, he taught me, is the quality that allows a puppet's face to appear to express

❖

The integration of elements is masterful, almost miraculous. The story is not a dramatic work in the Western sense—there is no conflict, no revealing of character, no climax. Instead there is a series of emotions set within cycles of acceleration and stillness, a layering of sung poetry (which I could only guess at), movement, masks, drums and flute, emotional nuance, and an accumulating poignancy.

a wide range of emotions, allows a puppet manipulator to achieve this range of expression, and allows an audience to register these emotions.

From Saito I learned the *gofun* technique used for finishing Bunraku puppets and Noh masks. The process uses a combination of ground seashells and hide glue, mixed in precise proportions at carefully controlled temperature.

The puppets and masks in *She-Who-Loves*, carved from white



cedar, are the first pieces I have made using the *gofun* technique. In September, we will have a chance to repay Saito's kindness when he and his private collection of original and antique Japanese puppets and *karakuri ningyo* come to Maine for World Puppets Portland, one leg of the World Puppets New England festivals that Sandglass Theater, UCONN, Figures of Speech Theatre and Portland's Downtown District produce. Festival-goers and others will be able to see his collection September 7-30, 2001 at the Maine College of Art, where Saito will also present a gallery talk. •



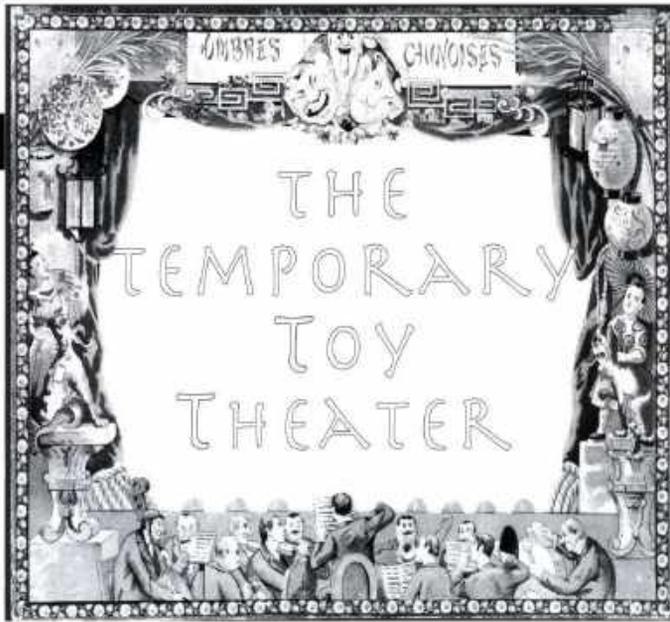
There is one moment in the performance when the ghost of a young man makes a long slow exit after a solo dance, and as he left the stage I was deeply touched with an awareness of our permanent predicament: alive yet mortal, clinging to life and inexorably letting it go, a mixture of beauty and pain, where the fact that it can be expressed so eloquently by human art surely means that beauty will prevail.

As the masked figure moves forward, you sense the frailty, the transiency of the actor's body, while the mask he wears seems so much more real and timeless than does the actor himself.



The demands of Nob are so extreme: the mask is perfect, so the movement that accompanies the mask must also be perfect. No stray movement is acceptable, nothing that detracts from our perception of the mask's essence.

I'm dying to ask the people in the row in front of me if they feel it too, if they come to Nob because it reconnects them with a primal sense of life's sacredness, if they, too, want to cry when they see the reluctant departure of a young man's ghost from the company of his friends. Instead, I sit in the theater till everyone has left, watching people take snapshots of each other at the lip of the stage, wondering how to reflect that sense of the sacred in my own work.



MUSEUM

*Antique theatre,
Ombres Chinoises*

Before radio, before television, VCRs and DVDs, there existed a small box of paper and cardboard known as the toy theater. Mass-produced for the newly emerging urban middle classes of England and Europe during the first half of the nineteenth century, these miniature proscenium stages were inexpensive models on which popular dramas of the day could be performed in the homes of a society whose desire for entertainment had increased as the Industrial Revolution provided it with greater time for leisure.

