



Around the World With Mr. Punch

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PC Tide Ebbs From UK Punch

by Glyn Edwards

A STORY in the UK broadsheet, *Daily Telegraph*, of August 5th headlined YES, IT'S THE RETURN OF THE PUNCH AND JUDY SHOW confirmed what UK Punch performers have known for some time. Today's audiences have moved on from the rigid PC attitudes of the late 20th Century and want to see the traditional show in action more and more. Jane Seddon, Director of Services at Blackpool Town Council has voiced the opinion most commonly heard

by Punch's Profs from their audiences. Quoted in The Telegraph, she says "**Ten to fifteen years ago there was a concern that Punch and Judy might provoke violence and there were moves to ban it, but times have changed and children have moved on. It is now seen as the innocent entertainment it was always meant to be. I watch programmes such as Power Rangers on television with my children and it is more violent and sinister.**" Thus was Mr. Punch welcomed back to Blackpool beach.

What is particularly good news for Profs is that this signals a new media cliché being born. From at least the 1960s right up to the 1980s the standard Punch and Judy media cliché was that it was a dying art form and that there were few performers left. From the 1980s onwards the cliché became that Punch and Judy were on their last legs because of Political Correctness. Neither cliché was particularly helpful towards conveying the true picture of a thriving tradition deeply embedded in popular culture and much in demand at local festivities both public and private, and so far as the Political Correctness cliché was concerned, the more it was repeated in the media the more it became a general public perception that this was true. 'Punch and Judy banned' stories became an excuse for the tabloid media to debate the wider issues of Political Correctness in public by using an apparently grotesque example of petty censorship. The true facts behind some of these stories (Punch Banned by Chelmsford Council, Punch and Judy Book Banned, Punch Banned from Brighton, Council Bans Blind Punch Man) reveal a different story – as a visit to the *Hits and Myths* section of the Punch and Judy College of Professors website will show – as the original tales become transformed into the journalistically created urban myth of Punch being gradually banned from public society by a rising tide of political correctness. The briefest moment for rational pause would have led to the realisation that even if these 'bans' were indeed occurring as the media reported, then the sheer number of 'unbanned' Punch and Judy Shows taking place each year would reveal the 'bans' to be a statistically insignificant percentage.



Meanwhile, society itself has moved on and the media are reflecting this. The change in mood was indicated in last year's story of Punch being under attack from the Bodmin Women's Rape and Sexual Abuse Centre for causing children to laugh "at a man, woman and child whose only interaction with each other is based on violence," a view uncritically accepted by Bodmin Town Council. There was no even-handed media treatment of this issue. The council became a national laughing stock. And now the news of Punch's 'return' is confirmed, and it is up to Profs and Punch enthusiasts to help spread it with glee. Ol' Red Nose is back in town.

Official



Editorials

FROM THE U.K.

WELL, I'm afraid we've been a bit remiss in keeping up our regular publication schedule but will throw ourselves on the mercy of the court and offer a plea of Punch's Self-Interest. On the U.K. side of the Atlantic, your Editor has been serving Mr. Punch's needs not only through regular touring – but by working on the ambitious project to restore him to adult theatre. Readers will hopefully understand the amount of time and effort that the latter project has consumed. There was an additional need to prepare Mr. Punch for his performances at the Puppeteers of America Festival (so that he didn't let the side down) as well as preparations for the series of Punch workshops at the Festival. This isn't a complaint, you understand, but only a certain number of available hours remain between snapping awake and falling asleep – and they seem to flash by in a way I don't recall them doing when I was at school. But never mind – here we are in print online once more with as eclectic a grab bag of Punchiana as anyone could wish for. We'll need some more, of course, for the next Edition and that is where you all come in. If it relates to Punch or his tradition in the widest sense - be it question, answer, trivia or profundity – then just send it along to glyn@punch-and-judy.com and it will be received with gratitude. Meanwhile you are invited to browse this issue and enjoy.

FROM THE U.S.A.

I'M probably preaching to the choir here, but I have to say it: a chorus of many swazzles is some kind of beautiful music! For the British, this may be a familiar sound, but here in the United States, swazzle symphonies are few and far between. It therefore warmed my heart to hear Glyn and Mary Edwards' Puppet Fest 2005 class of two dozen or so – some newcomers, some professionals – all swazzling with glee. I stood in the hallway (in between Artistic Director-requiring crises) and chuckled and grinned like a fool.

Punch was very much alive and well at Puppet Fest this summer. With two performances, a week-long master class and more, we worked Glyn and Mary pretty hard. Blame it on having two Punch pros on the festival staff – myself, and Workshop Co-Director Chris Griffith. We were insatiable. But so were the 500 members of the festival audience, who gave the Edwards' show a rousing reception. So too, were the participants of filled-to-the-brim workshops. Starved for hands-on, first person "practical Punch" knowledge, they ate it up like chocolate.

