

OPAL

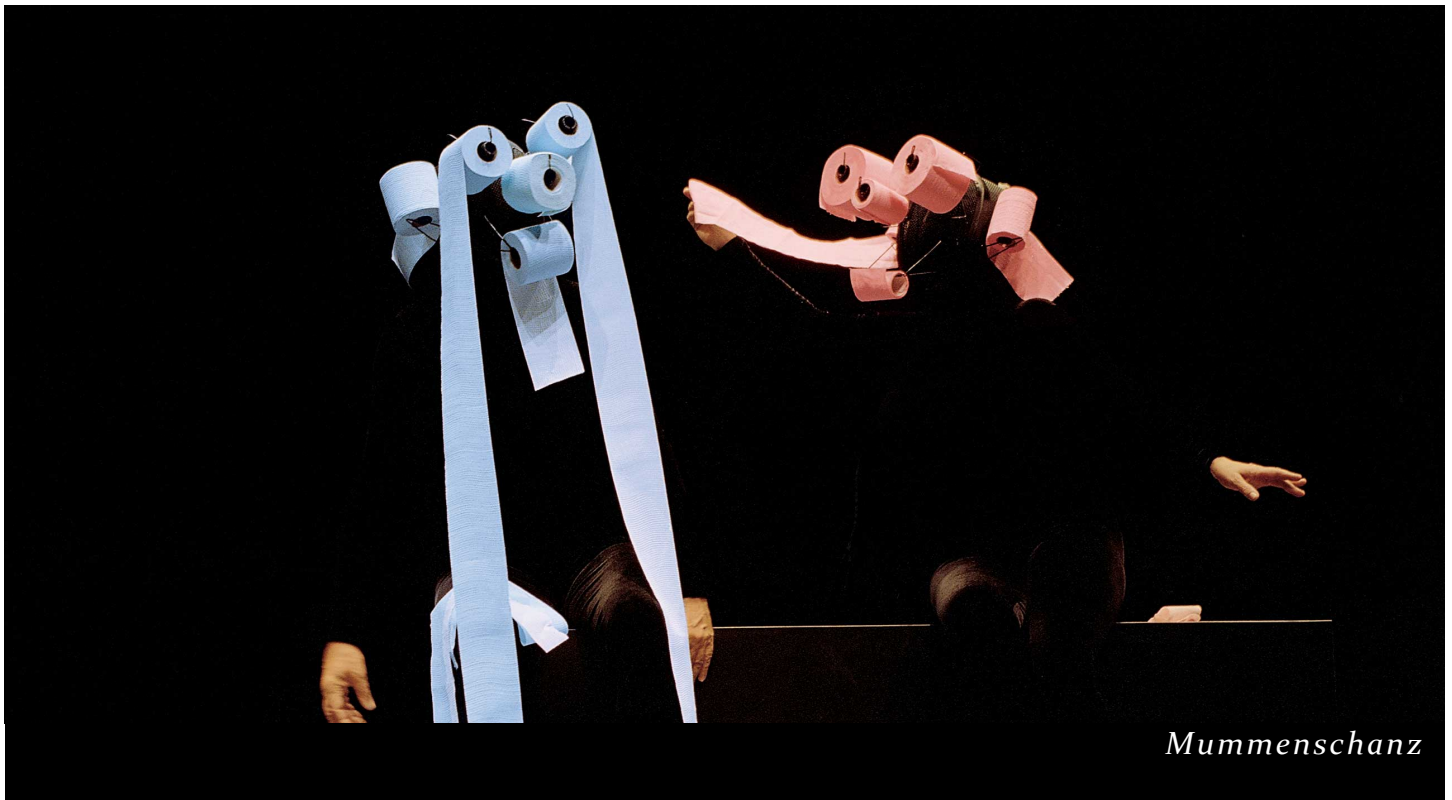
SPRING 2013

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Mike Harding, OPA President, Applefun Puppetry

Welcome to another great OPAL. The theme this time around is Forms. One of the great things about the art of puppetry is the variety of forms. There is no shortage. Recently, I had the opportunity to see the legendary Swiss puppet/mask/movement group Mummenschanz perform at the Rose Theatre in Brampton. You might remember Mummenschanz from their 1976 appearance as special guests on the Muppet Show where they manipulated toilet paper rolls, clay and their bodies to create puppetry.

