

	<p>The official newsletter of San Francisco Bay Area Puppeteers' Guild Looking for updates and missed information? Check for it at SFBAPG.ORG</p> <p><i>SFBAGP is a charter guild of the Puppeteers of America, Inc., a non-profit tax exempt organization</i></p>
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December newsletter



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Above, a picture of Joseph and Mary's Flight into Egypt from Wayang Wahyu from Central Java, shared by Kathy Foley as part of her article on Larry Reed, (**UC-Davis Wayang**, below) in this newsletter.

January Holiday Zoom Party

Happy holidays to you all! Traditionally, many puppeteers are busy during the Christmas season, so our post-December holiday gathering is mid-January. This year, we are taking the extra safe choice of a zoom-based gathering, to which you can invite friends from other physical locations...all over the world!

January Holiday Zoom Party

Sunday January 23, 5pm-6:30 (PST)

This year, we will have a greeting from our President Santa, a fun zoom-specific game that we all can participate in, and a lineup of outstanding short video works of puppet artists, including our guest artist Myra Su from Chicago, and from some of our talented **Guild** puppeteers, such as PuppetArt and Magical Moonshine theaters!



Special Guest Artist: Myra Su

Myra Su is a storyteller, puppeteer, and puppet maker based in Chicago. Her primary medium is shadow puppetry but her work also includes



experimentations with video, crankies, and other paper-based media. Most recently, she was a recipient of a Handmade Puppet Dreams 2020 Quarantine Film Micro-Commission grant. Her short puppet film, GOODNIGHT SHADOW, debuted in February 2021 and was made under lockdown conditions. She is currently teaching puppetry workshops online as well as designing puppets for an upcoming music video. In addition to her independent work, she is a touring performer with

Manual Cinema, with performances worldwide. She is also a co-curator for a quarterly puppet slam, "Nasty, Brutish & Short."

Open Submission

Join the fun! Do you have a short (up to 5 min.) original video work that you are interested in sharing at our zoom event? If so, please contact programming@sfbapg.org. Slots are available on a first-come basis.

We are taking the safer zoom choice for this holiday event, but are hoping to have an in-person ~~holiday~~ spring party, as our celebration of reunion.

MEETING KAMELA PORTUGES

by Elisheva Hart (Ed. Note: If you missed the sad news of Kamela's passing, please see last month's newsletter

<https://sfbapg.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/November-2021-Newsletter.pdf>)

The first encounter Kamela and I had was in the late 1980's at an outdoor San Francisco Bay Area Puppeteers' Guild meeting, held at the almost new Coddington Mall in Santa Rosa.

Suddenly Kam burst out of a crowd of many puppeteers and streaked directly to me. And asked, "Will you vote for me?" I looked at her and said, "No. I don't know who you are!"

Her answer was, "Wait 5 minutes and then you will know all about me" and disappeared.

(The above part is absolutely accurate.)

{While we are waiting "5 minutes", here is some information about the Guild at that time, which may be accurate!}

*Originally SFBAPG met once a month on a Friday night. * but no meetings during summer (vacation time for puppeteers.) * Hence our "year" began in September.

*we officially began our first chartered Guild meeting. at Children's Fairy Land.

*Hopeful wantabe officers (President, Secretary, etc.) directly campaigned for the exact position that they wanted.....back in those days.....}

5 minutes later, Kamela and her puppetry partner, Lee Armstrong, brought out an over the head hand puppet stage and performed something I had never seen done before, nor since:

>a brilliant commercial<

with Lee's News-Anchor Puppet interviewing and promoting Kamela's Puppet-Candidate for her Guild office of choice! What a terrific "hook" to use the puppets and staging to show us what she could do with puppetry! YES, we voters agreed that she totally deserved our votes She won by a landslide!

" A Rootie -Toot-Tooie!" blasts from Mr. Punch, "THAT'S THE WAY TO DO IT!" -----Thank you so much Kamela for sharing your wonderful self with us. "Bon Voyage".

UC-Davis Wayang

By Kathy Foley

On November 19 at UC Davis Larry Reed and ShadowLight Productions did a version of Arjuna's Meditation at UC Davis as part of a Conference funded by the Luce Foundation on rethinking the history of Indonesian music to which I was invited by Henry Spiller (a Music Professor at UC Davis who regularly has played in my wayang performances). It was wonderful to be in a live performance, outside in the warmish November air. Fred Riley III did a masterly job of



keeping the coconut oil flame lamp going as Reed did the story of how the *Mahabharata* hero (Arjuna) does a meditation and shows himself the equal of the god, resisting the attractions of heavenly goddesses sent to test him and facing the demon turned pig, Momosumoko, Then with the help of the goddess Supraba, Arjuna kills the demon Nirwakatawaca who has been attacking heaven.

