



OPAL

Spring 2008

A Newsletter for Members of the Ontario Puppetry Association

Théâtre de la Dame de Coeur presents astonishing puppetry

Show review by Mike Artelle

Last summer I had the pleasure of learning about and visiting one of Canada's most ambitious puppetry theatre companies. Located in Upton Quebec, about 40 minutes from Montreal, Théâtre de la Dame de Coeur has been in operation since the late 1970s on a 15-hectare estate. The company specializes in the use of giant puppets which are unlike anything I've ever seen, and very technical in their design.

Each puppet is mounted on a main control rod, which the puppeteer places into a harness, with several leavers and rods to control the puppets movements. Although there is a significant amount of hardware involved in the construction, the movements of these giant puppets are so fluent and lifelike it is astonishing to watch them in action. The ingenuity involved in the design of the puppets is clear from the moment they appear on stage. The eyes on each of the human puppet characters are especially remarkable, but you'd have to see it to believe it!

The performance of these larger than life puppets takes place in the evening, and around the contour of an exceptionally large outdoor theatre venue. This allows for action on all sides of the audience and intriguing visual effects with lights that show up well against the black sky, which becomes the backdrop of the performance and creates a fun theatrical atmosphere.

I attended by invitation from puppeteer Graham Soul, who is among the extremely talented cast. For a production of this scale, the company employs a large troupe of performers each season. As a new production is mounted every two years, last summer premiered "Les Dinosaures ne savent pas lire". (continued on page 3)



Photo courtesy Théâtre de la Dame de Coeur

From the Editor Mike Artelle



Greetings OPA members! I'm happy to announce that the OPAL has undergone a transformation. It is now available in pdf format to be e-mailed to members. A limited number of hard copies will continue to be printed and mailed to members who do not have e-mail. Any OPA member with e-mail who still wishes to receive the hard copy is asked to please e-mail me, and I will keep your name on the post mailing list. In order to take advantage of the pdf format, the OPAL will also soon be available online via the OPA web site. By going to the pdf format, it is our hope that the readership of the OPAL will increase therefore promoting the OPA and its members to a

broader audience. Of course, the more involved OPA members are with the OPAL the better our newsletter will be, and therefore the more likely it will be downloaded from the web site or passed on to others. Anyone interested in submitting puppet news of any kind (puppet building tips, workshop opportunities, upcoming performances, and so on) may e-mail the information to me. The next deadlines will be: **July 25th** (for events in Aug, Sept, Oct, or beyond) and **Oct 25th** (for events in Nov, Dec 2008, and Jan 2009 or beyond). Hopefully, this will allow more opportunities for members to participate. Until then, best wishes and keep those puppets moving!

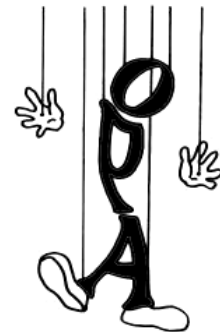
OPA Mandate

The Ontario Puppetry Association is a strong advocate for the art of puppetry in Ontario. It supports the work of puppeteers of different styles and at all levels of expertise.

OPA Board Members, 2007-08

(correction: last issue "Summer 2007" listed the 2006-07 executive, not the 2005-06 executive as was stated)

President	Phil Arnold	puppetaxe@gmail.com
Vice President	Mike Harding	applefun31@hotmail.com
Secretary	Muriel Smith	dsmith@kos.net
Treasurer	Johan Vandergun	lampoon@connection.com
Membership	Mike Artelle	artellephant@webruler.com
Member at Large	David Smith	dsmith@kos.net
	Jamie Ashby	jamie.ashby@utoronto.ca
	Marie Franek	mfranek@cogeco.ca
	Teddy Dong	teddy.dong@rogers.com
OPAL Editor	Mike Artelle	artellephant@webruler.com



Contact the OPA

By Phone: 1-800-379-0446

By Post: General Inquiries

Memberships &
OPAL Submissions

On the Web: www.onpuppet.ca

Ontario Puppetry Association, c/o Phil Arnold, President
714 Hedgerow Place, London, ON N5Y 3J6

