



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

November 2015



The next guild meeting will be in Vallejo

on the afternoon of November 14 starting at 2:00pm with a workshop on creating and shaping a short puppet skit. The workshop will go until 5:00 when we will break for our guild meeting and dinner. Adults wishing to stay for the evening Cabaret can then relax until the doors open at 7:00 for the public. The Hub in Vallejo is a community arts center with gallery, café, bar (in the evening) and performance space, all housed in an historical Oddfellows Hall. More info in the newsletter.

Also, your newsletter has a new email address:

newsletter@sfbapg.org and calendar listings should go to events@sfbapg.org

Inside this issue:

Next Guild Meeting, Shadow Puppet Retreat, Bread and Puppet Reviews, Puppeteer Heroes, what are Guild Members Up To and More!

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From your President

November for many working puppeteers marks the beginning of the holiday show season. I hope your elves, snowmen, and sugarplum fairies are all in top form and ready to bring joy to many! Before we dip deeply into the end of the year festivities, however, we have one last guild gathering for 2015, on Saturday, November 14, in Vallejo, with an afternoon workshop, meeting, and potluck, followed by an evening show of adult cabaret puppets. In the skills development department, your programming committee continues to provide an ongoing series of excellent workshops, with the most recent being a shadow puppet retreat in the redwoods (see Elisheva's write-up in this issue). The November meeting workshop will focus on shaping (writing, directing, creating) a short puppet skit or play. Next year promises to keep the information coming! Our next guild meeting will be our annual holiday party which we hold in January to make sure all you hard working and playing puppeteers can come (during the quiet January season). More on that to come! (from co-president Michael Nelson)

Nov Guild Meeting Features Fun Improv & Creative Slam Workshop

When: Sat., Nov 14 2-7pm **Where:** The Hub, 350 Georgia St Vallejo Ca

Do you have a short puppet piece (or start of a longer work) that you'd like to develop with a supportive group? Do you want to practice your puppetry in a fun and creative way? Solo performer and have an idea that needs more hands? This workshop is for you!

2pm Ideas for Short Puppet Acts – lead by Michael and Valerie Nelson of Magical Moonshine Theater and Lee Armstrong of Images In Motion. See what they have to share about developing a short piece and telling your story quickly and visually. Covering the basics of concept, beginning, middle, end, improvisation, team puppeteering, to creative approaches and more!

3ish Using the O'Neill Conference model, those participants who come to the meeting with an idea for a short piece will explain their concept and ask for volunteers. Other groups can form and develop their own concept. Groups will rehearse & at the end of the workshop, present their "work-in-progress."

Note:

- If you have an idea, try to bring as many puppets and props as you can. We won't be building.
- Everyone, please bring a puppet if you can. There will be puppets available too.
- There will be simple stages.
- Shadow puppeteers: There will be a shadow screen, overhead, etc. available to create a shadow puppet piece.
- Pieces rehearsed at this workshop can be presented at the evening Slam, if desired.
- Music: If you have an idea, please bring music, if needed.
OR the evening will feature a 3 piece "Gypsy-Jazz" band which could possibly provide background music for your slam piece.

5pmish Guild meeting followed by potluck supper. Please bring an appetizer, salad, main course or desert to share. Bring a beverage. There are restaurants and a new Grocery Outlet within 2-3 blocks of the Hub.

7pm End of Guild meeting, as doors open at Hub for The Puppet Slam!

For the Puppet Slam event, The Hub has a cafe with beer, wine, coffee and other drinks available, as well as snacks

Note: The Guild meeting (2-7pm) is free. The at-the-door price of the Forbidden Puppet Cabaret starting at 7pm is \$20.00. Guild members can get a \$10.00 discount ticket. To get your \$10.00 ticket, go to <http://forbiddenpuppet.bpt.me/> and at the bottom of the ticket prices, enter the discount code/password

“puppetguild”--the page should reload with the discount ticket price of \$10.00 now available. Please note that this is a co-op performance and the performers share the ticket income, so if you can afford a higher priced ticket, the extra funds go to support the artists.