I am encouraged, therefore, about the fate of Punch in the world of American puppetry. He thrives.

And how about all of you? How does Punch fare in your corner of the universe? Around the World With Mr.

~ *Glyn Edwards, Worcestershire*



Punch is ready and waiting for your contributions. We'd love to hear from you.

And as for Punch, I know we'll hear more of him.

Oh, there I go. I'm grinning again. :-))

~ *Diane Rains, Minnesota*

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Devils, Babies and Osama bin Laden

by Glyn Edwards

PART TWO of TWO

READERS will recall that this Journal (with its readership of fellow Profs and Punch enthusiasts) seemed the appropriate place in which to document the adult Punch and Judy show I've been working on with fellow Prof Martin Bridle, commissioned by us from UK theatrical maverick Ken Campbell. In this concluding part we place on record what the production contained.

WELL, what *should* a Punch and Judy Show for adults look in the 21st Century? And what should Old Red Nose get up to? And how exactly should the drama end? These were questions that we spent a great deal of time discussing in fine detail. And what fun it was – because it forced Martin and I go into parts of Mr. Punch's mindset far outside the normal boundaries we play within. All Profs know that you pitch the show differently to an audience of 10 year olds than you do to an audience of 5 year olds. Similarly a large family audience at a public event needs a different approach to a student audience in a drama class. But what about a no-holds barred adult audience? That would be the equivalent of off-road driving rather than taking advantage of paved highways and standard traffic safety regulations – and could end in a painful crash.

We decided that we were aiming at a theatre-going audience (as opposed, say, to an alcohol fuelled stag or hen night crowd) and that the intention was to let Mr. Punch address adult themes within his familiar format. Here, then is an outline of what the show contained. We knew it was a viable proposition when we realised that – just like in a normal Punch show – you could write the running order out as a list of different routines.

The overall premise was simple. In Act One actor/ventriloquist Josh Darcy introduced his vent figure to the audience as “story structuralist and puppet lifestyle-guru Edgar McBear” who's aim was to bring Mr. Punch's show up to date for the 21st Century. Us two Profs were his students in the exercise and were each sent to our respective booth to await instructions. Act Two of the play would be a complete performance of the updated Punch show arising out of Act One.

Act One running order:

Introductions: Edgar McBear - and his students - are introduced to the audience and his masterclass commences.

'Rooti-tooti-tooits': An introductory sequence playing around the idea of Mr. Punch's unusual vocal technique – and the fact that he wouldn't be making any changes to it in the interests of modernisation.



Graveyard Sequence: A re-enactment parody in the style of a black and white horror movie (with black and white puppets) and based upon Victorian gothic writer Erick, Count Stenbok's reminiscence of a macabre Punch show he'd seen as a child.

Kasper scene: Loosely based on a long-lost routine mentioned in the works of Stenbok and featuring Kasper's fight with a Devil which triplicates itself. The previous edition of this Journal has construction pictures of the Devil trick puppet. (We opted to perform this routine in a childish, stylised fashion - to a soundtrack of oompah music - as befits the namby pamby puppet Kasper has become).

Updating the plot (i): Having by now (in a roundabout way) set Mr. Punch in his cultural/historical context for the benefit of theatre goers who knew little about him we could air ways in which he and the plot of his show could be updated. Letting Judy have an affair was one new plotline. In a solo show it would require Punch and the baby to be on the Prof's hands whilst (by hitching up the front of the booth) Judy and her lover in flagrante could be operated by the Prof's knees.

IVF Sequence: A set of quins for Punch and Judy would be an appropriate updating of the baby business. A routine involving an ovarian extractor, some comedy sperm and a cervical catheter (all looking remarkably like comedy props from a cookery routine) brought the house down every time it was seen.

Pulcinella Sequence: In the guise of filling in some missing background on Punch's ancestry, we performed the 'hanging the hangman' routine from the Pulcinella/Punch stories. This was to set up a traditional routine we would be updating later.

Makeovers: It was agreed that Punch would need to stay traditionally dressed - the plotline reason given for this being that he is a bizarre children's party entertainer and this is his stage wear. Judy, however, was put in the Acme Makeover Booth and emerged with a fake tan, silicone implants (and matching rear), baseball cap, denim skirt with white leather belt, and a pony tail.

Updating the plot (ii): To add more actual plot than a Punch and Judy Show normally contains, it was decided to appropriate one from film noir. Judy (now written in to suffer from high blood pressure and a weak heart) would undergo a fatal heart attack at the sight of Punch apparently being murdered by his mistress. Pretty Polly (a character from the Beggar's Opera) was updated to become Kylie.