An exhibition of these antique toy theaters, along with a larger number of modern and contemporary examples of the form, was organized by the artist's collective Great Small Works in the gallery space of the downtown Manhattan theater, HERE, this past November. Borrowed from private collections, the early pieces are elaborate and colorful stage sets bearing titles like, *The Battle of Waterloo*, *Simple Simon* and *Ombres Chinoises*. These miniature theaters are unique, well-defined worlds made to house unique well-defined narratives and they have about them the same eerie feel of latency that a life-sized theater does when it is emptied of its animating spirits—they wait, dormant, their power sealed away until a sudden splice of speech and movement releases that power into drama.

This sense of expectant latency is the most striking quality of the early toy theaters. They came with sets, costumes, figures and even scripts but the user was able to improvise, to insert himself into prefabricated dramas and transform himself into writer, director and actor. This double characteristic of openness and frame must have been the attraction for those who bought these theaters as well as for those who played the part of audience. Limitless possibilities for improvisation lay within narrowed boundaries— if the frame of a certain toy theater was the *Battle of Waterloo*, then any number of stories built around that battle might be told by the imaginative user.

In *Ombres Chinoises*, an antique theater in which uniformed sailors are frozen into evocative positions at an outdoor café somewhere in Asia, there is no way for the viewer to know what has already taken place or what is about to take place. Drama will begin only when those silent figures set into their flattened scenery are released by the user into the accumulating motion of a particular fiction.

If toy theater in its antique form is drama waiting to occur, this is not so in many of the more contemporary examples. They are less elaborate, more schematic, almost sculptural in some cases. One of the exhibition's strongest

pieces, Tina Kinderman's "Bluebeard's Chamber" is more peep show than toy theater. It is a large, closed box, the interior of which becomes visible only when the viewer removes himself from the surrounding exhibition and kneels at an oversized keyhole. There is little to see: a dimly lit interior, an almost empty room, a hardwood floor sloping away from a wall against which the figure of a woman, white robed and three-dimensional, recoils in what appears to be an attitude of fear and apprehension. There is no movement. There will be no movement. The scene is fixed, a tableau wherein the drama begins and ends precisely at that moment the viewer recalls the title of the piece.

Unlike the somewhat egalitarian space provided for drama by the traditional toy theater, Kinderman's piece offers a private and minimized transaction. The viewer is voyeur. His initial collision with the box creates a kind of instantaneous, bracketed drama.

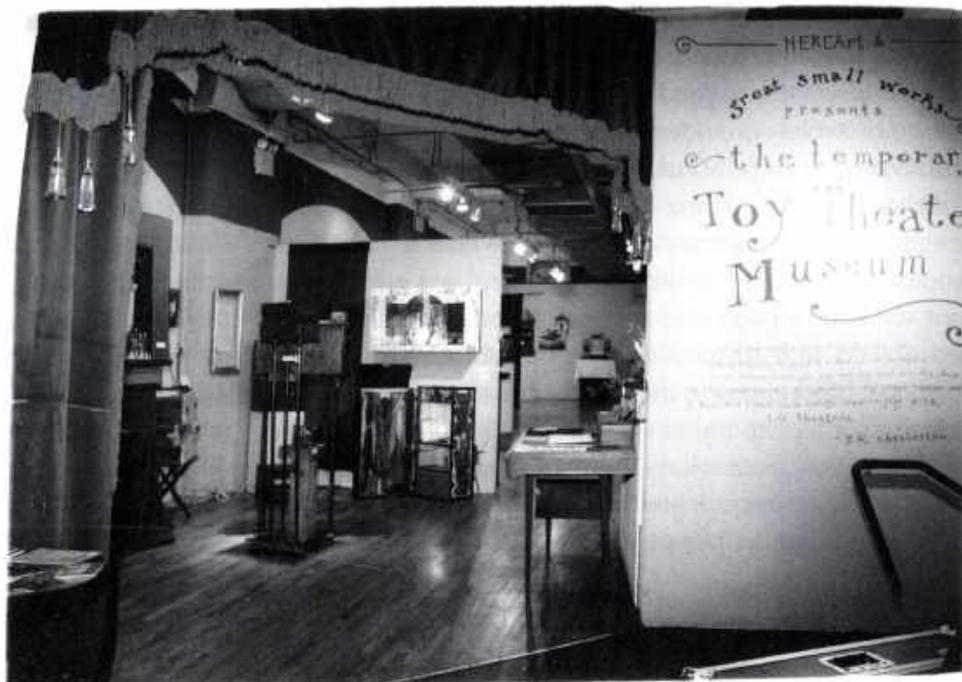
Jonathan Berger's, "House" is, once again, a privately transacted affair between object and viewer. The small wood-planked construction has been placed not at eye level but low to the ground so that, as in Kinderman's piece, the viewer must bend down—thereby removing himself from the rest of the exhibition—in order to see into the windows of a stark dwelling redolent of abandonment, isolation and mystery. Berger's "House" is so suggestive that nothing else seems needed—without any kind of animation or prompting, those qualities embodied in the piece stir memory and a kind of metaphorical prior knowledge in the viewer. He knows precisely what Berger would like for him to feel as he looks at that neatly allusive object.

