

# **SOUTH AFRICAN PUPPETRY FOR THE THEATRE SINCE 1975**

by

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‘I hereby declare that the dissertation submitted for the degree M Tech: Performing Arts Technology, at Tshwane University of Technology, is my own original work and has not previously been submitted to any other University or Technikon; all quotes are indicated and acknowledged in a comprehensive list of references’.

Zuanda Badenhorst

## **ABSTRACT**

Puppetry as an art form has existed in this country since the 1800s. It has been particularly over the last thirty years that the genre has come to the fore, not only as a form of entertainment, but also as an educational tool.

The introduction of television in South Africa in 1975 opened up a new avenue for puppeteers. Puppetry for television has however been excluded from this study as its vast scope makes it a subject for a separate research project.

The objectives were to establish a database of puppeteers and puppet companies; to make the results of the research available on a website to be managed and updated by UNIMA, South Africa; to organize an exhibition of puppets by as many professional puppeteers as possible; and to publish a booklet entitled 'The puppet book'.

The methodology used covered an account of puppetry and puppeteers in alphabetical and chronological order. An empirical research method was followed. This involved participatory research through interviews, as well as attendance at and observations of performances and exhibitions. The texts consulted for research included newspaper articles and reviews, newsletters and magazine articles from various archives, scrapbooks kept by puppeteers, correspondence with puppeteers and programmes of productions and performances.

Information on the background and performances of forty-one individual puppeteers, thirty-nine companies and four tertiary institutions was gathered. Of the individual puppeteers, twenty-nine are still functioning, albeit not all on a full-time basis.

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## **GLOSSARY**

**Anthroposophists** – Anthroposophy is a system of mystical philosophy developed by Rudolf Steiner, who claimed to possess a power of intuition giving him access to knowledge not attainable by scientific means (Webster's, 1992:50).

**Bambara-style** – Bambara Puppets: Bambara puppets originate from Mali, Africa. The most common puppet form in Mali is the use of rod-puppets and the puppeteers themselves inherit their art from generation to generation, especially along the Niger River where several ethnic traditions have blended, for instance Bambara with Sarakholé (Rubin, 2001:188)

**Blacklight theatre style** – For blacklight theatre the stage and puppeteers are dressed in black and ultra violet or fluorescent lights are used to show up the puppets that are painted in ultra violet colours. Also known as black theatre and according to Philpott (1969:32), it is a type of production using selective-lighting technique long known in live theatres especially in 'magic'. Puppets are lit from the stage wings or from above and below and objects appear to float in space.

**CAPAB** - Cape Performing Arts Board.

**Cone Puppets** – Puppets attached to a stick and the costume to the wide part of the cone to make the puppet disappear. It is a concept often used in Rudolf Steiner schools.



**Eurhythmics** – The art or system of rhythmic movement expounded by E. Jacques-Dalcroze (Chambers, 1986: 434).

**Glove puppet** (American fist or hand) – According to Philpott (1969:95):

“So-called because the performer’s hand is inside cloth body of the puppet, with fingers divided between puppet neck and arms, hand is inserted through open bottom end of the body, which is attached to the puppet neck. Head usually hollow or partly so, controlled by one or more fingers inserted in neck, thumb and other fingers in arms. Legs are occasionally added, as with Punch and the German Kasper, which may be stuffed and used only when puppet sitting on playbord.”

**Flyer** – A separately published document used for marketing purposes – usually only one page.

**Hand puppet** – A term mainly used in the United States, which is the equivalent of the English glove puppet.

**Hand-rod puppets** – These puppets are a combination of hand and rod puppets.

The puppeteer’s hand might fit into a glove in order to use the hand expressively or it might fit into the soft movable mouth of the puppet. This is combined with a rod either attached to the head, body or arms and is operated from below stage with some variation of technique. Also refer to muppet-type puppets.

**Masquerades** – an assembly of persons wearing masks (Chambers, 1986: 773).

Although there are differences, there is a close relationship with the puppet, which has been called 'the complete mask'. The mask is a form of disguise which has been traced to the most primitive times – but its precise function varies, the purely theatrical being the final development. It has survived in festivals such as the Mardi Gras carnival. Whether the actor uses a mask or a puppet, there is a temporary identification with the character represented (Philpott, 1969:152).

**Muppet-type puppets** – Puppet made from soft material and or foam with wide, movable mouths manipulated by the puppeteers' hand. The puppets were made famous by Jim Henson's Muppet films.

**NAPAC** - Natal Performing Arts Council.

**PACOFs** - Performing Arts Council of the Free State.

**PACT** - Performing Arts Council Transvaal.

**Paper theatre** – A performance presented in a miniature theatre reminiscent of Victorian play / toy theatres. Cut-out paper or cardboard figurines of characters and of scenery are set in ends of horizontal wire controls or fixed to narrow wooden sliders, to be moved on tracks according to the script.

**Papier-mâché** – A craft technique that involves building up layer upon layer of pasted paper which is then baked or left to harden (Webster's, 1992:849). It can also be made in pulp form or bought as *mallo-do* from art suppliers.

**Pelham Puppets** – Commercially produced puppets. The company producing these puppets was founded as 'Wonkey Toys Ltd' in 1947, but in 1948 it was renamed Pelham Puppets Limited by its founder, Bob Pelham. The company was located in Marlborough, U K. and closed in 1993 (Pelham Puppets Online, S.a.:1-10). They were the first string puppets designed for children and available in toy shops (Philpott, 1969: 181).

**Sicilian marionettes** – One of the few surviving forms of folk-puppetry. The type of puppet, apart from the difference in size (up to two-thirds life size and extremely heavy), and its method of control (a strong iron head rod operated from above stage) is reflected in the little articulated figurines found in ancient tombs and ruins. Most of the puppets have elaborate armour and the plays are related to the struggles between Christianity and Islam. The body is of wood with a padded chest; the action of the legs is stiff and depends on the handling of the whole figure rather than on leg strings (there are none); the knight's sword is bolted to the hand and controlled by an iron rod, the arm with the shield being moved by a cord (Philpott, 1969: 237).

**UNIMA** – *Union Internationale de le Marionette*. An international puppetry organization founded in 1929, and re-constituted in 1957. South Africa is a member of UNIMA.

**Welfare State International** - Welfare State International, founded in 1968 was born out of the cultural and political ferment of Britain in the late 1960s. In the eighties it achieved international acclaim for its joyous blend of visual spectacle, popular theatre and, celebration. Its resources remain what they have been almost from the beginning – sculpture (using, as well as more conventional materials, elements such as ice or fire), puppetry, landscape, food, fireworks, music, technology, dance, performance and weather (Coult & Kershaw, 1983:1).

Feasting and eating form an intrinsic part of the Welfare State International's performance events, which involve the group participating in making noise instruments, searching for lost treasures and the revival of the ritual coming-of-age festivals (Joubert, 2002).

“Time is a big element in Welfare State International's work; the ‘best’ way of making something often means the quickest. Working quickly you often find that the simplest solutions to problems are the most effective, and it prompts you to work for a big strong image instead of a collection of details” (Coult & Kershaw, 1983:69).

# CHAPTER 1

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 INTRODUCTION

Puppetry as an art form has existed in this country since the 1800s. In the early years the main aim of puppet performances was entertainment, and more specifically, children's entertainment. Initially productions were staged mainly by overseas puppeteers and companies, such as the Theatre Royal from Paris, France (1837), W F H Parker (1837 and 1848), Henry Penn (1863), an unknown professional marionette group (1870), Lambert d' Arc with his *Marionetten Troupe of Fantoques Francaises* (1889), an Italian puppet theatre group (1902) and a group of German puppeteers, after World War 1 (Schwenke, 1984:11, 12).

It was only in the 1930s and 1940s that, according to Schwenke (1984:15-18), an indigenous puppetry tradition took hold. Pioneers such as Estelle van der Merwe during the 1930s, and John Wright, Frieda Ollemans, Marion Beach and the Transvaal Interchange Teachers' Association started with productions during the 1940s.

While most of these early puppeteers were amateurs, often performing in aid of charities, semi-professional and professional companies emerged from the 1960s

onward. Schwenke names (1984:23-25), *Teatro dei Piccoli* founded by Keith Anderson (1961), the Royal Puppet Company founded by Gary Friedman (1972), and the Handspring Puppet Company founded by Adrian Köhler, Basil Jones, Jon Weinberg and Jill Joubert (1981).

Puppeteers and companies from overseas continued to visit the country and had an influence on and made a contribution to puppetry in South Africa. Among these were: Bob Bromley (1951-1952), Hogarth Puppets (1954), John Wright's Marionettes (1955 and 1957), Jozef Contrijn (1964), Marionetten von Salzburg (1968, 1970 and 1973), Norman Shetler (1972), Eric's Puppet Company (1981), and Ian and Friends (1983) (Schwenke, 1984:62-77).

The introduction of television in this country in 1975 broadened the scope for puppeteers, many of whom created puppet productions especially for television. Television characters such as *Levinia Heks* from the *Liewe Heksie* series; *Flippie Fosfor* and characters from the *Vuurhoutjeland* series; *Haas Das* the newsreader and *Piet Muis*; *Sarel Seemonster*, *Karel Kraai* and *Bennie Boekwurm* from the *Wielie Walie* programme; *Mannie* the chameleon and *Ulula Uil* from *Nuustak*; were some of the noteworthy ones.

The increasing number of programmes featuring puppets (both locally made and from overseas) stimulated an interest in and an awareness of the genre, while also leading to an increase in puppet productions for the theatre. In addition, the late 20<sup>th</sup>

century also saw a move towards puppetry as an educational tool, particularly outside the formal school set-up, as well as productions aimed specifically at adults. Jan van der Paauw and Jenny Kirsch (Schwenke, 1984:61) started using puppet theatre as an educational medium before the 1980s. After 1980 Estelle Bryer with Andries and the Grey Witch (1983-1989); AREPP: Educational Trust with Puppets Against Aids and Puppets Against Abuse (1988-1994); and Gary Friedman and Nyanga Tshabalala with Puppets in Prison (1996-1997) came to the fore.

The Handspring Puppet Company is perhaps the company best known for its puppet productions aimed at adult audiences. Productions include Episodes of an Easter Rising, Woyzeck on the Highveld (1992), the opera Il Rittorno d'Ullise (1998-1999) and Tall Horse (2004).

Other puppeteers and companies such as Gary Friedman with Puns and Doedie (Puppets Against Apartheid) (1983-1987), The Creation (1986), and The Losh 'n Horror Show (1997); Margaret Auerbach with an Untitled lesbian feminist show (1984-1985), A House is not a Home (1985) and Mightier than the Sword (1994); The Little Marionette Company with Hoopstraat (1991); the Remix Theatre Company with The Fable of the Mermaid and the Drunks (2002); and the company PHDT with The Alchemist's Heart (2003), also performed shows for adult puppet theatre.

## 1.2 ACTUALITY OF STUDY

The history of puppetry in South Africa was documented in a summary review for a BA Honours study entitled *Die Geskiedenis van Poppeteater in Suid-Afrika 1800 – 1984* (Schwenke, 1984). The study included both amateur and professional Puppet Theatre and, while providing a useful background, many new developments have since taken place, necessitating an updated study.

Puppetry has become an increasingly popular art form over the last thirty years as is evident in the founding of companies such as Spellbound Puppets (1973); the Little Marionette Company (1975); Royal Puppet Company (1977); Sunshine Kids Puppetry Ministry (1977); AREPP Educational Trust (1987); Handspring Puppet Company (1981); PACOFS marionette company (1979-1981 and 1985-1992); Toby's Puppet and Prop Shop (1990); Maltitz Marionettes (1992); Rainbow Puppet Theatre (1992); The Playhouse Puppet Company (1995-1998); The Puppet People (1991-1998); Johannesburg Puppet Company (2000); *Petrus Produksies* (2001), to name but a few.

Formal courses in puppetry were introduced at tertiary institutions, notably the Drama departments of the University of Stellenbosch and the Tshwane University of Technology (formerly Technikon Pretoria), as well as the department of Entertainment Technology at Tshwane University of Technology.



In order to cater for the growing interest in the genre, a more comprehensive study became a necessity.

### **1.3 AIM AND OBJECTIVES**

The aim of this study was to review puppetry for the theatre in South Africa since 1975.

The objectives were:

1. to establish a databank of professional puppeteers, puppet companies and performances for the use of students, scholars, as well as those practitioners in the industry, interested in this field of study;
2. to, after completion of the thesis, make the research available on a website which will be managed and updated by UNIMA, South Africa;
3. to organize an exhibition by as many professional puppeteers as possible and to publish a booklet entitled 'The puppet book', sponsored by ABSA bank.

### **1.4 FIELD OF RESEARCH**

#### **1.4.1 Scope of study**

The focus of this study is semi-professional and professional puppet theatre for the stage since 1975. The terms semi-professional and professional implies making a living or earning an income from a career as performer and / or creative artist or

technician or having a longterm involvement with and commitment to puppet theatre.

Puppetry for television is excluded as the scope would become too wide - preliminary research has shown that puppetry for television entails a study on its own. Where necessary, however, for historical background, reference will be made to work done for television, as many puppeteers for the stage have also branched into television.

Amateur puppet theatre (where performances are primarily done as a hobby or for no monetary reward) will be excluded, because performances are often presented irregularly and only scant formal or reliable information is available which would make inclusion difficult.

#### **1.4.2 Demarcation**

Although the aim of the study is to review puppetry for theatre in South Africa since 1975, there will be brief references to the background of the puppeteers and puppet companies before 1975, where it is deemed necessary to complete the background record. Productions and performances up to 2004 will be discussed, to give an indication of the developments in this country over the past thirty years.

### **1.4.3 Terminology**

For the purpose of this study, the term “for the theatre” is used in its broadest form and includes performances inside a theatre building or other permanent buildings, performances outdoors or in a puppet booth. By implication these are live puppetry shows in front of an audience.

The term “puppetry” refers to a branch of dramatic art which uses specially created figures as characters and whose actions are controlled by human actors by various technical means. It includes all the various types of puppets such as hand puppets, rod puppets, hand-rod puppets, glove puppets, string puppets or marionettes and shadow puppets.

## **1.5 RESEARCH PROCEDURE**

The research requirements for the Magister Technologiae: Performing Arts Technology in the Department of Entertainment Technology (Tshwane University of Technology) entails a prescribed theoretical thesis with the option of, but not necessarily, a practical component.

#### **1.5.1.1 Non-empirical (normative) data sources**

Non-empirical data sources include archival and documentary sources. These included texts (Munro, 2004:13), encompassing newsletters, newspaper and magazine articles and reviews, electronic articles, programmes of performances and scrapbooks kept by individual puppeteers and archives used in order to establish a historical background and record of activities by puppeteers and puppet companies.

#### **1.5.1.2 Empirical (Reactive)**

As this type of research “is used to describe the study of things as they currently exist in the real world” (Goddard & Melville, 2001:11), this approach, based on interviews and personal observations was followed.

An empirical approach based on self-reporting and observation was followed. Self-reporting (Mouton, 2001:99) comprised face-to-face interviews, telephone interviews, mail and electronic interviews with puppetry practitioners. Observation included attending of performances and exhibitions.

## **1.6 RESEARCH PROBLEMS**

Due to the ephemeral and informal nature of the genre many puppeteers do not keep factual records of their performances and therefore they often have to rely on (often sketchy) recollection. Where possible verification of information was done using newspaper and magazine articles and reviews. These in themselves, while providing an important source of information, often proved to be biased and incomplete, omitting, almost as a general rule, reference to the construction of the puppets. In addition scant information in reviews and articles made it impossible to verify or establish many actual dates and venues.

The study is as comprehensive as possible, taking into account the above mentioned-problems and the fact that a number of puppeteers failed to respond to numerous requests for additional and personal information.

## **1.7 CHAPTERS**

Chapter 2 contains the results of the research in the form of a databank in alphabetical and chronological order.

Chapter 3 contains a conclusion and observations.

## **1.8 SUBMISSION**

### **1.8.1 Technical care**

The layout and technical details of this presentation have been executed in accordance with guidelines laid down in *Guidelines for the preparation of dissertations and theses* (Marais, Lourens and Albertse, 2002).

### **1.8.2 Stylistic explanation**

- An asterisk denotes words and terms recorded in the glossary.
- Italics denote the use of Afrikaans or other foreign languages, as well as puppet characters.
- A bold font indicates puppeteers and puppet companies.
- Titles of productions are underlined.
- Attention was paid to cross-referencing, in the most uncluttered and uncomplicated manner possible, thereby not interrupting the “flow” of the manuscript. As far as possible page numbers were included in the reference to make the study more user friendly.

### **1.8.3 References**

#### **1.8.3.1 Bibliography**

The bibliography contains all works consulted and cited in the study, as well as personal interviews and conversations. These are set out in alphabetical order using the Harvard method according to *Citation guide* (Lotter, 2002). However, as unconventional sources were often consulted, the researcher had to use her own discretion regarding the strict application of the Harvard method.

#### **1.8.3.2 Personal observations**

These refer to personal observations of puppetry performances and exhibitions, set out in order of reference in the text. These are indicated in bold and in brackets.

## **CHAPTER 2**

### **PUPPETEERS AND PUPPET COMPANIES – ALPHABETHICAL DOCUMENTATION**

#### **2.1      ANDERSON, KEITH (also refer to CAPAB)**

##### **2.1.1    Background**

Keith Osler Anderson was born on 23 October 1937 in Cape Town. He staged his first Punch and Judy shows at seaside resorts from the age of about eight. He collected money by passing a hat around and with the money, bought a second-hand 9,5mm cine-projector and formed a film company (Anderson, 2003).

In 1949, at the age of twelve, Anderson made 8mm puppet movies, which he sold to a local businessman. The income from the film ventures enabled him to buy several Pelham puppets\*, which were commercially manufactured in the United Kingdom and had become available in South Africa. During school holidays, Anderson toured the country, presenting a two-hour programme of puppet plays, variety comic 'opera' and a puppet circus. In 1950 Anderson established the Pelham Puppet Club. At this time Anderson also developed an interest in the circus, which led to a life-long involvement in various capacities for Ringling Brothers and Barnum and Bailey Circus (Anderson, 2003).



When in 1953 a company called Hogarth Puppets from the United Kingdom toured South Africa, Anderson worked for them during school holidays. In 1955 the British puppeteer, John Wright, toured South Africa with his marionettes and Anderson joined the company on its national theatre tour. He received an award for puppetry from the *Cape Argus* newspaper during this year. In 1956 at the age of nineteen, Anderson was appointed as stage director for the National Theatre (South Africa). Apart from acting he also designed for the theatre (Anderson, 2003).

From 1958 to 1959 Anderson was appointed as resident stage director at The Repertory Theatre (later renamed the Alexander Theatre) in Johannesburg. During 1958 he studied Stage Design in Johannesburg under Roy Cooke. Since then he has designed décor and costumes for numerous theatre productions such as opera, ballet, musicals, extravaganzas, ice shows and puppet theatre. His design work became known internationally when he left South Africa in 1986 to work for Ringling Brothers, and Barnum and Bailey Circus in the United States of America. After leaving the circuses, he designed various ice shows, musicals, theatre productions and television productions in the United States and in South Africa.

In 1959 Anderson used puppets for mission work in Johannesburg and in 1960 did a national tour of all YMCAs (Young Mens Christian Association), performing with his puppets. In 1961 Anderson established the *Teatro dei Piccoli* in Margate, Natal (currently Kwa-Zulu Natal) which became the home for some 500 puppets, made of wood, plastic wood, rubber or fibreglass and performed a variety of works from Shakespeare to musical revues. Amongst others the following well-known stories were

also performed: Jack and the Beanstalk, Aladdin, Cinderella, Sleeping Beauty, Pinocchio.

When not playing in Margate, the group of four artists toured the country until 1963 when the company joined Toor Cosmopolitan Circus, that toured the Indian Ocean Islands as Keith Anderson's International T.V. Puppets and Wonderettes. Keith Anderson's International T.V. Puppets and Wonderettes was done with ± 1 meter high fibre-glass marionettes / cabaret puppets (puppets manipulated on short strings, with the puppeteer in view).

After the tour, Anderson returned to South Africa in 1963 and joined the University of Cape Town as resident designer and manager of the theatrical workshop of the Little Theatre, where he remained until 1967. He also worked as a freelance designer for CAPAB\*, NAPAC\*, PACT\*, PACOFS\*, Brain Brooke, Brickhill-Burke, African Consolidated Theatres, 20<sup>th</sup> Century Fox and MGM. During this time, he designed the Hi-De-Hi puppet shows, which included a full variety programme with music, dancers and comedy. Among the short works presented were the Dance Macabre, a Puppet Ballet, a traditional Apaché Dance and a Minstrel Black and White Rag.

Keith Anderson's Marionettes, which existed only from 1964 to 1967, was managed and performed by puppeteer Margaret Heale and her husband, Tim Heale. Anderson designed and was responsible for all the puppet shows and also directed some of the shows. Shows performed were: Pinocchio at The Little Theatre, Cape Town, which afterwards toured the (then) Cape Province; Sleeping Beauty at the Hofmeyer

Theatre, CAPAB in Cape Town and The Little Mermaid at the Labia Theatre, Cape Town (Anderson, 2003).

Between 1967 and 1990 Anderson was involved with various circuses locally and abroad as a trapeze artist, performance director, producer and production designer. He was only occasionally involved with puppetry; yet in 1975 he founded The South African Puppet Company. After touring on and off for about a year, Anderson incorporated the puppet company into the Circus School (Anderson, 2003).

Anderson's ultimate ambition was to use puppets as a medium for entertainment. At first he used the Pelham Puppets, but after working with Hogarth and Wright, he discarded the Pelham Puppets in favour of his own marionettes, which were  $\pm 33\text{cm}$  in height. He used latex for faces, hands and all other exposed body parts. He experimented endlessly with mass-produced jointed bodies which would be changed using only costume and facial features.

In 1978 at the Circus Osler in Cape Town, Anderson made a new set of Wonderettes puppets. As a base, he used the large boy puppet sold by Bob Pelham at the time, which had rubber arms and legs. As he was then also a clown in the circus, he turned one of Pelham's puppets into a character of his own clown personality and sent Pelham photographs of the characters he had created. Pelham reproduced the clown characters commercially. The mayor of Monte Carlo bought the original puppet as a present for Princess Grace (Anderson, 2003).

In 1985, Anderson retired from the circus and published two books – “The Amazing Story of Nicholas James” and “Once upon a Circus”. “The Amazing Story of Nicholas James” translated into Afrikaans as “*n Tent Vol Sterre*”, was published in 1990.

In 1990 Anderson returned to South Africa after world tours with Ringling Brothers and Barnum and Bailey Circus and accepted the position of resident designer at the CAPAB Opera House in Cape Town. He found the puppets he had designed in 1975 for The Little Mermaid being used as props to dress a setting for an opera. The puppets were retrieved and refurbished before he founded the CAPAB Puppet Company consisting of six puppeteers, headed at the time by Tony Fletcher. Anderson, as well as designing and writing some of the scripts, manipulated the puppets. The company produced various puppet shows until 1997. In 2003 Anderson was responsible for the art direction of the spectacular performance at the opening ceremony of the Cricket World Cup in Cape Town and later he toured with the production, iStongmani.

### **2.1.2 Productions and performances**

1975

According to Anderson(2003), he and film director, Ashley Lazarus, pooled their money in 1975 to commission puppeteer Toby van Eck to build puppets for The Little Mermaid / Die Kleine Meermin to establish the South African Puppet Company (*Die Nasionale Poppeteater van Suid-Afrika*). They employed six puppeteers, who undertook a tour of the then Cape Province with a show, Poppeplesier / The Little

Mermaid. Poppeplesier consisted of a puppet variety show before interval, with The Little Mermaid following after interval as the main feature. Characters appearing in Poppeplesier were *Tickey*, the puppet and *Mr. Punch* who introduced the audience to the puppets. *Tickey's* adventures with a number of characters formed part of the performance. The Little Mermaid was adapted for puppets from the Hans Christian Andersen fairy tale. The story is about a *Little Mermaid* who falls in love with a *Prince* when she saves him from drowning. The action took place underwater in and around the *Sea King's* castle, in a palace on shore and on board a ship. Well-known voices were used for the puppet characters, for example:

- *Sea Witch* – Miems de Bruin
- *Grandmother* – Dulsie van den Berg
- *Queen* – Hermien Dommissie
- *Little Mermaid* – Elsabe Moolman
- *King* – Riaan Cruywagen,
- *Prince* – Johan de Kock

Although the production mainly made use of marionettes, other types of puppets were also included, such as shadow puppets, Bunraku-type puppets, synchronized rod puppets and black theatre technique.

The production took six months to prepare, with Anderson designing the sets, puppets and costumes. Toby van Eck, who made the puppets and costumes, worked

as the puppet master. Bob Pelham also worked on some puppets. Anderson worked with the scriptwriter, Johan Visser, on the story and Afrikaans dialogue.

All lighting special effects and sound equipment were built into the stage in order to reduce the number of staff required. The stage could be struck and loaded onto a pantechnicon in an hour, ready to leave for the next venue. Ballet mistress, Pamela Grimes, who had previously worked with John Wright, directed the production. The company toured on and off for about a year after which Anderson incorporated the puppet company into the Circus School.

1978

CAPAB asked Anderson to perform The Little Mermaid / Die Kleine Meermin for them. As he was due to return to Europe with a trapeze troupe he could not oblige, but lent his stage and puppets to CAPAB. No reference to any CAPAB puppet performances could, however, be found.

1990

Refer to background and **2.7.2:66**.

1992

Anderson wrote the script and designed the sets, puppets and costumes for Nomhle and Ngcuka (refer to **2.7.2:69**).

1993

Anderson designed the set, puppets and costumes for Chewele and the Giant for CAPAB (refer to **2.7.2:71**).

1994

Anderson designed sets and puppets for Pikkie, staged by the CAPAB Puppet Company (refer to **2.7.2:71**). He was also responsible for the design of The Dragon Lady (refer to **2.7.2:71**).

1995

Anderson designed the sets and puppets for the opera The Magic Flute, as well as for an ethnic opera, Child of the Moon, (refer to **2.7.2:71**).

1996

iStrongmani - was a marionette production designed by Anderson for the CAPAB Puppet Company. The show consisted largely of trick puppets and Anderson based his designs on information derived from the book *Puppet Circus* by Peter Fraser (Anderson, 2003; refer to **2.7.2:72**).

2001 – 2003

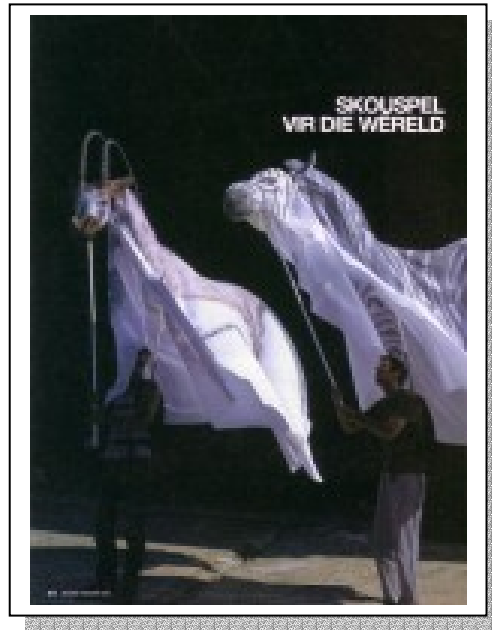
Anderson designed and directed an extravaganza for the Opening Ceremony of the Cricket World Cup, which took place on 8 February 2003 at Newlands Stadium, Cape Town. The whole project, which took two years to plan, was executed with Anderson's larger-than-life animal rod puppets.

A herd of hundred life-size *Zebra*-rod puppets that galloped around a waterhole, as well as sixteen different types of animal puppets, were seen. All these puppets formed part of the opening scene of the extravaganza. The Big Five in other words, *Elephant, Buffalo, Lion, Rhinoceros* and *Giraffe*, walked in on stilts, followed by *Sable Antelope, Baboons* and *Guinea Fowls*. The puppets were made from fibreglass, textiles and papier-mâché. The project was done in conjunction with the company Ceremonies for Africa, of which Penny Jones was the producer and creative director, Mark West the television director, Mathews Mokome the co-producer and Anderson the artistic director (Toffoli, 2003: 26). Toffoli gave the following description:

“Sommige van sy marionette is lewensgetrou; ander pure spektakel. Die koppe van die reuse sebras en sabelbokke beweeg apart – en verstommend realisties – op lang stokke wat gemanipuleer word deur die hande van die marionet meesters wat binne-in rondspring. Die fraai seeslang het weliswaar vyf mense in sy romp en lyk soos iets wat van ‘n Chinese straatfees ontsnap het, terwyl die opblaas-seekat van goed 18m lank en die leeu in sy Karibiese kostuum pure vermaaklike Disney is” ( 2003: 26).

[Some of his marionettes are true to life; others pure spectacle... The heads of the giant zebras and sable move separately - and are unbelievably realistic – manipulated from the inside on long rods by the marionette masters. The beautiful sea snake has five people in its body and looks like something that had escaped from a Chinese street festival while the blow-up octopus of ± 18 metres in length, and the lion in its Caribbean costume is pure Disney entertainment - my translation].





**Fig. 2.1.** Giant-size rod puppets for the Opening Ceremony of the Cricket World Cup 2003. Photo: Ronnie Levitan.

iStongmani (1996) - was again performed in March and toured the Western and Eastern Cape.

2004

No puppet productions were performed.

## **2.2 AREPP (THE AFRICAN RESEARCH AND EDUCATIONAL PUPPETRY PROGRAMME) EDUCATIONAL TRUST (1987 – 2002)**

**arepp: Theatre for Life (2003 - )**

[Generally referred to as **arepp**].

### **2.2.1 Background**

AREPP (The African Research and Educational Puppetry Programme) Educational Trust was a non-governmental edutainment theatre organization founded in 1987 by Gary Friedman as a community based Trust. The aim was to research indigenous forms of puppet and mask theatre in Southern Africa (Friedman, 2002a: 2). An additional aim was to use theatre and puppetry to provide alternative, supplementary social education. The focus and work of AREPP involved social education, life skills and self-efficacy. Various international donor agencies donated funds to support the organization.

Since 2002 the organization has maintained the name **arepp** (the legal trust name), but the acronym then stood for African Repertory Educational Performance Programme. The organization later became known as **arepp** Educational Trust. In the middle of 2003 the name was changed from the **arepp** Educational Trust to **arepp: Theatre for Life** (Schutz, 2004:1).

Gary Friedman left **arepp** in 1995 and Brigid Schutz, who had joined the company in 1993 as a puppeteer, has been one of three executive producers since 2002. The other two producers are Anette Brokensha and Gordon Bilbrough.

The company has also worked in Namibia, Botswana, Tanzania, Lesotho, Kenya, Zimbabwe, Zambia, Switzerland, United Kingdom, Canada and Reunion, teaching the use of puppetry as an educational tool to nurses, teachers, healthcare workers and community performers. Since 2002 the three executive producers, a bookkeeper, an administrator, and three project managers have been employed by the Trust. Performers for five teams (four per team) have been appointed on one-year contracts. Two additional teams of puppeteers, depending on the specific shows, have been appointed on short contracts. **Arepp** has offices in Johannesburg and Cape Town (Schutz, 2002).

“All of AREPP’s life-skills programmes are in line and supported by the Department of Education, Health and Social Services. AREPP also provides follow up support to the schools and are well linked with other NGOs (Non-Governmental Organisations) and Welfare organisations such as Childline” (Donald, 2003b:2).

“Each of the AREPP shows is lively, theatrical and very energetic, and specifically designed to appeal to the targeted age group. The shows incorporate the current music, the sayings and the ‘attitude’ of that age group, and speak to the audience with their own voice, telling their own stories, in their home language” (Schutz, 2003:1).

The intent is to address the broader issues of sexuality, relationships and gender, while at the same time stressing the ideas of a positive self-image, self-worth and, above all, the right to choose. According to Schutz (2003:1), the shows encourage

self-knowledge and self-awareness, and contextualize and simplify issues by putting them into the social contexts of the audience. The shows further impart the skills necessary to handle life situations, the knowledge to identify them, and the means to seek support and assistance to handle them. The aim is to leave the audience with the skills, information and confidence to make their own choices. “The emphasis on high quality theatre and puppetry, on character driven scripts and on the entertainment value of our work, is different from classic message-laden educational theatre” (Schutz, 2004: 1).

Over the years, **arepp** has, according to Schutz (2005) conducted workshops such as:

- Puppets for Peace, Puppets Against Abuse, was held in Lenasia, Gauteng from 17 – 29 January 1994. During this year, the newly appointed workshop coordinators, Brigid Schutz and Nyanga Tshabalala, facilitated the workshops (Friedman & Schutz, 1994: n.p.).
- Puppets Against Aids - toured Kenya with performances and workshops to establish local performance groups throughout Kenya in 1994 and 1995 (Friedman, 2002a:3). The workshop coordinator was Schutz, while Friedman, Schutz and Tshabalala conducted the workshops. From this workshop the Nairobi based CHAPS (a Community Health organization) and the FPPA (Family Planning Association) that are still operating, developed (Schutz, 2005).

- In 1995 the JEP (Joint Enrichment Project) workshop, a NGO, was established. This was done to enrich unemployed children with the help of puppetry projects.
- Another workshop during this year was the ACC (Africa Cultural Centre) workshop, which was conducted with children in Johannesburg. It culminated in The Children's Creativity Pageant with giant puppets in the streets of Newtown. **Arepp** also assisted Kenyan puppeteers who visited South Africa in a puppetboothmaking workshop.
- During 1996 a workshop was presented for the Umati Family Planning Association in Tanzania, teaching the use of puppetry to councilors. Schutz and Brokenshaw taught the use of rod and glove puppets.
- Schutz and Bilbrough taught a Puppetry in Education course for Ishashalaza Drama School at the Windybrow Theatre, Johannesburg for two terms in 1996. It was presented to third year students as part of the Trinity College of London syllabus.
- In 1996 teachers were trained at Lehurute, Zeerust in the use of various styles of puppetry in teaching. They were taught the use of shadow, sock and hand puppets and simple techniques to liven up their classrooms.

- During 1997 a workshop on General Puppetry was held for DRAMAid at the branch in Grahamstown. The aim was to learn different ways and to add to the participant's performance skills for high school and adult audiences. Schutz conducted the training.
- The Use of Puppetry in Education was presented at primary schools in Scotland and at the Scottish Mask and Puppet Centre while on tour in the United Kingdom in 1997.
- In 1997 a workshop on General Puppetry was conducted at the Grahamstown Children's Festival. Schutz, Brokenshaw and Bilbrough taught the construction and use of shadow, finger and string puppets as well as puppets from junk materials.
- A Puppetry in Health Education workshop was presented at Nigel Correctional Services on the East Rand during 1997. Schutz and Bilbrough were assisted by Brenda Shafir, who trained the inmates on the use of shadow puppets. The aim was to teach the message of the transfer of HIV/Aids.
- In 1998 a follow-up of the Tanzanian project to train trainers in the use of puppetry were conducted by Schutz and Gerhardt Bester.

- In July 1999 workshops for primary and high school children was conducted at SYDS (Soweto Youth Drama Society). These holiday projects were Fun Puppets for the primary school children and Puppets in Peer Education for the high school children.
- Puppets in Peer Education was presented at The Attic in Port Elizabeth for the Aids Training Informing and Counselling Centre. The workshop was for high school children and organized by the municipality's Department of Health.
- During 2000 an inhouse workshop for **arepp** staff was presented by Schutz on string, glove, mouth and shadow puppets, regarding the design, making, characterization and performance of the puppets (Schutz, 2005).
- In 2001 a workshop for high school children, The Use of Puppetry in Peer Education on Health Issues, was presented in Tanzania. It was conducted for the HPDF (Hanang Participatory Development Fund) and sponsored by CIDA (Canadian International Development Agency). Schutz, Mpela and Stephan van Niekerk trained the puppeteers.
- The HPDF project continued and during 2002 and 2003 Schutz and Van Niekerk visited rural schools in Tanzania to check on the project in the field and to to teach additional skills.

## 2.2.2 Productions and performances

1988

Friedman produced Puppets Against Aids, which was directed and also performed by him for the next 5 years. This was **arepp**'s first long-term educational programme, which was prompted, by the discovery that Aids was not being taken seriously by either the governments or people in the Southern African region. The official launch took place on "World Aids Day", 1 December 1988, when the puppeteers took to the streets of Johannesburg with their giant grey puppets (Friedman, 2002a:3). Friedman used huge carnival heads on human actors, which gave a caricature effect. The audience was immediately captivated by the initial fun aspect of the puppets, which later made it easier for the puppets to get their message across (UNIMA\*, 1990b:1).

"Encased in a complicated harness which provides a backdrop of scenery yet covers his head and body with a curtain, Gary and his two colleagues present the amazing show with stylish flair. Using a whole range of puppets with distinctive voices they tell a realistic and often humorous story..." (Paton, 1992:1).

1989

Puppets Against Aids - Friedman toured South Africa with the show assisted by puppeteer, Nyanga Tshabalala.



1990

Puppets Against Aids - Friedman and Tshabalala toured Southern Africa with performances and also presented a paper at the ANC (African National Congress) HIV/Aids Conference in Zambia (Friedman, 2002a:3).

1991

Puppets Against Aids - **arepp** toured with the show in South Africa and Zimbabwe where Friedman produced a documentary film Puppets Against Aids in Zimbabwe. Friedman also put on the show at the 9<sup>th</sup> International Puppet Theatre Festival in Charleville-Mezières, France (Friedman, 2002a:3).

1992

Puppets Against Aids - **arepp** toured Namibia for a month, visiting all the major towns and villages. **Arepp** also toured Canada for three months with Puppets Against Aids, focusing mainly on rural indigenous communities from Newfoundland to the Eastern Arctic regions. This tour was co-ordinated by Oxfam, Canada. At the end of November, the show was performed at the Waterfront, Cape Town (Friedman, 2002a: 3).

1993

Puppets Against Aids - was performed at the International Aids Conference in Berlin, Germany. Friedman also developed new Aids education programmes in Botswana (Friedman, 2002a:3). According to Schutz (2005) other community puppetry programmes, which taught puppetry as a tool to educate, were developed by

Friedman, Schutz, Gordon Bilbrough, Candy Mahomi and Tsepo Matladi. They served as puppetmakers and puppeteers.

The film Puppets Against Aids – Township of Tundra, made in Canada, was previewed in Johannesburg on 28 February and was shown in Cape Town on 7 March. Friedman lectured and performed Puppets Against Aids in Perth during the week of 24 to 31 March at the first National Aboriginal Community Disease Control Conference (McKimmie, 1993: n.p).

1994

Puppets Against Abuse - was a community theatre-based project developed by Friedman for **arepp**. It dealt with domestic violence, rape and related issues in the South African community. Later this developed into a production called Our Street. The show was developed by Friedman, while Schutz and Tshabalala trained the puppeteers. Bilbrough wrote the script and made the puppets with the help of Anton Burgraaf (Schutz, 2005).

Puppets Against Aids - toured Kenya with performances and workshops were run to establish local performance groups throughout Kenya in 1994 and 1995 (Friedman, 2002a:3). The puppeteers were Tonny Nene and Florence Masebe (Schutz, 2005).

To Run a Little Faster - was a show written by scriptwriter Gordon Bilbrough. Schutz and Nene did the initial training of the puppeteers. **Arepp** set up an independent NGO in Namibia called PAAN (Puppets Against Aids Namibia) and gave them the

rights to perform this HIV/Aids awareness production under their artistic supervision from 1994-1997. The puppets were designed and made by Lynton Richards who had studied at Technikon Pretoria.

1995

Playing For Keeps - dealt with HIV/Aids. It was performed as part of the International Puppet Theatre Festival and Education and Therapy conference at the Civic Theatre in Johannesburg. Schutz made the puppets and the puppeteers were Yana Sakelaris, Mark Sykes, Mosoeu Ktele and Gcina Mkhize. The show was a combination of actors, shadow and rod puppets and it was also performed at the Grahamstown National Arts Festival during July (Schutz, 2005).

Puppets Against Aids – was again performed at the Grahamstown National Arts Festival during July.

1996

No new shows were developed during this year.

1997

According to an **arepp** general press release (1997: n. p.) the adult-focused programme, Check Your Mate dealt with HIV/Aids and rape. The show used the direct interactive format of a game show, and mixed it with puppetry. Check Your Mate toured throughout South Africa, performing to audiences of 500+ per

show, between 10 and 15 times a week, in the local languages relevant to each community.

Look Before You Leap - was a puppet show, based on the 1994 production that dealt with sexual awareness and the issue of HIV/Aids. A combination of rod and body puppets were used, which were designed by Lynn Leventhorp. One mouth puppet designed and made by Lynton Richards, was used in this show for high school children.

Playing For Keeps - was a puppet show developed in 1995, that was aimed at children between the ages of eleven and fourteen, and it focused on life skills and self-empowerment, while informing pre-sexually active children about HIV/Aids. The show was a combination of drama and puppetry.

No Monkey Business - taught six to ten-year-old schoolchildren to respect and care for their bodies, to understand the term disease and assisted them with how to 'say no' and how to recognize 'stranger danger'.

The above-mentioned three shows were presented at various schools, but specific locations and dates were not mentioned (arepp, 1997: n.p.). According to Schutz (2005) three shows a day were presented in Gauteng during term time for up to 200 children.

No Monkey Business – Secrets Strangers and Surprises – the show from the series toured Scotland and London where performances, informal talks and lectures were presented on the use of puppetry in education. It was sponsored by Christian Aid and was performed at primary schools. The puppeteers were Schutz, Brokenshaw and Louis Bolton (Schutz, 2005).

1998

No new shows were developed. **Arepp** continued performing and touring the country with:

No Monkey Bussiness, Playing for Keeps, Look Before You Leep and Check Your Mate (Schutz, 2005).

Check Your Mate - was performed at the 12<sup>th</sup> World Aids Conference in Geneva during June. The puppeteers were Schutz, Vusi Mpela and Smoky Culyao (Schutz, 2005). A skills building workshop on the use of puppetry in HIV/Aids prevention formed part of their contribution (Schutz, 2005).

Untitled - **arepp** took part in the Puppet Festival on the Square during July at Sandton Square in Johannesburg, organized by the Eastern Metropolitan Council.

Untitled – **arepp** taught children from Alexandra township near Johannesburg to make puppets from found materials and presented various performances (Schutz, 2005).

According to Schutz (2005), **arepp** again took part in the Grahamstown Children's Art Festival during July.

No Monkey Bussiness - Can't Touch This - was presented at the Pakistan International Festival at the Rafi Peer Theatre Workshop. The puppeteers were Culyao and Gugu Mzolo, while Schutz was responsible for the organization and for delivering talks on puppetry in education (Schutz, 2005).

1999

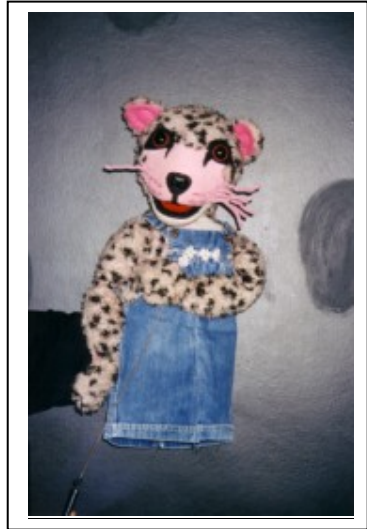
No Monkey Business and Monkey Tales - developed into a series aimed at children from three to ten years of age in pre-primary and primary schools. These shows dealt with 'stranger danger', good and bad secrets, body awareness, physical boundaries, life skills, self-efficacy, basic health, violence, physical, sex and substance abuse, discrimination as well as HIV/Aids awareness (**arepp** Educational Trust, 1999: 3).

Using bold, bright, larger than life mouth puppets (muppet-type puppets), the audience shared the adventures and misadventures of *Mac Monkey* and his best friend *Vanda Vulture* as they learnt about life in their forest home. Fortunately, no matter what they got up to, they were always under the watchful eye of *Thandi* (the trusted adult figure played by an actor) who was there to guide and help them (Schutz, 2003:1). According to Schutz (2003:1), the marketing pamphlet described the show as:

“...energetic, interactive, vibrant and colourful, and carefully structured into short narrative segments which are linked with participatory songs. Mac Monkey becomes a trusted and

recognizable friend, creating a 'safe place' where the children can comfortably identify and interact with the stories and themes without fear or concern".

Schutz made all puppets for the shows, which were hand/rod puppets made from foam and covered with stretch material (Schutz, 2002).



**Fig. 2.2.** *Vanda Vulcher*, **Fig.2.3.** *Lindi Leopard*, **Fig. 2.4** *Mac Monkey*, from the No Monkey Bussiness series. Photo: Schutz, B.

Gypsy Joe and His Puppet Show – the show was developed through a workshop held in Zimbabwe for the Salvation Army at Howard Hospital in Howard. They shared additional skills in the use of puppetry (Schutz, 2005).

No Monkey Bussiness and Monkey Tales – were presented at the Kaleidoscope Children's Art Festival in Rustenburg for pre-primary school children (Schutz, 2005).

2000

No new shows were developed. **Arepp** continued performing and touring the country with:

No Monkey Bussiness, Playing for Keeps, Look Before You Leep and Check Your Mate (Schutz, 2005).

2001 – 2002

Continuation of the No Monkey Business series: No Monkey Business – Can't Touch This - child abuse, trust, body awareness and life skills were addressed in this production which was performed from January to December 2001 in urban and rural areas in the North West and Gauteng provinces, as well as in Cape Town. English, as well as SeTswana and IsiXhosa were used as languages.

No Monkey Business – inside out - health, HIV/Aids, body awareness and life skills were the themes addressed in performances from April to December 2001. It was performed in SePedi, IsiZulu and SeSotho in the rural areas of the Northern Province, Mpumalanga and the Free State for Junior Primary School children aged six to ten.

No Monkey Business – Healthy, Happy & Hip - substance abuse, trust, body awareness and life skills were addressed in Afrikaans and English. It was performed in urban areas of the Western and Eastern Cape for Junior Primary School children aged six to ten (**arepp** Educational Trust, 1999: 7).



No Monkey Business – Push Me Pull You - performances for Junior Primary School children aged six to ten addressed bullying, teasing and violence. It was presented from January to June 2001 in the urban areas of the Western and Eastern Cape and Kwa-Zulu Natal in English and Afrikaans (arepp Educational Trust, 1999: 7).

No Monkey Business – Secrets, Strangers and Surprises - this story addressed issues regarding strangers, abuse, rules and life skills and it was performed in English for children aged six to ten. It ran from August to November in the urban areas of Gauteng.

In 2002, **arepp** also branched out into life-skills education for all age groups in schools and youth-focused organizations. Three other series of shows About Us (aimed at eleven to fifteen-year-old children), No Monkey Business (aimed at six to ten-year-old children), and Monkey Tales, (aimed at three to five year olds) were created. Altogether 1570 shows were performed in 1119 schools across South Africa (**arepp** Educational Trust, 2002: 6). These productions were again presented in 2003.

About Us- Don't Think So and About Us- As If – were presented at the Youth Art Festival in Grahamstown in July. These were accompanied by workshops on puppetry.

2003

No Monkey Business – Us and Them - was aimed at Junior Primary learners and toured the country.

“Mac, Vanda and their friends at school never play with Tommy Turtle because he’s a reptile, and everybody knows that reptiles don’t make nice friends because they’re different. But then, one day in the forest, sneaky old Clarence Crocodile starts a fire so that he can trap them, and eat them, and the only way our friends can escape to safety is if they learn to work together and help each other” (Schutz, 2003:2).

The programme dealt with the difficult issues of acceptance and working together.

While dealing primarily with self-image and tolerance, the show also encouraged the view that everyone has value, irrespective of different beliefs, appearance or even accents. The intent was to foster the concept of ‘I’m OK, you’re OK’ and prepare the ground for cooperation and unity.

After UNIMA members had attended a final rehearsal of the show the following report appeared in an UNIMA newsletter:

“The message of positive self-image and tolerance comes through clearly in the show without becoming didactic. It is presented with a wonderful rhythm with lively performance given by two puppeteer actors. Good manipulation, clearly defined brightly coloured characters and a strong musical script make this show ideal for reaching and touching large audiences and school children” (UNIMA, 2003a: 2).

2004

No Monkey Business series – was aimed at grades 1 to 3 learners and even children of three years old. These puppet shows dealt with good and bad secrets, body awareness, physical boundaries, stranger danger, life-skills, self-efficacy, basic health, violence, discrimination, HIV/Aids awareness, physical and substance abuse (arepp Theatre for Life, 2004:7). All other series previously mentioned in 2003 toured the country.

## **2.3 AUERBACH, MARGARET**

### **2.3.1 Background**

Margaret Auerbach was born on 15 May 1957 and completed her matric at Northcliff High School. She completed a BA degree at the University of the Witwatersrand in 1977, majoring in English, German and History of Drama. In 1979 she also obtained a Diploma in Junior Primary Teaching from the Johannesburg College of Education.

According to Auerbach (2002a), her mother and father had a profound influence on her decision to become a puppeteer. Her mother always encouraged her by taking her to puppet shows at the Civic Theatre in Johannesburg, while her father also performed Punch and Judy shows. Auerbach presented her first show on 27 November 1970 when she was thirteen years old. It was a performance at the Art Ballet and Music School in Braamfontein, Johannesburg (Auerbach, 2004:3). When

she was about 15 the family visited to the well-known puppeteer Gawie de Wet in Cape Town, who gave her his recipe for papier-mâché in order to create her own puppets.

In 1971, while still at high school, Auerbach and a friend, Marjory Nain, started the Moonshine Puppet Company that performed at birthday parties. This association ended when Nain started her tertiary studies and Auerbach founded Spellbound Puppets in 1973. The first show, which Auerbach staged when she was still at school in 1974, was Numbi's Neck, about a giraffe with a short neck. It still forms part of her repertoire, although the story has changed somewhat over the years (Auerbach, 2002a).

In 1980, Auerbach started teaching and from 1981 to 1983 she travelled through Israel, Germany, Turkey and England with puppets and a specially constructed puppet theatre. In Israel, she worked on a kibbutz where she also presented puppet shows. She used a teach-and-learn method in her shows which she coupled with well-known stories. Where she could not speak the language, she learnt songs from the countries in which she performed to involve the children. After her stay in Israel, she went to Göttingen, Germany where she did street theatre with puppets. At first she used a complete puppet theatre, specially made from aluminium, but later she performed without the stage. Here she got involved in the Women's Movement and subsequently she did puppet shows for adults on feminism. In Germany, she went to schools to offer her services - a concept that was foreign to the Germans because

they were used to attending the theatre. Nevertheless, this venture proved to be very successful in the end (Auerbach, 2002a).

During her stay, Auerbach also performed at children's birthday parties, which were very different from those in South Africa. The children came home from school with a few friends, who then stayed for the whole afternoon and had dinner before leaving. As the party took place indoors, these children had to be kept busy and puppetry lent itself well to the occasion. During this period Auerbach called herself *Zappelpappen Puppen* when presenting shows. She realised that the language barrier presented problems to children when trying to interpret the characters correctly. Sometimes she used a character like an evil-looking witch with a kind heart, but the audience sometimes misread the character of the witch because they could not understand English (Auerbach, 2002a).

During her travels in Germany, Auerbach also put together a street theatre puppet show called The Dragon's Teeth with two friends, Brigitte van der Twer and Diana Bidwell. With this show they toured the south of Germany. The tour took place from 4 – 19 August 1983 and they performed in Göttingen, Bonn, Koblenz, Reckershausen, Darmstadt, Wiesbaden, Heidelberg and Tübingen. Bidwell, dressed as a clown, played the guitar for this street performance that consisted of music, acting, mask and puppetry.

“It also brought in themes that were alive in Germany at that time: unemployment, nuclear warfare and violence against women. It was also performed at a German anti-nuclear women's camp near Reckershausen, where the Pershing missiles were being stationed at the time” (Auerbach, 2004:1).

Auerbach later went to England where she performed her street-theatre puppet shows.

Back in South Africa in 1983, while being employed as a secretary at the German department of the University of the Witwatersrand, Auerbach did puppetry part-time.

Between 1985 and 1989, Auerbach conducted various puppetry workshops:

- 1985

Puppetry workshops for the Funda's Teacher's August Centre for pre-school teachers in Daveyton during May and in Meadowlands during August.

- 1986

Puppetry lectures, demonstrations and workshops for teachers and Education students organized by the University of the Witwatersrand Centre for Continuing Education during May, July and August.

- On 3 September teaching session for Junior Primary students at the Soweto College of Education 'English through puppetry: a practical approach'.

- 1987

Puppetry lectures, demonstration and workshops organised by the University of the Witwatersrand Centre for Continuing Education for students specializing in Pre-School education during September.

- 1989

A puppetry workshop for the Vumani Pre-School Project for Childminders at Baragwanath Hospital on 11 April.

On 11 and 12 May, a workshop for the Johannesburg Child Welfare Society staff on puppet-making and script writing.

On 8 June, Auerbach gave a demonstration lecture entitled 'Puppets across the curriculum' at the Johannesburg College of Education.

On 26 August, and on 9 and 16 September a puppet workshop for Joyce Levinson's Children's Promotions at the Windybrow Theatre, Hillbrow in Johannesburg. This last workshop was partly televised on ZAP Mag on SABC TV 2 on 6 December.

After 1984 Auerbach took a part-time job at the Centre for Continuous Education, and worked at a nursery school for six months. From 1987 to 1988 she was co-ordinator for PAWE (Performing Arts Worker's Equity).

In 1997 she performed at the Bloemfontein Book Fair, presented Puppet workshops for students at the Johannesburg College of Education and a lecture demonstration for the Cease-fire Campaign on the use of puppetry to promote peace. At the Rustenburg Kaleidoscope Children's Festival she gave performances of A Bird of Peace and also held puppetry workshops (Auerbach, 2002b: 4).

From 1998 to 1999, Auerbach held adult puppet workshops at the Cancer Association. Puppet workshops were also held for children at the German School in Johannesburg as well as at the Jeppe Preparatory School in Johannesburg for Jeppe Preparatory Lateral Learning week.

In 2000, Auerbach conducted puppet workshops for students studying Educare at Park Town College, Johannesburg.

In April 2003, Auerbach conducted puppetry workshops at the German School's Literature Week in Johannesburg, at which the Grade 3 children learnt to make sock puppets. In March 2004 she again held puppetry workshops at the German School's Literature Week, at which the Grade 5 children learnt to make puppets, practised puppet manipulation and were taught story creation with puppets (Auerbach, 2005: 1).

Auerbach presented a puppetry workshop for the South West Gauteng College of Education. The students made colourful puppets to use in the classroom (Auerbach, 2005: 1).

In 1989, Auerbach started her full-time career as a puppeteer. She usually works alone with her glove puppets on a stage constructed by her and she writes her own scripts. The puppets are mainly made from fabric, but she often uses papier-mâché for the heads. The sizes of the glove puppets vary from 30 cm in height to  $\pm$  1 metre. Auerbach uses a special technique to make her glove puppets. She attaches a rod (wooden dowel) to the front part of the body. This keeps the puppet upright, especially helping to control the legs of a puppet. In her workshops with children, she often uses discarded materials and calls these organically manufactured puppets.



Over the years, Auerbach has occasionally worked with other puppeteers because she deems it very important to be exposed to their ideas to avoid falling into a rut (Auerbach 2002a).

Auerbach has worked with various NGOs (Non-governmental Organizations) and community organisations on projects with various themes ranging from environmental education, children's rights, peace education, child abuse, homelessness, breaking down of prejudices, tuberculosis, HIV/Aids to epilepsy. She has performed all over South Africa, as well as in neighbouring countries such as Botswana and Namibia. She also wrote a children's book, "A Spider in the Library", for children between the ages of four and fourteen.

Auerbach has documented all the shows she has done, including comments on the shows, as well as letters received from children. On September 1987 "I performed my 1000<sup>th</sup> puppet show" (Auerbach 2002a).

In her workshop, she has about 60 puppets, which she uses in various shows, interchanging and combining the characters from different stories. Auerbach found that some children were scared of puppets when first confronted with them therefore she usually has a friendly puppet at the beginning of a show to set the children at ease (Auerbach, 2002a).

### **2.3.2 Productions and performances**

1981 – 1983

Refer to background for performances outside South Africa (2.3.1).

1983

Witch Ways - this show addressed social issues and was performed at the Teachers' Centre in Soweto, as well as in Meadowlands and Nelspruit. Auerbach also developed and performed a dental health puppet show of which no further information is available.

1984

Auerbach continued her part-time career as puppeteer for her company Spellbound Puppets, performing at nursery schools, primary schools, libraries, recreation centres, museums, street carnivals and parties.

A Hand in Glove – in this production African mythology was explored through puppetry and included magic, music and puppetry. Recycled materials were used for the puppets and actors such as Solly Philander, Genius Letsolo and Chantelle Natafel performed and manipulated the puppets. Vicky Borcham directed the production, with Auerbach directing the puppetry sections. The show was performed at the Black Sun Theatre.

Untitled - a lesbian feminist adult puppet show was developed and presented by Auerbach at Garbo's Restaurant in Rosebank, Johannesburg on 28 December.

1985

Untitled - the lesbian feminist adult puppet show (1984) was again performed at Garbo's Restaurant in Rosebank, Johannesburg on 24 January and on 3 May.

Untitled - a political street puppet theatre sketch was performed at the Mary Fitzgerald Square Flea market, Johannesburg on 25 February.

A House is not a Home - an adult puppet show about the housing shortage, was performed on 9 March for an International Women's Day Celebrations at the Witwatersrand Centre for Continuing Education, University of the Witwatersrand (Johannesburg), organised by the feminist group Matrix Women.

The Witch's Tree - for children, and Witchways - for adults, was performed from 1 April to 11 May at the Women's Festival of the Arts, Johannesburg. Witchways was also performed on 1 June for the POWA (People Opposing Women Abuse) National Conference in Durban.

Untitled - various children's puppet shows were performed at shopping malls in Benoni, Witbank, Nelspruit, Carletonville and Krugersdorp throughout the year.

Untitled - on 6 December, Auerbach performed for the Cerebral Palsy Clinic at Baragwanath Hospital, Johannesburg (Auerbach, 2004:2).

1986

Sneaky Bill - on 31 May, a performance was put on at the JODAC (Johannesburg Democratic Action Committee) fête at St. Catherine's Church in Bramley, Johannesburg. This show was written in protest against Apartheid laws in the country. Sneaky Bill is a story about a nasty zookeeper, *Sneaky Bill*, who likes to lock up animals in his zoo, where he treats them very badly. According to Auerbach (2004: 4):

“The protest element in the story was picked up more by the adults than the children. Sneaky Bill kept making his control of the zoo more repressive. It is a show that I still perform regularly, but the emphasis in the new South Africa is more on kindness to animals”.

Tuffy Tooth - was a show commissioned by the University of Witwatersrand Community Dentistry Department and performed at Nasrec Expo Centre Stadium in Johannesburg, Riverlea Primary School in Johannesburg, as well as other venues around Johannesburg during July and August (Auerbach, 2004:2).