Volunteering: If you wish to volunteer at the evening Puppet Slam event (help with box office, food, tech, craft table, etc.) please visit Signup Genius (provided by John Arnold) at <http://www.signupgenius.com/go/60b0b48a4a623a13-slam> or contact Lee Armstrong, images@vom.com, 707 738-5906.

Directions: If coming on Hwy 80 (from Sac or Berkeley) take the Georgia exit and head towards downtown Vallejo to 350 Georgia (The Hub.)

If coming from Sonoma/Napa take 37 or 12 to Hwy 29 South which becomes Sonoma Blvd. Going S. take a right on Georgia and proceed to 350 (The Hub.)

SPECIAL NOTE: Saturday is Farmers Market and Georgia St. in front of the Hub is closed until about 1:00 (maybe later...depends). If it is closed when you arrive you can take Virginia (the street to the N.) or York (the street to the S.) and there are free parking lots. The Hub is on the corner of Georgia and Marin, 1 block W of Hwy29/Sonoma Blvd. If Georgia is open there should be plenty of free st. parking.

Time to renew

If you haven't yet sent in your renewal form for 2015-16, please send it in now. We will be making up the 2015 directory soon. Don't get left out! You can go online to renew. Just click on the link <http://www.sfbapg.org/membership/join-or-renew-membership/>. Renew today! It's the best \$25. you will spend all year

Nick Barone Memorial Workshop

We are starting to plan the Nick Barone Memorial Workshop day! I will be next summer probably in July or August. If you would like to be a part of the planning, please contact me: Camilla Henneman, camhenneman@gmail.com <mailto:camhenneman@gmail.com>



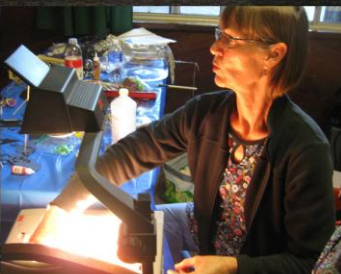
GUILD SHADOW PUPPET SLEEPOVER! Elisheva Hart

We met at beautiful Westminster Woods, near Occidental and Bodega Bay, on Sat/Sun October 10-11. The nectar-like air was definitely worth the trip and opened us to great creativity and inventiveness.

We were 19 in number! Many learned of this opportunity on Facebook as well as the mailing/word of mouth. Lex's Mum, Janice, came all the way from England! Our teacher, Camilla Henneman, was accompanied by 21 year old daughter Asili, whom we haven't seen at meetings in a decade. Both guests made beautiful creations. Everyone showed amazing creativity. The progress showed by people who had never made a shadow puppet before was awesome. Somehow being immersed together overnight made our dreams come true.

Cam's philosophy about teaching workshops is to show puppeteers her method...and then they show her where it can go! Mission accomplished, and one of the best results, as well as the art and creativeness, was the community and friendship building. It felt very friendly, like back in the day when our Guild was meeting regularly in members' homes. This feeling has been mentioned by many members on our polls. Overheard from one work table of 4 was a spontaneous invitation to meet soon in the

Shadow Retreat



Photos: Elisheva

speaker's home for their own mini-sleepover because it was so inspiring to work along side each other, even if they weren't working on the same project! The others were in agreement.

QUICK NOTES AND TIPS ON SHADOW PRESENTATIONS:

*Halloween, and just after during sales, is a great time to get lighting "toys" and sound effects. Christmas offers less opportunity, mostly lighting effects.

*When using the overhead projector (OHp) and it is placed so far from the screen that the light spills over at the sides, mask around the playing stage (the horizontal part where you lay puppets, scenery and effects) with a paper frame or strips of paper. Tape these down or OOPS!