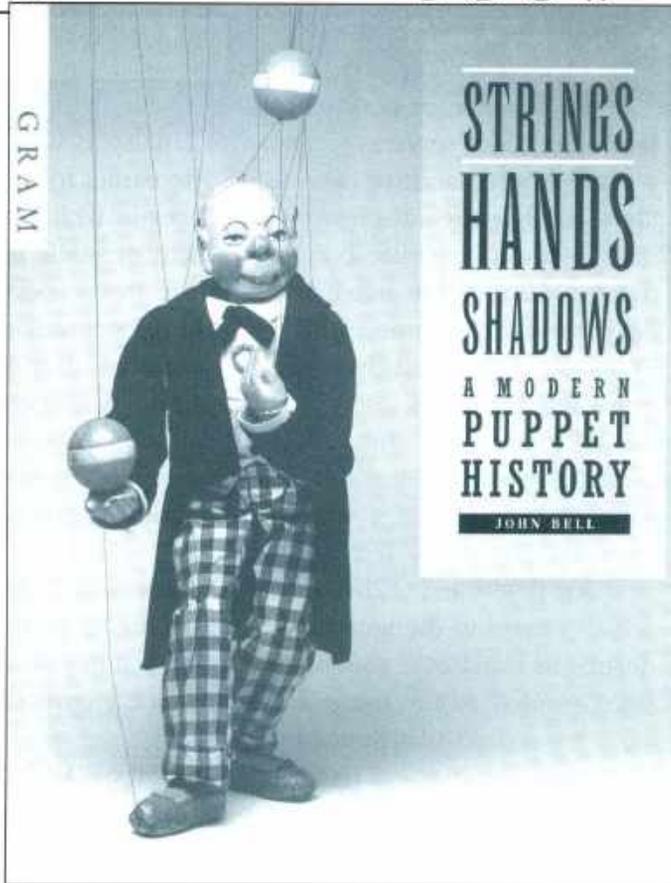
Throughout this crowded exhibition, framed quotes hang on the walls and one of them, from Susan Stewart's book, *On Longing*, reads, "The toy is the physical embodiment of fiction: it is a device for fantasy, a point of beginning for a narrative."

Toy theater, in both its earliest and its latest embodiment, does serve as a device for fantasy as well as a place where narrative may begin. The earlier toy theaters, though, are sites for drama, places in which human desire and choice combine to activate static elements. Many of the newer theaters are more specifically suggestive. Frame and narrative have become one. They are drama already made and although they are more interesting as visual objects, they are less connected to the aims and use of the traditional toy theaters. The sense of latency is gone, yet in this transition away from fixedness, they have acquired a more personal quality.

Joe E. Jeffries', *A Toy Theater for Ethyl Eichelberger*, comes closest to the antique theaters in the sense that, despite its schematic, roughed-out quality, it has clearly been created as the frame for telling not a particular story but a particular kind of story.

