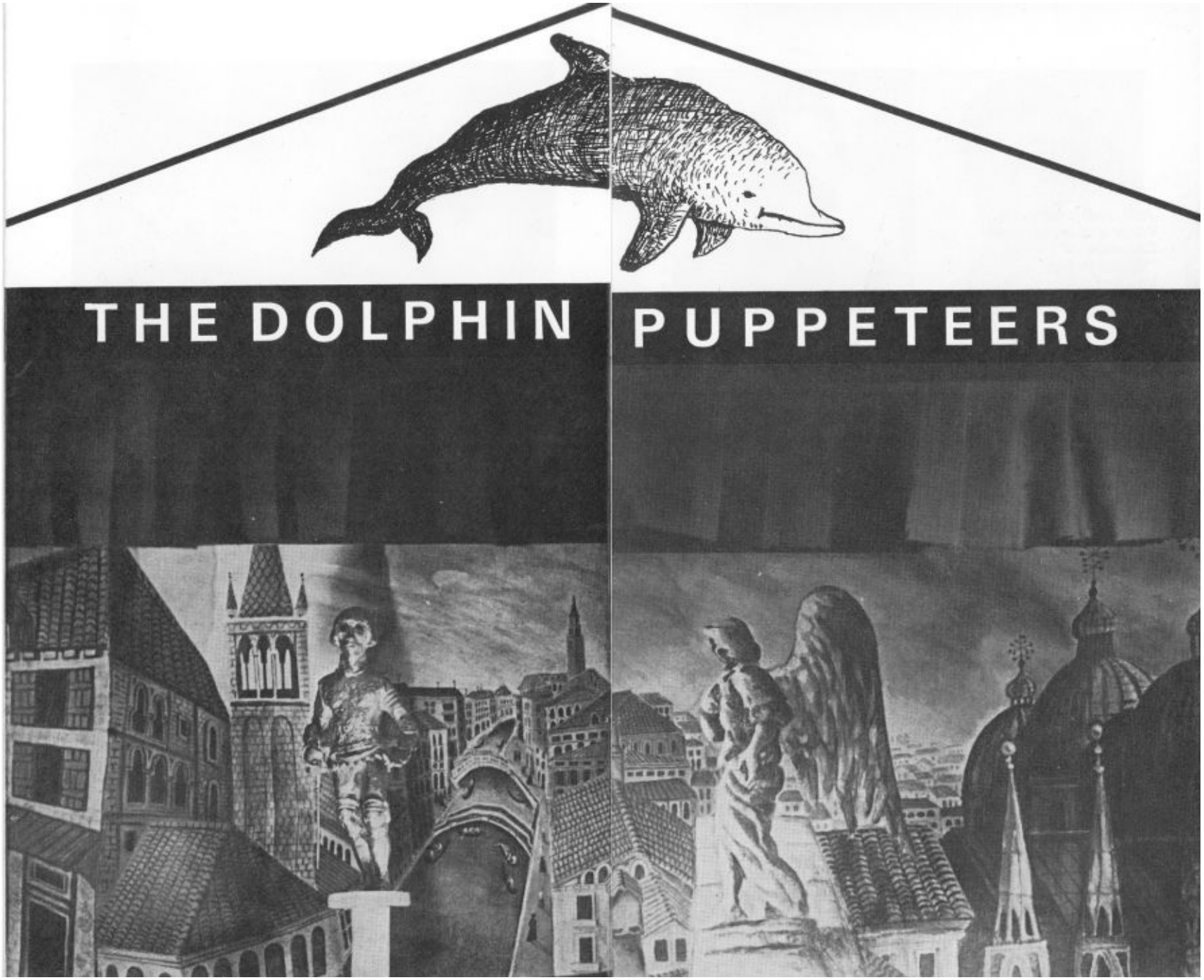
THE DOLPHIN
PUPPETEERS

The Fletcher family form the first team of puppeteers, and perform during the holidays.

WHO ARE THE DOLPHIN PUPPETEERS?

