



The official newsletter of
San Francisco Bay Area Puppeteers' Guild
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SFBAPG is a charter guild of the Puppeteers of America, Inc., a non-profit, tax exempt organization

February 2005



Manami Sakamoto performs Otome Bunraku at the Guild holiday party.

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President's Message:

Hi all. The holiday party was a smashing success. Over 35 members and friends attended the party at the San Leandro Community Center. Elisheva Hart told us a great Solstice story about how Humming

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(President's Message, cont.)

Bird and Coyote helped return the sun to Earth. This was followed by Michael Burroughs and Kevin Menegus, The Fratello Marionettes, presenting their holiday show: "The North Pole Review". Featured were hula dancing mice, ice skating snowpeople, and other assorted holiday madness. It was a wonderful show. After a brief intermission, and a successful raffle, Manami Sakamoto of Japan dazzled us with her giant Bunraku-type puppets and her dancing technique. She was ably assisted by translator, Haruyo Hosomi, from the local Japanese Christian church



Michael and Kevin of Fratello Marionettes took us to tropical isles where even the mice did the hula.



Diners enjoying a sumptuous repast chat with a new puppet friend.



Elisheva tells a Miwok creation myth after creating a recycled forest "a-la-Jay-Marshall."

of San Lorenzo. While Haruyo translated, Manami showed us the inner workings of her finely crafted creations. What a treat to see her at our guild. Thanks Bonnie Remsberg, Mary Decker, and Sam Hale for allowing her to be available for us. As extra icing on the cake, since we did also celebrate Manami's birthday, our raffle raised \$109.00 for our guild coffers. All raffle items were donated by Lettie Schubert. Thanks Lettie! I look forward to our February meeting. Information will be included in this newsletter. See you next month - Randal.



During the gift exchange, Benjie Nelson received (and modeled!) one of the more whimsical items.

Japanese Puppeteer Manami Sakamoto

Guild members who attended the holiday party in January had the great privilege of seeing a performance of Otome Bunraku by Manami Sakamoto, visiting from Japan. Bunraku is perhaps the best known of the styles of puppetry from Japan. Traditionally bunraku was the realm of men performers, and each large bunraku doll or figure was manipulated by 3 men. Otome bunraku evolved in the 1920s as special style of bunraku to be performed by women. In addition, this style of puppetry is accomplished with various mechanical devices that are used to attach the puppet to the body of the puppeteer, so that one woman can perform one puppet figure alone, unlike the 3 to 1 puppeteers to puppet ratio of bunraku. The attachments that Manami so gracefully demonstrated to us are as follows: The puppet body (really a heavily padded kimono without an actual body) was attached to a support that held the weight of the puppet on the Manami's shoulders, braced against her chest. On each of the puppeteers knees were supports for the "feet" of the puppet (although these were actually attached to the kimono fabric, creating the illusion of feet) and there was a silk cord running from each side of the puppeteers head (near the ear) to each side of the puppets head (also near the ear) so that when the puppeteer turned her head to the side, the puppets head, pulled by the strings, also turned in the same way. This mechanical set

up left the puppeteers hands free to manipulate the hands of the puppet, which Manami did to great effect, either manipulating a hidden lever to open and close the fingers or using her own hand (underneath the puppet's hand) to hold and manipulate a fan. For special emphasis Manami would occasionally abandon one of the puppet's hands and use her own hand to work a delicate mechanism for opening and closing the eyes of the puppet.

The pieces Manami performed were dances set to recorded music

(shamisen, the Japanese banjo, and sung narration in Japanese). The movements were slow, graceful and filled with powerful emotion, the situations being explained to us by our very capable translator. One dance was a dance of separation with a lover, where the dancer tries to hide her sorrow at the impending parting so as not to make leaving harder for her love. The second piece showed a young woman who discovers a white hair among the black and with that discovery comes a realization of impending aging. The third piece Manami performed was a rod puppet in a freer style, set to the song "Ave Maria," where a traditional looking Japanese woman puppet soared and fluttered around the room,

ecstatically interacting with audience members. Manami explained through the interpreter that the third piece was her own style that she is developing.



In this graceful puppet dance, a young girl discovers a white hair among the black and realizes old age will come to her as well.

