

Strings attached

THEATRE/REVIEW

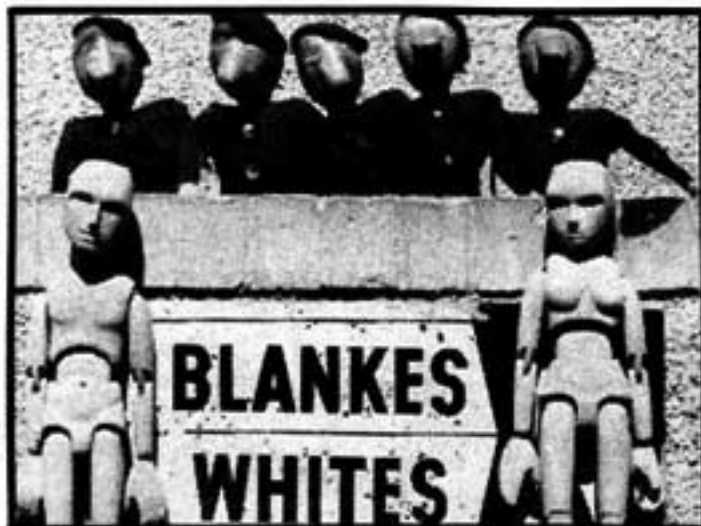
The Creation: Royal Puppet Company

IT IS THE ingenuity of The Royal Puppet Company's "The Creation" that is so gripping. I have never seen anything like their work before; it bubbles with ideas, surprises and audacious use of mixed media.

To explain. Their puppets — except for God and Satan — are not Punch and Judy puppets (They do that work very well, too — try and catch them in Greemarket Square, Cape Town).

Their puppets are string, wire and overhead control ones, about 30mm high, managed by human beings shrouded in what look like black beekeepers' uniforms (This image — the dark figures manipulating mannikins — is one of the most resonant of the show).

"The Creation" is just that, beginning with a diminutive Garden of Eden from whose verdant soil emerges Adam, brushing himself down, then Eve. They talk, but in a Lilliputian language of cooings, grunts and squeaks (I understand that when they believe they are alone, koala bears speak the same way). The plot is familiar: the expulsion from Eden and the steady progress of civilisation from original sin, to violence, revolution,



□ Some of "The Creation" cast

greed and nuclear destruction.

The conventional pessimism of this account of human progress is redeemed by one wrenching scene where Adam dons wings and flies — a back-projection showing a tiny figure aspiring to the sun (He crashes).

The puppets are lifelike, but that is less striking than the vitality of design and decor minds putting the show together. One lovely touch: serried rows of dead bodies litter a battlefield. A hessian cloth is reverently unrolled over them: it is covered with tiny standing crosses. All praise to Karoly Pinter and his troupe for their magic which helps cleanse the doors of perception.

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