Watching Mummenschanz reminded me how, in skilled hands, virtually anything can be a puppet, even objects that aren't thought of as traditional puppet forms. As such, other disciplines come to mind when contemplating forms of puppetry. Miles Davis was a puppeteer and his puppet was a trumpet, Gilles Villeneuve wasn't just driving his F1 car, he was puppeteering it; such was the level of connection and commitment that these men had to their chosen objects. A great musician pours his soul into an instrument and art comes out the other end. A great driver goes beyond the technology and brings his car to life. This is what puppeteers do. In the final analysis, the form doesn't really matter; it's what the puppeteer brings to the form.



Mummenschanz

PUPPET ALLSORTS FIRST SEASON A HUGE SUCCESS

Res Krebs, OPAL Editor, andreas@wildrun.ca

The Toronto Puppetry Collective is just finishing up our first season of the Puppet Allsorts series of performances in Toronto, and it's been a huge success. The performances by puppeteers from all over Ontario (including OPA President Mike Harding), have really wowed audiences, and we've sold out nearly every performance. Artichoke Heart Collective performed a beautiful shadow piece, Mike Petersen did his fantastic rendition of Punch and Judy, Chad Solomon regaled kids and adults alike with the traditional Ojibway story of Nanabozho and the Animals, and Studio Babette performed their amazing Spanish folk tale *Carlos and his Five Reasons*.

The Toronto Puppetry Collective started with Joanne Bigham's desire to fill a major gap in the city's performance scene—there's no series dedicated to the art of puppetry. She brought Kelly Kirkham and myself on board, and we were soon in the thick of scheduling performances, advertising the events, building a website, and actually putting on shows. And a grant from the OPA made all of this possible!

With the success of the first season under our collective belt, we're currently planning the second season. It's going to have all sorts of puppetry (get it? Puppet Allsorts?),

There are currently two shows remaining in the season:

On May 27th, we have our first adult-focused show. Frank Meschkuleit is performing the world premiere of *My Big Fat German Puppet Show*. Opening for Frank is Marty Stelnick with another premiere: *Rooster Kane's Curio Emporium*. These guys are going to be hilarious.

And we finish the season with a Puppet Slam on June 17th! We've got some favourites from Toronto's puppet slam scene lined up, as well as some new faces.

So if you've missed out on the season so far, and you're in the Toronto area, I highly recommend checking out one (or all) of these shows. But I'm not biased at all...

Check www.puppetallsorts.com for more information and to purchase tickets.



All ready for the Artichoke Heart Collective's performance of Dreams



Chad Solomon brings his Rabbit and Bear Paws characters to life

*Puppetry Praxis—Puppetry Theory, History, and Practice***WHAT IS A “FORM” OF PUPPETRY? ONE ANSWER AND AN EXAMPLE***James Beauregard Ashby, Vice President of the OPA, Bricoteer Experiments Theatre*

What exactly do we mean when we refer to something as a particular “form” of puppetry? Do we mean the same thing as when we refer to something else as a “style” of puppetry? Is there a point in making a distinction?

To answer the last question immediately, I think so. The discourse surrounding puppetry has been notoriously muddy, which has led to a multitude of problems. I addressed just one of these in my article “Just How Lazy Are We?” for the most recent *OPAL* issue, perhaps the most fundamental one of all: how the word *puppet* itself should be defined. In addition to being muddy, the language used to discuss puppetry has often been appropriative as well. For example, in *Toward an Aesthetics of the Puppet: Puppetry as a Theatrical Art*, Steve Tillis questions “the desire of many people involved with the puppet to annex the mask into the field of puppetry” (20). Any steps that we can take towards developing a more precise vocabulary will aid us in having more meaningful, constructive, and even enjoyable conversations about puppetry, in print and in person.