*Get an OHp from a school, photographic shop, business, etc who might be discarding it. They were "hot" before power point. But useful to us! Check their closets or storage room. Ask on Craig's List or on neighborhood "sharing" email lists.

*DOLLAR STORES are treasure boxes of amazing cheap items for OHp as well as for other puppetry such as: army men, small plastic spiky balls, plastic spiders, bugs, 3-D skeletons, etc. (Imagine army men scaling the gothic castle you have cut out as scenery and placed on the OHp stage, only to be devoured by plastic lizards!) In fact \$ \$tores are the puppeteers' friends-up there with Velcro-as in "What did we ever do before__?"

*Manipulate your shadow figure directly on the OHp stage and it will become LARGE and against your shadow screen and it will be crisp and small ("actual" size).

*Backdrops for OHp can be photo copied as a transparency or traced with a sharpee onto clear plastic, such as the above mentioned gothic castle, and touched up with paint. Try a sample first, many paints, fabrics, etc with color only are seen as grey or black when projected.

*Light shows for concerts were birthed in the mid 60's in our very own bay area! Wet show effects (a big part of most light shows) are easy and spectacular with the OHp. Use a clear glass pyrex pie pan. Put in water

and add drops of mineral oil for great action. Ditto drops of rubbing alcohol. Color is added with drops of drawing ink. Food coloring is paler. Pyrex imprinted on the pan can be covered with strategically placed cut scenery underneath it, or by dropping a rock into the water to cover it.

SCREEN. Cam's large screen is supported by a pvc frame and covered with a white shower curtain from....\$ \$tore!

SLIDE PROJECTORS: also way out of style. Ask older family photographers, nose around thrift shops. For the *best* slide projector (SLp), Cam suggests we find the Kodak Ektagraphic Slide Projector on Craig's List as they are family owned. Then buy a Bahl wide angle lens (2") to replace the original one. Find this lens on ebay where they are available from camera collectors.

*An amazing and mysterious "disappearing zone" can be created with a V of gaffers (duct) tape on the floor. (The point of the V begins at the midpoint of the screen. The two "arms" each go towards one of the 2 slide projectors, which are side by side, but several feet apart.) The projectors are aimed so their beams slightly overlap at the screen. People (one or more), puppets, and mini-parades can stand within the V and disappear totally or just with isolated parts showing. Crazy fun!

All the participants were great at sharing tips with each other as we worked.

Terry Ryder, looking at a projection of an Asian shadow monkey, revealed that an easy way to make the many decorative holes is to put the basic monkey/whatever on a pad of foam core and use an ice pick to pierce the figure. She also showed us an extremely simple shadow screen she used in school workshops constructed of a sheet of "frosted" plexiglass (or a clear one lined with white paper); angle irons for support which tape or clamp onto a table; and a battery operated camp lantern (shaped like an old kerosene lantern) which gives a soft even light with NO hot spots (glare through the screen into audience eyes) AND does not need electrical outlets so it can be used anywhere and has no cord to trip over! The puppets perform on this screen in an upright position against it.

Thanks so much to LEX RUDD for finding this great spot. Yes, let's return to Westminster Woods again: Home of clear air, yummy food including a late night snack of hot chocolate just for us!, comfy beds, a heated outdoor pool-we didn't sign up for it this time-a big work room with nearby restrooms-all great stuff, although the Girls' Choir also on retreat, probably won't be there to sing to us at each meal.