After her performance at our Guild Holiday party, Manami went on to S. California where she appeared at The Conservatory of Puppetry Arts in Pasadena on Friday, January 28th under the auspices of COPA and the LA Guild of Puppeteers. Manami is traveling the country on a

cultural fellowship grant to introduce Otome Bunraku (Women's Bunraku) to the U.S. You can visit the English language section of her website at <http://www.mars.dti.ne.jp/~kimuzi/index-e.html> and learn more about the art form and her work.



Manami demonstrates the head mechanism of her otome bunraku

From your new newsletter editor:

Michael Nelson, Yountville

First of all, let me extend to our previous newsletter editor, Carl La Rue, a heartfelt thanks from all of the Guild for his services rendered to the Guild. It is my understanding that Carl is not a puppeteer, nor is he a guild member, and his generosity to our organization and our art form were simply extraordinary. Thank you Carl. It is my sincerest hope that our guild can now once again carry its own weight in the newsletter department.

That being said, "Greetings. I am, for the present, your new newsletter editor."

I have volunteered to take on the guild newsletter to the best of my ability (and time), and I ask that you help me to once again make this newsletter a vital conduit of information, calendar listings, and news of interest to puppeteers and our guild. In order to do this, I will need the input of our membership. Here's how you can help:

Calendar listings: Guild members are already puppet enthusiasts. They like puppetry and puppet shows. Send me your calendar listings for shows open to the public, so that they (we) can come to your shows. When more people come to your shows, it demonstrates to presenters that your shows (and puppetry) are popular, leading to more performances for you and for other puppeteers. Guild members can bring family and friends, or help spread the word to potential audience members who are near your engagement. It is in

your best interest to share your performance schedule to your fans. Articles or items of interest: Let me know what kind of things you would like to see in your newsletter. While my time and the guild finances for newsletter are limited, I will try to include those items that guild members wish to see. If you are willing to write something up for the newsletter (article, review, a regular column on ?), contact me and let's see what we can do. I can't guarantee that everything can fit or will go in, but at the moment the future newsletters are wide open.

Submitting items for the newsletter: The easiest way for me to receive material for the newsletter will be through email, so I can cut and paste right into the newsletter. If you send something by email to me, I will acknowledge it by return email. (If you don't receive a return acknowledgement from me in a reasonable amount of time, call and let me know you sent it, as my spam filter sometimes removes items I want to see.) My email is mail@magicalmoonshine.org, & phone is 707-257-8007.



CALENDAR LISTINGS BY DATE:

FEBRUARY LISTINGS

- 1** February 1, 2005, 7:30PM Prince and Princess Show by P&T Puppet Company, [San Carlos Library](#), San Carlos, CA
- 2** February 2, 2005,

9:30AMPirates! By P&T Puppet Company, The Learning Company and Academy, San Jose, CA

12 Wild Swan Aphrodisiacs presents Little Blue Moon Theatre, Saturday, February 12, 2005 - Special Valentine's weekend Show: "Cupid's Labor of Love," 7:00 pm doors open (show time around 7:30), Wild Swan Aphrodisiac Studio, Walnut St., in Napa, Tickets: \$20.00 & \$25.00, There are only 40 seats (note that the \$25 seats sell out first). Call Lora at Wild Swan for directions and to reserve your seats today (707-252-2253). Note that this is a performance for adults and features puppet nudity and sexual situations (all very tastefully done.) For an e-flyer for the event: <http://magicalmoonshine.org/blueinvite.htm>

12 & 13 Coad Canada Puppets present "Harlequin's Cloak" & "Up Please!"
 Dates & Times: Saturday, February 12 * 2:00 p.m. & 7:00 p.m.
 Sunday, February 13 * 2:00 p.m.
 Location: First Presbyterian Church of Palo Alto
 1140 Cowper Street (at Lincoln)
 Palo Alto, CA 94301
 Tickets: Available for purchase at the door, Advance reservations: 650-361-1310

Price: \$14 adult; \$12 child and youth (17 years and under)
 Sponsor: First Presbyterian Church of Palo Alto
 Contact: Mary Decker
 1116 Ruby Street, Redwood City, CA 94061
 650-361-1310 or
marydeck@earthlink.net
 Add'l Info: All performances are

double features. Duration is 1 hour 15 minutes, including intermission. Appropriate for ages 4 to 104.

"Harlequin's Cloak" - an original hand-puppet Commedia del l'Arte pantomime.

