

January 17, 2007

To Whom It May Concern:

A few weeks ago, the National Historic Landmark Fulton Opera House was treated to a visit by Marionetas de la esquina. The Marionetas were kind enough to stop by on their way to an engagement at the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts. The company performed their show *Dibújame una vaca* both in English and in Spanish, much to the delight of our audiences, young and old.

The city of Lancaster, Pennsylvania has a largely Hispanic population, but there has never before been a Spanish language performance on the stage of its 155-year-old opera house, the premier performing arts center of the area. That audiences here had two opportunities to hear the show in its original language was deeply appreciated by this community. The Marionetas company members added to the audiences' joy by making themselves readily accessible to all through a lengthy question-and-answer period following each performance. Children were particularly excited by the company's willingness to allow them to handle the puppets and to have their photographs taken with the performers – both human and otherwise. I marveled at the great patience and giving nature of all of the team and their clear love of children as well as of their work.

Although they were not contracted to do so, the Marionetas also gave up much of their lunchtime to meet the public at Lancaster's Central Market, a community gathering place, for an impromptu look at their puppets and puppetry. They were extraordinarily well received by the public, but I was most impressed by the company's very willingness to undertake this little adventure. It is characteristic of the Marionetas warmth, thoughtfulness, and generosity of spirit.

The Fulton also had the privilege of hosting the very first English performance of *Dibújame una vaca* (which was called *Emilio and the Enchanted Cow*). The company's command of the language was astounding for a debut. Not only was every word perfectly understandable, and the translation excellent, but all of the nuance, and the remarkable depth of emotion, conveyed by the excellent performers in Spanish was present in the English rendering, so our non-Spanish speaking patrons experienced the full impact of the piece, which was humorous, touching, and heartwarming all at once. That the production so effectively dealt with serious issues of concern to children of every culture speaks to the Marionetas' commitment to making truly meaningful art for young people and their families, and of its universal appeal.

Here is a puppet company that creates exciting original work that is wonderfully joyous, insightful, funny, and poignant, while exploring matters of real consequence and meaning. It is a company that is a delight both on stage and off. While completely professional and serious about their art, the Marionetas are also friendly and cheerful, a pleasure to do business with – even across borders. I can't wait to work with this company again, and hope that many others come to know and enjoy Marionetas de la esquina as we have.

Most Sincerely,

Barry Kornhauser
TYA Director