To return to the first two questions asked, I would propose that string-marionette theatre is an example of a form of puppetry, whereas tandem puppetry—a new term I have coined, which shall be defined below—is a style. All this distinction means is that, as a particular type of puppetry, string-marionette theatre is generally associated with a particular type of puppet (namely, of course, the string marionette) that brings with it certain design and movement conventions. An artist can, of course, reject, adapt, problematize, or even explode these conventions, but they are still part of the legacy of the form that has been inherited. The tandem style, on the other hand, is a way of “doing” puppetry: like any other style, it could, theoretically at least, be applied to any production, regardless of the form being employed. That said, a given style might be especially

compatible with a specific form or set of forms.

As is so often the case, however, this type of distinction is not always so neat. Consider cabaret puppetry. As Bil Baird reveals, the New York-based puppet artist Frank Paris “was the first to operate his show in full view,” and “his short-strung marionettes” (229) were especially well suited to this technique. Baird meant that Paris was the first in the West to do so, for as he well knew, the manipulators working in the Bunraku tradition of Japan had been appearing onstage with their puppets for centuries, just as they continue to do. This staging method soon came to be one of the defining features of “cabaret” puppetry for adults (Philpott 43), a form Paris began to popularize in 1937 (McPharlin 452; Cook). This technique of appearing onstage with one’s puppets was gradually embraced by artists working in other forms of puppet theatre, so that by 1978, puppet theatre theorist and historian Henryk Jurkowski felt compelled to declare in a somewhat patronizing tone that “[n]owadays it is fashionable to display the operators and the speakers,” as “[o]ften you can see the puppeteer onstage beside his puppet” (“The Language” 54), demonstrating “who is the passive object and who the principal of the action” (55).

Given that it has been shaped largely by circumstances related to the kind of venue in which it is usually presented—a nightclub or other establishment for adult audiences at which refreshments can be purchased—and that it has historically been associated with puppets of a certain kind, namely “short-strung marionettes” (Baird 229), one could speak of it as a form of puppet theatre in itself. The virtuosic style has been closely linked with cabaret puppetry ever since Frank Paris first stepped onto the stage with his marionette variety show. “Polished, slick presentation is [a] vital ingredient of such acts” (44), A. R. Philpott informs us, no doubt because such technical mastery—the key attribute of the virtuoso—has managed in the past to hold the attention of the easily distracted (given the lively surroundings) nightclub patron, particularly when it has been brought to bear on narrowly defined (in terms of content, running time, and required stage

space) pieces. Such attention to technique presumably also allows for the quick transitions that are imposed by this form.

The variety so essential to cabaret puppetry could potentially preclude it from being deemed a puppet theatre form proper, however. Philpott notes, for examples, that “shadow features were a feature of the *Chat Noir* . . . in Paris in [the] nineteenth century” (44). Modern puppetry cabarets—or “slams” as they are now often called in an effort to relate them to the edginess and vitality of poetry slams, although puppetry slams are not necessarily competitive— attract practitioners at all levels of experience and of every conceivable form of puppetry. In fact, the distinct possibility that one might encounter an original—or at least creatively modified—type of puppet at a cabaret or slam should itself act as a warning against focusing too much on types of control mechanisms when discussing puppetry, as we can start to assume that there are “a limited number of distinct and established types,” as Tillis observes. In reality, “the number of . . . types is unlimited” (111), and a cabaret, with its open format, is conducive to this and every kind of experimentation. It should therefore be considered more of an event or venue type than a form of puppetry as such. Indeed, it is worth pointing out here that, although the two terms are often used interchangeably—and, even more frequently, ambiguously—*cabaret* and *slam* are not necessarily exact synonyms. Producers, performers, and spectators need to be surveyed more formally, but it would seem that there might be a slight preference for the term *slam* when attempting to put together an event that is particularly welcoming to experimental, even unfinished short pieces, as opposed to pieces that are merely short (but perhaps more “polished,” as those performed by Paris were).