1987

Untitled - a children's show was performed for an ECC (End Conscription Campaign) fête, held on 28 November in Johannesburg (Auerbach, 2004:2).

1988

Untitled - children's puppet shows were held at the Mayfair Recreation Centre for the Fordsburg Women's Group (Fedtraw) on 10 July and for NICRO (National Institute for Crime prevention and the Reintegration of Offenders) in Johannesburg on 27 September and on 8 December at an after-school care centre in Noordsig, Johannesburg (Auerbach, 2004b:3).

1989

Untitled - Auerbach performed an adult puppet show with Lawrence Olwyn on 10 March at the Cape Sun Hotel, Cape Town at the launch of the Argus/M-Net Southern FPX cycling race.

Untitled - a puppet show was performed at the Harvey Cohen Centre in Eldorado Park, Johannesburg on 3 June as part of International Children's Day celebrations.

Untitled - On 10 July, Auerbach performed street theatre with puppets at the Standard Bank National Arts Festival, Grahamstown. The performance took place at the Village Green Craft Market.

1990

Jellynod – Auerbach co-wrote and manipulated puppets for this children's show at the Waybury Art Centre, Rosebank. Rodger Titley made the puppets for the show. These included *Jellynod*, a mild pink monster, and a sprite called *Pratz*. Jos

Levin performed as a clown in a sequence in which the character of the girl *Jo-Jo* was represented as a small puppet.

1991

When it Comes to the Crunch – Auerbach co-wrote and manipulated puppets with Roger Titley and Mike Huff for this production that was commissioned by DAG (an anti-drugs group) in Namibia. Roger Titley made the puppets (Auerbach, 2002b:2).

1992

A Spy in the Ointment – Auerbach manipulated puppets for a Janson Pharmaceutical product launch in Stellenbosch and Cape Town. She wrote and performed this adult Christmas party show, which was commissioned by Edgars Stores. Auerbach also continued with her own shows at nursery schools and primary schools, libraries, recreation centres and street carnivals.

1993

The Rocky Road – was commissioned by WCRP (Work Conference on Religion and Peace), to launch a charter on religious freedom. According to Auerbach (2004:3):

“WCRP is an organization that incorporates diverse religions in South Africa, and brings people together to discuss the commonalities of religions, especially in terms of building a stronger moral code in the country. The puppet show was written to show how all religions have common messages and it is better to work together on the commonalities than to fight the differences. The aim of the show was also to highlight the different elements of the declaration of religious rights in a humourous way”.

On 23 March, Auerbach performed this adult show at the Maitisong Arts Festival in Gabarone, Botswana and at the Trinity Hall, Braamfontein, Johannesburg, on 6 May.

1994

Mightier than the Sword – was written and performed by Auerbach on 28 January at the automobile club, Houghton, Johannesburg at the launch of COSAW (Congress of South African Writers). It was an adult puppet show, which satirised the censorship laws during the Apartheid era in South Africa.

Gogo Thembi - for International Children's Day, Auerbach wrote and performed a show for street children, with children's rights as the theme. This has since been performed at many schools. The puppet show was performed on 1 June in a park in the Johannesburg suburb of Berea for a group of street children who were part of an informal upliftment project, as well as for a newly formed group of homeless girls, called Themba Lethu. The group was under the auspices of the Welfare Society of Johannesburg.

1995

City Wisdom - was written and performed for the First African International Puppetry Festival at the Civic Theatre in Johannesburg.

Witch Ways – the 1983 production which was also performed at the above-mentioned festival, was revised and it dealt with the issue of homelessness. According to Auerbach cited by Berry (1995:11):

“Most people fail to see the reasons behind homelessness – they are very ready to criticize but don’t understand that a lot of these people are lured to the city with fantasies of money and jobs and don’t see the evils lurking behind. Through puppetry one can get people to respond to such issues in a different way. It’s such a unique medium and elicits an immediate and spontaneous response”

1996

Health Squad to the Rescue - was a puppet show, which was performed and written by Auerbach, for SANTA (South African National Tuberculosis Association). She continued presenting this show until 1998.

1997

Sneaky Bill - President Nelson Mandela attended a performance of this puppet show (refer to 1986). The performance at the Sacred Heart School in Johannesburg was organized by his grandson to raise funds for the Nelson Mandela Children’s Fund.

Untitled - Auerbach performed at the home of the then Premier of Gauteng Province, Tokyo Sexwale and his wife Judy, for the annual Streetwise Christmas party. Streetwise is an organization that works with homeless youth.

A Bird of Peace - was performed by Auerbach at the Rustenburg Kaleidoscope Children’s Festival (Auerbach, 2002b:4).



1998

Goldfinger and the Fellowship of the Funny Bone – was an adult show performed for the Yoga Teachers' Fellowship (venue unknown).

Untitled - Auerbach performed and participated at a National Puppetry Festival, organized by the National Eisteddfod Academy and Eastern Metropolitan Local Council.

Untitled - various puppet shows were presented for the Yeoville Community Development Forum at a Heritage Day Festival, as well as at community carnivals and for a Clean-up Campaign, in Yeoville in Johannesburg (Auerbach, 2002b:2).

Catch a Falling Star - was an adult puppet show commissioned by TFF (Training for Freedom), an organization set up by Amnesty International and NICRO (National Institute for Crime Prevention and Rehabilitation of Offenders). The show was staged as part of a workshop to conscientize the South African Police Service to children's rights. Performances were held in Johannesburg, the Vaal Triangle, North Rand, Pretoria, Soweto, Springs and Krugersdorp for members of the South African Police Service and new police recruits, until 1999 (Auerbach, 2002b:2).



**Fig. 2.5.** Auerbach and *Jonah*- drug-buying learner from Catch a Falling Star. Photo: Auerbach, 2003.



**Fig.2.6.** *Jonah*, *Captain Ndlovu* and *Themba* from Catch a Falling Star. Photo: Auerbach, 2003

1999 – 2000

The Treasure Hunt – a puppet show about water conservation was the result of a puppetry-training project commissioned by the Rand Water Board, Delta Park Environmental Centre. Auerbach trained the puppeteers and also developed and directed the show (Auerbach, 2002b:2).

Untitled - Auerbach gave an adult puppet show as part of a course for journalists on Editing and Layout at the Department of Water Affairs, Pretoria.

2001

Untitled - in March, Auerbach performed at the Maitisong Arts Festival in Gabarone, Botswana and held puppetry workshops. In April she also performed at the Fourways Mall Puppet Festival.

2002

The Treasure Hunt - the puppet show (2000) was again performed at schools in Gauteng (Auerbach, 2002:2).

2003 – 2004

Reach for a Dream - was a puppet show, developed for the ABSA Museum of Finance about a little boy *Jabulani*, who needed to earn money to buy a music box as a birthday present for a friend, from Mr Mozart's Music Shop. He eventually earned enough money from making wooden toys which he sold. The show required audience participation because a 'bank manager' had to be found who could look after Jabulani's savings until he had saved enough for the present. Auerbach made and manipulated the puppets. Various performances were held at the ABSA Museum of Finance, Johannesburg during July 2003, as well as June and July 2004 (Auerbach, 2005: 1).

*Bophelo Mohlakeng – Life in the Wetlands* – was a story about a little frog, *Bonono*, who lost his mother. In addition he was captured by some naughty children who were out frog-hunting. Once the children learnt about the importance of respecting the environment from *Mabohlale* the duck, and how important the wetlands are in conservation, *Bonono* was united with his mother *Shina*, and they all lived happily ever after. The show was developed for the Rand Water Board's Puppetry Project based at Delta Park Environment Centre. The group workshopped the puppet script and designed and created their own puppets. The project ran from December 2003 through the first half of 2004 (Auerbach, 2005: 1).

## **2.4 BAILES, ANN (also refer to JOHANNESBURG CIVIC THEATRE: MARIONETTE COMPANY and The LITTLE MARIONETTE COMPANY)**

### **2.4.1 Background**

Ann Bailes was born on 8 November 1937, and grew up in Johannesburg where she matriculated at Parktown Girls High School in 1956. Bailes then studied Textile Design at the Art School of the Witwatersrand Technikon, obtaining her National Diploma with Costume Design as an additional subject. After graduation, Bailes left South Africa to work in London, England for a company called Stage Décor. Here she made properties and painted scenery and eventually made costumes for operas and ballets at Covent Garden, as well as for pantomimes at the London Palladium.

In 1968 Bailes returned to South Africa where she worked on properties and décor at the Civic Theatre Johannesburg for the show Eureka. At the request of Michael Grobbelaar, director of the Civic Theatre Johannesburg, she started the Johannesburg Civic Theatre: Marionette Company with Alida von Maltitz. Here Bailes could use her experience in properties, décor painting and costume construction as she and Von Maltitz combined their skills. While Von Maltitz mostly carved the marionettes, Bailes made the costumes and painted the sets for the productions. Von Maltitz also taught Bailes how to manipulate marionettes. Bailes discovered a real talent and love for this art form. The first show performed by the new company was The Christmas Story together with a divertissement programme for which Bailes and Von Maltitz made and manipulated the marionettes. According to Bailes (2002), a good manipulator and puppeteer needs to know something about dance and music, have a feel for the theatrical and have a 'touch of madness'.

Bailes left the company at the end of 1969 to work at the Glynde Bourne Festival in the United Kingdom. She returned to the Johannesburg Civic Theatre: Marionette Company in 1970, where she worked until 1973. In 1970, Bailes painted sets and also constructed costumes and manipulated marionettes for Pietie and the Waterwitch / Pietie en die Waterheks, created by Von Maltitz.

A variety programme was presented at the Johannesburg Pavilion (Milner Park showgrounds) for the 1971 Rand Easter show during March and April. Bailes was the principal puppeteer with Von Maltitz (refer to **2.83.1** and **2.30.1**). During 1971 Barry Bakker directed the marionette shows created by Von Maltitz and Bailes with a

number of *Pietie* stories like *Piet se Fiets* and *Pietie and the Starfish*, where *Neptune* played an organ with notes on strings coming out of it with a yellow submarine passing by.

In 1972 work was started on the marionettes for *Liewe Heksie en die Feekoningin* and *Koning Rosekrans* with Alida von Maltitz at the Johannesburg Civic Theatre as well as for *Señor Onion* for which Des Lindberg compiled the music. The SABC later produced *Señor Onion* as a television programme. Bailes helped with the sets, created costumes and manipulated the marionettes for those productions as well as for the production and performances for *Amahl and the Night Visitors* in December.

Bailes then worked for the Properties Department at PACT in Pretoria while working part-time at the Civic Theatre Johannesburg: Marionette Company as puppet maker and manipulator along with Dianah Newton and Jeanne Watson.

From 1973 - 2003 Bailes freelanced as a puppet maker and manipulator for The Little Marionette Company in Pretoria. The company did puppetry for the stage and started preparatory work for television in 1974 prior to the launch of television in South Africa in 1975. (refer to **2.41.2:218**).

In 1979, Bailes started working for Sun International, constructing costumes for the Extravanzas staged at Sun City, while continuing to work for The Little Marionette Company.

## **2.4.2 Productions and Performances**

For work done from 1975 to 1999, refer to The Little Marionette Company.

## **2.5 BARNSTORMERS (refer to FLETCHER, TONY AND JILL)**

## **2.6 BRYER, ESTELLE (refer to RAINBOW PUPPET THEATRE)**

### **2.6.1 Background**

Estelle Bryer was born in Bloemfontein, in 1929, and matriculated in 1945. She started her tertiary studies at the Johannesburg Teacher Training College with Art as a major 1946. In the same year, she switched to kindergarten teaching at the Johannesburg Training College for Pre-school Education. Bryer married before completing her studies. However, at the age of 27, she made a set of papier-mâché puppets, which she later presented to complete the creative Art subject she needed to receive her diploma. She became the first kindergarten teacher at the Waldorf School in Cape Town when it was established in 1960 (Bryer, 2001: 2).

Her entry into the world of puppetry occurred in 1962. Whilst teaching at the Waldorf School, a fellow teacher, Felicitas Fuhs, who was a Eurhythmics\* musician and puppeteer from the Camphill movement, inspired her to do puppetry. The two started working together with Fuhs making glove puppets of moulded felt and used silk for

the costumes and scenery. They performed fairy tales with Fuhs' portable theatre at schools and hospitals. They branched out to presenting shows at birthday parties, shopping centres, hospitals and churches in 1963.

Bryer completed a four-year training course in Eurhythmy Therapy in Germany and Switzerland in 1974. This made her the only qualified teacher in Eurhythmy Therapy in South Africa. She introduced Eurhythmy to the Waldorf Primary and High School as part of the curriculum (Bryer, 2001: 2).

In 1964, Bryer made up a story to help a particular child who was "afraid of a gray witch who lived inside him and was making him naughty" (Bryer, 1997:29). This story changed and developed over the years before it was later developed into a moral / remedial / educational story to fight against hooliganism, shoplifting and other social ills for the Department of Education and Culture in the Cape Province. Bryer was employed part-time for two years to bring this show to children at underprivileged schools (specific years unknown). Between 1983 and 1989 she was sponsored by the Department of Commerce and Industry. During this time she presented Andries and the Gray Witch at more than 200 schools in the Cape Town area (Bryer, 2001: 2).

The success of this programme led to an invitation to give a talk and demonstration of her work at an International Puppetry Conference in Dornach, Switzerland in 1987. The organizers constructed a special solo theatre for this purpose. Between 1985



and 1987, while still teaching at the Waldorf School Bryer also performed and taught puppetry at the High Rustenburg Health Hydro.

Bryer prefers to use glove puppets, but also performs with table and rod puppets and marionettes, which are mainly made of silk materials. She uses fantasy stories to enrich children's lives and performs in a few fold-up theatres, which she has designed (Bryer, 2002a).

In 1998 Bryer created two puppet pocket aprons – aprons with pockets, containing small glove and finger puppets. Bryer performed with these in the United States and England, as well as locally (Bryer, 2002a).

Bryer had a dream of creating a permanent puppet theatre and in 1992 the dream became reality when the Rainbow Puppet Theatre was established at the Waldorf School in Constantia, Cape Town (Bryer, 1997: 26).

## **2.6.2 Productions and performances**

As Bryer was always involved in teaching, productions and performances were sporadic and not well recorded.

1975 - 1981

No record exists of specific shows performed by Bryer during this period, except on Saturday 26 January 1980, when Bryer talked about her work, gave a demonstration

and performed The Frog Prince at a UNIMA, Cape Town meeting. According to the UNIMA Cape Town, newsletter (1980a: 1) “the introductory sounds were beautiful, being played on a pentatonic Kalimba and the puppetry was charming”.

1982

Mother Holler - was performed by Bryer at the UNIMA, Cape Town meeting on 8 May (UNIMA, 1982: 1).

1983

Andries and the Witch - the story tells the children of the evils of anti-social behaviour.

“Once there was a good boy who had beautiful brown eyes and a heart that shone like gold. His name was Andries. Everybody loved him because he was so good and so sweet and so kind... And so the story goes. Andries goes out into this world to do good but falls under the power of the wicked fairy, who makes him do evil things like shoplift, swear and fight. This story has a happy ending when an angel rescues Andries from the bad fairy and he is once again able to do good” (Turnbull, 1983:8).

Bryer performed this puppet show at (what was then termed) ‘Coloured’ schools in the Cape Town area, at the request of school principals, after a massive wave of crime and vandalism in the ‘Coloured’ residential areas. She continued to perform this show intermittently until 1989.

Andries en die Heks was performed by Bryer, Gawie de Wet and Rose de Wet during the July meeting of UNIMA, Cape Town (UNIMA, 1984:1).

1986

Untitled - Bryer performed at Pick 'n Pay stores at various shopping centres in Cape Town between 8 and 19 December (UNIMA, 1986b: 1).

1987 – 1989

No information is available of performances given between 1987 and 1989 other than odd performances of Andries and the Witch.

1990

Untitled - on 8 December, Bryer performed a scene with an angel puppet by candlelight at a UNIMA, Cape Town meeting (UNIMA, 1991a:1).

1991

The Christmas Rose – was performed by Bryer at a UNIMA meeting on 19 January at the Ruth Prowse School of Art, Woodstock, Cape Town (UNIMA, 1991a:1).

1992

Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs and The Christmas Rose were performed at the Rainbow Puppet Theatre (refer to **2.56.2:293**).

The Easter Rabbit - was performed by Bryer on 20 April with a host of characters like the *Rabbit*, a *Gnome*, a *Hen*, a *Blackbird*, *Butterflies*, an *Angel*, and a little *Lamb*. In a UNIMA newsletter, it was stated that “the puppet which stole the show was definitely the *Worm*, most beautifully conceived and manipulated. All this, together

with Bryer's magical lighting and flower garden made for a delightful show at this meeting of UNIMA" (UNIMA, 1991b:1).

The Frog Prince and The Christmas Rose – the two glove puppet shows, were performed during December in the Nico Malan Theatre foyer, Cape Town as part of the Puppet Alive exhibition. The Frog Prince was performed on 18 December and The Christmas Rose on 20 December.

1993

St. George and the Dragon - was performed by Bryer at the Rainbow Puppet Theatre (UNIMA, 1993b:1) (refer to **2.58.2:294**).

1994-2002

According to Bryer (2002b: 1), by 2002 her glove puppet repertoire comprised the following shows: Frog Prince, Red Riding Hood, Jason and the Grey Witch, Beauty and the Beast, The Christmas Rose, The Easter Rabbit, Mother Holle, St. George and the Dragon, Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs. These shows were performed at the Rainbow Puppet Theatre.

Singing Story Tree – was performed by Bryer at her home on 26 October for members of the UNIMA, Cape Town branch. The inspiration for the Singing Story Tree came from work she had seen at the Nairobi Puppet Festival, which she had attended with Gary Friedman during February of the same year.

“The tree itself is cleverly designed using an umbrella with pockets stitched inside the hold the numerous characters that live in the tree. The trunk and stand too are ingeniously made to make the tree very portable (all fits into a long bag)...Estelle allows the flow of the play to be guided by the audience, making excellent use of her calming voice to quiten the children. Estelle wore her eurhythmy dress, of which the colour and flowing nature does not distract the audience from the play” (UNIMA, 2002b: 2).

Freedman also added:

“We are introduced to the various characters, each of which has a related song or story. There’s the White Dove, Bobo the monkey, the Caterpillar, the Snail that comes out of its shell, the Rose Fairy that swings in the tree, the Owl and several other interesting characters that have been collected by Estelle from as far away as California” (UNIMA, 2002a: 2).

## **2.7 CAPAB (Cape Performing Arts Board)**

### **2.7.1 Background**

During the early years, the Cape Performing Arts Board mainly made use of ad hoc puppeteers and companies. This information will be found listed under the various puppeteers. In 1964 Keith Anderson, of Keith Anderson’s Puppets, presented two puppet plays and in 1968 an effort was made to perform puppet theatre for adults with the *Houtkop Poppespelers*. This was the first satirical programme done by Tony Fletcher and Margaret Heale (Schwenke, 1984:33, 36).

The Cape Puppet Players of Tony and Jill Fletcher often presented puppet plays from 1973 to 1976 (refer to Fletcher, Tony and Jill).

In 1990 the CAPAB Puppet Company was founded at the instigation of Keith Anderson and in September 1991 the company toured the Cape Province with their first production, The Little Mermaid.

## **2.7.2 Productions and performances**

1975

Liz de Groote of the Lilliput Marionette Company performed at CAPAB (Schwenke, 1984: 36).

1976 – 1986

Between 1976 and 1986, no records could be found of performances under the auspices of CAPAB, apart from 1981 when Toby van Eck performed with his marionettes (Schwenke, 1984: 36).

1987

Gulls - Kohler designed and made the *gull* rod puppets for the production written by Robert Hewett and directed by Keith Grenville for Volute Productions under the auspices of CAPAB (Randall, 1988: 6). The production opened at the Nico Malan Theatre, Cape Town on 17 July and featured puppets made from plywood and cane.

“This is the first time, Kohler, of Handspring Puppet Company, has been commissioned to create puppets for a play of this nature. Gulls is something of a puppeteer’s dream. There is no way you can get out of having puppets in this play” (Thamm, 1987: 5).

1988

Gulls - The production toured the Eastern Cape and performed at the Port Elizabeth Opera House from 7 – 9 April. The show was also performed during July at the Standard Bank National Arts Festival in Grahamstown.

1989

Doringrosie - this musical with puppets, is an Afrikaans adaptation of the fairytale by Charles Pereault, The Briar Rose. In the programme (CAPAB, 1989) it was stated that this was an experiment with non-realistic theatre techniques where a storyteller moved between the characters. The puppets were operated amongst actors together with music, song and the use of a Commedia dell' Arte play style.

The décor was minimalistic and easily manoeuvred (CAPAB, 1989). Liz de Groote made the papier-mâché rod puppets. The actors manipulating the puppets were Jill Adams, Freddie Booysen, Hermien de Vos, Tenswell Hector, Charl-Johan Lingenfelder, Raél Mercuur, Ilse Roos, Cindy Simpson, June van Merch, Jaco Voges and Igloo Nadine von Katt. Ben de Haeck directed this production.

Doringrosie was staged at the Nico Malan Theatre Foyer from 4 – 21 January.

1990

Keith Anderson (refer to **2.2.2:16**) instigated the CAPAB Puppet Company, which consisted of six puppeteers headed by Tony Fletcher. The puppets of The Little

Mermaid which he had designed in 1975, were retrieved and refurbished for the touring production, which took place in 1991.

1991

The Little Mermaid / Die Kleine Meermin – the puppet show included elements of drama, humour and simple direct dialogue. The first half of the show was devoted to teaching the young audience the basic principles of puppetry, using hand illusions, sock and glove puppets, while the second half included a cabaret performance by a trio of marionettes performing to music (also refer to Fletcher, Tony and Jill).

The puppeteers were Tony Fletcher, Karl Marx, Mauro Faroani, Alfred Rietmann, Daryl Rodgers and Ryno Mulder. Nina Gerasimov, a Russian puppet master, introduced the show, which was devised by Keith Anderson and directed by Alfred Rietmann, with lighting by Tony King.

In a later article in the Cape Times (Beauty and the ...1992:7) it was mentioned that the company also exhibited puppets by members of UNIMA, Cape Town and then went on to perform the show at the Victoria and Alfred Waterfront and at more than 180 schools in the Eastern and Western Cape (the then Cape Province).





**Fig. 2.7.** CAPAB Puppet Company: top 1967 and bottom 1991. (CAPAB, 1996:5)

The Magic Flute - Christine Crouse directed the opera for CAPAB and Adrian Kohler made and directed the four large almost life-sized marionettes (Pitman, 1991:1). The marionettes, dancing *Penguins*, a *Giraffe*, a *Flamingo* and a *Lion*, were all operated high above the stage (Opera is for... 1991: 13). The Magic Flute was performed by CAPAB from 30 September – 18 October.

1992

The Little Mermaid / Die Kleine Meermin (refer to 1991) - the show toured the Eastern Cape from 10 – 22 February and was performed at the Port Elizabeth Opera House from 10 – 15 February and at the Guild Theatre, East London from 17 – 22 February (Puppet Theatre Show..., 1992:7).

Nomhle and Ngcuka – was an African version of the folk tale, Beauty and the Beast, and was performed with string puppets. The story, adapted by Alfred Rietmann,

retained the essential drama in a series of short scenes to suit children and the production incorporated African traditions and ceremonies.

“This has to rank as one of the most exquisitely done and exceptionally well-adapted puppet shows CAPAB has produced for some time” (Macdonald, 1992:5).

Macdonald (1992:5) also reports that The Beast – *Ngcuka*, looked almost Indonesian, with a huge head covered in horns, two big furry paws and strings of pink tentacles.

“The production is a perfect showcase for the puppeteer’s art: the characters who shed their inanimate wood and latex origins, the voices – over (sic) telling in rich folkloric language, the tale of the beast, a bewitched prince awaiting true love to set him free; the ochre-coloured set with its vivid African geometric patterns; the lighting and the African-jazz fusion soundtrack” (Green, 1992:7).

In a dream scene, *Nomhle* (Beauty) found herself in *Ngcuka*’s enchanted garden, surrounded by illuminated swooping *butterflies*, *caterpillars*, *snails* and other *insects*. Great puppetry skills were required to swoop and flutter these big insects in and out of scene in time to the music (Macdonald, 1992:5).

The sets were bright and lively and opened up easily, not only to serve as backgrounds for traditional tribal motifs, but also as magical gardens and a village. It was written and designed by Keith Anderson, directed and adapted by Rietmann, while Toby van Eck made the puppets (Macdonald, 1992:5). Fletcher was the puppet master while the other puppeteers were Alfred Rietmann, Craig Leo, Daryl Rogers

and Karl Marx. Performances were in English, Afrikaans and isiXhosa. The show was performed in the Nico Malan Arena Theatre, Cape Town from 25 July – 15 August 1992.

1993

Chewele and the Giant - was an African folk story, designed by Keith Anderson, as a puppet-type show. The company usually visited two schools per day with this production.

1994

Pikkie - the CAPAB Puppet Company performed an ethnic version of Pinocchio, called Pikkie (which means 'small person' in Afrikaans), using puppet-type puppets, designed by Anderson. The company toured the Cape Town area with the production (Anderson, 2003).

The Little Mermaid – (refer to 1992) was revived using a slightly smaller stage so that the show could be staged at the poorer equipped schools. The company toured the Cape Town area with the production (Anderson, 2003).

The Dragon Lady - CAPAB Opera Company sponsored a Bunraku style production of this show, which was the story of Turandot, designed by Keith Anderson (Anderson, 2003). The company toured the Cape Town area with the production (Anderson, 2003).

1995

The Magic Flute - was adapted and designed by Keith Anderson and performed with rod puppets. The company toured the Cape Town area with the production (Anderson, 2003).

Child of the Moon - was an ethnic opera designed by Keith Anderson. CAPAB opera produced the show and the company toured the Cape Town area with the production (Anderson, 2003).

Jamie's Ginormous Adventure - was a children's tale presented during the December holiday period and it featured "the popular CAPAB puppets' with puppet manipulators Anthea Thompson, Craig Leo, Jana van Niekerk, Kurt Wustman and Pierre Neethling" (Masked adventure, 1995:14).

"The show told the story of Jamie, a twelve year old computer junkie who gets an assignment at school to write a story. One night in his bedroom, he journeys into his own imagination where he meets fantastical creatures such as old Sticklebax, Ezlemene, the Evil shadow of Xmaja, Sprigg a sprite, and Serena Queen of the Colours. There are also friendly fish, singing aloes and an array of flying and crawling creatures which make his visit even more interesting" (Show for kiddies..., 1995: 14).

1996

iStrongmani – the theme of the show was the circus and Anderson wanted to introduce live theatre to children through the medium of puppets. iStrongmani was

the name the Zulus gave to William Pagel when he toured Durban with his circus in 1907. They later dubbed all consequent circuses *iStrongmani*.

Most of the characters were based on real circus artists as well as other performers whom Anderson had known and / or worked with. Anderson used these characters so that children could relate to them. Some puppets were based on well-known marionettes. These characters were:

- *iStrongmani* (based on Mr William Pagel) – This puppet had no trick strings therefore it required the skill of a master puppeteer to operate it.
- *Equestrian Director and Ringmaster* (based on Colonel Trevor Bale who first visited South Africa as an animal presenter with Pagel's Circus).
- *Ali and Oop*, the acrobats (based on the Sheridan Twins) required the skill of three people to manipulate them. .
- *Grimaldi* the Disjointing clown (based on Joseph Grimaldi, known as the father of clowns).
- *Auguste* (based on Tickey, the South African clown who was named for South Africa's smallest coin).
- *The Tramp* (based on Tommy Turnbull) was a true caricature of what the real Tommy the clown looked like (CAPAB Puppets, 1996: 2-7).
- *The Whiteface Clown* (based on Francesco the clown) was always extravagantly costumed. Franceso worked in all fields of entertainment from the age of six. In later life, he became known as *The Fool for God* and was well known for his stand against performing animals (CAPAB Puppets, 1996: 2-7).

Other characters included:

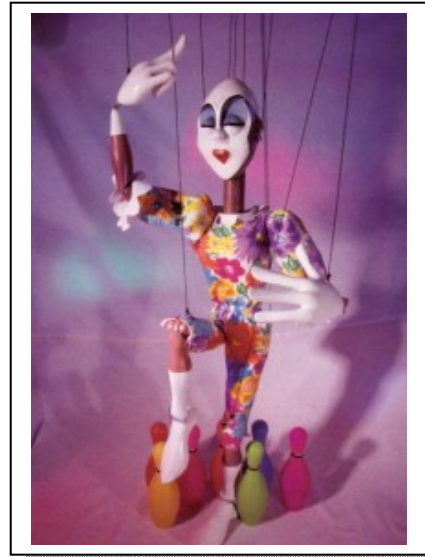
- *Showlife the Unicyclist*. The name *Showlife* was given to the anonymous, ever-moving and ever-changing group of roustabout, tent workers, grooms and crew that kept the circus moving.
- *Spuds the Juggler*, was named for his compulsion to juggle potatoes.
- *The Grand Turk* was a trick puppet, that could change into his six children, concealed as part of his body beneath his elaborate garments.
- *Zeee Zeee, the Zebra*, was based on *Muffen the Mule*, a character from the Hogarth puppets whose 1954 tour did much to promote interest in puppets in South Africa. It represented an independent and spirited Zebra (CAPAB Puppets, 1996: 2-7).
- *Sasha, the Stiltdancer* (CAPAB Puppets, 1996: 2-7).

The show consisted mostly of trick puppets designed by Anderson. Sasha Gerasimov, who studied this craft in Russia, carved the marionettes from wood. Luigi Preite, Craig Leo and Elizabeth Lett were the manipulators. In order to encourage teachers to use the production as an educational tool, a brightly illustrated programme with designs and information was supplied. At the beginning of the show an explanation of the different types of puppets was given, followed by the forty-five minute production where the different circus character puppets entertained the audience. No pre-recorded sound was used, and audience participation formed part of the show. At the end of the show a

question-and-answer, session was held (CAPAB Puppets, 1996:4). The show toured the Eastern Cape and was staged at the Opera House, Port Elizabeth from 24 – 27 June (Puppet Circus at..., 1996: n.p.).



**Fig. 2.8.** *iStrongmani*  
(CAPAB,1996: 5)



**Fig.2.9.** *Grimaldi*: the  
Disjointing Clown from  
*iStrongmani*. (CAPAB,1996:  
backpage)

1997 - 2004

No puppet shows were performed under the auspices of CAPAB.

## **2.8 The CAPE PUPPET PLAYERS (refer to FLETCHER, TONY AND JILL)**

## **2.9 The CHILDREN'S PUPPET PLAY (also refer to HECHTER, I and HERBST, I)**

### **2.9.1 Background**

Ilse Hechter and Ingard Herbst founded this travelling company in Cape Town in October 2000. The company operates as a N.P.O. (Non Profitable Organisation). The focus of the company is to produce puppet shows, to perform at schools and festivals, to do work for welfare organizations and to present workshops on puppetry.

The company facilitates workshops for teachers or learners and it has a wide variety of workshops available. The shortest workshop is a quick and easy one-hour glove puppet workshop, while the longest workshop is an eight-hour workshop called 'Easy Puppets'. The participants in this workshop need to be twelve years and older. The workshop includes making three easy puppets and how to put together one's own puppet show. An optional extra to this is the Curriculum Outcomes based Supplement for grades R – 9, which focuses on how to use puppetry as a tool to achieve a specific outcome in the classroom. This forms an integral part of the Educational Curriculum (Hechter, 2003b:3).

Herbst and Hechter joined forces with Hilette Stapelberg to run a workshop on the making of marionettes at their workshop in Cape Town on 19 and 26 July, on 2 and 9 August, as well as on 11 October 2003 (UNIMA, 2003e: 1; UNIMA, 2003g: 2).



## 2.9.2 Productions and Performances

2000

The Frog Prince / Die Paddaprins – the production is described by Hechter (2003b:3)

as follows:

“This muppet show is a funny version of the classical tale. The theme is friendship and sharing. Prince Fernando’s dream of finding a Princess goes haywire when he is turned into a slimy frog”.

The characters for The Frog Prince / Die Paddaprins were: *Princess Amelia* - a muppet with rod arms; *Prince Fernando* - a muppet with rod arms; *Fernando the Frog* - a muppet with rod legs; *Tiekie the Horse* - a rod puppet; *Zap the Witch* - a muppet with rod arms; *Mielo* - a marionette; *Bug 1* and *Bug 2* - rod puppets and *Albert the King* - a rod puppet.

Hechter and Herbst designed and made all the puppets and put on the show at schools and for welfare organisations.



**Fig. 2.10.** *Mielo*, ±75 cm in height from The Frog Prince. Photo: Herbst, I, 2003.

2001

The Frog Prince / Die Paddaprins - various performances of the 2000 production took place in the Cape Town area. The company also performed at the *Klein Karoo Nasionale Kunstefees* in Oudtshoorn and on Robben Island (Hechter, 2003b:3).

2002

Red and Lester / Red en Lester – this marionette show, performed in English and Afrikaans, was a version of the classic Grimm’s fairy tale, Little Red Riding Hood.

“Little Red is the main character in this marionette show. Little Red is as big as a four year old. Nine big and colourful marionettes go on an adventure with her. Red was supposed to walk with her

brother Benji to Granny's, but then she meets up with Mr. Lester de Wolf. There is no need to be scared. Mr. de Wolf is a vegetarian, but he has drugs that he wants her to experiment with. Red is a no-nonsense girl and doesn't fall for his tricks. Join Red and her friends for a production with an anti-drug abuse message" (Hechter, 2003b: 3).

Hechter made the puppets, manipulated and produced the marionette show, assisted by Herbst. The characters for this production were *Red*, *Benji* (her brother), *Mother*, *Granny*, *Lester de Wolf*, *Chicken* and *Tembo the Dog*, all half-life-size marionettes, as well as *Tra-la-la*, a rod puppet. *Tra-la-la* was a good spirit who protected *Red* when she got into a tight spot with the wolf.



**Fig. 2.11.** *Tra-la-la* and Ilse Hechter (left) and Ingard Herbst (Hechter, 2003b).

Performances of The Frog Prince / Die Paddaprins and Red and Lester / Red en Lester took place at various times and venues in Cape Town.

During December, Herbst and Hechter performed an extract from Red and Lester at a UNIMA, Cape Town meeting: “They used large and very colourful puppets which they have characterized beautifully” (Freedman, 2003:2).

The company performed at the *Voorbrand Fees* of the *Klein Karoo Nasionale Kunstefees* in Oudtshoorn, the Spier Summer Arts Festival at Spier Wine Estate in the Stellenbosch region, the Hermanus Whale Festival, as well as the in Highstreet Theatre and the Milnerton Playhouse in Cape Town (Herbst, 2003b:1).

2003

Poenka Moenka - Hechter and Herbst started to devise their new production, which was a rod-and-shadow puppet show (Hechter, 2003a:1).

The Frog Prince / Die Paddaprins and Red and Lester / Red en Lester - was again performed at various venues in Cape Town (Hechter, 2003b:1).

The Frog Prince / Die Paddaprins, Red and Lester and Poenka Moenka - were performed at the Hermanus Whale Festival on 3 and 4 October at The Kidz Zone (Herbst, 2003b:1).

Red and Lester - was again performed at the company's workshop in Parow on 11 October (UNIMA, 2003g: 2).

2004

The Frog Prince – was performed for UNIMA members at the Frank Joubert Art Centre, Cape Town on 27 March (UNIMA, 2004d: 2).

Suzie and Dr TV Box - was a fable to encourage children to read and follow their dreams. The show opened with the appearance of a giant mantis, made and manipulated by Hechter. Herbst was the other puppeteer in the show.

“Dr TV Box, a female hippopotamus scientist is out to sell her invention to everyone and to keep them captive to it by turning their heads into TV sets. This is the base of the story that unfolds in many directions. It is a complex and unpredictable show that communicates a clear message and remains immediate and accessible” (UNIMA, 2004g: 1).

The show was performed for UNIMA members during October and at various venues in Cape Town. No other performance dates and venues could be established.

## **2.10 DE GROOTE, LIZ (also refer to LILLIPUT MARIONETTE THEATRE)**

### **2.10.1 Background**

De Groote was born in Belgium and came to South Africa as a small child. After having received her schooling in Durban she qualified in Graphics, Art and Commerical design at the Natal Technical College (Puppets tell Christmas..., 1975: n.p.). In 1970 de Groote joined the Johannesburg Civic Theatre Marionette Company and in 1973 she formed her own company in Cape Town, the Lilliput Marionette Theatre (Reynolds, 1975:20). In 1974 Lost in the Forrest was produced as a full-length play (Reynolds, 1975:20).

In 1981, de Groote gave two lectures to UNIMA members on the carving of a marionette (UNIMA, 1981c:1). Only sketchy information could be obtained about this puppeteer.

### **2.10.2 Productions and performances**

1975 – 1989

Refer to LILLIPUT MARIONETTE THEATRE

1989

Doringrosie - De Groote made the papier-mâché rod puppets for the production which was performed at the Nico Malan Theatre Foyer from 4 to 21 January (refer to CAPAB). After this date, no further reference could be found on the work of this puppeteer.

## **2.11 DE WAAL, ERIK**

### **2.11.1 Background**

Erik de Waal was born in 1969 and obtained a BA Drama (Hons) degree in Children's and Puppet Theatre at the University in Stellenbosch in 1992. He founded YAP (Youth and Puppet Theatre Company) in 1993, producing various children's theatre performances, as well as puppet theatre, with African themes (Kruger, 2003b:1).

### **2.11.2 Productions and performances**

1993 – 2001

De Waal produced work for puppet theatre with original texts and adaptations. These included Wolf en Jakkals Stories.

2002

Tales from the Calabash / Kalbasstories - this production was an adaptation of three African stories written by De Waal and adapted and directed by Marie Kruger. De

Waal performed these tales about jungle animals and South African monsters (Kruger, 2003b:1).

The production was performed in South Africa as Kalbasstories. It was storytelling with various puppets like marionettes, rod puppets and hand puppets being used together by the actor. The *Cannibal* was a basic mask with a rod and a costume added to it, while masks represented the *Lion* and the *Monster*.

The production toured South Africa and performances were given at primary schools and civic centres in Gauteng, North West province, Limpopo, Mpumalanga and the Western Cape between 2 March and 25 May (De Waal, 2002:3 - 4).

De Waal performed the show as Tales from the Calabash at various festivals in Canada from 31 May to 2 September. During this period, he also performed at various public libraries for audiences up to 400 members (De Waal, 2002:5 – 9).

The production received four stars at the Edmonton International Fringe Festival, Canada and was described thus by Sperounes (2002: n.p.):

“He’s not completely alone on stage. He does have some help in the shape of various puppets, including a giraffe, a vulture, a guinea fowl, a lion (which looks more like a fox) and a crazy dragonesque creature known as the Nabulela. He lives in a river, eats children and offers a valuable lesson to adults – love your kids equally”.





**Fig 2.12. Zebra and Fig.2.13. Vulture** from Tales from the Calabash (Kruger, 2003b).

2003

More Tales from the Calabash - this show was a follow-up of Tales from the Calabash and it toured South Africa, Turkey and Canada (Kruger, 2003b:1).

2004

Although various attempts were made to ascertain information regarding productions and performances from De Waal, no response was forthcoming.

## **2.12 DE WET, GAWIE (DE WET PUPPETS)**

### **2.12.1 Background**

Gawie de Wet grew up on a farm in the Beaufort West district (in the then Cape Province) where he saw his first puppets, which were made by his father. The puppets were crude, carved wooden ones, operated by two strings stretched between his father's big toes.

After De Wet had mastered the art of operating these puppets, he played the guitar while operating the puppets. On big agricultural show days, a second operator would sit opposite him, also playing the guitar, and the puppets would dance or fight. While performing in this way as a child, De Wet realized the potential of puppets as a teaching medium.

After the depression of the 1930s, the family moved to the town of Beaufort West, where De Wet saw a Punch and Judy show at school. De Wet later learned to make puppets as part of his training as a teacher, but no instruction was given on how to use them as teaching aids. De Wet was convinced of their ability to help children relax and talk and he has used puppets for these purposes throughout his career (Kampher, 2003:1).

De Wet taught English as a second language in Van Rhynsdorp and Elsie's River (Cape Province) as well as special English classes for local children in Retreat. He

later worked as an Art specialist in Wildemere (Cape Province). In Elsie's River, De Wet used to give puppet shows above his kitchen stable door.

Later De Wet took a year's Art course at Hewat Training College and ended up giving weekly puppet shows in which students were involved at every level - making and manipulating, designing and creating scenery, doing lighting and backstage work.

De Wet met Josef Conrÿn who visited Stellenbosch University in 1964 to start a course in puppeteering. They kept in contact through correspondence and this led to an invitation from the German Puppet Institute in Bochum to attend a month-long puppeteering course (Retreat's Gipetto throws..., S.a: n.p.). De Wet later returned to Germany twice for follow-up courses. During the 1980s he performed as De Wet Puppets (Kampher, 2003: 1), but no specific reference could be found. No additional information up to 1990 could be gleaned from sources available to the researcher.

By 1991 De Wet had retired to his home in Maitland, Cape Town, because illness had forced him to give up teaching and his puppet shows. His collection of puppets was passed on to actor Joseph Mitchell. These puppets were glove puppets with stylized carved wooden heads (Retreat's Gipetto throws..., S. a: n.p.).

On 20 April 1991 UNIMA, Cape Town saluted De Wet and his work.

“Illness had dogged De Wet's footsteps and had slowly made it more and more difficult for him to continue with his puppetry. When he found he could not lift his arms above his head, his wife Rose, and a young devotee named Stanley, would support his arms while

he performed. When De Wet had even less use of his arms, he still managed to manipulate, and proved it by demonstrating a most convincing *tortoise*, a *dog* and a *snake*.

Gawie is a brave and lovable person, and we in UNIMA wished to mark this occasion by presenting him with a citation, which read: To our dear Gawie, in admiration and appreciation of the many years you have lovingly devoted to inspiring peace, kindness and goodwill through the medium of puppetry. With blessing and love, UNIMA South Africa” (UNIMA, 1991b:1).

De Wet died on 16 September 1994 and UNIMA, Cape Town paid tribute to “Gawie who loved his fellow man, and in Puppetry he found the ideal medium to express this love, promoting peace and harmony” (UNIMA, 1994c:1).

### **2.12.2 Productions and performances**

1977

Untitled - according to a UNIMA, Cape Town newsletter (1977:1), De Wet performed on 2 April at the DRL Mission Hall and at 16<sup>th</sup> Avenue Factreton, Cape Town. No further details about the specific show were available.

1978 – 1982

No record could be found of performances during this period.

1983

Untitled - De Wet and his wife, Rose toured the Boland (Western Province) with their wooden puppets. No further details, were given about this show (Retreat's Gipetto throws..., S.a: n.p.).

1984 – 1985

No record could be found of performances during this period.

1986

Untitled - De Wet performed at the Karl Bremer Hospital and at the Baptist Church, Manenberg on 6 December (UNIMA, 1986b:1).

1987 – 1990

No record could be found of performances during this period.

1991

Untitled - De Wet gave a performance with a *tortoise*, a *dog* and a *snake* on 20 April at a UNIMA, Cape Town meeting, where tribute was paid to his devotion to puppetry over the years.

De Wet's play about a girl who was dissatisfied with her looks was performed at an UNIMA Cape Town, meeting on 9 November. In the story the girl was given various faces that pleased her even less, and made her happy to regain her original one. "As always there was a strong moral message which came over very well. The fact that the characters stood and moved on the table did not

detract in any way, and Gawie is to be admired for his adaptation of style” (UNIMA, 1991b:1).

1992

Die Verlore Katjie - was performed by De Wet in the Nico Malan Theatre foyer, Cape Town on 6 January as part of the Puppet Alive exhibition and festival arranged by UNIMA, Cape Town (UNIMA, 1991d: 2).

1993

No record could be found of performances during this year.

1994

Untitled - in April, when a number of UNIMA members went to visit De Wet on his birthday, they were treated to a puppet show performed by Rose de Wet and Eddie Kampher, directed by De Wet (UNIMA, 1994b:1).

**2.13 DE WET PUPPETS (refer to DE WET, GAWIE)**

**2.14 DODDERS, CATHY (refer to The PUPPET PEOPLE)**

## **2.15 DOMMISSE, JAQUELINE (also refer to The PUPPET PEOPLE)**

### **2.15.1 Background**

Jaqueline Dommisse (néé Dodders) was born on 3 September 1963 and matriculated in 1981 at the Krugersdorp High School. She obtained a BA Dramatic Art degree from the University of the Witwatersrand in 1985.

Dommisse started her career as a stage manager for Children's Theatre Productions, a Johannesburg-based Theatre Company, in 1986 and worked for the company until 1987. Dommisse became a freelance actor in 1988 and worked for Out of the Box, managed by Annie Barnes, in Johannesburg, as well as for Story Spinners, which was based at the Baxter Theatre in Cape Town.

In 1991 Dommisse and Cathy Dodders launched The Puppet People, and toured the Western Cape Province until 1998. Dommisse wrote scripts, designed and constructed puppets and produced puppet shows (Dommisse, 2003:1 – 5), assisted by Dodders.

In 1999 Dommisse directed Eve...lution, which was performed at the Coffee Lounge in Cape Town, for Hearts and Eyes Theatre Collective. The show was a woman-centred production (Dommisse, 2003:6).

Dommisse has been a member of the following associations:

- 1985 – 1999 SA Guild of Speech and Drama Teachers

- 1992 – 1999 UNIMA
- 1995 – 1999 SAADYT (South African Association of Drama and Youth Theatre)
- 1995 – 1996 Committee of the Cape Eisteddfod, Speech and Drama where she developed a new syllabus and organized events.

From 1998 until 2002 Dommissie taught and facilitated various puppetry-related workshops for:

the Baxter Theatre for BUWA, Community Theatre Festival.

an YPTET (Young People's Theatre Education Trust) residence project.

BA Drama students at the University of Cape Town.

the Boland Theatre and Drama residence project.

Community Arts Project Workshops.

Remix Theatre Company in integrated theatre for able-bodied and disabled performers.

Dommissie has not only worked as puppeteer, but also as a director and teacher.

She has an interest in improvisation as a performance medium, as a tool for devising performances and a method for training actors (Dommissie, 2003:1 – 5).



### 2.15.2 Productions and performances

1991

For productions and performances during this year, refer to The Puppet People.

1992

The Story of Jason's Teeth - the production was intended to draw attention to Dental Care Week. Like most children, *Jason* preferred junk food to healthy food. *Gerry* and *Penny* (germ and plaque) found Jason's mouth and teeth the ideal place to set up house. The show began with the children entering the set through the mouth of Jason via the gullet, entered the mouth across the tongue, and then took their place in the audience. The two germs were puppets manipulated by Dommisse and Cathy Stewart. The show went on tour in the Cape Town Area from 19 – 28 August (Teeth lessons done..., 1992:n.p.). The Story of Jason's Teeth was produced and directed by Cheryl Abromowitz of Stagecraft Casting at the Nico Malan Theatre Foyer from 10 – 18 August (Give a smile..., 1992:13).



**Fig.2.14.** Dommisse and Cathy Stewart with *Gerry* and *Penny* (germ and plaque) from Jason's Teeth (Teeth Lesson done..., 1992:n.p.)

1992 -1998

For productions and performances during this period, refer to The Puppet People.

1999 – 2001

During this period Dommissie taught and facilitated various puppetry-related workshops (refer to background) but no productions were staged (Dommissie, 2003:6).

2002

The Fable of the Mermaid and the Drunks - this was what could be termed an 'integrated' theatre production - a new direction in contemporary dance and physical theatre, where disabled and able-bodied people work together both on- and offstage. This production was the Remix Theatre Company's first effort at puppetry.

Dommissie quoted by Willoughby (2002: IX) said:

"In this production there are moments when the puppets integrate with the dance and ignite the performance. The result is spellbinding, proving yet again that puppetry is a powerful medium that should not be considered only as children's theatre".

The production was based on a poem by Pablo Neruda, a Spanish political refugee, and the crux of the work was the ill-treatment of a mermaid, due to a misconception. Sudi Kapangura and Nicola Visser performed in the production and operated the marionettes. The two marionettes were *The Mermaid* and *Little Sudi*, both designed and made by Dommissie, using wood and papier-mâché were used.

“One of the most moving moments in the play Jacqueline says, is when Sudi, who needs crutches to walk, manipulates a duplicate marionette of himself – and it walks!” (Fletcher, J. 2002:n.p.).

A sequence of shadow puppetry was also incorporated into the show, which was a story about mermaids from central Africa. While Kapangura told the story, the puppets were operated by Visser behind a screen improvised on an upturned table. Wheelchair dancer, Malcolm Black, founder of Remix Dance Project and a self-taught artist, designed and created the shadow puppets with Dommisse’s help (Dommisse, 2004:1). Dommisse directed The Fable of the Mermaid and the Drunks for Remix Theatre Company, which was staged at the Intimate Theatre, Cape Town from 12 – 18 December.



**Fig. 2.15.** Nicola Visser with the *Mermaid* and Sudi Kapangura from The Fable of the Mermaid and the Drunks (Dommisse, 2003)

2003

The Alchemist’s Heart - the show was based on a true story as told by Anton Krugel and written by Peter Hays. The company PHDT (Peter Hays Does Theatre)

conceptualized the street theatre project, which Peter Hays and Warona Seane performed in different locations. Only one character was ever seen at a time. It was nine minutes in length and it included puppetry, live action, magic, projected images, special effects and paper engineering (Dommissie, 2004:1).

The story was broken into various images and image sequences, then becoming reality by using the afore-mentioned techniques. In the scene where *Chris* breaks up with *Anton*, for example, the set comes crashing down to illustrate *Anton's* world falling apart.

The Alchemist's Heart included Sicilian style marionettes, as well as shadow puppets. The two actors manipulated the puppets in full view of the audience. Two sets of puppets were constructed. These were portrait puppets of about 35 cm and 20 cm in height. As the story unfolded, *Chris* was either the small puppet, the large puppet or the actor / puppeteer. The scale of the set changed depending on which *Chris* was being used. The set was designed on a revolving stage, creating seamless transitions between the different set pieces – hotel room, street scene and opera house. The puppeteer/actor was in the middle of the revolving stage (Dommissie, 2004:1).

The stage manager and cast operated the shadow puppets onto a screen, mounted behind the revolving stage, above the actor's head. Dommissie did not make the puppets for the show, but consulted with the designer of the show, Patrick de Wet and also trained the actors to operate the puppets.

Dommissie directed The Alchemist's Heart, which premiered at the National Arts Festival, Grahamstown as part of the Main Festival. It was produced by PHDT in association with the Grahamstown Foundation (Dommissie, 2003:5). Previews of the production were presented at the Baxter Theatre, Cape Town from 18 to 20 June. The production was also staged at the *Suidoostefees* in the Western Cape (Dommissie, 2005:1).

2004

During this period Dommissie taught and facilitated various puppetry-related workshops but no productions were staged.

## **2.16 DONALD, JANNI**

### **2.16.1 Background**

Janni Donald was born in Cape Town on 22 April 1975. While still at school in 1990, she became a member of UNIMA, Cape Town and regularly attended meetings until graduating in 1998 with a Bachelor of Arts in Fine Art from the University of Cape Town. As a student, she was awarded the C G Saker Scholarship for Sculpture.

From 1991 to 1992 Donald did a part-time apprenticeship with Nina Gerasimov, former head puppeteer of the Bolshoi Theatre, St. Petersburg in Cape Town and from June to September 1994, she did an apprenticeship with the puppeteer Bob Hartman of Hartman Entertainment in San Francisco, United States of America.

From 1992 to 1998 Donald was a part-time manipulator for the company Funny Puppets in Cape Town, run by Nina Gerasimov and from 1993 – 1998 she regularly performed in schools, hospitals and private homes in Cape Town. In 1993 Donald was a member of the cast and scriptwriting team for *Peace Child South Africa*, a Peace Child International production (Donald, 2004b:5).

During 1996, she gave workshops on the construction and performance of puppets at the National Gallery, Kirstenbosch Goldfields Centre, Herzlia Highlands Primary School and at Westerford High School, Cape Town.

From 1999 – 2002 Donald studied puppetry at Charleville-Mezières, France where she obtained the *Diplome d'Erat des Métiers des Arts de la Marionette* (Diploma of Puppetry) from ESNAM, the *École Supérieure Nationale des Arts de la Marionette* (Higher National School of Puppetry Arts). During this period she received a grant from the Michael Tesson Trust for Performing Arts (2000/2001) to study in France and a grant from *Defi Jeune* for Chasing Shadows – a cultural exchange and research project on puppetry in Thailand, as well as from UNIMA, for the research of Thai puppetry (Donald, 2004b: 5).

Donald was elected as chairperson of UNIMA, South Africa in 2003 when she returned from her studies in France. She is at the beginning of a full-time career as professional puppeteer. She founded a company, Lynx Theatre, in July 2003.

According to Donald (2004b: 1) “Lynx creates visually rich and exciting theatrical projects that convey meaning within a modern South Africa, using diverse mediums

to communicate beyond words.” Donald also works as part-time actor with the Odd Enjinears as part of Odd Experiments (Donald, 2003a:2).

During 2004 Donald researched and curated an exhibition of Malian puppets called Patrimony in the Sasol Art Gallery in Stellenbosch, the Irma Stern Museum in Cape Town, the Gold of Africa Museum in Cape Town and Museum Africa in Johannesburg, which was produced by the Handspring Puppet Company (Donald, 2005:1).

## **2.16.2 Productions and performances**

1993

Untitled - at a UNIMA, Cape Town meeting on 4 December the following was stated:

“Janni Donald set up her attractive theatre, which has matured beautifully (as has Janni) and proceeded to give us a show that did her credit. Full marks to her expressive Dragon, painted in marvellous iridescent blues and greens, with sparkling eyes, ethereal wings and mobile mouth on an extending neck “ (UNIMA, 1994a:1)”.

1993 - 1998

Donald intermittently performed at schools and hospitals until 1998. No records were kept of these performances. Donald could only recall:

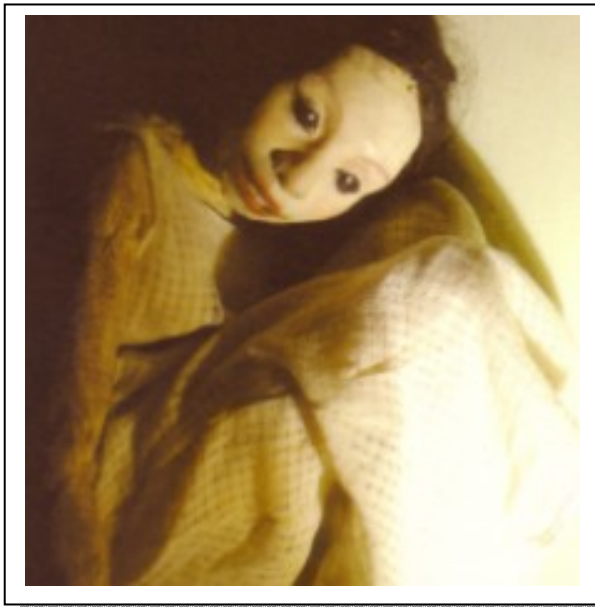
The Princess and the Unicorn – was aimed at children performed at the first African International Puppet Theatre Festival at the Johannesburg Civic Theatre from 18 – 25 September 1995 (Donald, 2004a:1).

1999 - 2000

From 1999 to 2000 puppet shows were performed overseas and as part of Donald's studies:

The Jury - was a short, wordless piece of street theatre with Donald acting with a large puppet *springbok*. It was a solo street performance, staged in London from August to September (Donald, 2004a:1).

Cabaret – a group show was performed with students of ESNAM in the *In programme* of the *Festival Mondial des Theatres de la Marionette*, Charleville-Mézières, France in 2000 (Donald, 2004b: 5).



**Fig.2.16.** *Fille* made by Donald for her studies at ESNAM, France and **Fig. 2.17.** Donald with *Fille* (Donald, 2003a).

2001

No productions were staged.



2002

“Z” Comme Zorro - the show was performed as part of the diploma for ESNAM, for which Donald was puppet maker.

Sortie de Secours - the show was part of Donald’s diploma performance for ESNAM where she was actor, scenographer, puppet maker and assistant director (Donald, 2003a).

Gulliver, without Fear in the Eyes - was performed in Kilkis, Greece, with Donald as scenographer, puppet maker and assistant director. Shadow puppets were used on big draped scenic cloths, together with life-size puppets (Donald, 2004b: 5).

2003

Fine Line - was based on an idea by Mike Kantey. It was “a play that reads between the lines of history to explore dreams of change” (Donald, 2004c: 7).

“The play started in a restaurant on present-day Vergelegen. Waitresses introducing the specials of the day get carried away into telling stories of the historical figures, after whom the dishes are named...

They take us back to the early 1700s in the Cape Colony where a slave woman, Suraya, meets Adam Tas – leader of the ‘free burghers’ rebellion’...

The Colony at the time is rife with corruption and exploitation – the Governor is amassing fortunes for himself, monopolizing trade with passing ships. While Tas and the burghers are plotting to bring about a change of fortune for the suppressed free burghers, Suraya dreams of an egalitarian society. Drawn together by their wishes for change, Tas and Suraya fall in love...

But Suraya has a history of her own. She is a former member of the Batavian aristocracy, deported by the Dutch for her role in the resistance to their rule in her home country...

A friend from those revolutionary times in Batavia asks her to leave Tas to live with him in the village of escaped slaves at Hangklip, claiming her trust in Tas is misplaced. But she will never know unless she waits. After 14 months in jail, Tas is released and now Suraya must see if Tas is willing to use his newfound status to further their ideals of equality...

The waitresses are played by actresses while the historical characters are large puppets. Freed from the constraints of the human body, the puppet characters move expressively. Their neutral faces allow the audience to project their own emotions onto the characters. These sewn, stuffed figures remind the audience that the story and the characters, as well as their own views of them, are but constructs based on a skeleton of 'truth' (Donald, 2004c:7)

The four actresses performing alongside the large rag-doll type puppets (UNIMA, 2003c:3) were Aja Marneweck, Faniswa Yisa, Tali Cervati and Vaneshree Lingham. Donald directed, co-wrote and designed Fine Line with Luke Younge. They developed this experimental puppet performance for Lynx Theatre, which was performed for the Cape WOW (Women of the World) festival at Artscape on 9 August in the Arena Theatre (UNIMA, 2003b:1). An extract of the show was also performed at a UNIMA meeting on 26 July at the Frank Joubert Art Centre, Newlands, in Cape Town.

The Little Giant - was a 25-minute show family show and a story of kindness and transformation. The show unfolded in a marionette theatre with two performers manipulating the marionettes.

“The story starts in a city where Maria, a little girl is trying to plant a flower. A passing truck crushes the flower and she is sad. The city is bleak and grey and nothing grows there. One day, for no particular reason, a little giant falls into the middle of the city. Eventually she befriends the giant who after many trials and tribulations, makes trees and grass grow everywhere” (Donald, 2004c: 4).

