Theater



'Marvin' presents survivalmessage

By LIZA HOLTMEIER Senior Reporter

The Futz Theatre's fourth season opens tonight with the production of McPherson's award-winning "Marvin's Room."

This dramatic comedy tells the story of Bessie and Lee, two estranged sisters separated by their decisions and priorities. After 20 years their lives converge when Bessie finds she needs a bone-marrow transplant. The show's themes deal with the quest to love others first, and the poignant humor that sometimes occurs with death.

Valerie Devoe, who plays Lee, said the audience will identify and recognize most of the characters.

"It's so real," she explained. "You know people who are like these people, and we deal with things the same way they do."

Because of this identification, the audience can learn from the characters' experiences, Devoe said.

"I think that it really is true that when we give ourselves to others, we do get a gift in return," she said. "There's a lot of love to be gained by giving love to others.

Connie Dillow, who plays Aunt Ruth, added that people will realize "the vibrant love of living that all of us can achieve if we just go and get it."

She said audience members will learn the importance of accepting the tragedies in life, and living above the pain.

The show runs tonight through Saturday and Sept. 25-28 at the Futz Theatre, 124 S. Ninth St. in the Mission Arts Building. Curtain for all performances is at 8 p.m., except on Sept. 28, when it's at 7:30 p.m. Tickets are \$10.65, except for the \$5.33 opening special tonight. Reservations can be made by calling 435-6307.

Round the world

Puppeteering animates folk tales

By JIM GOODWIN A&E Editor

While Hobey Ford's greatest joy may be performing for children, it's when the skeptical eyes of an older audience light up that the puppeteer knows he's breathed vitality into his

"I've had adults walk up to me after a show and say, 'You know, I forgot you were there,'" Ford said. "They were engaged in the life of the puppet, so to speak."

The North Carolina artist will perform his international folk tale hybrid "World Tales" for adults and children alike tonight and Friday at The Wagon Train Project, 512 S. Seventh St. The 7:30 p.m. performances will be followed by question-and-answer sessions.

"World Tales," which Ford has been performing on the road for about three years, is a collection of separately enacted stories from Africa, Greece, China and North America. The only human in his entourage. Ford animates a variety of puppets - including rod, Indonesian-style shadow and Japanese-style Bunraku - for the

Using the Bunraku tradition in the Cherokee Indian tale "Little Grandmother Spider Woman." Ford dons black clothing and manipulates his large puppets while visible to the audience on stage. The form is less mechanical than, say, marionettes, and lends well to the story, Ford said.

The other sections and characters of "World Tales" include an African Ananasi story, featuring a trickster portrayed by a two-dimensional rod puppet; a Chinese dragon king tale performed with shadow puppetry; and Aesop's "The Ant and the Grasshopper," depicted with rod

puppetry.
Ford, inspired to use several techniques, doesn't necessarily correspond his puppet styles with the stories' countries of origin, he said. Instead, he adapts character styles to a story's context, depending on roles, setting and mood.

"I usually don't do an Indonesian story using Indonesian puppets," Ford said. "I look at it theatrically mation call the performance art

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I think the best children's theater doesn't play down to children, which entertains adults too."

AMY LAMPHERE director of Wagon Train Project

story. It's a nice way of working."

When those puppets are wellconstructed and their scenes wellperformed, the result is nothing short of beguiling enchantment, Ford said. Even for adults.

Amy Lamphere, director of The Wagon Train project, admits she was apprehensive about booking an art form not traditionally staged for

"I thought puppets were something you show children," Lamphere said. "I always thought of it as entertainment, not art. Then, it was like boing,' (The Wagon Train Project) would be the perfect setting for this because it's so intimate.

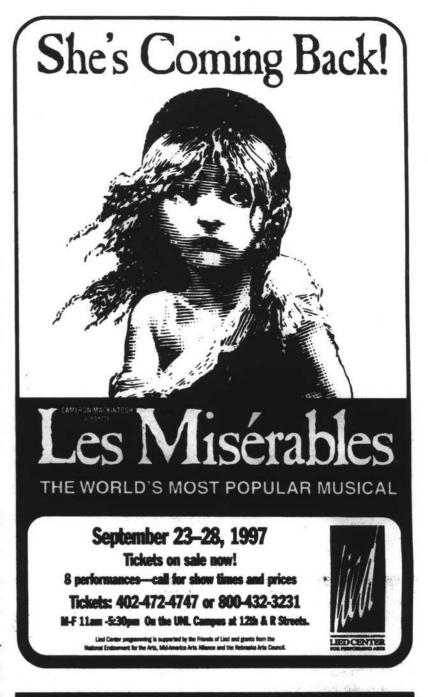
"I think the best children's theater doesn't play down to children, which entertains adults, too."

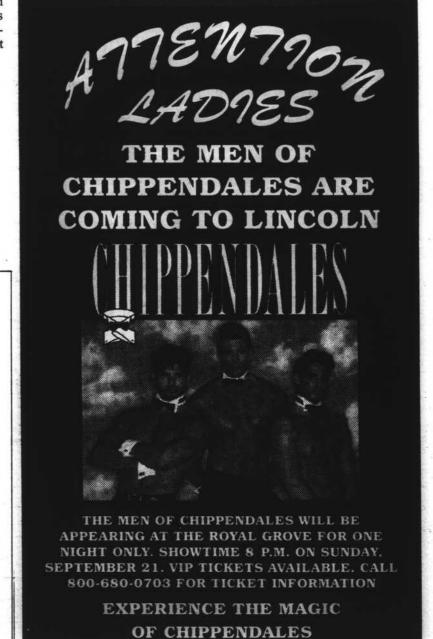
Lamphere's change of heart isn't uncommon for adults who allow themselves to "suspend disbelief, and get involved with the story," ford said.

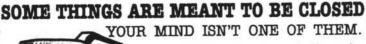
"Children absolutely think it's real," he said. "Then, I noticed adults, who don't expect to see life in an inanimate object. When they do, it becomes very real and magical."

Ford's appearances and those of Mexico City's Teatro Tinglado on Sept. 24 and 25 are part of this year's puppet festival at The Wagon Train Project. Tickets for all shows, which begin at 7:30 p.m., are \$10 for adults and \$5 for students. For more inforand use an appropriate style for that cooperative at 435-7776.

Sunday, Sept. 21 (Jormer Replacement) Slim Dunlap with special guests the sissies Special Acoustic Show









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