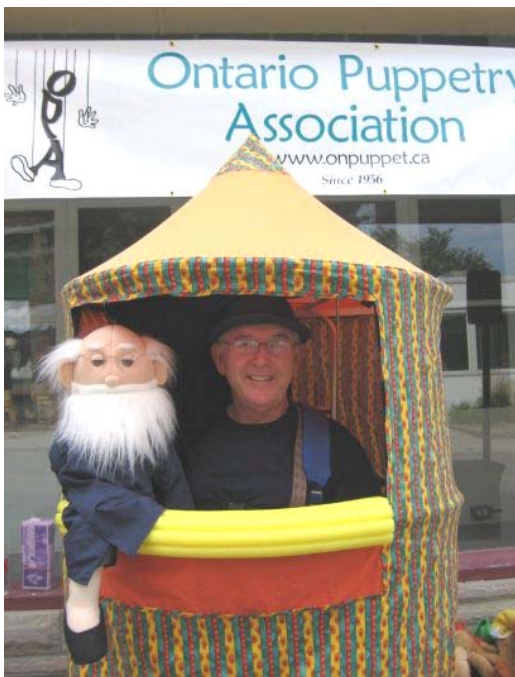
Ontario Puppetry Association c/o Mike Artelle
726 Cole Ave. Ottawa, ON K2A 2B7

Théâtre de la Dame de Coeur (continued from cover)

The largest puppet in this production is a fully articulated dinosaur, which takes advantage of the fact that the theatre roof is 50 feet above the audience. It was a sight to behold! The dinosaur, which in my opinion was worth the trip alone just to see in action, becomes the friend of Tom, the little boy who is the main character of the story. The show is presented entirely in French, and although my French is quite rusty, it was still easy to follow along. In addition to the breathtaking puppetry, giant sized scenery pieces are used with shadow screens and video projections to make this an unforgettable theatrical presentation. The Dame de Coeur site also includes a fully staffed restaurant which serves a delicious buffet before the performance, a museum gallery with numerous giant puppets on display and daily interactive puppetry demonstrations. This summer will be the final run for “Les Dinosaures ne savent pas lire”, with performances starting on June 25th and lasting until August. To see more information about this remarkable puppetry company visit the web site at: <http://www.damedecoeur.com/en/dinosaures/tarifs.html>

OPA Membership Update

Due to unforeseen circumstances, we are quite late this year with sending out reminders for membership renewals; therefore all membership renewals will be extended until Sept 2009. A membership form has been included with this OPAL. If you have yet to renew your membership, please do take a moment to fill out your current e-mail, web, mailing address, and phone number so that we may update our records. Then, send the form along with your payment of \$30.00 to our new Membership Convener, Mike Artelle at: 726 Cole Ave. Ottawa, ON K2A 2B7. For membership inquiries, please contact Mike at: artellephant@webruler.com or 613-728-7043. Thank you to Dahlia Katz for being our Membership Convener over the past year, we wish her all the best. We also thank everyone for your continued support of the OPA!



OPA President Phil Arnold at last year's festival

OPA at the Puppets Up International Festival, 2008

Next up on our schedule of events, the OPA will once again take part in the Street Entertainment at the Puppets Up International Festival in Almonte, Ontario on August 9th and 10th. We are looking for members to volunteer for either a half-day, one full day, or two half days during the festival. OPAL editor Mike Artelle is our liaison for this event and is seeking volunteers to fill a number of available positions such as: supervising a giant marionette interactive, supervising the water puppet booth interactive, performers to be a “living puppet”, a puppeteer to assist the festival MC, wandering performers, “walk-about” puppet booth performers, as well as supervisors for other attractions. If you want to help out behind the scenes, we will also need help with non-puppetry tasks, such as monitoring the green room, helping to set up attractions, and so on. As an added incentive, those who volunteer for a half-day or full-day will receive a free ticket to see one performance, courtesy of the festival’s Street Entertainment Committee. OPA members are also needed to march in the parade on each day of the festival. This

festival is unique in Ontario, and is certainly worthy of the OPA’s support. It has already become a tradition for many puppeteers in the province, and is an amazing opportunity for networking with peers. We are hoping that the OPA will have a strong showing of support through our members’ participation. If you would like to volunteer, please contact Mike Artelle at: artellephant@webruler.com

Upcoming Performances

Theatre de L'Oeil, *A New World*, Ottawa Children's International Festival, May 30 –June 1st, 2008, 613-241-0999 www.ottawachildrensfestival.ca This acclaimed 45 minutes production, created in 1990, is suitable for ages 4 to 8, and is billed as “a classic of puppet theatre”. Theatre de L'Oeil is the troupe from Montreal that created the nationally and internationally acclaimed *Le Porteur*.



Ronnie Burkett, *Billy Twinkle, Requiem for a Golden Boy*, at the NAC, Nov 25 – Dec 6, 2008. At present the National Art Centre in Ottawa will be Ronnie Burkett's only Ontario stop for this production, (see the complete touring schedule online at: http://www.johnlambert.ca/english/ronnie/billy/calendar_f.htm). For more info about the NAC performance visit... <http://www.nac-cna.ca/en/theatre/index.cfm> ...then select the correct date on the calendar at the top left of the screen to see the page about Ronnie's show and ticket info!