Further on the theme of variety, I trust that it goes without saying that there is plenty of that in the Canadian puppet theatre scene. From Ronnie Burkett’s marionette dramas for adult audiences to the collaboratively created productions—intended primarily for family and young audiences—staged by Puppetmongers Theatre using Bunraku-inspired direct manipulation techniques, these different permutations would seem to have little in common, save for their shared focus on the stage object. If we turn away from control methods and instead examine

performance style, however, we find that these two companies do indeed have some other points in common.

In their shared style of manipulation, tandem puppetry, much of the conceptual space between the puppet and the operator is collapsed, and the operator’s role as an actor is foregrounded. This would seem to be a style particularly well suited to our time. “[W]e are not at present within one cycle of the puppet’s history but in two. They touch and even penetrate each other,” Jurkowski wrote in the 1980s. On the one hand, there “is the cycle which deals with magic, rites, religious and similar sorts of puppets, all based on animism and the supernatural.” On the other hand, there is the cycle that “deals with profane and secular puppets, wherein all interest lies in the process of creation”; indeed, the “process of creation on the stage has become more important than the puppet by itself,” Jurkowski contends, and he is obviously not entirely pleased with this development. The focus in much of contemporary puppetry has shifted from the puppet itself to “the actor . . . onstage who is the ‘creator,’” which has reduced the puppet to being “at most a participant of the actor’s work” (“Towards a Theatre” 40).

Jurkowski appears to leave the door open for exceptions, however, as one of the legitimate historical functions of the puppet that he proposes is “the puppet as partner of the actor, who is visibly manipulating the figure onstage.” When the puppet is functioning in this mode, it and its operator “co-operate to create a theatre character”: the former “is the mobile picture of this character,” while the latter contributes “voice, feelings and even . . . facial expression.” All of this results in a performance in which “the actor has replaced the puppet player,” and although Jurkowski claims that this was “quite a new situation” (39) at the time, the puppet manipulator is now more commonly understood to be an actor, at least within the puppet theatre community itself. Burkett, for example, has stated that “a puppet can only exist if there is a really good actor-puppeteer, manipulating it, speaking it”; indeed, “you need the better actor . . . to take an inanimate object and give it life, and breath, and focus” (Personal interview). Ann and David Powell of Puppetmongers have often emphasized that using their own facial expressions to express the emotions that their puppet characters are

supposed to be feeling at a given moment is one of their central performance techniques.

Thus, the puppet and manipulator are explicitly working in tandem here. This necessitates a twin focus, as Burkett reveals when he stresses how important “creat[ing] a movement vocabulary that included both the puppeteer and the puppet” was to his development as an artist. This dual emphasis sets the perspective shared by Burkett and the Powells apart from that of the more purely virtuosic puppet artist. As Burkett says of a number of other operators who appear onstage with their puppets, “[T]hey’re so busy stealing focus from the puppets and trying to be great dramatic *artistes* that you don’t even watch the poor little wooden thing hanging down between their legs” (“Civil Disobedience” 12). That said, the greater attention to the operator’s own extramanipulatory performance can still be perceived as being taken too far. For example, *Guardian* reviewer Lyn Gardner claimed that, in a 2009 performance of *Billy Twinkle: Requiem for a Golden Boy* (2008), Burkett got “in the way of his own marionette creations; he dominate[d] them, rather than merely bringing them to life.” Rather than “acting as a conduit for his creations,” he was “merely acting - and very noisily indeed.”

Gardner’s wording in describing Burkett’s performance as “merely acting” is patently intended to be taken as a criticism, yet it also indicates just how difficult regulating the permeable boundary between the puppet and the performer in tandem puppetry can be. To be sure, the semiotically productive gaps between the body of the operator and that of the puppet can never be fully bridged. At least two sign systems collide onstage, and the audience is left to sort it out. In fact, in the Puppetmongers production *The Brick Bros. Circus* (1978), we can see three sign systems at work simultaneously: those of puppet theatre, human theatre, and circus, respectively.