The show was performed during December, in Cavendish Square, Cape Town.

Who Eats Who - was a food chain story performed at the Two Oceans Aquarium, Cape Town. Glove puppets, which were originally designed by Sheryl Abromowitz for the same script, were used. Donald re-wrote the script and helped train the manipulators (Donald, 2004c:1).

2004

Elise's Adventures in Congoland – written, designed and directed for Sogo Theatre by Donald as part of her master's degree in Theatre Performance at UCT. The show was performed at The Playroom in Cape Town (Donald, 2005:1).

Donald (UNIMA, 2004g: 1) stated:

“With this piece I have been investigating how to represent multiple aspects of the self in theatre by constructed images (puppets, projections and shadow)”.

The Fire Raisers –puppets designed and constructed for Magnet Theatre in collaboration with the Swiss company, Theatre Spirale (UNIMA, 2004f: 2). The show included five life-size *Fireman* puppets made by Donald. For this she was nominated for a Fleur du Cap award in the Best Technical Contribution to Theatre category (Donald, 2005:1).

The show was performed at The Baxter Theatre in Cape Town, the Schlachthaus in Bern, La Parfumerie in Geneva and Temple Allemand in La Chaux-de-Fonds, France (Donald, 2005:1).

**2.17 DOVE, MIKE AND MARGE (SUNSHINE KIDS PUPPETRY MINISTRY:  
1977-2001. JOY COMPANY BLACKLIGHT  
PRODUCTIONS: 2002-2004)**

**2.17.1 Background**

Marge Dove matriculated at the School for Art, Ballet and Music in Johannesburg and she danced for PACT (Performing Arts Council, Transvaal) Ballet at the State Theatre in Pretoria before she got married and had children. Her dancing experience has helped with the choreography when directing puppet shows. Mike Dove is a businessman based in Durban (Dove, 2002).

The couple established the Sunshine Kids Puppetry Ministry in 1977 in Durban after they had attended a Christian Conference at Rhema Church in Johannesburg, where puppetry was used. They had never before been exposed to this medium, but were both instantly enchanted by the art form. Since 1977 they have built up a team of thirteen members. Some of the members are teenagers who are not permanently employed and often leave after a short while. They regularly train new members, although some have been with them for more than four years. The company changed its name to Joy Company Blacklight Productions in 2002.

The puppets that used are generally based on the Muppet-type puppets mostly imported from the United Kingdom, United States of America, or Canada. The puppets bought from One Way Street in Canada are made from foam, covered with ultra-violet stretch material.

The Doves and their company hold performances every Sunday and do approximately 15 outreach programmes in the community each year. They are affiliated to Hillcrest Christian Fellowship in Durban and are often invited to perform in other venues in the Durban area.

All the shows have religious themes. The shows are choreographed and directed, using existing music sound tracks. Initially the performances were on stage but in 2002 they started to perform in front of the stage to have better contact with their audiences (Dove, 2002).

Their first shows were done in white light, but after having attended the International Festival of Christian Puppetry in Chicago in 1999, they started doing shows in blacklight. For blacklight theatre, the stage and puppeteers are in black and ultra violet lights are used to bring out the puppets that are painted in ultra violet colours. This gives the shows a kind of floating magical effect (2002e).

#### **2.17.2 Production and performances (refer to SUNSHINE KIDS PUPPETRY MINISTRY)**

#### **2.18 DREYER, THARRIE (refer to ZIETSMAN, THARRIE)**

## **2.19 ERASMUS, MIRIAM**

### **2.19.1 Background**

Miriam Erasmus (néé Backhouse), or Auntie Mim, as she is known to children in the KwaZulu-Natal area, was born on 13 May 1948 in Lewes, Sussex, England. She studied various musical instruments from the age of five. After school she studied Music and Teaching in Drama as well as Laban Movement at the Margaret Mac Millan College of Education, Bradford, Yorkshire. She specialized in Pre-school Education and also obtained a Certificate in Education from Leeds University.

For the first three years after her studies, she taught Music, Movement and Sport at Raistrick Secondary School. She started the Brighthouse Folk club and became a professional folk singer, touring the United Kingdom and Europe. In 1977, after having married John Erasmus, she moved from the UK to Durban, where she had a son in 1978 and a daughter in 1981. During this time she put her singing career on hold. In 1982 she formed The Handy Spandy Players. She co-devised and composed the music for 10 educational programmes incorporating puppets that toured Natal schools until 2003. In 1985 she founded the Durban Folk Club of which she is now a life member.

In 1987 she resumed her career as a professional singer and songwriter. Between 1982 and 2003 she and John Erasmus developed and composed 32 educational

theme programmes and puppet shows for all ages, as well as retro songs for functions and music for senior citizens.

Erasmus writes all the scripts for the puppet series Suzy's Supa Dupa Puppet Shows. These shows are plus minus 45 minutes in duration and target children from ages 3 – 12 years. *Suzy, Granny and Christopher Crocodile* are well-known puppet characters amongst the children of KwaZulu-Natal (Erasmus, 2002a).

John Erasmus arranges all the songs for keyboard accompaniments (between them they play  $\pm$  12 instruments) and makes all the props, while Miriam Erasmus makes the glove puppets or adapts the puppets, obtained from various sources (Erasmus, 2002a).



**Fig. 2.18.** Miriam and John Erasmus (Erasmus, 2002b).

## 2.19.2 Productions and performances

1982 - 1995

In 1982 Erasmus started Suzy's Supa Dupa Puppet Shows and over the years a number of puppet shows featuring *Suzy* were developed and performed at various venues in KwaZulu-Natal.

Very little detailed references could be found of specific shows between 1982 and 2001, apart from one in 1996. When the researcher attended a show in 2002 she was able to view the glove puppets.

1996

In an article on puppet shows at the Natal Playhouse, Suter (1996b:2) mentioned the following shows involving *Suzy*, developed up to 1996:

Supa Dupa Christmas Puppet Show, Seaside Suzy, The Nursery Rhyme Show, The Easter Puppet Show, as well as Suzy Goes to the North Pole, which was first presented by Erasmus in 1989.

Suzy Goes to the North Pole - in this show *Suzy* sets out to find *Father Christmas* with many adventures *en route*. She meets *Penguin*, *Christopher Crocodile*, and a polar bear called *Olav*, *Mr Magic Midnight*, *Jack Frost*, *the Snow Queen* and *Santa*.

Nine songs were written by Erasmus in this show and according to Suter (1996b:2) it



was suitable for children up to the age of 10. This show was performed at the Playhouse, Durban from 18 – 31 December.



**Fig.2. 19.** *Snow Queen* from *Suzy* visits the North Pole; **Fig.2. 20. and 2. 21.** *Ningi* and *Shushila* from *Globe-trotting Suzy*; **Fig. 2.22.** *Suzy* from the *Supa Dupa Puppet Shows* (Erasmus, 2003: CD).

1997 – 2001

No record could be found of specific shows presented by Erasmus during this period.

2002

Suzy's Supa Dupa Puppet Shows - included the following 45-minute shows, which were staged one at a time while touring Natal schools (Erasmus 2002b:2):

- Birthday – for schools and private parties
- Entrepreneurs - is a show in which *Suzy* shops for her birthday party.
- Christmas – traditional Christmas Eve with *Suzy* and *Santa*.
- Christmas seaside Suzy – *Suzy* has Christmas in Durban.
- Easter – *Suzy* and the *Easter Bunny*.
- Manners - is about basic, civilized behaviour.

- Nursery rhymes – with *Suzy* and friends.
- Globe – trotting Suzy – about kindness and understanding.
- Holiday – *Seaside Suzy* at the beach, an animal farm and at a crocodile farm.

While still on holiday at the seaside *Suzy* and *Grandma* met various characters like *Christopher Crocodile* (a glove puppet made from an oven glove) a *Bunny*, a *Polar Bear*, a *Snake* and *Donkey* (also made from oven gloves). The show started off in *Grandma's* kitchen and then moved to the seaside depicted by a brightly painted backdrop.

Erasmus made the glove puppets of *Suzy* and *Grandma*. The puppets resembled traditional rag dolls with round flat heads, stuffed to give fullness, with painted features. All the *Suzy* characters were attired in garments made from opulent textiles, jewellery and hair decorations to provide detail. The puppets were about 30 cm in height (2002d).

The portable puppet theatre used in all the shows was made by John Erasmus from metal parts which slot together. Each show had its own backdrop painted to suit the specific puppet story. Erasmus did all the voices live via microphone and John Erasmus added commentary together with sound recordings and the live keyboard while children often joined in (2002d).

**2.20 FLETCHER, TONY AND JILL (Variously known as The CAPE PUPPET PLAYERS, The TONY FLETCHER GLOVE PUPPET COMPANY, FLETCHER’S PUPPETS, FLETCHER’S MARIONETTES, The BARNSTORMERS) (also refer to CAPAB)**

**2.20.1 Background**

Anthony (Tony) Fletcher was born on 22 January 1931 in the United Kingdom. He started performing as an actor in the United Kingdom in 1943 but he only started developing his skills as a magician in 1952. He came to Cape Town to join the South African Navy in 1961. In the same year he became involved in children’s entertainment as a professional magician and started work as a puppeteer from 1962.

His interest in puppetry started during World War II, when at the age of eleven, he was evacuated to Cornwall where he saw his first puppet show. He later saw the Hogarth Puppets performing with a pianist puppet and then taught himself to make puppets. A number of his marionettes involve trick stringing – his special skill - but he uses all types of puppets (Fletcher, T, 2002).

Fletcher’s first short solo marionette show was in 1962/1963 with the Puppet Pianist in the Somerset West Town Hall. The first full marionette show was a pantomime, Little Bo-Peep, at the Masque Theatre, Muizenberg. As a puppeteer, his work

included Alfred Warder of the Tower, The Pollution Monster and Jan van Riebeeck – History of Cape Town for the Masque Theatre (Fletcher, T, 2002).

Between 1962 and 2003, Fletcher performed under various company names such as The Cape Puppet Players (1973), The Tony Fletcher Glove Puppet Company (1973), Fletcher's Puppets (1989), Fletcher's Marionettes (1993), and the Barnstormers (1994), with Jill Fletcher joining as manipulator in 1973.

According to Schwenke (1984:1), The Cape Puppet Players performed during the 1970s (no specific year mentioned) around Cape Town, at children's birthday parties, on beaches and at schools.

During 1973, the Fletchers performed as the Cape Puppet Players with the show Mrs Emm and the Whale / Mev. Emm en die Walvis, for CAPAB at the Nico Malan Theatre in Cape Town. The show was written by Jill Fletcher, with Tony Fletcher directing (Schwenke, 1984: 36).

In 1973 the Fletchers also performed as The Tony Fletcher Glove Puppet Company at the Claremont Civic Centre. Glove puppets were used to present nursery rhymes. A Winnie the Pooh sequence was done with large marionettes, followed by Peter and the Wolf and a modern melodrama in which the villain was a balloon puppet who met his fate at the hand of a dastardly pin (Fletcher, T, 2002).

As the Cape Puppet Players, the Fletchers again performed Mrs Emm and the Circus/Mev Emm en die Sirkus for CAPAB at the Nico Malan Theatre in 1974 (Schwenke, 1984:36). In September of the same year, Tony Fletcher performed in the United Kingdom with his marionettes (Fletcher, T, 2002).

Fletcher was appointed as director of PACOF's newly created marionette company in October 1979. His wife, Jill, moved to Bloemfontein in January 1980 to join him as manipulator (UNIMA, 1979b:1). Fletcher returned to Cape Town in 1981, where in 1990 he was appointed as puppet master of the CAPAB Puppet Company.

Since his retirement from the South African Navy, he has performed at various shopping centres and has run workshops for schools or small groups. During 2002 Fletcher was involved as a teacher in Puppetry at the New Africa Theatre Association for disadvantaged children. The aim was to teach Puppetry through very rudimentary puppets, made from recycled materials and to let the children tell their own stories. He also taught Puppetry at the Waterfront Theatre School during this period (Fletcher, T, 2002).

Fletcher hosted a UNIMA, Cape Town, meeting on 21 September 2002 where he told the members about the bridging course on puppetry for adults at the New Africa Theatre Association. Fletcher discussed operating techniques with glove puppets and exercises to hone the skills needed (Freedman, 2002a: 1).

Jill Fletcher died in 2003 after a long illness.

## 2.20.2 Productions and performances

The Fletchers kept no detailed records and productions were intermittently presented with various companies (refer to background), which were not always specifically mentioned in reports or articles.

1975 - 1976

The Cape Puppet Players organised the Cape Town Puppet Festival in the Rondebosch Town Hall from 24 March – 6 April 1975 (Fletcher, T, 2002).

Mrs Emm and the Circus / *Mev Emm en die Sirkus* (refer to background) - Tony and Jill Fletcher's Cape Puppet Players again presented the show, for Hofmeyer Puppets, at the Nico Malan Theatre, Cape Town.

Mrs Emm and her Children Danie and Patti / *Mev. Emm en haar Kinders Danie en Patti* - was presented by CAPAB Afrikaans Drama from December 1975 until 4 January 1976 (Marionette Nativity, 1975: 12).

1977

Untitled - Tony and Jill Fletcher staged shows as part of the Cape Town Festival at Cape Town Station in April on Mondays and Wednesdays (UNIMA, 1977:1).

1979

Puppet Fun - was presented by The Cape Puppet Players for People's Space, Cape Town during December (Schwenke, 1984:44).

1980

Untitled - a programme of magic and a hand puppet play by Tony and Jill Fletcher was performed at the Nico Malan Theatre on 4 and 5 July (Holloway, 1980: 6).

1981

Aspoestertjie – the Fletchers staged the show for PACOFS (Performing Arts Council of the Free State) in Bloemfontein according to Fletcher (2002). No written record could be found to verify this (refer to background).

1982 – 1984

No record could be found of shows performed during this period.

1985

Master Peter's Puppet Show – the show, written by Manuel de Falla, was performed with the Cape Town Symphony Orchestra at the Cape Town City Hall and at the Baxter Theatre, Cape Town, during December. On this UNIMA reported:

“We would like to congratulate the Fletchers for undertaking this difficult project, with its complex music, which made taxing demands on the manipulators. The fact that it happened at all was an important step for South African puppetry and shows an enlightened attitude towards

puppets on the part of the CTSO. This piece is not often performed and is even less often performed as originally intended: with puppets. Apart from the difficulty of the music itself, there were also problems with the positioning of the puppet stage, the puppeteers were sited above and behind the orchestra, thus severing important contact between them and rendered the beautiful costumes of the puppets difficult to see from the audience” (UNIMA, 1986a: 1).

1986

Jill Fletcher performed at various shopping centres in the Cape Town area during the December period (UNIMA, 1986b:2). No other information about the shows was given.

1989

Fletcher demonstrated some of his cabaret marionettes at a UNIMA, Cape Town meeting on 17 June.

“Among these marionettes were Louis Armstrong, a violinist, Dolly Parton and a versatile pianist who gave a realistic performance, whether sitting on the floor, or on the piano. His hands were beautifully carved and, when applied to the foam rubber keys, gave the illusion that the fingers were actually moving. Tony’s timing is a thing to be wondered at, amid that welter of strings and things, and he obviously has a very musical ear regardless of what he says to the contrary. The programme finished with a demonstration of the disintegrating skeleton” (UNIMA, 1989:1).





**Fig. 2.23.** Fletcher with *Dolly Parton*, *Violinist* and *Professor* the pianist. Photo: Waldemar Swierczewski (Fletcher, 2002.)

Untitled – was a variety performance by Fletcher’s Puppets. Jill Fletcher gave glove puppets shows, along with Charlotte Morkel and Gillian Barton, while Tony Fletcher followed with magic tricks and a marionette show. It was performed at the Nico Malan Arena Theatre, Cape Town from 3 – 14 July.

1990

Since ± 1990 Fletcher has specialized in a marionette cabaret act with various marionettes like *The Pianist*, *The Stripper*, *The Skeleton*, *The Mummy*, *Louis Armstrong*, *Dolly Parton*, *The Violin Player*, and *Michael Jackson*. The act was performed at various venues in the Cape Town area until 2002.

1991

The Little Mermaid / Die Kleine Meerman, - was staged for the CAPAB Puppet Company. Fletcher was puppetmaster with five other puppeteers for this show (refer to 2.7.2:68).

“Puppeteer Tony Fletcher skilfully manipulated a jazz saxophonist, a jolly pianist an expressive violinist and a slinky sequin-clad Dolly

Parton belting out her 9 to 5 number...The tragic story of the unhappy mermaid is presented against the backdrop of spectacular sets filled with all sorts of moving sea creatures. There's a blood red sea anemone, various fish species, a protective sea mother, a wicked witch clutched in the bosom of a slimy octopus and of course, mermaids" (Shelley, 1991:17).

1992

Nomhle and Ngcuka – Fletcher was appointed puppet master for the show that was presented in the Nico Malan Arena Theatre, Cape Town from 25 July – 15 August 1992 (refer to **2.7.2:66**) .

1993

Mrs Emm and the Whale / Mev Emm en die Walvis – was performed by the Fletchers on 27 February together with various UNIMA members. The show was part of the first anniversary celebrations of Mini-Cape, Cape Town. Fletcher's Marionettes also presented Mrs Emm and the Whale during April in the Tip Top Tent at Mini Cape, Tygervalley, Cape Town (Bester, 1993: 10).

Circus Fantasy - was presented at the Standard Bank National Arts Festival, Grahamstown. Tony Fletcher and Thomas Wehrli were the puppeteers. It was later presented at Mini-Cape, Cape Town from 16 – 18 July in a large circus tent (UNIMA, 1993b:1).

1994

Jill and Tony Fletcher converted an old barn into a puppet theatre and centre in Cape Town in 1994. Since then numerous productions (specifically aimed at children) have

been presented at the Old Barn Theatre under the company name, The Barnstormers (UNIMA, 1994b:1).

Graskop Races Home – was a pantomime staged during the June – July holiday period. It included a dream sequence with shadow puppets (UNIMA, 1994c:1)

1995

Save our Vlei – was presented during the *Klein Karoo Nasionale Kunstefees* in Oudtshoorn.

1996

Cabaret Marionette – this act was performed by Fletcher at the hall of the Castle of Good Hope, Cape Town on 24 September (UNIMA, 1996b:1).

1997 – 2001

Although various attempts were made to obtain information from Fletcher regarding this period, no information was received and no further references could be found.

2002

Marionette Variety Show - this cabaret was performed by the Fletchers at the Masque Theatre, Muizenberg from 26 June – 4 July (Unima, 2002a: 1).

2002 – 2004

No reference of performances during this period could be found.

## **2.21 FLETCHER'S PUPPETS (refer to FLETCHER, TONY AND JILL)**

## **2.22 FLETCHER'S MARIONETTES (refer to FLETCHER, TONY AND JILL)**

## **2.23 FRIEDMAN, GARY (also refer to AREPP, ROYAL PUPPET COMPANY)**

### **2.23.1 Background**

Gary Friedman was born in Cape Town on 19 May 1956. Friedman's interest in puppets stems back to his childhood. By the time he was ten years old, he was giving puppet shows at children's parties. He matriculated at Abbott's College, Cape Town in 1974 and obtained a BA Drama degree at the University of Cape Town in 1977. In 1977 he founded the one-man Royal Puppet Company at the People's Space Theatre in Cape Town, which operated until 1987. He was the sole member for the shows until 1982, after which other puppeteers were sometimes included. Friedman (2002b) stated that the reason he did in fact become involved with puppetry, was that he found it easier to communicate through puppets. This fact manifested itself in the show Looking for a Monster (2001) in which a Jewish boy uses puppets to communicate his story.

Apart from local performances, Friedman has also performed at various International Puppet Festivals (refer to productions and performances below). He appeared as a guest on a CBS Christmas Television special, *It takes all kinds*, in Los Angeles, United States of America during 1979.

From 1981 – 1982 he studied at the *Institute International de la Marionette* in Charleville-Mezières, France on a French Ministry of Culture scholarship and obtained the UNIMA International Puppetry Diploma.

During 1987, he studied Puppetry for Film and Television under Jim Henson, creator of the Muppets, at the *Institute International de la Marionette* in Charleville-Mezières, France and he also attended a Theatre of Metamorphosis puppetry course presented by Henk Boerwinkel of the *Figurentheater Triangle* in The Netherlands. He also attended a master class in Theatre Direction at the Puppet Centre, London presented by Henryk Jurkowski from Bialystok University, Poland and Joseph Krofta, director of Drak Theatre in the Czech Republic (Friedman 2002a: 3).

On his return to South Africa in 1987, Friedman founded and directed the African Research and Educational Puppetry Programme (AREPP) in Johannesburg, which he headed until 1995 (refer to AREPP). From 1995 Friedman also presented puppet shows under the name Gary Friedman Productions.

During 1996 Friedman, along with Nyanga Tshabalala, founded Puppets in Prison, a peer-group educational theatre project in South African prisons. This project ran until 1997.

Friedman started producing shows for television in 1997. His best-known work for television was School TV – The Pezoolies - which he co-produced for SABC Educational Television from 1999 – 2001.

In 2002 Friedman moved to Australia after being awarded a Distinguished Talent visa by the Australian Government to reside and work in that country. In October he presented a paper, Puppets and Politics at the International Puppet Summit at the Victorian Arts Centre in Melbourne, Australia.

During 2003, Friedman re-launched educational programmes on the South Pacific island of Fiji. Under the auspices of the Red Cross, he assisted in training local puppetry teams dealing with HIV/Aids, Sexually Transmitted Diseases, Dengue Fever and Disaster Management (Gary Friedman Productions, 2005: 1).

### **2.23.2 Productions and performances**

1977

Although the Royal Puppet Company was established during this year (Friedman, 2002a:4), no references to productions could be found.

1978

During this year Friedman worked with Eric Smith's Puppet Company in Tel Aviv, Israel. In South Africa, he staged a puppet show as the Royal Puppet Company, for children at the Noxolo Primary School at Crossroads in Cape Town. It was described as follows:

"This afternoon's show will be purely entertainment and fun. Not

only will there be Archie Naartjie (who has a close resemblance to the children's favourite Tommy of TV fame) but also monkey Nunky with his tricks, and of course, the star of the afternoon, Charlie – Archie and Nunky's black friend, says Gary" (Fun with Charlie, 1978:14).

1980

The Family - in this puppet show, staged in Cape Town for the Royal Puppet Company, Friedman used the glove puppets *Oscar*, *Tallulah* and *Abra Cadabra* (Louw, 1980:4). No further information was available in this article.

Untitled - on 22 March Friedman entertained members of UNIMA, Cape Town, with a talk and a show. He had a "little 'friend' whom he coaxed out of a suitcase – a fast talking character, full of spunk and back chat, who concluded by singing loud, long and lustily, in a high falsetto" (UNIMA, 1980b:1).

Untitled - was a children's puppet show. Ibell (1980:3) stated:

"His puppets were bright and amusing. The cast included *Oscar*, a shy fellow who didn't like to be laughed at; Fluffybum, with a screeching voice, Tullulah, a special guest from Los Angeles and Archie Narchie, who was annoyed at being awoken from his midmorning rest".

Friedman's Royal Puppet Company performed this show at various venues in Cape Town during June and July, amongst others at the Good Hope Centre, at Rompies Pub and at the Adelphi Centre.

Untitled – Friedman’s Royal Puppet Company performed another children’s puppet fantasy play. The three characters were the puppets *Savern*, *Bleisch* and *Bartholomeus*, all manipulated by Friedman (Puppet Show, 1980:6). Friedman performed this show at the Adelphi Centre, Sea Point, in Cape Town from 24 June to 10 July.

According to Friedman:

“The three Blue Puppet People act out their world of fantasy, song and isolation far away from the big city from which they are banned. In this children’s production I try to involve the audience in the puppet’s rich sense of contrasting fantasy and reality. The plot of the story is completely open and involves the children’s decision as to the final destiny of the three characters” (Puppet Show, 1980: 6).

1981

On 31 January Friedman performed with *Oscar*, *Rocky Allen*, *Colly Molly* and *Tallulah* at a UNIMA, Cape Town meeting (UNIMA, 1981a:1). On 18 March, Friedman re-enacted the saga of the Jewish heroine Esther, who rescued her people from oppression in Persia by winning the heart of the King, with his puppets at the Purim Carnival at Marks’ Synagogue Centre, Greenpoint, in Cape Town. The puppet characters were *The King*, his *Evil Adviser* and *Esther*. These were big hand-rod puppets made from papier- mâché.

Flash - this story was about the plight of one brave hero, who matched his power against the evil musical *Emperor*, who changed his victims into musical instruments to improve his musical repertoire (Flash: programme, 1981: n.p.).



Puppet characters were the fantasy superhero, *Flash*, *Emperor*, *Evil Mac Nasty*, the villain and *Princess Mitzi*. The puppets were a combination of glove and rod puppets.

Jackman (1981:12) stated:

“this puppet villain makes Friedman’s borrowing of many ideas from the movie *Flash Gordon*, quite forgivable. In fact much of the show’s sound effects come from the movie’s soundtrack”.

1982

Drame en Coulisses (Backstage Drama) - the puppet-opera was based on

Commedia dell’Arte characters and opened with *Columbina* having constructed her first string puppet for her husband *Arlequino*, who made it clear that he detested the artistic, poetic string puppet - all he cared for was the direct, strong and political *Punch and Judy* (Drame en Coulisses, 1982:n.p.).

The show was first performed at the International Puppet Theatre Festival in Charleville – Mezières, France. After his return from France, Friedman’s Royal Puppet Company performed Drame en Coulisse (Backstage Drama) at The People’s Space Theatre, Long Street in Cape Town from 22 – 26 November.



**Fig.2.24.** Arlequino and with the small string puppet from *Drame et Coulisses* (Columbina Backstage Drama). (Friedman, 2002c: CD).

1983

The Blood Play - the play was produced for the Western Province Blood Transfusion Service and was a "colourful and lively presentation complete with an accident, an ambulance and even a *Dracula*" (UNIMA, 1983:1). Friedman also performed the play on 12 March at a UNIMA, Cape Town meeting.

Shakespeare is Pie (acronym for Puppets in education) - a show which included excerpts from three set works for matriculation students in English, namely *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *Othello* and *Romeo and Juliet*. The company tried to stress the theme of manipulation – manipulation of puppets and manipulation of people by the characters in the plays. Three different puppet techniques were used for the three plays: *Marionettes à Tringles* (puppets manipulated by strings and a head rod) for *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (a play within the play); glove puppets for *Othello* and giant mask puppets for *Romeo and Juliet* (Taylor, 1983:5).

“The character of Shakespeare will be used to introduce and link the three plays. Only Othello will be performed with a puppet stage, as glove puppets are held above the operator’s heads. The other two will be performed on an ordinary stage. But in Othello the comic characters who introduced the play interact with the puppeteers. In all three plays the puppeteers are visible” (Taylor, 1983:5).

For this specific production the company consisted of Friedman as the company leader, Jan Pyecraft (an artist and sculptor from the Central School of Art, London, who made the puppets) and Mike Chase, who taught the cast mime and movement for this production. André Roothman produced the show, while Debbie Lan was responsible for the music.

In early June Shakespeare is Pie toured the Western and Eastern Cape, visiting high schools. From 24 June – 1 July 1983, The Royal Puppet Company presented Shakespeare is Pie for schools at the People’s Space Theatre in Cape Town and at the Five Roses National Festival of the Arts, Grahamstown (Taylor, 1983:5).

The Hobo - the show, directed by Friedman, included mime artist, Mike Chase, Jane Pyecraft and the marionette *Micolino*, which was manipulated by Pyecraft. The pianist David Alcock performed the music, Improvisations on a Theme, by Eric Satie. This show was performed at the Arena Theatre, Nico Malan Theatre in Cape Town from 1 – 16 September.

“The Hobo is an inherent outcome of every society and is also an aspect within the psychological make-up of man – the rejected. The production was based on an original idea by Mike Chase, using the concept of combining the mime and marionette as the Hobo and his

conscience, which are inseparable. Because there are neither objects nor words used, other than illusions created by mime, one's imagination is stimulated into an acute awareness of expression beyond the barriers of language, space and time" (CAPAB, 1983:n.p.).



**Fig. 2.25.** Mike Chase and the marionette *Micolino* from *The Hobo*, 1983 (Friedman, 2002c: CD).

Puns and Doedie (Puppets Against Apartheid) - was loosely based on the traditional Punch and Judy, with typical South African characters, situations and songs. The characters were the flower seller, *Doedie*, and her husband *Puns*, both from District Six. *Puns*, who worked for the Cape City Council Sewerage Department, was the hero of the show. Other characters in the show were *Fatima*, *Pun's* girlfriend, a character in Claremont, *Gogga*, a clown, *Pri-mister*, who liked to be in control, *Constable Kaaskop*, the long arm of the law who tried to make a decent and upright citizen of *Puns*, and *C.T.*, Cape Town's own space creature, a little green man. The show was

directed by Ivan Lucas with puppeteers Friedman and Reuben Liedeman (Baron, 1983b:15).

Hetherington (1983: 25) reported:

“as a vehicle for reflecting and satirizing the South African situation, Friedman’s committed socio-political work, and his virtuosity as a solo performer was excellently displayed. The show featured two Apartheid – classified ‘Coloured’ characters, who poke fun at the government and its Apartheid politics. Characters such as the then South African President PW Botha, Archbishop Desmond Tutu, Margaret Thatcher and Ronald Reagan were introduced”.

Puns and Doedie (Puppets Against Apartheid) - was performed on streets and at shopping malls in Cape Town from 3 – 25 December and after Christmas the show toured the Garden Route, stopping over at holiday resorts. The show ran for five years in South Africa and was also presented at puppetry festivals and theatres throughout Europe in 1987. The show changed according to the political climate of the day. It was sometimes also titled The Puns and Doedie Show.

1984

Puppet Theatre 84 - was a programme presented by Friedman of the Royal Puppet Company and the plays presented were The Puns and Doedie Show and Puppet Cabaret (Unima, 1984: 1). It was staged at the Sanlam Centre, Parow from 31 March – 7 April.

For the Cape Town Festival, the company performed Puppet Cabaret at the Grand Parade, Cape Town from 9 – 14 April and The Puns and Doedie Show at Greenmarket Square from 16 – 18 April (UNIMA, 1984:1).



**Fig 2.26.** Puppets from Puppet Cabaret.  
(The Cape Times, 1984: n. p.).

Cabaret – Friedman, of the Royal Puppet Company, held late-night cabaret performances that consisted of various short interludes of comedy, sketches, song and dance. It included a love duet, Romeo and Juliet. The Puns and Doedie Show was again performed. “I’ll be trying out new material every week, keeping the show as experimental as possible and building up a good repertoire” (Friedman quoted by Baron, 1984a:8). It was performed at Back Stage / Les Coulisses Restaurant in Hout Bay, Cape Town on Thursdays and Fridays during May.

Puns for Executive President - the show consisted of twelve different characters which included *Voetsak*, the dog; sweet *Zola* with her Afrikaans accent; *Puns*, the

Member of Parliament for Mitchell's Plain; the *Pri-mister* and *Bishop Tutu* and was presented at the Baxter Studio Theatre, Cape Town from 17 – 29 December.



**Fig. 2.27.** The *Pri-mister*, *Puns*, *Doedie* and *Bishop Tutu* from *Puns for Executive President* (Friedman, 2002c: CD).

Friedman, of the Royal Puppet Company, performed at the Standard Bank National Arts Festival, Grahamstown from 4 – 13 July. He presented three productions at various venues:

- *The Miller's Tale* - was an updated puppet version of Chaucer's work.

According to The Cape Times (1985:n.p.) it was:

“an adult puppet romp with music and comedy and one of Chaucer's most saucy tales of *Nicolas*, *John* and his young wife *Alison* who fell in love with poor *Nick*”.

- Cabaret - was a collection of sketches which included Romeo and Juliet; P.W. in Space (a short comic adventure of South Africa's own super hero); Can-can girls, as well as many other song and dance routines.
- The Puns and Doedie Show.



**Fig.2.28.** The Miller's Tale (Friedman, 2002c: CD).

1985

The Miller's Tale and Cabaret - were presented at Rita's, Cape Town from 23 January - 2 February.



The Puns and Doedie Show - was performed at the Standard Bank National Arts Festival, Grahamstown from 4 – 14 July and also in Durban at Expo '85, along with Circus in a Suitcase, an animated puppet circus for children.

1986

Friedman left Cape Town in February for Johannesburg. “Currently he (Friedman) has a three-month contract to perform at Gold Reef City” (UNIMA, 1986a:1). No other information could be found about this contract.

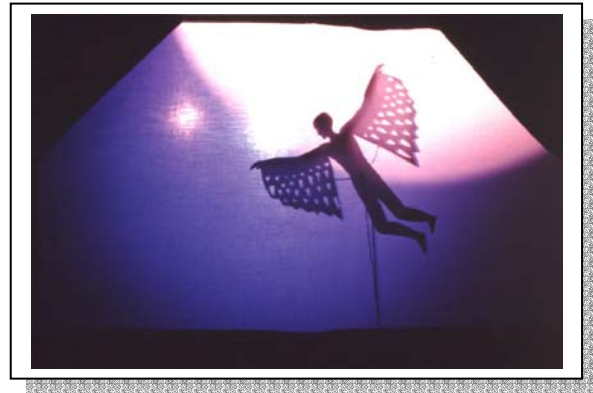
Friedman returned to Cape Town when the Royal Puppet Company presented a double bill, The Creation and Hamlet, an adult multi-media production, from 3 to 10 October at the Arena, University of Cape Town.

The Creation - traced man’s development through various historical and / or religious stages, beginning at the dawn of time and ending with his journeys into space (Verdal, 1986:9). It told the story of the birth of Man in Africa using African folk mythology and a variety of traditional puppeteering styles. There were marionettes, Bunraku rod puppets and masks, combined with traditional mime (Ronge, 1986:4).

“The Creation uses two wooden puppets and a colourful cast of marionettes who portray a variety of characters, including soldiers and pin-striped businessmen. The costumes are excellent. So are the faces of the marionettes, which have stark, bold exaggerated features” (Verdal, 1986:9).

Friedman and Karoly Pinter devised the show and acted as puppeteers, along with Katja Hörnchen and Mikael Reiser. The Creation that later opened at Wits Theatre in Johannesburg on October 21, was performed until early November.

“The show at the Wits theatre adopted the Indonesian technique of representing drama through shadows cast on a screen by back-lighting, with the figures going through their actions in the form of articulated cut-outs” (Baneshik, 1986:10).



**Fig. 2.29. and Fig. 2.30.** Scenes from The Creation (Friedman, 2002c: CD).

1987

Friedman, who founded AREPP (refer to **2.2.1:22**), also toured Europe and the United Kingdom with Puns and Doedie (Puppets Against Apartheid), performing in London, Amsterdam, Paris and the Isle of Man.

1988

Pomp and Politics - Friedman used his art to champion peace and understanding in this production. This was done through erotic cabaret and silent drama in which his

figures represented humour, pathos and tragedy. In the festival programme (Standard Bank National ...1988:57) it was stated that: “Puppet theatre masters reality by bringing forth contradiction between controlled and controller – which is real, which illusion”. Rosie Fiore, assisted by Brigid Schutz, directed the show, which was presented by the Royal Puppet Company from 5 – 9 July at the Standard Bank National Arts Festival in Grahamstown.

Puppets Against Aids – the show was produced, directed and the puppets manipulated by Friedman for AREPP. The show was performed for the following 6 years (refer to **2.2.2:28**).



**Fig.2.31.** Giant puppets from Puppets Against Aids (Friedman, 2002c: CD).

1989 - 1994

Friedman toured Southern Africa, Europe, Canada and Australia with Puppets Against Aids and Puppets Against Abuse for AREPP, assisted by puppeteer, Nyanga Tshabalala (refer to **2.2.2**).

1995

Friedman coordinated the first African International Puppet Theatre Festival in Johannesburg. The festival started off with a street parade of giant puppets. The larger-than-life sized puppets *Daisy*, *Charlie*, *Dread*, *Laetitia* and the giant-sized 14-metre *Nkululeke* were built by Tshabalala with reeds and cheap materials and directed by Friedman.

Friedman also staged puppet shows under the name Gary Friedman Productions, as part of the International Puppet Theatre Festival and Education Conference at the Civic Theatre in Johannesburg from 18 – 25 September (Denys, 1995:21; Puppet Power, 1995:4).

1996 – 1997

Puppets in Prison - was a workshop based on a peer-group Education Theatre project, started at the Diepkloof Prison in Johannesburg. This soon spread to other prisons in South Africa (Friedman, 2002a:3). Friedman coordinated the programme and developed the performances with Tshabalala and the prisoners.

A six-week pilot workshop with a group of young prisoners was held in 1996.

Participants developed scenes, which included issues such as rape, sexual practices, drugs, human rights, prostitution and the correct use of condoms. A documentary video about the project was made and televised in several countries.

A show was also presented for a group of Members of Parliament at the Diepkloof Prison on 3 April (Seale, 1996:10). The programme continued at Ekuseni Rehabilitation Centre, KwaZulu-Natal until 1997 (Tshabalala, 2003:2).



**Fig.2.32.** An inmate and his puppet from Puppets in Prison. (Friedman, 2002c: CD).

1997

The Losh 'n Horror Show - a Jewish-Zulu musical comedy with shadow and glove puppets was produced, performed and co-scripted (scriptwriter unknown) by Friedman at the Agfa Theatre on the Square, Johannesburg and at Zerban's Dinner Theatre in Cape Town (Friedman, 2002a:3). Guy Willoughby directed the show (Willoughby, 2001:2). The theme of the show was continuing escape. Central to the story was a black housekeeper who had been with her Jewish employers for years. When they emigrated to be with their daughter in Australia, she was left without a pension. Other characters included a black couple that were their neighbours.

According to Fletcher (2000, n.p.), Friedman had his stage strapped to his body, with the acting area above his head, and his puppets hanging from his waist. Each puppet had to be lifted and manipulated above his head.



**Fig.2.33.** A scene from The Losh 'n Horror Show. Friedman, 2002c:CD).

1998

The Losh 'n Horror Show - was performed at the Standard Bank National Arts Festival in Grahamstown (Friedman, 2002a: 3).

1999

During this year Friedman was occupied with puppetry for television (refer to background).

2000

The Losh 'n Horror Show - was adapted and performed at Cafè Riteve at the South African Jewish Museum in Cape Town for ten weeks, continuing into 2001 (Friedman, 2002a:3).

2001

Looking for a Monster – was a multi-media show about the Holocaust.

“Looking for a Monster crosses time’s borders when today’s puppeteer meets the shade of a teenage playwright and puppeteer from the 1940s” (The Jewish Museum, 2001:1).

It is the story of a young Jewish boy, Hanush Hachenburg, who perished in the Holocaust in Auschwitz in 1944 and his puppet play, written in 1943 in the Terezin Ghetto. Before the play could be staged, he was sent to Auschwitz where he died. Gary Friedman and his two young puppeteers, Luigi Preite and Aja Marneweck, presented it for the first time (Chait, 2001:10).

“The story involves a strange series of ‘coincidences’ that lead the puppeteer on a journey that helps to uncover young Hanus’ life. Through the rich tapestry of visual theatre, Hanus’s play is finally given life, fifty-five years after it was written. This exposes some of the harsh realities of a world, although sometimes forgotten, still making a powerful impact on our reality today” (Gary Friedman Productions, 2001: 2).

The show made use of marionettes in the Czeck and Sicilian tradition, as well as shadow puppets, objects as puppets and paper puppets. According to UNIMA (2001:1) a spectacular selection of authentic music and songs as well as cleverly

edited video footage made for an extraordinary experience. Willoughby (2001:2), wrote that “Looking for a Monster should prove that puppets are for grown-ups as well as kids”.

The show was produced and performed by Friedman with writer / director Guy Willoughby and was staged at the South African Jewish Museum in Cape Town from November 2001 to 17 January 2002. Friedman took the video footage for this multi-media production, while in Europe visiting the sites of Hachenburg’s life and death (The Jewish Museum, 2001:1).



**Fig.2.34.** Friedman with marionettes from Looking for a Monster (Friedman, 2002c: CD).

2002

Looking for a Monster - was again performed as the opening production at the International Puppet Theatre Festival in Nairobi, Kenya in February 2002.



The Losh 'n Horror Show - was again performed in November in Sydney, Australia.

Friedman relocated to Australia during this year.

2003 - 2004

Refer to background

## **2.24 GARY FRIEDMAN PRODUCTIONS (refer to FRIEDMAN, GARY)**

## **2.25 GODBOLD, ANDREW (also refer to The PLAYHOUSE PUPPET COMPANY and PUPPETREE COMPANY)**

### **2.25.1 Background**

Andrew Godbold was born on 1 February 1974 and matriculated at SACS(South African College School), Cape Town in 1992. He studied at the Waterfront Theatre School in Cape Town from 1993 to 1994, where he specialized in Dance, Drama and Teaching Methods for Speech.

In 1995 Godbold joined the Playhouse Puppet Company in Durban as puppeteer. In 1998 he was puppet master for six months before the company closed down. After the closure of the Playhouse Puppet Company, Godbold founded the Puppetree Company and directed the company until June 2000 when he left South Africa for the United Kingdom.

### **2.25.2 Productions and performances**

For productions from 1995 to 1998, refer to the Playhouse Puppet Company. For productions from 1998 to 2000, refer to Puppetree Company.

- aziland

17 August – 31 August, Natal (now KwaZulu-Natal)

## **2.26 HANDSPRING PUPPET COMPANY**

### **2.26.1 Background**

Four fine arts graduates of the University of Cape Town founded the Handspring Puppet Company in 1981 in Cape Town. They were Jon Weinberg, Jill Joubert, Adrian Kohler and Basil Jones. Weinberg left the company in 1982 and Joubert in 1983. Adrian Kohler and Basil Jones have run the company since then.

Initially the aim was to write plays for children in an African context. From 1981 to 1985 the company rented studios in Cape Town and each year toured a new rod puppet production to schools throughout Southern Africa, with regular seasons at Cape Town's Baxter Theatre.

“The Company survived without any subsidy through five year of making children's theatre and touring it to schools and gradually making it more and more integrated with the educational curriculum. At first it was just plain entertainment and then later became more

and more oriented towards education or edutainment” (Shantalla, s.a.:2).

In 1985 Jones and Kohler moved to Johannesburg where they built a workshop, office and rehearsal studio at their home. In January 2000 the company moved back to Cape Town.

The Handspring Trust was established in 1990. Between 1990 and 2000, the Handspring Trust for Puppetry in Education developed a multimedia science education programme for pupils 8 to 12 years (Loots, 2001:1).

During 1990, under the auspices of the Handspring Trust, the company participated in the establishment of the National Community Theatre for Development and Education Network (NACTED), which developed organizational and artistic skills in the community theatre environment in South Africa. Between 1990 and 2000 the Handspring Trust received funding from the governments of the United States of America, Denmark and Canada, the European Community, the Rockefeller Foundation, ESCOM (Electrical Supply Commission), the Liberty Life Foundation and the Swedish Save the Children fund (Van Wyk, 1994:11).

The company rarely ran conducted workshops, although a few workshops were run in 1981 at the Drama Department, Rhodes University, Grahamstown, at the Natal Arts Society in Durban during 1982 and another in 1987 at UNISA, Pretoria.

The company has received a number of awards, including the National Vita Award for Best Production of a New South African Play for three of their productions and Special Vita Awards for their contribution to South African Theatre and Opera (Jones, 2002).

Episodes, a retrospective exhibition by the Handspring Puppet Company of puppets made by Kohler and various assistants for adult theatre from 1984 to 2000, opened at the National Arts Festival, Grahamstown in June 2001 and toured South Africa into 2002.

The Handspring Puppet Company embarks on a new project only once every 18 months. The plays are chosen carefully because they involve extensive research and rehearsal periods before being staged.

## **2.26.2 Productions and performances**

1981

The Honey Trail - was a rod puppet show and according to Van Niekerk (1981:10) it was:

“The story, about the kidnap of Dora the swallow by a wicked power-mad serval cat and the attempts by Muzz mole and Voets the chameleon to rescue her, had the children gripping their seats and shouting encouragement”.

Kohler and Weinberg did the design. Although the puppets were mostly rod puppets, Voets the chameleon, had plywood ribs with a wooden backbone and wooden eyes

that could spin. *Muzz*, the mole, on the other hand was made largely from foam rubber (Jacobs, 1981:5). The show was performed at the Baxter Theatre, Cape Town from 22 June to 11 July (UNIMA, 1981b:1).

The Honey Trail toured the country until 3 October and performed in different venues in the following South African provinces and neighbouring countries:

- 15 – 20 July, Orange Free State (now Free State Province)
- 21 July – 8 August, Transvaal (now Gauteng Province)
- 11 – 12 August, Northern Transvaal (now Northern Province)
- 14 – 15 August, Sw
- 3 September – 1 October, Eastern Cape
- 3 October, Cape Province (now Western Province)

1982

Kashku Saves the Circus - was a rod puppet play in which *Kashku* – the blind crystal ball fortune teller– helped the circus creatures to escape from the tyranny of their evil Ringmaster, *Mr Sooza*.

The characters for Kashku Saves the Circus were:

*Mr Sooza* – the Ringmaster, *King* – the Fierce lion, *Jango* – the Rat saxophonist, *Lolly* – the Clown, *Arnold* – the Toothless lion, *Jessy* – the elephant, *Hedley* – the hairy hyena, *Tina* – the tightrope walker, *Inanna* – the Blind Fortune Teller, *Donna* –

the Rat dancer, *Danny* – the Lion cub, *Lugal* – leader of the Monkeys and *Sugar* – the Rat dancer (Kashku saves the..., 1982).

“It is not often that an elephant steals the show. But, Jessy with a trunk that she wrapped around necks in pure affection or which she used to dispose of people on stage, was the star performer. She trumpeted with fear (a trumpet backstage gave the right sound effects) twitched her tail in circles and won the hearts of kids” (Baron, 1982:10).

No pre-recorded soundtrack was used. Each puppeteer wore a small microphone connected to a mixer amplifier, which drove four high-performance speakers. The lights were controlled from a small dimmer board, which was designed to be powered from any two standard wall sockets (Kashku saves the..., 1982).

Kohler wrote the text and the show was directed by Bill Curry. The music was composed by Sue Barry and Luyanda Ntete, with lyrics by Gus Ferguson. Kohler, Jones, Joubert and Jennie Reznick designed, made and manipulated all their own puppets with support from friends. The assistant puppet makers were Tinny Rosser, Marianne Crofton, Dorothy Barnes, Anita Kohler, Bryony Mortimer and Jon Weinberg.

The company took the show on a tour throughout the Transvaal (now Gauteng), the Orange Free State and Botswana during April and May. In June the company took part in the Standard Bank National Schools’ Festival, Grahamstown, moving on to the Baxter Studio, Cape Town until 10 July, after which they toured Natal and the Eastern Cape until September.



**Fig.2.35.** Joubert, Kohler, Reznick and Jones with *Lolly* the clown and *Inanna* the blind fortune teller from Kashku Saves the Circus (Baron,1982:10).

1983

Gertie's Feathers – the puppets, which were made and manipulated by Kohler at the Puppet Space, Cape Town, were used for this production by the Handspring Puppet Company (refer to Puppet Space).

1984

Mbira for Pasella - opened at the Baxter Theatre, Cape Town on 2 July 1984.

Thereafter it was performed in Port Elizabeth, Kimberley, Hennenman, Bloemfontein, Welkom, Randfontein, Johannesburg, Springs, Benoni, Sasolburg, The Eastern Cape and Botswana (Gaborone, Mochudi, Old Naledi). The tour dates were from 1 August to 28 September. The company presented this production at 33 theatres and schools (Jones, 2004:1). The researcher could not find any additional information on this production.

The 13 Clocks – this show, written by James Thurber and directed by Bill Curry, was a “spooky tale filled with royalty, rogues and amusing characters woven with magical spells and wizardry. The central character in the production was *Golux*, the child of a witch and a wizard” (Baron, 1984b:15). The puppeteers were Jones, Kohler, Toni Morkel and Odette Leat. Performances were held in Cape Town during December (Baron, 1984b:15).

1985

Episodes of an Easter Rising - the company produced their first play for adults - a string puppet version of a radio play by the South African writer, David Lytton. The play deals with the choices two white women have to make when a wounded black activist, hunted by the police, seeks refuge on their remote farm. This show, with manipulators visible to the audience, was so well received in South Africa (Jones, 2002) that the company was invited to perform at UNIMA's 7<sup>th</sup> World Festival of Puppet Theatre in Charleville-Mezières, France. It was the first production which the company took abroad.

The puppets were designed and carved from jelutong, a Malaysian hardwood, and painted by Kohler, who also designed the set. Ester van Ryswyk directed the show and Caroline Littlewort made the costumes. The characters were as follows: *Adelaide* and *Wanjiro* manipulated by Odette Leat, *Edith* manipulated by Mignon Lee Warden, the *German* and the *Manager* manipulated by Kohler and *The Man* and *Nurse* manipulated by Jones (Episodes of an..., 1985: n.p.).



1986

A Midsummer Night's Dream – the idea for the production was born after Köhler and Jones saw a Czechoslovakian production of A Midsummer Night's Dream at the World Festival of Puppet Theatre in France in 1985. On their return they put the idea to director Esther van Ryswyk and John Slemon of the Baxter theatre, who were enthusiastic about the project. Eighteen months of planning followed before rehearsals began. The production was first performed in 1988 (Lupton, 1988:8). For additional information, refer to 1988.

1987

Amos and Boris - a shadow puppet play, was performed at the opening of an exhibition of contemporary puppets at the Unisa Art Gallery, Pretoria on 8 July and again at the Durban Art Museum on 15 August. The puppets were made and manipulated by Jones and Kohler (UNISA Art Gallery, 1987:1; Unmasking the Puppet, 1987:1).

1988

A Midsummer Night's Dream - in this production the Handspring Puppet Company further explored the combination of puppets and actors. The company saw a need to represent a fantasy world of characters interacting with humans. This play won the Vita Award for Production of the Year in the Cape.

In the design, concept and use of the puppets, Jones and Kohler combined aspects of ancient puppet traditions. From the Japanese Bunraku Puppet Theatre came the

style of visible, black-cloaked puppeteers operating the puppets on stage, while the puppet plays of the Bambara and Bozo peoples of West Africa provided the characters, which in turn inspired the design of the giant-sized, imposing figures of *Oberon* and *Titania* (Lupton, 1988: 8).

“This unusual presentation is visually stunning – mainly due to the remarkable puppets created by the Handspring Company’s Adrian Kohler to represent the fairy denizens of the dream world into which four young lovers wander. These puppets operated on long rods are not the conventional idea of pretty, gauze-winged fairies, but strange, almost nightmarish apparitions – huge fish, skeletal flying creatures, goblin-like beings, and in the cases of *Oberon* and *Titania*, giant statues with movable arms and heads inside which the two stand to deliver many of their lines” (Venables, 1988:4).

“In addition, a side-splitting puppet show replaces the play-within-a-play by the rude mechanicals. This spoof on puppetry, using rag dolls, is in an entirely different style to the fairyland sequences (Lupton, 1988:8).

There is a conscious African influence in the play injected through costume and design. The fairies do not flitter about in tinsel and soft voile dresses. Instead they are chamois clad creatures who could well originate from dark African woods” (Katz, 1988:11).

The actors who took part in the production and also manipulated the puppets were:

- Neil Mc Carthy – *Oberon*, the puppet king, and *Theseus*, the Duke of Athens
- Antoinette Butler – *Hippolyta* and *Titania*
- Jenny Reznick – *Puck*, the King’s henchman
- Sandy Schultz – *Hermia*
- Fred Abrahams – *Lysander*
- Dawid Minnaar – *Demetrius*

- Clare Stopford – *Helena*
- Basil Apollis – *Bottom the Weaver* (Lupton, 1988:8).

Members of the Handspring Puppet Company manipulated the various goblins, gaping fish and other creatures. Kohler designed the décor and puppets for the production.

A Midsummer Night's Dream was first presented at the Oude Libertas Amphitheatre, Stellenbosch on 28 January and opened at the Baxter Theatre Concert Hall, Cape Town on 8 February. Later it was performed at the Monument Theatre, Grahamstown for the Standard Bank National Arts Festival on 6 and 7 July under direction of Fred Abrahamse (Standard Bank National..., 1988:55).



**Fig.2.36.** A scene from A Midsummer Night's Dream 1988 (Episodes – exhibition catalogue, 2001:18,19).

Carnival of the Bear - was a historical drama set in the town of Romans in France 200 years before the French Revolution. The background was a carnival where the subject was the people's struggle against injustice (Sichel, 1988:12).

This was a production in which a variety of puppets, made and manipulated by the company, was used. The puppets were conceived from the beginning. As a result the puppetry was more integrated with the drama. Fifteen actors/puppeteers were joined by a parade of puppets ranging from ten-centimetre to three-metre high carnival figures (Sichel, 1988:12).

According to Kohler, quoted by Sichel (1988:12):

“Pure string, pure rod, glove, finger and shadow puppets, a spirit puppet – it's a bit like a muppet – light puppets and for the very first time we built a Bunraku puppet. We've used the techniques before, as in Episodes of an Easter Rising and the fairies for A Midsummer Night's Dream where the manipulators were visible”.

In the case of the Queen of France, *Catherine de Medici*, a puppet with the traditional Japanese controls was created and manipulated by two puppeteers.

Other puppet characters were the spirit puppet, *Saint Blaise*, the Patron of Drapers, and *Jousting Horses* –“oblong rings of bright ribbons garnished with equestrian heads” (Sichel, 1988:13). Students from the Witwatersrand University School of Dramatic Art made the shadow puppets and appeared in the production.

The show was presented by the Market Theatre Company and City Theatre and Dance Company in association with Handspring Puppet Company. It was staged at the Warehouse of the Market Theatre, Johannesburg during August and September under the direction of Mark Fleishman.

The rest of the year was spent working for television during the day and workshopping a play with actors from Junction Avenue Theatre Company in the evenings. For this play the Handspring Puppet Company made life-sized puppets, to see what would happen when they performed as equals alongside humans. This experiment resulted in Tooth and Nail, which was produced in 1989 under the direction of Malcolm Purkey at the Market Theatre in Johannesburg.

1989

Tooth and Nail - could be seen as an apocalyptic prediction of the chaos about to envelop pre-election South Africa. A life-sized news photographer, his body wasted away in parts, bore silent witness to the violent lives of a militant schoolgirl, her sangoma mother, a prophetic trade unionist and a trio of yuppies. A life-sized Bunraku figure of an opera-loving madam sang duets to her human manservant. The photographer, *Saul* was made from polystyrene and plywood. His openwork chest structure marked the beginning of a form of puppet construction specifically used by the Handspring Puppet Company, which would reach its final form in The Chimp Project in 2000. The whole puppet was constructed almost like a jigsaw puzzle, with dozen of pieces of plywood, covered with a fabric scrim, which allowed light through

and gave the puppet a ghostlike appearance (Episodes: captions accompanying ..., 2001).

The puppeteer for *Saul* was attached to the puppet in six places. The puppeteer's head moved the puppet's head, his waist moved the puppet's torso, his hands moved the puppet's arms and hands, and his feet moved the puppet's legs. The puppet was designed and made by Kohler.



**Fig. 2. 37.** *Saul* manipulated by Jones from Tooth and Nail (Episodes – exhibition catalogue, 2001:8).

1990

During this year Barney Simon, co-founder and artistic director of The Market Theatre, started preparations, work-shopped and wrote the musical, Starbrites, with

the company, which would premiere under his direction at The Market Theatre in Johannesburg in 1991.

1991

Starbrites – dealt with a down-and-out musician, living in a Soweto shack, who has his spirit rekindled by the infectious optimism of his adoring young nephew from the country (Jones, 2002). This was in line with Simon's idea to direct a fable about regeneration, reflecting the changing political climate in South Africa. Actors portrayed these two main characters in the play.

All other characters were two- and three-dimensional puppets of various kinds and sizes made and manipulated by Kohler and Jones. Some puppets were background mini-busses and bicycles while others in the foreground were human-sized puppets. Small perspective puppets for the background of streetlife in Soweto, like gossiping shadow puppet *Neighbours* in windows, *Alley cats* and life-sized *Shebeen queens* featured. At the end, the uncle's long-lost love, the singer of his band, returns as a life-size Bunraku figure. Included in the show were three *Petticoats*, which were rod puppets from a dream sequence in which the *Petticoats* came to haunt the sleeping lingerie salesman. Dean Pitman made the 'dancing' mechanism (Episodes: Captions..., 2001).

After an eleven-week season at the Market Theatre, Starbrites toured to summer festivals in London, Dublin and Copenhagen. In the same year the company received a special Vita Award for contributions to South African Theatre and Starbrites was

voted Production of the Year of a new South African Play by the Vita Awards panel (Starbrites wen Vita, 1991:1).

Woyzeck on the Highveld - was an adaptation of George Buchner's play, *Woyzeck*. It was set in the veld around Johannesburg. With Woyzeck on the Highveld, the company began an association with the artist and filmmaker, William Kentridge, who also directed the production. This brought together puppets and animated film. Kentridge's simple draw-erase-draw technique, using charcoal on large sheets of white paper, became a moving background in front of which puppets could be manipulated. Fairly roughly carved, almost monochrome, wooden rod puppets and ink-drawn acetate shadow puppets were made to complement the charcoal drawings of the film. The animated film was able to create the setting for various scenes, but more interestingly, alluded to the thoughts and emotions of the puppets.

Kohler and Kentridge designed Woyzeck on the Highveld and the assistant animator was Erika Elk. Kohler made the puppets, assisted by Francois Viljoen and Erika Elk. Hazel Maree made the costumes for the puppets. The manipulators for the puppet characters were as follows:

- Louis Seboko – *Woyzeck*
- Busi Zokufa – *Maria*
- Tale Motsepe – *The Miner, Margaret, Andries* and *The Barker*
- Jones – *The Captain*
- Köhler – *The Doctor* (Henson International Festival..., 1994:1)



The show premiered at the Standard Bank National Arts Festival in Grahamstown in 1992, followed by a season at the Market Theatre in Johannesburg. Performances were then given in Germany, Belgium, The Netherlands, United States of America, Hong Kong, Australia, Scandinavia, France and Italy from 1992 - 1994. Woyzeck on the Highveld received Vita awards for production, set design and direction.



**Fig. 2.38.** A scene from Woyzeck on the Highveld 1992 (Episodes – exhibition catalogue, 2001:12).

1993

The Big Friendly Giant - a play based on Roald Dahl's children's story, was adapted for theatre by the British author David Wood and directed by Fred Abrahamse for performances at the Baxter theatre, Cape Town from 26 February – 3 April 1993.

The set design model used for the original United Kingdom production, directed by Wood at the West End's Aldwych Theatre, was sent to Cape Town. The hideous giant heads seen in part two of the show, were based on the United Kingdom prototypes.

