



PUPPETRY ARTS INSTITUTE

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Spring 2018

Founded 2001

Diverse Workshops

By Kraig Kensinger



Kraig Kensinger and an assistant help a blind young man in an art class for those with disabilities. In photo at bottom right, a teenage boy with autism presents "Peter and the Wolf" at Puppetry Arts during the Englewood Art Walk on April 20.

Not only are PAI puppet painting workshops enjoyable for grandparents and their grandchildren, but for many diverse groups too. Numerous senior citizen outings have brought older adults to craft puppets. A social service arts organization brought their employees to a workshop for team building and staff development. A group of hipster art animators in their twenties designed puppets to use in their Dungeons and Dragons role play games. Various home school groups and families have used these workshops to get to know their peers through storytelling and pretend. A group of academics gifted in math and science came to stretch their artistic abilities.

I spent three weeks with a teenage boy with autism to paint a collection of Hazelle hand puppets. He was in love with the music of "Peter and the Wolf" and wanted to develop a show of his own. His show, with music and dialogue, was presented on April 20th during the Englewood Art Walk.



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Letter from Our President



Puppetry Arts Institute has made a commitment to serve all ages and income groups who come for our shows or workshops. We are branching out more and more to that part of the community which ordinarily would not be able to afford the privilege of live entertainment. Neither can these children enroll in the expensive art classes offered other places. We have maintained low fees and prices to facilitate that end. Grants, donations from our supporters, income from our shows, workshops, and nun puppet sales, and the dedication of our volunteer staff and helpers have enabled us to afford to hire puppeteers, buy materials, and keep the lights on through the first quarter of the year. But we could use further help.

For each \$7 you donate, you can supplement the cost of one workshop so that a child can have the opportunity to create his/her own puppet and to express himself/herself through creative play on our stage. For \$250-\$500, you can help co-sponsor or sponsor a show and your name or business will appear on our postcards mailed to over 300 families and reach over 1,000 more families by email, Facebook and our website. It is a unique opportunity to bring professional puppeteers each month to PAI, not to mention the opportunity to advertise local businesses. Consider taking advantage of these opportunities to help guarantee the future of PAI. Thank you.

Ann Ragan

President, Board of Directors

Northland Ethnic Festival

The PAI was present at the 15th Annual Northland Ethnic Festival with examples of puppets from 5 of the 7 continents! The festival, held at Park Hill South High School on the Saturday after Easter, draws a diverse and family crowd from mostly Platte County. Anitra Steele took a display, handouts and two trays of beautifully painted finger puppets by Joyce Stone to sell. She spoke to over 100 during the 4 hour festival, selling finger puppets and the PAI.

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Roxie Brennan
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Joyce Stone

If you would like to help us grow, we are a 501(c)3 organization and we will send you a statement for tax purposes. You may mail your donations to us at

11025 E. Winner Road
Independence, MO 64052

You may also contact us at 816-833-9777 or by email at pai@att.net. Our hours are Tuesday—Saturday, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.



Clowning Around



Teto was Hazelle's signature marionette from the 1940s through the 1970s. Although his white face is traditional of clowns which evolved from the court jester of the middle ages he is actually an Auguste clown, patterned after a comic by that name in the 1860s. Auguste clowns usually have a big red nose, giant shoes and bright baggy clothes. Teto's nose is only dotted with red. Other clowns from the Hazelle factory were patterned after character clowns whose clothes reflect their personality.

Ringling Brothers Clown College was established in 1968 while Teto was Hazelle's best seller. It taught the American style of humor based on slapstick and graduated over 1500 clowns before it closed in 1997. A delightful YouTube video by Ringling Brothers is available entitled "How to Be a Clown," by Mental Productions.

So what happened to the popularity of clowns? Has the film industry demonized all clowns to the point that children are afraid of them? Have we forgotten what we called "Clowning around?" That's like asking, have we forgotten how to have fun?

Teto depends upon finding humor and wit to expressed through his actions on stage. PAI strives to keep that door open. Join us for Puppetry Camp from July 18th through 20th. Make reservations now.—Ann Ragan

Pierrot's Debut

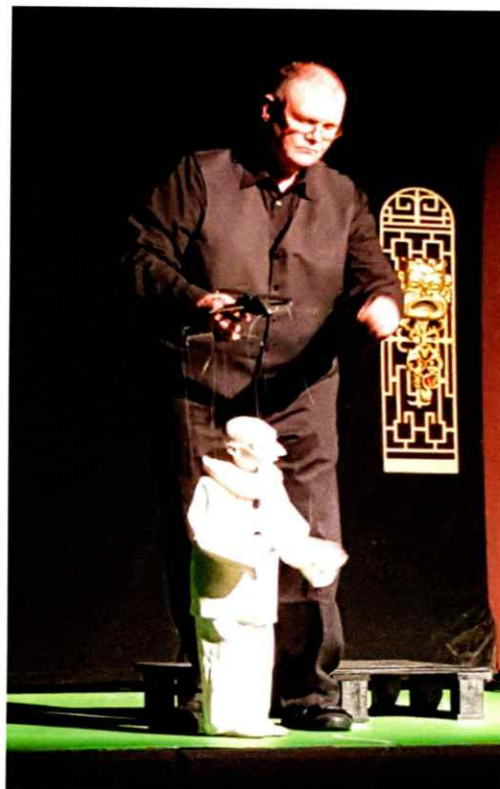
By Ann Ragan

My acquaintance with Pierrot as a stock character of 16th century commedia dell'arte began when Kraig Kensinger brought Pierrot's white clothed and white faced body onto the stage at PAI's "Stars on Strings" fundraiser. As he slowly came into the spotlight Pierrot sang "When You Say You Love Me," by Josh Groban.

Although invented to play a trusting buffoon who is rebuffed by his sweetheart in preference of Harlequin, he was later embraced by artists and playwrights in other roles.

Commedia dell-arte began in Italy with a group of actors who performed in town squares and passed a hat around to finance their efforts. But it was best known and appreciated in France where improvisation was often based on hunger, love, or money.

There was something about this character that touched the depths of my soul as it has audiences over the centuries. The image of Jean-Geaspared Deburan's Pierrot without his previously worn white frilled collar and hat, doing his pantomime with his white face and black skullcap comes to mind as we often see Pierrot portrayed today. But we were all captivated by Kraig's interpretation, Pierrot's choice of song, and his apparent trust in all things good and beautiful.



Performance Schedule

Please call to confirm shows, dates and times as they are subject to change. Reservations are requested.

May 19, 2018, 11 a.m. & 2 p.m.
MOTHER GOOSE'S NEIGHBORHOOD
 Performed by Angela Polowy,
 of Eulenspiegel Puppets



Saturday, July 21,
 11 a.m. & 2 p.m.
PUPPETS ON STRINGS
 Performed by Clement
 McCrae Puppets



Friday, June 15,
 7 p.m.;

Saturday, June 16,
 11 a.m. & 2 p.m.;

Saturday, June 23,
 11 a.m. & 2 p.m.



OLD McDONALD'S FARM SHOW
 Performed by Kraig Kensinger

Friday, August 17, 7 p.m.
 Saturday, August 18, 11 a.m. & 2 p.m.

**SIZZLIN'
 SUMMER
 SHOWCASE**

PUPPETRY ARTS INSTITUTE
 11025 E. WINNER RD.
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