

About Figures of Speech Theatre

John and Carol Farrell founded Figures of Speech Theatre to explore the interplay of actors, puppets, masks, and movement. Believing that audiences experience art most vitally when they are called upon to engage their imaginations fully, the company produces visual theater that emphasizes myth, transformation, and surprise.

A touring company since 1982, Figures of Speech Theatre has performed for audiences from Caribou, Maine to Lima, Peru. Presenters of their work have included Broadway's New Victory Theater, The Kennedy Center in Washington, DC, Trinity Repertory Company, the Smithsonian Institution, Festival Theater in Sofia, Bulgaria, Internationalen Puppentage in Austria, Japan's Hitomi-za Theater, and EXPO Vancouver. The company has recently collaborated on major artistic projects with several organizations in its home state of Maine including Portland Stage Company (*Peer Gynt*), Heartwood Theater (*Gilgamesh*), Bates College (*Dragon's Daughter*), and the Portland Symphony Orchestra (*Magic of Christmas*). FST also conducts extensive teaching residencies for all ages (www.figures.org).

Figures of Speech Theatre is a four-time winner of the coveted "UNIMA Citation of Excellence," the highest award in American puppet theater: in 1986 for its production of *Anerca*, in 1989 for *Cupid and Psyche*, in 1997 for *Nightingale*, and in 2001 for *The Beanstalk Variations*.

Figures of Speech Theatre
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*FST is a not-for-profit institution,
and contributions are tax deductible.*

FIGURES OF SPEECH THEATRE

presents

Cupid & Psyche

*the 2000-year-old
Greek myth in which
love is triumphant &
happiness is eternal*

Adapted, designed,
produced and performed by
Carol Farrell and John Farrell

About *Cupid & Psyche*

On the last school day of 1987, in the last hour of that school day, we premiered *Cupid & Psyche* for an audience of junior high students. Obviously there was no way to gauge whether their enthusiasm at the end of the show had anything to do with the show itself or was just the explosive excitement of summer. Eighteen years after surviving this trial by fire, *Cupid & Psyche* remains part of our repertoire because we still have fun performing it together, we continue to find new challenges in it, and people of all ages still seem to enjoy it.

When we begin a new work, we start by choosing material which resonates with our personal experiences, our own unanswered questions. For us, the myth of Cupid and Psyche is about reaching the point in a relationship where you either have to find the courage to break through the boundaries which have been set up for you (or you've set for yourself), or hang it up. Equally compelling is the myth's emphasis on the vital struggle to learn to trust. As with all great myths, Cupid and Psyche's story opens doors that lead us to new understanding, without ever moralizing or telling us what to do.

The act of performing the piece has itself been illuminating for us. When we perform *Cupid & Psyche* for young audiences, the simple fact that there are two people on stage who love each other has a profound effect. In post-show question time, usually the first question we're asked is, "Are you two married?" And when we tell them that we are, there is often a big, spontaneous round of applause! Sure, they see plenty of kissing (and more!) on TV, but apparently they don't see enough of The Real Thing. So it's a genuine treat for us to be able to spread around some of what we feel. Thanks for joining us to share love and laughter!

About the Artists

Carol Farrell began performing experimental theater in 1971 with the New World Energy Theatre in Switzerland, then moved to San Francisco to study dance. She earned her MA in Theater Design at University of Connecticut where she got hooked on puppetry. After 4 years on the University of Maine's Theater faculty, Carol co-founded Figures of Speech Theatre in 1982. She has studied Object Theatre at the Institut Internationale de la Marionnette in France, and *bunraku* puppetry in Japan. Carol's responsibilities as Co-Director of FST have included co-creating eighteen works of original theater, performing, designing costumes, and developing teaching residency programs.

John Farrell founded Figures of Speech with Carol Farrell in 1982 after an abbreviated course of law study. Since then he has studied directing for the puppet theatre with Josef Krofta of DRAM Theatre, and carving with Toru Saito, Japanese master puppet builder. John has taught at the Haystack Mountain School of Crafts, and is the proud father of daughters Delia and Alida. In 1999 he was one of five American artists awarded a six-month fellowship through the Japan-US Friendship Commission's Creative Artists' Program. The Maine Arts Commission awarded him an Individual Artist Fellowship in 2002. As Co-Artistic Director of Figures of Speech Theatre, John wears many hats from performer to director to puppet and set designer, to producer of World Puppets Portland, an international festival of puppetry arts.

Other Productions in FST's Repertoire

Jester Kings of Java - This comical tale of love gone awry features authentic Indonesian shadow puppets in a one-man extravaganza in which kings, buffoons, demon giants and a flying monkey dance across the screen to mesmerizing Javanese gamelan music.

Nightingale - The Emperor of China experiences a moment of transcendence when Nightingale appears in his court. Though later he is enchanted by a jeweled mechanical bird and banishes his friend, Nightingale returns to open the Emperor's eyes and save his life.

Artist-in Residence Teaching Programs - FST's teaching programs use the art of the puppet to build confidence, enhance curriculum, and promote self-expression while having fun.