Kohler not only designed and made seven rod puppets, eight shadow puppets and the *Big Friendly Giant* puppet (which was about four metres high in its fixed sitting position), but he also taught the actors to use rod puppets and assisted in teaching them how to perform with the puppets.

The most sizeable challenge was designing and constructing the giant puppet made into the likeness of Tobie Cronje. Cronje, who had to perform for 10 – 15 minutes during each show, had a tough time operating the puppet, because of its size.

However, Kohler said the idea was to “give the audience the experience of the true scale of the giant in the story. It's also visually spectacular and we want the audience to gasp” (UNIMA, 1993a:1).

1994

Woyzeck on the Highveld - the company was invited to perform at the *Theater der Welt* Festival in Munich. In association with theatre producer Art Bureau, of Munich and Mannie Manim Productions of Johannesburg, the company toured to several other festivals in Germany, Belgium, Switzerland and the United Kingdom. During this year Woyzeck on the Highveld toured Canada, Spain, Scotland, Belgium, Germany, the United Kingdom and the United States, where it opened the Henson Foundation's 2<sup>nd</sup> New York International Festival of Puppet Theatre at the Joseph

Papp Public Theatre from 6 – 10 September (Henson International Festival..., 1994:1).

This was the first project of the Handspring Puppet Company to receive generous donor support. Funders included the Foundation for the Creative Arts, the Standard Bank National Arts Festival, the Johannesburg Arts Alive Festival, the Department of National Education, the German Embassy and South African Embassies abroad. The Vita Awards panel voted the play Production of the Year of a New South African Play (1992 – 1993) and it received national awards in the categories Costumes, Sets, Lighting and Direction (Henson International Festival..., 1994:1).

1995

Faustus in Africa - the Kentridge / Handspring Puppet Company partnership

developed a second production, which was underwritten by the Art Bureau in Munich and *Kunsfest* in Weimar. The play was a free adaptation of Goethe's *Faust* parts I and II and set in colonial Africa.

In Faustus in Africa the central puppet character, *Faustus*, sells his soul to the devil (an actor) in exchange for unlimited power to influence events on the continent.

Other characters were:

The *Old Emperor* (part of the band); *Helen of Troy* (based on a 1940s cigarette advertisement); *Faustus* (based on the explorer Brazza); *Gretchen*, Faustus' lover; *Johnston*, Faustus' servant and later the new *Emperor* (based on Patrice Lumumba, the first president of the Congo) and the *Hyena* – a minor devil. The latter puppet

continued the idea of open-structure puppets, as seen in Tooth and Nail (1989). Four dancing women from Faustus in Africa had specially designed hip-swinging mechanisms and appeared in a bar scene entitled 'Auerbach's Tavern, Dar es Salaam'. They were designed and carved by Kohler.

The production opened in Weimar and Berlin before transferring to the Standard Bank National Arts Festival in Grahamstown, which also provided financial support, as did the Foundation for the Creative Arts, and the French Institute. After a season at The Market Theatre, the play toured Israel and Europe in 1995 and 1996 where it was performed *inter alia* in Paris, Rome, Copenhagen, Avignon and Seville (Faustus in Africa..., 2001:1).



**Fig. 2.39.** *Helen of Troye* from Faustus in Africa, 1995 (Garbett, 2002: 14) and top right **Fig.2.40.** (Handspring Puppet Company, 2003)



**Fig.2.41.** Jones and Kohler manipulating the *Hyena* from Faustus in Africa (Episodes – exhibition catalogue, 2001:17).

1996

Woyzeck on the Highveld – the production was staged in Hong Kong, Adelaide, Wellington, Bogota, Avignon and Jerusalem.

1997

Faustus in Africa - was performed in Washington, Chicago and at the Massachusetts International Theatre Festival.

1998

Ubu and the Truth Commission – it was the third play developed in partnership with Kentridge, which dealt with South Africa's Truth and Reconciliation Commission, marrying the issues of state terror to the themes of Alfred Jarry's *Ubu Roi*.

Jarry's play (1898) is generally regarded as the first in the absurdist tradition and seemed an appropriate starting place for a play centred on a hit-squad character (*Ubu*) facing the future in the days and weeks running up to the start of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission hearings. Actors and puppets were combined in this production.

*Niles*, a crocodile handbag with a big appetite, was the pet of *Ma Ubu*, *Ubu's* wife.

*Ubu* stuffed all kinds of incriminating evidence down his mouth, which *Ma Ubu* found and promptly sold to the media. *The Dogs of War*, together with *Ubu* himself, made

up an evil barbershop quartet. *Ubu* used them as hit-squad sidekicks. The heads were carved from Obechi wood.

There were *Four Witnesses*, each with a story of personal loss, who testified before the Truth Commission. The heads and hands of these Bunraku-type puppets designed and carved by Kohler were made from jelutong wood.

“Their testimonies, based on texts from the Commission itself, took place in the middle of the antics of Ma and Pa Ubu, but could not be seen or heard by them” (Episodes: Captions..., 2001).

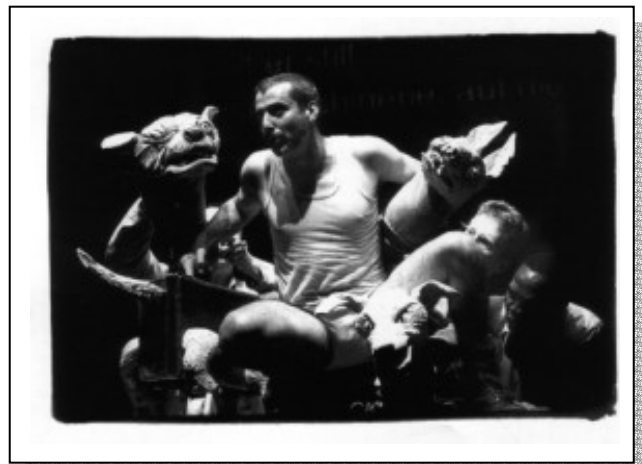
*The Vulture* was also designed and made by Kohler. This bird perched in the *Ubu*’s living room. It was mostly inert, but occasionally it would squawk and flap its wings. At the same time an apparently random and gnomic proverb, such as ‘The poor are salted meat’, would appear on the screen behind the performers. The production was presented in South Africa and in 1999 as part of the London International Festival of Theatre (LIFT).



**Fig. 2.42.** The *Dogs of War* from *Ubu and the Truth Commission* (Episodes – exhibition catalogue, 2001: front page).



**Fig.2.43.** A *Witness* from *Ubu and the Truth Commission* 1998 (Episodes – exhibition catalogue, 2001:23).



**Fig.2.44.** Dawid Minnaar with the *Dogs of War* (Episodes – exhibition catalogue, 2001: 22).

1998 to 1999

*Il Ritorno d'Ulisse* (The Return of Ulysses) - the partnership with Kentridge produced a version of Monteverdi's opera that was the company's first attempt at opera. The opera relates the events of the closing book of the Odyssey and in this rendition of Monteverdi's *Il Ritorno d'Ulisse*, *Ulysses* is no longer in Ithaca. Lying in a Johannesburg hospital, he is a frail man hanging onto life and remembering the epic of the Greek hero in his dreams. "The animist opera invites us to a new odyssey: to film and music, to the human voice and puppets, to the twentieth century, Monteverdi's Venice and mythical Greece" (Innet, 1999:1).

"For those unfamiliar with the Kentridge/Handspring style, (seen in productions since 1985) one of the most striking factors is the way in which the puppeteers work with the puppets. It's a fascinating interaction, as if the handler becomes the puppet's translator,

caretaker and critic all rolled into one – watching and checking the reaction of their charges at all times. This multi-media production may not appeal to purist opera buffs but it's a visual and theatrical masterpiece" (Smart, 1999:1).

The production combined film animation with the puppet action. The musicians were placed on a raised and curving dais surrounding the central stage area, where the puppets performed.

Kentridge directed the opera and the concept for the puppets came from the Handspring Puppet Company (Innet, 1999:1). Kohler designed and made the puppets, of which the heads and hands were crafted from jelutong wood.

The production was first presented at *La Monnaie*, Brussels, Belgium in May 1998. It was financed by the Flemish Government at the *Kunsten Festival des Arts* in Brussels and a command performance was also put on for the King and Queen of Belgium. This time five puppeteers also worked with musical director Philippe Pierlot and the Ricercar Quartet with six musicians, as well as a group of seven international opera singers. The show toured Berlin, Amsterdam (command performance for the Queen of the Netherlands), Zürich, Lisbon, and was performed at the Standard Bank National Arts Festival, Grahamstown (29 June and 1 - 2 July), and at the StateTheatre, Pretoria (7 – 10 July 1999) in South Africa (Il Ritorno d'Ulisse, 1999:1).





**Fig. 2.45.** A scene from *Il Ritorno D'Ulisse* 1998 (Episodes – exhibition catalogue, 2001: 30).

2000

The Chimp Project, - was the first play for some years not involving Kentridge as director. According to Jones:

“It was a huge mountain to climb. Adrian was directing an adult play for the first time, although he has directed children’s work before. We were working without the towering stature of William Kentridge... it wasn’t easy. But the play has progressed from being quite problematic in the beginning to becoming much clearer and simpler and more poetic” (Bolt, 2000:78-81).

The Handspring Puppet Company worked with author Peter Esterhuysen on the text, sculptor Gerhard Marx as an animator, and with zoologist Barak Morgan (Boekkooi, 2000:4).

The group consisted of actors and puppeteers manipulating meticulously crafted puppets, combined with the film animation of Gerhard Marx. It told the story of *Lisa* – a chimp from the city who had learned sign language, liked pornography, television and luxury. She was taken to a rehabilitation centre in the Congo by her minder *Sonya*, a South African woman, where she had a more natural interaction with her own species. She had to learn a different lifestyle, as *Tadishin Mori*, the head primatologist, refused to let *Lisa*, who was on the verge of puberty, get away with her city-style habits in the jungle (Pearman, 2000:1).

“Not only is the play a work of puppet mastery – as the perfection of the chimp and human puppets’ movements is astoundingly realistic – it is also a story incredibly well told and holds the audience captivated with its theatricality and suspense” (Pearman, 2000:1).

The following extract was taken from an interview with Julia Boltt of Style magazine where questions relating to The Chimp Project were raised:

“Julia: What gave rise to The Chimp Project?

Adrian Kohler: It all started in March 1998 when scriptwriter Peter Esterhuysen and zoologist Barak Morgan approached me with a proposal to create a play centred on chimpanzees. In July of that year we went to the forests of Gombe in central Africa to a rehabilitation centre, and the writing began in February 1999. I started making the puppets at the same time. From August 1999 until now, we’ve been in rehearsal.

Julia: What challenges did this production present?

Basil: Working with animal puppets has its difficulties. The main problem is the unnatural posture the puppets create for the puppeteers.

For this production, we worked with a t'ai chi master to learn control, to slow down, because when you work with puppets you need to be slower than an actor would be, in order to keep the movement from becoming frantic and blurred. We also work very closely with breath to attune to each other. Sometimes there are as many as three people controlling one puppet, and you can't always see the other puppeteers; you can only hear their breath. We've found that t'ai chi fits in perfectly with our style of work.

Julia: How many puppets appear in The Chimp Project?

Adrian: This is the largest company of puppets we've ever had. There are twenty-four three-dimensional puppets and thirty shadow puppets, which were used in the multimedia links" (Bolt, 2000:78 – 79).

According to the Episodes exhibition (2001:6) catalogue:

"... all the puppets, both animal and human had whole-bodied skeletal structures covered with gauze. This resulted in puppets, which were fully three-dimensional, lightweight but whose transparency evoked a lantern-like ghostliness which somehow seemed right for the play"

The puppet characters were:

*Sonya*, *Lisa's* guardian, *Tadashi*, the curator of the sanctuary, *Shadrack*, a businessman, *Father Yves*, a Belgian missionary doctor, *Two boys* accused of poaching, *A bush pig*, *Hamisi*, Tadashi's assistant and *The Police Commissioner*.

These puppets were designed and carved by Kohler. Jelutong wood was used for the heads and hands. Luke Younge was assistant puppet carver and other assistant puppet makers were Tau Qwelane and Monique Fagan (The Chimp Project, 2000).

The manipulators for The Chimp Project were Köhler, Jones, Louis Seboko, Yvette Coetzee, Tau Qwelane, Fourie Nyamande, Busi Zokufa and Rajesh Gopie. The co-ordinator of the play was Kurt Wustmann while the set designer and painter was Nadya Cohen. Hazel Maree designed the costumes. Basil Jones was the assistant

production co-ordinator and the directors of video were Deborah May and Catherine Warric (*The Chimp Project*, 2000).

The Chimp Project premiered in May in Germany, at Hanover's Big World Expo, from where it later transferred to the Reklinghausen Festival in Weimar and Munich. In South Africa, it was presented at the National Arts Festival in Grahamstown on 7 and 8 July and at the Market Theatre in Johannesburg from 14 July. It was also produced in association with Artscape and performed at the Nico Malan Theatre, Cape Town from 27 September to 7 October. Subsequently, the show was presented in Switzerland and Paris again. It also toured the island of Réunion before moving to Nuremberg, Germany in December. In June 2001 the show returned to Paris for a stint at Peter Brooke's theatre, *Les Bouffes du Nord*.



**Fig.2.46.** Chimps from *The Chimp Project*, 2000  
(*Episodes* – exhibition catalogue, 2001:36).

Zeno at 4a.m – was directed by Kentridge. Kentridge saw Zeno at 4 a.m as a forerunner of a greater work, which resulted in 2002 in Confessions of Zeno, a theatrical adaption of the novel The Confessions of Zeno by Italo Svevo. Zeno at 4 a.m dealt with Zeno's memories of the death of his father. This might explain the fragmentary nature of the performance (Moen, 2001: n.p).

In Zeno at 4 a.m, Kentridge used shadow puppets and described this multi-media theatre production as a one-act opera or a "shadow-oratorium" because of the use of shadow puppets throughout the production (Schoombie, 2001:3).

"The piece begins with a musical prologue executed by a string quartet, a piece by Kevin Volans, which projects the suggestion of African music into a kind of contemporary classicism. Then the scene empties and on the diaphanous screen in the background, appear the animated images of a mournful procession of shadows, accompanied by the accordion of a Johannesburg street musician. Adrian Köhler's puppet levers move through the air, slender figures of wood, aluminium and plastic, constructions of lost and found. Anthropomorphic trees, fantastical creatures which give material form to the obsessive visions which disturb the troubled "conscience" of the protagonist" (Manzella, 2001:n.p).

The shadow puppet images of the procession in the production provided a perfect indication of the content: a procession of semi-abstract shadowy images, ghosts, like the things we might see in our nightmares, a procession of anthropomorphic figures on high platforms, like cranes, with heads like loudspeakers or trees (Moen, 2001:n.p). After the interval, these figures return as the obsessive images dominating Zeno's thoughts. Later they become real shadow images, indirect projections of figures manipulated by the Handspring Puppet Company onto the

screen. There were fifteen rod puppets, controlled from five other figures that were extensions of the human body. These puppets were made from wood, aluminium, nylon webbing and plastic board (*Kunsten Festival des Arts*, 2001:1).

“The most beautiful moment is at the end, when Zeno’s father has died and a new procession of fabulous creatures (the puppet players with grotesque masks – a tree, a telephone... -on their heads) escorts him away, as if in a dance of death. This brings the ritualistic, reconciliatory and exorcising aspects of Kentridge’s treatment of death and memory to a conclusion” (Moens, 2001: n.p).

On the right-hand side of the stage, the actors / puppet players were visibly manipulating the puppets. The repeated processions of these bizarre creatures provided rhythm to the performance, and illustrated the obsessive inner world of Zeno. The performance ended with the actors putting similar constructions to those of the puppets on their shoulders and forming a funeral procession as living equivalents of the shadowy puppets (Beirens, 2001:n.p).

Members of the Handspring Puppet Company involved in this production were Jones, Kohler, Busi Zokufa and Tau Quelane. Actor Dawid Minnaar played the small role of *Zeno*, which was mainly an acting role, while Otto Maida sang the key role of *Zeno’s Father*.

The show premiered in Brussels in May and from October to December it was performed in Paris (Pompidou Centre), Toulouse and other French cities, Minneapolis, Chicago and New York (Lincoln Centre).

2002

Confessions of Zeno – the show concluded the theatrical adaptation of the novel by Italo Svevo and was directed by Kentridge. The production premiered during May in Brussels, Belgium and received a standing ovation on 8 June when performed in Kassel, Germany at the Documenta II, Festival (Van Niekerk, 2002:12). The show was presented at the National Arts Festival, Grahamstown on 3 and 4 July.

Together with the writer, Jane Taylor, and the composer, Kevin Volans, Kentridge gave life to Zeno by using a technique which he called live cinema. In the tradition of the silent cinema, the Sontonga string quartet accompanied the actions that evolved with animation, shadow puppetry, projection, acting and singing.

A projection screen made from cheap tracing paper, held together with tape to form a visual grid, was placed at centre stage. Diagonally at the back and at the side of the stage, Köhler and other manipulators worked with shadow puppets to project silhouettes of puppets, video-taped by a camera and projected on the screen. Drawn backgrounds, animation and sketches on acetate, rolled along in front of the camera. These were interwoven into a cinematographical image (Van Niekerk, 2002:12). The delicate and small ( $\pm 20\text{cm}$  varying to  $\pm 40\text{ cm}$ ) hand-manipulated figures made from torn cardboard or corrugated plastic board, became large enough on screen to be able to act with the characters on stage and even sometimes overpower them (2002a).

Dawid Minnaar acted the character of Zeno, while Otto Maidi sang the role of *Zeno's father*, Lwazi Ncube sang the role of his father's wife *Augusta* and Phumeza Matshikiza that of his mistress.



**Fig. 2.47.** Dawid Minnaar in Confessions of Zeno, 2002. Photo: Documenta (Van Niekerk, 2002:12).

The Tall Horse - pre-production work for this show started during this year.

2003

Confessions of Zeno - was performed at the Spier Amphitheatre, Stellenbosch from 6 to 8 February.

During the course of the year, the Handspring Puppet Company continued the pre-production work for the Tall Horse. They worked in collaboration with Jaja Coulibaly, a puppeteer from Mali.



The company started experimenting with materials at their workshop in Kalk Bay.

According to Freedman (2002b:2):

"The giraffe puppet has recently been in the making and in the process of learning from one another; they had to deal with a difference of approach in finding materials with which to make puppets. They experimented with recently cut alien vegetation, for the creation of the framework for the giraffe".

This method was later revised (refer to 2004).

2004

During March, the company again performed Monteverdi's Il Ritorno d'Ulisse, directed by Kentridge, in the USA as part of the Lincoln Centre's Great Performers' programme.

Tall Horse - this production was based on a "well-documented version of an African form of diplomatic initiative that occurred in 1827 when the Pasha of Egypt, Mehemet Ali sent a giraffe to Charles X, the King of France" (Handspring & Sogolon..., 2004). The French received the giraffe with an enthusiasm that verged on hysteria and the animal fascinated both scientists and the public. This giraffe became the most popular animal in the Paris zoo and it was said to have inspired the young Eiffel when he designed his famous tower. This signal event is regarded as the beginning of an increasing flow of cultural and artistic influence from Africa into Europe (Tall Horse: programme, 2004).

As stated in the programme of the show:

“The Tall Horse is the product of a collaboration of artists from diverse cultures – Malian, South African, Béninoise (French, American and English). It is the story of a collaboration among Malian, French, Egyptian and Italian individuals, slaves and kings, scientists and tomb robbers, to bring an exotic regal and exceedingly rare gift (a Giraffe) to Enlightenment - era France” (Tall Horse:programme, 2004).

“The challenge (for Kohler and Coulibaly) was to find a way to mix the Handspring’s (Puppet Company) highly eclectic forms of puppetry, borrowed from traditions as far afield as Czechoslovakia and Japan, with the Malian style. I hoped the idea of setting the piece in a West African museum would allow the many objects in the story, each with their own memories, to reside side by side, despite their differences” (Tall Horse: programme, 2004).

Coulibaly’s heritage is steeped in the ancient tradition of Bambara puppetry; the oldest and richest of Africa’s surviving puppetry traditions. The puppets were cultural tools located in the magic field between illusion and reality, which connected the invisible world of the supernatural and the visible world of the human (South meets west, 2004:1). This old puppetry tradition is given contemporary interpretation in Tall Horse.

The production employed a variety of techniques, including the interaction of actors, life-sized puppets and masquerade figures. The heads and masks were carved from wood and painted. In some cases, like the Malian *Castelet* - a large antelope with a fringed skirt - cage-like structures shaped the bodies that covered the puppeteers. The costumes were made from African printed textiles in bright colours (2004).

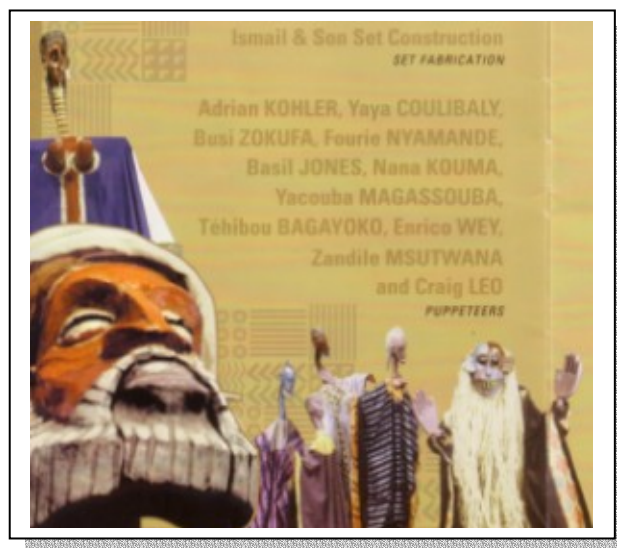
The 5-metres high *Giraffe* was the tallest and most technically intricate puppet that the Handspring Puppet Company had ever made. The puppet was constructed from a frame of carbon-fibre rods and it took two puppeteers on stilts, to operate. The puppet was fully mechanical – its head, ears and tail could be manipulated by the puppeteers through a complex system that allowed the puppeteers, inside the body frame of the giraffe, to manipulate the appendages through bicycle brake cables. The *Giraffe* could turn its head, flap its ears and tail and walk with the swaying graceful gait one would recognize from the wild (Handspring outdoes itself, 2004:1).

The giraffe puppet was designed and constructed by Kohler who said “one of the main challenges of the puppet construction was getting the weight ratio of the carved giraffe head right for the flexible neck structure, so as to ensure that it was not too heavy for the puppeteers to support” (Handspring outdoes itself, 2004:1). The puppeteers were Kohler, Coulibaly, Busi Zokufa, Fourie Nyamande, Jones, Nana Kouma, Yacouba Magassouba, Téhibou Bagayoko, Anrico Wey, Zandile Msutwana and Craig Leo.

The production was directed by Marthinus Basson, the script written by Khephra Burns, set and costume designs by Kohler, while Kohler and Yaya Coulibaly, assisted by puppet makers Téhibou Bagayoko, Nana Kouma, Yacouba Magassouba, Mervyn Miller, Thami Kitti and Kevin Willemse designed and made the puppets. Hazel Maree made costumes for the puppets.

Musicians Warrick Sony and Murray Anderson were commissioned to create the musical score. “We kept this time period in mind when composing the music” (Renowned South Africa..., 2004:1). A large projection screen showed animations of line drawings, maps and computer-generated cartoon images to merge past and present on stage.

Tall Horse was performed at the Baxter Theatre, Cape Town from 10 to 18 September, at the State Theatre, Pretoria from 22 September to 2 October and from 6 to 9 October at the Dance Factory, Johannesburg (Tall Horse – The..., 2004:1).



**Fig 2.48.** A group of puppets from Tall Horse (Handspring & Sogolon..., 2004:1- 2).

## **2.27 HECHTER, ILSE (also refer to The CHILDREN'S PUPPET PLAY)**

### **2.27.1 Background**

Ilse Hechter was born on 21 June 1980. From 1999 to 2000 she studied BA Fine Arts at the University of Cape Town, but did not complete the degree.

In 2000, Hechter after having completed a course in puppetry-making with Hillette Stapelberg founded The Children's Puppet Play with Ingard Herbst.

She has been a fulltime puppeteer since 2000 and produces puppet shows for performances at schools, festivals, and for welfare organizations. She also presents workshops and makes puppets to sell at art and craft markets. In 2000 Hechter assisted in making marionettes for Ratanga Junction Entertainment Centre, Cape Town.

### **2.27.2 Productions and performances**

For all productions from 2000 – 2004 refer to The CHILDREN'S PUPPET PLAY (2.9.2:77).

## **2.28 HERBST, INGARD (also refer to The CHILDREN'S PUPPET PLAY)**

### **2.28.1 Background**

Ingard Herbst was born in Johannesburg on 28 October 1971 and grew up in Bloemfontein. She enrolled for the National Diploma: Fine Arts at the Technical College of the Orange Free State from 1992 – 1994, with sculpture as a major subject, but she did not complete the diploma (Herbst, 2003b:1).

In 2000 Herbst started making puppets and performed in Cape Town. In October of that year Herbst met Ilse Hechter at UNIMA, Cape Town, and together they founded The Children's Puppet Play.

Herbst also sells puppets at Art and Craft Markets as well as making puppets on commission. She uses a mixture of materials to construct her puppets, such as polystyrene, wire, wood, woven twigs and paper (Herbst, 2003a:1).

During February 2003 Herbst and Hechter held adult workshops for puppetry at the National Museum, Cape Town.

### **2.28.2 Productions and performances**

For all productions from 2000 to 2004, refer to The CHILDREN'S PUPPET PLAY (2.9.2:77).

## **2.29 HERZBERG, LILLY (also refer to PUPPET SPACE)**

### **2.29.1 Background**

Herzberg was active in puppetry from 1952 – 1979. Over the years, she worked as a puppeteer, director, or as a scriptwriter and produced shows for children and adult audiences in the Western Cape Province (Lily Herzberg, S.a: n.p.). Puppet Space at the Space Theatre, Cape Town that was founded in 1972, functioned under the direction of Herzberg.

Lily Herzberg was the first UNIMA member in South Africa. After having attended the British UNIMA festival in Colwyn Bay in 1968, she proceeded to organize UNIMA in South Africa. She was appointed UNIMA representative of South Africa by the UNIMA presidium in 1969. She resigned as chairperson in April 1978.

During her 10-year tenure, she did this work in a voluntary capacity until 1977. She represented South Africa at the UNIMA congresses in Prague in 1969 and in Charleville-Mézières in 1972.

Herzberg wrote many articles on all aspects of puppetry over the years. These appeared in various South African national magazines in English and Afrikaans. She

has also broadcast numerous talks on SABC radio on many aspects of traditional and contemporary puppetry (Lily Herzberg, S.a: n.p.).

Herzberg published “The Bewitched Tree” in 1959 and later “Puppetry for Young and Old”, which contained the puppet play The Bewitched Tree, as well as “*Poppespeel vir Oud en Jonk*”, with the puppet play Die Getoorde Boom. This was the first book of its type in Afrikaans, with the first puppet play to be published in Afrikaans.

All the productions she was involved in received critical acclaim in particular The Rebirth of the Ostrich, a Bushman legend, which she dramatized, devised and directed. This shadow production was the first shadow puppet San story produced in South Africa (Lily Herzberg, S.a: n.p.).

She lectured at various tertiary education institutions in Cape Town, to Occupational Therapy students, Logopaedics students and Teacher-Training students on Puppetry in Education and Puppetry in Therapy.

She was invited to give the opening lecture and to run a workshop on shadow puppetry at the first National Marionnette Workshop at the Civic Theatre, Johannesburg, in August 1977.

Her play The Bewitched Tree was also made into a film, which had a wide circulation through the Cape Provincial Film Library. She directed this film and adapted the script.



Her publicity efforts in the field of puppetry have helped to increase information about, and popularize puppetry in South Africa. She has also been approached on many occasions by the Department of Information and Education to compile reports on South African puppetry when such requests have come from abroad.

Herzberg left South Africa to settle in London in 1979.

### **2.29.1 Productions and performances**

1975

Rebirth of the Ostrich – (refer to PUPPET SPACE)

1979

The Bewitched Tree - was a puppet play based on an ancient fable, which is over 2000 years old. The story was passed down through Africa by word of mouth and is known to many people throughout the continent. This version was based on the outline of the old story, and although many characters, dialogue and situations have been added, the spirit of the legend has remained intact. It is a story of a man in close touch with nature. The Bewitched Tree, was produced by the Baxter Theatre on 25 June and directed by Cecily Bova in consultation with Herzberg.

Despite many attempts to contact Herzberg for more information via e-mail, she has not responded.

## **2.30 JOHANNESBURG CIVIC THEATRE: MARIONETTE COMPANY**

### **2.30.1 Background**

In 1964, the Board of Governors of the Johannesburg Civic Theatre Association, on the recommendation of Michal Grobbelaar, director of the Johannesburg Civic Theatre, decided to form a marionette theatre company at the Johannesburg Civic Theatre. The company was known as Johannesburg Civic Theatre: Marionette Company, hereafter referred to as JCT:Marionette Company.

The Association recommended to the Johannesburg City Council that another marionette theatre, apart from the one at the Johannesburg Civic Theatre, be built at the Rand Easter Show grounds at Milner Park, Johannesburg, where performances could be held during the Easter holidays. On 29 March 1966, the 80-seater Johannesburg Marionette Theatre was opened in the Johannesburg Pavillion at the Rand Easter Show grounds at Milner Park. This theatre was one of the permanent contributions from the City of Johannesburg to commemorate the 80<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Johannesburg, as well as the fifth anniversary of the Republic of South Africa.

For the inauguration of this theatre, the Johannesburg Civic Theatre Association invited the Little Angel Marionette Company from London, headed by the former South African, John Wright. The opening coincided with the Rand Easter Show period and from then on the Johannesburg Civic Theatre Association presented

marionette performances during every Rand Easter Show season, as well as at the Johannesburg Civic Theatre (Pieter Roos Hall) until 1981.

Since the opening of the theatre in 1966, the director of the Civic Theatre had searched for artistic people to appoint as full-time puppeteers. On 1 July 1968 Alida von Maltitz was appointed as the first full-time puppeteer, with Ann Bailes appointed as the second full-time puppeteer. They began making puppets for the first presentation scheduled for December 1968.

In 1968 Daan Retief wrote a play about the birth of Christ for marionettes. The play, together with a divertissement programme entitled, The Christmas Story / Die Kersverhaal was presented during December 1968, in the Chamber Theatre of the Civic Theatre.

In March and April 1969, the JCT:Marionette Company put on performances in the Johannesburg Pavilion park at Milner Park, as part of the Civic Theatre's contribution to the Performing Arts in South Africa - the theme of the Department of Information's exhibition at the Rand Easter Show, Johannesburg.

From 27 September to 11 October 1969, a variety show was performed at the Pieter Roos Hall of the Johannesburg Civic Theatre. The show was done with assistance from Elizabeth de Groote, Roy Sawyers and Barry Greyvenstein.

During 1970 the productions, A Green Christmas, written by Eleanor Anderson and directed by Bess Finney and Die Kersverhaal, by Daan Retief, Little Red Riding Hood / Rooikappie; a programme of Divertissements; and a bilingual production of Pietie and the Waterwitch / Pietie en die Waterheks by Alida von Maltitz, were presented at the Civic Theatre and at the Johannesburg Pavilion, Show Grounds, Milner Park (A Variety programme..., 1970: 1-2; Grobbelaar, 1979:15).

During school holidays, marionette performances were held regularly. The performances originally took place in the Chamber Theatre of the Civic Theatre, which had 112 seats. The performances, however, became so popular and the demand for seats so overwhelming, that the productions was moved to the large auditorium of the Civic Theatre.

“It is also fact that the little ones who start coming to the Civic Theatre proper soon became imbued with a love for the theatre” (Grobbelaar, 1979:15).

The JCT: Marionette Company presented a variety programme at the Johannesburg Pavilion (Milner Park showgrounds) during the 1971 Rand Easter show during March and April.

In 1971 the water fantasy, Pietie and the Waterwitch alternated with a programme of Divertissements during the first two seasons. In June and July, Pietie and the Starfish, was presented and was again presented in December together with a new

programme of Divertissements. This season ended in January 1972 (Grobelaar, 1979:15).

During the Rand Show of 1972 the Marionette Company again presented earlier shows in the theatre at the Johannesburg Pavillion at the Rand Easter Show grounds at Milner Park. (The specific shows are not known). For the June / July season two new productions were presented, namely Liewe Heksie en die Feëkoningin and Señor Onyon. Both were again presented during September.

For the December 1972 season, the Company produced its first opera, Amahl and the Night Visitors. The shows were performed from 4 to 22 December.

In 1972 Alida von Maltitz, resigned and Ann Bailes accepted a position in the Properties Department of PACT, while still working part-time for JCT: Marionette Company. Dinah Newton, who joined the Company in September 1972, was appointed as principal puppeteer. On Newton's resignation in 1976, Jean Watson took over as principal puppeteer.

A Dream Fantasy was performed at the Rand Showseason in Johannesburg from 26 March to 7 April 1973. The show was directed by Leonara Nel. Dinah Von Maltitz (Newton) and Ann Sideris were the marionette masters assisted by Cecile Celliers, Alfreda Ehrensperger and Hansie Visagie.

During 1973 Señor Onyon was again staged, as well as The Sorcerer's Apprentice. The company again performed during the Rand Show (Grobbelaar, 1979: 15).

The Sorcerer's Apprentice and Señor Onyon were performed at the Civic Theatre from 25 June to 14 July.

In December 1973, the company undertook its first tour when three productions, Señor Onyon, The Sorcerer's Apprentice and Fun in the Veld, a variety programme, were presented at Oranjemund School Hall, South West Africa (now Namibia), on the 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> of the month (Grobbelaar, 1979:15).

In March 1974 the company again appeared at the Rand Show, but Grobbelaar did not mention the productions staged in his report (Grobbelaar, 1979:15).

Aladdin and the Magic Lamp was the first full-length play to be presented by the JCT: Marionette Company and ran from 26 June to 20 July 1974. Ralph Trewhela adapted the well-known story for marionette theatre. Bess Finney directed the production and Denis Wilman was the musical director. The show was done in the form of a pantomime and was devised primarily for junior audiences.

“Probably for the first time in South Africa, an original script has been written professionally for marionettes. “Aladdin and His Magic Lamp”, a full length musical, promises to be the most spectacular show yet staged by the Civic Theatre Marionette Company” (Baneshik, 1974:23).

The show contained “a good deal of knock about humour for the younger set, with sophisticated overtones for adults and Mr Trehwela has taken a novel approach to several of the original roles. Even the two genies, Lamp and Ring, have contemporary personalities” (Baneshik, 1974:23).

Characters included a *Lord High Traffic Cop*, a comedy *Camel*, an exotic *Belly Dancer*, the *Sultan*, *Grand Vizier*, *Princess*, *Aladdin's Mother*, the *Wicked Uncle* and of course *Aladdin*.

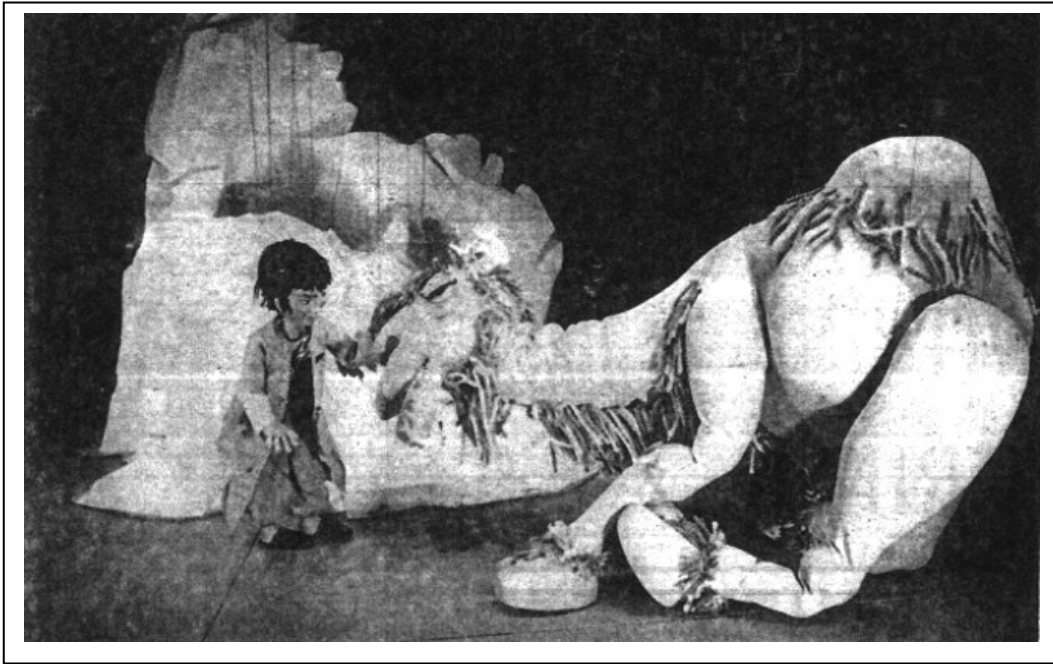
“The Wicked Uncle is definitely camp, a point the children will miss, but his antics, as he minces across the stage should be appreciated by the adults.

The music has been used creatively throughout – the princess does a No No, Nanette-type tap dance, the genie swings about the stage to a Latin American rhythm and the camel does an exotic ballet to the strains of Tchaikovsky” (Simmonds, 1974:13).

“The intelligent script and charming songs incorporate the modern touch (the Genie of the Ring decides the only way out of the cave is via rocket propulsion through the roof), and the sets and costumes have just the right glamour and appeal” (Jenkins, 1974:23).

“I liked the Ballet of the Laundry, and the pas de quatre from Aladdin, bat, skeleton and snake. The flying carpet sequence was cleverly done: but the two characters who stole hearts were Coco the Camel and the black and beaming Bimbo” (Brewer, 1974:14c).

Some of the foremost actors were contracted to do the voices of the various characters. These included Kenneth Hendel, Olive Wright, Adrian Egan, Ronald Wallace, Gay Lambert, Robin Dolton and Bruce Anderson (Brewer, 1974:14C).



**Fig. 2.49.** *Aladdin and the Camel* from Aladdin and the Magic Lamp, 1974 (Simmonds, 1974:14).

### 2.30.2 Productions and performances

1975

The Reluctant Dragon – Jean Watson designed and made a dragon as her first marionette, and it followed almost naturally that a play with a dragon as one of the characters should be found. It was decided to stage Kenneth Grahame's Reluctant Dragon, which was a 'send-up' of knights and dragons and a new set of marionettes was created.

The well-known theatre personality, Truida Louw, was asked to adapt, translate and direct the production, which was to be presented in English and Afrikaans. Ralph Trehwela was asked to compose special music. Actors such as Katinka Heyns,



Patrick Mynhardt, Eonone van Niekerk, Dana Niehaus and Hein Toerien were contracted to provide voices for the marionettes, and the first season opened on 21 April 1975 at the Rand Easter Show.

Von Maltitz was the principal puppeteer with Jean Watson, Soekie Kruger, Diana Fitzpatrick and Antoinette Snyman assisting. The Marionettes, costumes, properties and décor were designed, made and painted by Von Maltitz, Jean Watson, Soekie Kruger and Diana Fitzpatrick.

The show was presented in the Marionette Theatre at the pavilion of the City of Johannesburg during the Rand Show from 21 April to 3 May and was again staged for a season at the Johannesburg Civic Theatre during August.



**Fig. 2.50.** . Studio work on the Reluctant Dragon, 1975. Photo: Alan Coxon (Wilson, 1975:n.p.).



**Fig.2.51.** Studio work on the Reluctant Dragon, 1975. Photo: Alan Coxon (Wilson, 1975:n.p.).

Aladdin and the Magic Lamp - was again presented by the JCT: Marionette Company and ran from 18 to 30 August (Edgson,1975: 8).

1976

The company's 1976 season commenced at the Civic Theatre on 24 January with a series of Saturday performances. The productions Reluctant Dragon and Señor Onyon, were presented with Snyman, Watson and Newton as manipulators.

In March, a short season of Aladdin and the Magic Lamp was again staged, as well as a lunch hour presentation of Señor Onyon and Reluctant Dragon.

Bits and Pieces – a variety bill, was performed with Watson as principal puppeteer, assisted by Irene Martin, Maureen Levy, Ronald Jacobson and Antoinette Snyman (Grobelaar, 1979:17). The production opened on 26 April for a season at the Rand Easter Show.

During the second half of 1976, Truida Louw rehearsed Jack and the Beanstalk / Jan en die Boontjierank. This production was presented with the ever popular Señor Onyon on Wednesdays and Saturdays from 16 October 1976 to 18 December, at the Civic Theatre. Alida von Maltitz assisted with the direction of the shows (Von Maltitz, 2001).

1977

Rumpelstiltskin / Repelsteeltjie - Reinet Louw adapted the fairy tale into Afrikaans as Repelsteeltjie for the marionette company. The well-known radio personality, Bill Sharp, composed the music for the production and also translated Louw's adaptation into English. George Ballot, Katinka Heyns, Pierre de Wet, Jan Pohl, Errol Ross and

Patrick Mynhardt provided the voices of the marionettes. Jean Watson, Irene Martin and Antoinette Snyman were the manipulators (Grobbelaar, 1979:17). It was directed by Truida Louw, and presented at the Rand Easter Show from 25 April to 7 May.

Traditions: Then and Today - on 3 and 4 June, the puppeteers and Truida Louw took part in a presentation in Springs, Eastern Transvaal (now Mpumalanga). Excerpts from Repelsteeltjie and a lecture were presented under the aegis of the Department of National Education's branch, Cultural Advancement.

Performances of Repelsteeltjie / Rumpelstiltskin were presented at the Civic Theatre from 11 June to 9 July (Grobbelaar, 1979:17).

Another 'first' was scored when a marionette workshop was held at the Civic Theatre from 9 to 12 August. Officially opened by His Worship the Mayor of Johannesburg, Sir Martin Powell, it was attended by 38 puppeteers from all over South Africa and Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe). Specialists, including the puppeteers from the Johannesburg Civic Theatre, read papers. The workshop's finale was a series of performances by puppeteers of a variety of programmes.

A marionette programme in three parts was performed in an eighty-seater tent on the lawn of the Civic theatre, Johannesburg from 3 December to 7 January 1978. The programme, in Afrikaans and English comprised:

1. Carnival of the Animals / Karnaval van die Diere – was presented by Don Lamprecht with music of Saint Saëns and verse written by Annette Barnard.

2. Once upon a time .../ Eendag lank gelede... - was a fairy-tale written by Truida Louw and told in English by Sheilagh Holiday and in Afrikaans by Anna Neethling-Pohl.

3. A Nativity - was a production with Christmas carols sung by an octet of the Rand Afrikaans University Choir. The production was done with shadow puppets, designed by the puppeteers (Grobbelaar, 1979:17). The puppeteers were Karin Bröll, Irene Martin, Jean Watson and Hansie Visagie, with Truida Louw as Artistic Director (Grobbelaar, 1979:17).

1978

Clown Capers / Narrekaperjolle – was a new programme with the circus as theme, which was devised and directed by Michal Grobbelaar. Watson, Martin, Alida von Maltitz, Newton and Bailes created puppets.

Watson (principal puppeteer), Martin (puppeteer), assisted by Snyman and Pieter Bezuidenhout, manipulated the puppets. It was first presented at the Rand Easter Show from 10 April to 22 April 1978.

From 27 June 8 July a short season of the productions, Aladdin and the Magic Lamp, Rumpelstiltskin / Repelsteeltjie and Clown Capers / Narrekaperjolle were presented.

Dinah Newton, who had moved to Bloemfontein after her marriage to Johan Von Maltitz, was invited back to restage the production of Aladdin and the Magic Lamp.

During this year, invitations to visit other centres with the marionette performances were received. As the JCT: Marionette Company did not have its own technical staff, it had to rely on the Civic Theatre's technical staff for the visits to other centres. The Civic Theatre technicians provided their services without hesitation, in spite of the additional workload (Grobbelaar, 1979:18).

The first visit was to Potchefstroom, Western Transvaal (now North West Province) on 12 September with Narrekaperjolle and Repelsteeltjie. On 4 November, the same programme was presented at Elsburg, Transvaal (now Gauteng).

Aladdin - was performed on 1 December, at the Townsview Primary School (location not mentioned by Grobbelaar) and on 2 December, Clown Capers was performed at the Syringa Spa near Krugersdorp, Transvaal (now Gauteng) (Grobbelaar, 1979:18).

A Christmas production could not be presented, as a venue was not available.

“After 10 years of active existence as the only professional company of its kind, the Marionette Company can look back on a proud record. It has proved that here is a need for this kind of entertainment and looks forward to having its own theatre where performances can be presented all year round, thereby adding to the City of Johannesburg's prestige as a world city (Grobbelaar, 1979:18).

1979

Jan en die Boontjie Rank - was directed by Alida van Maltitz and performed during June – July (Von Maltitz, 2001).

1980

No record could be found of shows during this period.

1981

Aladdin and the Magic Lamp - the 1974 production was again staged. According to Schwenke (1984:42) this was rated as one of the most successful productions by the marionette company. No further reference to activities of the company after this period could be found.

## **2.31 JOHANNESBURG PUPPET COMPANY (also refer to SNYMAN, A and VON MALTITZ, A)**

### **2.31 1 Background**

In 2000 the Johannesburg Puppet Company was established by puppeteers Alida von Maltitz and Antoinette Snyman at the Rand Afrikaans University (now the University of Johannesburg), with donations from the Tesson Trust. Hugo Strydom acted as the technical manager and Cathy Sachse as the financial manager (Snyman, 2000:3). Since 2002, only Antoinette Snyman and Cathy Sachse have been permanently involved with the company. The company is housed in the Gencor Art Hall. It has also become the permanent home to hundreds of marionettes, which previously belonged to the J C T: Marionette Company (Snyman, 2000:3).

Productions for the Johannesburg Puppet Company were mostly conceptualised, written and directed by Antoinette Snyman (Snyman, 2004:1).

## 2. 31.2 Productions and performances

2000

*Die Stadsmuis en die Plaasmuis* - is the story of how *Jean Pierre Muis* (the city mouse) decided to visit his cousin *Stoffel Stoflap* on the farm. The very important city gentleman shuddered at just about everything on the farm. He did not want to drink *Amamoemoe's* warm farm milk because he was afraid of *Kieter Kater*, the farm cat. *Paddaman van Slyk* irritated him because this toad croaked till late at night. *Jean Pierre Muis* then decided that the farm life was not for him because there was no television and on top of it he couldn't charge the battery of his cellphone.

At the request of *Jean Pierre Muis*, *Stoffel Stoflap* then went to visit him in the city, but the city was too rough for the farm mouse. The two cabaret cats *Vinkel* and *Koljander* tried to convince him to give the city another chance, but all in vain. *Stoffel* and *Jean Pierre* eventually decided to each stay where they belonged – at home.

Dinah von Maltitz made both main characters for this marionette production and Antoinette Snyman wrote the text. The manipulators were Antoinette Snyman, Janita Morton, Marinda Botha and Sanmarie Auret. The voices of Richard van der Westhuizen – *Die Plaasmuis* and Lochner de Kock – *die Stadsmuis* were used.

The marionette show was directed by Dinah von Maltitz for a puppet festival and sponsored by The Michel Tesson Performing Arts Trust. The show was performed for

the Johannesburg Puppet Company from 27 November until 14 December at the Gencor Gallery, Rand Afrikaans University.



**Fig.2.52.** Richard van der Westhuizen and Lochner de Kock with the Plaasmuis and the Stadsmuis (Von Maltitz, D, 2003b).



**Fig.2.53.** The Plaasmuis from Die en die Plaasmuis (Von Maltitz, D, 2003b).



2001

African "Tails" – was conceptualised, written and directed by Snyman and it was performed twice a day from 1 to 14 December with puppets from the collection. No further information could be obtained about the production.

2002 - 2004

According to Snyman (2004: 1) the following productions were performed at the theatre based at the Gencor Art Hall (at the then Rand Afrikaans University):

Puppet Idols - written, directed and manipulated by Snyman

Sirkus op tone - written and directed by Snyman

Karnaval van die Diere - with music by Saint Saëns



**Fig. 2.54.** Various marionettes from the Johannesburg Puppet Company collection exhibited at ABSA. Photo: Van Eck, T (2003).

## **2.32 JONES, BASIL (also refer to HANDSPRING PUPPET COMPANY)**

### **2.32.1 Background**

Basil Jones was born on 20 July 1951. He studied B A (Fine Arts) at the University of Cape Town from 1971 to 1974. After his studies he worked at the Cultural History museum in Cape Town. In 1977 he joined his partner, Adrian Kohler, in Birmingham, United Kingdom, where both became involved in community art projects (refer to **2.39.2:216**). In 1978 he accepted a post at the National Museum and Art Gallery in Botswana as a graphic artist. He was instrumental in obtaining one of the best collections of Bambara puppets for the museum (Jones, 2002).

In 1981 he returned to Cape Town where he, Adrian Kohler, Jill Joubert and Jon Weinberg founded the Handspring Puppet Company. Basil Jones and Adrian Kohler have run the company alone since 1983.

### **2.32.2 Productions and performances**

For productions and performances refer to the HANDSPRING PUPPET COMPANY.

## **2.33 JOUBERT, JILL (also refer to HANDSPRING PUPPET COMPANY)**

### **2.33.1 Background**

Jill Joubert who was born in 1954 in Tzaneen, matriculated in 1971 at the Notre Dame Convent, Kroonstad. In 1972 she started studying B A Fine Arts at the Michaelis School of Art at the University of Cape Town, majoring in Sculpture. In 1975 she changed her course to BA (Art), where she worked with Steven de Villiers on a glove and shadow puppet production as part of the Design and Craft subject. During 1976 Joubert studied for a Higher Diploma in Education at the University of Cape Town, while teaching three-dimensional art to blind children and adults at the Touch Gallery. She did a puppet workshop with Adrian Kohler at the Zonnenbloem Teachers' Training College and also assisted with the making of as well as performing with puppets for Gertie's Feathers (Joubert, 2002a).

From 1977 to 1980 Joubert was an art teacher at Herzlia High School, Cape Town where she did puppet workshops with standard 8 (grade 10) pupils. In 1981 she founded the Handspring Puppet Company with Adrian Kohler, Basil Jones and Jon Weinberg in Cape Town. She was involved with the company until 1983 when she left to start a family. Joubert organized and participated in nation-wide tours and was bookkeeper for the Handspring Puppet Company from 1981 to 1983.

In 1984 Joubert was again appointed as a teacher at Herzlia Middle School and from 1987 until 1988 at the Herzlia Senior High School, Cape Town. In 1986 Joubert was elected chairperson of UNIMA, Cape Town for one year. She organised and ran a creative playgroup for children aged 2 ½ to 3 years where she used puppetry for creative themes. She was also involved with puppetry workshops for children and teachers in various communities in the Cape Town area (Joubert, 2002a). Currently (2005) Joubert is head of the Frank Joubert Art Centre in Cape Town.

Joubert makes her own puppets and draws inspiration from the African wooden rod puppets like the Bambara puppets from Mali. She also uses small glove puppets, painted with care and with careful attention to detail, but prefers not to use string puppets because she gets the strings tangled (Joubert, 2002).



**Fig. 2.55.** Jill Joubert with some of her puppets (Joubert, 2002b).

### **2.33.2 Productions and performances**

1976

Joubert made and manipulated puppets for Gertie's Feathers at Puppet Space, Cape Town (refer to **2.39.2:216** and **2.57.2:292**).

1977 – 1980

Refer to background.

1981

The Honey Trail - was performed for the Handspring Puppet Company at the Baxter Theatre, Cape Town from 22 June to 11 July 1981. Jill was involved in making and manipulating the puppets (refer to **2.26.2:144**).

1982

Kashku Saves the Circus - was performed in 1982 for the Handspring Puppet Company. Joubert was involved in making and manipulating the puppets. Joubert organized a workshop on puppetry for the Handspring Puppet Company at the Natal Arts Society in Durban during 1982.

1983

Gerties Feather's was again produced by the Handspring Puppet Company at the Puppet Space, Cape Town in 1983, with Joubert as manipulator.

1984 - 1986

After leaving the Handspring Puppet Company, Joubert devised various puppet shows for her own children. These stories were usually performed at birthday parties for the children.

Puppet performances since 1984 have ranged from shows at International Women's Day, supermarkets, open day events at Community Arts Project, Cape Town, to advertising (Joubert, 2002a).

1987

Joubert was inspired by the work of \*The Welfare State International and by African \*Masquerades (an assembly of persons wearing masks) when she created the puppet, *Puff the Magic Dragon* and puppets for The Noisy Ha Ha Bird. Ideally these large puppets should be manipulated in the open air. The performances at her children's birthday parties of The Noisy Ha Ha Bird culminated in the children walking on the dragon's trail in procession to a feast (feasting and eating form an intrinsic part of the Welfare State International's performance events, which involve the group participating in making noise instruments, searching for lost treasures and the revival of ritual coming-of-age festivals).

The large puppets were also later used for various purposes at birthday parties or other festivities, because they were versatile and not connected to a specific story. During this year Joubert made various magic female characters. *The Autumn Fairy*,

for example, was a large cloth puppet inspired by Indian and African designs. These puppets were used to perform stories at her children's birthday parties.

1988

*The Moon Witch* was a large puppet (again along the lines of those used by the Welfare State International), made during this year. This puppet had a carved polystyrene head with a gloved hand. *The Wish Fairy*, a character from the story Simon and the Snail, was another magic female character puppet used for birthday parties. Joubert explored all types of puppets and she used both humour and serious themes in her stories.

The Owl and the Pussycat - for this show Joubert used a small puppet theatre constructed from a piano stool and cone puppets. These puppets were attached to a stick at the bottom and the costumes of the puppets were attached to the wide part of the cone. To make the puppet disappear, the stick was pulled down through the narrow bottom of the cone which was attached to various holes. Usually these cone puppets were single toys similar to a concept often used in the Rudolf Steiner Schools. The theatre was decorated with papier- mâché and found objects (2002b).

The Princess Who Never Smiles – was a traditional indigenous story for which wooden rod puppets in the \*Bambara-style were made. This show was performed at Joubert's children's birthday parties.

1989

Sir Gawain, the Green Knight and the Loathly Lady - was an amalgamation of two Sir Gawain legends and characters from Joubert's children's own fantasies with themes such as 'magic', 'riddles', 'danger' and 'love'. The puppets used for these shows were soft-sculptured puppets, for which various different types of textured fabric were used (Joubert, 2002a).

Rapunzel – was based on the classic Grimm's story. The *Prince* on his *Horse* was done as a simple rod marionette based on Sicilian puppet designs, while the rest were all fabric puppets. It was performed at a UNIMA, Cape Town, meeting on 17 June.

“Jill's lovely voice and excellent characterization kept everything together. She has the ability to conceive believable, well-rounded characters. The witch, for instance, had many facets to her colourful personality. As well as being likeable, tender and loving, she was selfish, vindictive and ruthless – yet managed to enlist our sympathy” (UNIMA, 1989:1).

1990

Sir Gawain the Green Knight and the Loathly Lady – was performed by Joubert at an UNIMA meeting on 24 March.

“Joubert created everything herself, including the amusing dialogue, interlaced with sound philosophy and imagination. Perfect diction and expert synchronization (in spite of operating a variety of characters in quick succession) all makes for her special king of magic. Sir Gawain's horse was beautifully contrived and yet so simple with much left to the imagination. The knight mounted him



expertly to Jill's vocal hoof beats and he galloped off...for all the world as though there were legs under that velvet cloth hanging from the saddle. Good use is made of small characters at the corners of the play board who pop up out of cones at appropriate times" (UNIMA, 1990a: 1).

The Fisherwoman and her Husband - this story was a gender reversal of the folktale.

It also had a strong ecological slant and dealt with desire for power at the expense of the environment. The sub-plot was about the relationship between middle-aged couples in which the man feels socially unfulfilled (Joubert, 2002). Puppet characters include the *Husband* as the king, with an extendable neck, the *Mermaid*, *Narrator* and the *Magic Fish*. The show, aimed at an adult audience, was performed in the piano stool theatre with cone puppets. Joubert performed this show at an UNIMA, Cape Town meeting on 25 August.

Untitled – this was a Christmas show, which Joubert presented at an UNIMA, Cape Town meeting on 8 December.

"With a lowered playboard, Jill Joubert sat framed in the proscenium arch and gently allowed the Christmas celebration to happen...She brought all the traditional characters out of cones, in turn – all most charmingly conceived. While the tiny Baby Jesus slept, the audience sang the well-known carols and songs" (UNIMA, 1991a:1).

1991

Joubert entertained the children at an UNIMA meeting 20 April by performing in the garden with the *Autumn Fairy*, *Noisy Ha-ha Bird*, and the *Dragon*. The *Autumn Fairy*

puppet helped the children to make wands, which would put them in touch with the *Noisy Ha-ha Bird*, who later revealed that the *Dragon* had stolen the children's tea and eats.

"The life-sized Dragon appeared, and after a lot of argument, agreed to lead the children back to the room where the tea would be restored to them. The children then put their heads through holes in the long piece of material that formed the Dragon's body, and trooped gaily back to the house, singing as they went" (UNIMA, 1991b:1).

1992

Hickory Dickory Dock – was a participatory play for 2 to 4-year-old children performed by Joubert in the foyer of the Nico Malan Theatre, Cape Town on 8 January.

Untitled - on Saturday 13 June Joubert presented a puppet show at the UNIMA meeting, Ruth Prowse School of Art, Woodstock, where the theme of the meeting was 'all things ghostly' (UNIMA, 1992a:1). No additional information was available in the newsletter.

The Crazy Old Man – was a show which Joubert created to mark the birthday of her son, Simon. Joubert staged it on 28 November at an UNIMA meeting at the Ruth Prowse School of Art.

1993

Puff, the Magic Dragon – was a show presented by Joubert on 27 February as part of UNIMA, Cape Town's participation in Mini-Cape's first anniversary celebration.

The Gift of Death – was presented by Joubert on 4 December at a UNIMA, Cape Town meeting. It was:

“...sensitive, thought-provoking and excellently told through the simplest of puppets – which actually increases the dramatic impact. It brought home clearly that death is not just an end to life, but a very necessary part of nature’s whole cycle” (UNIMA, 1994a: 1).

Joubert continued presenting the puppet shows she had developed for her children’s birthdays until 1994, when her style slowly changed from puppetry storytelling to Performance Art.

1994

On 16 April Joubert presented The Servant Girl at an UNIMA meeting at her home. No more information was given about the show (UNIMA, 1994b:1).

The Seal Woman – was originally devised by Joubert for her daughter’s birthday, but it turned out to be rather more of a coming-of-age puppet play for adults. She staged this show at various adult birthday parties. The story was about a *seal woman*, a rod puppet who came to the beach. She shed her skin while she did a wild dance. The other puppet was the *husband*, also on a rod, who did not do much. He told her how to be a woman and gave her various presents, which were different garments. She did not talk, only got dressed. In the process she lost her freedom and the clothes therefore became symbolic of her lost freedom.