(After the first performances of the show Kylie's withdrawal from touring on medical grounds saw our topical character change to J.Lo). The complexities of the 'fake death' plot were deemed in need of setting up in this Act 1 exposition – although they ultimately proved not to have needed this. It is also decided that the Doctor should be updated to a psychiatrist; the Policeman to a Riot Policeman and that Joey the Clown should become Ken Dodd (veteran Brit comic!) on the grounds he may be as old – but at least he's still alive. The Foreign Gentleman should become Osama bin Laden.



Obscene Oriental Punch: Having set up the format for a 21st Century Punch and Judy Show it remained to lay one expectation to rest. We would be cheating if we failed to address the fact that Mr. Punch's hump, hat, nose, chin and stick are perceived by those who perceive these things to be a collection of phallic symbols. How would we acknowledge this? The answer was created from two sources: one, a passing reference from Erik, Count Stenbok to the oriental Punch being chiefly obscene; the other a recollection that in at least one Trickster tale (a Native American one), the phallus is detached by the hero and sent on a quest of its own. Thus we concocted a completely spurious ancient Punch fragment involving a fight over a geisha between a fierce samurai warrior and a Red Nosed Samurai endowed with a remarkable weapon. When the latter is sliced off, it pursues the warrior to exact vengeance (noisily but offstage) before returning to unlock the door of a prison to release the languishing Red Nosed Samurai. The

detachable golden member (which worked rather like a caterpillar rod puppet and was known backstage as the Golden Willy) was to prove useful at the climax of the entire play.

A twenty minute interval allowed us to re-set the stage in order to perform Act Two 'in widescreen' (by putting a connecting playboard between the two Punch booths). With Josh Darcy acting in the traditional 'bottler' role and us two Profs working in tandem in the big booth, we were able to mount a pell mell 21st Century Punch show which put into practice all the material jested about in Act One.

Act Two running order.

At home with Punch & Judy: A short sequence reminding all concerned that this hungover Punch is, in fact, a reprobate kids entertainer who's being told by his assertive (frying pan wielding) partner to get his act together and look after the quins whilst she goes 'shopping'.

Judy and her lover: Flaps in the lower part of the booth opened to reveal a 'knee puppetry' sequence. This is a speciality of the author, and demonstrated that face painted knees atop hairy legs dressed in scanty costumes could get huge laughs out of the amorous gropings of Judy and her secret lover.

Quins routine: Punch attempts to look after five babies simultaneously. Four were two squabbling sets of identical twins (the construction details of which were detailed in the previous issue), and the fifth was demonically possessed of a green face, extending neck, rotating head and the ability to projectile vomit (and to quote from "The Exorcist"). Punch lulls the former to sleep with a mallet and dispatches the latter by walloping it with a crucifix.

Punch meets Kylie: Judy returns from her lovers tryst and, upon learning that her quins have been "abducted by aliens", fetches her frying pan to Punch and exits. Kylie makes an appearance and she and Punch indulge in a passionate whirlwind affair interrupted only by Kylie's incessant mobile phone. They hatch a plan to dispose of Judy by faking a lovers tiff in which Punch is stabbed with a dummy knife in order to trigger Judy's fatal heart attack. The plan succeeds but Punch is left in the lurch when Kylie dumps him after a further mobile phone call.

Policeman routine: An excessively aggressive riot policeman on horseback enters and after verbally assaulting both Punch and his own horse has his head rammed up the horse's backside by Mr. Punch who attempts to ride it away. The horse throws Punch.

Doctor routine: Hearing a disturbance a medical practitioner arrives. He proves to be a psychiatrist fixated on electro-shock therapy as the cure for all disturbances. During a series of questions and answers he unpacks his equipment, connects Punch to the voltage and leaves to switch it on. Punch is convulsed by the current and when the returning psychiatrist asks him how he feels, Punch replies "O.K." and knocks his head clean off his shoulders.

The kids party: A parent arrives from the kids party at which Punch is booked to entertain. The kiddies are all ready and seated on the mat ready for the show. He leaves them in Punch's hands. In breezy kiddy entertainer mode Punch sends the first member of his audience on a one-way trip using a magicians vanishing cabinet; he face-paints the second by upending it in a bucket of emulsion; he saws the third in half in another magic trick (allowing the two halves to run off separately) and he sits the fourth down in front of a small Punch and Judy Show where it is eaten by a crocodile. (Dear readers, it has to be said that this was the routine which never failed to reduce real children's entertainer/ Profs to helpless tears of laughter.)

The counting routine: The parent returns and asks where Punch's audience has gone. Punch says he's disposed of them – and with his outsize magic wand disposes of the parent as well. With the bottler's help he pulls up a huge bin-full of all the puppets disposed of so far in the show. He asks for a calculator to total the sum. He is interrupted by the arrival of Ken Dodd who starts his act ("By Jove, the audience has passed out drunk. This must be Glasgow.") Punch disposes of Ken Dodd and adds him to the pile.