This does not mean, however, that the production necessarily becomes unreadably chaotic or esoteric. On the contrary, the interplay between Brikko the Clown, moved by the artistry of the other performers in *The Brick Bros. Circus*, and David Powell, histrionically sobbing on behalf of the puppet and spraying the audience with a water pistol to exaggerate the melodramatic quality of the scene even further, for example, plays upon the audience’s double-vision rather than interferes with the readability of the puppet. In the last issue of the *OPAL*, I outlined Tillis’s theory



Scene from *Billy Twinkle*

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Hey everyone, now you can pay your OPA membership dues via PayPal and credit card! Also, we have introduced new membership rates for students, individuals, and groups. Want to be a member for life? No problem, lifetime memberships are available too. Visit www.onpuppet.ca!

Bonus: The first person to buy a lifetime membership will get a puppet event held in their name!

of the “double-vision created by the puppet”: “the audience sees the puppet, through perception and through imagination, as an object and as a life; that is, it sees the puppet in two ways at once” (64). As “involved” as Powell is, the spectators are still encouraged to believe in those tears, despite the fact that their real source could not be made more obvious. Indeed, this kind of ontological playfulness is one of the potential pleasures of puppet theatre. Moreover, any “demands” that such a performance places upon the audience “can easily be met by any audience of kindergarten children” (66), as Tillis writes. That said, while spectators of all ages have attended performances of *The Brick Bros. Circus*, the sign systems colliding onstage—sometimes literally—in a tandem puppetry performance can also produce relationships between object and performer that, in terms of both appropriateness and sophistication, are better suited to a strictly adult audience, as evidenced by the work of Burkett.

In my last article, I emphasized how much energy a performer must channel into a puppet in order to bring it to life. In tandem puppetry, however, there is a two-way flow: humans and puppets mutually transform one another. Certainly, the puppet continues to partake of the nature of the performer, in that it appears also to be a living being. There are many ways one can encourage spectators to imagine that a puppet is alive, of course. One might choose to be the more active agent, “addressing them [the puppets] as performers” (116), for example, to quote Czech semiotician Jiří Veltruský, or one could in fact represent “the undergoer of the action performed by the puppet” (117), thereby joining it on its own plane to some degree. The Powells rely heavily upon the first type in order to bring the otherwise stone-, or rather clay-faced, cast of *The Brick Bros. Circus* to life, while Burkett—“as Billy, a puppet visionary turned cruise-ship entertainer who has just been fired” (Gardner)—in an altercation with his character’s deceased mentor Sid Diamond, who has been resurrected as a hand puppet, makes use of the second in *Billy Twinkle*. Veltruský asserts that the “vivifying effect on the puppets” produced by the human performer being subjected to their physical and verbal attacks can be “enhanced by other procedures” (117), such as a kind of ironic echoing. We can find this kind of echoing, which carries with it a distinctly metatheatrical quality, right after Sid and Burkett (as Billy) fight violently onstage:

SID. . . . Now will you listen to me?

BILLY. Now, I won’t, because you’re not going to talk anymore.

SID. Sir, I’ve just begun!

BILLY. No, you’re done. You’ve been using my mouth, Sid. What the hell is that about?

SID. Gee, I don’t know. I’m a puppet and you’re a puppeteer. Figure it out, asshole! (18)

Of course, there are at least as many differences as there are similarities when we compare Burkett’s works with those developed by the Powells, in spite of the performance style that they have in common. Perhaps the most significant schism is related to just *how* those works are created, a topic I will address in my next *OPAL* article. The performer-creator remains at the centre of all of such developmental processes, however. In his analysis of “contemporary puppet theatre” (43) as a whole, Jurkowski emphasizes that “[t]he most important element is the creative process, dominating all other elements of theatre.” This element also prevails “in the actors’ theatre of the avant-garde” (42). In both cases, “the development from the first impulse to the final effect is executed by its creator — actor or puppetplayer.” This leads Jurkowski to ponder whether we might be “arriving at the point of being able to talk about a unity of approach for puppets’ and actors’ theatre.” He immediately answers himself in the negative, although he is not able to offer any clear explanations as to why. At the time, he did not feel comfortable offering any “answers,” as “[t]here . . . [were] only questions” (43).