THE TEMPORARY TOY THEATER MUSEUM is, in fact, a perfect title for this jumbled exhibition. Two centuries of toy theater have been gathered together in one room so that we are able to see the effect of time and human pressure on this small dramatic form created not only for entertainment but—according to the spirit of the day—for one more place in which the tales we tell ourselves are told.





Text by: John Bell

Photos by: Dirk Bakker

Published by: The Detroit Institute of Art

Reviewed by: **Stephen Kaplin**

One of the frustrations facing practitioners, scholars and lovers of puppet theater in this country is a dearth of books on the subject. It is indeed fortuitous then that the Detroit Institute of Art has provided some remedy by presenting us with *Strings, Hands, Shadows— A Modern Puppet History*, published as part of their "DIAGRAM" book series, which presents aspects of their collection along with scholarly commentary, this slender volume was printed as a companion to an exhibition presented at the DIA of puppets and related objects from the collection of Paul McPharlin. After decades of hibernating in the Institute's basements and storage rooms, this exhibition was the first public viewing of selected objects from what is perhaps the largest such collection in the country, representing a thick and meaty slice of modern American puppet history.

The richness of the exhibition is in part a testament to the seminal place of Paul McPharlin in shaping American puppetry. He was indisputably a prime force in the resurgence in puppetry in this country throughout his relatively brief career as puppet designer, performer, author, teacher, organizer and publisher. A large part of McPharlin's extraordinary influence has been through his efforts to publish texts and books pertaining to puppet theater. No doubt inspired by Edward Gordon Craig's self-published journal, *The Mask and The Marionette*, he used his private publishing house, Puppetry Imprints, to disseminate important historical, biographical and technical information on puppet theater. His *Puppetry Yearbooks*, which he edited between 1930 and 1947, document the professional field to an extraordinary degree. His magnum opus, *Puppet Theater in America— 1524-1948*, remains the standard historical text in the field to this day, especially as posthumously supplemented and updated by his wife and long-time colleague Marjorie Batchelder. After his death in 1948 his collection of hundreds of puppets and related objects was donated to the DIA by his family.

It is a small selection from this remarkable McPharlin collection that is used by John Bell to illustrate and trace the development and flourishing of American puppetry in the 20th Century. Bell's background, like McPharlin's, is that of a practitioner as well as a scholar and academic. His longtime association with Bread and Puppet and Great Small Works gives Bell a thorough understanding of puppet theater as a form of social and political dialogue. His text ties descriptions of individual objects or performances and artists' bios to a meta-narrative which follows modernism's triumph, as well as the intermingling of traditional performance styles from Asia, Africa and Europe which have shaped the landscape of contemporary American puppetry. Bell assumes his reader has a basic understanding of the general trends of 20th century art and theater, but while referring back to these ideas and concepts repeatedly, he keeps his narrative relatively free of academic jargon. Instead he lets the objects, and where appropriate the artists, speak for themselves, before putting them into a social and cultural context.



Bell begins the book with a quick outline of his thesis— that the trajectory of American puppetry in the 20th century has been a series of rebirths and revivals. He then introduces requisite puppetry terms before beginning the historical survey of the objects in the McPharlin collection in roughly chronological sequence. Chapters cover European antecedents to American puppetry; Asian puppet performance; Modernist trends at the beginning of the century in American puppetry; the great Puppet "revival" of the 30's; and, finally, post-war and contemporary developments. Bell adroitly traces the ups and downs of American puppetry through the course of this with discussions of the impact of the work of Jim Henson and Peter Schumann and their colleagues, and the establishment of institutions for the perpetuation of puppetry into the future. The book ends with an appendix concerning the DIA's collection of model theaters and commercially-manufactured puppet toys. Unfortunately, since the narrative draws on the McPharlin's personal collection supplemented by additional materials acquired by the DIA subsequent to his death, there are only a few works from contemporary artists represented or discussed, with the result that the contemporary puppet explosion of the last two decades is only sketchily addressed.

