

THE



PHOENIX

GSPG minutes, February 17, 2003

Members present: Diane Koszarski, Richard Koszarski, Lois Corwin, Betty Sommerville, Willie Somerville, Steve Swank, Michael Terletski, Bob Culek. Guests John and Joanne Tyne.

Minutes of the January 20, 2013 meeting, approved via e-mail, were available to peruse.

Circle Time: Our guests, John and Joanne Tyne of JMT Productions, East Windsor, NJ were attracted by our “puppet clinic” workshop. Steve Swank shared news of his participation in a graduate student film, Ed Hellman’s Retire for the Evening. Steve plays an elderly (!) puppeteer whose demise does not stop his sock puppet from seeking new adventures. Check out fun snippets available on YouTube. It will debut May 31 at the School of Visual Arts Short Film Program.

Diane reported that today’s workshop had been included in Puppet Happenings this month – a first for our guild. Michael showed beautiful collectors’ puppets, a Jiminy Cricket from Italy, and insect musicians from Prague. He would like our presenter to help to reconfigure them for performance. The Tynes wanted help engineering the transfer of a bouquet from one marionette to another. Diane wanted help redesigning a decorative fairy godmother marionette for use as a prologue puppet. Lois mentioned she is planning a trip to Prague, to meet the puppeteers working there this summer.

Betty filled us in on National Day of Puppetry developments. Diane shared Steve Abrams’ timeline of puppet history (available at the Puppeteers of America website) to celebrate “A Century of American Puppetry”.

We then welcomed our workshop presenter, Steve Widerman of The Puppet Company. Steve showed historic puppets starting with Rufus Rose, and his

“Roddy McDowell” kit figure. From his mentor Bill Baird, he has a junior Devil. He demonstrated basics of control, balance and stillness with a simple Albert Roser style dragonfly puppet. His mantra was “weight matters,” all marionette limbs are pendulums on the end of a string. Start with stillness, learn your instrument, use a mirror or recording device for feedback, and practice constantly.

He concluded with his Disco Skater routine, which he has performed thousands of times, from early street gigs to today. Lois recalled seeing him in Central Park back then! Even skating on the rug, it was one snazzy marionette display.

We then broke up for one-on-one consults with Steve, and a chance to try manipulation of his various marionette figures. All participants thanked Steve for such a generous, inspiring and knowledgeable encounter with his expert puppetry.

Our next meeting will be March 17, 2013.

Respectfully submitted,

Lois Corwin, Recording Secretary



See all the photos from Steve Widerman’s Workshop.

More photos on pages 4 and 5

Visit us on the web at:
www.gardenstatepuppetryguild.com

Puppet Playlist #16

At the end of April I attended a strange and wonderful puppet slam called “Puppet Playlist #16”. It was presented by Sinking Ship Productions and The Tank on the lower east side of NYC. The history of its format is that every so often the producers suggested a playlist of a certain artist and called for submissions from both musicians and puppet artists to submit works related to that playlist. This particular Puppet Playlist show was selected from the last four years of favorites by popular vote. There were 18 favorites presented and most were musicians, not puppeteers. If I mentioned the puppet shows only, I would be doing a disservice to the performances. The musicians were no less than astounding, in my estimation. In particular I liked a woman named Emily Hope Price who played an electric cello as if it were an upright bass. From Playlist 14 she played her rendition of “Bang, Bang (My Baby Shot Me Down)” by Sonny Bono. The poignancy and the irony of that song was etched with her pain in an achingly beautiful voice. From Playlist #9, Matt Singer played “No Diggity/Axel F.” It was sung seductively and saucily arranged for his guitar. Sean Brennan and Peter Musante did a memorable performance of the Ghostbuster Theme with guitar and a percussion box. They were totally charming riffing off each other. Now, as for the actual puppetry, Broderick Jones

performed to “Superstition” by Stevie Wonder. He produced an endearing black cat rod puppet that experienced various calamities and when the 16 ton weight dropped, or the ladder fell on the poor unfortunate animal, another ghost arose from the background ticking off the predictable 9 lives. Liz Hara and Marta Mozelle MacRostie from Playlist #14, reinvented Peter and The Wolf (a bad romance) to Sergei Prokofiev’s music with an added punch from Lady Gaga. It started off with the unexpected romance between Peter’s grandfather and the Wolf and ended with some perversions and bloody shootings. Another puppet performance I enjoyed was by Jake Bazel and Vivian Viera. The musical background was “Fire” by the Pointer Sisters and each time this memorable line returned, the puppeteers blew some sort of pressurized air into a red cloth to show the fire between the two puppets. The final act was by The Puppet Kitchen “I believe in a thing called Luff” by The Darkness from playlist #10. The puppets were truly luffable.