Now, over twenty years later, it might be time to start suggesting some answers, as tentative as some of them may be. Probably the most obvious, but definitely the most important, difference between puppet and human theatre has already been mentioned: the former is largely defined by its focus on the stage object. This has more far-reaching yet subtle repercussions than we might initially realize, however. For example, a troupe of human actors

and a puppet theatre company might adhere to similar developmental processes when creating new shows, and yet the latter group will have to account for the specific nature of the puppet as they consider their working methods and then put them into practice. Surely such realities as the puppet's status as an object—even if it is only perceived as such by the audience, as in the case of the bare human hand as puppet that was examined in my last article—will affect these working methods somehow. I will turn to these kinds of complications in the next instalment of my column. For the moment, it is enough to stress that this attention to process—and to the theoretical vocabulary and historical context that I have been endeavouring to cultivate in this column—will allow us to transcend the largely descriptive and often overly evaluative language of critics like Gardner. By placing a similar emphasis on process, puppet artists could potentially avoid overwhelming the objects sharing the stage with them, as they would be more conscious of how they and their puppets are generating meaning together and of how each decision they make during the development of a given production affects how both parties are perceived by the audience.

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PUPPET FEST MIDWEST

Elise Handelman



Elise and some fabulous felt puppets

My husband, Bob Nathanson, and I were happy that we were able to attend the 10th Annual PuppetFest MidWest this past July. Sponsored by The Rumpelstiltskin Society, the festival was held at North Central Missouri College. Peter Allen & Debbie Lutzky-Allen are the Festival Directors.

This festival is always fun. I've attended 3 times before and Bob twice. It has a lot of unique features (which you'll read about throughout this review).

After you've registered, checked into your dorm, dropped off puppets for the exhibit, attendees gather and Debbie gives a welcome and orientation. After each night's dinner, attendees gather at the Grundy County Jewett Norris Library Hoover Theater.

The community is treated to wonderful shows for only \$5. Unlike other festivals, there is only one main stage performance each evening.

Featured performances were ***Suspended Animation*** by The Huber Marionettes (Philip Huber), ***The Nightingale*** by Grey Seal Puppets (Drew Allison), ***Sock Puppet Serenade*** by Kurt Hunter Marionettes, ***Billy the Liar*** by Toybox Theatre (Keith Shubert) and Cripps Puppets (Madison J. Cripps), ***Jack and the Beanstalk*** by Nappy's Puppets. Drew's show and ***Billy the Liar*** performs mostly with rod puppets. Nappy entertains with fabulous shadow puppets.

This festival has an "Open Space" for an attendee to show off their performances. Matt Sandbank, of Tennessee, performed a terrific shadow performance titled ***A Wild Goose Chase***. Matt had taken Nappy's shadow workshop a

few years ago. The next afternoon, Bernie Beauchamp, of Las Vegas, performed with his variety marionettes.

This festival is unique because each attendee chooses, in advance, one of nine workshops that they will stay in all week. They spend 5-1/2 hours for four of the days working on a single focus. On the last day, a Show & Tell Workshop Recital is held where each group either performs or does a Show & Tell. What a fabulous opportunity to see what others learned and created in their workshops!

I took Pam Corcoran's **Needle Felting** workshop with seven other attendees. Everyone had different ideas of what they wanted to create. With Pam's guidance, and encouragement, and inspiration from each other, everyone's puppets appeared to each one's satisfaction.

For the **SHOW & TELL**, Pam chose a skit that was able to use all puppets created in the workshop to assist the main character pulling a turnip.

In the **Shadow Puppetry** workshop, Nappy, aka Jim Napolitano, had the participants focus on building and creating their shadow puppet scene for S&T, rather than focusing on building the shadow stage, which he's done in the past.

In M'El Reum's workshop, **Soft Stuff**, attendees had fun showing off their "soft" fabric creations. Randel McGee, an extraordinary ventriloquist, has presented Ventriloquism workshops before. This time he presented **Carved Polyfoam Theatre**. Attendees, including Jean Burn and her grandson, Matt, made some great puppets. Randel also hosted the Pot Pourri.