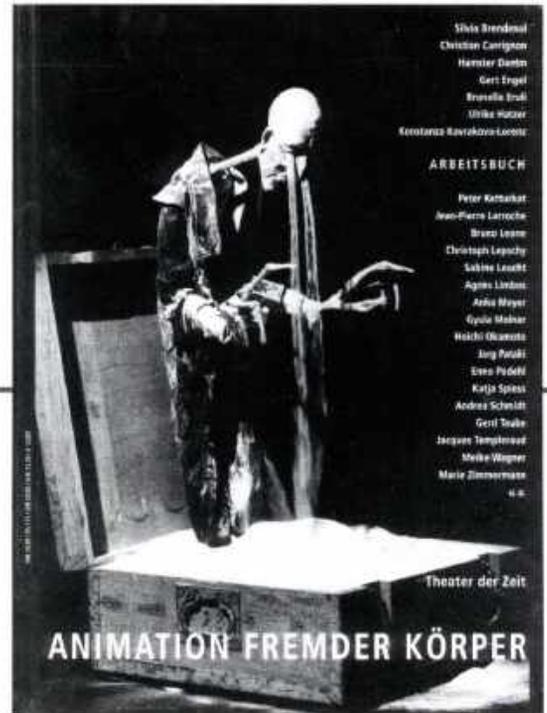
The book itself is extraordinarily handsome and well laid out, with over a hundred stunning full color photographs by DIA's director of Visual Resources, Dirk Bakker showcasing individual items from the collection. One of the difficulties in photographing puppets is that they are objects that are meant to be seen in motion. Bakker has resolved this problem by posing the puppet figures in dynamic, slightly off-balanced poses that suggest a sort of freeze-frame in mid-step, which helps give a strong sense of the puppets as animated performing objects. Generous and informative captions to each photo help tie them into the text. In addition to the photos and the main body of text, there are also numerous side bars that insert useful information.

The results of all this effort is truly gratifying— a focused and comprehensive survey that connects the field of puppetry to the broader current of cultural events. It is a rare enough to have any book on puppet history published, but one that balances the text and the visual information so well is a truly unique addition to the canon. I hope that the folks at DIA keep this book in print for many years to come •

THEATER DER ZEIT Animation of Foreign Bodies On the Puppet-Figure:

an Objecttheater Workbook 2000

edited by Silvia Brendenal



Silvia Brendenal has published a Workbook, a kind of high-level textbook on puppetry, commissioned by the German publication *Theater der Zeit*. She has collected articles, interviews and essays by performers, writers, critics and scholars and presented them in a well-illustrated, 140 page, magazine-sized volume.

The essays are divided into four categories: Art and Ritual, The Theater of Objects, Room to Maneuver (a dialogue with other arts) and Education. They function as a serious introduction to (mostly European) puppetry: its aims, its theories, and its future. What immediately jumps out in these essays is their consistent use of a precise vocabulary to describe the work done in the field: Object Theater, Figure Theater, Visual Theater, Shadow Theater. The general term Puppet Theater only describes theater with traditional puppets, Kasper, Punch, etc. To differentiate the work in this manner clearly makes sense, especially if the general reader is to understand a field as eclectic as contemporary puppetry. Within this terminology Paul Zaloom, for example, would be referred to as an object player and Ronnie Burkett as a figure player, a perfectly reasonable distinction.

The essays don't discuss process or technique, but are generally concerned with the metaphysical and mystical side of puppets, objects and materials and with the metaphorical and existential possibilities inherent in their performances. This intellectual approach, somewhat contrary to ours (all essays are written by Europeans), does point out the extent to which American puppetry—how we think and often write about it—has been influenced by

Peter Schumann and papier maché. Several essays in Brendenal's volume are written by writers outside the field, something that needs to happen much more here. They give both this volume and the field an added sense of well-established credibility.