Osama: Osama enters and assumes that a martyrdom operation has been underway. Passing himself off as Irish (O'Sama from the Emerald Isle) he attempts to recruit Mr. Punch and brings him a suicide belt. Using the standard dialogue from the hanging sequence, Punch gets Osama to show him how to work it and Osama blows himself up.

Topical stuff: George W. Bush appears in pursuit of Osama, assisted by Tony Blair in clerical dress. Punch disposes of them and puts them through the sausage machine. Foul mouthed Celebrity Chef Gordon Ramsey appears and replaces Punch's sausage machine with a catering sized version. Various celebrities are named as being overdue for a sausage stuffing – and appropriate sausages appear from the machine. These include celebrity puppets – including Kermit-coloured sausages with little Kermit-style neck frills. The Devil suddenly appears. (Fortunately for us Gordon Ramsey's TV shows during the performance period had been "Hell's Kitchen" and "Kitchen Nightmares" respectively, making this a natural link) Gordon Ramsey is stuffed into his own sausage machine and Punch – who has hitherto avoided Ramsey – reappears

The denouement: Ending the show - like ending any Punch show - gave us much pause for thought. We opted for looking at movie style plot cliché endings: notably the scenes where James Bond is finally trapped by the evil genius. ("So glad you could join me Mr. Bond. Heh heh.") In our version, the Devil has, in fact, lured Punch to arrive at this moment. He plans to defeat him by enlisting the countless other devils defeated over the centuries by Kasper, Pulcinella and the rest of Punch's relatives. Whilst Punch battles them, the Devil gets himself behind Punch and tips him into the sausage machine. As Punch becomes sausage meat the Devil sings a song of triumph when suddenly....

.....the Golden Willy, last seen rescuing the Red Nosed Samurai at the end of Act One, appears above the sausage machine and throws the mechanism into reverse. Back go the sausages, out comes Mr. Punch who stuffs the Devil into the machine. Finally the machine is fed into itself to produce a string of silver sausages - and to preclude the Devil from returning the same way. Punch dances in triumph and says his goodbyes.

Successful performances have been given to date at the 'Objectivity' season of adult puppetry and the 'Dynamics 05 International Puppet Festival' both held at the Midlands Arts Centre, Birmingham (UK). The independent assessor for Arts Council England described it as "Thrillingly different. It was interesting, highly entertaining and clearly surprised most of its audience. It seems certain to enjoy a longer life". And that longer life is in hand. The Midlands Arts Centre New Work Trust has pledged further financial support as has the Arts Council. This support in getting Mr. Punch back into the world of adult theatre is very welcome because after a long, long spell in - or near to - the nursery his wider artistic credentials in adult circles are no longer what they once were. What us Profs were delighted to have discovered, though, is that Old Red Nose certainly still has it in him to work for adults. The project has now brought on board an experienced independent producer from the small scale theatre circuit and has great hopes of undergoing some exciting new developments before going on tour sometime towards the end of 2006.



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Punch's Postbag

Punch and Santa

Hello,

We recently uploaded a dvd-quality mpeg of Santa Claus' Punch & Judy (1948) to the [Internet archive](#).

You probably have this film already, but if not, you surely need it! Yours,
Germaine Fodor at www.avgeeks.com.

This is one of my favourite archive Punch shows. If you've not seen this film of America's George Prentice in action you need to! Forget British Punch and Judy so far as the storyline is concerned and watch a virtuoso performance of timing and raw energy. Yes it's Politically Incorrect – but so were the 1940s. The way the movie has been edited contributes to the disjointed and episodic nature of the show but the riotous anarchy of the

performance just leaps off the screen and makes you wish you'd been there to see a live show. Look, too, at some of the reviews posted by uncomprehending PC critics and smile. Prentice was a Variety/Vaudeville performer who played Broadway as well as the London Palladium. His show is distinctive and un-reproducible. Ed.

Circus Punch

Dear Sirs,

I have received a set of Punch and Judy puppets from my mother who is 86 and lives in Florida. Some years ago she bought them from a lady who worked for the Barnum & Bailey Circus. Stamped on the figures is a manufacture's make, Febs Figures. The date of these I am told is from the 20's or 30's. Can you help in identifying these puppets or the company which made them. Thank you very much for any help you can provide.