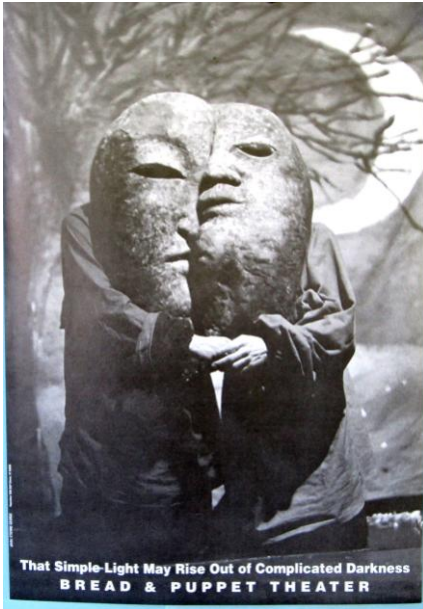
FOLLOW UP ON WET SHOWS. Back in the early hippy days the perfect glass to use instead of a pyrex pie pan was a clock crystal-which come in 2 sizes-one nests within the other. Water, mineral oil, etc is sandwiched in between the 2 crystals (actually glass) and squished around, throbbing to music, rotated, etc. Plastic may have been substituted by now, but it might scratch???and perhaps the heat from the OHp would be too intense for long term use of plastic.DOES ANYONE HAVE ANY EXPERIENCE WITH PLASTIC? Please share, thanks.

I found my Edmond Scientific Co. 1969 Handbook on doing light shows. Alas, they are no longer in business and so are not a source of clock crystals. By the way, these are the clear protectors over clock hands. While searching the internet for an alternative source, I found a very interesting site which might be of interest to you. It is <http://www.joshualightshow.com>

The first thing I looked at is a written page (under Joshua Light Show 1967-68) which has an interesting description of their origins at Fillmore E (NYC). They achieved almost equal billing with many famous musicians like The Who, Janice Joplin, and Chuck Berry. Their light show was projected onto a screen from behind the bands. AND lo! they are still performing-complete with Joshua himself. They

were at SF's Exploratorium in 2014! This concert can be seen the above website under Exploratorium - 2014. It is full length and includes tantalizing glimpses backstage of various techniques, some of which we met at our Shadow Sleepover, and some new ones. Very elaborate and very inspirational. Groovy, Dudes! Kick back, Look there or be Square!

BREAD & PUPPET THEATER'S "FIRE" a review by Elisheva Hart



Bread & Puppet Theater toured Santa Cruz and the Bay Area for a week early in October, with such offerings as performances of "Fire", a B & P Book Fair, Fiddle Talks, and a Parade. The October issue of our Guild Newsletter contains a synopsis of their history. This theater group was started in 1963 by Peter Schumann in New York City.

B & P has been labeled "in-your-face" street theater, although "Fire" is too lengthy-in my opinion- to be in this category. A reviewer from Time Magazine, T.E.Kalem, wrote in 1971, "This virtual dumb show [the puppets don't speak] is as contemporary as tomorrow's bombing raid." No indication of which show he was reviewing, however it was written during the Vietnam era so it could be applied to many, if not all, of them.

On Oct. 7, 2015, this decades old group- with a new crop of performers- presented "Fire" in the Sebastopol Grange. It was created in 1965, inspired by the self-immolation of 3 Vietnam war protesters. Last month's performance was dedicated to the current US participation in the struggles in Yemen.

A side wall in the Grange was decorated with "'Cheap Art"-cloth banners which the group had printed. They were for sale after the performance along with Peter Schumann's many pamphlets on his radical beliefs about puppetry and its components. The packed audience included half a dozen young kids, who amazingly kept silent during the long, basically static, performance.

The performance was traditionally framed between 2 offerings of bread which the troupe itself had baked-one offering served "communion style" and passed from hand to hand down each row-the other was upon exiting, from a table by the art sales. The servers during "communion" wore long black hooded tunics with a neutral expressioned realistic white face mask, who introduced the excruciatingly slow pace and the "dress code" for most of the performers.

"Fire" was done in silence except some sound effects. During the first 3/4th of the performance, these consisted only of a hand cranked Noise Machine (my designation) which sounded sort of like of a giant bamboo wind chime and had a hammer on top to signal the beginning of the next cycle. There was also a flat lute-like stringed instrument, and a bell which signified the ending of a cycle. No mikes or other amplification was used. At the last part of the play, all hell broke loose in the sound area (an electric saw, crashing rocks and/or crockery, etc.) which kept



getting louder and louder-intensified by the contrast of the first hour of almost silence.