A frequent concern in the essays deals with puppetry's place within the mainstream theater. Should it become integrated, will it lose its soul if it does, do puppets enrich the theater, and if they do, will they necessarily force the actors to change the definition of their art. For some of these questions an interview with Marie Zimmermann is particularly interesting. She has made a point, as the artistic director of the THEATERFORMEN Festival in Stuttgart, of presenting Figuren Theater at the festival, knowing that she offers her audiences an exciting alternative. She realistically evaluates the future of what, after all, may only prove to be a trend. Silvia Brendenal's *Workbook* makes a very intelligent case for the "trend" being here to stay.

review by Hanne Tierney

The Complete Book of Puppetry

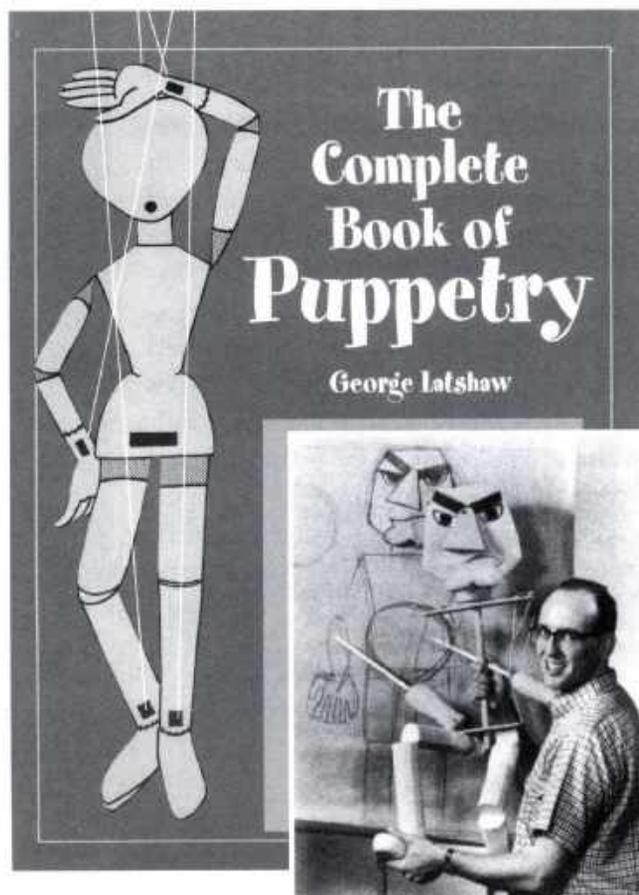
by *George Latshaw*

reviewed by A. Periale

How fortunate for puppetophiles, that Dover Books has decided to reissue this wonderful book. Originally published as *Puppetry: The Ultimate Disguise*, in 1978, the new title sounds a bit presumptuous, yet the indefatigable George Latshaw has taken a good stab at it and covers a lot of ground.

What strikes one is that Latshaw is not merely a puppeteer, but is a man of the theatre. The book was designed for the theatre student, and Latshaw writes as if puppetry's legitimacy as part of the greater theatre world were self-evident. The prose is clear and often amusing: "An actor who enjoys being a ham is no match for the puppeteer who wants to be the whole hog."

For the theatre student, this book could be the basis for a four-year college degree. It covers every aspect of training, design, directing and play production. It is chock-full of exercises and the philosophy behind the art form. For those of us who were students when the book first appeared and are now *well* into our careers in the field, the book might provide a "refresher course," or



THE LANGUAGE OF THE PUPPET

This landmark book brought together 19 top puppetry performers, artists and scholars from three continents, and is full of beautiful pictures.

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serve to remind us of the joy of which brought us to puppetry in the first place. This volume is also full of illustrative photos of puppet productions, and puppeteers who've had noteworthy careers.

The Complete Book of Puppetry has been slightly corrected in this new addition, but has not been updated. The substantial developments in puppetry which have occurred in the last 20 years (and of which Latshaw has, himself, played an integral part) are not included. Though an occasional observation may seem a bit quaint in retrospect, the text holds up remarkably well. In an age where so many students imagine a career in puppetry as working with programmable joysticks just off-camera, this book may help us get back to the basics of great storytelling.