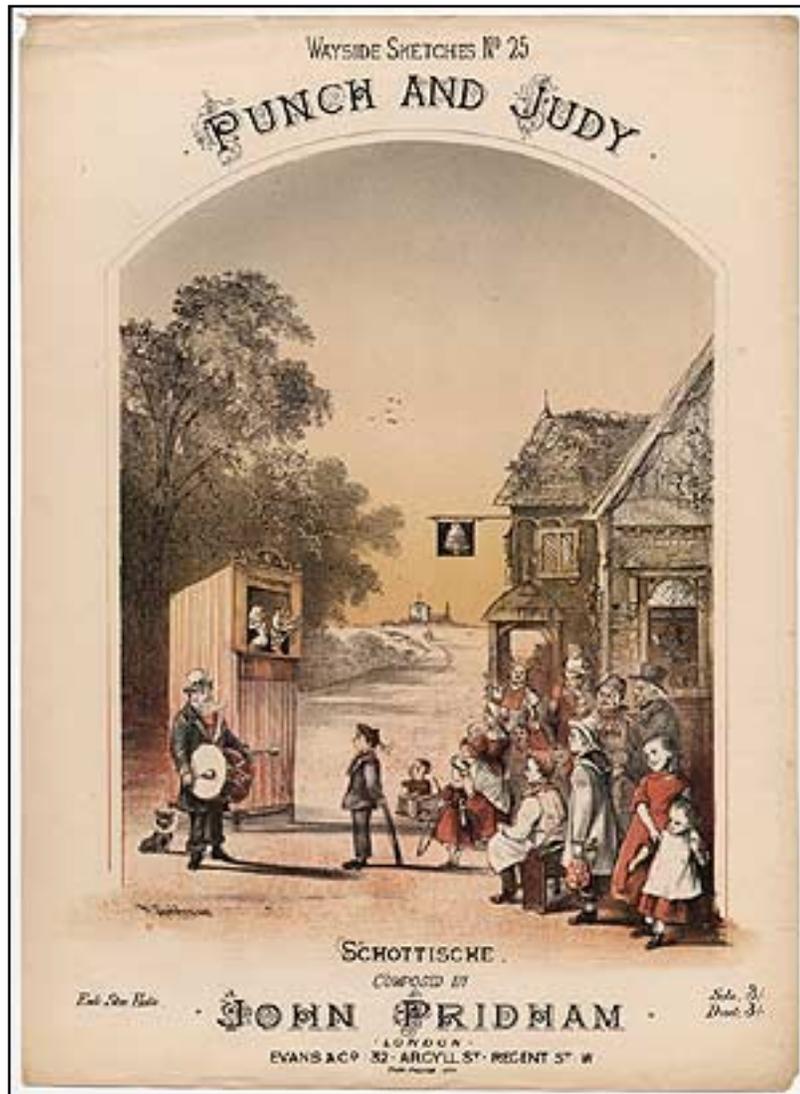
Sincerely, Frank Barletta: Philadelphia

The unforeseen delay in compiling this issue means that the question has already been answered! Ed.

After searching your lead I finally got my answer. As it turned out the FEB stand for Foy E. Brown a noted American ventriloquist maker, who also did some puppets. Thank you. Frank Barletta.

Can anyone contribute further information about Foy E. Brown? Ed.

Musical Punch



Hi, There are some nice puppets on display here www.peopleplayuk.org.uk as well as this Schottische sheet music cover.

Best, Trev Hill.

*Trev is a regular contributor of useful links and this one is no exception. It takes you to the homepage of the UK's Theatre Museum website. Click on **Timelines>puppets** to find Punch and Judy information and image.*

Ed.



