



**Festival Press Representatives:**  
Canary Promotion | Office: 215-690-4065  
Megan Wendell, [megan@canarypromo.com](mailto:megan@canarypromo.com)  
Rose Mineo, [rose@canarypromo.com](mailto:rose@canarypromo.com)

Web: <http://www.puppetfestivalrevolution.org>  
EPK: [www.canarypromo.com/puppetfestivalrevolution](http://www.canarypromo.com/puppetfestivalrevolution)

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## **Puppet Festival (r)Evolution Draws Hundreds of Puppeteers to Swarthmore To Celebrate Vibrant Art & Artists, Aug. 5 - 10**

National Festival of the Puppeteers of America highlights work of local and national artists; features Heather Henson, *Abby Cadabby* puppeteer Leslie Carrara-Rudolph, Judy & Atis Folkmanis, and Avenue Q puppet creator Rick Lyon

SWARTHMORE, PA — Offering a dynamic range of artists embodying the diversity of American puppet theater, Puppet Festival (r)Evolution, the 2013 National Festival of the **Puppeteers of America**, will connect audiences with puppet artists through performances and events from **August 5 – 10 at Swarthmore College** in Swarthmore, PA. This bi-annual festival showcases some of the best work being done by award-winning puppeteers across the country and offers opportunities to engage with career puppet artists through workshops, talks and community events.

For six days, audiences can see afternoon and evening performances featuring multiple combinations of hand, shadow, toy, rod and body puppets, as well as traditional and Czech-style marionettes, in productions that range from family-friendly to material that is strictly for mature audiences. Each morning begins by pushing boundaries and expanding skills during dozens of workshops held for puppeteers and interested attendees to gain experience in business, education, craft or performance. Mid-week, festival goers can sit in for intimate conversations with Emmy-award nominated puppeteer **Leslie Carrara-Rudolph** (*Abby Cadabby* on *Sesame Street*), Folkmanis® Puppets creators **Judy and Atis Folkmanis**, and *Avenue Q* puppet creator **Rick Lyon**, who originated the roles of Trekkie Monster, Nicky and blue Bad Idea Bear in the multiple Tony-award winning Broadway production, and whose characters have also been seen on Nickelodeon, MTV Networks and Comedy Central's *Crank Yankers*. The festival comes to a close on Saturday, April 10 with curated performances, fringe acts, field games, an afternoon parade through downtown Swarthmore and a special outdoor performance of ***Celebration of Flight***, **Heather Henson's** latest environmental spectacle featuring puppets, kites and flags by independent artists as well as the **Jim Henson Creature Shop** and **Guildworks**.

Puppet Festival (r)Evolution programming reflects the freedom and variety of the art form. “We’ve planned a festival that presents the full spectrum of American puppetry today, with a balance of traditional practices and bold experimentation,” says Festival coordinator, puppeteer, and founder of Philadelphia’s Mum Puppettheatre, **Robert Smythe**. “Our goal is to create connections and professional development opportunities for the puppetry community while giving the public a taste of the high caliber work of artists

from around the country, culminating in our full day of events on Saturday that will immerse the Boro of Swarthmore in puppetry.”

Puppet Festival (r)Evolution performances take place in venues and alternative spaces on campus of Swarthmore College and in the town of Swarthmore. Full registration packages for the week, including performances, talks, workshops, housing and meal plans, are on sale now. Single tickets to events throughout the Festival will go on sale to the general public beginning June 1. Registration, schedules and additional information can be found online at [www.puppetfestivalrevolution.org](http://www.puppetfestivalrevolution.org).

## **PERFORMANCES**

*For registration information, or to download a schedule, visit [www.puppetfestivalrevolution.org](http://www.puppetfestivalrevolution.org).*

***A Life In Her Day*** | Hilary Chaplain | Rated PG-13

**Saturday, August 10 at 9a.m. and 11a.m.** | Swarthmore Methodist Church Community Room

Hilary Chaplain channels Lucy Ricardo and Charlie Chaplin’s Tramp to create a world out of everyday objects. Waking alone in bed, she finds an engagement ring in a box of Lucky Charms, marries a lamp with a paper towel veil, honeymoon in Hawaii, gives birth, performs a bris and learns how to take care of a new born life.