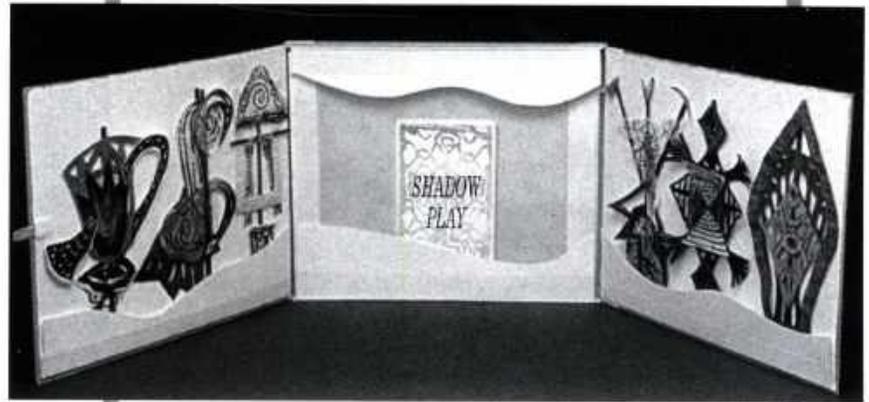
The Complete Book of Puppetry
Latshaw, 2000. ISBN 0-486-40952-X
Dover Publications, Inc.

31 East 2nd Street, Mineola, NY 11501
\$10.95 in the USA

“Shadow Play”

We have recently had the opportunity to play with a most extraordinary item— an artist’s book which is also a shadow theatre. It is called *Shadow Play*, and was created by Ann M. Kresge in collaboration with poet Melinda Kennedy. Kresge was awarded the 1998 Library Fellows Book Award from the Library and Research Center of the National Museum of Women in the Arts to assist in the creation of *Shadow Play*. Inspired by Indonesian *wayang kulit*, the set includes six abstract shadow figures, a screen, and a book with character descriptions, inspirational poems and an exhortation to create one’s own stories.

Kresge is an accomplished printmaker, and her puppets are printed on a sturdy paper. Each figure is ruled by a particular color, and may be



Shadow Play was published in a limited edition of only 125 copies, each numbered and signed by the artist. The price of this set is \$400. For purchase, contact the NMWA Museum Shop at 800/222-7270 or the NMWA Library and Research Center at 207/783-7364.

Red
earth
birth
dawn
goddess
unfold
elephant
crown
omens
avenues
ascend
anthem
stirrings
thresholds

*She rises from the milky
sea on a lotus blossom.
The world is created.*

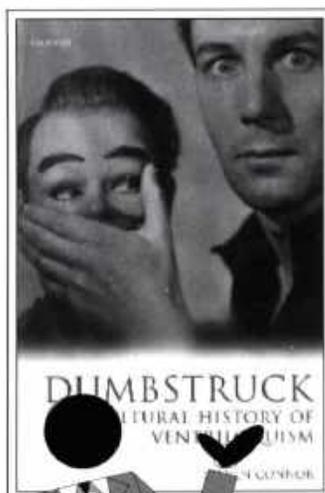
used in a number of ways: “Blue— Hold the vertical rod with one hand, while rotating the other from the center. The character will transform in a circular motion, from river, to swan, to moon, to warrior, to reflection. Move it up and through the landscape, in front of or behind the book. Depending on your tale, it may be water, creature, goddess, morning . . .”. Melinda Kennedy’s poems to each of the figures, as well as her “story starter” suggestions should also prove inspirational.

According to press release: “The book will last for centuries— it was created with various archival and handmade papers that will not deteriorate with time.” These facts are probably of more interest to book collectors than to puppeteers, who would be inclined to think of *Shadow Play* more as an element of the more ephemeral work of art: the performance. Getting a satisfying performance out of this set will take some experimentation, though I have no doubt that it can be accomplished. It might make for an excellent evening with a few close friends— each one in turn improvising a tale around some mythic theme. Or it might be the basis for a weekend workshop with a handful of creative souls. *Shadow Play* is quite beautiful enough to be displayed in a glass case, but to do so, to remove the puppets from the world of performance objects, would be a great shame. At least for the first hundred years or so.