Red-Nosed Miscellany



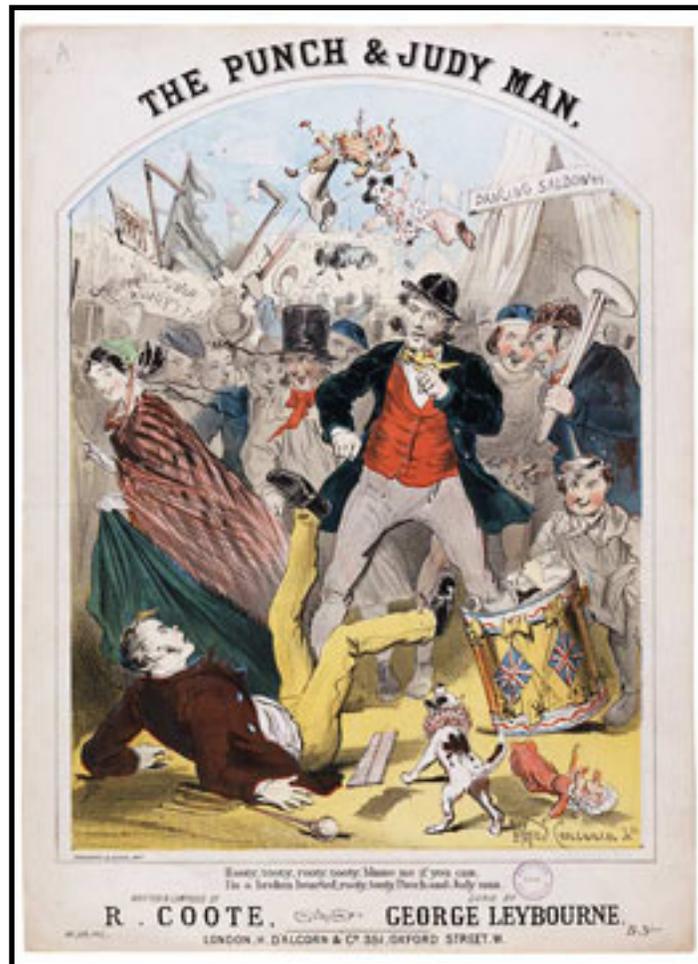
Black Punch

DIANE Houk (Missouri) forwards this enlarged image of a Victorian girl cradling what looks like a black Punch figure. Can anyone shed any light on this? Is it what it looks like – or has the original printing process in some way affected the reproduction? Given the era from which it dates it is remarkably free of the racial caricaturing of the face that was prevalent at the time. This is an interesting and intriguing image to which I hope someone can provide further clues.

Saddam Shame

BRENT de Witt hit the UK media in the Summer with a story about Council officials at Broadstairs in Kent (where Charles Dickens used to holiday) telling him to drop the puppets of Osama Bin Laden and Saddam Hussein cast as the show's sausage stealing pantomime villains. The original news item was featured by the BBC and other media on August 9th and made its way round the world – finishing up the *The Sunday Times* of Aug 14th under the heading 'Wet Blankets of the Week'. The Council were "unable to say" how many complaints they were responding to by taking this action. Profs are assuming it could have been as few as one – accompanied by a knee-jerk reaction of panic by the council's duty PR officer. As has been proved so many times in recent years, any attempt to appease a would be censor in the audience only provokes a backlash of scorn in the media which puts the appeaser in a far worse light than if they had they made a stand on behalf of Mr. Punch. Brent de Witt handled the whole affair with appropriate sang froid and aplomb in true Brit style. which is probably why the media never discovered that he is – in fact – a visitor from America. We'll never know what fun they would have had with that as their story!

The Punch and Judy Man



A FURTHER find from the Theatre Museum website (see letters page). To locate this image follow *Timelines>A Night At The Theatre*. The ditty was sung by George Leybourne (catapulted to fame by the song “Champagne Charlie”). He was – says the website – “The Victorian equivalent of a film star and lived the lifestyle to match his image, riding around London in his own carriage and four horses, with a selection of beautiful women. He dressed the part too, in a shiny top hat and fur collared coat and grew huge whiskers known as ‘Piccadilly Weepers’. His lifestyle caught up with him eventually and he died in 1884 at the age of 42.” But where did his ‘Punch and Judy Man’ song fit into all this? We can see from the cover that the puppets are flying through the air and someone has put his foot through the big drum and knocked someone else to the ground? There’s also a demure young lady by-stander. Zooming in to two lines of chorus printed at the bottom reveals the words “Rooty Tooty Rooty Tooty blame me if you can/I’m a broken hearted (indecipherable) Punch and Judy Man” But what’s the full story – and how does the tune go?

In Memoriam

IT is with sadness that we must note the passing of two important members of Mr. Punch's Hall of Fame. This year Old Red Nose lost veteran American Prof (amongst his other many talents) Jay Marshall: a regular visitor to Britain and a Punch performer of the highest rank. At a far younger age British professor Michael Stone (Sgnt. Stone) also finally succumbed to a long illness. It is Sgnt. Stone who is generally credited with coining the defence of Punch that runs "Mr. Punch no more encourages violence than Goldilocks and the Three Bears encourages squatting". He gave Mr. Punch a good run for his money over the years bringing controversy and a devil-may-care take on life that can only be celebrated as "That's the way to do it!".

Both Profs were true originals who left their mark on an often too bland world.



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Beyond The Basic

by Glyn Edwards

This section was inspired by an enjoyable series of advanced workshops I was fortunate enough to be asked to run during the recent Puppeteers of America *Puppet Fest 2005*. Discussing Punch performance techniques in detail with a crowd of like-minded persons is my idea of fun (“Get a life” I can hear detractors cry – but Mr. Punch can deal with them). Mindful, too, that practising Profs amongst our readership regularly ask for more performance related articles I figured that there was room for some shared information of an advanced nature. This material assumes you have already mastered the basics of a Punch and Judy Show and want to wade into some deeper waters. If you want to share any thoughts or ask any questions just get in touch: glyn@punch-and-judy.com .