***ADA/AVA*** | Manual Cinema | Rated PG

**Tuesday, August 6 at 8 p.m.** | Pearson Hall Theater on a double bill with *Silent Shadow Cinema*

Bereaved of her twin sister Ava, septuagenarian Ada solitarily marks time in the patterns of a life built for two. In this fantastic and supernatural story of two sisters separated by death and reunited by phenomenal circumstances, handmade shadow puppetry, cinematic motifs and live sound manipulation create an immersive theatrical live-movie exploring mourning, melancholy, self and other.

***The Adventures of a Boy and His Dog on the High Seas*** | Mum Puppettheatre | Rated G

**Saturday, August 10 at 10a.m. and 12p.m.** | Swarthmore Community Center

A fun-loving family adventure that follows a boy and his dog as they discover a buried treasure map only to be kidnapped by a crew of pirates and their captain, who turns out to be a young girl. When the crew mutinies and tries to force the Captain and the Boy to walk the plank, the Dog’s new friends help to save the day.

***Beauty Is Embarrassing*** | Wayne White | Rated PG-13

**Wednesday, August 7 at 8p.m.** | Pearson Hall Theater

Part biography, part live performance, *Beauty Is Embarrassing* tells the irreverent and inspiring story of one-of-a-kind visual artist and raconteur Wayne White. A three-time Emmy winner for his work as a designer, puppeteer and voice-over actor on Pee-wee’s Playhouse, White acts as his own narrator to guide us through his life using moments from his latest creation: a biographical one-man show of vaulted highs and crushing lows for a commercial artist struggling to find peace between his work and his art.

***Billy The Liar*** | Toybox Theatre & Cripps Puppets | Rated G

**Thursday, August 8 and Friday, August 9 at 1:30p.m.** | Tarble Hall

Audiences with a taste for the zany and fun will enjoy this fast paced, high-energy puppet play that follows the adventures of Billy and his friend Suzy as Billy tells more and more lies that get him into more and

more trouble. Surprisingly warm, brought to life by Czech-style marionettes with rod puppets, over-sized toy theater and found objects.

***Bird Machine*** | Concrete Temple Theatre | Rated G

**Thursday, August 8 at 8p.m.** | Pearson Hall Theater

This contemporary fable investigates the desire to live beyond human limitations through the use of technology. In a visceral mix of object art, rod puppets, shadow puppets and projection with live actors, *Bird Machine* delivers Leo, the dreamer obsessed with flying, and the Emperor, who fears that a new technology will eventually destroy his city's walls.

***Buried ALIVE! A Matchbox Theater*** | Deborah Kaufman | Rated PG-13

**Saturday, August 10 at 10a.m. and 12p.m.** | Swarthmore Town Hall

Guided by flashlights into a dark room, 25 adults at a time will experience this frightfully funny exploration of the curious phenomenon of 19th Century “waiting mortuaries” that resulted from the almost universal fear of being buried alive. Puppeteer Deborah Kaufman based the work on historical and medical facts, playing with scale and becoming her tiny characters to magnify the action.

***Celebration of Flight*** | Ibex Puppetry, Heather Henson | Rated G

**Saturday, August 10 at 3p.m.** | Campus Lawn

Unifying the concepts of dance, kite, and puppet movement with her themes of seasonal movement and the Earth's energy flow, *Celebration of Flight* is the latest of Heather Henson's environmental spectacles. Featuring rod puppets, kites and flags from independent artists as well as the Jim Henson Creature Shop and Guildworks, the show incorporates the audience with interactive live music and performance.

***D-Generation: An Exaltation of Larks*** | Sandglass Theater | Rated PG-13

**Tuesday, August 6 and Wednesday, August 7 at 1:30p.m.** | Frear Ensemble Theater

Based on over 40 stories collected by artists during visits with local care facility residents, this poignant new production explores the rich creative potential and ability to communicate that exists in people with late-stage dementia and their caregivers. *D-Generation* is a stunning collaboration between Sandglass Theater, Michel Moyses (video), Paul Dedell (music), Sabrina Hamilton (lighting) and Roberto Salomon (direction) featuring a cast of rear-rod puppet residents who join a story circle at their local care facility.

***Dreams in the Arms of the Binding Lady*** | Izumi Ashizawa | Rated PG

**Tuesday, August 6 and Wednesday, August 7 at 1:30p.m.** | Troy Dance Studio

The Japanese legend of a Jyorogumo serves as the basis for this fusion of Japanese physical theater, unconventional puppetry and mask with a touch of ghost story and surrealism. Commissioned by the Embassy of the United States in Peru in 2012, the piece has toured internationally to Romania, Iran, Japan, Russia and Australia, most recently arriving at the Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts in Washington, DC.

