

Two live performers, a stimulating multimedia projection, an expansive and colourful set, an original script, captivating and original music as well as over twenty puppets engage family audiences fully for fifty minutes.

FINDING MY SONG: BY BIRD

Finding My Song: By Bird is the fable-like tale of Bird's search for her lost song – a metaphorical search for self-awareness and identity. It is also the story of Mouse, who constantly pushes the physical boundaries of his genetic make-up with aspirations and attempts to fly. "How different can a mouse be from a bird"? He asks. Mirroring Bird's search for her song, the Choirmaster Zlativ struggles with a new composition, his "most important...so far". Other puppet characters help or thwart the Bird along the way. Imagining the whole story is an old Paper Bird lady who sells "Good luck Birds". As she folds and unfolds paper and stories to those who "wait" and "don't rush by", she ponders other questions, ..."What is a song?" "How does one keep going in the face of adversity and sore feet?"

The ultimate lesson of the play, however, unfolds when Bird, Mouse and Zlativ, come together to solve their individual problems. Friendship and cooperation is key to our success to "dream our dreams and sing our songs".

The story is simple yet profound...

*Theresa Seraphim, Edson Leader
February 2011*

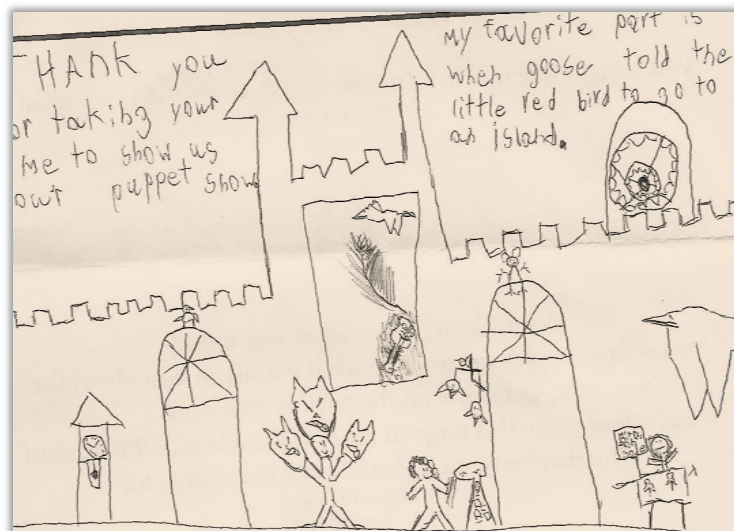




Forget everything you know about puppet shows....

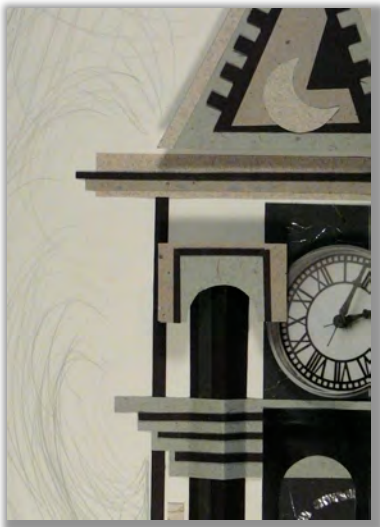
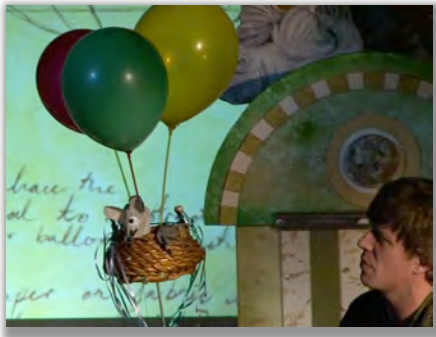
Christine Tam ... Herald Tribune, Grande Prairie

"The show
was unique...
I loved the
diva girls!"
*Audience
member,
Age 11*



What makes the play remarkable is... Scott Sauer ... he provided a dozen voices for an array of different characters and was hilarious in every role.

Seamus Smyth - The Grove Examiner Feb 2011



The story captured me instantly; a tale of a little red bird that lost its song and set out to find it, meeting other wonderful characters along the way.