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- I came across this by accident at a Festival when alternating shows (out

of one shared booth) with Prof. Clive Chandler. A ‘clever’ child who had seen Clive’s show but not mine started calling out to tell my Policeman what was going to happen next. My Policeman – who does a completely different routine – thus found himself being talked through a new set of moves by a child he’d never met before. By playing along with this it looked to the adults in the audience as if an inspired bit of lengthy ad libbing with the audience was taking place – when in fact it was quite a simple exercise. From there it was just a short step to doing this at other events for no reason (well, usually the reason was to ring the changes in a multi-performance day). If you throw your own set of moves for a given routine away - assuming the routine is one that will lend itself to this - and allow your characters to ask the audience how to proceed, they will probably suggest things that you were going to do anyway. You can thus follow their instructions whilst working your way through a selection of your own moves in a different order. What you lose in carefully plotted structure you gain by the appearance of creating the show on the spot in partnership with your audience. Occasionally they will even suggest a variation you’d never thought of before. Trying this out isn’t as scary as it sounds. You can easily get back onto your familiar track whenever you want (or if your audience isn’t up to the challenge).

- John Rudlin’s book *Commedia dell’ Arte: an actor’s handbook* (ISBN 0-415-04769-2) contains words of wisdom for actors playing Commedia which have huge relevance to Punch performers. He reminds us that the different characters each have a different relationship, or rapport, with the audience. It’s very easy as a solo performer just to keep two (or possibly three) main relationships going. There’s THE relationship that Punch must strike up with them; there’s the relationship between the Prof and the audience; and there’s the relationship between the audience and the puppet on the Prof’s other hand. Punch’s rapport is constant – but the others have a range of options. The characters on the Prof’s other hand don’t all have to have an identical rapport with the crowd – and it is surprising how many Profs don’t realise this. Many shows are played with Punch having one attitude and all the other characters (including the Prof) having a second one. Sometimes there are but two voices: a swazzle and the voice of the Prof (with a nominal falsetto for Judy if it’s a male Prof). If we were talking about pictures – these would just be in black and white. But if you stop to give each of the puppets a voice and a viewpoint of their own (however lightly sketched in) the show gains immeasurably. If you extend this to the way they treat the audience you open up new horizons. I discovered, for instance, that although both my Policeman and my Devil were endeavouring to enlist the help of the audience in catching Punch I was getting two completely different

routines out of the same bit of plot. The policeman treated the audience as potential witnesses and asked their help in locating a miscreant and the Devil insulted the audience and ordered them about. Thus the audience would do whatever the policeman asked – but the exact opposite of whatever the Devil told them to do. This is the most extreme example I can offer, but it's worth looking for other opportunities to have your cast find their own relationship with the audience. If Judy, Joey, the Policeman and the rest all have similar voices and all treat the audience the same way, the show won't keep your audience engaged and interested for the same length of time as if they do. The Prof, too, doesn't have to restrict his rapport to that with the audience. He may start this rapport with them outside the booth during the warm-up and he or she may then continue it - as a disembodied voice - once inside. The Prof can thus keep talking to the audience or *to Mr. Punch* or *to any other of the puppets*. It's even possible for the puppets to acknowledge the puppeteer and talk back (or make comments to the audience about the offstage puppeteer). You don't need to feature this heavily, but it is an option open to you that would allow one more little 'moment' in your show that lifts it above the mundane.

- Part of the delivery of a good Punch and Judy Show lies not just in the timing but in the rhythm. Those whacks, cracks, knocks, bumps and bangs as the puppets duck and dive and dodge is – along with the swazzle – an essential part of the soundtrack. Little snatches of rhyme, the occasional song chorus, the natural rhythm of the call-and-response routines; they all contribute significantly to putting across the spirit of the Punch and Judy Show: that essence which takes an outrageous plotline and spins it from tragedy to a universal comedy. So why not help it along? Some performers use a harmonica in a rack along with additional percussion novelties attached (sirens duck-calls and the rest) to punctuate the action. It's your own solo version of those percussionists in the orchestra pit who provide the comic effects for comic acrobatic routines and other physical comedy. If this is too much to attempt, then upright slapsticks mounted within the proscenium arch on either side of the playboard can also lend extra percussive moments as your puppets collide with them and bounce off. You can even rig the playboard into a form of giant slapstick by adding a second thin layer of wood or suchlike. The latter takes a bit of trial and error but to my taste the end result is worth it if you can get an extra comic beat out of the noise your puppet makes as it makes contact with the playboard after a whack from a slapstick. Knockabout comedy plays more comically if you can punctuate the knockabout with sounds and, after all, the actor's slapstick in pantomime was once enhanced on occasion by a pinch of gunpowder

between the sides. Come to think of it a child's toy 'cap gun' cap wedged in the slapstick that Punch uses on the Devil should work just as well. I must bid you hasty adieu and adjourn to the Punch Lab to try it out!