The ± 30 cm high naked woman rod puppet is characteristic of all the things women usually do not like about their bodies. As the story unfolds, a range of painted cards containing important characteristics attributed to women, are dealt like a pack of cards (Joubert, 2002). The story was performed as Sealskin / Soulskin at an UNIMA meeting on 19 August.

In her later works Joubert became intrigued by the development from the written and to the spoken story, to the visual line of relating a story. She preferred to perform a quiet visual show that would suggest the storyline, rather than using words to express it. She sat on the floor to be in better and intimate contact with her audience. According to Joubert (2002a) she is not a shy puppeteer who hides behind her puppets in order to tell a story.

1995

The Dog's Coat - was a Zimbabwean story for which Joubert had carved wooden puppets. This was a story about a spoilt young man who stole his faithful dog's coat when he was forced to go off to seek his fortune. At a certain village the king had declared that the one who could make his daughter laugh or show emotion, could marry her. Joubert staged the show during the February meeting at UNIMA, Cape Town. The audience had fun participating, but nothing moved the sad princess. At this point the betrayed dog came to claim his coat from the spoilt young man's body. The result was "hilarious and the princess's spell was broken" (UNIMA, 1995b:1).

As this was an audience participation story, members of the audience were asked to present some small object or idea like a puppet, an acrobatic or magic trick or a little story to help make the *Princess* talk or laugh or reveal some emotion. Joubert, Janni Donald and Lisa Burger manipulated the puppets.

The Adventures of Ray – was presented by Joubert on 11 March in honour of Ray Querido, the UNIMA secretary, after her return from Canada. No other information is available about the show.

The Briar Rose Story - was another coming-of-age story, which Joubert did in the form of a tableau. It was almost static with hardly any movement and it was done on a table with a white cloth. In this story she focused on the part that was left out of the traditional story, which was about the other fairies who came to give wishes. She asked her own daughter what she would wish her to have in life and what would be meaningful. All the papier-mâché figures were in the form of sculptures and symbolic of these wishes, for example *Courage*, *Wisdom* and *Love of Animals*. The *Evil Fairy* was transformed to become the *Good Fairy*. This show was a combination of puppetry, sculpture objects, performance and storytelling (Joubert, 2002a).



**Fig. 2.56.** *Fairies from The Briar Rose Story*, 1995 (Joubert, 2002b.)



**Fig. 2.57.** *Fairies from The Briar Rose Story*, 1995 (Joubert, 2002b).

Columbine and Harlequin – was a Commedia dell’ Arte story Joubert told through the use of puppets. She also sat on the floor and used colour symbolism in creating these characters. Each puppet was represented by a colour best denoting its character (Joubert, 2002a).

1996

Columbine and Harlequin - was again staged on 24 February at an UNIMA meeting at the Ruth Prowse School of Art, University of Cape Town.

“Once again we were caught up in its delicate, heart-stirring pathos, brought by Jill’s subtle, masterly conception and manipulation of the characters involved. True puppetry transcends material issues, and by its sheer artistry caused one to feel” (UNIMA, 1996a:1).

On 25 May Joubert “created her own special magic with The Green Ribbon and the meaningful Gift of Death” (UNIMA, 1996b:1).

The Briar Rose Story (1995) - was presented on 24 August at an UNIMA, Cape Town meeting (UNIMA, 1996c:1).

The Dog's Coat – was again presented by Joubert in the large hall at the Castle of Good Hope, Cape Town, on 24 September (UNIMA, 1996d:1).

2002 – 2004

Joubert still presents The Seal Woman, The Briar Rose Story and Columbine and Harlequin on request, but her career as head of the Frank Joubert Art Centre, Cape Town, limits the time she spends on puppetry.

## **2.34 JOY COMPANY BLACKLIGHT PRODUCTIONS (refer to DOVE, MIKE and MARGE)**

## **2.35 KAMPHER, EDWARD**

### **2.35.1 Background**

Edward Kampher was born in 1969. Kampher lived with his uncle and aunt, Gawie and Rose de Wet for seven years (refer to DE WET, GAWIE). During this time Kampher developed an interest in puppetry. Kampher assisted his uncle in puppet shows at churches, at schools and other institutions under the company's name De Wet Puppets. As De Wet's health deteriorated, he entrusted Kampher to perform the shows when he could not. After De Wet passed away in September 1994, Rose de

Wet donated most of the puppets, equipment and literature to Kampher. The puppet company has since then been known as Puppets by GG and is co-ordinated by Kampher (Kampher, 2003:1).

Kampher, assisted by his wife Denise, uses puppetry to reach children in community centres to promote puppetry amongst children and to help them to come to terms with the issues which confront them (UNIMA, 1999:1).

Various workshops were conducted on puppetry for the REACH Community Youth Organisation in Cape Town, Beaufort West, and Saldanha Bay as well as at Koinonic Community Centre, Paarl.

### **2.35.2 Productions and performances**

Shows, dates and venues could generally not be determined as Kampher could not supply specific details.

1994

Pepino of the Green Face and Red Hair - was a puppet play about a boy *Pepino*, written by Gawie de Wet.

“...the characters emerge from a little old suitcase which, draped with a cloth, then becomes part of the table top stage.

Pepino is sad and does not like his own looks especially as the Master's daughter, Angela, laughed at him. His dilemma is



worsened when Smartie suggests that Mr Magic try to give him a new face. A very funny sequence follows as Mr Magic tries everything with his various formulas: 'Abracadabra...'. Pepino becomes less satisfied with each transformation, his own face becoming well loved in the end" (UNIMA, 1995a:1).

Kampher, assisted by Denise van Wyk, kept to De Wet's formula of simplicity. The play was performed in remembrance of the late Gawie de Wet.

1995

No record could be found of shows performed.

1996 – 1998

Puppets by GG mostly performed on beaches under the auspices of REACH Community Youth Organisation at the following venues:

- Santos Beach, as well as Diaz Beach in Mossel Bay, December 1996
- Beaufort West, June 1997
- Willow Grove Beach, Port Elizabeth, December 1997
- Vredenburg / Saldanha Bay, June 1998
- Willow Grove Beach, Port Elizabeth, December 1998
- Hawston Beach, December 1998
- Madiba Beach, Mossel Bay, December 1998
- Kwanonqaba, Mossel Bay, December 1998 (Kampher, 2003: 3).

1999 – 2000

No record could be found of productions and performances during this period.

2001

Seventeen schools in the Cape Town area were visited during June under the auspices of the Western Cape Department of Community Safety for the Hands Off Our Children (HOOC) campaign.

2002

Nineteen schools in the Cape Town area were visited to publicise HOOC during June of this year (Kampher, 2003:2).

2003 – 2004

Despite many attempts to contact Kampher for more information via e-mail, he did not respond.

### **2.36 KEITH ANDERSON'S PUPPETS (refer to ANDERSON, KEITH)**

### **2.37 KING, GREG (also refer to The PLAYHOUSE PUPPET COMPANY)**

#### **2.37.1 Background**

Greg King was born in 1971. He received a BA Honours degree in Drama from the University of Pietermaritzburg. While at school, King was inspired by the Handspring Puppet Company. He joined The Playhouse Puppet Company when it was founded in 1995 (refer to **2.53.1: 269**).

King left the Playhouse Puppet Company in July 1997 to pursue a career as freelance cartoonist, graphic artist and actor (Suter, 1997b: 10).

### **2.37.2 Productions and performances**

For productions and performances from 1995 to 1997, refer to The PLAYHOUSE PUPPET COMPANY.

**2.38      *KLEINVOLK MARIONETTE* (refer to STAPELBERG, HILETTE and JOHAN)**

**2.39      KOHLER, ADRIAN (also refer to HANDSPRING PUPPET COMPANY and PUPPET SPACE)**

#### **2.39.1 Background**

Adrian Kohler was born on 20 December 1951. He studied BA Fine Arts at the University of Cape Town from 1971 to 1974. After graduation, he worked for Puppet Space at the Space Theatre in Cape Town in 1975. During 1976 he left for Birmingham, UK, where he taught puppetry until 1977. In 1978 he returned to Southern Africa to teach Adult Education at the University of Botswana. There he ran a Theatre-in-Education programme in which theatre was used as a developmental tool. He used puppets and actors to make people aware of ways to improve their

living conditions. Kohler returned to South Africa in 1981 and founded the Handspring Puppet Company along with Basil Jones, Jill Joubert and Jon Wineberg (Jones, 2002).

### **2.39.2 Productions and performances**

1976

Gertie's Feathers - was a show written by Kohler about an Oudtshoorn ostrich who goes on a quest to retrieve her feathers from the hat of a certain opera diva. It was presented on 22 April for Puppet Space at the Space Theatre, Cape Town.

1977

The Monkey and the Demon Lurker – was presented by Kohler and Basil Jones while they were involved in community art projects in Birmingham.

1978 – 1980

No productions were staged in South Africa. Refer to background.

1981

For productions and performances from 1981, refer to the HANDSPRING PUPPET COMPANY.

1987

Gulls - Kohler designed and made the puppets for Robert Hewitt's play, which opened at the Nico Malan Theatre, Cape Town on 17 July. The gull-puppets were plywood and cane rod puppets.

## **2.40 KRUGER, MARIE (also refer to UNIVERSITY OF STELLENBOSCH)**

### **2.40.1 Background**

Marie Kruger was born on 14 November 1950. Kruger obtained a SOD (*Senior Onderwys Diploma*) at the University of Stellenbosch in 1972 and the BA Honours degree (cum laude) in Drama at the University of Stellenbosch in 1983. During her Honours year, Kruger became interested in puppet theatre while under the tuition of Doeks van Niekerk. He was a member of UNIMA, Cape Town, and through him she became a member as well.

In 1978 Kruger obtained a MA Drama (cum laude) at the University of Stellenbosch for a thesis entitled: *Poppespeel: die historiese ontwikkeling, spelbeginsels, karakter en gebruiksmoontlikhede van die toneelpop*. Kruger obtained a D Phil at the University of Stellenbosch in 1997 for a thesis entitled: *Pantomime: die tradisionele elemente en kontemporêre tendense in die twintigste eeuse pantomime - 'n teater-historiese ondersoek* (Kruger, 2003a).

She was employed by the Cape Education Department in 1973 and in 1979 became a part-time lecturer at the Drama Department of the University of Stellenbosch. In 1983 she started working with the *Matie Poppekas*. Kruger has since then taught puppetry as part of Theatre Skills and later as part of Theatre Science courses. Under the direction of Kruger, students staged at least two productions a year in which puppetry was used. The Drama Department also often uses puppetry in other productions (refer to UNIVERSITY OF STELLENBOSCH). According to Kruger (2003a) the status of puppet theatre has improved over the years and she finds the developments exciting. Kruger has a special affinity for puppet plays where a variety of puppets along with with actors and masks are used on stage (Kruger, 2003a).

Kruger's publications include:

- *Poppespel 'n Gids vir Beginners / Puppetry a Guide for Beginners*, 1990.
- Chapters in *Theatre for Young Audiences in South Africa* and *Puppet and Mask Theatre in South Africa*, 1997 in *The World Encyclopedia of Contemporary Theatre Volume 3: Africa*.

Since 1986 Kruger has presented numerous demonstrations and workshops on puppetry.

#### **2.40.2 Productions and performances**

Productions and performances by Drama students and *Die Matie Poppekas* under Kruger's guidance will be discussed under UNIVERSITY OF STELLENBOSCH.

1983

Die Kampus en die Ruimteprins - was a production presented in the H B Thom Theatre, Stellenbosch on 22 September. It was puppet theatre for adults and Kruger was responsible for the direction and text under the supervision of Doeks van Niekerk. Kruger and Van Niekerk made the puppets (Die Kampus en...,1983).

1984

For productions and performances during this year, refer to UNIVERSITY OF STELLENBOSCH.

1985

Poppekaspret – was done as a puppet and children's theatre production with professional actors. This was an original story of which the adaptation, directing, as well as the puppet and décor design were done by Kruger. The show was sponsored by the Western Cape Department of Education and Culture and was performed at the Western Cape primary schools for historically disadvantaged communities.

1986 -1992

For productions and performances during this period, refer to UNIVERSITY OF STELLENBOSCH.

1993

Uit die Storieskatkis - was performed as a puppet and children's theatre production with professional actors, directed by Kruger. It was performed at the Whale Festival, Hermanus and at primary schools and libraries in the Western Cape.

1994 - 2000

For productions and performances during this period, refer to UNIVERSITY OF STELLENBOSCH.

2000

Poppepret Met Bosstories - was a puppet and children's theatre production with professional actors, which was performed at the *Klein Karoo Nasionale Kunstefees* in Oudtshoorn, as well as in Bloemfontein and Durban. Kruger wrote and directed the production, and also constructed the puppets.

2001

Poppemanewales - was a puppet and children's theatre production for which Kruger did the adaptation of the *Jakkals en Wolf* stories she knew from her childhood. Kruger, who also adapted and added a few folk songs, constructed the puppets. The actors Marinda Engelbrecht and Pedro Kruger manipulated the puppets for the production at Ukkasie, (a South African Arts festival in London), where the soundtrack was released on compact disc (Kruger, 2005:1).



Wally 107: Vinnig Leer met Vet Pret vir Noodgevalle - was a commission Kruger received from Telkom for the City of Cape Town to market the 107-emergency number in the Western Cape primary schools. She made use of a body puppet for *Wally 107* while the rest were hand puppets. These included *Prof Telefoon*, *Moffel*, *Poffel* and *Gerty*, a small girl. Kruger wrote the text and made *Prof Telefoon* and *Gerty* from papier-mâché. The papier-mâché was modelled over plasticine and extra-strong polyfilla that had to be sanded down to such an extent that Kruger (2003) would not recommend it for future use. *Moffel* and *Poffel* were glove puppets made from fabric by Elrina Marais. The puppets had to be executed in fine detail because it was a video production (Kruger, 2003a).



**Fig. 2.58.** *Prof. Telephone* and *Gertie* from Wally 107, 2001 (Kruger, 2003c).

2002

Tales from the Calabash - was a puppet and children's theatre production, which Kruger compiled and adapted for the stage from original text, written by De Waal. She also designed and directed the show for Erik de Waal (refer to **2.11.2:83**) to

perform at primary schools in the Western Cape, Gauteng, Limpopo, Mpumalanga and the North West Provinces.

2004

Kruger was on sabbatical and no productions were staged.

## **2.41 KRUYSWIJK, REINETTE (also refer to The LITTLE MARIONETTE COMPANY)**

### **2.41.1 Background**

Reinette Kruyswijk was born in 1957 in Louis Trichardt. She matriculated at the School for Art, Music and Ballet in Pretoria in 1975.

In standard 6 (grade 8) Kruyswijk became friends with the puppeteer Hansie Visagie, who attended the same school, and she started making costumes for his puppets. In 1974 their first play, Die Towenaar se Leerjonge, became a pilot programme for television.

During these high school years Visagie regularly went to Alida von Maltitz and according to Kruyswijk (2003) she obtained knowledge of puppetry from him.

Visagie and Kruyswijk founded The Little Marionette Company in 1975 when they were in their final year at school.

Kruyswijk studied Information Design at the University of Pretoria where she obtained a BA in Fine Arts in 1979. In 1980 she started to work at the studio of designer Ernst de Jongh, but she continued to work with Visagie at The Little Marionette Company. In 1982, when Visagie was called up to do his National Service training, Kruyswijk had to take over all the work for the television programme Tumi. Kruyswijk married Josef Fourie, an architect and classmate, in 1982 and moved to Nelspruit, Mpumalanga in 1984. She regularly went back to Pretoria to help construct, as well as to manipulate puppets. She also made puppets for The Little Marionette Company at home. She tried to go on tours, but only managed one to Bloemfontein, because it interfered with the raising of her children. Kruyswijk still (2004) works in association with The Little Marionette Company (Kruyswijk, 2003a).

In ±1994, Kruyswijk came into contact with the paper company SAPPI and in 1995 she was approached to produce a puppet play in a traditional puppet booth. The venture was so successful that new avenues opened up, which developed into a road show travelling to schools. In 2001, Nomtu Nyambo, who could speak Seswati, was employed as puppeteer and Analet Prinsloo, who had studied Drama at the University of Stellenbosch, joined her. During 2003, they travelled to schools from Mondays to Fridays in the Mpumalanga area around Nelspruit.

Kruyswijk has also used some of the marionettes from The Little Marionette Company to perform A Fun Show at children's parties, at a shopping mall in Nelspruit and at hospitals. In 2002 she added some of her own marionettes like *Sebastiaan*, a clown on a one-wheeled bicycle.

“Alhoewel Reinette self ook poppe manipuleer, hou sy die meeste daarvan om die poppe te maak. Sy sê onder normale omstandighede neem dit haar sowat 10 dae om ‘n pop kant en klaar te maak, maar as dit moet, kan sy dit in slegs 2 dae doen” (Doubell, 1987: 1).

[Although Reinette also manipulates puppets she prefers to make them. She says that in normal circumstances it takes her about ten days to complete a puppet, but if pushed, she can do it in 2 days - my translation].



**Fig. 2.59.** Reinette Kruyswijk manipulating *Sebastiaan* from A Fun Show, 2002. Photo: Badenhorst (2003).

#### **2.40.2 Productions and performances**

For productions and performances from 1975 to 1995, refer to The LITTLE MARIONETTE COMPANY.

1995 - 2001

Between 1995 and 2001, Kruyswijk produced shows for SAPPI. Under their auspices she toured to primary schools in the Nelspruit area (Mpumalanga). Kruyswijk wrote and produced two stories using a collapsible puppet theatre to tour with. All these stories made use of only two manipulators. The stories for SAPPI were the following:

Adam and the Tree – was a story about trees. A combination of glove and rod puppets were used and there were human and animal characters in the play. *Adam* was an ever-present character, like the *Tree*, which had movable eyes. The children were taught a love of nature, including the differences between indigenous and foreign trees. Animal characters in the story were *Elephant*, *Rhinoceros*, *Giraffe*, *Hippopotamus* and *Warthog*.

Adam visits the Forest – was a story about recycling. Again *Adam* and the *Tree* were presented (Kruyswijk, 2003a).

2002

Kruyswijk worked with a NGO (non-governmental organization) called GRIP (The Greater Nelspruit Rape Intervention Project). The NGO was founded to help rape survivors at hospitals and to provide them with legal aid.

Thandi Has a Problem - was a story developed for GRIP about child abuse and HIV/Aids. When the road show visited schools, pamphlets for GRIP were handed out. The story tried to eradicate the myths around how HIV/Aids is contracted and cured.

The *Sun* was the central figure in the story. Two girls and a boy talked to the sun.  
These puppets were all a combination of hand and rod puppets

2003-2004

In 2003, Kruyswijk made another boy puppet to add to the show Thandi has a Problem (Kruyswijk, 2003b:1)

## **2.42 LILLIPUT MARIONETTE THEATRE (also refer to DE GROOTE, LIZ)**

### **2.42.2 Background**

Liz de Groote founded the company in 1973 in Cape Town. After 1989, no further reference could be found relating to this company.

### **2.42.2 Productions and performances**

1975

Hansel and Gretel - was the Lilliput Marionette Theatre's contribution to the Cape Town Puppet Festival (Reynolds, 1975:20).

The Marionette Nativity – was a medieval Christmas play for children and adults (KRUIK-dagboek, 1975:12). The show was performed by the Lilliput Marionette Theatre and in the programme the following was written:

“The Marionette nativity was adapted from the Coventry Mystery Play Cycle, which dates from the 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> centuries and is attributed to the tailors’ and shearmen’s guilds of Lincoln in England. Many small scenes made up the cycle and the strong element of comedy still remains” (CAPAB, 1975: 2).

The puppets were made from carved wooden bodies. They were then painted and clothed (‘Nativity’ is vir...1975:27).

The Puppeteers were Adrian Köhler, Judy Dodds, Liz de Groote, Nigel Deary, Sharon Montgomery and Fred Utley. Cecilia Pienaar designed the set while De Groote made the puppets and Jacqueline Martens arranged the music. Eileen Thorns directed the production, which was performed at the Hofmeyr Theatre, Cape Town for CAPAB from 11 December – 4 January (KRUIK-dagboek, 1975: 12).



**Fig. 2.60.** Puppeteer Liz de Groote with some of the marionettes she designed and made for The Marionette Nativity, 1975. Photo: Paul Alberts (CAPAB, 1975).

1976 – 1988

No record could be found of productions during this period.

1989

Doringrosie - this musical with puppets, was an Afrikaans adaptation of the fairytale by Charles Pereault, The Briar Rose and in the programme (CAPAB, 1989) it was said that this was an experiment with non-realistic theatre techniques where a storyteller moved between the characters. The puppets were operated amongst actors together with music, song and the use of a Commedia dell' Arte play style.

The décor was minimalist and easy to manoeuvre (CAPAB, 1989). De Groote made the papier-mâché rod puppets. The actors manipulating the puppets were Jill Adams, Freddie Booysen, Hermien de Vos, Tenswell Hector, Charl-Johan Lingenfelder, Raél Mercur, Ilse Roos, Cindy Simpson, June van Merch, Jaco Voges and Igloo Nadine von Katt. Ben de Haeck directed this production.

Doringrosie was performed in the Nico Malan Theatre Foyer from 4 – 21 January. After this date, no further reference could be found on the work of this puppeteer.

## **2.43      The LITTLE MARIONETTE COMPANY (also refer to VISAGIE, HANSIE)**

### **2.43.1      Background**

Hansie Visagie and Reinette Kruyswijk founded the company in 1975. The company has produced, designed and staged numerous productions locally and overseas,



assisted as and when required by Althea Visagie, Ann Bailes, Con Visagie and approximately a further 30 associated members of the company.

Accolades and awards for Visagie and The Little Marionette Company include the following:

- Three ASTERA nominations from SABC TV2 and 3.
- The company was invited to take part in international marionette festivals in France (1983), Austria (1983), The United States of America (1985) and Denmark (1999).
- Visagie and The Little Marionette Company featured on the following television programmes: *Collage*, *Portfolio*, *Kraaines*, *Pot-Pourri* and *Pasella*.
- The Rain goddess was performed abroad with sponsorship from the Foundation of Creative Arts, for work on a multi-media marionette theatre production intended for performance abroad.

Various marionettes and / or puppets from The Little Marionette Company were displayed at art exhibitions between 1980 and 2000 in at least fifteen national Art galleries and at Universities in Johannesburg, Cape Town, Pretoria and Durban.

Some of the puppets of the company have been incorporated into permanent and public collections such as those at the University of South Africa, *Museum de Oratorio* Montreal, as well as in Canada and *Fyourtojet Odence* in Denmark. Various puppets have gone into private collections.

The Marionette Museum founded by Visagie and situated at the University of Pretoria (refer to Visagie, Hansie), is not yet open to the public, but has been visited by students from the Departments of Entertainment Technology and Drama of the Tshwane University of Technology (formerly Technikon Pretoria), as well as the Drama Department of the University of Pretoria.

A number of students from Pretoria University and Tshwane University of Technology have, as and when required, been given part-time training in the making of marionettes, puppets, costumes, stage sets and properties at the company. Many have been used as manipulators, translators, voice artists and stagehands. Over the years numerous freelance artists have been co-opted, as needed, by The Little Marionette Company.

Between 1984 and 1997 the company was mainly involved with work on puppet productions for television (Visagie, 2002).

## **2. 43.2 Productions and performances**

1975

Clown Capers / Narkaperjolle – had already been staged before 1975. This programme was done with a variety of marionette characters such as an *octopus*, *penguins*, *fish*, *clowns* and *seals*, all performing their own routines. The show was meant to be pure entertainment (Visagie, 2002). During this year and later during his career, Visagie performed this show as an act of charity for ill children in hospitals.

Peter and the Dragon - was Visagie and Kruyswijk's first professional production, directed by Harriet Pienaar. Visagie wrote the text, while Don Lamprecht and Aart de Villiers structured the play and also did the voice recordings. The puppet characters were a small boy, *Peter*, his *Mother*, *Hetta Heks* and a few *butterflies*. Visagie and Kruyswijk made and manipulated all the marionettes.

Die Towenaar se Leerjonge – was a marionette show, which was again performed and directed by Harriet Pienaar. The story deals with the mishaps of a small apprentice sorcerer. He put a spell on the broom to do his work but he could not get the broom to stop. In the end the sorcerer comforted him.

Visagie and Kruyswijk made *Die Towenaar*, the *Leerjonge* and a number of *Besems* (brooms) of ± 30cm in height. The manipulators for this production were Visagie, Kruyswijk, Boertjie Maurach and Joy Varne. Visagie's father built the bridge for the marionette theatre and Kruyswijk made the curtains (17...en hy speel, 1976:8).

"The Sorcerer's Apprentice. The décor was delightful with a small laboratory in the foreground and rows of bottles against the walls. Two huge vats boiled and bubbled with bizarre-looking fumes.

Peter and the Dragon was a short play with a few changes of scene, and the dialogue was used to tell the story. Again the decor was simply and effectively done. The play involved two witches, a king and two absolutely charming fairy-tale dragons. Apart from Hansie Visagie other names in the production were Don Lamprecht and Magda Beukes" (Van Biljon, 1975:21).

The shows were performed at the Little Theatre, Pretoria during December.

1976 - 1980

Visagie started free-lancing as puppeteer for SABC Television before joining PACT at the Breytenbach Theatre, Pretoria as stage manager for the Afrikaans Drama Company in 1976. He did not do any puppetry for the theatre during this period (refer to **2.82.1:382**).

1981

*Ding en Dinge* - the whole 'thing' ['ding'] started with a magician who explained the 'flight of fantasy' to the audience when he appeared, accompanied by the overture of Mozart's Magic Flute. After a few tricks with smoke effects, the curtain went up and the show began. The show centred on the performance of five different marionettes: a *ballerina*, a *pianist*, an off-key *opera singer*, a *dinosaur fossil*, and a *choir*. The *pianist* played Beethoven's Bagatelle on a piano moving in a circle. According to Visagie (2002) he experimented and started moving towards sur-realistic designs. In the *pianist* this separation from reality could be seen – his neck was abnormally long. The *opera singer* was based on the legendary singer, Florence Foster Jenkins, who became famous at the age of 70. The marionette sang the aria that made the eccentric Florence famous (Visagie, 2002).

The dancing *dinosaur fossil* moved to the music of Saint-Saëns' Carnival of the Animals. The *Trash choir*, made of coat hangers, bottles and feather dusters, each with a big red moving mouth, closed the show. Here the marionettes and music were devoid of realism. The *choir* mimicked different instruments and sounds from Mozart's *Eine Kleine Nachtmusik* that was gradually accelerated eventually becoming totally

distorted. After a climax of distorted sound and colour had been reached, *the Magician* appeared again to conjure all back to normal. The show, according to Visagie (2002), was a visual and sound incitement or a platform for movement and colour accompanied by music.

*Ding en Dinge* was performed by the company for the opening of the State Theatre, Pretoria. It formed part of a two-week programme in the Drama Theatre (Schwenke, 1984:37).

1982

*The Sorcerer's Apprentice / Die Towenaar se Leerjonge* (1975) and *Jack and the Beanstalk / Jan en die Boontjierank* were performed at the State Theatre, Pretoria from 3 April to 17 April with Visagie, Kruyswijk, Althea Labuschagne and Ben Viljoen manipulating the marionettes (Breytenbach, 1982: 7).

*The Sorcerer's Apprentice* - was a 14-minute programme with no words, that marionettes performed to the accompaniment of music.

“Die musiek was baie goed en word ook baie goed aangewend. Die storielyn moes afgelei word uit handeling en was nie duidelik nie. Sodoende het baie meer verlore gegaan as wanneer hulle byvoorbeeld van ‘n verteller gebruik sou maak” (La Grange, 1982: n.p.).

[The music was very good and was employed well. The story line had to be deduced from the action and was not clear, consequently a lot more was lost than if, for example, a storyteller had been used - my translation].

Magda van Biljon, Don Lamprecht and Wilna Snyman provided the characters' voices for Jack and the Beanstalk / Jan en die Boontjierank. Magda van Biljon was also responsible for the music and directing the show. The choreography was done by Elizma Fourie (The magic of..., 1982:3).

1983

Peter and the Wolf / Pieter en die Wolf and Carnival of the Animals / Karnaval van die Diere - were productions based on stories told with music.

Peter and the Wolf / Pieter en die Wolf - was written and the music composed by Sergei Prokofiev. The different orchestral instruments were introduced to the children. Each character in the story represented an instrument. The hero was *Peter*, a brave boy who caught the Wolf with the help of his friends, a *Cat* and a *Bird*. In the process, he saved the *Duck* and convinced the town's *Hunters* to send the *Wolf* to the zoo rather than shoot it.

A clarinet represented the *cat*, and the *wolf* was represented by three horns. The *Huntsman* fired shots to the sound of kettle drums and base drums. After the show, the children were allowed back-stage to look at the marionettes. The storyteller was Nic de Jager.

Carnival of the Animals / Karnaval van die Diere - was a show where various animal, bird and fish marionette characters were manipulated to the music of Saint-Saëns. The small stage that was used gave an intimate atmosphere. The presenter (a tape

recording) for Carnival of the Animals / Karnaval van die Diere promised that all the children would see musical portraits of some animals. The *elephant* walked to heavy bass sounds, while the *birds* flew to light piano tones. A family of *fowls*, a *turtle* and several kinds of *fish* and even the *skeletons of some pre-historic animals* were portrayed.

The décor, marionettes and properties were designed and made by Visagie and Kruyswijk, assisted by Renate Pretorius. These marionettes, that were only ± 30cm in height, were made on a smaller scale than usual. Visagie (2002), says he would like to do smaller marionettes again because he feels more comfortable with them.

Visagie, Kruyswijk, Renate Pretorius, Ann Bailes, Althea Labuschagne and Anneke Kruyswijk manipulated the marionettes. Magda van Biljon directed the show, which was staged at the Piet van der Walt Theatre in Pretoria (Peter and the Wolf...,1983).

Peter and the Wolf / Pieter en die Wolf and Carnival of the Animals / Karnaval van die Diere were performed alternately at the Piet van der Walt Theatre, Pretoria from 7 – 16 July.

The Soul Seller - was a marionette performance. The idea came from Visagie and Therése Bartman wrote the script of this African folktale, which Aart de Villiers revised.

“The Soul Seller is the tale of a girl who is able to communicate with the spirit world of her ancestors, who meets the malevolent figure of

the Soul Seller who eventually possesses not only the girl, but the young man she wishes to marry” (Bailes, 1989:15).

“Theresa Bartman and Hansie Visagie’s story was a sort of African tribal variation on the Faust theme. A beautiful young girl is doomed to marry the chief of her tribe, whom she does not love, being enamoured instead of a young man. A solution is offered by the Soul Seller who is travelling with the Moon as his companion. If the girl will sell him her soul he will see that she is reunited with her beloved. The Moon, however, becomes jealous and changes the girl into a two-headed dragon”(Venables, 1986: n.p)

Other characters in the play were three *masked tribe members*, the *Chief*, the spirit of the ancestors in the form of a *Bird* and the girl who had turned into a *Monster*. Visagie, Kruyswijk, Annette Pretorius, Ben Viljoen and Josef Fourie made all the marionettes. The manipulators were Visagie, Ann Bailes, Althea Labuschagne and Dawn Leggat. Liz Macleish did the design, described by Visagie (2002) as “stark statuary formed a scenic background for the show”.

Don Lamprecht did the narration, while the other voices were done by James Ryan, Magda van Biljon and Esme Solnick. Don Lamprecht also did the sound recording of the performance where the original music composed by Reta-Louise Malherbe was performed on traditional Bushman instruments, together with a chorus of voices (Bailes,1989:15).

The Soul Seller , directed by Magda van Biljon, was first performed at the 15<sup>th</sup> Puppet Festival of UNIMA in Charleville-Mezières, France, as well as at a puppet festival in Austria during October (Bailes, 1989:15).





**Fig. 2.61.** *The Soul Seller*, 1983 (Little Marionette Company, 1985b).

The Fun Show / Marionettekaperjolle - Don Lamprecht was the storyteller for this production of a series of short stories. The characters varied from a *clown* to a *Punk-choir* to *mice*. The manipulators were Ann Bailes, Kruyswijk, Annette Kruyswijk, Toby van Eck, Renate Pretorius, and Visagie. Kruyswijk, Renate Pretorius, Van Eck and Visagie designed and made the marionettes, décor and props. A transportable stage was designed to enable the company to perform at a number of schools in the Gauteng (previously Transvaal) area (La Grange, Oelofse, Lues, 1983: 16). The production was compiled with the help of Ann Bailes and Hannalie van der Merwe, both of whom were presenters of television programmes for children at the time. Visagie was responsible for the technical direction of the production. The show was performed in the Drama Foyer, at the State Theatre, Pretoria from 9 – 31 December and directed by Magda van Biljon.



**Fig. 2.62.** Visagie with a clown marionette for The Fun Show, 1983 (La Grange, Oelofse, Lues, 1983:16).

1984

*Fanjan die Towenaar van Drakenstein* - was performed as part of a children's theatre programme directed by Zack du Plessis and Magda van Biljon.

The story tells of a small boy, *Fanjan*, who inherits his grandfather's role as the Magician of Drakenstein and, with only a ragged copy of his book of magic spells, has to take responsibility for ridding the local castle of evil *bats*. The other principal characters were the *Spirit of the South Easter*, and a red spider called *Spellie*, but there were also *birds*, *bats* and a *tortoise*. "This is quite the most lavish puppet show I have ever seen. The construction and manipulation of the figures is very clever" (Venables, 1984: n.p).

Manipulators were Althea Visagie, Hansie Visagie, Con Visagie, and the voices were done by Katinka Heyns, Tobie Cronje, Clarabelle van Niekerk, Magda van Biljon,

Elma Potgieter and Zack du Plessis (Magda bied hope..., 1984: 13). The show was performed at the Intimate Theatre, Johannesburg from 3 – 20 October.



**Fig.2.63.** Magda van Biljon with marionettes from *Fanjan die Towenaar van Drakenstein*, 1984 (Venables, 1984: n.p.).

1985

A Fun Show and The Sorcerer's Apprentice - the double bill of puppet shows marked the Johannesburg Civic Theatre's first contribution to National Youth Year and both were performed at the Johannesburg Civic Theatre, Johannesburg during February.

"A Fun Show was a variety concert featuring the likes of a tap-dancing skeleton, an ostrich prima ballerina, and a couple of mice who did a mean song-and-dance routine. It also features the whimsical interpretation of a childhood favourite, Die Lappop. The Sorcerer's Apprentice formed the second part of the show. It is attractively staged with a detailed set and costumes" (Engelbrecht, 1985: 22).

"The first half is taken up with a series of songs, skits and sketches that introduced a variety of well-made figures. I particularly liked the big brave mouse and her cynical tormentor, the tragically expiring

ostrich, and the bounding jack in the box who vanishes right into the flies” (Dean, 1985: 5).

Other characters in A Fun Show were *frogs, long-tailed mice, a clown* and his *cat*.

Puppeteers for the show were Ann Bailes, Antoinette Snyman, Althea Labuschagne and Susan Pienaar. The Sorcerer’s Apprentice (1982) was revised with some of the marionettes being rebuilt.

The Rain Goddess - the idea came from Hansie Visagie, while Aart de Villiers revised it. The show was based on the indigenous story of Mojadji, the Rain Goddess (Visagie, 2002). The tale was of the age-old tradition of dancing to call up rain. ”Here a distinction is made between the elements in heaven and the earthly characters” (Bailes, 1989:15).

With this production, the company introduced a new trend into their work, using projected slides in combination with the marionettes. The slides were projected from the front onto a gauze cloth attached to an aluminium frame. The size of this cloth could be altered to give the puppeteers the possibility to perform in front or behind the cloth (Maree, 1985:3).

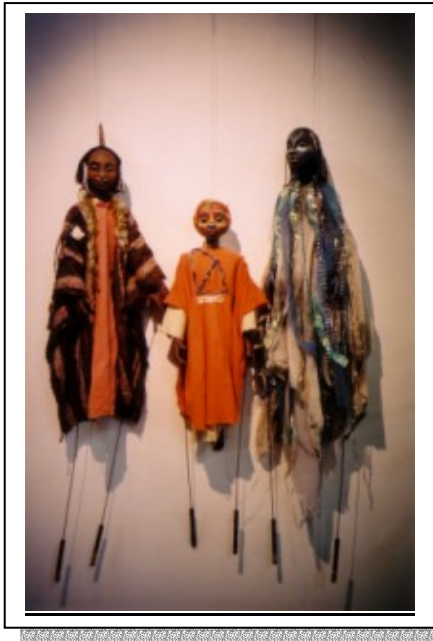
Due to the expense of transportation the company could not take their bridge with them and had to rehearse each production with the puppeteers dressed in black and playing from stage level – not ideal, but expedient (Bailes, 1989:16).

Apart from *The Rain Goddess*, other characters were *The Moon*, *Drought*, *Adviser* and *Messengers*. Visagie, Kruyswijk, Ben Viljoen, Annette Pretorius, Ann Bailes, Vivienne Elkington, Althea Labuschagne, Con Visagie, Michelle Groenewald, and Ivor Thompson made the marionettes. The manipulators were Ann Bailes, Althea Labuschagne, Vivienne Elkington, Michelle Groenewald, Anette Pretorius and Visagie. Voices were provided by Don Lamprecht, Nic de Jager, Daleen Kotzè, Lochner de Kock, Visagie and Aart de Villiers. The music was composed and recorded by Roger Bashew and Clarabelle van Niekerk (*The Rain Goddess...*, 1985).

“Because both these productions were made to be premiered at International Festivals of puppetry it was possible to design each to be performed to an adult audience (too frequently puppetry is thought of as a purely children’s entertainment).

The Little Marionette Company were alone in performing with marionettes (string puppets) and because of this, as well as having come from so far away, caused a lot of interest” (Bailes, 1989:16).

The company travelled to the United States of America with The Soulseller (refer to 1983) and The Rain Goddess. The shows were performed at the puppet festival in Los Angeles, United States of America, organized by The Puppeteers of America, on 12 July 1985. It was partly sponsored by the South African Department of National Education and SAMRO (Southern African Music Rights Organization).



**Fig. 2.64.** *The Adviser, the Rain Goddess and the Moon* from *The Rain Goddess*, 1985 as exhibited at ABSA. Photo: Van Eck, T (2003).



**Fig. 2.65.** *The Rain Goddess*, 1985. Photo: Paul van Eeden (Bailes, 1989:15).



**Fig. 2.66.** *The Rain Goddess, and Drought Gosts* from *The Rain Goddess*, 1985. Photo: Paul van Eeden (Bailes, 1989:16).

The Magic Flute - The puppets for the first act of the opera were made during this year. A student needed to film a show as part of her studies and Julius Eichbaum, the then editor of *Scenaria*, encouraged Visagie to take on this project. Because of a lack

of financial resources, the opera was never completed. The characters of *Papageno*, *Papagena*, *Zarastro* and the *Queen of the Night* were made. The bodies of the puppets were constructed from wood and the heads and hands from a wire construction covered in papier- mâché and mallo-do (Visagie, 2002). Only acts 1, 2 and 3 were completed.

The marionettes were designed and constructed by Visagie, Kruyswijk, Ann Bailes, Vivienne Elkington and Toby van Eck. Visagie, Kruyswijk, Bailes, Elkington, Antoinette Snyman, Ria Human and Althea Labuschagne were manipulators while Con Visagie was stage manager. Don Lamprecht prepared the soundtrack, while Roy Sayers was responsible for very demanding technical requirements such as back projections for the lighting. Aart de Villiers directed the opera for the film. The Magic Flute was never performed in a theatre although the marionettes were exhibited from time to time.



**Fig. 2.67.** *Papageno* and *Papagena* from The Magic Flute, 1985 . (Visagie, 2002).

1986

Bastien and Bastienne – was a marionette production performed to a German soundtrack of the music by Adolf Dallapozza, Brigitte Linder and Kurt Moll and directed by Pierre Roestorf. According to Snyman (1986b:2) audiences found this a strange choice for marionette theatre, seeing as it was almost entirely static, consisting of a series of sung and spoken conversations between pairs of characters. The marionettes were made of papier-mâché with silk period costumes, made and hand-painted by Ann Bailes. The manipulators were Visagie, Ann Bailes and Althea Labuschagne, while Pierre Roestorf executed the lighting.

“The first Bastien and Bastienne, was an 18<sup>th</sup> century pastoral play. Mozart was only 12 years old when he composed the music to this simple tale of young love lost and won. The three characters – Bastien the young man, Bastienne the little shepherdess, and Herr Colas – were beautifully conceived.

The marionettes’ period costumes were magnificently executed with meticulous eye for detail. The whole scene setting was superb. It was beautifully evocative of the pastoral setting.

The opening scene with its deep perspective and cloudy effect was breathtaking, with the little sheep crossing the bridge a delightful touch. The lighting effects too were effectively employed” (Hirschfield, 1986:7).

The Soul Seller (refer to 1983) - followed as the second part of the production where eight marionettes were involved. Retha-Louise Malherbe dubbed the musical score with all the female voices while Kobus de Witt sang the only male part. According to Snyman (1986a:3) “In this story the marionettes had more possibilities, than in Bastien and Bastienne, to move in order to get more life-like movements”.



Ann Bailes, Hansie Visagie and Althea Labuschagne, Alessandra Desole and Con Visagie made the marionettes, décor and properties in the workshop of The Little Marionette Company (Bastien and Bastienne..., 1986). The production was performed at the Johannesburg Civic Theatre from 17 – 23 June.

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Karnaval van die diere (refer to 1983) - was staged at the Civic Theatre, Bloemfontein, 23 – 27 September. It was presented before interval with Fanjan, die Towenaar van Drakenstein, following after interval.

“Reinette Kruyswijk en Hansie Visagie se marionette- en dekorontwerpe was funksioneel en baie lewensgetrou. Die diere was dadelik herkenbaar en die uitgelate gehoor het spontaan die diere se name uitgeroep” (Kinders hou van..., 1986: 10).

[Reinette Kruyswijk and Hansie Visagie’s marionette and décor designs were functional and very life-like. The animals were immediately recognisable and the ecstatic audience spontaneously called out the animals’ names - my translation].

Circus Audition - was a variety programme staged at the Eldopark Garden Centre, Pretoria on 20 September with *singing and dancing mice*, and a *trapeze artist* (girl) as part of the show. The puppeteers were Visagie, Ann Bailes and Kruyswijk (Tuinsentrum hou..., 1986:5).

Sondernaam - was done for the Department of Traffic Safety. This production was designed to tour pre-primary and primary schools. The aim was to teach children road safety. Visagie created a small place called *Sondernaam*, which could only be recognized by a road sign with three pumpkins on it. The characters were the mayor, *Oom Grom*, his neighbour, *Tant Fien*, with her little dog and a little *girl*, and *boy* who

had to learn how to cross streets. All the *street signs* could talk and had movable 'mouths'. In the story, the town developed and traffic became heavier and more complex. However, children were taught how to deal with this. It was a combination of hand and rod puppets, as well as three marionettes. To keep costs down, the decor was made of cardboard and painted. Visagie, Kruyswijk and Frauke Kröger made the puppets. Thea Visagie, Frauke Kröger and Michelle Groenewald manipulated the puppets and toured with the production. This puppet show was presented in school halls and classrooms in and around Johannesburg (Visagie, 2002).

1988

*Sleutel-GAT revue* - was a cabaret directed by Jan Engelen and Visagie designed and manipulated the main character *Pop* for The Little Marionette Company.

"The star of the show is the marionette Pop, who plays Devil's Advocate. He is brilliantly manipulated by Hansie Visagie and superbly voiced by Jan Engelen" (Le Roux, 1988:23).

"The group of actors, singers and writers who devised it hit upon a magnificent idea in the creation of a puppet who speaks as a member of the audience, heckling and interfering in their performance to stinging ironic effect. This puppet is the work of Hansie Visagie who does a job that is technically sophisticated and brilliantly styled" (Ronge, 1988:16).

*Sleutel-GAT revue* was a show involving actors and musicians where a puppet was the link in the show. *Pop* had a wire-car face like the typical street-vendor craft we see in South Africa (Visagie, 2002).

The show was staged at PACT's Potpourri Festival in Pretoria from 16 June until 25

June and at the Windybrow Theatre, Johannesburg from 26 June until 2 July.

1989

Sleutel-GAT revue - the show was presented at the Nico Arena, Nico Malan Theatre, in Cape Town from 13 April to 22 April 1989 and at the H B Thom Theatre, Stellenbosch from 25 April.

1990

During this year the company worked for television only.

1991

Bastien and Bastienne (refer to 1986) - was again staged for the Mozart Festival at the Johannesburg Civic Theatre, Johannesburg. The manipulators were Visagie, Ann Bailes and Thea Visagie, while Pierre Roestorf was the lighting designer and technician (Visagie, 2002).

Hoopstraat - was a puppet show for adults in which a *Spider* and other insects sang and discussed the state of affairs in South Africa, using rather coarse language.

Visagie made and manipulated the puppets with the help of two students from the then Department of Theatre Crafts from the Technikon Pretoria, Bibi Neke and Karlien Goutier. Jannie Wolmarans was responsible for the text and lyrics, while Tommie Cronjé composed the music.

The show was presented at The Standard Bank National Arts Festival, Grahamstown

during July.

1994

Die Dwerg van die Infanta - was commissioned by the Cultural Bureau of the University of Pretoria. It was based on a story by Petra Gunter about the death of the 18th Century Spanish Infanta, Marguerita. The puppets were based on a well-known painting by the artist Velasquez. The puppet characters were the *Dwerg* (the jester), the *Prinses*, *Koning* and *Velasquez*. These four were rod puppets and in addition, shadow puppets were used in the background. It was the first time that the company used this combination of puppets. Visagie, Van Kruyswijk and Charl Ritter made the puppets. The manipulators were Eugene Grobler and Margit Meyer-Rödebeck and it was staged at *Die Masker* theatre, University of Pretoria (Visagie, 2002).

1995-1996

During this period, the company worked only on television productions.

1997

Visagie was approached by the State Theatre to produce puppet theatre productions on a regular basis. Thingamabobs and Bang vir 'n Slang – were the first puppetshows the company performed under the auspices of the State Theatre in Pretoria.

Thingamabobs - was a short supporting programme. This was a South African

version of the Punch and Judy – style hand puppets, taking place in a squatter camp.

Bang vir 'n Slang – The show was based on the concept of Peter and the Wolf, but Visagie used African characters to introduce musical instruments to the young audience, with Richard van der Westhuizen as the narrator. Rod puppets were used in this production, while Tommy Cronjé and Siegfried Pretch were responsible for recording and compiling the music respectively (Visagie, 2002). The show was performed in December, and continued into January 1998.

1998

The Little Prince / Die Klein Prinsie - was a marionette show based on the well-known story by Antoine de Saint-Exupéry about a mystical journey to the Sahara Desert. These marionettes had wooden bodies, with papier-mâché heads and hands. It was directed by Lizz Meiring and was presented from 5 September to 3 October in the Marble Foyer of the State Theatre, Pretoria (Jacobs, 1998:1).

Liewe Heksie en die Sonneblom - was based on the story by Verna Vels. The story took the audience to the home of *Liewe Heksie* where a big sunflower followed the sun from morning till evening. Action also took place at the castle of *Koning Rosekrans* and in '*Gifappeltjieland*' where *Geelheks*, *Kerrie* and *Borrie* were hatching their evil plans. When the King's silver rose was stolen, *Liewe Heksie* was ordered to find it and she did this with the help of *Blommie Kabouter* (Boekkooi, 1998b:4).

The puppets were marionettes manipulated from a bridge puppet theatre. Lizz

Meiring directed the production, while the voices of artists such as Verna Vels, Riaan Cruywagen, Estelle Zeeman and Zack du Plessis, were heard (Boekkooi, 1998b:4).

Rumpelstiltkin – this story, based on the fairytale by the brothers Grimm, was performed in English during the same season as Liewe Heksie en die Sonneblom. A revolving stage was used for this production. Lochner de Kock's voice was recorded for the title character and Siegfried Pretch compiled the music (Boekkooi, 1998b:4).

Both productions were staged from 7 November to 19 December in the Drama Foyer at the State Theatre, Pretoria.

1999

Peter and the Wolf (refer to 1983) - was staged in the Marble Foyer, State Theatre, Pretoria in English, Afrikaans and sePedi. It was performed every Saturday from 6 February to 20 March and thereafter daily from 26 March to 10 April (Pieter en die..., 1999:13).

Aladdin - marionettes for the classic tale were made and manipulated by Visagie, Thea Visagie and Clara Kiss. Thys Stander was responsible for the décor.. Siegfried Pretz wrote the music while Jolette Odendaal and Don Lambrecht recorded some of the voices (Visagie, 2002). The show was performed in the Marble Foyer of the State Theatre, Pretoria from 3 June to 17 July.

The Rain Goddess / Die Reëngodin (refer to 1985) – the script was re-written by Lizz

Meiring. Aart de Villiers structured the script and the voice of Jolette Odendaal was recorded for the *Rain Goddess*. According to Boekkooi (1999b:10):

“Die Reëngodin was die eerste vollengte-produksie in die resesent se verwysingsraamwerk wat iets van die raaiselagtigheid rondom die legendariese Modjadji vasgryp. Die teksskrywers Lizz Meiring en Hansie Visagie, het daarin geslaag om moeilike begrippe, soos die rol van die voorvadergeeste, aan kleuters asook hulle wat veel ouer is, oor te dra”.

[The Rain Goddess was the first full-length production, in this reviewer's frame of reference, that captured something of the mystery surrounding the legendary figure of Modjadji. The scriptwriters Lizz Meiring en Hansie Visagie succeeded in making difficult concepts like the role of ancestral spirits accessible to children and older people - my translation].

The show was presented in the Marble Foyer of the State Theatre, Pretoria from 1 September to 2 October and thereafter in Denmark.

According to Visagie (2002), the show received very little attention from the South African public. However, he also stated that the reviews from the Danish critics were positive about the technical and aesthetic aspects of the production, but they were more interested in the background information relating to the cultural aspects of the production.

Hannah and the Lamb - centred on the Nativity. The story was told as seen through the eyes of a little beggar girl in Bethlehem. She went out after her lamb, which ran away, saw a star and went to find out where it came from. A donkey and a cow also ran away, she joined them and later a shepherd family went in search of her.

Eventually they found her at the crypt.

Siegfried Pretch composed the soundtrack for the production, while the voices of actors Hannes Muller, Don Lamprecht, Jolette Odendaal en Tiaan Rautenbach were used for the various characters on the soundtrack (Kersverhaal in Pta, 1999:6).

Puppeteers involved in the making and manipulating of the puppets were Visagie, Thea Visagie, Machteld van Nieuwkerk, Ann Bailes, Thys Stander and Veradine Spendjarov (Visagie, 2002). The show was performed at the Momentum Theatre at the State Theatre, Pretoria from 4 to 23 December.

2000

Nandi goes to the City - was a marionette show about a black girl, *Nandi* who came to the city from a rural area. The show was performed in Afrikaans, English and sePedi in the Marble foyer at the State Theatre, Pretoria (Visagie, 2002).

2001

Die Klein Prinsie (1998) - was performed at the *Klein Karoo Nasionale Kunstefees* in Oudtshoorn during April, as well as at the Gariep Festival in Kimberley, during September.

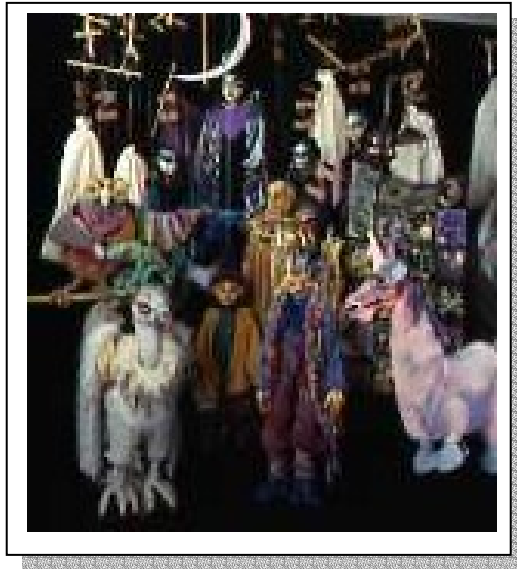
2002

Die Klein Prinsie (1998) - was performed in Sasolburg as part of the WAM festival (Visagie, 2002).

2003-2004



Visagie moved to Cape Town and no performances were staged by the company during this period.



**Fig. 2.68.** A group of marionettes from The Little Marionette Company collection (Visagie, 2002).

## **2.44 MALTITZ, MARIONETTES (also refer to VON MALTITZ, ALIDA)**

### **2.44.1 Background**

Alida von Maltitz established Maltitz Marionettes in 1992 at the Maltitz Marionette Theatre, which is based at her home in Westcliff, Johannesburg.

### **2.44.2 Productions and performances**

For productions and performances refer to VON MALTITZ, A.

**2.45      MATIE POPPEKAS (refer to UNIVERSITY of STELLENBOSCH and  
             KRUGER, MARIE)**

**2.46      MAVANI PUPPETS (refer to VAN NIEUWKERK, MACHTELD)**

**2.47      NAPAC [Natal Performing Arts Council] (also refer to The  
             PLAYHOUSE PUPPET COMPANY)**

**2.47.1      Background**

The Natal Performing Arts Council only presented occasional puppet plays. In 1968 the council presented Jan en die Boontjierank / Jack and the Beanstalk in conjunction with PACOFS. Norman Shetler, an overseas visitor, performed under the auspices of NAPAC, during 1972 (Schwenke, 1984:41).

Since the dissolution of the Performing Arts Councils in 1994, NAPAC has been known as The Playhouse Company of Durban and puppetry has started featuring more often.

**2.47.2      Productions and performances**

No information could be found on puppet shows apart from the performances between 1975 and 1994 (refer to The PLAYHOUSE PUPPET COMPANY).

**2.48      Die NASIONALE POPPETEATER VAN SUID-AFRIKA/The SOUTH  
AFRICAN PUPPET COMPANY (refer to ANDERSON, KEITH)**

**2.49      PACOFS [Performing Arts Council of the Orange Free State]**

**2.49.1    Background**

The Performing Arts Council of the Orange Free State was the first Performing Arts Council to take the initiative in presenting puppet plays. The inspiration for the venture came from Jozef Contrijn of Belgium, who visited South Africa at the invitation of the University of Stellenbosch in 1964 (Schwenke, 1984:32). Under his supervision, a course in the making and manipulation of hand puppets was presented in Stellenbosch. He also trained the first professional puppeteers at PACOFS. A basement in St Andrews Street, Bloemfontein was transformed into a puppet theatre according to his specifications. The theatre, with animal names instead of seat numbers, was opened on 6 July 1964.

The puppet characters *Piet Skaapkop* and *Jan Mielies* performed as presenters of puppet shows in the above mentioned puppet theatre from 1965. One of the most successful performances was *Aspoestertjie* directed by Francasca Bantock in 1968 (Schwenke, 1984: 33).

PACOFS did not, however put on annual puppet shows and no reference could be found of any productions until 1978, when Dinah von Maltitz established a new

marionette company under the auspices of PACOFS. The aim was to present programmes in the Civic Theatre, Bloemfontein and to travel to country towns in the Free State. Von Maltitz started the pre-production work during that year and presented *Doringrosie / Sleeping Beauty* in the Civic Theatre in 1979 (Schwenke, 1984: 33). The company existed only until the beginning of 1980 when Von Maltitz resigned (Von Maltitz, D. 2003). Tony Fletcher was then appointed as director but left in 1981 (refer to **2.20.2:113**) (Fletcher, T. 2002).

Tharrie Zietzman re-established the PACOFS marionette company in 1985. She directed the company until 1987 (refer to **2.85.1:415**). According to PACOFS production reports the company still existed until 1992, after which date no records could be found.

## **2.49.2 Productions and performances**

1979

*Sleeping Beauty / Doringrosie* - was adapted for marionettes from the classic fairy tale, directed by Bess Finney, with music by Ralph Trehwela. It was presented alternately in English and Afrikaans.

One of the main characters, *Captain Malibu*, entertained not only the children, but the adults as well. This stork delivered babies with the help of an international computer system. Of this Van der Sandt (1979:5) said:

“In this version the baby princess is flown in by a hardened war pilot, Captain Malibu – frightfully English, complete with stiff upper lip, old chap – who has swapped his Spitfire for a battery-propelled pram”.

*Captain Malibu* was also responsible for the big rescue operation where the *Prince* kissed *Princess Daniela* to wake her up from her sleep, in order to break *Poison Ivy*’s magic. Also among the “cast” were the puny, henpecked *King Montmoneser*, the snobbish *Queen* and the sweet-faced, kindly *Nanny* (Van der Sandt, 1979:5).

The court jester, *Joey*, had a Punch-like chin and nose, and a Cockney accent, while the good fairy *Happy Heather* was a ‘bonny’ Scottish lass. The *Princess* was, as in all good fairy tales, beautiful and sweet-tempered and the *Prince* was handsome and brave, if somewhat arrogant. Six *Good Fairies* dressed in pastel colours (and matching hair) made up the rest of the characters (Van der Sandt, 1979:5).

Critics had the following to say about the production:

“The way the strings of these characters are controlled is pure mastery. With a tug of a string each puppet lives... The King tapping his foot to the music is a delight and the sight of Captain Malibu pawing the ground before take-off is bound to cause shrieks of laughter” (Van der Sandt, 1979:5).

“Die strydros wat so maklik skrik en sy edele ruiter afsmyt, het self applous ontvang. Sy knieë wat so komieklik knak en sy fisieke reaksies op gebeure het groot pret verskaf” (A.P.M., 1979:34).

[The war-horse, that was so easily startled that he threw off his noble rider, received applause. His knees, which bent in a comical way and his physical reactions to events provided great entertainment - my translation].

bDinah von Maltitz, Susan Kruger, Alet Retief, Margaretha Fischer, Marina Bekker and Tharrie Dreyer constructed and manipulated the marionettes (*Sleeping Beauty...*, 1979).

The show was performed from 4 to 7 April at the Civic Theatre, Bloemfontein, and moved to Clarendon Hall at the City Hall, Bloemfontein where it was presented from 10 to 28 April. After this run, the company toured the province, presenting 104 shows (Van der Sandt, 1979:5).



**Fig. 2.69.** *Poison Ivy* from The Sleeping Beauty, 1979 (Photocopy: Von Maltitz, D, 2003b).



**Fig. 2.70.** The *Prince*, *Princess Daniela* and the *Queen* and *King Montmoneser* from The Sleeping Beauty, 1979 (Photocopy: Von Maltitz, 2003b).

1980 -1984

No record could be found of productions and performances during this period.

1985

Zietzman designed and made marionettes and also trained manipulators for an untitled programme that was performed at schools in the Orange Free State (Zietzman, 2002).

1986

Karnaval van die Diere and Fanjan die Towenaar van Drakenstein - were performed by The Little Marionette Company under the auspices of PACOFS at the Civic Theatre from 23 – 27 September (also refer to The LITTLE MARIONETTE COMPANY).