How lucky PFMW is to have had the extraordinary talented Philip Huber, who presented **Marionette Manipulation**. Each attendee demonstrated the movements they learned in the workshop. In all my years at festivals, I've never heard so many terms used. That's because Philip makes manipulating a marionette look so easy! Luman Coad presented **It's Alive - Hand Puppets**. His workshop attendees put on a skit using hand puppet manipulation skills they learned from a master.

Pix Smith, PofA's Business Consultant, gave the workshop **Practically in Business**, providing information and answered individual's questions. Each with extensive experience working in TV, Drew Allison and Art Grueneberger led **Puppets on Camera**. Hilarity ensued when watching videos the attendees presented, who worked in groups and shot scenes with puppets, in various venues around the campus.

Keith Shubert, of Toybox Theatre, and Madison J. Cripps, of Cripps Puppets, gave the workshop **What Is A Puppet Slam?**. Bob Nathanson, Angela Polowy, and Pady Blackwood's nephew, Kraig Kensinger, took the workshop. Since Keith and Madison hosted the SLAM the last night of the festival, that's when their workshop attendees presented the Slam pieces they worked on during the week.

For 10 years Philip Huber has curated the puppet exhibit. The exhibit Grand Opening, sponsored by the Trenton Area Chamber of Commerce, includes a ribbon cutting with a giant scissors. Festival attendees gather while this occurs and many can be seen on the front page of the Trenton newspaper the next day.

This festival has a "Swap & Shop" where you can sell your wares. Bob and I sold copies of Bob's book, **Diary of a Doll Wiggler: A Bob's-Eye View Into the Wacky & Wonderful World of Puppetry**.

After each evening's performance, everyone gathers at "Pam's Place." Eating delicious food Pam prepares and drinking, it's a perfect place to chat with old friends and new, and watch more late-night puppetry. Two workshops gave their presentations on the last evening at Pam's Place. The Truffle was a fun festival finale. Goodbyes followed. A participant list allows everyone to keep in touch. It was a fabulous week!

*Book Review***PUPPETRY: A READER IN THEATRE PRACTICE**

Penny Francis. Published by MacMillan, 2012. Reviewed by David Smith of David Smith Marionettes

This small book offers the theatre professional the opportunity to become better acquainted with this most ancient of theatre arts which has become so important in stage, screen, and social media. For the puppet professional and aspiring artist it could well fill any gaps in understanding and experience. The book's focus is on the evolution of puppetry from the 1990s to the present.

Penny Francis' exploration of puppetry in performance has, as she states, taken her around the world, observing, discussing, editing, reviewing, commentating and finally, teaching at the prestigious Central School of Speech and Drama in London, England.

A listing of the headings of the seven chapters with some commentary should give you some idea of the scope of this beautifully succinct, articulate book. Each chapter ranges from 13 to 35 pages each with a bibliography, recommended reading and illustrations.

INTRODUCTION

1. **APPROACH. PUPPETRY** – The Act of the Act, Puppet Theatre and Theatre with Puppets, The Puppet: Animated Figure and Object, The Animated Object, The Puppeteer.

2. **RELATED ARTS** – Masks, Automata, Ventriloquism.

3. **TECHNIQUES** – This section provides an overview of the broad range of styles of puppetry – rod, marionettes, glove and hand, shadow, humanettes, toy & paper, model theatre, black light, tabletop and bunraku.