Toby's Tailpiece



(Very) Old Punch Showman In Trouble

***PENNY** Francis has forwarded this splendid snippet which she discovered in Edward Gordon Craig's magazine "The Marionette" dated 1910. There are some truly fascinating points to note. Firstly, its date of 1825 places the incident right at the early days of The Punch and Judy Show as we've come to know it and prior to the Payne-Collier script. Secondly is the remarkable parallel (well not the treadmill punishment maybe) between the legal situation of performing Punch then and the similar theoretical situation faced by UK busking Profs today under the new Licensing Bill, and thirdly there is the overwhelming public sympathy shown for the plight of the Punch puppeteer which has echoed down to this day. Further conclusions are drawn by Craig himself in his own Editor's footnote. The reference to the play 'The Maid and the Magpie' suggests that this was show (marionette or glove puppet?) in which Punch was the dominant comedian in a well know story. Perhaps one of our erudite*

readers knows more and can explain? But what a tantalising glimpse it gives of a human interest story from a time when Punch himself is made to say "I've travell'd full a hundred years". He's now been around longer since that remark than he had been up to the point when he made it!

PUNCH'S ADDRESS ON HIS MASTER'S RECENT IMPRISONMENT. 1825

A CUTTING FROM AN OLD ENGLISH NEWSPAPER

WE have received the following doggerel lines from a Correspondent at Minster, in allusion to the recent imprisonment of MIDDLETON, for performing without leave of the Magistrates of that portion of the County.

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What is this I hear! sure it can't be true!
Such things before, faith I never knew!
My master taken — sent to jail —
Refused the privilege of bail —
There to trudge and labour hard
Before he has in court been heard;
This can't be right, else I'm much mistaken,
And by reason surely am forsaken.
'Tis true I've never studied much the law,
Nor puzz'd my brain on politics or war;
But this I've always understood,
The maxim too, I think is good, —
"That innocent each man is thought
I'll so hold he is brought",
But in this case, my master is detained
And punished, while his character's sustain'd.
What's the indictment? O, let me see!
Thus runs the matter, neatly as may be,
"A certain interlude, or play,
Was acted on a certain day,"
Thus did my master, so say you,
But proof they have not got as yet;
And if old punch ought of thee know,
No play is this, no, it's call'd a show.

WHAT is this, I
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My master taken -
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Refused all privilege
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But in this case, my
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And punish'd while
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What's the
indictment? O, let me
see!
Thus runs the matter,
nearly as may be;

But what surprised me
more than all, is this -
That I so long should
travel, hit or miss:
I've travell'd full a
hundred years,
Exciting mirth,
dispelling cares;
My duty in each place
I've done,
With PRISBY and
with MIDDLETON;
Both Lawyer, Doctor,
Magistrate and Cit
Their sides have held,
when I've displayed
my wit.

What I have done, for
clearly it was me
Committed these
atrocious acts, not
thee;
My family, with heads
of wood,
Performed a play of
moral good;
Those who know the
play this can't deny;
It's name, the Maid
and the Magpie.
Consult your law-
books pray, and there
you'll find.
That plays were made
to please the human
mind.

My friends will all
believe me when I say
My family are moral
in their way;

“A certain interlude,
or play,
Was acted on a certain
day.”
Thus did my master
so say p...t,
But proof they have
not got as yet:
And if old punch
ought of thee know
No play is this, no,
it’s call’d a show.

If wooden heads can,
by their art,
A moral lesson now
impart,
And strive with
virtue’s advocate
All bad practices to
eradicate;
Take this for granted,
tho’ some may chop
them.
None but wooden
heads will try to stop
them.

~ *OLD PUNCH*
(1825)

Mr. Marsham appeared as Counsel for the prosecution, but instead of applying to the Court to “further punish the said offender”, he offered to consent that the conviction should be quashed, if Mr. Pollock, who was retained for the prisoner, would undertake “not to bring any action at law for what had been done”! After some delay, Mr. Pollock consented to this, and “the offender” was discharged forthwith not a little the worse for the Performance he had been through upon the wheel; and he was taken back to his disconsolate spouse at Minster, by Mr. Henry Harnett, who had very handsomely come forward to assist the poor fellow; and such was the joy of the inhabitants of Minster, that they proceeded with music, flags, etc. to Monkton to meet “the Offender” ; and when a chaise came in sight, all was prepared to testify their joy, but it was discovered to be the chaise containing the Overseer, who certainly received very strong expressions of dislike from the persons then and there assembled. Ultimately the poor performer was taken into Minster in triumph, the chaise being drawn by the people.

What is valuable here is that it gives us the names of two Puppet players, Prisby and Middleton, and also shows one of the family of Pollock, ever good friends of the Theatre in England, coming to the support of Mr. Punch. Editor.

