

Abstracts

“Theodora Skipitares’s Textual Bodies” by Felice Amato

Theodora Skipitares, American puppet artist, describes the inspiration for her most recent work, *There’s Blood at the Wedding*. She has been responding theatrically to inhumanity since high school when her first impromptu public performances were staged. She has continued for the past thirty years to shift people’s consciousness around social justice and other complex issues with a body of work characterized by her aesthetic sensitivity, innovative approaches to construction and manipulation, and irony.

Keywords: Skipitares, La Mama, Lorca, Philando Castile, *Blood Wedding*, puppetry, justice

“Playing the Refugee Game with Sandglass Theater” by Andrew Periale

Sandglass Theater’s production of *Babylon*, which addresses the plight of refugees seeking asylum, is an important work. They now book it as part of a longer program in which audience becomes participant in an elaborate game in which individuals play the parts of refugees and almost no one is granted asylum – you know, like in real life.

Keywords: refugee, asylum, puppet, Sandglass, ensemble, theater, Vermont

“Puppetry Interventions” by Linda Ehrlich

Paperhand Puppet Intervention performances present the everyday and the unexpected, the familiar and strange. Now in its 18th year, PHPI uses stilt dancing, large masks, shadow puppets and a wide range of other objects made mostly from found materials to create “pageant-play-extravanzas.” Says one of the founders: “Our work is a call to action not just an entertainment.”

Keywords: Puppet, Paperhand, North Carolina, performance, storywriting, spectacle

“Playing with Dolls in the West Bank” by Clare Dolan

Clare Dolan recounts her third workshop in Palestine, in which Palestinian participants created large puppets for public demonstrations. She brings into sharp focus the social justice issues that are a daily fact of life in this part of the world. This article is abridged. The entire article can be found on the *Puppetry International* index page, issue 44, www.unima-usa.org

Keywords: puppets, Bread and Puppet Theater, Ramallah, West Bank, social justice, Ashtar Theater

“Attending to the Illusion of Life” by Marina Tsaplina, Jules Oldendahl-James, Torry Bend

In the summer of 2018, the authors created a ten session module titled, “Puppetry and Embodied Imagination” for pre-health undergraduate students at Duke University as part of a new program: Reimagining Medicine. The brainchild of pediatric oncologist and writer Dr. Raymond Barfield, Reimagining Medicine’s goals are to foster the strength of character, practices, and philosophical foundations needed to work in contexts of human suffering, loss, and death.

Keywords: puppet, teaching empathy, healthcare, Marina Tsaplina, Raymond Barfield, Torry Bend, Jules Odendahl

“Social Justice in Iranian Puppetry” by Salma Mohseni Ardehali

Iranian traditional puppetry was an itinerant folk theatre performed typically in public places like alleys, marketplaces, and squares; when the troupes were forcibly settled (at the beginning of the 20th century), they performed in coffeehouses (qahveh-khaneh) as well as in enclosed front yards and porches. These became places to talk about social issues. In the author's opinion, the wave that has provided a consistent critical expression in social justice and the political situation of contemporary society, is that of Behrooz Gharibpour’s puppet operas based on the lives of some of the greatest Iranian poets.

Keywords: Iran, Persia, poets, Behrooz Gharibpour, Rumi, Hafez, Saadi, puppet, Ashura

“Sanctuary: the Spirit of Harriet Tubman” by Wes Sanders

Underground Railway Theater founders knew from the very start that, with their name, the time would come to tell Harriet Tubman’s story. In the early 1980s, stories of Salvadoran and Guatemalan refugees fleeing north to escape death at the hands of their governments began to hit the front pages of The Boston Globe. The refugees were systematically being denied visas at the border and the author went south to interview them as part of the “sanctuary movement.” The resulting play paralleled their tales of escape and persecution with that of Harriet Tubman, the most famous conductor on the Underground Railroad. The resonance with present-day asylum-seekers is powerful.

Keywords: Underground Railroad, Harriet Tubman, Underground Railway Theater, sanctuary, puppet, refugee, asylum, INS, ICE

“The Power of Papier Mâché” by Eric Bornstein

A well known mask maker from Massachusetts is tasked by Jamaica’s Minister of Culture to create large effigy masks based on the island’s cultural and historical icons. What ensued changed his life, and that of his Jamaican collaborators, forever.

Keywords: Mask, Eric Bornstein, Jamaica, effigy, papier mâché, puppet

“UNIMA Social Justice Commission” by Nancy Staub

Legends and historical documentation describe puppets advocating social justice and ridiculing injustice for hundreds of years. They include the clowns of wayang kulit in Southeast Asia, Karagöz of the Middle East and by all the European cousins of Mr. Punch. Since UNIMA (the Union Internationale de la Marionnette) was founded in 1929, the issue of social justice has emerged on several occasions. This is the story of the formation of the Social Justice Commission, and its struggle to identify just what it meant to do.

Keywords: UNIMA, social justice, puppet, UNESCO

“Brazilian Mamulengo and Punch” by Amy Trompetter

An invitation to perform Punch and Judy at a festival in Brazil, leads to plans for an event that pledges to give women a voice.

Keywords: Brazil, puppet, Mamulengo, Punch and Judy,

“Drew Colby: Creating Community with his Bare Hands” by Bonnie Duncan

Across a period of thirty-three years, Drew Colby worked with all forms of puppetry. He particularly enjoyed working with long string marionettes in Durban, South Africa. His passion for object theatre developed into a love of the theatre of the “uncreated” i.e. where everything in the show is seemingly created there and then. Hand shadow work seemed the ultimate “uncreated.” He brings it into refugee camps in Syria, and elsewhere.

Keywords: Drew Colby, shadow, puppet, Syria, refugee, theater

“The Puppet Bug” by Paulette Richards

Throughout her career, the author wrestled with representations of African-American identity. While on a Fulbright scholarship in Senegal, a quirk of fate landed her at the Institut français as an artist-in-residence, where, among other things, she found herself working with puppets, which changed her life in profound ways.

Keywords: puppet, Senegal, hair, Africa, African-American, identity, appropriation, Center for Puppetry Arts, Ballard Institute

New Books from Charlemagne Press, review by John Bell

John Bell reviews two new books from Charlemagne Press: *Designing for the Puppet Theatre* by Arlyn Coad, and Seth Shaffer's *The Dick Myers Project*.

Keywords: Puppet, design, Arlyn Coad, Dick Myers, Seth Shaffer