***The Dick Myers Project*** | University of Connecticut Puppet Arts | Rated G

**Friday, August 9 at 8p.m.** | Pearson Hall Theater

Legendary puppeteers Jim Henson and Frank Oz both proclaimed Dick Myers as “the genius of American Puppetry” for his one-man puppet performances that toured Europe, the Soviet Union, Japan and the United States in the 1960s and 70s. Under the direction of Bart Roccoberon, Head of the renown University of Connecticut Puppet Arts program, MFA Puppet Arts student Seth Shaffer mounts this restoration of Myers' original puppets and two of his shows.

***The Joshua Show*** | Joshua Holden | Rated G

**Saturday, August 10 at 9a.m. and 11a.m.** | Paulson's Carpets, Park Avenue, Swarthmore

A delightful show that is truthful and sincere, *The Joshua Show* has the look and feel of an episode of a classic children's television show featuring grumpy Mr. Nicholas, who has to learn how to trick himself into being happy on days when he can't seem to find a smile in his head. Through puppetry, music and dancing, Mr. Nicholas and the audience are encouraged to celebrate their own authenticity.

***Life in Motion*** | The Cashore Marionettes | Rated PG-13

**Thursday, August 8 and Friday, August 9 at 1:30p.m.** | Lang Concert Hall

In a concert of more than a dozen marionette pieces performed in full view of the audience with music and without words, *Life in Motion* is at turns humorous, beautiful and unexpected: a masterpiece of movement and manipulation that carries the audience through a series of emotional ups and downs, turns and surprises.

***Lunatic Cunning*** | James Godwin | Rated R

**Thursday, August 8 and Friday, August 9 at 1:30p.m.** | Troy Dance Studio

A virtuoso solo performance built from semi-autobiographical events and stories that explore and evoke uncanny connections between puppetry and the paranormal: a shaman discovers the roots of puppetry; a floating baby haunts a memory; an art school student has an out-of-body experience. With each tale, James Godwin leads mature audiences with a taste for the alternatively traditional ever further on a humorous and haunting voyage of synchronicity, silly magic and mythological awakening using rod, shadow and tabletop puppets; Czech-style marionettes; performance objects; and toy theater with a live actor.

***The Magic Soup and Other Stories*** | Brad Shur | Rated G

**Saturday, August 10 at 10a.m and 12p.m.** | Swarthmore United Methodist Church Fellowship Room

Klezmer music sets the mood as tabletop, glove and shadow puppet characters spring from every dusty corner and empty cereal box. After invoking great-grandpa Hershel, a young man's shabby apartment transforms to reveal the world of traditional Yiddish folktales. Each tales leaves scraps behind, and as all the pieces make their way into the soup pot, the young man discovers what it truly is to savor a good story.

***my dear Lewis*** | Kyle Loven | Rated PG-13

**Tuesday, August 6 and Wednesday, August 7 at 1:30p.m.** | Tarble Hall

Lewis is a man at the end of his journey, facing the final task of examining his life. In an unconventional and thoroughly intimate one-man show, shadow, hand and body puppets are combined with Czech-style marionettes, objects, video and music to revisit personal history through the various means of documentation and objects we all keep that help us preserve our past.

***The Reluctant Dragon*** | All Hands Productions | Rated G

**Saturday, August 10 at 9a.m. and 11a.m.** | Swarthmore Public Library

Loosely based on Kenneth Grahame's book, *The Reluctant Dragon* tells the story of the day Princess Penelope met and befriended a dragon at the very same time the celebrated dragon slayer, Sir Reginald Thwebes, came to town. When King Rhubarb charges Sir Reginald to fight the dragon, these colorful moving-mouth hand puppets and rod puppets raises questions about loyalty, friendship and understanding as a girl and her dragon prepare to fight to the death with humor and heart.

