

Bawdy puppets also tug at heartstrings

BY JERRY WASSERMAN, SPECIAL TO THE PROVINCE DECEMBER 2, 2013



Ronnie Burkett's marionettes are not for kids, unless they are into striptease, dirty jokes, aging divas, and puppet-human sex.

His show at The Cultch, The Daisy Theatre, is a sophisticated, partly improvised cabaret has some of the funniest adult theatre you'll see.

The beautifully designed two-foot-tall puppet characters have detailed facial features, finely articulated bodies and fabulous costumes. Burkett brings them vividly to life. Dolly Wiggler shakes and shimmies, takes off her dress and drops it with her tiny marionette

hand: ba-boom! You laugh at the audacity of a puppet stripper and marvel at the puppeteer who can give her such lifelike skills. Often you forget Burkett is there, although he operates the marionettes in plain view. The show belongs to the characters, most past their prime but living lives with passion.

Librarian Inez Throckmorton shows us how, late in life, she learned to twerk. Manny Teufel, accountant turned fast-talking devil, offers us a deal for our souls. Esme Massengill performs her erotic dance with the help of a male audience member. The X-rated things Esme does to her helper you'll have to see to believe.

While the dominant flavour is naughty and bawdy, the show can be deeply human. Edna Rural unconsciously strokes the doily that covers her armchair while telling a moving story about how she tricked her late unromantic husband Stanley into holding her hand.

Daisy Theatre plays The Cultch (1895 Venables St.) to Dec. 15. Tickets are \$33 at tickets.thecultch.com.

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