



The official newsletter of
San Francisco Bay Area Puppeteers' Guild
Looking for updates and missed information?
Check for it at SFBAPG.ORG

SFBAPG is a charter guild of the Puppeteers of America, Inc., a non-profit, tax exempt organization

September 2014



Those who attended the Day of Puppetry at Fairyland in August got a mini-festival of puppetry! More inside.

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Inside this issue...

- ◆ Fairyland Guild Meeting and shows in review
- ◆ National Puppet Slam and Dragon Con in Atlanta
- ◆ From your President
- ◆ Letters to the editor
- ◆ And more!

Looking for the guild calendar? Check out the guild website:
<http://www.sfbapg.org/events/calendar/>

Photos from the guild gathering at Day of Puppets at Oakland Fairyland thanks to Camilla Henneman and Lee Armstrong.

Guild meeting at Fairyland **Camilla Henneman**

The annual meeting at Fairyland was a magical evening in many ways. We arrived at the meeting as the park's daytime activities were winding down. The evening started with a brief introduction of everyone there. We welcomed new members, the Faun-Frykdahl family. It turns out that Nils Frykdahl's parents were members of our guild back in the 1970s. Several long time members remembered them. Olivia, our president, presided over the evening's events and kept us on schedule with the evening's packed agenda.

We then headed to the puppet stage for a wonderful new Fairyland puppet show, The Magic Teakettle. The Magic Teakettle is from an old Japanese fairy tale about a teakettle that is really an enchanted tanuki (a raccoon like animal) that comes to life when the kettle is put on the fire. The tanuki/teapot brings about joyful events and prosperity to the family that takes it into their home. The show was artfully performed by Randel Metz. The Magic Teakettle was not only entertaining, but quite beautiful with an authentic Japanese feeling. Annie Wong designed the puppets, props and scenery, and was scheduled to give a presentation later about her creative process. The music was particularly lovely and set the mood perfectly. The script and look of the play took much of its inspiration from a 1950s version of the play as it was created by Lettie Schubert with many humorous touches added to appeal to a



The Magic Tea Kettle was a featured performance.



“After dinner we headed back into the meeting room to see Annie Wong’s presentation on how she designed the puppets, props and scenery.”

contemporary audience.

After the show, there was a brief business meeting led by Olivia Huff. Mary Nagler gave us an entertaining and informative talk about the National Festival she attended with the help of a scholarship from our guild. Mary let us in on the secret that you might be able to pay for a lot of your incidentals if you create some puppets to sell at the market (the magic number to bring is 8). I felt a little wistful that I haven’t been to a festival since the last PuppetFest Midwest. I vowed to myself to get to the next National festival at the University of Connecticut next year.

We then headed to the party area for a catered dinner of spaghetti and green salad with garlic bread and a delicious cake for dessert. I ran around and delivered renewal notices. The general response was “Is it that time again?”

After dinner we headed back into the meeting room to see Annie Wong’s presentation on how she designed the puppets, props and scenery. Annie started with sketches and some Maquettes (scale models) of the characters. She told us that the scenery was inspired by Japanese woodblock prints, with some fun additions like a Hello Kitty. In the 1950s, Lettie Schubert had built puppets for her show which were donated to Fairyland after her passing. Annie based much of the style on Lettie’s puppets, using the same hair technique of cut and layered felt, but the final designs were very much Annie’s own. The heads were sculpted out of Styrofoam with a fabric covering. Annie passed the puppets and props around and we got to



inspect the different phases of the teapot/tanuki.

Many members stayed on for another puppet performance that was presented for children that were camping in the park. We had to leave before that, but it was a memorable evening. Thanks so much to Randel Metz and Fairyland for their generosity. Also thanks to Olivia for facilitating, to Lee Armstrong for bringing the library and lovely fur that Folkmanis generously donated. A big thanks to Tom and Beth for manning the information booth, to Annie and Mary for their presentations and the planning committee for putting it all together. We headed back to Santa Cruz for a restful night, as other friends headed back to their homes in the Sonoma area. I hear they did not have as restful a night and were awakened to some serious shaking in the wee hours, but they will have to fill you in on that.

Until the next time, Cheers!