***The Silent Shadow Cinema*** | Tom McDonagh and Company | Rated G

**Tuesday, August 6 at 8:00p.m.** | Pearson Hall Theater on a double bill with ADA/AVA

Three back-to-back shadow plays replicate the spirit and wonder of early silent movies, including live piano accompaniment. "Voyage to the Skies" pays homage to Buster Keaton in a farcical adventure that uses an experimental hydrogen balloon in a daredevil aerial expedition. "Disasternoon" uses McDonagh's

innovative 3D shadow technology, using 3D glasses, to follow a man and his hat on an afternoon stroll through a windy Parisian park. Finally, "The Red Room," adapted from the H.G. Wells short story of the same name, completes the trilogy with optical illusions used to suggest what may, or may not, be lurking in the dark.

***The Snowflake Man*** | Puppetkabob | Rated G

**Saturday, August 10 at 10a.m. and 12p.m.** | Swarthmore Ballet Theater

In a unique trunk show of Czech-style marionettes and props backed up by a pop-up book of watercolor paintings, *The Snowflake Man* honors W.A. "Snowflake" Bentley, pioneer of snowflake photography. This production combines art with history and science through live story telling with sculpture, illustration, pop-up paper art and music.

***The Struggle for Justice*** | Redstring Wayang Theater | Rated R

**Thursday, August 8 and Friday, August 9 at 1:30p.m.** | Frear Ensemble Theatre

Set during the two decades of 1935-55, *The Struggle for Justice* tells the story of an African American man's experience in the Jim Crow south of Mississippi. Determined to overcome the discrimination, violence and intimidation he faces, he sets out to prove his courage as a way of getting the respect he deserves and in the process realizes the depth of his human potential. This production features a panorama of southern culture through a large number of custom transparent leather shadow puppets, performed in a style adapted freely from traditional Indonesian *wayang kulit* theater.

***The Woodchoppers Opera*** | The Dolly Wagglers | Rated PG

**Tuesday, August 6 and Wednesday, August 7 at 1:30pm** | Lang Concert Hall

*The Woodchoppers Opera* is an original tale featuring rod puppets, flat cardboard puppets and moving props to tell the story of a woodchopper who enjoys his successful timesaving device until a time-traveller shows him the unintended future consequences of his invention. This deceptively comic production uses original songs set to familiar tunes played by accordion, whistles, bells and novelty horns, and will leave 21st century audiences talking.

## **WORKSHOPS**

*Nearly 5 dozen professional workshops take place Tuesday through Friday, 9a.m. to 12p.m., and cover topics in craft, performance, business and education. A full listing can be found at [www.puppetfestivalrevolution.org](http://www.puppetfestivalrevolution.org). Workshops include:*

### **Tuesday, August 6**

Dancing Pixels: Digital Puppetry Tools & Practice – Brad Shur

Stilt Walking – Annie Howe of Nana Puppets

Evolution of a Slam Piece – Carole D'Agostino

### **Wednesday, August 7**

Bridge Between Body & Puppet – Hua Hua Zhang

Lessons from the Masters: Making Modern

Shadow Puppets – Michael Richardson

Making It Real: Sonic Possibilities in Contemporary

Puppetry – Kyle Vegter

### **Thursday, August 8**

Creating Character Through Multiple Masks – Aaron Cromie

Human Silhouette and Shadow Puppetry – Manual Cinema

Ventriloquism for Dummies – Randel McGee

### **Friday, August 9**

Bare Naked Puppets: Writing Comedic Puppet

Plays for Adults – Marianne Gingher & Deb

Seabrooke

Television Puppetry 101 – Ryan Dillon

## **ABOUT THE NATIONAL FESTIVAL OF THE PUPPETEERS OF AMERICA**

The Puppeteers of America, a national nonprofit organization dedicated to the art of puppetry, was founded in 1937 and provides information, encourages performances and builds a community of people who love puppets and puppet theater.

The PofA's membership consists of over one thousand puppeteers and friends of puppetry from across the United States. It publishes the quarterly *Puppetry Journal*; oversees an audiovisual library documenting the history of puppetry; provides project grants, scholarships and awards for contributions to the field; supports regional and local networks of puppeteers; and produces national and regional festivals that present the best work being done by American puppeteers. The PofA also provides access to resources and venues to share knowledge and best practices and create opportunities to connect with other puppeteers, the American public and international puppet artists.

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**To request interviews, photos and more information, please contact:**

Canary Promotion | 215-690-4065  
Megan Wendell, [megan@canarypromo.com](mailto:megan@canarypromo.com)  
Rose Mineo, [rose@canarypromo.com](mailto:rose@canarypromo.com)

Electronic Press Kit: [www.canarypromo.com](http://www.canarypromo.com)  
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