Hannah Tabert, high-school student, RF Staples JS High School – Westlock, AB



Thank you so much for your performance. My son and I really enjoyed it; we had a great discussion about the "meaning" afterward. I should have paid more attention. Good Luck to you.
Audience member



Technical and Production Requirements

Touring Members:

2 actors
1 stage manager (TBC)

Size: 23 feet deep (minimum 18 feet)
13 feet high (minimum 11'6")
24 feet wide

Space For actors to prepare and change

Set up: Two and an half hours.

Strike: Two hours.

Thank you for a lovely production. The aesthetic was really beautiful and your puppets were fantastic. Thanks so much for inviting me to see your new work. I thoroughly enjoyed it.

Kate Newby
Artistic Director
Calgary International Children's Festival

Audio requirements/requests

4 in house speakers, 2 for audience and 2 for on-stage monitors

Audio cables need to plug into our effects/mixer which is a Behringer Xenyx 1002FX

It has 4 x ¼ phono outputs. (2 main and 2 monitors)

Our music is on a continuous soundtrack. Actors perform live over this.

Lighting requirements/requests

We use a computer with QLab software to run lighting, audio and video cues. We travel with a USB to midi interface that can connect to any lighting console that supports a midi input control.

We will need more details about the theatre lighting set up to pre- program the lighting cues.

Tech scenarios:

A 'bare bones' space ie. Community hall:

Use our rented lights and sound equipment that we travel with.

Small theatre:

Use our lights and augment them with a few in-place instruments and less than half a dozen cues for a technician. Use house sound is possible. No extra set up time is required.

Fully equipped theatre:

Communicate in advance the theatres technical capabilities; we forward our cue sheet (about 48 cues) ahead of time for technician input into the console. Additional 1 hour of set up required for focus and cue to cue.

Equipment: We may ask for the use of a sturdy eight foot ladder.

Credits

Director: Duval Lang
Associate Director: Devon Dubnyk
Dramaturge: Vanessa Porteous
Composer: Stu MacQuarrie
Lighting Design: Terry Gunvordahl
Light Programming: Graham Kingsley
Voice coach: Betty Moulton
Performers: Wendy Passmore
Scott T. Sauer

Assisting artists: Joan Bailey
Kira Bradley
Hans Eskesen - Eureka-Tech Inc.
Florence Godfrey
Tam Godfrey
Penny Hajdu

Movie Image Credits: Andrew Cerny,
Rachel Curtis
Glenbow Archives NA – 5600-6993a
Glenbow Archives NC – 6- 12553a
Zoe Klintberg,
Dorothea Lange
Spencer

Publicity Brittany Hellec
Kristin Link – BRAVO GROUP
Gerald Prost
Heather Schellenberg

Conceived and created by Wendy Passmore-Godfrey,
Produced by W.P. Puppet Theatre Society
Developed with support from The Alberta Playwrights Network

Special thanks to:

Jon Jon Atienza
Paul Bagley
Carol Beecher
Bill Dyer
Dwayne Engh
David Lereaney
Demetrio Navarro

Sharon Pollack
Cheryl Pultz
Quest Theatre
Tammy Roberts
Charmaine Spencer
Jed Tomlinson
VA Hill Fine Strings Adele

Adele Woolsey
Quest Theatre



The staging was beautiful and engaging, as was the story. Thank you for the wonderful entertainment. I wish we had more entertainment of this sort for children.

Kind regards, Elke Haagerty, audience father

w.p. Puppet theatre

W.P. Puppet Theatre Society's (WPTS) origins can be traced back to the childhood games of two little girls named Wendy and Pam. Inspired by those early memories, Founding and Artistic Director, Wendy Passmore-Godfrey, BFA, established WPTS as a charitable, not-for-profit society based in Calgary, Alberta in 1991.

Since then, WPTS, has created over twenty productions, covering a variety of themes for school and community audiences. Additionally, the company has developed projects with other organizations that engage puppetry to teach and connect with children in all sorts of situations—from learning about animals at the Calgary Zoo, to learning about hospital procedures or court system protocols.

WPTS has also produced “Puppet Power” a series of five international conferences historically occurring every two years, looking at the power of puppetry beyond performance. Past themes have included: “Puppets as Agents for Social Change” (2007), “Embracing Multiculturalism” (2003), “Puppets as a Therapeutic Medium” (2002). Current programming includes school and community workshops and residencies, professional development for teachers and other community leaders, and our Puppets on the Go crate program.