Thank You to our Folkmanis Friends

Folkmanis Puppets in Emeryville has been making the most innovative and engaging specialty puppets in the world since 1976, delighting imaginations and winning nearly every industry, child development, and kid-tested award - many repeatedly. They have also been a great supporter of the puppet community. It is our good fortune that they are located in the Bay Area. Many can remember their generous gift of puppets to all that attended our 50th Guild Gala party. This generosity was repeated at the Guild meeting at Fairyland this month, where Folkmanis donated yards and yards of fur fabrics. The table was piled with interesting and unusual furs and puppeteers went home with plenty of material to build puppets with. We hope to see many new creations with the Folkmanis fur give-away. Thank you Folkmanis!



Folkmanis fur, a boon to guild puppet makers, below.



Letter to the Editor Dept. -thanks to Ronna Leon for tip on Lotte Reiniger shadow puppet memorabilia

In the July, 2014 SFBAPG Newsletter, guild member Ronna Leon had an article and photo about discovering crank music boxes decorated with Lotte Reiniger's silhouette art, at Cliff's Variety Store in SF. Lotte is the wonderful woman who created the world's first full length animated film, taking 3 years to do so in the early-mid 1920's. The film was done in silhouette form, animating each of the 24 frames per second in the entire film! (Most animators of today do less animation than this per frame.)

She also performed shadow theater, especially of fairy tales. During "Cinderella" she would recruit a child in the audience to crank a small plain music box (set on a table or chair seat for amplification) to provide music for the Ballroom scene. I had the honor to see her do this in Montreal in 1976.

I had fun telling the clerks at Cliffs Variety Store all about studying with Lotte and showing them her book as we rummaged through the music boxes so I could get one of each silhouette (3 designs) and of each music piece (all Mozart). The music boxes originate in Germany, her birth country. Thanks to Ronna for sharing this news, I never would have known about these collectors items without your help.

Elisheva

Events (highlights)-for an extensive calendar of events go to

www.sfbapg.org/events/calendar/

PUPPET RUCKUS! A Family-friendly, Short-form Puppet Variety Show. Featured Guest: Tony Borders. Sat, October 18 12pm, (doors open at 11:30) General Admission: \$7 Bring your own chair for \$2 discount! Kids 4 and under are FREE! Put on by Infinite Potential Academy, 2301 Longport Court, Elk Grove, Ca www.facebook.com/PuppetRuckus

Puppeteers new and old - JOIN US!! Entries due 10/1/2014. Email eo@ElizabethanDesign.com for more info.



Images from Lotte Reiniger's silent shadow puppet film, Cinderella.

Puppet Travels, National Puppet Slam and Dragon Con in Atlanta

Michael Nelson

In Atlanta over the Labor Day Weekend we attended two events of the puppet world, the National Puppet Slam and the puppet track at Dragon Con. A puppet slam is usually an evening performance of short puppetry pieces for adults performed by a variety of puppet artists. Thanks in part to the Puppet Slam Network, these events are taking place in cities across the country. The National Puppet Slam is an annual event where puppet slam acts must be nominated and then juried, and if selected, the participants then perform at the National Puppet Slam which is held at the Puppeteers of America National Puppetry Festival every two years and on alternate years it is held at the Center for Puppetry Arts in Atlanta. This year there were three sold out performances in a 340 seat house in the main theater at the CPA. There were 10 acts, ranging in length from 3 to 10 minutes, and highlighting a variety of styles, techniques and subject matter. Several of the performers were from the University of Connecticut MFA in Puppetry program and performed pieces they had developed as class projects. Another act came out of the Puppetry program at the O'Neil Center. One shadow puppet piece on the overhead projector was done with all of the puppets and sets mounted on a translucent shower curtain screen that was moved around and manipulated to show the figures and created such scenery as ocean waves, etc. In another act three women mounted 5 foot tall preying mantises on their bodies and danced while singing a hilarious song about their propensity to consume their dates after sex.

On the same weekend in Atlanta was Dragon Con, a huge exposition where 60000 sci-fi, fantasy and pop culture fans gather to attend all kinds of things. One of these things is a puppetry track that runs the whole weekend, with performances and workshops, improvs, slams, and lots of puppet enthusiasm. Workshops ranged from "So you want to be a puppeteer" to "Marionettes 101," filming miniatures, Puppet Films (to to make them) and more. The puppet track was very well attended, and the late night puppetry at Dragon Con is so popular that hundreds had to be turned away.

Photos to right, from top: the Mantis sisters dance act, Marionettes 101 (working with scarf marionettes), and bottom, a marvelous marionette hand that crawled and danced across the stage.





Above, Moon Gas, the Magnificent Milo, Superstition and the Joshua show were 4 of the acts from the National Puppet Slam.



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