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Marionettes: How To Make And Work Them



Synopsis

This is the complete book of marionette craft — from making heads and constructing bodies to stringing the marionettes on one- and two-hand controls, operating the marionettes, and putting on your own shows. Four books by Helen Fling have been brought together to make this volume. Their wealth of illustrations, tricks, helpful hints and solid, easy-to-follow advice will go far toward making your performances successful, enjoyable, and creative. In the first section, full details are given on making puppet and marionette heads — creating them, molding them, casting them, making them out of plastic wood and papier-mâché, painting them, and adding character details such as noses and wigs. The second section tells, in equal detail, how to make hands, feet, legs, arms, and bodies with a variety of methods for joining the parts together, taping, painting, finishing, and placing screw-eyes for mechanical perfection. The third section shows how to construct marionette controls, how to string your marionettes, and how to manipulate your controls for the movements, postures, gestures, and tricks. Costume and character details are also covered. By the end of this section both you and your characters should be ready to perform. The final section covers the details of marionette show production — building a stage, lighting, scenery, sound effects, curtain-drops, and presentation. One complete play, with full details on stage props, marionettes, and background, is included. More than 400 helpful illustrations show every step of marionette craft from conception and construction to performance. Beginners will find this book to contain everything they need to know to construct marionettes and present their own shows. Puppeteers will find the chapter on head-making equally suited to their craft. Those who have some experience with marionettes will find the sections on tricks, alternate procedures, and professional methods to greatly increase their abilities to build marionettes and create a variety of new effects and successful marionette performances.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

This is a Dover reprint which consolidates in one book four previously published mini-volumes on aspects of puppetry (primarily marionettes though some hand puppet specifics are given and there is overlap between the two), including 1) making puppet heads; 2) making and assembling puppet bodies (human form), including hands and feet; 3) making one- and two- handed control sticks and stringing plus costuming, manipulation basics, props, storage, and limited discussion of animal puppet construction; and 4) stage design and construction, stagecraft, backdrop designs, production suggestions, and a sample script. All four sections are profusely and clearly illustrated with literally hundreds of line drawings, which are both technically useable and quite charmingly humorous. The text, like the illustrations, simply and clearly presents steps in construction of puppets from beginning to end. I have been researching puppetry books in the past year and think this is one of the best practical construction manuals still in print. It provides a great deal of information at an extremely reasonable price. Because of the funny illustration style and the simple and straightforward text, it would make an excellent textbook for teaching children (and adults who do not take themselves too seriously) the fundamentals of string puppetry. Most "how-to" books include photographs; this one does not, and in my experience illustrations can sometimes misrepresent how to accomplish certain tasks, leading to confusion and mistake. This book is, happily, not guilty of that failing. Prospective purchasers should also be aware that no historical information is included.

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I wanted to make a marionette of my own so I ordered up this book. Like the reviewers before me stated it's a good book for the money but it has 30 year old information. Many of the materials used in this book are really dated! Like using leather and shellac! I would have enjoyed it much more if the book was revised to include all the great new materials available today!

So I love puppets / marionettes. I bought this as a bit of a splurge item because I really just wanted to see what goes into making them and then I'd decide whether or not I wanted to take on a new craft or not. This book is a good starting point. It did give me a good idea of what goes into making a marionette. As others have said, the images are a bit dated, but that's okay, while simple it's done well. My only real gripe is that there is a large chunk of the book taken up by a play and how you would put it on. I'd really rather see that space used for more advanced tricks and techniques on how to make even better / more advanced marionettes. For example - there is little to nothing on how to handle eyes in this book (I can sum up all it says on the subject with they should be larger than normal and shellac them after painting them - when I wanted to know about making moveable ones). Same with mouths - the only really details information on a mouth is one page on making a dog mouth open. I'd really rather have had all of that space used on that play given to those kinds of things. You'll surely want to supplement this with other books or information found online - possibly even when making basic marionettes but still, as a beginner guide it does offer a fair amount of information.

I am glad I got it, because I like puppet books, but the line drawings are sometimes difficult to understand, and the book often makes things seem very quick and simple, when in fact it can take a long time, for instance, to carefully cover a small puppet hand with paper mache, then finish it. I like the book because it specializes in marionettes, and I love the cover design.

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