When the cast came to take their bows, 20 people crowded on the stage! (some techs were included) It was a large endeavor to put the show together and very entertaining. If you want to apply to do an act for the next Playlist Puppet Slam, the theme is Johnny Cash. You may send your request to puppetplaylist.com.

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GSPG Summer Meetings 2013

Hi, Folks,

Here's what's brewing this Summer:

June

Nothing! Our regularly scheduled meeting, 6/16, has a double whammy against it. That's the weekend Chatham Library starts closing on Sundays, plus it's Father's Day. I know I'll be busy with family affairs, as will many other members. June 9 in Chatham, or the 23 here in Teaneck were considered, but both our presenter and I had schedule conflicts. We'll see him in the Fall.

July

I've picked the third Sunday, July 23 for our Famous Picnic. Joyce Reilly in Chatham again has very graciously offered her home as the spot, but it depends on her final vacation plans. I'm happy to host everybody here in Teaneck as a back-up.

August

Several members are trekking to Swarthmore for Puppet @Evolution Festival. We'll hobnob there, and proudly parade our Guild banner!

IMPROMPTU theater trips

Several times we've had fun gathering to see a show together. If we know in advance, we can try for discounts. Keep your eyes peeled for something neat in New Jersey, let me know, and we'll get organized.

September

Assuming that meetings on the third Sunday is still good for most schedules, our Fall season begins September 15, with Elections and Puppet Festival Postcards.

Hope to see you May 19, and our National Day of Puppetry planning session.

Sincerely,

Diane Koszarski, President
Garden State Puppetry Guild

GSPG Upcoming Very Special Meeting

The Garden State Puppetry Guild meets in the lovely Maytime Greetings!

I hope all guild members are enjoying the beauties of our Garden State this month, adding your own horticultural efforts or savoring the skill of other gardeners.

We will have our regular Guild meeting on Sunday, May 19 at Chatham Public Library, 2:00 PM, to begin important discussions about the future of our participation in National Day of Puppetry. We want ideas, analysis and suggestions for our new path from everybody!

Our program this month is a weekday field trip to Puppet Heap, Paul Andrejco's thriving puppetry workshop in Hoboken, New Jersey. (You can preview their unique style at www.puppetheap.com). As the workshop is not open weekends we will meet at the factory, 720 Monroe Street, suite C-202, Hoboken, NJ 07030 for a tour of the premises on Thursday, May 23, at 2:00 PM. Please RSVP to Diane for directions – it's a bit tricky to get inside.

I look forward to seeing you out and about, in Chatham, and Hoboken.

Diane Koszarski, President

Garden State Puppetry Guild

flamingopuppets@gmail.com

Photos from Steve Widerman's Workshop



Fragile

Fragile

Fragile or in the French pronunciation announced by its authors, "Fra-jeel," is a wordless tale of persistence and enlightenment, scaled to engage a pre-school to elementary grades audience in the magic of live theater. Clan des Songes uses gentle, intriguing Bunraku-style puppetry, rather than the noisy razzamatazz so often associated with children's theater.

Fragile has two characters. One is a stumpy beige figure with red shoes, red hat and red satchel. The other is a thick beige line we interpret as a road. Our protagonist begins his journey, and soon finds that the "road" offers challenges. It dips, gaps, distracts. It becomes a teeter-totter and a hammock. It snatches his hat. Half of it disappears. It outlines a helpful elephant, mostly trunk, that snuffles the pathway back into view. It accepts a flower from our traveller, and provides more flowers in return.

These situations are laid out with a clever mix of graphics, mime and classic slapstick. The Bunraku manipulation is smooth and skillful, three black operators virtually invisible against a black backdrop. The tale moves forward, accompanied by cheerful, even bland, original music. Though a live performance, no interaction was required of the audience. Nonetheless, the

children I saw it with were totally and vocally engaged in trying to figure out what adventure was happening to the puppet and path. The piece felt a great deal like something from European art animation, which may or may not have captured a young person's attention. The ritual of live theater certainly lent its weight, encouraging a very young audience to learn to focus on the story in front of them without the need of flashy punctuation.