The PACOFS Marionette Company toured the Orange Free State with a programme, that was performed at schools (Zietzman, 2002).

1987-1988

Untitled - no other records of performances could be found in the PACOF archives, apart from a report of marionette performances, which were held on 27 June – Sasolburg, 30 June – Welkom and 2 to 4 July 1987 – Bloemfontein.

1989

Die Reënboogsteler – was a production directed by Hennie Baird. It included the following marionette characters: *Prinses, Thysie, Gerda, Moerbeï, Reënboogsteler, Kindervanger, Neptunus, Muis en Feetjies* (PACOFs, 1989: 92 – 93).

Zietsman made the puppets and the puppetmaster was Annemarie Rauh. Other puppeteers were Isadora Verwey, James Helsdingen, Dorette Nel and Cobus de Villiers. The manipulators, as well as Marion Holm, Blaise Koch, Hennie Baird and Ernst Eloff, were responsible for the voices.

The show was performed at the Civic Theatre, Bloemfontein before touring the Orange Free State from 22 June – 14 November.

1990

Hansie en Grietjie - was adapted by Hennie Baird and directed by Annemarie Rauh. Zietsman and Atie Kamper were the manipulators. The production went on tour performing in the Orange Free State from 8 May until 6 September (PACOFs, 1990: 97 – 98).

1991

Rooikappie en die Wolf in Skaapklere - was directed by Annemarie Rauh using a text by Gerben Kamper. The manipulators of the marionettes were Atie Kamper, Maria de Koker and Tharrie Zietsman. Heidi Edeling was responsible for the recording of the sound (PACOFs, 1991:92).



The touring production of Rooikappie en die Wolf in Skaapklere was performed at schools in the Orange Free State from 7 May until 9 October.

1992

Aspoestertjie en Haar Goeie Selfbeeld - was directed by Marga van Rooy using a text by Gerben Kamper. The manipulators of the marionettes were Atie Kamper and Maria de Koker. The company performed at various schools in Bloemfontein from 26 February to 10 March (PACOFs, 1992: 100)

1993 to 1996

No record of puppet theatre productions could be found in the archives of PACOFs.

1997

Braam en die Engel – was performed by Paul Lückhoff with hand puppets. Gerben Kamper directed the production, which was based on the book by Marietjie de Jongh.

Twenty handpuppets represented characters in the area of Wale where the situation was so bad that the heavenly powers decided to appoint an angel to save the people from disaster (Braam en die..., 1997: n.p.). The show was performed at the Civic Theatre, Bloemfontein from 26 May – 7 June and elsewhere in the Bloemfontein area until 5 July.

## **2.50 PACT [Performing Arts Council of Transvaal]**

### **2.50.1 Background**

The Performing Arts Council of Transvaal made a plea to the board in the Annual Report at the end of 1963 to promote indigenous puppetry as soon as possible. From 1964, the council made use of puppeteers and puppet groups who were appointed seasonally. These groups performed under the name of *Trukkie-Poppekas*. In 1972 Tine Balder was responsible for *Trukkie-Poppekas* (Schwenke, 1984: 37).

International companies like the *Marionetten von Salzburg*, performed in 1968, 1970 and 1973, under the auspices of PACT. Eric Smith's company – Eric's Puppet Company performed in the Drama Theatre of the State Theatre, Pretoria in 1981 (Schwenke, 1984: 37).

Outside companies and puppeteers performed under the auspices of PACT at the opening of the State Theatre in 1981. The Little Marionette Company performed intermittently from 1982 to 1983. In 1997 Hansie Visagie of The Little Marionette Company was approached by the State Theatre to produce puppet theatre productions on a regular basis from 1997-2000 (refer to The Little Marionette Company).

## **2.50.2 Productions and performances**

1981

According to Schwenke (1984: 37), the following shows were performed at the State Theatre:

Ding en Dinge - was presented by Hansie Visagie and The Little Marionette Company (refer to **2.43.2**).

Animal Crackers – was performed by Olive King.

Blow Your Mind – was a story set in outer space, performed by Dawn Leggat.

The Old Woman Who Swallowed a Fly – was performed by Joan Rankin.

1984

Poppekaperjolle - was a family programme presented by PACT during September and October (refer to **2.43.2**).

For productions from 1982 to 1983, and from 1997 to 2000, refer to The Little Marionette Company. No records of any puppet productions could be found in the annual reports in the State Theatre archives.

## **2.51 PETRUS PRODUKSIES (also refer to SWANEFELDER, JOHAN)**

### **2.51.1 Background**

Johan Swanefelder founded *Petrus Produksies* in 2001 in Secunda, Mpumalanga.

### 2.51.2 Productions and performances

2001

Die Passie - was performed with 33 marionettes, excluding crowd puppets.

Swanefelder trained seven manipulators to help him with the performance, and also made all the puppets and décor. This passion play was first performed at the Dutch Reformed Church *Moedergemeente* in Secunda and thereafter at various congregations in Roodepoort and Pretoria, as well as at the Kamnjab Easter camp in Namibia - This performance was for the Himba tribe, performed in a dry riverbed (Swanefelder, 2002:2).



**Fig. 2.71.** *Pilatus* from Die Passie, 2001. Photo: Swanefelder, J (2003b).

2002

Het Jy Sy Oë Gesien? - was a show about four men who changed their lives after they got to know Jesus. This was performed at various congregational centres in Gauteng, North West and Mpumalanga provinces.

So Kan Jy Jou Vingers Verbrand - was the story of Jonah and the Whale that Swanefelder performed at primary schools, as well as at various congregational and community centres in the Gauteng and Mpumalanga provinces. Shorter versions of these shows were performed at crèches and nursery schools.

Jy Moet Sy Voete Kielie - was the story of Ruth and Boas, that was performed at various congregations in the Gauteng and Mpumalanga provinces, as well as three performances at the Krêkvars Art Festival at the University of Pretoria in October.



**Fig. 2.72.** Boas from Jy moet Sy Voete Kielie, 2002. Photo: Swanefelder, J (2003b).

*Vasbyt Is Al Wat Help* - was performed on 1 December at the Dutch Reformed Church Oosterlig in Pretoria. The story was about the life of David and dealt with his life until he became King. It was performed with marionettes and three mouth puppets combined with shadow puppets (Swanefelder, 2005:1). The narrator was *Simba the Lion* and this show continued to be performed in 2003.



**Fig.2.73.** *Agie* from *Vasbyt is al wat Help*. Photo: Swanefelder, J (2003b).

2003

*Oor 'n Doring en 'n Koning* - was an adapted version of *The Little Prince* with a religious theme. The puppet *Judas* was the story teller in this production (Swanefelder, 2003a:1).

*Dawid en Goliath* – was a marionette show with two manipulators.

Vasbyt Is Al Wat Help - was performed. It toured Gauteng and the Western Cape Province.

Untitled – was a series with the Pentecost as the theme, performed in conjunction with Bruce Wilkinson. According to Swanefelder (2005:1) 500 children attended each of the shows during five evenings in May.

Kersverhaal – was a show with eight marionettes, that also included shadow puppets. The story teller in the show was *Donkie*, a donkey at the manger. The marionettes were manipulated by Swanefelder. The show toured holiday resorts in Mpumalanga (Swanefelder, 2005:1).

2004

Noag soekie Bos – was a show, manipulated by Swanefelder, in which the story of Noah was told with seven human character marionettes and animal characters, which included *Elephants, Apes, Bunnies, Dogs, Horses, Pigs, Sheep* and a *Dove* with an olive branch. There were also puppets in the sea. These included a *Whale, Nemo*, a fish and his *Father* and other *Fish*. Mouth puppets included *Camels* and *Giraffes*.

Swanefelder toured the country with this production. The show was also performed for 300 children per evening, during Pentecost in May, as well as during four evenings at a youth week. The show was later performed at the *Inniebos Kunstefees* in

Nelspruit, where it was nominated for the *Slurpie* award for Best Debut Production (Swanefelder, 2005:1).

Untitled – was a show in which Swanefelder was the only manipulator of the marionettes. According to Swanefelder (2005:1), it was an interactive way of storytelling where the stories of the Passion, David, Jonah and Noah, were told through marionettes. Swanefelder toured the country with this production (Swanefelder, 2005:1).

## **2.52 PIETERS, DULINDA (also refer to The SUNNYSHOW / Die SONNEKAS PUPPET THEATRE)**

### **2.52.1 Background**

Dulinda Pieters was born in 1974. She started her career in puppetry after she had obtained her BA degree in Drama from the University of Pretoria in 1995 and realised that she had to create opportunities for herself. She founded The Sunnyshow/*Die Sonnekas* Puppet Theatre in 1996.

### **2.52.2 Productions and performances**

For productions and performances from 1996 - 2004 refer to The Sunnyshow / *Die Sonnekas* Puppet Theatre.



## **2.53 The PLAYHOUSE PUPPET COMPANY (The Playhouse Puppets)**

### **2.53.1 Background**

The Playhouse Puppet Company (part of the Playhouse Company of Durban), also known as The Playhouse Puppets, was formed in 1995 and conducted its first tour to schools, crèches and other venues in the Durban and Pietermaritzburg area between 20 February and 28 April 1995 (Puppet Company's Debut, 1995:2). The company then consisted of a puppet master, a designer and a puppet constructor, Tharrie Zietsman; Greg King as puppeteer and set designer; and puppeteers James Dobbin, Andrew Godbold, Bongani "Pillay" Ngwenya, Eric Sibiya and Tanya du Plessis – none of whom had any formal training in puppetry (Blyth, 1997: n.p.). The company closed down in 1998.

### **2.53.2 Productions and performances**

1995

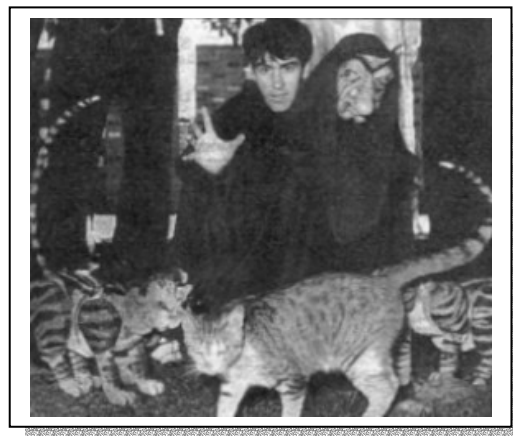
Caring Kim - the show, written by Allan Hagen and directed by Fran Cox, was an educational puppet show aimed at children of twelve years and younger. It was a story of good versus evil, teaching children the importance of kindness to all living things. In Caring Kim the dastardly *Mr. Catchit* and his reluctant assistant *Silly Cyril*, a chubby marmalade cat, captured animals and treated them cruelly. *Caring Kim* lived in Care-a-Lot-Land, a place of refuge for all sick unwanted and neglected animals. *Mr. Catchit* stole *Caring Kim*'s friend's *Clever Col*, a droopy basset hound

and *Dumbo Den*, a soulful grey tabby cat. *Caring Kim* appealed to *Magic Mary* to help her rescue the animals (Puppet Company's debut, 1995: 2).

The show featured marionettes, which puppetmaster Tharrie Zietsman designed and constructed. The puppeteers were Tanya du Plessis, Andrew Godbold, Greg King, Bongani "Pillay" Ngwenya (later known as Pillay / Pillai Ngwenya) and Eric Sibiya. Caring Kim was a touring production and the first tour to schools, crèches and other venues in the Durban and Pietermaritzburg area took place from 20 February to 28 April (Puppet Company's Debut, 1995: 2).



**Fig.2.74.** Tanya du Plessis and Greg King with marionettes from the company collection, 1995 (Pulling the right..., 1995:12).



**Fig.2.75.** Greg King with puppets from Caring Kim, 1995 (Puppet company's debut, 1995:2).

War on Waste – was another educational puppet show that featured *Count Viron* and his campaign against people who made a mess of the environment. He fought against the pollution bandits like *Blobette*, the *Big Dumper*, *Dirtbag*, *Ms.Filth*, *Grime-mo* and other members of the Gross-Gang who tried to stop him from continuing his campaign (Count Viron Fights..., 1995:n.p.).

During 1995 The Playhouse Puppet Company spent most of its time on the road visiting schools all over the KwaZulu Natal province with a variety of shows designed for young people. These included Caring Kim, War on Waste, Hansel and Gretel, The Gingerbread Man, The Continuing Adventures of Count Viron and Little Red Riding Hood and the Wolf.

The Rain Queen and the Baobab Tree - was written by Jackie Shipster, featuring music composed by Anthony Stonier. It was based on the legend of Modjadji, the Rain Queen. Using magic, humour and bushveld lore, it told of a young girl's journey to a baobab tree, and how she found out that she would become the next rain queen (Marionette show in..., 1995:8).

Other puppet characters were *Shongololo*, a millipede narrator; *The Old Rain Queen*; *Tholakele*, the young girl; *Mbonagahle*, the chameleon; *Henry Martin*, the hunter; *Eric*, the operatic crocodile; *The Dungbeetles*, *Mr and Mrs Mosquito*, *The Hoopoe*, *The Crested Barbet*, *The Ha-de-dah* and *The Woodpecker*.

The manipulators were Eric Sibiya, Greg King and "Pillay" Ngwenya. The voices were by Bongzi Ndaba, Thandeka, Nicholas Jali, Stephen Gurney and Patrick Lilley.

This production was presented on a colourful mini-set designed by Greg King from the original design by Keith Anderson (the show was initially performed as a drama with actors at the Market Theatre Johannesburg in 1994). The Playhouse puppeteers

themselves created the stage, the puppets, the properties and the scenery for the show that was performed on 30 June 1995 in the Loft at the Playhouse, Durban.



**Fig.2.76.** The *Rain Queen* from The Rain Queen and the Boabab Tree, 1995 (Marionette show in..., 1995:8).

Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs – was a marionette production adapted by Gurney from Jesse Braham White's play based on the fairy tale by the brothers Grimm.

Beth McKey and Yves Carle of Unique Creations constructed the marionettes. The human characters were  $\pm 70\text{cm}$  in height and the dwarfs were  $\pm 40\text{cm}$ , which made manipulating difficult because of the different string lengths (Tyler, 1995:n.p.). The company used special effects and shadow puppets for the first time.

Andrew Godbold, Bongani 'Pillay' Ngwenya, Eric Sibiya, James Dobbin and Greg King manipulated the puppets. Charmaine Weir-Smith, Frank Graham, Tim Wells, Patrick Lilley, Lynn Ellis, Catherine Farren, Loshani Naidu, Satchu Annamalai, Stephen Gurney and Vernard Allan-Brown were responsible for the voices (Suter, 1995:12).

The production unfolded on a small stage (about 4m x 2m), which was edged above and on each side with black curtaining, obscuring the puppeteers operating from above. When the curtains opened for the first time it revealed a set with a castle room at the far end with a set of stairs leading up to a circular platform. From there extended an area lined with pillars against a backdrop of a blue ocean and a view of another castle on a distant hill. Suter reported on this:

“It’s a delightful design and the one of many dreamed up by puppet master Greg King, who also designed the puppets and production poster, and operated the Queen Brangomar character” (1995:12).

Other parts of the set included the interior of the dwarf’s home (built around the tree’s roots), a dark forest and various castle interiors.

Anthony Stonier composed a collection of ballads and ditties. The music, songs, sound effects and voices of the colourful wooden characters were pre-recorded for the production (Suter, 1995:12). The Director and Drama Special Projects Co-ordinator at The Playhouse, Stephen Gurney, directed Snow White and the Seven

Dwarfs, with Greg King as puppet master and designer. The show was performed from 8 December to 14 January 1996 at the Sanlam Loft at the Playhouse, Durban.



**Fig. 2.77.** *Dwarfs* from Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs, 1995 (King, 2002).



**Fig. 2.78.** *Snow White and the Witch* from Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs, 1995 (King, 2002).

1996

Rainbow - was a collage of movement, light and sound with puppetry, drama, mime and circus (Suter, 1996a:7) devised and directed by Peter Court. The show featured 10 puppets and combined creation legends from African, European, Indian and Cape Malay cultures for a new tale of the birth of Earth (Tumbling, fire-breathing and..., 1996:n.p.).

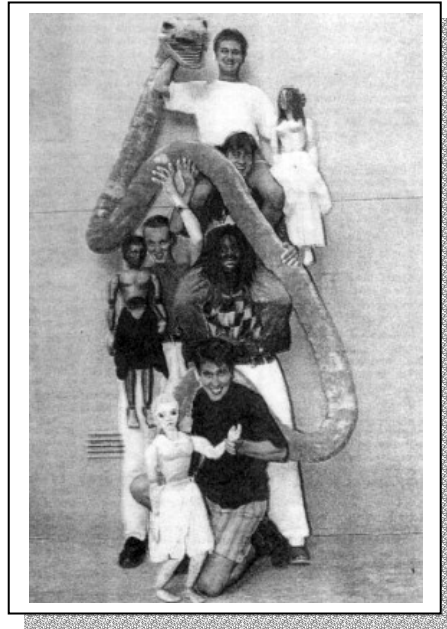
“Rainbow has been created to be interpreted on many levels. It can be enjoyed as a simple myth of creation, as a cautionary tale for children, as a political analogy, or as an adult exploration of lust and power” (The Playhouse Puppet Company, 1996a).

“The story traces the birth of the universe, Earth, imposing higher beings (a giant green snake and a colossal chameleon) and mortal creatures (five wooden human-like beings). All cross paths and suffer the consequences of discovering play, love, ceremony, jealousy, birth, humanity, rejection, war, death and ultimately hope” (Suter, 1996a:7).

Unlike previous productions, rod puppets, instead of marionettes, were used for Rainbow. The puppets were either a third of life-size or larger than life and all were hand and rod puppets manipulated by 10 performers who remained on stage throughout the performance. This was the first time that the puppeteers performed live in the Bunraku Style. This meant that they could be seen by the audience and had to learn new performance skills. The Playhouse Puppet Company created the puppets (Court, 2002).

The show featured puppeteers James Dobbin, Andrew Godbold, Bongani ‘Pillay’ Ngwenya, Richard Swift, puppet master Greg King, as well as actors Thembelihle

Patience Mabaso, Thandiwe Mvula, Loshani Naidu, Philippa Savage and Duduzile Mngadi. Rainbow was performed in the Sanlam Loft at the Playhouse, Durban from 5 July to 3 August and was also performed at the Maritzburg Arts Festival from 15 to 16 August.



**Fig.2.79.** Members of The Playhouse Puppet Company and four of the ten puppets from Rainbow, 1996 (Tumbling fire-breathing and..., 1996: n.p.).

1+1 = 3 - the Playhouse Puppet Company tackled the taboo subject of sex. The 45-minute production, written by Hennie Baird, was designed to educate the audience on sexually transmitted diseases, teenage pregnancy, over-population and its effects, and relationships in general. Despite the obvious serious nature of the subject, the show was loaded with humour and accessible to high school pupils, at whom the rod-puppet production was aimed. Playhouse puppet master Greg King designed the production. It was added to the company's repertoire of school-touring productions from September 9 (Tumbling, fire-breathing and..., 1996:n.p.).



Jack and the Beanstalk - was adapted for marionette theatre and directed by Stephen Gurney. Puppet master Greg King was the designer while Peter Court created the puppets. The Puppeteers were James Dobbin, Andrew Golbold, Greg King and Pillay Ngwenya (Smart, 1997:1-2).

The characters were *Jack*, *Sly*, (*Jack's* bullying arch enemy), *Ma Little* (the worrisome mother) and *Spellbound* (an old airborne gnome wizard who gave *Jack* his magic beans). Katherine Bruce, Marie Visagie, Angela Dodds and Patrick Lilley did the voices.

According to Scott (1996: 3), "the story opens with a jostling market scene where, if you keep an eye out, you will see a puppet show within a puppet show". This took place in the form of a Punch and Judy show on the stage. Suter (1996c:8) said:

"Greg King effectively mimed the role of big-burred, orange haired giant, Blunder-bore. Lots of magical moments including the imaginative sequence highlighting the growth of the stalk, the clever inter-action between the giant and the little fold – all lovingly created by Peter Court – and a dream sequence involving bubbles and a boat".

The lyrics and music were written by Anthony Stonier. The production was performed from 23 November to 31 December in the Sanlam Loft at the Playhouse Theatre, Durban.



**Fig.2.80.** The giant *Blunderbore* and *Jack* from *Jack and the Beanstalk*, 1996 (King, 2002.)

1997

The Mouse With No Whiskers - was a show based on the book *Ngalu, the mouse with no whiskers* by Marguerite Poland, and was adapted by puppeteers Andrew Godbold and Bongani 'Pillai' Ngwenya. Ngwenya also worked on Zulu translations for segments of the play. Bheki Mkhwane directed the production. The story was about a perky, big-eyed field mouse called *Ngalu* who trekked to the area of the Misty Mountains to search for the Spirit of the Great Elephant, from whom he hoped to get the whiskers he was born without (Suter, 1997a:6). The show also featured puppet characters like *Otters*, *Dassies* and *Elephants*, a *Hornbill*, a *Hippo*, a *Monkey*, a *Jackal*, a *Rabbit*, a *Cirvet cat*, a tambourine-playing *Mongoose*, a helpful grey *Mouse* and a raincoat-clad *Vulture*.

Puppet master Greg King did the design. The Playhouse Puppet Company created masks and rod and hand puppets from wood, feathers, pods and other natural raw materials. *Ngalu* had ears made from jacaranda pods while his face and body were made from papier-mâché made from brown paper. *Ngalu*'s nose was made to move and turn up (King, 2002).

Puppeteers King, Ngwenya, Godbold and newcomer Duduzile Mngadi also appeared as actors. King and Godbold appeared as British travellers on safari, anxious to dig up an ancient elephant burial ground, while Mngadi and Ngwenya acted as keepers of the sacred plot. The actors / puppeteers added their own facial expressions to accentuate the puppet moves, and provided narration, often using dialogue quoted from Poland's book, to describe the landscape. The props, which included three long planks, two ladders, two trestle tables, two tin drums and a large beige cloth, were carried on stage and according to Suter (1997a:6) "put to creative use as the actors, in black shirts and beige trousers manipulated the various puppets" Suter further states:

"Imagination, both in presentation and in audience appreciation, plays a large and important part as, on a stark floor space flanked by black curtains, the tale unwinds of a mouse that underwent a journey of self-discovery in his search for normality" (1997a:6 ).

Tyrone Morrow did the lighting design with incidental music and sound effects created by the performers, using whistles, drums and voice. In a scene where *Ngalu* had to cross a river, a large sheet of transparent plastic, lighting and tin drums were used to portray the scene. *Ngalu* was operated and voiced by King, while according

to Suter (1997a:6), a rather camp *dassie* and the *vulture* were portrayed by a masked Mngadi.

The show was performed in the Sanlam Loft at the Playhouse, Durban from 15 March to 13 April. The show was also performed at the Hexagon Theatre, Pietermaritzburg from 14 to 19 April.

Rumpelstiltskin - was the tale by the Brothers Grimm adapted for puppet theatre and directed by Peter Court. This production used archetypal characters to enforce the universality of this traditional tale. There were no named characters other than *Rumpelstiltskin* himself. *The Miller*, *The King*, *The Queen*, and *The Child*, were all named as such and no more.

“We do not know the name of the Miller’s daughter, but we can all identify with her plight. To give up one’s child must be the hardest decision a woman can ever make. This story is about the lack of communication and negotiation. It concerns people demanding things of each other. The Miller demands loyalty from his daughter, The King demands gold from her. The Prince demands her love and Rumpelstiltskin, her child. Any single demand refused will cost her her life” (The Playhouse Puppet Company, 1997).

The story of Rumpelstiltskin was told by a group of travelling players who set up camp by a bridge. They came across a young girl, who was a runaway, and they told her the story in order to convince her to go home, where she would be safe. The relevant tie-in was the plight of Durban’s street children, who were encouraged by social workers to go home. The play featured nine characters.

Greg King designed the play and The Playhouse Puppet Company constructed the puppets. The puppets that were painted by King and Andrew Godbold were dressed by James Dobbin. Godbold composed original music. The manipulators were Dobbin, Godbold, King, Duduzile Mngadi and Pillay Ngwenya.

The set was an open stage and the marionette bridge was used as the place where the travelling players rested. A combination of open stage performance, mask work, marionette, rod and glove, and shadow puppetry were used.

“This performance brings the puppeteers into a new field of integrated theatre by combining their puppetry skills with their skills as individual performers” (The puppets are ..., 1997: 1).

The show was first performed in the Sanlam Loft at the Playhouse, Durban from 27 June to 20 July.



**Fig.2.81.** Puppeteers Mngadi, Godbold, King, Ngwenya and Dobbin (The Playhouse Puppet..., 1996b).

## **2.54 The PUPPET PEOPLE (also refer to DOMMISSE, J)**

### **2.54.1 Background**

The Puppet People was a travelling puppet theatre company that toured the Cape Province from 1991 until 1998. The company was launched by Cathy Dodders and Jaqueline Dommisse (née Dodders) in 1991. Several part-time actors, musicians, directors and lighting designers, including Zwelaki Moni, Zorina Malick, Oscar Petersen, Paul Abrams, Peter Hayes and Lee-Anne van Rooi, assisted them over the years. On this Dommisse (2003:1-3) said:

“The Puppet People were storytellers who used puppets, marionettes, muppet-style glove puppets, masked actors and audience participation to tell their stories. The puppet shows were based on indigenous tales of less dominant cultures. They felt that the lessons behind the myths and legends of the world’s folklore are universal”.

Dommisse and Dodders researched and conceptualized the shows, wrote the scripts, designed and constructed the puppets and co-directed the performances. The exception was Sadako, that was devised and designed by the whole company. The company was disbanded in 1998.

The mainstay of The Puppet People’s work was the annual hour-long productions for pre-school to grade 3 learners. Each show comprised three or four stories and predominantly made use of rod and string puppets (similar to \*Sicilian marionettes).

The school touring versions of the shows were performed by Dodders and Dommissie, but when they were presented to the public at the Standard Bank National Arts Festival, Grahamstown or The Arena Theatre, Cape Town, a third actor / puppeteer was included and sometimes also live musicians (Dommissie, 2003:8– 9).

## **2.54. 2      Productions and performances**

1991

The Puppet People present... - was a collection of stories performed in a traditional puppet booth with glove puppets (Dommissie, 2003: 9).

Molweni Bantwana - was a touring production that was performed at many pre-primary and primary schools in the Cape Town area from March until June, as well as at hospitals, birthday parties and at the Cape Festival (Hip-hurrah for Hippo, 1992:n.p.).

The Mixed-up Feet and the Silly Bridegroom - was a story set in a place called Channuka and performed on 21 December in the Foyer of the Nico Malan Theatre as part of Puppets Alive for UNIMA, Cape Town (UNIMA, 1991d: 2).

1992

Zolani's child – was a show in which the company used simple knee-high screens of plain material as backdrops for the rod puppets of a *Girl*, her *Mother*, a *Villain* and

various animals. The puppeteers worked in full view of the audience. Dommissie designed the costumes.

“The story involved an African mother who magically acquires a daughter, fully grown and self-willed. Skulduggery engineered by a wicked man is finally un-masked with the aid of some charming animals, a dog a cat and a dove. A lovely touch was the “village” which was simply flipped from the inside to the outside of the screen” (UNIMA, 1992b:1).

This production was one from the company’s repertoire that toured the Cape Province. On 23 May Dommissie and Dodders also performed it at a UNIMA, Cape Town meeting.

Molo Hippo - was a collection of tales from Ashantiland, West Africa and Southern Africa, which were adapted for puppets and described by Dommissie (2003: 9), as “a calabash of African tales to captivate even the youngest child” Stories included tales of why Hippo lives in the water and how a magical child called *Lindewe* became a great chief.

Dodders, Dommissie and Zwelakhe Moni manipulated the marionettes and rod puppets, with the emphasis on audience participation (African tales by..., 1992:1). Two shows were performed daily from 29 June – 11 July at the Arena Theatre, Cape Town.





**Fig.2.82.** Cathy Dodders and her airborne partner from Molo Hippo, 1992 (African Tales by..., 1992:1).

Spider Stories and Tortoise Tails - was based on Ashanti stories from West Africa.

The show was presented at The Little Theatre's Playroom, Orange Street, Gardens, Cape Town from 7 – 24 December (UNIMA, 1992c).

1993

Untitled - the company performed a show at Mini-Cape's first anniversary celebrations as part of UNIMA, Cape Town's participation on 27 February (UNIMA, 1993a: 1).

Wondertales from the Wigwam – consisted of Native American tales of wonder and bravery and included Where does Fire come From? Ravenboy, Little Hawk and The Thunderchief.

The stage was open with a black backdrop. The décor consisted of two knee-high screens over which pictures were hung when required. Dommissie, Dodders and Bridget Wells were the operators of the large marionettes. Fletcher (1993:7) reported:

“Children, many of them no bigger than the puppets, sit on cushions almost at stage level, and are deeply involved. The stories are genuine American Indian, as are their outstanding cloth puppets, whose colourful dress and simple movements made clear statements. The coyote with his slavering jaws and flexible body was a masterpiece”.

In Where does Fire come From? two puppeteers switched to rod puppets for birds while for the large fire gods they put on masks and became actors.

The show was performed in the Arena, Little Theatre at the University of Cape Town during July.

1994

Kangaroos and Didgeridoos - comprised stories from Australia, based on traditional folklore of the Aboriginal people. According to Dommissie (2003:9) “These dreamtime tales introduce children to an ancient culture and form of storytelling”. It was performed at the Arena, Little Theatre at Cape Town University during July and on 2 July a special show was presented for UNIMA members (UNIMA, 1994c:1).

1995

The Green Bean Eco Show - serious issues related to the environment such as anti-pollution and anti-waste were presented in an entertaining way. It showed children how they could make a difference (Dommissie, 2003: 9). Dommissie and Dodders

were cast in the roles of two rough characters, the *Dirt Dumpers*. They did a comedy act with grotesque lunch boxes and lifelike contents, which they scattered. Puppet characters were two *Penguins* and the *Green Bean* as well as a bespectacled *Seagull*.

The show was performed at schools in the Western Cape Province and Dommissie and Dodders also performed the show at a UNIMA, Cape Town meeting on 17 June (UNIMA, 1995c:1).

“To start off the performance The Puppet People also performed their version of a tale from Nigeria, Why the Sun is so far from the Earth. Original touches and infectious rhythms permeated the whole show and brought forth enthusiastic audience participation” (UNIMA, 1995c:1).

1996

Tata Jumba's Tales - was a collection of stories from Africa, including the adventurous tale of Hapendiki and the Bibi (Dommissie, 2003:1).

1997

Sadako - was a show aimed at senior primary and early high school learners (Grades 5 to 9). It was the true story of a Japanese girl set in Hiroshima in 1955. Sadako raised the challenging issues of nuclear weapons, the consequences of war and the need for global peace. The show introduced a young audience to Japanese culture through the legend of the paper crane, the art of origami and the tradition of puppetry (Dommissie, 2003:9). The company collaborated with Peter Hayes and Lee-Anne van

Rooi of the Hearts and Eyes Theatre Collective and according to Dommissie (2003: 9), together they created their most ambitious work.

1998

Circling the Sun - was a “magical story-journey from the sky to the centre of the earth. Stories from as far away as Scotland and Chile and back to Africa were performed” (Dommissie, 2003: 9). The show toured the Cape Town area.

## **2.55 PUPPETREE COMPANY, THE (also refer to GOLDBOLD, ANDREW)**

### **2.55.1 Background**

After the closure of the Playhouse Puppet Company in 1998, Godbold established the Puppetree Company.

### **2.55.2 Productions and performances**

1998

The Elves and the Shoemaker - this was Godbold’s first show for the company, based on a Grimms’ fairy tale. A poor shoemaker made a pair of shoes with his last bit of leather. This led him to some unexpected fortune. Handcrafted wooden marionettes, made and manipulated by Godbold, were used in this production (Godbold, 2004: 1). The Elves and the Shoemaker was performed in Durban, Cape Town and Pietermaritzburg to capacity audiences (Smart, 1998: 7).

Bastien and Bastienne – was performed for the second puppet season. It was an English translation of Mozart's opera. According to Smart (1998: 8) the show was not well-attended and she made the following comment about the marionette performance:

“But you don't have to be a musico-logist to enjoy this beautiful music says Puppetree puppetmaster and director Andrew Goldbold. The tale of a love quarrel resolved by magic and human nature and set in a rural village is masterfully told” (Smart, 1998:8).

The production was presented in association with the Durban Singers Studio at Kwasuka Theatre, Durban from 8 – 18 October. The hour-long show featured the voices of Stacey Almond, Trevor Khumalo and Richard Salmon. The marionette manipulators were Pamela Tancsik, Thandiwe Mvula and Patricia Liversage. Smart (1998:8) further stated:

“The marionettes, scenery and lighting are beautifully in scale and detailed, says Andrew. I don't believe that Durban has seen marionette theatre of this calibre before”.

1999

Sun and Moon – was a marionette production in the minimalist style and was based on a folk tale from Tanzania, performed in KwaZulu-Natal. Four other marionette performances were also put on in Kwa Zulu-Natal:

- The Three Billy Goats Gruff.
- Madiepetsana and the Milkbird, a folk tale from Lesotho.
- Kitty and the Christmas-tree Star.

- Hansel and Gretel (Godbold, 2004: 1, 2).

Other productions presented during this year, were Indian Folktales at the Odeon Theatre in Chatsworth and Rumpelstiltskin and Jack and the Beanstalk, which toured to Pietermaritzburg (Pillay, 1999:1). The researcher was unable to ascertain the exact dates and venues of any of these performances.

2000

The Naughty Lion - was the last production that Godbold performed for the Puppetree Company in South Africa, before leaving for England to join The Little Angel Theatre in London (Godbold, 2004: 2).

## **2.56 PUPPETS BY GG (refer to KAMPHER, E)**

## **2.57 PUPPET SPACE**

### **2.57.1 Background**

Puppet Space at the Space Theatre, Cape Town was founded in 1972 and functioned under the direction of Lily Herzberg (refer to HERZBERG, LILY).

All members of the company were women. These included Greet Toxopeus, Betty Goldberg, Erika Feinstein, Eugene Stock, Iris Lewis, Gail Wilson, Ilse Kleinman, and Ruth Yudelowitz. The musical director of the company was Ray Querido.

In 1972 three shadow puppet plays were produced namely Potatoes, Potatoes by Anita Lobel, The Sorcerer's Apprentice and A Faithful Friend. Greet Toxopeus designed the plays, while Betty Goldberg, Erika Feinstein and Gail Wilson were manipulators. Ilse Kleinman was artist and designer and Ruth Yudelowitz, designer. Voices came from actors Val Donald, Joan Randall and Don Maquire (New home for..., 1972:8).

In 1973 a male puppeteer, Toby Van Eck, joined the company and stayed until 1975. In June 1973, Puppet Space presented Hansel and Gretel directed by Lily Herzberg and performed by puppeteers Dorothy Gutter, Toby van Eck and Erika Feinstein, working rod and glove puppets. It was performed from 18 June – 8 July. Van Eck made all the puppets. The method of modelled clay, covered with papier-mâché, was used to make the puppets for Hansel and Gretel (Gillespie, 1973: n.p.) According to Gillespie (1973: n. p.) puppeteers from Puppet Space entertained 300 children from Nyanga, a township near Cape Town. The puppeteers were Toby van Eck, Dorothy Cutter and Erika Feinstein.

A shadow puppet play, Rebirth of an Ostrich, written and directed by Lily Herzberg, opened at Puppet Space, the puppet department of the Space Theatre in Cape Town on 29 November 1973. It was a show based on a Bushman legend, reflecting not only the traditional beliefs of the Bushmen about ostriches, but also providing a graphic picture of the harsh milieu in which they lived (Herzberg, 1992:n.p.). The story was taken from "With Uplifted Tongue", a collection of Bushmen songs, poems and legends, recorded and translated into English by Arthur Markowitz (Herzberg, 1974: 20). The

characters in the play were a *Man*, his *Wife*, a *Male Ostrich*, his three *Ostrich Wives*, a *Jackal* and a *Whirlwind*.

Ilse Kleinman and Fraida Shapiro made and designed the black and grey shadow puppets. Ray Querido made the joints and designed the controls. The operators were Barbara Scott, Erica Feinstein, Rosalyn Brown and Bertha Tobias.

The University of Cape Town's Anthropology Department gave permission to use authentic Bushman music recorded on an expedition (Herzberg, 1992:n.p.).

## **2.57. 2     Productions and performances**

1975

The Lonely Giant - written by British puppeteer Violet Philpot was performed with glove puppets and actor Bill Curry as the *Giant* (Van Eck, 2002).

1976

Gertie's Feathers - was written by Kohler about an Oudtshoorn ostrich who goes on a quest to retrieve her feathers from the hat of a certain opera diva. Two of the manipulators were Kohler and Jill Joubert. It was performed on 22 April, in Puppet Space at the Space Theatre, Cape Town. No other information about the company could be obtained after this period.



## **2.58 RAINBOW PUPPET THEATRE (also refer to BRYER, ESTELLE)**

### **2.58.1 Background**

Estelle Bryer, who still directs puppet shows at this permanent theatre, founded the Rainbow Puppet Theatre in Constantia, Cape Town in 1992. The theatre seats 110 and two shows have been performed every Saturday morning since then. The theatre has a full lighting system and changeable scenery (Bryer, 2002a).

The company mainly performs Grimms' fairy tales and changes stories every month. According to Bryer (2002b:1), about fifteen different programmes had been developed up to 2002. Six puppeteers perform at the theatre, where each of the shows starts with the same ceremony. A story teller in front of the stage goes to the proscenium of the theatre with a lit candle and lights two candles, while folding back the curtain. Puppeteers sing from backstage at the same time.

### **2.58.2 Productions and performances**

1992

Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs was performed from 9 – 15 December and The Christmas Rose from 17 – 23 December for children from 4 years and older.

1993

St. George and the Dragon - was performed by Bryer at the Rainbow Puppet Theatre as part of a UNIMA, Cape Town meeting on 5 June. It was followed by a performance with a glove puppet *Lambie*, Bryer's favourite puppet (UNIMA, 1993b:1).

1996

Briar Rose (Sleeping Beauty) – combined glove, rod and shadow puppets - a first for the company.

Other shows include skits done with caricature puppets of various Cape Town \*Anthroposophists, including Eurhythmy teachers, inserted into the stories of St. George and The Dragon and Briar Rose. These were performed during evenings for adult audiences (Bryer, 1997: 30).

According to Bryer (2002b:1) the shows that she performed in her private capacity through the years from 1962 to 1992 were the same as those later performed at the Rainbow Puppet Theatre from 1992 – 2002 (refer to **2.7.2**). In addition, Sleeping Beauty, Little Brother and Little Sister, Snow White and Rose Red, Jorinda and Joringel, were also added to the repertoire of The Rainbow Theatre.

## **2.59 RANKIN, JOAN**

### **2.59.1 Background**

Joan Rankin, née Trehair, was born in Johannesburg. She matriculated at Roedean Girls' High School, Johannesburg. She saw her first puppet show when she was six years old. It was a Punch and Judy show, performed by puppeteers who had arrived in a horse and cart. She thought then that puppeteers were weird and that puppetry was definitely not something one pursued as a career (Rankin, 2002a).

Rankin started doing puppetry at school as an art project, working with clay and papier-mâché. She continued her project at home with plaster of Paris bandages, but found that the puppets were very heavy (Rankin, 2002a).

After matric, Rankin studied Graphic Art at the Michaelis School of Fine Arts, University of Cape Town from 1957 – 1958. From 1959 – 1960 she studied pottery and weaving at the Witwatersrand Technikon in Johannesburg.

After her studies, Rankin married and had three daughters for whom she did various puppet shows based on fairy tales. Rankin also studied acrylic painting under Sidney Goldblatt for several years and was the chairwoman for the Johannesburg Weavers' Guild in 1975 and 1976. At craft markets she exhibited hand-woven creatures and dolls that were to be the inspiration for her later puppets. She mounted seven one-woman exhibitions of paintings and creatures in Johannesburg, Durban and Cape

Town. In August 1977, Alida von Maltitz ran a workshop on puppet making at the J C T: Marionette Company. Although Rankin made a marionette, she was more intrigued by the shadow puppets. This workshop really ignited her interest in puppets and shadow theatre. Her first shadow theatre show was in 1980 for the J C T: Marionette Company at the Rand Easter show. After 1980, she started doing shows at schools and giving talks using an overhead projector to create shadow puppet shows (Rankin, 2002b:1).

In 1986, she started doing book illustrations and by 1998, had illustrated 28 children's books. She wrote and published her first book in 1995. Rankin also began creating miniature houses in 1999 (Rankin, 2002b: 1).



**Fig. 2.83.** Rankin, with one of her puppets (Rankin, 2002c).

## **2.59.2 Productions and performances**

1980 – 1981

The Old Woman Who Swallowed a Fly – was Rankins' first complete puppet show put on in 1980. It was a shadow theatre show, which she performed for the

Johannesburg Civic Theatre at the Rand Easter show, and also at the opening of the State Theatre in Pretoria during 1981.

1982-1991

Rankin performed at schools and gave talks, using an overhead projector to create shadow puppet shows, but she did not keep records of specific shows and venues (Rankin, 2002a).

1992

A Widlow's Tale – was Rankins' second complete puppet show, done in black theatre style, that included shadow puppets and marionettes. One of the puppets that she made was a giant woven puppet, *King Henry VIII*, which Alida von Maltitz manipulated. According to Rankin (2002a), it was inspiring to see her work come alive. The show was performed at The Maltitz Theatre, Johannesburg.

1994

The Birth of the World - was a 3-minute show in which Rankin joined a Danish puppeteer in a performance, using an overhead projector. This took place while she attended the International Shadow Puppet Festival in Germany. It was a show in which *Ungabar* created the world and the show featured of a big sphere split open with the creation of the world emerging from it.

This was an incentive for Rankin to start performing on her own. When she returned to South Africa, she began experimenting with the overhead projector, which she still

uses, together with torches and lights. She also experimented with inks on transparencies. She began doing shows at schools and talked about book illustrations while using the overhead projector. She is often asked to speak about creative writing. She uses shadow theatre because she feels that “shadows put you in touch with your subconscious world” (Rankin, 2002a).

1995-1999

Untitled - during this period, Rankin performed sporadically at schools using shadow theatre techniques.

2000

Untitled - Rankin started doing four-day workshops in creative writing for adults. She used myths for most of her performances at these workshops. For adult shows she preferred a shadow theatre, with only sounds to stimulate ideas. For these workshops, she used bird characters catching a taxi. At some stage, the taxi stopped as a result of a loud noise. The driver got out with a hammer with which he fiddled. Eventually they set off again. They came up to a big tree with a door. The students could handle the three-dimensional shadow puppets made from textiles, which were decorated with different textures and which also exuded different odours. The students then had to write short parts very quickly, on what they thought happened to the characters they had seen on the screen.

2001

Rankin continued with her workshop - productions in creative writing using shadow theatre.

2002 -2004

A Fashion show – was a shadow puppet show with figures moving to the beat of music. Comments about what they were wearing were often tongue-in-cheek. These often referred to environmental and social issues. This show was aimed at adults and teenage girls.

In this show, she used thin flexible wire figures, resembling line drawings, on clear plastic and cellophane, which she moved to get different expressions, movement and even abstract shapes. The researcher found that the show had a very graphic feel to it and the puppets were very different from the more traditional, solid cut-out designs usually found in shadow theatre. Rankin uses rolls of clear plastic with scenery painted on it with glass paint for scenes of cottages, landscapes and little villages. This method works very well for scenery or scene changes in a show with one puppeteer, because one only rolls the plastic along from one scene to the next.

Rankin also makes use of photocopies on transparencies. To attach the cellophane to transparencies or clear plastic, a two-sided paper tape is used. According to Rankin (2002a), the overhead projector light is brighter than traditional shadow theatre lights and therefore preferable. Rankin only performed shadow theatre shows rarely and on request.



**FIG. 2.84** Finger puppets the *Knave of Hearts* and the *Queen* exhibited at ABSA, 2003 (Rankin, 2002c).

## **2.60 ROYAL PUPPET COMPANY (also refer to FRIEDMAN, GARY)**

### **2.60.1 Background**

The Royal Puppet Company was established in 1977 (Friedman, 2002a: 4). The director, Gary Friedman, had, according to Schwenke (1984:23) as his aim the promotion of puppet theatre as a particular art form.

For productions and performances, refer to FRIEDMAN, GARY.



## **2.61 SHAFIR, BRENDA**

### **2.61.1 Background**

Brenda Shafir was born in Johannesburg on 18 May 1948. Shafir's older brother, together with the neighbourhood boys, put on a puppet show with glove puppets in 1951. According to Shafir (2002b), that was when she became fascinated with puppetry. During their childhood years, her mother wrote scripts and made the costumes for the shows. From 1967 to 1970 Shafir studied BA Fine Arts at the University of the Witwatersrand, and Psychology at the University of South Africa from 1985 – 1987. She is married and has three children.

From 1971 – 1984 Shafir lived in Israel. In 1974 she saw a television show about Bunraku puppetry. At that stage she taught art at home and decided to teach puppetry as well. After making glove puppets from plasticine with papier-mâché over it, the children only wanted to do puppetry, so she started to looking at different puppet forms (Shafir, 2002a: 2).

Back in South Africa Shafir taught general puppetry and ran many workshops at schools for pre-primary and primary schools pupils and teachers from 1985 to 1993. She also presented several workshops at the Johannesburg Art Gallery, Museum Africa, Johannesburg Youth Theatre, Schmerenbech Centre for Gifted Children and at Colleges of Education. Shafir undertook special voluntary projects like workshops

for the Streetwise children's shelter, homes for the aged and teachers from Soweto (Shafir, 2002a: 2).

In approximately 1992, a friend at the Waldorf School showed her tiny African figures with a small shadow theatre and this, according to Shafir (2002b), inspired her to devote herself to puppetry. Puppeteer Gary Friedman then gave her a videotape recording about the shadow puppetry of Richard Bradshaw. She found this very helpful. She put together a little show for 2 ½-year-old children about a mother and a baby fish. The children seemed to be glued to their seats and she realized that shadow puppet theatre had a special magic. The very simple theatre was made from a cardboard box of about 80 x 80 cm (Shafir, 2002b).

In the meantime, Shafir had heard about Ryno Rueusch in Germany who had founded the Centre for Shadow Theatre. In 1994 she attended the 2<sup>nd</sup> International Festival for Shadow Puppetry and also further festivals in 1997 and 2000. (The festival is held every third year). She found the festivals and workshops very inspiring and rewarding, as also the contact with international shadow puppeteers (Shafir, 2002a). As a result, Shafir has specialized exclusively in shadow theatre since 1994. Shafir taught puppetry at Crawford College in Johannesburg and after being retrenched, she started performing Shadow Puppetry at nursery schools. Since then she has put together ± 25 shows.

Shafir uses only recorded music, but tells the stories herself without pre-recorded voices. The fold-up box-size shadow theatre, decorated in black and white covered

material, has a rectangular screen in the middle with a round screen on the side for variation **(2002c)**.

Most of her shows are  $\pm$  40 – 45 minutes in duration and she usually uses well-known stories that she adapts to accommodate shadow theatre. In the beginning she used only African folk tales, but later she started using other folk tales as well.

Shafir divides her contribution to puppetry into five categories:

- Puppet shows for children from grade 0 to grade 4. These shows are suitable for larger groups of up to 100 children. After each show, the children are shown how Shadow Theatre works.
- Puppetry workshops for primary school children lasting 2 hours. Each usually consists of a show and then the children make puppets. They are shown how to design and construct the puppets, that they use to stage performances to music on her shadow screen.
- A one-hour lecture demonstration. Here Shafir compares traditional shadow theatre with other more contemporary light forms like the halogen light. The lecture / demonstration begins with a shadow show. This is followed by a demonstration of lighting techniques and special effects. The pupils are then shown how to design and construct their own shadow puppets and a simple Shadow Theatre.
- As part of her programme for schools, Shafir does a teacher training workshop, which can accommodate up to 10 participants. Teachers are

trained in shadow puppet design and construction, lighting techniques and the construction of a simple shadow theatre for use in the classroom. The teachers are also given ideas on how to present educational material through shadow theatre and stimulating creativity in children (Shafir, 2001:1).

- Special projects with street children, disabled children and prisoners. She experienced a real difference in the stories told by street children, while working with glove puppets, when compared to those working with shadow puppets. With glove puppets, the children tended to tell violent and sad stories about fights with police or parents fighting with each other. Stories told by means of Shadow Theatre, however, were lyrical, poetic, gentle and beautiful and the difference was poignant. According to Shafir, the children expressed their inner reality with the shadow puppets, as shadows are very mysterious and these resonate with one's inner world. This reaction from the children is satisfying and keeps her fascinated with this art form (Shafir, 2002b).

During 2003 Shafir gave a series of teacher training workshops in Ivory Park, Johannesburg. Because Shafir is very committed to the idea of shadow theatre and its use in the classroom, she ran these workshops particularly for those at disadvantaged schools where courses are very limited (Shafir, 2004:1).

In October 2003, Shafir travelled to Germany where she attended a three-day workshop in contemporary shadow theatre with Fabrizio Montecchi at the

International Shadow Theatre Festival in Schwaebisch Gmund. She also studied with another European shadow player, Norbert Goetz (Shafir, 2004: 1).

## **2.61.2 Productions and performances**

1994 – 2000

According to Shafir (2002b), she did not keep a precise record of dates and venues at which she performed until 2000, but since 1994, she has put together ± 25 shows, which she regularly performs. Amongst these are:

How the Giraffe got its Long Neck - was Shafir's first shadow puppet show. She used black plastic sheeting to cut out the figures and scenes, and also cellophane for a bit of colour.

How Fire came into the World - was a story that followed soon after. The influence of Shafir's art training was clearly visible in the well-balanced, creative composition that attracted attention (2002c).

The Story of Moses – a show for which Shafir created light and dark shadows by using compressed polystyrene material of which some was painted black and the other left white. This gave a three-dimensional effect because light came through the white material to give a lighter shadow for objects placed further in the scene.

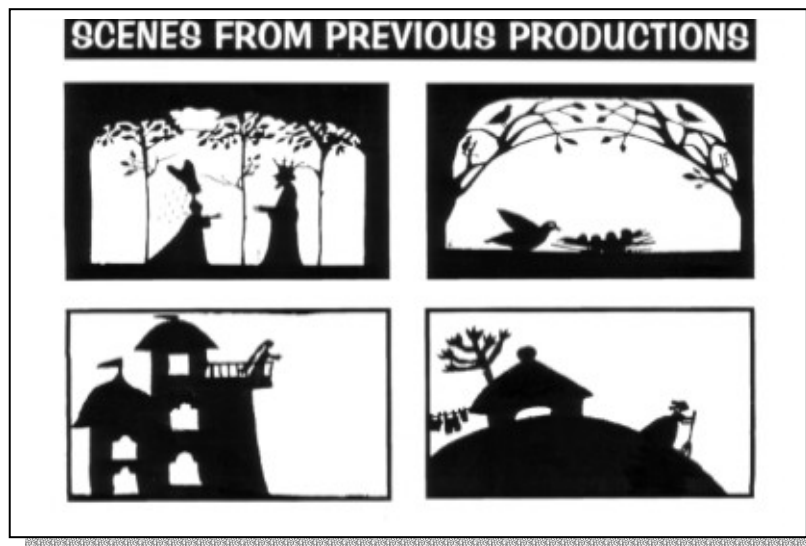
The Designation of the Temple and The Story about a little Prince who loved Birds - were shows in which the design was reminiscent of medieval artwork (Shafir, 2002b).

2001

The following shows were added to Shafir's repertoire:

- The Emperor's Nightingale - a Chinese folk tale, which told the story of the song of the nightingale that enchanted the Emperor of China. As the audience listened to various birdsongs, they learnt about Chinese music, writing and customs.
- Crocodile Tales - were two African stories about crocodiles and other reptiles. According to Shafir (2001:1), they are gently humorous and informative with the themes relating to reptiles, wild animals and care of teeth.
- Small Creatures - consisted of two stories relating to insects, snails and the life cycle of a caterpillar. One story, The Adventures of Caterpillar, was about a caterpillar changing into a beautiful butterfly with adventures along the way. The second story, Snail's Amazing House, was about a snail who was embarrassed about his small shell. When the snail found a way to make his shell huge he learnt that 'bigger is not always better'.
- The King's Secret Garden – in this show, children learnt about water being precious, flowers and the garden. In a dry country, the king used all the water for his bath. His bath water disappeared. Later he discovered that the palace gardener was using it to water a secret garden. Who should have had the water? The audience had to decide. In this show, shadow puppets as well as three-dimensional puppets were used.

- The Fisherman and his Wife - children got to know more about the sea, boats, ships and underwater creatures. A poor fisherman kindly released a fish that promised to grant him anything he desired, but the fisherman's wife was greedy – until she learnt that the simple life was best after all (Shafir, 2001: 2).



**Fig 2.85.** Scenes from previous productions (Shafir, 2001:1).

In two shows comprising African folktales, wild animals' feelings and experiences such as courage, patience, honesty, kindness and friendship, were related:

The first show told two stories namely:

- The Magic Pot - a Xhosa tale in which *Mdinini* warned his wife not to use his pot while he was away. His naughty wife disobeyed him with amusing consequences.

The Wonderful Python - was a story about a kind python that lived in a cave outside a village. The *King* needed his help. The bravest warriors were too afraid to bring *Python* to the *King*, but the tiny children led by the small princess finally succeeded in doing just that.

The second show told the following two stories:

- The Magic Tree – was a show about luscious fruits on a tall tree that could not be reached by the hungry animals until they had learnt the tree's name. With the help of the audience, brave *Tortoise* remembered, thereby saving the animals.
- In The Clever Red Ants Outwit the Snake – the *Snake* coiled himself around plover's eggs. The animals tried to help, but only the tiny ants were successful.

The King with dirty Feet - was the final show that Shafir put together for 2001. In this story the King refused to bath. The audience persuaded him to change his mind. Personal hygiene, bodies and clothes were addressed in this funny, cheeky show with special music (Shafir, 2001: 2). Shadow puppets as well as glove puppets were used.

Shafir only staged these shows up to March 2002 before starting to work on new material for shadow theatre. These works were more abstract and experimented with a halogen light.



2002

The shows presented during 2001 continued until March. On 23 March, Shafir performed a short story at the Maltitz Marionette Theatre, which she used to demonstrate shadow puppetry at workshops. The stage was a very simple one made out of a cardboard box. “The idea is not to frighten people off by using an advanced technique at their first encounter with puppetry. But that does not mean that the show was not very beautiful and exquisite” (Van Deventer, 2002:1).

2003 – 2004

The Adventures of Caterpillar and Snails Amazing House - were again performed in the winter holiday season at Maltitz Marionette Theatre from 1 – 12 July. (Von Maltitz, A, 2003: 2). In addition there were about 120 performances and workshops presented mainly at schools during this year (Shafir, 2004:1).

Seasons and the Weather – was a new show on this theme created in two parts for pre-primary and junior primary learners. The second half of the show was the Aesop fable Grasshopper and the Ants. Shafir (2004:1) described it as:

“Regarding my new work, I am trying to move away from traditional shadow theatre – I am creating a new show at the moment, The Elephant’s Child based on the story by Rudyard Kipling. It is a more contemporary technique using halogen lights, storytelling, music and effects. I will be visible throughout the show, instead of being hidden behind the screen, telling the story as I create the shadows on a small screen. This is a technique I learnt in Germany from Norbert Goetz”.

## **2.62 SIMPSON, MARITA**

### **2.62.1 Background**

Marita Simpson (née Taljaard) was born in Bloemfontein in 1962. She matriculated at *Roodepoort Hoërskool* on the West Rand in 1980 and from 1981 – 1982 she studied Physical Education at Rand Afrikaans University. From 1981 Simpson worked as a freelance artist who painted and did book illustrations. Between 1983 and 1984 she worked for the publishing firm Perskor, designing cover illustrations.

In 1983 Simpson married and moved to Port Edward. Here she started a business selling carved doors. She also painted fulltime until she became interested in marionettes. From 1999 until 2002 Simpson studied art at Rocky Ridge Learning Centre – a private school - where she still lectures from time to time (Simpson, 2002:1).

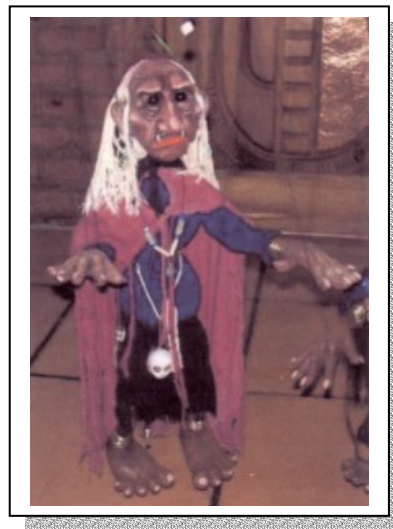
Most of the marionettes Simpson makes have an African theme. Simpson commented on a television programme in May 2002, how sad it was that the African myths and legends were not being told any more (Read, 2002: 1).

Collectors all over Europe and South Africa have bought Simpson's marionettes that depict elements of African culture. The marionettes are all handmade from wood and clay – some with long teeth, evil eyes and bedecked with beads. All the puppets do not represent legendary figures, as there are also friendly marionettes, such as those

representing characters from everyday township life. Characters that Simpson created were *Thokoloshes*, *Sangomas*, *Nightwalkers* and *Township children*. The heads, as well as the legs and arms are carved from wood. Hands and feet are usually made from resin but she also uses Pratley Putty. The marionettes are  $\pm$  80cm in height. Simpson, who is a puppetmaker, does not manipulate her marionettes. However, they are made to be manipulated, if the needed arises (Simpson, 2003:1).



**Fig.2.86.** *Witch*. Photo: Africarve (Simpson, 2003).



**Fig.2.87.** *Nightwalker*. Photo: Africarve (Simpson, 2003).

## 63 **SNYMAN, ANTOINETTE (also refer to JOHANNESBURG PUPPET COMPANY)**

### 2.63.1 **Background**

Antoinette Snyman was born in 1952 and matriculated in 1970 at the *Hoër Meisieskool Helpmekaar*, Johannesburg. At school she was never exposed to any

form of art, but in 1970 she went to the Johannesburg Civic Theatre where the director, Michal Grobbelaar, gave her a part-time job in the ticket office in spite of her stutter. She wanted to apply for a bursary from *Goudstad Onderwys Kollege*, but she was not accepted because of her speech impediment. At that stage Alida Von Maltitz and Ann Bailes were busy with shows for the Johannesburg Civic Theatre:

Marionette Company. Snyman was fascinated. She thought that if she could not speak with her voice, she would learn to 'talk with her hands' (Snyman 2002). During school holidays, she worked with Von Maltitz and Bailes at the Johannesburg Show Grounds, moving props and doing other backstage work. Later she was allowed to manipulate some marionettes.