—Andrew Periale

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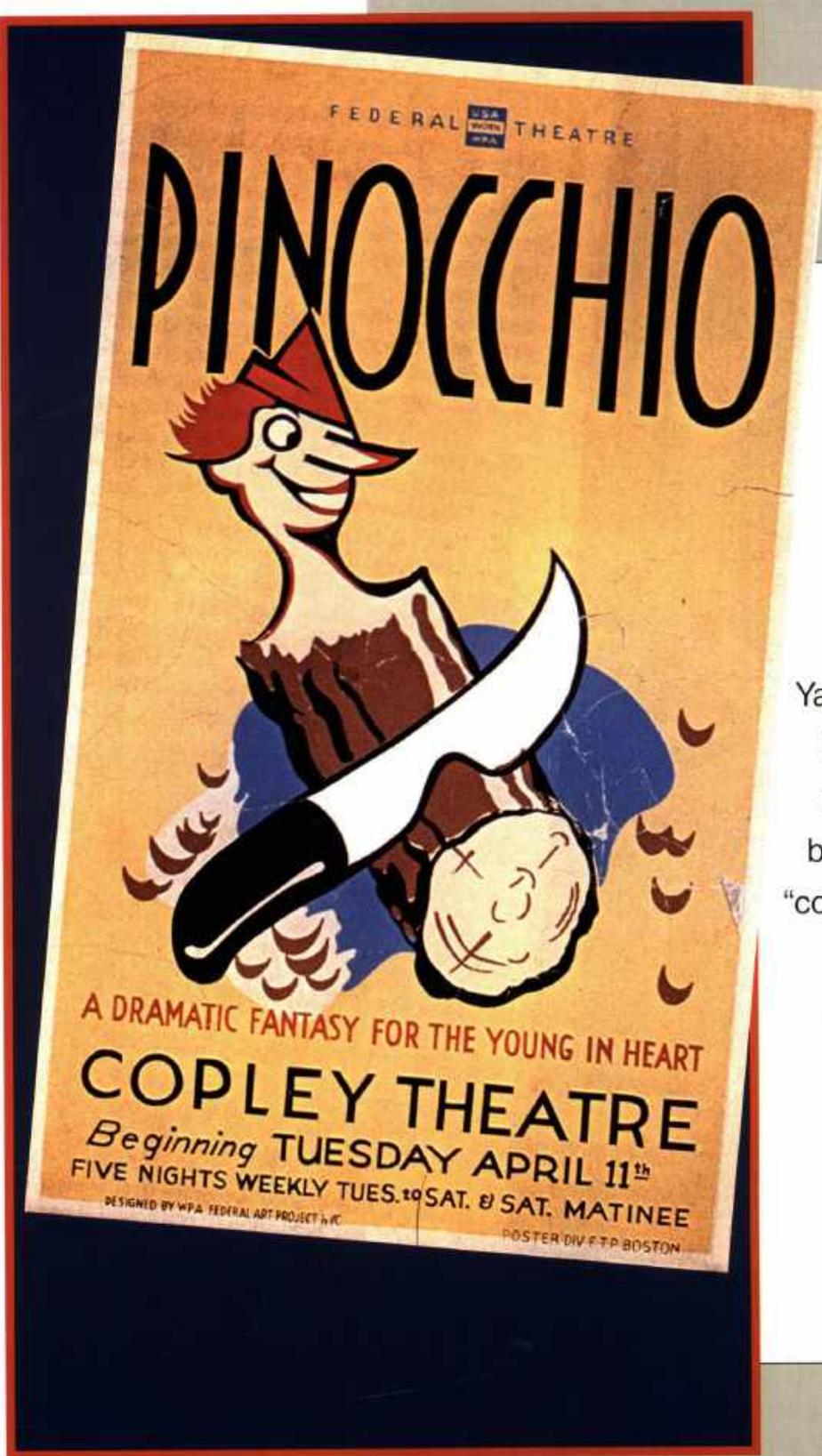
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Poster for
Yasha Frank's
Pinocchio,
a victim of
bureaucratic
"commie-angst"

(see page 20)

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