We are a family group: Tana (Producer) and John Fletcher, and our children, Mark, Miranda, Katy and Alexandra. With a mobile theatre, we travel all over Britain, showing plays for charities, to schools, in libraries or at festivals. The props, puppets and scenery are made in our kitchen, by the family. In the summer holidays of 1975 we turned the garden into a workshop: over 20 children came to paint, model, and make props for the new plays. A few of these children still work with us, forming a second team of puppeteers. Professionals and other friends have contributed to our latest plays. The extraordinary support and generosity of these people, and of various dressmakers, sculptors, electricians, and other craftsmen, has been our constant encouragement.

Our special thanks go to John and Lyndie Wright and many others of the Little Angel Marionette Theatre, Islington, who from the start have helped, encouraged and taught us.

The second team of puppeteers: children who join or replace Fletcher puppeteers during term time.

Some of the artists of the Dolphin Workshops.

Barry Hallsworth and Derek Over (Maidenhead Drama Guild) Christian Smith, Davina Ingrams, Gerry Smith.

Victor Stannett. Our master craftsman, and solver of problems.

The Future

The company started by mistake as a family amusement. For me, it became a medium through which certain poetry, stories and music could be visually expressed. As it has grown, it has become clear that puppetry has more to offer than just children's entertainment. In order to try and convince the adult British public of this fact, we are now asking professionals to take part, in order to obtain the highest standard in the finished whole, and show the potential of this under-rated art.
A third team, of adults will be formed soon, as demands during school hours from schools, libraries, teachers' conferences, or festivals, interferes with the education of the first two teams.—T.M.F.

If you would like more information about the Dolphin Puppeteers, please write to: Mrs. J. A. Fletcher, Dolphin Cottage, Altwood Road, Maidenhead, Berks.

PRODUCTIONS

The King's Birthday Cake

Augustus was a chubby lad

Harriet and the Matches

The Selfish Giant

The Happy Prince

Little Black Mingo

Dick and the Magic Milk Bottle

Willy Wind

The Quest for the Pied Piper

John Julius Norwich. Writer and broadcaster. Chairman of "Venice in Peril". Voice of the narrator in the Happy Prince.

Jonathan Cecil. Actor of stage, screen and television. Voice of The Happy Prince.

The Professionals for the Happy Prince

This version of Wilde's story was done specially for "Venice in Peril," after a tour we did raising money for this cause, with some information about the plight of Venice. The play is set in Venice, with Venetian music, and scenes by the illustrator and designer, ERROL LE CAIN, taken from Venetian scenes. All the puppets are modelled and dressed from the great Venetian paintings.

Andrea Welstead Hornby. Theatre designer now working with BBC television. Modelled the Happy Prince. Added her knowledge and experience in the workshops.

Trevor Collis. Sculptor. Cast the Happy Prince.

Errol le Cain. Film designer, animator, illustrator and writer. Painted rolling scenery, ghetto backcloth and directed the animation film in the Happy Prince.

Tanya Burrows and Clare McConnel, the first of the 2nd team to go away to a Festival.

In 1976, near Easter, we gave nine performances to schools in Guernsey. The Deputy Director of Education wrote afterwards:
"There can be no doubt at all of the educational value of your puppet shows. Their great virtue lies in the stimulus they give to so many areas of children's group activity—whether reading stories for suitable plots, writing the plays, speaking the lines, making and painting props and scenery, designing, creating and manipulating the puppets, or devising lighting and sound effects. Literature, music, art and craft, needlework, and elocution are all involved and blended into a single artistic whole that has a real and instant appeal to both children and adults. A number of our teachers and children have clearly caught the infectious enthusiasm you showed during your visit and we are immensely grateful to you."

The photograph on the front of the Souvenir programme is part of ERROL LE CAIN'S rolling scenery in the Happy Prince. All other art work done by Mark Fletcher. Photographs taken by ROBERT DEAN AND THE GUERNSEY PRESS.