Her confidence grew, because she could hide behind a marionette and become the character instead of being herself. Eventually she lost her stutter. She thought puppetry was the perfect job for her because she never stuttered while operating a puppet (Snyman, 2002).

From 1971 – 1974 she paid for her own studies at *Goudstad Onderwys Kollege*. During holidays she still worked for the J C T: Marionette Company. Von Maltitz taught her how to manipulate marionettes, but because she was too shy to ask for guidance, she developed a different manipulating technique. At the same time she was taught all aspects of the theatre from costume construction to script analysis. In 1975 Snyman started teaching Afrikaans and Mathematics at the Art, Ballet and Music School in Johannesburg, while still doing puppetry part-time and during holidays. After Von Maltitz and Bailes left the J C T: Marionette Company in 1973,

Snyman worked for Dinah Newton and Jean Watson. As payment, she asked Jean Newton to carve her a marionette, which was a little wooden carved boy she still uses to this day. Having her own marionette meant she could practise until she became a skilled manipulator.

In 1975, with the first test broadcasts of the SABC (South African Broadcasting Corporation) where hand puppets were also used, Snyman was ready to learn how to manipulate hand puppets, as she wanted to extend her range. This was the beginning of a long career as a manipulator of marionettes and of hand and rod puppets for television.

In 1978, Snyman put together a street theatre show with the few marionettes she had. These she took with her to New Zealand in 1979, where she performed. In 1980, after a six-month break, she came back to South Africa, but she had to work as a journalist because she found puppetry was not a sustainable career in South Africa.

The SABC closed their workshops and scaled down the Afrikaans programmes in 1997. With the decline of Afrikaans Television in 1997, Snyman started her own television production company and although it was too late to do Afrikaans videos for the SABC, she marketed her own work, which was very profitable (Snyman, 2002).

After her return from New Zealand, she continued performing her one-woman show, Antoinette's Marionettes, on a part-time basis. She uses small sets, which hide the body while she works above it. She paints her own sets. Different puppeteers and

puppet makers have made puppets for her, therefore she has built up a good collection. In 2002, Peter Collard made her a number of puppets, which were carved from wood (Snyman, 2002).

In 2000 Snyman and Alida von Maltitz started a new venture by founding the Johannesburg Puppet Company at the Rand Afrikaans University with donations from the Tesson Trust (refer to **2.31.1**).

Snyman performs regularly at birthday parties, twice a year at the Johannesburg Puppet Theatre, Johannesburg University (previously RAU) and at schools.

Her repertoire includes:

Christmas in Africa, Boetman and his Classic Team, Boetman: van Tiekiedraai tot Toyi-Toyi, Puppet Idols, African "Tails," Die Stadsmuis en die Plaasmuis, Senor Onyon, Rumpelstiltskin and any other Fairy Tales, Ha-ha said the Clown, Joy in Christ and Khaya Africa.

Snyman also writes concepts for special assignments and stages them (Snyman, 2004:1 – 4).

## **2.63.2 Productions and performances**

1975 - 1977

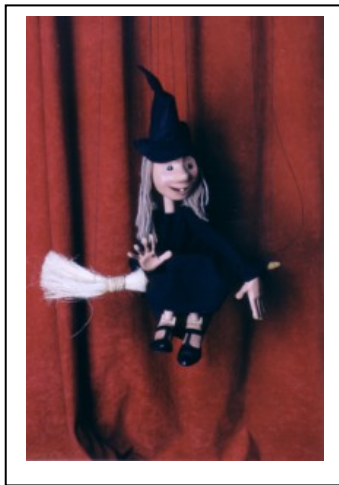
For productions and performances from 1975 to 1977, refer to JOHANNESBURG CIVIC THEATRE: MARIONETTE COMPANY and from 2000 to 2004 to JOHANNESBURG PUPPET COMPANY.

1978 - 2004

Antoinette's Marionettes – was a marionette show, which has been continually performed at various venues across the country since 1978. The show was either performed by one or two puppeteers and mostly performed to music, in cabaret style, while the marionettes were manipulated on short strings.



**Fig. 2.88.** *Anton Goosen* made by Hansie and Thea Visagie. Photo: Antoinette Snyman (2002).



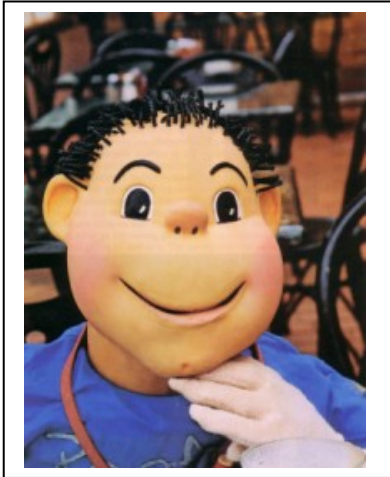
**Fig.2.89.** *Liewe Heksie* made by Alida von Maltitz. Photo: Antoinette Snyman (2002).



**Fig. 2.90.** *Thundzi* made by Peter-Paul Collard. Photo: Antoinette Snyman (2002).

2000

The Boetman-series - was a school project which Snyman did for the ATKV (*Afrikaanse Taal en Kultuurvereniging*), using a latex puppet made by Peter Collard. It started off as an educational video of 40 minutes, to teach children about the symphony orchestra and the different sounds and instruments. She toured with the show *Boetman en sy Classic Span* for the ATKV to various venues countrywide (Snyman, 2004: 3).



**Fig.2.91.** *Boetman* from Boetman en sy classic Span, 2000. Photo: Susan Lombaard (*Boetman maak sy...*, 2002:10).

2003

Boetman en sy Classic Span – the show was performed in Khayelitsha and Manenberg (Western Cape) as well as in Soweto (Gauteng) (Snyman, 2004: 3).

Puppet Idols / Poppesterre – a marionette show described as follows:

*“Antoinette Snyman se marionette hou kompetisie en die gehoor beoordeel. Daar is dansers, wilde diere, kakkerlakke, ballerinas en baie meer” (Pierneef Teater, 2003: 1).*

[Antoinette Snyman's marionettes compete and the audience adjudicates. There are dancers, wild animals, cockroaches, ballerinas and many more - my translation.]

Apart from performances at the Johannesburg Puppet Company at the Rand Afrikaans University (refer to **2.31.2**) and at the Pierneef Theatre in Pretoria on 2 and 4 July (*Kinderteater vir die...*, 2003:1), the show toured countrywide to schools and festivals, but no specific dates and venues were available (Snyman, 2004: 3).



2004

Boetman en sy Classic Span (2000) - toured intermittently from March to July around the country, performing in the Gauteng, Mpumalanga, Free State, Western Cape and Eastern Cape provinces.

Puppet Idols - was performed alternately during this period up to October.

Khaya Africa / Khaya Afrika – was a show, which Snyman developed especially for children of junior primary school age. The soundtrack was produced in Afrikaans and in English. The content highlighted different styles of music in South Africa, as well as Zulu culture and traditions. The script was written according to the stipulations laid down in the 2005 curriculum for the subject Arts and Culture (Snyman, 2004: 2).

“According to the Zulu tradition, Impundulu is the lightning or rain bird. Impundulu lands in South Africa and decides to stay, but [he] needs an identity document. Imoya, a little Zulu girl, tells him a secret: if the people of this land invite you to sing and dance with them, they have accepted you as their friend” (Snyman, 2004: 2).

Khaya Africa / Khaya Afrika - was performed in Meyerton on 8 April, in Durban from 3-7 May, in Cape Town from 8-14 May and in various other provinces up to September.

Joy in Christ - was a Christian ministry performance (Snyman, 2004:5 – 7), that was performed on 10 September in Rustenburg.

## **2.64 SPELLBOUND PUPPETS (refer to AUERBACH, M)**

## **2.65 STAPELBERG, HILETTE AND JOHAN (refer to KLEINVOLK MARIONETTE)**

### **2.65.1 Background**

Hilette Stapelberg (née Terblanché), was born in 1954 and studied at the Ivor Kirsten Academy of Fashion. She was trained as a costumier at PACT in Pretoria, where she subsequently worked in that capacity. Later she also worked as a costumier at CAPAB in Cape Town.

Johan Stapelberg (1948 - ) works as a graphic artist and illustrator. His comic strips in Afrikaans, *Scottie Smith*, and in English, *Meggi-Chops*, are known in South Africa, the South Sea Islands and Australia (Stapelberg, 2003:1).

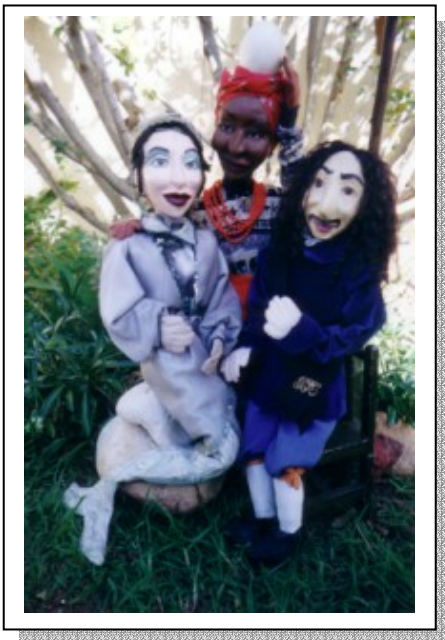
In 1996, they created *Kleinvolk Marionette* and produced the marionette series *Kleinvolk*, which consisted of individual marionettes, each with its own name and number. The marionettes were mostly produced for stalls at art markets and art festivals. Each was made from recycled materials like wood, old wigs, feathers, jewellery, textiles, paper and cardboard.

Some of the marionette characters made by them from papier-mâché and wood were *Jan van Riebeeck*, *Surprise Twala Volstruiseier*, *Handelaar*, and *Verdine Pescatore* –

*Knysna Meermin* all made on one-to-three scale. Although the Stapelbergs do not perform with these marionettes they are made to be manipulated.



**Fig.2.90.** *Verdine Pescatore-Knysna Meermin, Jan van Riebeeck and Surprize Twala Volstruiseier Handelaar* (Stapelberg, 2003)



**Fig.2.93.** *Verdine Pescatore-Knysna Meermin, Jan van Riebeeck and Surprize Twala Volstruiseier Handelaar* (Stapelberg, 2003)

## **2.66 The SUNNYSHOW/ *Die SONNEKAS PUPPET THEATRE* (also refer to PIETERS, DULINDA)**

### **2.66.1 Background**

From 1996 Dulinda Pieters managed The Sunnyshow / *Die Sonnekas* puppet theatre from home but in 1998 started operating The Sunnyshow / *Die Sonnekas* puppet theatre under Enter Active Productions cc. In 2000 she became the manager of the Moonbox Theatre, (situated at the Breytenbach Theatre in Pretoria), from where the puppet theatre operated until 2004. Every school holiday and most first Saturdays of each month, the Moonbox Theatre became home to the The Sunnyshow / *Sonnekas Puppet Theatre*.

The Sunnyshow / *Die Sonnekas* puppet theatre started educating children through theatre. Pre-primary schools, primary schools and other institutions such as libraries make use of the puppet theatre to “educate children from an early age to appreciate different values of issues addressed” (Pieters, 2003b). Various life skills were addressed in these productions specially developed for the clients and up to 2004 a total of 250 different stories had been developed and written for puppet theatre (UNIMA, 2004a: 1).

This puppet theatre has travelled throughout the Gauteng Province and also in the Limpopo Province. Issues such as HIV/Aids and Child and Drug Abuse were

covered. Various community partners have been involved to promote other essential skills in young children.

Enteractive Productions cc provides Industrial Theatre aimed at children in order to promote products and services for other companies. Through the use of hand puppets, clients like Coca-Cola, Dairy Belle, Telkom, Cadbury's, SAPS (SA Police Services), Ster Kinekor, ATKV (*Afrikaanse Taal en Kultuurvereniging*), LAPA Publishers and Smile Education have made use of the service of Enteractive Productions cc.

“Corporate companies have utilized Pieters’s knack for script writing to illustrate the machinations within their companies. Quirks of employers and employees would be attributed to some of the puppets, creating parodies, which normally have audiences grabbing-the-Kleenex with laughter” (Indulge your inner..., 2003: 9).

Pieters has drawn inspiration from various people to make the glove puppets she uses to perform in a traditional booth theatre. *Sonnetjie* and *Blommetjie* are not only the actors and manipulators, but also two main characters in the plays.

#### **2.66.2 Productions and performances**

1999

*Vakansiestories vir Kinders* was performed from 2 - 10 July and *Kersfeesstories vir Kinders* from 7 - 18 December at *Die Teaterhuisie*, Pretoria.

2000

Sprokies vir Kinders, 3 - 8 April, Vakansiestories vir Kinders, 1 - 8 July and Kersfeesstories vir Kinders, 4 - 15 December, were performed at *Die Teaterhuisie*, Pretoria.

2001

The two mouse characters *Frikkie* and *Prikkie* made their appearance at The Moonbox Theatre, Pretoria, with *Frikkie en Prikkie se Paasfeespret*, from 2 - 12 April and *Frikkie en Prikkie se Vakansiefees* from 4 - 14 July. The two characters featured again in *Frikkie en Prikkie se Lentewense*, 20 - 24 September; in *Frikkie en Prikkie se Pampoenfees*, 3 - 5 October and in *Frikkie en Prikkie se Kersfeeskaskenades*, 10 - 22 December.



**Fig.2.94.** *Frikkie* and *Prikkie*.  
Photo: Dulinda Pieters  
(2003a).

2002

Four productions were presented at The Moonbox Theatre, Pretoria. Frikkie en Prikkie se Paasfeespantoffels, 22 - 27 March; Frikkie en Prikkie se Vakansietassie 22 - 28 June; Frikkie and Prikkie se Lentelawaai, 27 - 29 August and Frikkie en Prikkie se Kerskouskaskenades, 3 - 12 December.

2003

*Frikkie* and *Prikkie* again appeared in four productions at The Moonbox Theatre, Pretoria with Frikkie en Prikkie se Paasfeesprobleme, 19 - 21 March, Frikkie en Prikkie se Vakansie verrassing, 21- 28 June, Frikkie en Prikkie se Lentedroompie, 20 – 24 September and Frikkie en Prikkie se Kerskouskaskenades, 8 -13 December (Pieters, 2004:1 – 2).

Frikkie en Prikkie se Vakansie verrassing - in this show *Frikkie* and *Pikkie*, the two mouse characters, were on holiday in *Sonneland* where some of the *Sonnewoud* inhabitants were unhappy about the disappearance of their pretty belongings. With the help of *Sonnetjie* and *Blommetjie* order was restored resulting in happy smiles (Frikkie en Prikkie..., 2003b:1).

2004

*Frikkie* and *Prikkie* again appeared in four productions at The Moonbox Theatre, Pretoria with Frikkie en Prikkie se Paasfeesprobleme, 27 March - 3 April, Frikkie en Prikkie se Vakansiepret, 26 June – 3 July, Frikkie en Prikkie se Lentepret, 27 – 29

September and Frikkie en Prikkie se Kersfeespret, 6 -11 December (Pieters, 2005:1).

According to Pieters (2005:1),in addition the company performed between 40 and 60 shows at nursery schools, primary schools, shopping centres and at birthday parties in Gauteng.

## **2.67        SUNSHINE KIDS PUPPETRY MINISTRY (also refer to DOVE, MIKE AND MARGE)**

### **2.67.1     Background**

Mike and Marge Dove established The Sunshine Kids Puppetry Ministry in 1977 and the name of the company was changed to Joy Company Blacklight Productions in 2002.

### **2.67.2     Productions and performances**

1977 – 2004

Shows are compiled from the repertoire of ± 37 sketches (Dove, 2002) of which 16 are listed below. Only a few items will be dealt with in detail:

Jesus is never too busy for Kids

Our Father

You can choose to do the right thing

Stopskit

I'm a Bunny

Dr Rubenstein



Arise my Llove

I'mJust a Stone

Born in a Barn

Faith

Get hooked on Jesus

Have a littleTalk to Jesus

Shout Hosanna

Don't get caught in the Net

Dream Big

Basking in the Sunshine

The following are examples of how various puppets are used:

Faith – is a non-verbal item with a glove puppet trying to get over a wall. Written words appear on the wall to give the audience clues. An larger-than-life Bible is used as a stepping stone to climb over the wall.

Don't get caught in the Net - features an underwater scene with muppet-type puppets, such as a mermaid called *Hotlips*, *Sebastian Crab* and various fish and shellfish swimming between seaweed fronds (flat cut-outs from polystyrene). The story is about lying and stealing.

Get hooked on Jesus – in this sketch Bibles open and close in time to music, while in Basking in the Sunshine seven wormlike puppets made from springs with feathery heads, dance with a dancer operating a big puppet head, while “singing” a gospel song. The puppets and properties are made from ultra-violet coloured materials.

Shout Hosanna - a flat cutout figure of Jesus on a donkey with moving legs moves across the stage, while a puppet with long springy legs and other wormlike puppet characters on springs move together.

Have a Little talk to Jesus - three big frogs, with legs attached to the puppeteers' feet, move in unison. Six puppeteers operate these puppets with green bodies and white bellies, dressed in hats and bowties. One puppeteer operates the back legs and head, while another puppeteer works the forelegs.

Dream Big - features a blue and green hand puppet character and a very big caterpillar with a number of booted feet floating in the air. These change into four blue butterflies with 'Dream Big' written on their reverse sides. The puppet first catches a small fish, then a very big one, while religious texts on flat cut-outs appear in the background. A very tall puppet with long legs, worked by two puppeteers, appears towards the end of the item. Rika Smith, from Durban, made these cutouts and printed foam fish.

The Doves' performed extracts from their repertoire at the Christian Festival during the National Arts Festival, Grahamstown in July 2002 (Dove, 2002).

## **2.68 SWANEFELDER, JOHAN (also refer to *PETRUS PRODUKSIES*)**

### **2.68.1 Background**

Johan Swanefelder was born on 4 April 1971. He grew up and went to school in Roodepoort and matriculated at *Hoërskool Die Adelaar* in 1989.

After school, Swanefelder studied theology, and obtained his BD degree in 1995 from the University of Pretoria. During 1995 he also obtained a Diploma in Drama at the Guild for Speech and Drama Teaching in Pretoria.

From 1996 to 1998, Swanefelder did mission work in Zimbabwe and Namibia and from 1999 to August 2001 he was a youth minister at the Dutch Reformed Church in Secunda. His first production was performed while he was a minister in Secunda.

He started out using hand puppets made of papier-mâché. An amateur puppeteer taught Swanefelder how to make marionettes. He went to see a show of Alida von Maltitz. Later she assisted him in the making and manipulating of marionettes. He also met Toby van Eck who offered new ideas and taught him how to construct the controls of the marionettes.

After leaving the ministry in 2001, he founded *Petrus Produksies* and became a fulltime puppeteer, touring to different congregations, mostly in the Gauteng and Mpumalanga provinces.

## **2.68.2 Productions and performances**

For productions and performances refer to ***PETRUS PRODUKSIES***

## **2.69 TANCSIK, PAMELA (also refer to TEKWENI PUPPETPLAYS and TANCSIK PRODUCTIONS)**

### **2.69.1 Background**

Pamela Tancsik was born on 24 September 1958 in Munich, Germany. She came to South Africa in 1998 after having seen a performance by the Handspring Puppet Company in Germany.

Tancsik started working with puppets in Munich when she was 17. She started manipulating marionettes and continued with it for 11 years. She also had her own shadow puppet theatre for 5 years. Tancsik's education and training are as follows: from 1979 – 1981 she was a guest student in Set Design and Painting at the *Mozarteum*, Salzburg. In 1987, she completed a diploma in Social Work (Arts Therapy) at the Academy for Social work, Munich and in 1992, she obtained a Master's degree in the Science of Theatre, Judaism, New German Literature and Philosophy. In 1997, she obtained a Doctorate in Theatre History from the University of Munich (Tancsik, 2002b:1-2).

Her professional experience in Germany and abroad is impressive. From 1989 to 1993, she performed as puppeteer for marionette and shadow theatres in various theatres in Munich, as well as in Croatia. From 1991 to 1993, she was Assistant Director and Dramaturge for the Bavarian State Opera, Munich (Tancsik, 2002b:1-2).

Tancsik started working in South Africa in 1998 with the Durban puppeteer Andrew Godbold. They performed one opera and two other productions before Godbold left for England in 2000.

Since 1999 Tancsik has performed her own puppet plays under the auspices of Tancsik Productions (refer to **2.70.1:330**) and in 2002 Tekweni Puppetplays, incorporating Tancsik Productions, was founded together with Adi Paxton (refer to **2.73.1:345**).

From January to April 2000 Tancsik directed puppet-making workshops for members of the McCord Hospitals *Sinikithemba* AIDS support group in Durban. According to Tancsik (2002c), 78 % of her work is based on puppetry, but she also produces and directs videos for educational purposes and weddings.

## **2.69.2 Productions and performances**

1998

Tancsik worked as puppeteer with Andrew Godbold on the classic story for the marionette play Rapunzel as well as the Mozart Opera Bastien and Bastienne (refer to PUPPETREE COMPANY).

For productions and performances from 1999, refer to **2.70.2:331** and **2.73.2:345**

2000

Musical Marionettes - include mostly marionettes, which Tancsik made herself.

During the years working as a puppeteer in Germany, Tancsik solely manipulated marionettes without making any herself (refer to **2.70.2:331**).

## **2.70 TANCSIK PRODUCTIONS (refer to TANCSIK, PAMELA and TEKWENI PUPPETPLAYS)**

### **2.70.1 Background**

In 1999 Tancsik started her own puppet company Tancsik Productions. She performed her own puppet plays at schools and libraries in Durban, as well as for rural communities in Kwa-Zulu Natal.

## 2.70.2 Productions and performances

1999

Idada Buhle (The Ugly Duckling) – was a show about family structures in South Africa, and was commissioned by the Turn Table Trust support centre for rural community development in May. The story is about a duck that goes in search of his father. It was aimed at 7 to 8-year-old children. This was a puppet play done with hand puppets in a small portable theatre with a painted background, resembling the rural landscape of the area. Six performances were held in the Bulwer Area, Kwa-Zulu Natal.

2000

Musical Marionettes – was a show, using marionettes, most of which Tancsik had made herself. The marionettes were made using plastic clay for heads, hands and feet, while the bodies were made from a variety of materials such as wood, metal and fabric. Godbold made two marionettes, *Prince* and a *chameleon*. The show was performed for older children to teach them about music, opera and speech. Tancsik used recorded music with her own voice and manipulated the marionettes on short strings in front of a black cloth. She adapted her marionette show for Christmas and Easter. The show featured various marionettes performing a potpourri of songs, from musicals, as well as famous opera arias. Among the singing and dancing marionettes was a glamorous *cat*, an African *chameleon*, *Carmen*, a passionate Spanish woman, *Dr. Higgins* and a bored *Prince* who wanted to be a rock star. This show ran until June 2002 (Tancsik, 2002a: 1).

2001

No productions were performed under Tancsik Productions during this year. (refer to **2.73.2**).

2002

Pinocchio's Birthday - was a hand puppet play for the age group 3 - 8 years, performed at primary schools and private birthday parties. The show featured *Pinocchio*, who had a birthday but no friends to celebrate it with him. With the help of the audience he learnt how to be a friend.

In May, Tancsik worked on a show with puppets and actors for AIDS awareness in the hope of obtaining funding from UNESCO (Tancsik, 2002c).

## **2.71      TEATRO DEI PICCOLI (refer to ANDERSON, KEITH)**

## **2.72      TECHNIKON PRETORIA (since 2004: Tshwane University of Technology)**

### **2.72.1      Background**

Both the departments of Drama and Entertainment Technology offer some form of puppetry as part of the curriculum.

In 1996 the head of the Drama Department, Woutrine Theron, initiated Children's Theatre as a specialization subject and Bett Hoon-Pacey has been responsible for



the subject since then. The students are familiarized with aspects of puppet theatre, focusing on children between the ages of 4 and 13.

The Department of Entertainment Technology offers puppetry as part of the B.Tech degree in Performing Arts Technology. Students are taught the production of rod / hand puppets and marionettes as part of the syllabus for Properties I and II and for productions in conjunction with the Drama Department. Students may also specialize in puppetry for the B.Tech degree in Properties IV.

Pieter Bezuidenhout and Hardus Koekemoer, under the head of department, Zuanda Badenhorst, have made puppets and produced puppetry shows since 1985.

In 1997 Sanlam sent out a circular to tertiary institutions encouraging them to send in proposals for sponsorship regarding upliftment programmes. The departments of Drama and Entertainment Technology's proposal, Ke bohlokwa (I'm Special), was selected from twenty-one entries and awarded a sponsorship of R105000,00.

With a programme of shows during 1998 and 1999 the message of Child Abuse Awareness was conveyed to between 50,000- 60,000 pupils in the greater Pretoria metropolitan area as well as surrounding areas. The project became part of a bigger multi-disciplinary project for primary schools in district N3, Gauteng. The following departments, NGO's and CBO's (community based organizations) were involved:

UNISA Criminology Department, Pretoria Child and Family Care, Child Protection Unit: SAPD, South African Narcotics Bureau, The Department of Education: Auxiliary Services, and the Traffic Department – Pretoria Municipality (Van Dyk, 1998:1).

Badenhorst, Theron and Stephen van Dyk were awarded Laurel Awards for this Community Service Project on Child Abuse Awareness at Technikon Pretoria in 2000.

### **2.72.2 Productions and performances**

1994

Pippin - Bezuidenhout and students of the Department of Entertainment Technology made rod puppets (human figures and sheep) from polystyrene, wood and textiles. The musical was performed at the Breytenbach Theatre, under direction of Johan Swart from the Dance Department.

1996

Señor Onyon and a programme on Fruit and Vegetables - the foamrubber hand / rod puppets were made by students from the Department of Entertainment Technology under tuition of Bezuidenhout. The shows were performed at several pre-primary schools in Pretoria, by students from the Drama Department, directed by Hoon-Pacey.

Hoon-Pacey often makes use of puppets from her private collection for some of the shows for the Drama Department. These are augmented by puppets made by Drama students and the Department of Entertainment Technology where necessary.

1997

Farmyard Capers and Olifante - were based on traditional stories and were adapted by Hoon-Pacey. They were performed at several pre-primary schools in Pretoria. Hand puppets from Hoon-Pacey's own collection were used, as well as with flat puppets made by the Drama students.

Towerteater - consisted of the following four stories:

- Die Koning se fantastiese Dieretuin - the hand / rod puppets, from foam rubber, covered with stretch fabric, were made by Bezuidenhout and students from the Department of Entertainment Technology.
- Ingrid se Droom - included Black Theatre\* lighting techniques for the underwater scene. The hand / rod puppets, also made from foamrubber and painted with ultra-violet paint, were made by Bezuidenhout and students.
- Wilma Waatlemoen soek 'n Maat - the puppets made for Señor Onyon in 1996 were re-used for this story.
- Bietjie-Kier en die Man in die Karoo - was an adaptation of a story by Marietjie de Jongh. This was a shadow puppet theatre production. The shadow puppets were designed and made from cardboard by a fourth-year student in the Department of Entertainment Technology, Nadine Golding. Actors interacted with manipulators. Hoon-Pacey directed the show, with Drama students. It was performed from 4 – 8

March at the Breytenbach Theatre, Pretoria and at the Springs Civic Theatre on 22 March.



**Fig.2.95.** Puppets from *Ingrid se Droom*, 1997. Photo: Bett Hoon-Pacey.



**Fig.2.96.** Shadow puppets from *Bietjie- Kier en die Man in die Karoo*, 1997. Photo: Bett Hoon-Pacey.

1998

Sea and Beach / See en Strand - was a show in which muppet-type puppets from Hoon-Pacey's own collection and from Ingrid se Droom (1997) were used. Hoon-Pacey directed the production, which was presented at several pre-primary schools in Pretoria.

Ke bohlokwa (I'm Special) – the show about child abuse was launched at Motsweding Primary School in Atteridgeville, Pretoria on 24 April and went on to be performed at other schools in Atteridgeville and Laudium, Pretoria.

Four B Tech students were involved in this project, namely three Drama students and one Entertainment Technology student. Stephen van Dyk, a fourth year Drama student, did the research, wrote the script, directed, acted and manipulated the puppets under guidance and supervision of Woutrine Theron. The Entertainment Technology student, Mandy Binoir, designed and made the portable puppet theatre, the muppet-type puppets and the hand puppets under the guidance and supervision of Zuanda Badenhorst.

The puppets were made from foam covered in stretchable fabric and painted with textile paint. The characters included *Miss Thiba*, the teacher; *Thotloetso*, a girl; *Letlhoo*, the uncle; *Mutsi*, a friend (Van Dyk, 1998:25). The show was performed from 25 May to 5 June at 10 schools in the Bronkhorstspuit rural area.

1999

Ke bohlokwa (I'm Special) – the show was revived by the Drama department and visited Atteridgeville and Saulsville, Pretoria during the first term of the year. During June a follow-up was conducted at 10 schools in the Bronkhorstspuit area. The show was again performed at the Rustenburg Children's Festival from 14-18 September.

Untitled - for the Leonardo da Vinci day, organised to coincide with the International exhibition at the Pretoria Art Museum in Arcadia Park, a street theatre programme for children was compiled, adapted and written by Hoon-Pacey. Muppet-type puppets and glove puppets from her own collection were used.

Road Safety / Padveiligheid - a programme on road safety was performed at several pre-primary schools in Pretoria. Hand and muppet-type puppets as well as elementary marionettes from Hoon-Pacey's collection were used.

Third- and Fourth Year Examination Programme - several stories were performed with hand and muppet-type puppets from Hoon-Pacey's collection, as well as flat puppets and shadow puppets made by the Drama students. It was performed at the Moonbox Theatre, Pretoria. The examination programmes were open to the public.

2000

Third and Fourth-Year Examination Programme – was a production telling several stories, with hand and muppet-type puppets from Hoon-Pacey's collection. African

hand puppets and shadow puppets made by the Drama students were also used. The shows were performed at the Moonbox Theatre, Pretoria.

Ancient Stars - consisted of a trilogy of stories which would be performed over the following three years. The first part of this trilogy was called Ancient Stars. Various myths and legends around the African creation story were used as the theme. Included in the storyline was the use of light and fire (Koekemoer, 2004: 2).

Giant-sized puppets were used. The main character for the trilogy was *Ma Goddess*, that was a six-metre high puppet, controlled by three puppeteers. The puppeteers were dressed in similar costumes as the giant puppet, in order to appear as if each was part of the puppet. Giant-sized *Ancestor Spirits* and *Villagers* were some of the other characters in the story. *Ma Goddess* and other human figures were rod puppets made from bamboo, polystyrene, foam, wood, metal and various textiles by Bezuidenhout and students from the Department of Entertainment Technology.

The god *Mantis* was represented as half puppet / half-human. A rod puppet fitted over the top half of the actor's body. Most of *Mantis*'s costume was made from plant materials and plastic ribs cut from ABS sheet plastic. The see-through, skeletal image that was created ensured that under the correct lighting, the *Mantis* appeared to be floating on stage (Koekemoer, 2004:8).

Hardus Koekemoer, with co-director Audrey Mullin designed and performed Ancient Stars with students from the Drama department as actors and manipulators. The show was staged from 19 to 26 February at the Breytenbach Theatre, Pretoria.



**Fig.2.97.** Giant-size puppets from Ancient Stars, 2000. Photo: Pieter Bezuidenhout.

2001

War – was part two of the Ancient Stars trilogy. The story related the myths and legends on the origin of war between people, people and animals and among animal species on the African continent. The story began with the cruel Arab slave wars, the Zimbabwe and Mapungubwe city-states and their ruler kings that brought war to the people and ended with the Soweto uprising in 1976 (Koekemoer, 2004:2).

The giant rod puppets from Ancient Stars (2000) were used again, although the bamboo was replaced by wire to reduce the weight. New rod puppets of various



animal characters such as *Crocodile*, *Snake*, *Elephant*, *Giraffe*, *Rhinoceros*, and *Ostrich*, from wire, foam, ABS-plastic sheeting and textiles were made. For the big *Elephant*, a backpack structure was used to be worn by the actor / manipulator.

The show was performed at the Breytenbach Theatre, Pretoria, from 27 February to 17 March.



**Fig.2.98.** *Elephant* from War, 2001. Photo: Pieter Bezuidenhout.

A Sort of Macbeth – was adapted and directed by Hoon-Pacey with nine male Drama students. Head-and-torso hand / rod puppets, manipulated by actors, were used to augment the cast. Performances were staged at the Rostrum Theatre from 14 – 18 August (Hoon-Pacey, 2004:1).

Third- and Fourth Year Examination Programme – a programme telling several stories with the use of hand and muppet-type puppets from Hoon-Pacey's collection

as well as sock and flat puppets made by students of the Drama Department. The shows were performed at the Rehearsal Hall on the Arts Campus, Technikon Pretoria.

2002

Destiny – was part three of the Ancient Stars trilogy. It was:

“An accumulation of ancestor legends and religious references to great leaders in Africa. The majority of the stories is (sic) collected from various sources and combined some myths, legends and tribal history. This part of the trilogy started with the first great leader that crossed the Limpopo River with his tribe before 1100 and ended with the release of Nelson Mandela from Pollsmoor prison in 1992. These stories are not supposed to have an ending, each new storyteller uses what he can from the oral history, myths and legends, and adds the related parts into the existing story” (Koekemoer, 2004:3).

The puppets for Ancient Stars (2001) were re-used. The show was co-directed by Koekemoer and Mullin and performed at the Breytenbach Theatre from 6-16 March.

Stories with Puppets – hand, finger and muppet-type puppets from Hoon-Pacey’s collection were used. The show, that was directed by Hoon-Pacey, was performed during a Storytelling Festival in the Moonbox Theatre, Pretoria.

Alice in Wonderland - was performed with puppets made by students of the Department of Entertainment Technology under the guidance of Bezuidenhout. The puppets were muppet-type puppets made from foam rubber, covered with stretch fabric.

Alice in Wonderland was directed by Van Dyk and performed during the same Storytelling Festival in the Rostrum Theatre, Technikon Pretoria. The show was also performed in Pretoria at the *Nuwe Hoop Skool*, the *Trans-Oranje Skool* for disabled learners as well as for the Reach for a Dream Foundation. The production later toured the Gauteng area.

2003

Shaka – was the story of the African leader. The puppets were human characters made from ABS-plastic sheeting and made on a vacuum-forming moulding machine. These were light and ultra-violet puppets, which were manipulated under special lighting, specifically used for these types of puppets. The show toured the Gauteng area from 17 March.

Bush Stories / Bosstories – was a third and fourth-year examination programme where hand puppets, flat puppets and masks from Hoon-Pacey's collection were used. The show was performed in the Rostrum Theatre on 29 October (Hoon-Pacey, 2005:1).

2004

Sicilian Puppets – Annelie Du Toit, a student who studied a B.Tech: Performing Arts Technology degree did her research on Sicilian Puppetry. She gave a performance in the décor workshop of the Department of Entertainment Technology where she demonstrated this specific form of puppetry as taught by the *Antica copamnia opera dei pupi famiglia Puglisi* in Catania, where she was the first South African to study

and to learn the construction and manipulating techniques. The show portrayed a battle of knights of the *chanson de geste* with two Sicilian rod puppets in full armour.

Third- and Fourth-Year Examination Programme – was a production comprising well-known fairy tales. Some of the tales were performed by actors, other staged as puppet shows using hand puppets in a booth. These were The Three Little Pigs, Hansl and Gretl and Little Red Riding Hood. The programme was staged in the Rostrum Theatre on 30 October (Hoon-Pacey, 2005:1).

Untitled – two shows were performed at a UNIMA (Northern Gauteng) meeting on 1 November in the Moonbox Theatre, Pretoria:

First-year students from the Department of Entertainment Technology under tuition of Pieter Bezuidenhout, performed a show compiled of short stories based on Egyptian mythology. The puppets were rod puppets made from papier-mâché, wood, mallo-do, polystyrene and textiles.

The second show was presented by second-year students and compiled of short stories based on characters from the well-known Asterix comic strips. The marionettes were made from papier-mâché, wood, mallo-doh, polystyrene and textiles (Bezuidenhout, 2005).

## **2.73      TEKWENI PUPPETPLAYS (refer to TANCSIK, PAMELA)**

### **2.73.1      Background**

In 2000 Tancsik founded Tekweni Puppetplays ( incorporating Tancsik Productions, together with Adi Paxton (known as Cherryco the clown). Paxton combines clowning, magic and puppets. Tancsik and Paxton do not always work together, therefore Tancsik often has other partners performing for Tekweni Puppetplays.

### **2.73.2      Productions and performances**

2000

From June to December, three new puppet plays were developed and performed for Tekweni Puppetplays. Fifty performances of these educational plays were given in schools all over KwaZulu-Natal. Tancsik manipulated the hand puppets for the show.

Gobble – was one of the plays, that taught children sensible eating habits. A multi-coloured bird, *Gobble* the parrot, introduced the show, which included singing, acting and puppets. Paxton acted the role of the little girl who copied the bad habits of *Roly Poly*, a fastfood eating mouse whose stomach burst open after eating too much. Eventually the girl learnt healthy eating habits from *Spatcarella*, the healthy mouse. Tancsik manipulated these hand puppets for the show.

2001

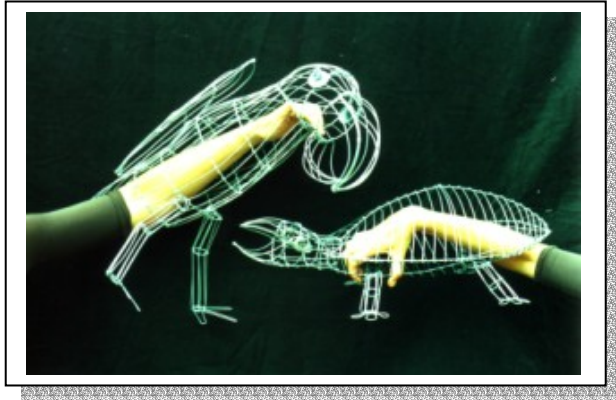
Lalela Kahle – was a cholera-awareness puppet play, commissioned by the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Health. The play educated children on the dangers of polluted water.

Tancsik performed this show in English, with a Zulu actress translating and singing songs in isiZulu. She manipulated the hand puppets behind the portable theatre while the Zulu actress sang songs in front of the theatre. Most of the children were frightened because they had never seen a puppet and sometimes they had to be reassured. According to Tancsik (2002c), some of them even ran away. Forty performances were given in rural areas of the KwaZulu-Natal province, during March.

African Fables – was a show containing three African stories, which were a combination of mime, puppetry, storytelling and magic, performed by Tancsik and Paxton. The puppets were unusual in that they were based on wire-sculptures such as those sold by the roadside in South Africa. Cephas Kachitigu made the puppets following the drawings and instructions from the puppeteers. The wire puppets were covered with fabric, which became see-through when a backlight was used. Rings attached to string moved mouths, legs, wings and beaks.

The three stories, The Tortoise and the Birds (Zulu), The Tortoise and the Dove (Swazi) and Fudwazana and Gongongo (Xhosa), all featured a tortoise. There was also a big rock that became a monster with a protruding tongue when turned around. The duration of the show is 50 minutes and was suitable for all ages.

The show was staged at the International Puppet Festival in Mistelbach, Austria as well as in Munich and Salzburg during October. Tancsik and Paxton also performed this show at the Botanical Gardens in Durban (Tancsik, 2002a: 2).



**Fig.2.99.** Uncovered *Parrot* and *Tortoise* from African Fables exhibited at ABSA, 2003. Photo :Pamela Tancsik.



**Fig.2.100.** *Tortoise* and *Parrot* from African Fables exhibited at ABSA, 2003. Photo :Pamela Tancsik.



**Fig.2.101.** Adi Paxton and Pamela Tancsik with puppets from African Fables. Photo: Pamela Tancsik (2003).

**2.74 TONY FLETCHER’S GLOVE PUPPET COMPANY (refer to FLETCHER, TONY and JILL)**

**2.75 TSHABALALA, NYANGA (also refer to FRIEDMAN, GARY)**

**2.75.1 Background**

Nyanga Tshabalala was born in Johannesburg on 6 January 1968. He matriculated at the Bona High School in Soweto, Gauteng in 1985. In 1986 Tshabalala studied music at the Federation Union of Black Arts (FUBA) in Johannesburg and obtained a Grade 5 certificate in Music Theory. Tshabalala joined AREPP (refer to **2.2. 2**) in September 1989 (Paton, 1992: 2), where he remained until 1993.

In 1994 and 1995 Tshabalala worked in New York at the Puppetry for Television Company (incorporating Sesame Street, with Childrens Television Workshop). He also worked and received training at Jim Henson Production in New York in aspects of puppet-making and costume design. During this time Tshabalala studied film at the New York film Academy for six months.

In 1996 Tshabalala developed Puppets in Prison with Gary Friedman (refer to **2.23.2**) with whom he worked at various stages through his career. Tshabalala represented South Africa on behalf of UNICEF when he attended an International Conference on Puppets for Development in Indonesia.



From 1997 until 2003, Tshabalala was mostly involved in puppetry for television. This included Kid Gloves for SABC 1, Pezoolies, for SABC School TV and, and Sesame Street for SABC 2 (Tshabalala, 2003: 2).

Tshabalala founded a non-governmental organization, SEPP (Sibahle Educational Puppetry Programme) in Johannesburg in 1998. SEPP has come up with a novel way of teaching school children about HIV/AIDS through stories told by a group of marionettes.

## **2.75.2 Productions and performances**

1989 -1993

Puppets against Aids – the show toured to a number of countries in Africa and Tshabalala assisted by Gary Friedman at AREPP as puppeteer (refer to 2.2.2:25-27). During this period, he participated in and performed at the ANC Aids Conference in Lusaka, Zambia in 1990 (Tshabalala, 2003:3).

In 1991 Tshabalala gave workshops to two groups from Mashonaland (Eastern Zimbabwe) and Bulawayo and performed Puppets against Aids at the 9<sup>th</sup> International Puppet Theatre Festival in Charleville-Mezières, France.

In 1992, AREPP toured Canada for three months with Puppets against Aids while in 1993 they performed at the International Aids Conference in Berlin, Germany.

Tshabalala also presented the show with the company in Botswana. He gave workshops where three local groups for Aids education were established.

1994 - 1995

Refer to background.

1996

Puppets in Prison - was performed and developed as a prison peer group youth programme, co-founded by Tshabalala and Gary Friedman (refer to **2.23:132**). The programme used puppetry in the rehabilitation, education and development of prisoners. The pilot programme was presented at the Diepkloof prison, Johannesburg, thereafter continuing at Ekuseni Youth Rehabilitation Centre in Natal until 1997 (Tshabalala, 2003: 2).

1997

Tshabalala was assistant director for the musical comedy with puppets, The Losh 'n Horror Show, produced by Gary Friedman, at the Agfa Theatre on the Square in Sandton, Johannesburg (refer to **2.23.2:133**).

1998

Kgodumodumo - was produced, directed and performed by Tshabalala. According to Tshabalala (2003), it was a South African folk story using puppets, music and dance. The researcher was unable to identify the venue and times of performances.

1999 - 2004

Tshabalala wrote and directed Abangani, an Aids-awareness puppet show for children, which was performed in the Gauteng area. Mogotsi (2004:1) said:

“Though a very difficult topic to tackle, the presentation ‘Abangani – Lean on Me’ had pupils at the Phatudi Primary School in Munsieville, roaring with laughter at the antics of the characters during a performance of the Sibahle Educational Puppetry Programme. SEPP, based in Johannesburg, tours primary schools in Gauteng informing children about their rights and teaching valuable life skills.

The aim of the educational programme is to prepare children to deal with high-pressure situations and help them to make smart, and safe, decisions – in this case about sex. Co-ordinator of the Sibahle Educational Puppetry Programme, Khaya Zondi, said the education campaign was a stepping stone to teach children responsibility.

Other schools visited by the Sibahle Educational Puppetry Programme, which is working in conjunction with the Mogale City Central Clinic, during a week-long campaign included Yusuf Dadoo Primary School in Azaadville, Lesego Primary School in Muldersdrift, and John Martin Roman School in Kagiso”.

Apart from the abovementioned educational programme, Tshabalala was mostly involved in puppetry for television.

## **2.76 UNIVERSITY OF THE ORANGE FREE STATE**

### **2.76.1 Background**

The department of Drama and Theatre Arts was founded in 1972. The University offers puppetry as part of two modules: Fantasy and Children’s Theatre (Theory and

Design) and Fantasy and Children's Theatre (Production and Performance), which forms part of the B A Drama and Theatre Arts degree (Luwes, 2005:1). Puppets have in the recent years only been used occasionally as part of children's theatre productions.

Elza Krantz started teaching puppetry in 1973 and according to her (2005), the puppet theatre productions during the 70's and 80's were mostly of a touring kind. The shows were staged in Kimberley, Kuruman, Vryburg, Lady Brand and Botshabelo. No records were kept of the puppet theatre productions, but she could recall the following productions: Dirkie Donkie en die Draak, Bienkie Muis, Janneman en die Heks.

Krantz made all the hand puppets used in these productions herself. The puppets were made from polystyrene balls of about 15 centimetres in diameter and covered with mallo-doh, which was also used for the hands. In addition, she used foam rubber and executed the clothes in fine detail. Rods were attached to manipulate the legs in the case of animal characters. A foldable puppet booth, bigger than the traditional puppet booth, was made of a hinged frame with curtains covering it (Krantz, 2005).

## **2.76.2 Productions and performances**

No records of the puppet theatre productions were kept in the archives of the department of Drama and Theatre Arts and only productions and performances during the following four years could be ascertained:

1979

Bienkie Muis – the text for the show was written by Annelise van der Ryst and presented in Vryburg (Krantz, 2005).

1988

Untitled - a touring puppet show entertained children from the Indian community, Vryburg in the Free State (“Haai Oe’s!” vir..., 1988:n.p.)

1996

Abdoltjie – was a compilation of four stories by Alba Bouwer. It was adapted by Chris Fourie, who wrote the text and directed this children’s theatre show. One of the stories told of *Abdoltjie*, a Cape Malay boy’s encounter with the *Suidoostewind* who helped him to find *Bella-bok* who became his companion in all his adventures. It also included the *Wolke-Doekoen* who lost his cape after boasting to the *See-Oupa* and his meeting with the *Prentjiesoldaat* and the *Grote Sjah* (Swart, 1996: n.p.).

A few hand puppets were used for some of the characters. Students from the department made and manipulated the puppets. The show was presented from 16 – 23 August at the Scaena theatre of the University in Bloemfontein (Department Drama and..., 1996:1 – 3).

2001

Tambotie – was a children’s theatre show where the story and adventures of various wooden dolls under the control of a Circus Master, *Grootkop*, were told. Only one marionette character, *Tambotie*, formed part of the show. Pieter Scholtz wrote the

text for the production directed by Gerben Kamper. The marionette was from the collection of Atie Kamper (Botha, 2005).

## **2.77 UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA**

### **2.77.1 Background**

According to Trichardt (2005), puppetry never formed a part of the formal curriculum of the BA Drama degree. Puppetry was however, sometimes used in productions and sometimes students used it as part of the Honours degree. Hansie Visagie taught puppetry as a module on a part-time basis between 1997 and 2002 (refer to Visagie, Hansie).

### **2.77.2 Productions and performances**

1997

A programme of three 30-minute shows were held from 19 July until December in *Die Bok Theatre* at the University on Saturdays:

Marafka – was a traditional Bulgarian fairy tale about a cricket who only wanted to make music and not collect food for the winter like all other insects do.

A Circus – was a fun filled puppet circus where children were entertained by an *Elephant, a Clown, Penguins and Mice*.

Liewe Heksie en die Sonneblom - was a marionette performance and some of the characters, which were seen with *Liewe Heksie* were *Blommie Kabouter, Koning*

*Rosekrans* and other inhabitants of *Blommeland*. The puppets came from the collection donated by Hansie Visagie, to the UP Cultural Bureau (Poppeteater vir die..., 1997:3). The production, puppets, sets and props were designed and constructed in the workshop of The Little Marionette Company assisted by students of the Drama department.

No other records of performances for puppet theatre could be found in the archives of the Drama department.

## **2.78 UNIVERSITY OF STELLENBOSCH (refer to KRUGER, M)**

### **2.78.1 Background**

Students in their second and third years can select puppetry as part of Theatre Arts. The students are taught the basic puppet theatre of hand puppets in a puppet booth but sometimes small rod puppets might be added. Students who use their own text choices are taught how to adapt existing texts for puppet theatre. Marie Kruger encourages students to use puppets not only for children's theatre, but also for adult theatre.

Kruger makes use of all types of materials, but the students are introduced to papier-mâché shaped over a balloon base or plastecine for hand puppets. Very intricate or highly technical methods are not used, because of the expense, which students

cannot usually afford. Polystyrene material is another material used quite often for very small to large rod puppets (Kruger, 2003a).

## **2.78.2 Productions and performances**

1983

Productions done for the training of students under the guidance of Kruger were Die Dapper Kabouters and Slim vang sy Baas (both her own texts) - Kruger directed and gave guidance on the constructions of puppets, as well as the technical care. Under the auspices of *Matie Poppekas*, these productions were not only performed at the H B Thom Theatre, Stellenbosch, but also at various venues such as primary schools in and around Stellenbosch.

1984

Loekie - by M I Murray was done for *Matie Poppekas*, as well as Die Verdwaalde Katjie (translated from Flemish). Kruger directed and gave guidance on the construction of the puppets.

1985

Groenteprotas - was a social-political satire performed by students for adult puppet theatre. Kruger was the director who translated and adapted the text from the Flemish *Groentecontestasie* by Rambouts. It was performed in the H B Thom Theatre, Stellenbosch (Kruger, 2005:1).



Hansie en die Lewenswater (translated from Flemish) and Die Towerlelies - written by Kruger, were student productions for *Matie Poppekas*.

1986

Jakkals Hou Sy Lyf Dokter –was a student production, which Kruger adapted from *Jakkalsdraf en Wolwedans* by Pieter W Grobbelaar and directed.

Donsie en Slonsie – was written by Elna Agenbach. Both the above-mentioned two productions were performed at the H B Thom Theatre.

1987

Donsie, Slonsie en die Donkie –written by Elna Agenbach and Wolf en Jakkals ontmoet Mens – this was a student production of which Kruger adapted the latter from *Jakkalsdraf en Wolwedans* by Pieter W Grobbelaar. She also directed the shows. Both these productions were performed for *Matie Poppekas* at the H B Thom Theatre.

1988

Manie Muis se groot Avontuur – was written by Kruger, while Dierekaskenades was adapted by Kruger from *Doer en Dierland* by Pieter W Grobbelaar. The tales presented in Dierekaskenades were *Bobbejaan en die Eina-pere*, *Die Geveinste* and *Die gevlerkte Muis*. The show was staged for *Matie Poppekas*. Kruger directed the production and guided students on the construction of the puppets and the technical care of the production.

1989

Paleissoles, die gesteelde Kroon and Die Dapper Muis – both written and directed by Kruger, were performed as student productions for *Matie Poppekas* at the H B Thom Theatre.

1990

Operasie super Skillie – was written by Kruger. She also directed the student production for *Matie Poppekas* (Kruger, 2003a).

Die Slinkse Kat – was an adaptation of the fable by Kruger. She also directed the student production for *Matie Poppekas* (Kruger, 2003a).

1991

Jakkals hou sy Lyf Dokter and Koning Leeu se Wens (an adaptation of Jungle Silver by H Todd) - were performed by students at the H B Thom Theatre, Stellenbosch, under direction of Kruger during August.

Van Hanse en Van Worsse written by Kruger, Die drie Wense and Die Musikante van Bremen – the latter two both adapted by Kruger - were other productions done for *Matie Poppekas* (Kruger, 2003a).

Die Musikante Van Bremen – was adapted from the folk tale by Margit Meyer-Rodenbeck with extra characters added. Of these, two men were big rod puppets,

which were manipulated in front of the puppet booth. Eugenie Grobler composed the songs for the production (Kruger, 2005:1).

1992

Wat die Mond van vol is, loop die Hart van oor - was a student production for adults, directed by Kruger and performed at The Keller Theatre, H B Thom Theatre Complex, Stellenbosch. It was performed as part of *Kampustoneel* in Pretoria, as well as at the Standard Bank National Arts Festival, Grahamstown.

Waar is al die Blomme heen? – was written by Erik de Waal and Die Wêreld van die Woempe adapted by Kruger, were performed as student productions for *Matie Poppekas* at the H B Thom Theatre, Stellenbosch.

1993

Rapsodie and Die Skone Slaapster – both adapted by Kruger, from the well-known fairytales Rapunzel and Sleeping Beauty, were two student productions for *Matie Poppekas* performed at the H B Thom Theatre, Stellenbosch.

Dinge in Diereland - was performed with professional actors and puppets made by students. Kruger compiled the text and directed the show as well as advising the students on the construction of the puppets and masks. It was performed at primary schools and libraries in the Western and Eastern Cape during 1993 and 1994 (Kruger, 2003a).

1994

Liewe Heksie en die Gifappels written by Verna Vels, as well as Skoonlief en die Ondier translated from the fairytale, Beauty and the Beast, were adapted by Kruger for student performance at the H B Thom Theatre, Stellenbosch for *Matie Poppekas*.

1995

Lekker is net 'n Vinger lank - was a contemporary interpretation of the Orpheus myth. It was a workshop production for adults, performed at the Keller Theatre, Stellenbosch in 1995 and 1996. Kruger directed the production, while Doeks van Niekerk and the student cast constructed the puppets.

Jakkals en Wolf - with the text adapted by Kruger; Die Eenhoring, written by Kruger; Kaptein Klamhout, adapted by Kruger; and Deur die Land opsoek na Pon, – adapted by Kruger were all student productions for children's theatre staged during this year.

1996

Lekker is net 'n Vinger lank - was again performed at the Keller Theatre, Stellenbosch from 21 – 23 February (*Lekker net 'n...*, 1996).

The Three Billy Goats Gruff and Jakkals Flous vir Wolf - were adapted and directed by Kruger for *Matie Poppekas*.

The Shocky Horror Puppet Show - was a workshop production by students, for adults and directed by Kruger. This was a satirical adaptation of *The Rocky Horror Picture*

*Show*. It was performed at the Keller Theatre, Stellenbosch (The Shocky Horror..., 1996)

1997

No productions during this year could be found.

1998

*Wolf en Hangkrans* and *Die Drie Ramme Rof* – both adapted by Kruger, were puppet theatre productions for children, produced and directed by Kruger for the *Matie Poppekas*.

*Murder They Wrote* - was a workshop student production aimed at adults performed at the H B Thom Theatre.

1999

*Tereus, Procne and Philomela* - was a shadow puppet play about love and revenge adapted from the classic myth Metamorphosis by Ovid. The workshop production was performed by students at the VIP Lounge of the H B Thom Theatre, Stellenbosch from 13 to 15 October (Tereus, Procne &..., 1999).

*Wie is in Konyn se Huis?* and *Drie Muisies leer 'n Les* - was adapted and directed by Kruger for *Matie Poppekas* at the H B Thom Theatre.

2000

The Goblins Plot to Murder God - was an adaptation by Kruger of the text by Mark O'Donnell. This was a workshop production by students for adult puppet theatregoers performed at the Keller Theatre, Stellenbosch.

Peter Pan - was produced as a children's puppet theatre production. It was adapted by Kruger for *Matie Poppekas*.

2001

Jan en die Boontjierank - was a student production done for Matie Poppekas and adapted for puppet theatre by Kruger.

The Oedipus Jack Rhapsody – was a puppet show for adults, directed by Kruger.

“The story of Oedipus is among the best known classical legends, largely because of the use made of it by psychologists ever since Sigmund Freud's identification of the Oedipus Complex in 1910.

This brings us to the phallic stage of psychosexual development: children develop incestuous wishes for the parent of the opposite gender and begin to view the parent of the same sex as a rival. The Oedipal complex is also reflected in the tale of Jack and the Beanstalk where Jack kills the giant, representing his father (in order) to come to terms with his feelings of anger toward the father for his sexual relationship with the mother.

The strength and perseverance to face the past and present, to learn the truth about oneself, to recognize honestly one's real identity and face it – these are the cornerstones for healing in psychoanalysis. Oedipus then is a paradigm for everyone in his struggle and his victory...and fairytales expressions of shared unconscious feelings” (The Oedipus Jack..., 2001:2).

The story began in a land far away where a boy named *Jack* and his mother *Merope* lived. The cruel reality that kept them in dire straits forced Jack to take the family *cow* into town and sell it for as much as he could. The characters were: *Sigmund Sneud*, *Jack*, *Merope*, *Terisias*, *Cow*, *Jocasta* and *Lauis*.

The puppets were constructed from wirework, covered with a sheer fabric and masks added for the faces. It was performed on the top and the lower floors in the foyer. Kruger directed the production, which was performed in the Foyer of the H B Thom Theatre on 31 October and 1 November.

*Hasie Kalbassie* and *Zomo, die Konyn* – were both texts adapted by Kruger and produced for Matie Poppekas. Both student productions for children's puppet theatre were performed at the H B Thom Theatre, Stellenbosch.

## **2.79      VAN DEVENTER, ALIDA (refer to VON MALTITZ, ALIDA)**

## **2.80      VAN ECK, TOBY**

### **2.80.1    Background**

Toby van Eck was born on 10 July 1942. He grew up Wolseley in the Cape Province (currently Western Cape Province). When Van Eck, at 10 years old, saw his first puppet show, he knew what he wanted to do for the rest of his life:

“I saved every penny I had but when I wanted to pay for my ticket at the box office, I didn’t have enough and I was turned away. I sat down on the pavement and cried my heart out. A kind man saw me and gave me a complimentary ticket. The man was John Wright, a famous South African puppeteer who later moved to London and opened the Little Angel Marionette Theatre” (Van Eck, 2002).

After matriculating, he worked as a waiter on the South African Railways for a year and for the following fourteen years, he worked in the printing industry in Cape Town. In the boarding house where he stayed, an art student had to build puppets and through this association, Van Eck became more involved in puppetry, as well as a member of UNIMA.

In 1968 Van Eck designed and painted the décor and was also one of 7 manipulators for Aladdin en sy Towerlamp designed by Dan Kirchner. He also manipulated puppets for Die Sirkus and Die Paddaprins (Van Eck, 2002). The Tygerberg Marionette Theatre produced a programme in Afrikaans, Cinderella and Danse Pizzicato, with Ella Lotter, Kirchner and Leonard Lotter. Van Eck designed and painted the décor, while Kirchner wrote the text and directed the production. Van Eck also did charity puppet shows for various clubs, associations, hospitals and congregations between 1970 – 1972.

Van Eck won a bursary to study puppetry in Germany from mid-1972 to mid-1973. He studied puppetry in Bochum, Germany and was largely influenced by the German rod puppeteer, Hans Jurgen Fettig, with whom he worked for 5 months in Stuttgart.



He learnt the formal disciplines involved in puppet making, using traditional materials like papier-mâché, as well as the more modern skill of polystyrene sculpting.