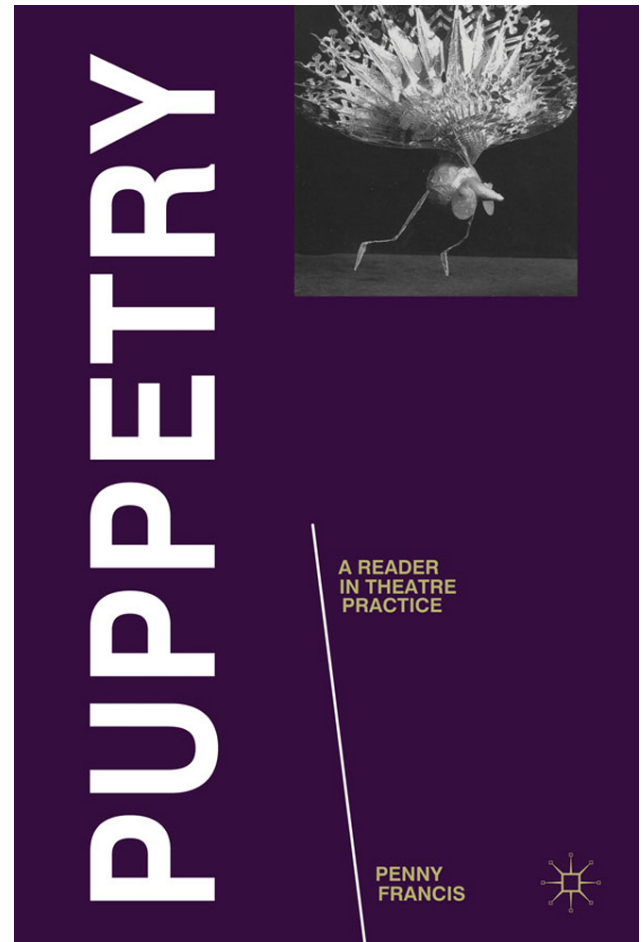
4. **IN PERFORMANCE** – A discussion of the many aspects of 'theatre' in puppetry—writing, directing, design, construction, street theatre, stages, lighting & sound design, puppeteer and actor.

5. **DRAMATURGY** – puppet production scripts, playscripts for children, devised and mixed media productions.

6. **AESTHETICS** – This is an aspect of puppetry that is often ignored or side-stepped. Here are five brief papers presented by world renowned puppet scholars' views of puppetry.

7. **HISTORY** – this is a brief overview of the place of puppetry in theatre from earliest times through the middle ages, to commedia, to 17th century opera, to 19th century Europe and eventually ending up at 21st century puppetry in Europe and North America.

This is not a 'How To' puppetry book but one that tells "What It Is." Enjoy!



A Final Note—musings of an itinerant puppeteer

A TRIBUTE TO PUPPETS UP!

Teddy Dong, Blue Ink Puppetry

Dear Volunteers, Organizers, and Sponsors of the International Puppets Up! festival,

Thank you for the continued success of the international puppetry festival in Almonte every year.

Your contribution to make this event possible through scheduling, training, preparation, set-up and clean-up is imaginable.

Each year, many puppeteers, puppet enthusiasts, and spectators flock to the tiny town of Almonte for a time of laughter, inspiration for new ideas, and just to sit back and relax. The event draws audiences and puppeteers from within the Mississippi Valley, Ottawa Region, all corners of Ontario, and some even further away!

The Puppets Up! festival provides to the community at large, to puppeteers and puppet enthusiasts alike a time and a purpose to have fun! To let yourself loose and

absorb the awe and wonder; to see an inanimate object transformed by using

imagination fused with creativity that brings a large audience to laugh, be silent, cry, or applause.

I know Almonte is a quiet little town. Not much happens on a day-to-day basis, except a bit of rush hour traffic and the occasional family of ducks that parade down the street. However when the preparations begin in early July for the two-day festival, not one person is immune to the hype and excitement that the festival brings.

The International Puppets Up! festival plays an important role to both the community and its attendees, and to the puppets who are once again brought into life! A puppet performance does not

happen without an audience, and that is why Puppets Up! provides a meaningful role to all puppeteers who just need that little glimpse of spotlight (...and for the audience to get a glimpse of a puppet show not seen on a television). For these reasons and many others, I feel the Puppets Up! festival has done and will continue to do wonders to the showcase the art of puppetry and the community.

Thank you all that make this event happen!



The Amazing Parade!
Photo: Paddy Vargas



Kids Enjoying A Fantastic Show
Photo: Paddy Vargas