Full contact information

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***Playwright and Artistic Director:
Wendy Passmore-Godfrey***

In writing and producing Finding My Song: By Bird I was interested in exploring the notion of individuality. In the story I use the 'song' as a metaphor for who we are. We are, from a microscopic level, linked to life and non – life all around us. And yet we also feel we are distinct entities. How do we balance belonging and standing apart? And when a traumatic event happens – in this case the tower collapsed, but it could be many things, death, immigration, divorce, moving or simply growing up how does one find again, who one is, in the new situation?

I also wanted to explore the tenacity needed to accomplish difficult tasks. Perhaps in our world of 'instant on' – we have forgotten how to persevere. To be thwarted time and again as the little Bird is in the story, to change our mind, to believe we've come to a final decision and then have to re-examine it again, to carry on to success. Actually this sounds a lot like the creative endeavor of producing a puppet show!

The support of friends became another theme of the story as well as the power of small things to make us happy, like a birds song in the morning. And if a 'song' is a symbol of freedom of speech – what is the responsibility that accompanies that freedom? This was another question posed in the show.

I don't expect that everyone will follow every theme in the story or that understanding will be right away. Perhaps it will take a night of dreaming or a walk in the park before something clicks. My hope is to spark conversations, encourage profound thought, inspire creativity and Animate the Spirit!

ANimate the Spirit

Puppet show has lessons for adults as well as children

By Theresa Seraphim, EDSON
LEADER
February 15th 2011

"What is a song anyway?"

This question is posed by Bird, the main character in "Finding My Song: By Bird", a new production of the W.P. Puppet Theatre which played in Edson March 4.

The story is simple, yet profound: Bird loses her song when her home, the village tower, is destroyed. She wanders the earth trying to find it, encountering all sorts of creatures along the way, including a whale, a fiddle, the wind, and others.

Bird finds she has to start with the above question. What is a song? And what kind of song is she supposed to be singing?

A few things soon become clear to her: She has a song that's unique to herself. She's the one who has to find it. And when she does find it, she has to take the risk and use it.

The fiddle, which Bird encounters on the Island of Silence, tells her another very important point: "It's not a gift. It's a responsibility." In other words, her song is not just for her but is meant to be shared with others.

It's easy to guess how the tale ends. But it's that journey Bird undertakes, in order to find her song, which makes the story so appealing.

It all comes out in a one-hour production involving two people on stage maneuvering the puppets and playing various characters. The children in the audience appeared to be quietly spellbound by the show, saying very little during the performance.

However, in the question-and-answer time that followed (somewhat unusual but a good way to help the audience integrate the story's elements), they came forth with a number of good questions.

Judging by their responses to the actors' questions posed to them, the children seemed to have grasped the ideas behind the story.

W.P. Puppet Theatre cofounder Wendy Passmore, who wrote the play, said "Song" is a new show that is ready for touring, and she is eager to hear how audiences respond to it.



The story is done in an energetic way, with the points being brought across without preaching.

The length of the show is just right for younger attention spans, as well, although judging by the raptness with which it was received, that wasn't an issue in this performance.

"Song" should be a success wherever it is played, leaving children with a renewed wonder and love of characters, and adults with many lessons to think about.

I like the part theat brd foud her song. Audience member Age 6

8A - Westlock News, Monday, March 7, 2011

Multimedia puppet show on tap

Find My Song: By Bird show, which comes to town March 8, is geared for family audiences

DOUG NEUMAN
NEWS STAFF

Puppetry is one of the more obscure performance arts, but residents of the area will have their second chance in as many weeks to take in a show.

On the heels of Bernd Ogrodnik's show *Metamorphosis* at the Cultural Arts Theatre last week, the stage will be filled with another multimedia puppet show March 8 — W.P. Puppet Theatre's new show, *Find My Song: By Bird*.

"It's about a little bird who has lost her song and is looking for her song and in the course of it, she meets a whole bunch of different characters who aid her or thwart her attempts," said the show's creator, Wendy Passmore.

On a deeper level, she added, the show is about what a song is, what the responsibility in singing a song is, how to get your own unique song and how life experiences contribute to who you are. As such, it will deal with themes of freedom of speech, originality and perseverance.