Watching the story brought back memories of my first encounter with Balinese wayang when I studied this story with I Nyoman Sumandhi at the Center for World Music in 1974 at the Julia Morgan Center in Berkeley. Through the support of Sam and Luise Scripps an array of Balinese, Javanese, Indian, Korean artists taught during 1974-1975 at the institution and those lucky enough to have been around were exposed to amazing music, dance, and puppetry by master teachers. Larry was not a member of the class in 1974. He was at that time already in Bali studying with our teacher Sumandhi's father. But it was fun to see a lakon that was my first introduction to wayang done all these years later by Larry, who has been a force in both traditional style Balinese wayang and innovative shadow casting nationally and internationally. His shadow looms large in the field and has had Impact on many of us. His generosity in teaching his style has resulted in training for many puppeteers around the globe.

The next day, Nov. 20, the conference included a presentation by Pak Sumarsam, a central Java style dalang, as well as myself. Sumarsam shared some of his current research on how Hindu-Buddhist traces continue to exist in some contemporary court genres in Java. My presentation noted the borrowing of traditional Javanese style wayang by Jesuit priests in the 1960s to create wayang wahyu which tells Bible stories in Central Javanese wayang style. Blacius Subono, a teacher at the Indonesian Institute of the Arts (ISI) in Solo has been important for creating music specific to *wayang wahyu* and keeping the form alive. He is a dalang of wayang kulit purwa but has also trained and performs in the Christian wayang style. Performers

have been a mix of Catholics and Muslims over the years.



It was fun to see Larry Reed and his gifted musicians of gender wayang music present a Balinese performance with a real flame (fire marshal's concerns make this hard to find in indoors

presentations in the Bay area). Scholars of Indonesian arts in the Bay who attended the event joined with scholars who had traveled from Canada, Europe, and the east

coast. The event was face to face and made one hope that covid would subside and we might all feel more comfortable about meeting in person soon.

Kathy Foley, President UNIMA-USA



Gamelan instruments traditionally accompany Indonesian puppet performances. The dalang or puppeteer, will often “conduct” the gamelan orchestra using a wood turned “round” held between the big and second toe, tapping on a part of the stage to change the tempo of the music.

Giant Puppets in Vallejo, December 10, Volunteers?

**VALLEJO CAPITOL STREET STAIRS
GRAND RE-OPENING!
FRIDAY, DEC. 10 @ 4 PM**

- Official ribbon cutting by the City of Vallejo
- Parade with Obtainium Works Art Cars, Las Catrinas of Solano AIDS Coalition, and Vallejo Giant Puppets!
- Exhibit at Vallejo Naval & Historical Museum at 734 Marin Street

**From Blight to Beauty,
One Step at a Time**

Celebrate with us!

Stairs @ Capitol Street & Sonoma Blvd., Vallejo
VALLEJO CAPITOL STAIRS MOSAIC PROJECT

Have you wanted to try out giant puppets with a “lite” commitment? Two of the large puppets from the Vallejo Giant Puppet Project will attend the opening of the new Capital St. Staircase in Vallejo on December 10, at around 4pm. They (the puppets) will hang around a bit and interact with participants, and possibly walk a bit. Interested parties should contact Michael and Valerie Nelson at newsletter@sfbapg.org -

I believe that the puppet interiors have been filled, but some hand work is unfilled at this point. Thanks! --In the image above, the giant puppets are the couple in the upper right hand corner.

Puppetry Lost a Friend

By Michael Nelson

Did you know that if you fill a gap in your puppet head/body with baking soda, and then add a drop or two of Zap super-glue, it will instantly create a rock hard, gap filling bond that is sandable and paintable? I learned this from Kamela Portuges, and I suspect that many of us have little bits of puppet building lore and knowledge that she shared with us over the years. Kamela was a dedicated and brilliant puppet builder and was always delighted to share her hard gained knowledge with anyone that needed to know.

The first big project that we worked with Kamela on was our full stage adult production, Orpheus Ascending (about 3 decades ago). It featured puppets ranging from 6 inches tall to 10 feet tall, with a cast of 10 plus a musician. Kamela and Mike Wick worked together with me to create the puppets, masks, and transformative sets for the production. When



showtime loomed near, we roped Kamela into performing as well since the other performers (besides Valerie and me, pictured with Kamela, above) were the Greek chorus, not puppeteers. As was Kamela's way throughout the time I knew her, she poured her self, and her creativity into the project, working hours that even I thought were too long. One of her favorite stories she would tell about that production was about our son, Benjie, about 7 at the time, who rigged the chair she was sitting in to work with some kind of bungee cord booby trap. She was so engrossed in her work that she did not notice but when she stood, the chair shot out from under her. She was delighted.

Kamela was a huge supporter of our work over the decades, and filmed many of our live shows, offering commentary and praise that always made us feel appreciated and loved. We loved her devoted friendship, and were proud to follow her career and her many accomplishments. We will miss her.

Send future newsletter items to newsletter@sfbapg.org