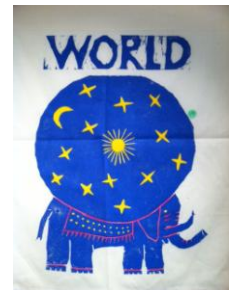


This play was of a 7-day war. At the beginning of each cycle, a sign was placed on a stand signifying Monday-Sunday. Alas, the sign was too close to the floor. Visually the big problem for the audience was that during the climax of the show the crucial performing could not be seen! They need a platform to perform on. Luckily, sitting in the 3rd row I was able to pop up and down to see bits of the action.

This production is a great example of physical simplicity and economy of materials, plus portability-one which can be performed in many different venues. The light was just a bulb enclosed in a clamp-on large metal bell, similar to something clamped on to a raised car hood. The stage was basically a plain, unbleached muslin curtain with panels of black fabric out to each side. They were hung from bamboo poles. The curtain was concealing a "black box" playing area behind it, which was also made with long black curtains. In this area were presented 8-12 performers clad in black with neutral white masks. They were frozen in a tableau each time the curtain was pulled aside. For instance on "Monday", the villagers were in friendly poses with their neighbors. The "front-woman" (who played the Noise Machine, lute, etc. and tugged open and close the curtain) gave a cup to one; slowly it was passed around the group and shared with each other.

"Wednesday's" tableau began offering violence which signified a build up of sound and stress in the "daily" poses until "Sunday" brought in a "Tough Guy" in a fedora with his henchmen, representing powerful forces who took over. Locals collapse, tremendous cacophony resounds, a fence is "built" around the protesting martyr-all dressed in white-and she is "burned" alive (conveyed by her covering herself with strips of red tape.) "Tough Guy" peers at her, closes the curtain and turns off the light. End of show.

Did I "like" the play? Not relevant. It's not Facebook. I feel B & P's intention is to PROVOKE us into thinking/gut reactions, whatever. Paradoxically, when it was over-despite the chaos and cacophony of war-at the end of the play I felt a clarity of mind just like at the end of a long meditation. This probably was a result of all the silence and of the slowed down pace, both of which required my focus to stay involved. If I had seen "Fire" in 1965, when I was living in the 'burbs with 2 very young children, I would not have had this reaction...'just' meditation? Relaxation? What are these?

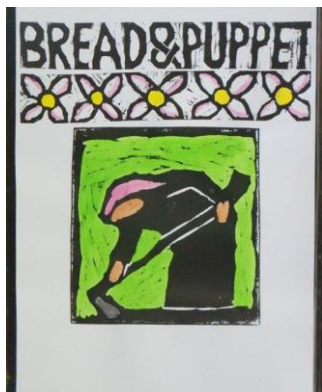


Whether or not traditional Japanese Noh Theater influenced B & P Theater, I found a great deal of similarity in their performance styles. Noh is one of the world's oldest continuous theater forms. Scripts are available from the 14th century. It comes from ancient, esoteric temple rituals. Performers wear masks and are simply storytellers using their movements to suggest the essence of their tale, rather than to enact it. The plots are very well known to the audience. It has been said of this technique that the total effect is closer to a simile or metaphor made visual, than of any action being portrayed. (Medieval records show that in the past puppets were used in some Noh plays!)

Also I find a great "flavor" of Zen in the B & P tableaux. Just like when a Koan is presented to a Zen student to puzzle over and examine its paradoxes [the Koans we commonly hear of in the US are: What is the sound of one hand clapping? and If a tree falls in the forest and there is no one to hear it, does it make noise?], often the Zen master kicks the inattentive student to wake her up, which is very similar to the abrupt invasion of the intense war noises into our first peaceful tableaux in "Fire".