If you know of any puppetry performances taking place between Aug 1st and Oct 25th (or beyond), please send the information to the OPAL at: artellephant@webruler.com

Upcoming Workshops

Toronto School of Puppetry Spring Intensive Workshops

The Toronto School of Puppetry is once again offering intriguing workshops. Mark your calendars and register early! For registration details and fees please see the school web site at: <http://www.puppetmongers.com/>

Week 1: June 16 to 20, **The Arts of Puppetry**, from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. daily

In this course, Ann and David Powell, of the Puppetmongers, will lead an exploration of the many arts involved in puppetry, including the basics of making and working with glove puppets, rod puppets, marionettes, tabletop figure and shadows. Everyday there will be a workshop with guest a artist such as director Sue Miner, designer Camelia Koo, choreographer Yvonne Ng, composer Rick Sacks. Some comfort with tools is an asset to registrants.

Week 2: June 23 to 27, **Puppet Play Development**, from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. daily

Join the Puppetmongers team, with guest director Sue Miner, in the creation of a puppet production. In this week we will start with a story outline and go through our process of brainstorming, storyboarding, construction, character development and scene creation. On the afternoon of the last day there will be a performance for a small audience.

Workshops in Almonte to support the Puppets Up Festival

One again this year there are a variety of workshops or being offered in Almonte, ON August 5th to 8th during the week before the Puppets Up festival. Several of the festivals professional puppeteers will be instructing different workshops, such as a four day marionette workshop with Bence Sarkadi from Hungary, shadow puppets with Jim Napolitano, costume designing with Ingrid Harris, Puppets for Television with Trish Leeper, and many others. Visit the Puppets Up web site at: <http://www.puppetsup.ca/workshops.cfm> for more info, but book early, these workshops fill up fast!

If you know of any puppetry workshops taking place between Aug 1st and Oct 25th (or beyond), please send the information to the OPAL at: artellephant@webruler.com

Member Updates



Ottawa Puppetry Club 9th Annual Variety Show

The Ottawa Puppetry Club, a member company of the OPA, has been busy preparing for their 9th Annual Variety Show. This year's production was titled "A Twist of the Tale" and presented several fantasy stories through puppetry. Members have collaborated to build puppets, write scripts, make costumes and props, and rehearse their skits on their own time. Then, as a group, the Club met twice a month for full rehearsals of the 50-minute show. They did two performances on Sunday, April 27th, at the St. Laurent Complex. A final performance took place May 2nd as a fundraiser for Connaught Public School. For additional information about the OPC visit the web site at: <http://www.webruler.com/artellephant/opc.html>



A puppet window display at St. Laurent Complex with puppets made by OPC members.

And now its time for... Puppets in the News!

This just in...Mr. Magorium's Wonder Emporium, starring Dustin Hoffman and Natalie Portman, is now on DVD. Canadian puppeteers extraordinaire David and Ann Powell of Puppetmongers worked on the film as the puppetry department, and appear in a short clip as part of the extras on the DVD. Of course, they are also OPA members! In other news, if you are searching for rare or out of print books, the staff at Puppets in the News (ie: your editor!) has determined that the best online source available is none other than: <http://www.puppetbooks.co.uk/about.htm> This is the site for Ray DaSilva's Puppetry Books. Mr. DaSilva and his wife Joan are well known puppeteers from England who lived in Toronto during the mid 1950s until the early 1960s. During this time they met George Merten, a founder of the OPA, and performed at a P of A festival that Merten had organized. The DaSilva's involvement with Merten and the Toronto Guild of Puppetry influenced their decision to devote their lives to puppetry. This in turn influenced my decision to name the DaSilva website as the best source for puppetry books. It is quite remarkable that modern technology allows us to be only a few clicks away from Mr. DaSilva's impressive rare puppetry bookstore. His website is certainly worth browsing to see what is available, and the shipping is very fast! On a completely unrelated topic...a new live musical of Finding Nemo has been unveiled at Disney's Animal Kingdom. The 30 minute show features large colourful rod puppets of all the characters and is a very impressive display of puppetry theatre. And that's all for puppets in the news!



Ontario Puppetry Association

Membership Form

One Year Membership is \$30 Cdn. Please make cheque or money order payable to the Ontario Puppetry Association and mail to:

Ontario Puppetry Association
c/o Mike Artelle, Membership Convener
726 Cole Ave.
Ottawa, ON
K2A 2B7

Name:.....

Company / Group (optional):.....

Address:..... Phone: (.....).....

City:..... Prov.:..... Fax: (.....).....

Postal Code:..... E-Mail:.....

Website:.....

Contact the OPA

By Phone: 1-800-379-0446 **On the Web:** www.onpuppet.ca

By Post: General Inquiries Ontario Puppetry Association,
c/o Phil Arnold, President
714 Hedgerow Place, London, ON N5Y 3J6

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