During this study period, Van Eck met Lilly Herzberg at a UNIMA festival in France. On his return to South Africa in 1973, he approached her for work at the Space Theatre, Cape Town.

In June 1973, Van Eck joined the Puppet Space at the Space Theatre as puppeteer. He remained with the company until September 1975, when he was appointed as puppet master of *Die Nasionale Poppeteater van Suid-Afrika / The South African Puppet Company*, under the direction of film maker Ashley Lazarus. The company existed until February 1976 (refer to **2.1.1**).

In June 1973, Puppet Space presented Hansel and Gretel, directed by Lily Herzberg with puppets being manipulated by several puppeteers including van Eck. Van Eck made all the rod and glove puppets, using the old method of modelled clay, covered with papier-mâché. In 1975 Van Eck participated in a puppet show The Birth of an Ostrich, with light and shadow puppets at Puppet Space as well as The Lonely Giant, (refer to PUPPET SPACE).

Van Eck became involved in television work when he was commissioned to build a *Bun* for an advertisement for Bull Brand Sausages, in 1975. The bun had to eat a sausage and then burp. Later in 1975, he had to build 65 puppets for the first puppet

opera on television - Hansie en Grietjie produced by Danie Odendaal (De Bruyn, 1978:2).

In 1976 Van Eck got married, but his wife died a year later. Van Eck was appointed as property maker at CAPAB, Cape Town in 1980 and in 1981 became property maker at the State Theatre, Pretoria. He worked at the State Theatre for four years. During this period he worked with Dawn Leggat and Alida von Maltitz, making puppets and properties for Die Bybelverhaal directed by Louise Smit for television.

Van Eck participated in a UNIMA exhibition at Rand Afrikaans University Johannesburg. *Rose*, the glamorous nightclub singer was mentioned in the Rosebank Gazette 1 June 1983 by Lesley Delatola, as well as in *Suid Afrikaanse Oorsig* 1 Julie 1983 (Van Eck, 2002).

In October 1984, Van Eck started working for Sun International performing his own puppet cabaret shows. During that year he visited the puppeteer Jim Gamble in California, United States of America, where he was introduced to the type of cabaret puppets that he still uses, as well as to Gamble's control for short string marionettes. He also met famous American puppeteers such as Jim Henson and Frank Oz of Muppet fame (Van Eck, 2004:1). In 1985 Michael Lovegrove asked him to perform his puppet cabaret as part of a speciality act of Hot Property at the Wild Coast Sun.

In 1986, after he had made a six-metre high gorilla for Sun City, Sun International commissioned Van Eck to start a property department for Sun City. As his career was

progressing in the properties department, so was his lifetime hobby of puppetry. All his spare time was devoted to making and manipulating puppets.

Van Eck left Sun International in this year for a 7 month sabbatical during which he worked on the ship Eugenia Costa as puppeteer with his Cabaret Puppets. Over a period of five years and fourteen extravaganza shows, Van Eck was responsible for most properties used in the extravaganza shows. The properties department at Sun International was closed down at the end of 1990, so in 1991 he once again joined a cruise ship and even performed at the North Pole.

In 1990 Van Eck launched his freelance career as a puppet maker, puppeteer, property maker and sculptor. The one-man business, operated from home, became known as Toby's Puppet and Prop Shop. His portfolio includes giant-size Springbok heads used by the Springbok rugby team; bright pink ostrich costumes and clown masks used by circuses and the centrepieces for the Miss World pageant at Sun City.

In 1995 Van Eck built the original puppets for School Television for SABC and he also created polystyrene statues and figurines for the display market (Van Eck, 2004:2).

During 2003 Van Eck and a partner, Thys Stander, produced three life-sized Boabab trees, four Buffalos, sixty elephant tusks and a cat species of 2½-metres high for an

exhibition stand at the South African Tourism Board's Indaba in Durban for the North West Government. The stand was awarded seven gold medals.

Van Eck says:

“Besides making a puppet and learning how to make it walk, you must learn how to put your soul into the puppet. Everybody has a gift. I love puppets and I think communicating with and through puppets is my gift. I like to entertain people with puppets. I like to make people laugh” (Van Eck, 2002).

During 2004 Van Eck was invited to visit the puppeteer Fred Cowan in the United States where he performed and gave talks on puppetry in South Africa.

Van Eck has taught puppetry on an ad hoc basis at Technikon Pretoria (currently the Tshwane University of Technology) since 1985 and as recently as 2003.



**Fig. 2.102.** Toby van Eck with a group of puppets from his collection. Photo:Toby van Eck (2005).

## 2.80.2 Productions and performances

1975

The Birth of an Ostrich - Van Eck manipulated this puppet show with light and shadow puppets at Puppet Space (refer to PUPPET SPACE).

The Lonely Giant - was based on a story by Violet Philpot with the actor Bill Curry as the *Giant*. Glove puppets made and manipulated by Van Eck were used in this production, performed at Puppet Space (refer to PUPPET SPACE).

The Little Mermaid and Circus Adventure – were based on Hans Christian Andersen's tales and created by Ashley Lazarus and Keith Anderson of *Die Nasionale Poppeteater van Suid Afrika* / The South African Puppet Company. Various shows were performed in Cape Town, Port Elizabeth and at the Guild Theatre in East London. Van Eck made some new marionettes and worked as a manipulator.

1976

Untitled - Van Eck did a free puppet show to raise funds at a fête at St John's Hostel, Cape Town.

1977

Cabaret Marionettes - Van Eck performed this show and lectured at the National Marionette workshop held at the Civic Theatre, Johannesburg during August.



**Fig.2.103.** Van Eck with the *Belly Dancer* and *Clown* from the Cabaret Marionettes. Photo: Van Eck (2003).

1978

Cabaret marionettes - In a UNIMA, Cape Town, Newsletter (1978:1) it was stated that “Van Eck put up a delightful show for members” He manipulated his cabaret puppets on short strings to music.

1979-1980

No record of productions and performances could be found.

1981

Toby's Festival Puppets - Toby van Eck and his festival puppets performed a music variety show as part of the Republic Festival at PACT, Pretoria. *Petronella van Oudtshoorn*, an ostrich, was one of the characters (Schwenke, 1984:36).

Toby's Festival Puppets - was presented as a musical variety show with marionettes, as well as rod-and-glove puppets. The puppets performed 11 items, which included: Let me entertain you, Hair-hair, Interlude, Sad to be green, Belly Dancer, Die dapper Muis, Petronella van Oudtshoorn, Can you do the Can-can?, Midnight Serenade, The Amphi and Bean Chorus and I Did it My Way. The show was performed for CAPAB lunchtime music concert as part of the Republic Festival at the Nico Malan Theatre, Cape Town from 5 – 7 May.

1982

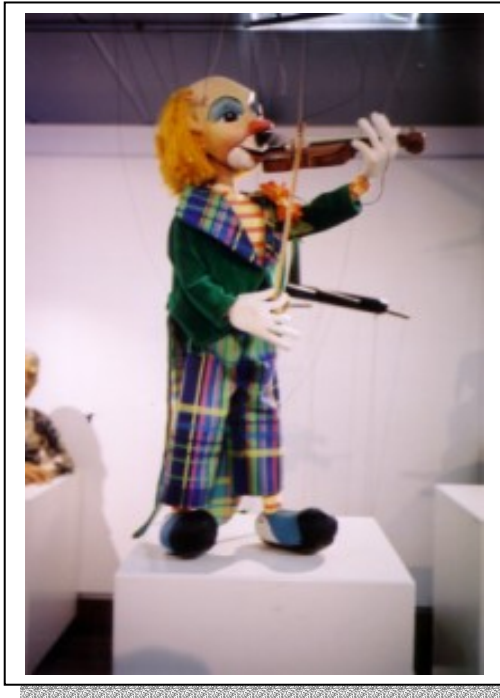
No productions and performances were recorded during this year.

1983

Toby's Puppets: a musical cabaret - consisted of scenes with various marionettes and hand puppets presented in front of a booth puppet theatre. Five kinds of puppets were used in the show, namely glove puppets, rod puppets, shadow puppets, string puppets and a combination of rod-and-glove puppets (Hitge, 1982 n.p.).

Characters presented were *Fatima* the belly dancer, *Bone-apart*, the skeleton, *Petrushka*, an ostrich, *Rose*, the nightclub singer and the *Rio Carnival Belle*, a

Copacabana dancer. The show was performed as part of the Potpourri Festival at the State Theatre Arena, on 13 and 16 July.



**Fig.2.104.** *Violin Player* as exhibited at ABSA in 2003. Photo: Van Eck (2003).



**Fig 2.105.** Van Eck and *the Violin Player*. Photo: Van Eck (2003).

1984

Van Eck visited the puppeteer Jim Gamble in California, United States of America

(Van Eck, 2004:1)

1985

Toby's Cabaret Puppets - Van Eck performed the speciality act as part of The Hot Property Show at the Wild Coast Sun Theatre for adults. These dancing marionettes were called *Cabaret* puppets because they performed to recorded background music (Puppets are the..., 1985:5). The puppet characters were *Charlie*, the clown, *Fatima*,



the belly dancer, *Rasta Bird*, and two *Drunk Ducks* who laughed and kicked their legs. Van Eck also performed another cabaret show for children twice a day.

Cabaret Puppets - On Saturday 13 July, Van Eck performed with his cabaret puppets after a variety show at Ramsgate Mall, Ramsgate, Natal.

1989

The Rain Queen and the Boabab Tree - Van Eck made puppets for the production, which was staged under the auspices of CAPAB (refer to **2.1.2** and **2.7.2**).

1990

Bravo - was an extravaganza directed and choreographed by Carlo Spetro. The Latin Finale contained an ultra-violet puppet sequence by Van Eck.

“One of the characters was a green frog that sang ‘It ain’t easy being green’... Toby proudly goes over to a sussed looking frog and proudly says “I suppose this one is the closest I have come to Kermit” (Christie, 1990:12).

Van Eck worked on board a Cruise Liner for seven months. He entertained the audiences with four puppet productions – all one-man shows. According to Van Eck (2004), ± 15, 000 people saw his shows.

1991

Van Eck repaired old puppets while making new ones for the CAPAB productions of Sleeping Beauty and The Little Mermaid (refer to **2.1.2:18** and **2.7.2:68**).

1992

Nomhle & Ngcuka - Van Eck made the puppets for the show presented by CAPAB.  
(refer to **2.1.2:18** and **2.7.2:69**).

Toby's Cabaret Puppets - Van Eck performed with his cabaret puppets for six weeks as part of Champagne on Ice at the Wild Coast Sun.

1993-1994

Refer to background.

1995

Van Eck started making puppets for corporate functions. These were usually carved from polystyrene and covered in mallo-doh papier-mâché.

Toby's Cabaret Puppets - Van Eck performed at the Civic Theatre, Johannesburg as part of the International Puppet Theatre Festival from 18 to 25 September, co-ordinated by Gary Friedman.

1996-1997

No record of productions and performances could be found.

1998

Strings and Things - this production included a variety of Van Eck's cabaret puppets with hand, shadow and rod puppets as well as marionettes. It was performed at the Kaleidoscope Festival for children in Rustenburg from August 25 to 29. He again performed his cabaret show at *DieTeaterhuisie* in Pretoria from 15 to 19 September to celebrate his 45<sup>th</sup> year in the marionette industry.

Extravaganza - Van Eck made a big *praying mantis* that was designed by the Handspring Puppet Company for an extravaganza at Sun City. Eight actors manipulated the puppet.

1999

Little Shop of Horrors - The show was presented at the Civic Theatre, Johannesburg. Van Eck made all four versions of the 'man-eating plant' *Audrey*. The puppets included the very small plant in a pot, a medium plant and the giant puppet plant. He had to use the original designs. The puppets were made from aluminium, which formed the frame that was covered with sponge material. The actors manipulated the puppets.

The show was presented at the Civic Theatre, Johannesburg.

2000 – 2002

Toby's Cabaret Puppets - Van Eck presented his cabaret puppets for the Johannesburg Puppet Company at RAU, Johannesburg in 2000.

Cabaret Marionettes - was performed by van Eck with his troop of cabaret marionettes as part of a variety programme staged from 2 December to 22 December 2000 at the Maltitz Marionette Theatre (Von Maltitz, 2001).

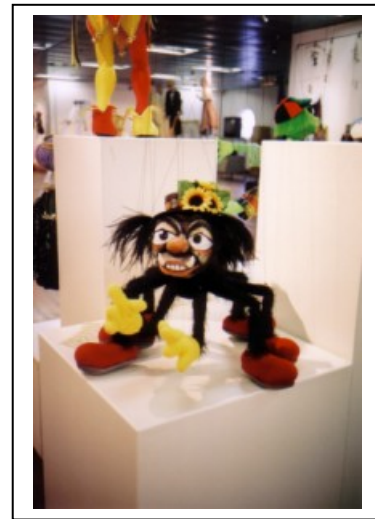
He also made more than 200 puppets for other puppeteers and people interested in this form of entertainment. These included puppets for Nyanga Tshabalala's Aids programme.



**Fig.2.106.** The *Court Jester* as exhibited at ABSA in 2003. Photo: Van Eck (2003).



**Fig.2.107.** The *Frog on Roller Skates* as exhibited at ABSA in 2003. Photo: Van Eck (2003).



**Fig.2.108.** The *Spider* as exhibited at ABSA in 2003. Photo: Van Eck (2003).

2003

Toby's Cabaret Puppets - was performed at the opening ceremony of the National Puppet Exhibition at ABSA Towers, Johannesburg on 7 October. Van Eck also took part in the National Puppet Exhibition from 7 to 29 October at ABSA Towers, Johannesburg.

2004

During this year, Van Eck made 35 puppets for the Child Protection Unit of the South African Police Services, as well as 65 for the South African Library Services.

A Slice of Africa in Strings - was performed with three marionettes. The characters were *Nelson Mandela*, *Miriam Makeba* and a *Zulu Dancer*. The show was performed in the United States, while Van Eck was on a visit to the puppeteer Fred Cowan (Van Eck, 2004: 3).

## **2.81 VAN NIEUWKERK, MACHTELD**

### **2.81.1 Background**

Machteld van Nieuwkerk was born in The Netherlands in 1953 and immigrated to South Africa after having completed her schooling in The Netherlands. She comes from a family of creative people - her mother was an artist and her father an accomplished storyteller. It was in this stimulating environment that her love for puppetry was born. From the age of six she started making puppets and performing stories. In South Africa she became a nursery school teacher. Here her puppets were of great assistance to her. A Punch and Judy show she saw in the 1980s helped her decide to become a full-time puppeteer and in 1990 she contacted an agent who booked her for her first show.

Her first shows were done only with hand puppets, all made by her. After she had attended a workshop presented by Alida von Maltitz, where she was taught how to make and manipulate marionettes, she also included marionettes on short strings in her shows (Van Nieuwkerk, 2002).

Van Nieuwkerk uses any story she feels will work for puppet theatre and she creates all her own scripts and designs. She usually makes most of her puppets and marionettes, but sometimes she uses marionettes made by other artists. The puppets are carved from polystyrene and scrimmed with paper. To soften the glued paper marks, she covers the heads in maize meal and glue, but sometimes she uses papier-mâché (mallo-do). She experimented with fibreglass matting and cold glue, but found that this was not strong enough. Her glove puppet heads are a bit bigger than the usual tennis ball size ( $\pm 25\text{-cm}$ ) because she works with large groups of children. Van Nieuwkerk uses her own voice with recorded music for the shows and according to Van Eck (2002) she has a “robust performance style”.

Van Nieuwkerk, who travels to schools and birthday parties with her collapsible theatre, performs on her own. She usually performs in and around Soweto, Johannesburg and Pretoria. According to Van Nieuwkerk (2002), her dream is to have a new set for every show, but because it is not a practical proposition for one person, it stays a dream.

To expand her knowledge of this art form, Van Nieuwkerk has attended numerous courses and workshops on puppetry presented by local and international puppeteers

and she travels frequently to Europe and America. While working at the State Theatre with The Little Marionette Company on their marionette productions, she travelled to Denmark with the company in 1999.

As a variation, she began doing tabletop puppet theatre shows in 2000 with short string marionettes. She has found however, that the equipment took too long to unpack, put up and strike, therefore she does not often use this form.

In 1996 Van Nieuwkerk saw a paper theatre\* show for the first time while attending the International Puppet Festival in Budapest. She was instantly intrigued and so went to Preetz in Germany to attend the International Paper Theatre Festival. In 2000 she was invited to perform at the *Papierentheater-treffen* in Preetz, Germany and in September 2002 she returned to perform again. She loves this medium but it has its limits as only a small audience can watch a show (Van Nieuwkerk, 2002).

According to Van Nieuwkerk (2002) her performances at schools differs a bit from birthday party performances.

“At birthday parties things usually happen a bit faster and one has to be on ones toes to handle the energetic children to keep things from becoming disruptive. Subtle shows do not often work and hand puppets which tend to be lively and busy work well compared to marionettes that work better with the more classic tales and music” (Van Nieuwkerk, 2002).

Van Nieuwkerk has undertaken various special projects for NGOs (non-governmental organizations), for example the Mentally Handicapped at the Sunshine Centre in

Lenasia and eyecare for the company TIBA. Since 2002, Van Nieuwkerk has also worked on different television productions.

### **2.81.2 Productions and performances**

1990

The Three Bears - was Van Nieuwkerk's first glove puppet show based on the classic fairy tale.

Cinderella – was the next story she developed and adapted for puppet theatre from the classic fairy tale. The puppets were made from papier-mâché.

1991-1997

Van Nieuwkerk performed at schools and at birthday parties in the Gauteng area.

The puppeteer did not keep records of specific productions and performances (Van Nieuwkerk, 2002).

1998 – 1999

From 1998 to 1999 Van Nieuwkerk worked for the Little Marionette Company as manipulator (refer to The LITTLE MARIONETTE COMPANY).



2000

How the Zebra got its Stripes - Karel Britz did the artwork for this paper theatre performance. Van Nieuwkerk performed this show at the *Papieren-theater-treffen* in Preetz.

2001

Tales of Zululand – the paper theatre show began with a boy *Jo-Jo* who lived in a squatter camp. To develop this show Van Nieuwkerk started off with the story or draft, made the drawings, wrote the script and afterwards Jan Engelen assisted her in the direction. She had to develop the sound track in German because she felt that her German might not be good enough for her usual spontaneous way of telling a story. Van Nieuwkerk performed the show at the *Papieren-theater-treffen* in September in Preetz, Germany.

Van Nieuwkerk performed at schools and at birthday parties in the Gauteng area. The puppeteer did not keep records of specific productions and performances (Van Nieuwkerk, 2002).

2002 - 2003

The Bewitched Tree – was an African story, which was performed with hand puppets. This show Van Nieuwkerk performed at schools and birthday parties from December 2002 to the end of 2003.

2004

Although various attempts were made to acquire information regarding productions and performances from Van Nieuwkerk, no response was forthcoming.

## **2.82 VISAGIE, HANSIE (also refer to The LITTLE MARIONETTE COMPANY)**

### **2.82.1 Background**

Hansie Visagie was born in Lusaka, Zambia in 1958. He matriculated at Pro Arte High School for Art, Music and Ballet in Pretoria in 1975. In 1981 he obtained the degree BA (Hons) in Fine Arts (Information Design) from the University of Pretoria.

Visagie produced his first puppet show while at primary school. The first puppets he made were papier-mâché hand puppets and he used a wooden crate for the theatre. He saw a Punch and Judy show while in primary school, and he also used to go to the Little Theatre in Pretoria to see shows by Tine Verton. His mother encouraged him by first buying him a few plastic hand puppets. He also used to observe his cousin Marike, who was a costume designer, making clothes. He used the book “Make me a start with Marionettes” by Waldo Lancaster to make his first marionette with dowels and screws, and manipulated it for the family. The family participated in one of his first shows, Kabkrallie in die Groen Groen Woud in 1966.

After seeing the Salzburg Marionette Theatre performing at the Johannesburg Civic Theatre in 1968, he was convinced that that was the career he wanted to follow. He later met Alida von Maltitz and Ann Bailes at the Johannesburg Civic Theatre and they encouraged him to participate during school holidays. He also learnt a lot about many aspects of puppetry from the German puppeteer, Hans Walter Grünewald, who lived in Pretoria (Visagie, 2002).

While at the Pro-Arte School for Art, Music and Ballet in Pretoria, he met Reinette Kruyswijk with whom he worked on puppets on Saturdays and during holidays. By 1974, while still at high school, he was already involved in making and manipulating marionettes for the Johannesburg Civic Theatre. After high school, his professional career in puppetry developed rapidly, while freelancing for *inter alia*, the JCT: Marionette Company and PACT. Visagie and Kruyswijk established The Little Marionette Company in 1975. He started free-lancing as a puppeteer for SABC Television and in 1976 joined PACT at the Breytenbach Theatre, Pretoria where he was the stage manager for the Afrikaans Drama Company until 1977.

In 1981, he married Thea Labuschagne, who assisted him as a puppeteer and during the following 25 years, his company designed and produced numerous puppet theatre productions in various genres, and performances were staged at a variety of venues in South Africa. A number of overseas tours were undertaken with performances in France, Austria, the United States of America and Denmark.

Visagie has a keen interest in the training of students in the field of Puppetry, Theatre Craft and Information Design. Since 1985, Visagie has lectured part-time in Puppetry at various tertiary educational institutions. Simultaneously Visagie also became a part-time lecturer in Information Design at the University of Pretoria in the Department of Visual Arts and History of Arts. From 1986 to 2002 Visagie was a part-time lecturer in the Department of Theatre Technology (currently the Department of Entertainment Technology) at Technikon Pretoria, where he taught puppetry.

From 1996 to 2002, he was part-time lecturer in puppetry at the University of Pretoria at the Department of Drama and between 1997 and 2002 he was external examiner at the Drama Department, Technikon Pretoria for the subject Children's Theatre. Visagie in his personal capacity, as well as in conjunction with The Little Marionette Company has received several awards and accolades (refer to The LITTLE MARIONETTE COMPANY).

From 1995 to 2002 he also served on the Advisory Committee of the Department of Entertainment Technology at Technikon Pretoria. He was appointed head of the Art Department, City Varsity in Cape Town in 2003.

In 1995 Visagie established a marionette museum, situated in the basement of the Education and Law Building on the campus of the Pretoria University, with the assistance of the Cultural Bureau of the University. Already on display and available to be viewed on special request, are approximately 800 marionettes and puppets of The Little Marionette Company, as well as roughly 100 puppets from Visagie's

personal collection from Java, Indonesia, Austria and Germany. In addition, there are some 500 puppets made by the SABC's model building department, used in various television programmes.

Visagie has conceptualized and been Art Director for various television programmes since 1975. These included Nuustak, Fanjan die Towenaar van Drakenstein, Kabaret ya Poone, Ferdi, Tumi, Bana, ba Bebeleng, Mannemarak, Mina Moo, to name but a few. He also acted as Artistic Director for major theatre productions such as *Vlerkdans*, *Antjie Somers* and *Skilpoppe*.

#### **2.82.2 Productions and Performances**

1975

Visagie performed a Punch and Judy show, which formed a part of the drama Lafras Verwey, staged by PACT in the Breytenbach Theatre, Pretoria.

For production and performances from 1975 to 2003 refer to The LITTLE MARIONETTE COMPANY.

1977 - 1978

A marionette programme in three parts was performed in an eighty-seater tent on the lawn of the Civic Theatre, Johannesburg from 3 December to 7 January. Visagie was involved in the section, A Nativity, as a manipulator.

## **2.83      VON MALTITZ, ALIDA (also refer to MALTITZ MARIONETTES; JOHANNESBURG CIVIC THEATRE: MARIONETTE COMPANY)**

### **2.83.1      Background**

Alida von Maltitz was born in 1942 in Dunnottar near Springs. She attended the *Aucklandpark Laerskool* in Johannesburg, from 1953 to 1955. Here a teacher, Henk Malan, taught her how to make puppets with plasticine pasted over with layers of paper, and she made her first hand puppet. During her primary school years she made her own set of hand puppets and performed at home. *Oumatjie* was a finger puppet with which Von Maltitz performed her first puppet shows in standard 6 (grade 8).

From 1956 to 1960 she attended the *Hoër Meisieskool Helpmekaar* where she performed Rumpelstiltskin with hand puppets in 1956.

In 1957 she started making string puppets based on ideas she found in books. She made *Gregory* the dancing clown, *Professor Verstrooi*, a *Witch* and *Fishes*. She saw the puppeteer John Wright performing in the Library Theatre of Johannesburg and entered *The Witch* in a competition adjudicated by him. She won the first prize with which she bought a book on puppetry.

Von Maltitz started studying BA at Rhodes University with Art and Music as major subjects in 1961, but in 1962 dropped Art as a subject to study Music only. During

this year she also wrote 8 radio programmes of 20 minutes each for schools on how to make puppets. Sets of colour slides were taken of each step and distributed to schools, along with the radio programmes.

In 1962 Von Maltitz made a set of five puppets named after the Rhodes University chamber choir to tease the choir. During this time, she built a string puppet booth over her bed in the residence and also performed shows in the Music Department with the help of fellow students.

In 1965 she graduated with a B.Mus degree and a distinction in Theory of Music. One of her papers was titled 'Puppets and Music'. Von Maltitz realized that she would like to continue with puppetry, so wrote a letter to John Wright to ask for advice. He invited her to work in his theatre in London.

In 1966 she travelled to Germany to attend her first UNIMA festival. She met Gretl Aicher of the Salzburg Marionette Theatre and was invited to work for them for a season. Having already made an arrangement with John Wright, she was unable to take up the offer. In London, Von Maltitz worked in Islington in the Little Angel Marionette Theatre for seven months, doing everything from selling coffee, fixing décor and doing lighting for the shows. She learnt woodcarving in John Wright's workshop, made her first fully carved puppet, *Kasper*, and was also allowed to do a little manipulation.

Back in South Africa Von Maltitz started carving *The Conductor*, made small rod puppets for The Good Samaritan and carved a donkey for the puppet character, *Kasper*. With the help of her sister Amalie, Von Maltitz started carving the wooden marionettes for The Nativity / Die Kersspel, which she was to perform annually in future with changes in the title (Hoffmann, 2001: 228).

Von Maltitz was approached by Michal Grobbelaar, Director of the Johannesburg Civic Theatre, to work as a puppeteer. In 1968 she started working for the Johannesburg Civic Theatre: Marionette Company, together with Ann Bailes as the first puppeteer / marionette master.

The Christmas Story / Die Kersverhaal was presented 25 times during December 1968 in the Chamber Theatre of the Johannesburg Civic Theatre. During this year, she exhibited puppets in a joint exhibition with other puppeteers at RAU (Rand Afrikaans University) .

In March and April 1969, the Marionette Company put on performances in the Johannesburg Pavilion at Milner Park, as part of the Johannesburg Civic Theatre's contribution to the Performing Arts in South Africa - the theme of the Department of Information's exhibition at the Rand Easter Show, Johannesburg.

From 27 September to 11 October 1969 a variety show with marionette characters was performed at the Pieter Roos Hall of the Johannesburg Civic Theatre, which included Kasper, The Donkey and the Motorcar, Flippie, Apie the Pianist, The



Dancing Skeleton, The Cat and Mouse at the Dustbin, Platjie the Frog, The Frog Choir, The Prince and the Mermaid and Buzzoff. The show was done with assistance from Elizabeth de Groote, Roy Sawyers and Barry Greyvenstein.

During 1970 the productions, A Green Christmas, written by Eleanor Anderson and directed by Bess Finney, Die Kersverhaal by Daan Retief, Little Red Riding Hood / Rooikappie; a programme for Divertissements; and a bilingual production of Pietie and the Waterwitch by Alida von Maltitz, were presented at the Civic Theatre.

Characters for Pietie and the Waterwitch were *Pietie*, *Kasper*, *Flippie*, a good-natured *Waterwitch*, a *mermaid* performing an underwater ballet, a school of fish with a *Schoolmaster*, talking *Daisies*, *Platjie Padda* and the *Frog Choir*.

In 1971, the water fantasy Pietie and the Waterwitch alternated with a programme of Divertissements during the first two seasons. In June / July Barry Bakker's play, Pietie and the Starfish that was presented was so popular that it was again presented in December, together with a new programme of Divertissements. This season ended in January 1972.

During the Rand Show of 1972, the JCT: Marionette Company presented previous shows in the theatre, in the Johannesburg Pavilion, at the Rand Easter Show grounds at Milner Park. (The specific shows are not known). For the June/July season two new productions were presented, namely Liewe Heksie en die

Feëkoningin by Verna Fels, who also directed the show, and Betty Misheiker's Sënor Onyon, directed by Bess Finney. Both were again presented during September.

Señor Onyon, presented in English, was the story of a Cape onion, or rather a Spanish onion from the Cape. He was very musical and played the guitar, which stood him in good stead in his search through the vegetable garden for a friend to join him on his travels. Together Ann Bailes and Alida von Maltitz designed the marionettes, while Ann Bailes designed the set.

For the December 1972 season, the company produced its first opera, Amahl and the Night Visitors (Menotti), which was directed by Aart de Villiers as well as Peter and the Wolf / Pieter en die Wolf, using Prokofiev's music. Bess Finney directed the latter play. Dinah von Maltitz and Antoinette Snyman manipulated some of the marionettes in this production. These shows were performed from 4 to 22 December.

When Von Maltitz married Jaap van Deventer in 1972 she resigned as puppet master at the Johannesburg Civic Theatre. During the five years at the theatre, 150 marionettes were carved with assistance from other puppeteers (refer to Johannesburg Civic Theatre: Marionette Company). The company performed twice a day, as well as during every school holiday.

Von Maltitz founded a Puppetry Association in 1972 of which she was the chairperson for 12 years. Later it became part of UNIMA (Union Internationale de la Marionette).

From 1974 to 1977 Von Maltitz did not work on stage puppetry very often because her three children were born during this time. Von Maltitz did, however, make *Haas Das* for the first South African television programme in 1975.



**Fig. 2.109.** *Piet Muis and Haas Das* from *Haas Das se Nuuskas* for SABC Television, 1975 as exhibited at ABSA in 2003. Photo: Toby van Eck (2003).

From 9 to 12 August 1977, she participated in a marionette-workshop at the Civic Theatre, Johannesburg and was one of 22 puppeteers who exhibited their work. In 1983 she took part in a puppetry exhibition at the Rand Afrikaans University

In 1991 Von Maltitz founded a training centre for puppeteers in her workshop and theatre at home. This is an ongoing business.



**Fig.2.110.** *Kasper on a Donkey* as exhibited at ABSA in 2003. Photo: Toby van Eck (2003).

### 2.83.2 Productions and performances

1975

Christmas Story – Von Maltitz made use of the wooden carved marionettes she had crafted in 1968. The show was performed in Sasolburg at the Ettienne Rousseau Theatre on 13 Desember.

1976

Untitled - On 8 April a puppet show was performed for the singer Sarie Lamprecht. Von Maltitz worked with puppeteers Dawn Leggat and Vivienne Elkington.

1977

Die Spook - from 9 to 12 August Von Maltitz conducted a marionette workshop at the Civic Theatre Johannesburg where she also performed this show. Von Maltitz assisted Dawn Leggat with her puppet show, The Tangles. This show that involved shadow puppets, was rehearsed at the Maltitz Theatre.

1978

Untitled - on 1 November, Von Maltitz manipulated *Kasper*, to perform for a women's church service in Johannesburg.

Jan en die Boontjierank and Verrassings in die Park – were directed by Von Maltitz for the Johannesburg Civic Theatre: Marionette Company.

1979 -1990

During this period, Von Maltitz did not work on stage puppetry very often because she was raising her three children.

1991

The Original Christmas Story – (refer to background and 1968) was presented in the Maltitz Marionette Theatre in Westcliff, Johannesburg.



**Fig.2.111.** *Joseph and Maria from The Original Christmas Story. ( Maltitz Marionettes, 2004).*

1992

Widlow's Tale – was directed by Rankin. It was a show done in black theatre style, which included shadow puppets and marionettes. One of the puppets that Rankin made was a giant woven puppet, *King Henry VIII*, which Von Maltitz manipulated. The show was performed at the Maltitz Theatre, Johannesburg from 12 to 24 July (Rankin, 2002a).

Punch and Judy – were hand puppets, made for the Parktown Centenary Festival in the Park. Von Maltitz made all the puppet characters and later also performed the show at the Windybrow Theatre. The show was later adapted for television.

1994

The Christmas Story - was again performed, as well as a programme described as a cross between a circus and a ballet (Odendaal, 1994:7). Von Maltitz's sister, Amalie, Judith Jordaan and Annalie van der Vyver assisted her. Organist Chris Lamprecht and his son Charl recorded the music (Odendaal, 1994:7). The show was performed from 14 November to 3 December at the Maltitz Marionette Theatre.

1995

Untitled - a variety marionette show in was performed on Thursday, 5 August in the Maltitz Marionette Theatre.

Untitled - a variety marionette show, performed by Von Maltitz as part of The South African International puppet Theatre Festival at the Civic Theatre, Johannesburg.

Untitled - a show in which Von maltitz used a variety of marionettes for the 5<sup>th</sup> International Palestinian Puppet Festival in Jerusalem during October.

1996

Untitled - a show in which Von Maltitz used a variety of marionettes was performed in Grahamstown, Orania, Ficksburg and later in Sarospatak (Hungary).

The Three little Pigs / Die Drie Varkies - the classic tale was done as a shadow production at the Maltitz Marionette Theatre from 2 to 23 November.

The Original Christmas Story / Die Oorspronklike Kersverhaal - using the marionettes carved for The Nativity / Die Kersspel in 1967, the show was again performed at the Maltitz Marionette Theatre from 30 November to 7 December.

1997

Jonah and the big Fish / Jona en die groot Vis - this Bible story was performed as shadow theatre. The technique moved away from the traditional white screen with black shadows, by incorporating colour and movement with coloured fabric. The figures were made from coloured stretch stocking material, which gave the effect of movable coloured drawings. Since the discovery of the halogen light, new possibilities have opened up for the shadow theatre artist. According to Von Maltitz (2001), this makes it one of the most exciting forms of puppet theatre today. The figure can become smaller and bigger and the décor can change while the figures remain static. The illusion of Jonah sinking deep into the sea was achieved using this method.

The show was performed in January 1997, at the Music in the Mountains Festival at the Drakensberg Boys' Choir School.





**Fig.2.112.** Shadow Puppets from Jonah and the Big Fish. Photo: Alida von Maltitz.



**Fig.2.113.** Shadow Puppets from Jonah and the Big Fish. Photo: Alida von Maltitz.

The Original Christmas Story / Die Oorspronklike Kersverhaal - was performed at the Maltitz Theatre from 19 November to 13 with the original wooden carved marionettes.

1998

The True Christmas Story / *Die Ware Kersverhaal* - was again performed with some costumes for the wooden string puppets made in 1967. Von Maltitz, using dialogue instead of narration, reworked the script and improved shadow theatre inserts. The puppeteers were Von Maltitz, Elsje van Deventer and Ilse Steyn.

Lochner de Kock, Richard van der Westhuizen and Lizz Meiring supplied the voices, while Liz Klingenberg was the lighting technician for the show. The music was recorded with Charl Lamprecht (as guitarist) and Chris Lamprecht (as organist). The show was performed at the Maltitz Theatre from 2 to 23 December.

1999

The True Christmas Story - during January Maltitz Marionettes was invited to take part at a Puppet Theatre Festival of Nativity in Plays, Lutsk in the Ukraine. The team consisted of Von Maltitz, her daughter, Elsje van Deventer, Ilse Steyn and Liz Klingenberg.

Jonah and the big Fish / *Jona en die groot Vis* – was performed by Maltitz Marionettes, as originally performed in 1997, on Thursday 1 April, at the Association of Arts, Pretoria (Association of Arts, Pretoria, 1999: 2).

Jonah and the big Fish / *Jona en die groot Vis* – was again performed by Maltitz Marionettes during the *Aardklop Nasionale Kunstefees* in Potchefstroom from 29 September to 3 October.

Stokkies en Toutjies - which consisted of marionettes performing short marionette tricks, was performed during the *Aardklop Nasionale Kunstefees* in Potchefstroom from 29 September to 3 October.



**Fig. 2.114.** The *Jester* wih ball from *Stokkies and Toutjies*

The Christmas Story and Stokkies and Toutjies - were performed at the Maltitz Theatre in Johannesburg from 27 November to 17 December with Alida and Amalie von Maltitz, and Lisa and Elsje van Deventer as manipulators.

2000

A variety programme was performed from 2 December to 22 December at the Maltitz Theatre. Included in the programme were: A Tale of two Dreams - by Gerda van Deventer, Cabaret Marionettes by Toby van Eck and Nativity by Von Maltitz.

A Tale of two Dreams - was a new, romantic story done with shadow puppets with elegant figures in a medieval style (Von Maltitz, 2001).

The Nativity - was performed with the traditional marionettes made in 1967.

2001

The Three Bears - the story was developed specially to entertain pre- school children and was performed with marionettes in a style known as Table Top Theatre. The fold-up and easily movable theatre lends itself perfectly to travelling shows. This classic tale was also performed in later years with changes in the title. Maltitz Marionettes performed the show at the Maltitz Theatre.

The Nativity - was again performed, along with a puppet ballet, the Spider and the Fly, as well as a variety programme with *Birds*, an *Octopus*, *Kasper the Clown*, *The Conductor* and *The Choir* appearing before The Nativity. It was performed from 5 December to 15 December at the Maltitz Theatre.



**Fig.2.115.** The *Spider* from The Spider and the Fly. Photo: Alida von Maltitz (2003).

Goldilocks and the three Bears / Gouelokkies en die drie Bere and was performed from 26 June to 31 August at the Maltitz Theatre.

Jonah and the big Fish / Jona en die groot Vis was performed on 26 July and 30 August at the Maltitz Theatre.

Goldilocks and the three Bears / Gouelokkies en die drie Bere was again performed from 16 to 28 November at the Maltitz Theatre.

The Nativity - Von Maltitz again performed the show with the traditional marionettes made in 1967. Van Deventer, for the first time, was only the director of the show and did not manipulate. The four manipulators of the show included Von Maltitz's two daughters, Gerda and Lisa, and her sister, Amalie. The Christmas play was developed and more biblical stories were added. Von Maltitz also emphasized the relationship between Joseph and Mary in the story.

As usual, the show opened with a pre-programme and a new marionette *Gus*, resembling an old puppeteer, manipulated two *butterflies* (Vermaak, 2002:11). The marionette was made from a new material, varaform, wire and dowels. *Kasper the Clown* was back with new tricks and the *Octopus* tried to chase away the *Fishes*. The *Mouse* also put in an appearance. Performances were staged the Maltitz Theatre, from 4 to 21 December.



**Fig.2.116.** *Gus the old puppeteer as exhibited at ABSA in 2003. Photo: Toby van Eck (2003).*

2003

The Three Bears - On 23 March, various Johannesburg puppeteers gathered at the Maltitz Theatre, where Von Maltitz and Amalie von Maltitz performed the show developed in 2001. According to Van Deventer (2002:1), "the strings were very short to cope with modern settings and with children's parties".

Von Maltitz and Branda Shafir presented a winter holiday season programme at the Maltitz Theatre with the following two productions:

Von Maltitz performed various items with her marionettes, which included an Under-water Scene, Gus, the Puppeteer Puppet and his little green frog and The Spider and the Fly, while Shafir performed The Adventures of Caterpillar and Snail's Amazing House. Performances ran from 1 to 12 July (Von Maltitz, A, 2003a: 2).

The Christmas story was again performed as The Original Christmas Story / Die Oorspronklike Kersverhaal from 5 to 20 December at the Maltitz Theatre, Johannesburg. A supporting programme with a Frog and other marionettes entertained the audience before interval. A special ceremony during which the audience lit candles on a Christmas tree, formed part of the show (Kersverhaal met Marionette, 2003a: 6).

2004

The Original Christmas Story / Die Oorspronklike Kersverhaal - the Christmas story was again performed from 3 to 11 December at the Maltitz Marionette Theatre, Johannesburg. As always, short items were performed before the main story (Maltitz Marionettes, 2004).

## **1.5 VON MALTITZ, DINAH [née Newton] (also refer to JOHANNESBURG CIVIC THEATRE: MARIONETTE COMPANY; PACOFS)**

### **2.84.1 Background**

Dinah Von Maltitz (née Newton) was born in 1945 and grew up in Trinidad. She studied Graphic Design and Illustration at St. Martin's School of Art in London, from 1963 to 1966. At the same time, she worked at the Unicorn Theatre for children at the Arts Theatre Club on costumes, scenery and in front-of-house. She also worked as a freelance illustrator after having completed her studies.

Von Maltitz came to South Africa in 1969 to join her parents. She worked at an advertising agency, before leaving to do her own textile printing work. She met the Von Maltitz family when she came to South Africa and was talked into joining the JCT: Marionette Company by Alida von Maltitz and Michal Grobbelaar. Von Maltitz agreed to a half-day job in September 1972. After being taught by Alida Von Maltitz, she was appointed as full-time puppeteer in 1973 (Von Maltitz, D, 2003).

A Dream Fantasy directed by Leonora Nel was performed at the Rand Show Johannesburg from 26 March to 7 April 1973. Dinah Von Maltitz (Newton) was one of the marionette masters.

Paul Dukass' musical story of The Sorcerer's Apprentice and Señor Onyon by Betty Misheiker, were performed in Afrikaans and English from 25 June to 14 July 1973. Existing marionettes were used, but Dinah von Maltitz changed their costumes:

“The décor and costumes by Dinah Newton are full of charm and imagination and the whole presentation is immaculately produced” (Keill, 1973:11).

For Fun in the Veld (refer to Johannesburg Civic Theatre: Marionette Company), Newton made *Dompie* who had a solid body because she did not know how to make the segmented body. Because of this *Dompie* waddled which added to his character (Von Maltitz, D, 2003).



Preparations for the production of Aladdin were started early in 1973. Newton first stripped a puppet of its clothes to learn about its construction. She battled through a heap of papier-mâché and managed to make a huge gold *Genie* with no legs. She decided to tackle the legs later. Newton not only designed the décor and costumes, but also created the marionettes with the assistance of Melanie Basset.

“...and the sets and costumes have just the right glamour and appeal” (Jenkins, 1974:23).

“I liked the Ballet of the Laundry, and the pas de quatre from Aladdin, bat, skeleton and snake. The flying carpet sequence was cleverly done: but the two characters who stole hearts were Coco the Camel and the black and beaming Bimbo” (Brewer, 1974:14c).

When Newton married Johan von Maltitz she started using Von Maltitz as her professional name. The couple moved to Bloemfontein in 1976. There Von Maltitz founded the PACOFS Marionette Theatre in 1978 when she was asked to start a marionette company at PACOFS. She had to train two assistants, Susan Kruger and Alet Retief, to master the fine art of making marionettes, to make the costumes and to manipulate them. Apart from the J C T: Marionette Company this was the only marionette company of its type in South Africa.

The company existed until 1979. Von Maltitz’s contract with PACOFS had been to make puppets and set up the shows, on the understanding that she would not tour. There would be a Free State Touring Company, which would play in the province, while she stayed in the workshop to set up the next production. This, however, never

happened. Eventually Von Maltitz had to tour under difficult circumstances and after the second tour, she resigned because PACOFS would not honour its contract (Von Maltitz, D, 2003).

Von Maltitz started her family after leaving PACOFS. She performed solo with seven puppets using taped music, performing mostly at birthday parties, nursery schools, Sunday schools, school halls, shopping malls, and hospitals, in small towns in the Free State and townships. “I think I have pranced across just about every school hall in Bloemfontein and became known to a generation of kids as Aunti Di” (Von Maltitz, 2003).

It all ended in 1998 when her shoulder tendons started giving trouble from the weight of puppets. Having retired from performing, Von Maltitz started doing what she liked best – teaching and making puppets.

Von Maltitz exhibited 35 glove puppets from 11 September to 30 October 2001 at the *Oliewen Huis* Art Museum, Bloemfontein. On 20 September, she presented a lecture entitled “An Introduction to Puppetry” at this exhibition of ornamental and functional puppets made of papier-mâché.

“It was a lot of fun all those years and the resulting aches and pains are worth it. A career as a puppeteer has proved to be minimum monetary gain and maximum job satisfaction” (Von Maltitz, D, 2003).

### 2.84.2 Productions and performances

For productions from 1972 to 1976 also refer to JCT: MARIONETTE COMPANY and for 1979 to PACOFS.

1975

The Reluctant Dragon - Von Maltitz carved her first set of wooden puppets for this show. The puppeteers from the JCT: Marionette Company were sent for wood carving lessons with an Austrian from Oberammergau. Von Maltitz carved *St. George* against the grain because of inexperience, but the *Boy* was carved much faster, because she followed the grain. Von Maltitz's mother knitted *St. George's* chain mail. The *Dragon* was a spangly green-scaled dragon, flashing his red eyes and spouting most undragonlike poetry (Von Maltitz, D, 2003).

Von Maltitz was the principal puppeteer and the marionettes, costumes, properties and décor were designed, made and painted by her and other puppeteers (refer to **2.30.2:188**).

Aladdin and his Magic Lamp - was again presented from 19 to 30 August at the Civic Theatre, Johannesburg.

The Christmas Story - one of the characters for this show was *Happiness*, considered by Von Maltitz to be one of the best marionettes she has ever made. She carved the

marionette and used wood stain to paint it. This little brown wide-eyed boy only clad in shorts and a string of beads around his neck is currently (2004) used by Antoinette Snyman. It was the only puppet she was sad to leave behind at the Johannesburg Civic Theatre when she left (Von Maltitz, D, 2003).

During this time, Von Maltitz carved a puppet for Michel Tesson who had a yearning to see himself as a puppet. He was dressed in a black velvet monk's cloak.

Upon leaving the JCT: Marionette Company in 1976, she relocated to Bloemfontein in the Free State.

1978

*Sipho*, a newly carved marionette, was a black boy (based on *Happiness*, that was left at the J C T: Marionette Company), made as an example to the marionette company at PACOFS. *Albert* was a puppet from the J C T: Marionette Company that was used to promote the newly founded marionette company. Each assistant had to make one marionette as part of their training before production work could begin on Sleeping Beauty.

1979

Sleeping Beauty - refer to PACOFS.

1980 – 1998

Von Maltitz resigned at the beginning of 1980. After the birth of her two sons she started performing with seven puppets and taped music throughout the Free State Province. Not all shows during this period were recorded.

Von Maltitz performed dressed in black, and in view of the audience. Her touring show consisted of the following marionette characters on short strings, which she introduced in the following sequence:

*The Sugar Plum Fairy* in a little mob cab and extravagantly dressed, opened the show. This puppet was later given to a little girl who fell in love with it. *Gladiola Dragon* in green scales and *Stanley Clown* sporting a big dotted bow tie and a bowler hat, followed. *Octavia Ostrich*, wearing ballet shoes performed her dancing routine. The *Twin*,s who had no legs, were dressed in flowing brightly coloured cloaks. They did a flying act. *Mimi Melbatosta*, who was a send-up of a well-known South African soprano, was also part of the show (Von Maltitz, D, 2003).

1987

Puppet and magic show - Von Maltitz performed her touring show, with the puppet characters mentioned above, as part of this programme at the Drama Unit, in Mmabana on Friday 29 May (Von Maltitz, D, 2003).

1989

Untitled - Von Maltitz performed her touring show at the Village, Sandton for children from the Johannesburg Hospital Oncology Unit and their families, as well as at nursery schools in Johannesburg. The *Sugar Plum Fairy*, *Gladiola Dragon*, *Stanley Clown*, *Octavia Ostrich* and *The Twins* performed (Von Maltitz, D, 2003).

1990-1998

For the period up to 1998 also refer to background. No shows during this period were recorded.

Von Maltitz started experimenting with glove puppets. After she had taught puppetry at St. Michael's school for a while, she had to make glove puppets for a psychologist working with abused children. They had to be anatomically correct, thus Von Maltitz had to give them legs. The heads, feet and hands were made of papier-mâché. She made a family of puppets.

1999

The Flemish consulate approached Von Maltitz to make four glove puppets to teach children about their rights and duties as part of a programme on Children's Rights Education. Welma de Beer wrote the puppet play. Under her guidance, four drama students from UOVS (University of the Free State) presented a show to teach the children using puppets.

*Jerry* was a happy, funny giraffe who loved children. *Riana* was a kind and clever bespectacled rhinoceros that enjoyed giving information to everybody. She was the legal adviser to all because she enjoyed reading books. *Pule* was an African boy in a school uniform who was energetic and full of life. He enjoyed giving his opinion, but was kind and gentle. *Lena* was an English-speaking girl in school uniform, who enjoyed helping others because she was concerned about other people's welfare. She was kind and understanding (Von Maltitz, D, 2003).

The show was launched at *Oliewen Huis* museum. According to Von Maltitz (2003) a comment from a learner of Brebner Primary School was: "The rhinoceroses knew all about children's rights. I learnt that when someone touches you and hurt you, you must tell someone you trust".

Von Maltitz also made sets of glove puppets, which were offered for sale from her workshop. These included a set of six fruits playing steel drums. The idea was triggered by Von Maltitz's son, who had asked her to make a Banana glove puppet. The other characters were a dumb looking *Pineapple*, an *Orange*, a *Lemon*, an *Avocado* and a *Naartjie*. The avocado's rattles had seeds inside the papier-maché spheres to make a real sound. *The Tropical Steel All Stars* group were all in bright green trousers and bright T-shirts with coloured check jackets to match.

Other characters developed by Von Maltitz were:

*The Tooth Fairy*, dressed in white with little wings and a see-through plastic bag with money around her neck. *Tulip, the Daisy*, was a green glove puppet with a face

beneath the white petals and a yellow crown on top of her head. *Guiseppe* was a white-faced clown with an enormous red nose, lace-up boots and hands in a white suit trimmed with red. *The Man in the Moon* in a midnight blue robe had an enormous yellow head. A *Carmen Miranda* with a luscious red mouth, an off-the-shoulder frilled dress and fruit-decorated turban and shiny jewellery, looked seductive. A few *Witches*, one called *Phyllis*, and *Wizards*, as well as a set of puppets depicting all the primary and secondary colours, were all made for the market. All these puppets were for sale (Von Maltitz, D, 2003).

2000

*Die Stadsmuis en die Plaasmuis* - Von Maltitz made both main characters for this marionette production and directed the show, which was performed for the Johannesburg Puppet Company from 27 November until 14 December at the Gencor Gallery, Rand Afrikaans University.

2003

Von Maltitz kept on creating papier-mâché glove puppets. In 2003 Von Maltitz received a commission for twenty-one puppets from the Library Services in Bloemfontein. These puppets were made for an Educational Programme for Library Services and comprised of a *Black and a White family* and a variety of animals.





**Fig. 2.117.** The glove puppets of a *Black* and a *White Family* for Library Services, 2003. Photo: Dinah von Maltitz (2003b).

“Having finally admitted after thirty years that I am a puppeteer I retired from performing and when the boys left school, retracted to the studio to make puppets, which is what I like doing most. Decided to spend a year making “people – friendly” puppets – i.e. glove and learn to refine the process – first efforts not so hot, but they got better and I had a hell of a lot of fun. Intend to continue in same vein till too wrinkly to care” (Von Maltitz, D, 2003)



**Fig. 2.118.** Glove puppets of *Six Fruit* playing steel drums, 1999. Photo: Dinah von Maltitz (2003b).



**Fig. 2.119.** Glove puppet *Carmen Miranda*. Photo: Dinah von Maltitz (2003b).



**Fig. 2.120.** Glove puppet *Tooth Fairy*. Photo: Dinah von Maltitz (2003b).

A one-metre high marionette, *The Queen of the Sea*, was made on commission for a private collector. Costumed in variations of blue, turquoise and green coloured chiffon that flowed over a body that was painted to look like body make-up, this was a good example of papier-mâché crafted to perfection. Even the insides of the ears and the top of the hands had designs painted on them. The figure had a thick plait of coloured hair around the head and dangling over her shoulder, and a beaded headdress and collar in white to complete her regal outfit (2003).



**Fig. 2.121.** *The Queen of the Sea* marionette as exhibited at ABSA in 2003.  
Photo: Toby van Eck (2003).

## **2.85      ZIETSMAN, THARRIE (also refer to PACOFS and The PLAYHOUSE PUPPET COMPANY)**

### **2.85.1      Background**

Tharrie Zietsman (née Dreyer) matriculated at *Hoërskool* New Castle and obtained a BA Fine Arts (Honours) degree at the University of the Orange Free State in Bloemfontein in 1977. In 1978 she obtained the Higher Education Diploma at the University of the Orange Free State and was approached to be trained as a marionette designer, maker and manipulator for the permanent marionette company of PACOFS under supervision of Dinah von Maltitz. In 1979, when PACOFS

Marionette Company was disbanded Zietsman was appointed as head of the properties department at PACOFS.

She married Johann Zietsman in 1980. They travelled to United States of America via London, where she visited John Wright in his studio. In New York she became a member of the New York Puppet Association. Here she exhibited marionettes and traditional American apple dolls. She came in to contact with the puppet maker Steven Hansom, well-known for his association with the Muppets.

In 1982, the couple returned to South Africa to settle in Cape Town where she made several Muppet-type puppets, as well as puppets for Tony Fletcher's Glove Puppet Company. She also designed finger puppets for a toy factory. Zietsman taught Puppetry as an extra-mural subject at a primary school and did religious shows for various congregations.

In 1985 Zietsman moved to Bloemfontein where she re-established the PACOFS Marionette Company. She designed and made the marionettes and also trained the manipulators for a programme, which visited schools in the Orange Free State for the next three years (Zietsman, 2002). Zietsman taught Art. She was responsible for developing a syllabus that included puppetry as part of the syllabus for Grade 12. In 1987, she visited the Salzburg Marionette Company where she gained expertise in the technical aspects concerning puppetry (Zietsman, 2002).

The Arts and Crafts unit of Taung's, Mbabane Culture Centre (in Bophutatswana) appointed Zietsman as head of the unit in 1991, where she worked until 1994. She taught puppetry with the aim of experimenting with the art form, and as a result, 1-metre high puppets, rod puppets and shadow puppets were made.

In 1994 the Zietsmans moved to Durban where, the Playhouse Company appointed Zietsman to start The Playhouse Puppets. She had to train puppeteers in designing, the making and manipulation of puppets. The company started touring schools in 1995.

Zietsman left the theatre in order to teach puppetry at secondary school level in 1996.

In 1998 she decided to give her full attention to the making of dolls.

In 1999, when the Zietsmans moved to Johannesburg, she studied different moulding methods for dolls. Zietsman left South Africa for New York in 2002.

### **2.85.2 Productions and performances**

For productions and performances from 1978 to 1979 and 1985 refer to PACOFS and for 1995 refer to The PLAYHOUSE PUPPET COMPANY.

## **CHAPTER 3**

### **3. CONCLUSION and OBSERVATIONS**

The research process for this thesis was a lengthy one, as no research had been done since 1984. Difficulties encountered when searching for relevant information are documented in chapter 1.

Information on the background and performances of forty-one individual puppeteers, thirty-nine companies and four tertiary institutions formed the basis of the research. Of the forty-one puppeteers, twenty-nine still operate in South Africa and of the thirty-nine companies, seventeen are still functioning, albeit not all on a full-time basis.

The primary aim was to establish a database of professional and semi-professional puppeteers, puppet companies and their performances in South Africa over the past thirty years. This was achieved (chapter 2) within the limitations imposed by the absence of information in some instances. By making the data available on a website, it is hoped that additional information will be forthcoming, particularly from practitioners and interested parties outside the country.

A number of professional puppeteers participated in the exhibition which was held at the ABSA Gallery, Towers, Johannesburg from 7-29 October 2003. The Puppet Book is attached as an addendum to this study.

It was not the purpose of this study to draw conclusions regarding the state of professional puppetry in this country since 1975. However, during the course of the research, a number of observations were made.

Lily Herzberg established the South African branch of UNIMA in 1969 and this organization has kept South African puppeteers not only in contact with international trends, but also nationally with each other. A number of national and international puppet festivals were organized by UNIMA, which played a role to keep the art form alive. Through contact with UNIMA, companies also participated in festivals across the globe and so brought South African puppetry under international attention. The archives kept at the Cape Town branch (although not comprehensive) proved to be a valuable source of information during the course of this research.

Formal courses, as was noted in chapter one, where puppetry forms a part of various course structures, have been introduced at tertiary institutions. However, special dedicated courses aimed at the formal and exclusive training of puppeteers such as the *Diplome d'Erat des Métiers des Arts de la Marionette* (Diploma of Puppetry) from ESNAM, the *Ecole Supérieure Nationale des Arts de la Marionette* (Higher National School of Puppetry Arts) in Charleville-Mezières, France, are not available in South Africa. Ideally, a year-long course at a tertiary institution covering all aspects of puppetry would help to elevate the standing of the genre.

Puppet theatre as educational entertainment, which encompasses social intervention, development of human potential, health and religion, took off after the 1980s and has

shown rapid growth since the 1990s. Various NGO's increasingly made use of puppetry as an educational medium and this has proved to be an additional source of income to puppeteers who previously relied mostly on entertainment.

Permanent puppet performance venues were made available from time to time and at intervals in various theatres during the existence of the Performing Arts Councils until the 1990s. Since the disbanding of the councils, however, puppet companies have had to share theatres with other disciplines or perform in theatre foyers. At present the only existing permanent puppet venues in the country are the Rainbow Puppet Theatre at the Waldorf School in Cape Town, the Johannesburg Puppet Company at the University of Johannesburg and the Maltitz Marionette Theatre in Johannesburg.

The success of arts festivals dramatically increased after 1994 when the Performing Arts Councils were disbanded, and although puppetry performance had been staged, the research revealed that it was mostly as part of the fringe performances for children's entertainment and rarely sponsored. There have been some exceptions such as performances by the Handspring Puppet Company, The Little Marionette Company and the company PHDT (Peter Hays does Theatre).

It was noted (taking into account the political climate in South Africa from 1975 to 1994) that few puppeteers of colour formed part of the professional puppetry fraternity and to the author's knowledge, Nyanga Tshabalala, is currently the only Black director of a professional puppet company in this country. A number of the



companies, such as **Arepp** and the Playhouse Puppet Company, trained and employed puppeteers of colour, although their backgrounds could not be established during the course of this research

It was also noted that relatively few productions were commissioned or received funding or sponsorship, which usually meant that puppeteers or companies had to rely on their own initiatives to produce shows. Puppeteers often had to resort to providing 'commercial' entertainment for children at birthday parties or in shopping malls to stay afloat financially. In addition, many managements often treated puppetry performances as a 'side-line', usually in the main as children's entertainment and therefore made available only make-shift performing spaces such as theatre foyers, which lacked specialized equipment. There have been some exceptions, such as the Handspring Puppet Company. The hope is that their inspiring performances will raise a greater awareness of the genre in the country and dispel the idea that puppetry performances are solely for children's entertainment.

The increasing number of puppetry programmes on television (although again primarily children's programmes) have created an awareness of puppetry in the country and has provided an alternative source of income for a number of local puppeteers. It is recommended that an in-depth study be made of puppetry for television to augment this study.

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