A clue as to why does the B & P Theater perform dumb shows? In a B & P pamphlet, "The Radicality of the Puppet Theater", which Peter Schumann wrote 1990: "The puppets need silence, and their silences are an outspoken part of their language." Talk about a Paradox!

One definition of this paradox could be "conflict of truths" -that is conflicts of viewpoints- a phrase Betty Reid Soskin used to describe her experience of Richmond, Ca. as an African-American woman during the WWII war experience vs one expressed by a white woman in the same place at the same time. (See the short piece about her in this issue.)



And From Mary Nagler

Recently, I got the opportunity to attend a Bread and Puppet performance at the Sebastopol Grange. I almost did not get in! Quite a large crowd had gathered, but at the last minute I got a seat toward center in the third row. Traditionally, they start each show, I learned, with breaking bread and sharing it with the whole audience in Noh style; in very sloooooow motion. It took a full half hour for the white masked, draped in black figures, to disperse bread to all present. Anticipation built up during the long process. You could have heard a pin drop.

The performance was a series of tableaux involving a number of figures, as described above. The scenes were all in black and white. It was difficult to see as the show should have been raised. Only the first row could get the full view. Much of the symbology was lost on me, as I struggled to work out the relationship between the scenes, which followed the days of the week. It was war times, and as the whole piece moved veryveryvery slowly along, I found myself wishing it would all be over, soon; like war. In that way it was very effective!

I did find it interesting that when there were many people on stage, some were actually simple structures dressed and masked to look like people, and manipulated by a few of the performers. There was a found object musical instrument, (pictured here) that a lone figure "played" using it to change the scenes and simulate war sounds. The music was discordant, the crashing sound effects deafening and when it was over I felt a sense of relief. The person sitting to my right muttered that she thought the whole thing "a waste of time, pretentious and boring." The chap on my left was sincerely moved to tears. I realized I was the middle man, who gave it more respect than the one and was less moved than the other. I am glad I went. It was not what I expected. A long piece by Bread and Puppet performed at the National festival left me much the same at the end. But I find myself still mentally mulling over possible meanings, symbols and visual effects, so perhaps they succeeded in making me think!



Elisheva passes on A message from Betty Reid Soskin

94 year old African-American National Park Ranger [the oldest in the system] who is sharper than a box full of tacks.

In my pantheon of Civil Rights Heroes are Jim Henson and Fred Rogers who taught kids such things as, "it's not easy being green" , and, "one of these things doesn't belong with the others---and it doesn't matter anyhow!" Now this Sesame Street Generation of kids is all grown up and in places of influence.

She was a 20 year old secretary in Richmond, Ca. during WWII, doing her part for the war effort. Betty now is in Community Outreach at the 'Rosie the Riveter/WWII Home Front National Historical Park' on the bay in Richmond -right where ships were being build and launched.

A friend and I were visiting the museum (we both have "Rosies" in our family tree) and saw a short film there on the Richmond experience during the early 40's, with an awesome talk by Betty about her experiences during this time and afterwards. Two of our heroes are also two of hers! Elisheva

What Are Our Members Up To?

From Thierry Fill



The Puppets' Connection of America ® (P.C.A.), was created in 2012 to champion the idea of our parents, 6th Sense 'Pa & 'Ma, to have us, Hear, See, Smell, Touch and Taste perform together our series of shows called 'The Kid's First Real Show' © (T.K.F.R.S.) in a home-like brand new theater to be built and located in

America, and more specifically San Francisco, CA.

The new theater residency was to be deliberately (and conveniently) T-shaped and referred to as the T-heater, all in relation to its use of green power technology, the T standing obviously for theater, but also for the nickname of the human who had been put in charge of the whole project, Thierry Fill.

<https://www.facebook.com/thepuppetsconnectionofamerica> Hope you'll enjoy my (puppets) satirical work enough yourself for it to give you a few smiles, knowing other members will too in that case...