The show is intended for family audiences. Younger children will appreciate the story, the colour and the action, while older children can get a self-awareness message.

"It's enjoyable for all," Passmore said. "It has many differ-

ent layers of meaning."

Passmore has nearly three decades of experience in puppet theatre, with productions dating back to the 1980s. She has been interested in puppets for most of her life, including when she was a child, and said one of the main reasons she likes to use puppets is because they can be so metaphorical.

"We're telling a human story here, not really a bird story," she said. "We're using animals as metaphors for humans and puppets are particularly good at that, because an actor dressing up like a bird is a bit hokey."

With puppets, audiences can more readily suspend their disbelief and therefore can identify more with the characters.

"I love the fact that it's sort of a collective imagining. Me and the audience are all imagining that this little thing made out of paper ... really has problems and solutions, and goes from extreme happiness to very depressed," she said. "I think it's a real fantastic moment."

While puppets will be the main artistic focus of the performance, the production can more accurately be described as multimedia.

Two live actors play roles alongside the puppets: Passmore herself plays the Paper Bird Lady, who sells paper birds by a cathedral, and Scott Sauer



Wendy Passmore and Scott Sauer joke around with some of the other cast in Tuesday's presentation of *Find My Song: By Bird*, a multimedia production created by Passmore's W.P. Puppet Theatre. It will play at the Cultural Arts Theatre at 7 p.m. on Tuesday, March 8.

plays choirmaster Mr. Zlativ, who is looking for inspiration.

There will also be a projector set up that will display a series of images with a whole soundtrack to go with it. They are all images Passmore created to reflect what the character is thinking or where the character is.

"Those are all original paper art forms," she said.

It has taken three years to put the show together, and it has only played four times prior to Tuesday's scheduled production.

Passmore emphasized that while she is the playwright, she had help from countless individuals who provided feedback and helped refine the play.

"There were lots of rewrites and I got lots of input," she said.

"There are lots of names to put on the credit board."

Tickets cost \$10 for adults and \$8 for children, and are available at the Flower Shoppe or at the door.

Since the show is so new, Passmore said she hopes people will provide feedback. Those who provide feedback will be eligible to win an autographed poster.

The Crowsnest Pass Promoter

Community

Editor Joni MacFarlane
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Friday, April 15, 2011

Learning with puppets

By Joni MacFarlane
Editor

It seems like way too much fun to be a learning tool, but using puppetry tailored to a classroom's curriculum has been shown to be an effective and engaging way to challenge students.

Horace Allen School was fortunate to have Calgary's W.P. Puppet Theatre residency program last week with Wendy Passmore-Godfrey, artistic and founding director, in attendance.

"The kids are very motivated and excited," said Passmore-Godfrey. "It's a lot of fun, but also a reinforcement of what's happening in the classroom."

Passmore-Godfrey was in residence at HAS for the entire week, seeing each class about three or four times and working closely with teachers. She said the residency program is not just a supplement to what students are doing, but an incorporation of what they're learning in the classroom.

For example, Grade One Science students were studying animals and plants and how they adapt and change to the seasons. Students were asked to create their chosen animal using research they'd done and then present it



Joni MacFarlane photo

Horace Allen School kindergarten student, Cooper, demonstrated his tiger puppet to his classmates as part of the W.P. Puppet Theatre's residency program. Wendy Passmore-Godfrey, artistic and founding director, was on hand last week, creating a memorable learning experience for the kids.

to their classmates. There are often added components, said Passmore-Godfrey, such as presentations, script writing, character development and performance.

"We touch on all subjects, science, drama, language arts," she said. "There are lots of things going on and they have to work together."

The puppetry classes are also geared towards a final production and give students a taste of theatre. Horace Allen School's final production including all students and classes was held on Friday, April 8.

W.P. Puppet Theatre offers workshops, residencies, keynotes and professional devel-

opment for schools and communities and is funded through the Alberta Foundation for the Arts. They've been teaching in schools since 1991.

HAS received a grant of \$3,600 from the Alberta Foundation of the Arts towards the residency.



Joni MacFarlane photo

Lucca and Mia took turns interviewing their tiger puppets as part of Calgary's W.P. Puppet Theatre residency program last week. Horace Allen School received a grant of \$3,600 from the Alberta Foundation of the Arts towards the residency.