Inspired by the world famous pantomime-dance performances in Copenhagen's Tivoli Gardens, Luman Coad has created his own delightful vision based on the timeless adventures of Harlequin, Columbine, Pantalone, El Capitano, and Pierrot.

"Up Please!" - a humorous tale about eternity and mischief. Tall golden gates are perched upon a pillowy blanket of white clouds. Just outside them is the top of Jacob's Ladder. A succession of Souls climb the ladder and apply for passage through the gates. After checking a huge book, the Angel on duty admits some and rejects others. Then an Imp appears, and the orderly processing of applicants is disrupted -- with unexpected results.

17 Tinker's Coin Productions will perform "The Donkey, The Table and the Stick" Feb 17, 2005 4pm Franklin Library, 10055 Franklin High Road, Elk Grove (Sacramento area). More information: 16-484-0606 (Tinker's Coin Productions).

27 FEBRUARY GUILD MEETING! Sunday February 27th at Dreamweavers Theatre General meeting at 6pm. Herbert Lange's "Little Red Riding Hood" at 6:30 pm.
 Location:
 Dreamweavers' Theater
 1325 Imola Ave. West
 Napa, CA 94559-4724

Directions: Take HWY 29 to Imola exit. Proceed east one block to the River Park Shopping Center. The theatre is behind the Golden Carrot. (Drive between Vallegas Market and the Golden Carrot, theatre is to your right).

For a map go to

<http://dreamweaverstheatre.org/directions.html>



MARCH LISTINGS

26 A reminder - The National Black Light Theatre of Prague is doing its only Bay Area performance "Fantasy Travellers" on Saturday, March 26 at 3 p.m. at the Marin Center Civic Auditorium north of central San Rafael. Tickets are going fast. If you have one, be sure to mark the date on your new 2005 Calendar. If you haven't got a ticket, call 415-499-6800 Monday through Friday, 11 am to 5 pm and charge the ticket on your Visa, MasterCard, Discover or American

Express. \$2 per ticket service charge. Tickets will be mailed or held for pickup in advance at the box office. No returns. Ticket prices are \$32, \$28 (Students 18 and under \$18) plus the service charge. You can also stop by the box office and pick out your seat/seats during the same hours as above, saving the service fee.

Calendar Listings, On-going events:

Ongoing Shows and Events:

Exhibition "Show Me a Story: Children's Books and the Technology of Enchantment" at Heller Rare Book Room, F.W. Olin Library, Mills College, 5000 MacArthur Blvd., Oakland. January 18 to March 11, 2005. For information call (510) 430-2047. For directions call (510) 430-3250. Why should puppeteers be interested? Some of the paper engineering techniques can be adapted for puppet shows.

From the IJ Weekender listings: The classic story "Beauty and the Beast" will be presented by the Young Performers Theatre at Fort Mason Center from January 22 through February 13.

This version takes an unusual twist, using a combination of live actors and puppets to weave the tale. Performances are Saturdays at 1 p.m. and Sundays at 1 and 3:30 p.m., in Room 300 on the third floor of Building C, Fort Mason Center, Marina Boulevard and Buchanan Street San Francisco. Tickets are \$6 children under 13; \$9 general. Call (415) 346-5550.

NEW EXHIBITION MUSEUM OF CRAFT & FOLK ART, SAN FRANCISCO, CA

Title: Puppets from Around the World

Exhibition Dates: Wednesday, May 4 Sunday, July 24, 2005

EXHIBITION DESCRIPTION:

Puppets from Around the World features a selection of more than 50 puppets representing puppetry traditions of North America, Latin America, Asia, Africa, and Europe. All major types of puppets are included from marionettes to hand, rod, and shadow with educational information on techniques and purposes. Drawn mainly from the vast collection of Alan G. Cook, legendary collector and puppeteer, the puppets on display will charm children and remind adults of magic moments spent watching figures come to life before their eyes.

Museum of Craft & Folk Art - General Information

Location: Fort Mason Center, Landmark Building A, San Francisco, CA 94123 - 1382 Entrance at Buchanan Street and Marina Boulevard

Hours: Tuesday - Sunday, 11am to 5pm; Saturday 10am to 5pm

Admission: \$4 for adults, \$3 for seniors, free for youth 18 and under

Free the first Wednesday of each month and Saturdays 10am to 12pm

Information: 24-hour recorded message, 415/775-0991