From Glynn Bartlett AKA Tree



I'd like to share a bit of news with SFBAPG community. I'm a recent member of the guild so many of you may not know me. I have a very exciting trip coming up where I'm going to get to do some amazing things with puppets and learn from some pretty incredible puppeteers. I've been invited to be a part of the creative team for the Barrydale festival and celebration that takes place yearly on the national South African holiday of Reconciliation. This will be an amazing opportunity for me to experience how puppets and theater can be used to bring together two communities that have been historically separated by the oppressive forces of

apartheid. My journey will start on November 20 and take me to London where I'll have a short layover to see "War Horse" and the V&A museum and anything else I can reasonably fit into a two day layover. Then I'm off to South Africa where I will help build puppets for a week in puppet studios in Cape Town. Then off to Barrydale for the set up of the event the following two weeks. I am currently helping to design puppets via email and Skype meetings.

Once I arrive in South Africa I will be thrown into an intensely creative time of puppet building and helping to erect a bit of set along with folks from Handspring Foundation as well as working with Ukwanda designs who develop puppets and shows from a black South African perspective. When I return I would like to find a time where I could do a presentation and talk, to share stories and pictures with guild members who have an interest. In the meantime I plan to continue to share and write about my experiences as my adventure is unfolding while I'm away on my personal puppet blog. You can find me on

tumblr. Search for glynntree . For those of you who are interested I also have a puppetry website where you can view my creations and personal passion for puppetry. I've posted pictures of my puppets as well as a bit of my mission and philosophy around them. The web address is: papilionpuppetry.net

From Randal Metz

On November 21 & 22, Randal Metz, Fred C. Riley III & Rhonda Godwin, will once more be working with The San Francisco Chamber Orchestra. The concerts will be free to all, and under the direction of Benjamin Simon. This year's youth concert will be a retelling of Tchaikovsky's "Nutcracker" ballet.

The three free concerts will feature the puppets of Randal Metz and Lewis Mahlmann. Both of these puppeteers have done performances of the Nutcracker before. This version will use puppets from Randal's version as well as from Children's Fairyland's "The Nutcracker Prince." Fred Riley will be making some unusual scarf puppets to fill out the cast.

While the orchestra plays live on stage, Rhonda Godwin will narrate as her "Snow Queen" marionette entrances the small ones. The show will have such marvels as a fire breathing Chinese dragon, trick marionettes, and lots of dancing candies and snowflakes. There will also be a battle between the Mouse King and the Nutcracker's toys!

Because the Chamber Orchestra is a small group of musicians, not all the ballet music can be performed. It is usually presented by a symphony orchestra. Many pieces of the ballet use more instruments than a chamber orchestra has on stage. So part of this challenge was to tell the Nutcracker tale to the pieces of music that can be played by a limited number of musicians.

Also on stage will be a short presentation by the Young Partners in Performance Group, a collection of youth future classical musicians.

The three free concerts can be heard at the following locations:

November 21: 2:00 - 3:00, Noe Valley Ministry, 1021 Sanchez St., San Francisco, CA 94114

November 22: 12:00 - 1:00, Oakland Asian Cultural Center, 388 9th St. (Suite 290),
Oakland, CA 94607

3:30 - 4:30, College of San Mateo Theatre, 1700 W. Hillsdale Blvd., Bldg. 3,
San Mateo, CA 94402

Come and enjoy a free afternoon of music and puppetry for the whole family!



Pictured:
Randal Metz, Fred Riley III & Rhonda Godwin when they performed "History of a Soldier" last year with The San Francisco Chamber Orchestra.

Little Clara is in awe as her toy nutcracker changes into a large Nutcracker Prince.

Out of room! For this month's calendar listings please visit: <http://www.sfbapg.org/events/calendar/>

Send your Calendar listings to events@sfbapg.org