Kudos to the troupe Clan des Songes, for investing their skill in this charming piece, and to Ricochet, a program bringing these French performers (and two other troupes) to share their vision with us.

Small World footnote: I noticed a fellow with a shaggy mane of long black hair among the parents and children waiting to enter the studio— could it be? —yes, it was former Guild member Preston Foederer, of The Brothers Grimy fame. He said after finishing his degree in neurobiology, he just recently has moved to Chattanooga, Tennessee, to teach in the University there. He was up for the weekend to visit lots of friends, including a pal in Clan des Songes. His puppet shows are boxed up for now, but he is excited about his new home. Best of luck, Dr. Foederer!

Review by Diane Koszarski



National Day of Puppetry PICTURE PORTFOLIO

Thanks to Marshall Katzman for extensive coverage of our 15th annual celebration of NDOP. Check out all his snaps at <http://gardenstatepuppetryguild.shutterfly.com/>
For more coverage, enjoy reporter Kathleen Turpin's article and photo coverage in the Messenger-Gazette: <http://s.nj.com/sm6mtal>.



Lois Corwin creates a mask for Coyote, the Native American trickster



Diane Koszarski offers a snake marionette made of egg cartons, gussied up to become Quetzacoatl.



Chili by Penny Rapicano,



Betty Sommerville and her son Willie lead a movement workshop.



Cake for Diane's sixty-something birthday.





Lois is emcee Potpourri Show



4-H Chinese Culture Club shows off Lion Dance parade puppets



Marshall Katzman's Fantasy Puppet Theater does Little Red Riding Hood



Workshoppers parade their Quetzacoatl snakes to the "Lions and Tigers March."



Diane, of Pink Flamingo Puppets, performed Pirate Bob and His Buried Treasure and got a hug!





Lois' full body puppets compete in 'Dancing with the Stars' judged by wizards Gandolf and Dumbledoofus



Penny's new table top show, Stone Soup, uses help from the audience.



Pretty Cool 4-H Puppetry Club presents The Three Little Fish pursued by a killer whale



Penny wraps up the day with her Fun On A String marionettes, Dog, Scarecrow(flirting with Lois' lumberjack)



The soulful Hanna-blu-blu. puts in a word for our Guild.

GSPG Minutes, March 17, 2013

Members present: Diane Koszarski, Lois Corwin, Betty Sommerville, Bob Culek.

Circle Time consisted of spreading out and consuming our awesome St. Patrick's Day feast, green guacamole and chips, soda bread with lemon curd, Irish breakfast tea, and brownies!

Betty reviewed preparations for National Day of Puppetry. It was efficient to recycle a 4-H announcement from previous years to send to local libraries, and post to our website. Diane reported that of members polled, Marshall Katzman and Joyce Reilly had offered to participate, in addition to Lois, Pretty Cool Puppetry Club and herself. The 4-H Chinese Culture Club Lion Dancers are on board.

Lois and Betty planned routines for Lois' dancing partner puppets, to be contestants from Dancing with the Stars, and be judged by the Puppetry Clubs' wizard puppets, in the style of the Muppets' Statler and Hilton.

For workshops, the Puppetry Club will do their movement workshop. Lois has planned a Coyote mask to involve children in a Native American story about Coyote which she will tell. Diane plans to offer the snake marionette craft from Muppets Make Puppets. With the addition of some feathers and sequins, it can be Quetzacoatl. She's looking for some good music to let the kids parade with their creations in the afternoon.

We then settled down to cut up egg cartons into individual cups, for the snake puppet – 24 cups per snake!

Our next meeting will be on Saturday, April 20, in Bridgewater, NJ as we celebrate National Day of Puppetry at the Ted Blum 4-H Center.

Respectfully submitted, Lois Corwin, Recording Secretary



Puppet Festival (r)Evolution

Monday, August 05, 2013 4:00 PM - Saturday, August 10, 2013 11:00 PM (Eastern Time)

Swarthmore College

500 College Avenue

Swarthmore, Pennsylvania 19081

United States

Event Details

Questions? Contact Robert Smythe, the Festival Director: (267) 240-3679

Join hundreds of puppeteers at beautiful Swarthmore College for Puppet Festival (r)Evolution, the 2013 National Festival of the Puppeteers of America, for a full week of informative workshops, dynamic performances, and engaging community events.