

# ENTERTAINMENT

## THEATRE REVIEW

# Foggy Bottom is tops

The production uses cartoon slides as scenery instead of cardboard props.

By **Shawna Richer**  
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I took the Night Train to Foggy Bottom, and what a cool trip it was.

The show, which began a three-town tour of Southwestern Ontario in Aylmer on Tuesday night, is a fantastic combination of mime, puppetry, sound and light.

Night Train To Foggy Bottom is a joint production of Coad Canada Puppets of Vancouver and the mime company Theatre Beyond Words from Niagara-on-the-Lake.

The adult fantasy has proven to be Theatre Beyond Words' most successful winter production. Both companies spent several years putting the show together, working by phone, fax and the occasional visit. It finally premiered in 1991 in Niagara-on-the-Lake, and is now touring 14 towns and cities.

Night Train To Foggy Bottom takes the audience on a whimsical journey into the world of dreams and memory. Time plays tricks on the mind and the boundaries of reality melt before the eyes as surreal, insect-like clocks fly and clay figures dart about the stage.

Peter Blain, chairperson of the Aylmer Community Arts Council, expressed uncertainty about the production.

"I could go down in flames over this one," he said nervously, minutes before the curtain opened.

Don't fret, Peter. Night Train To Foggy Bottom is a remarkable journey.

The central character is Thadius, a sculptor who

### IF YOU GO

- CHATHAM:** Tonight at Chatham Cultural Centre, tickets are \$17 and \$19 and reservations can be made by calling 354-8338.
- PETROLIA:** Saturday at Victoria Playhouse Petrolia. Tickets are \$17 and the reservation number is 882-1221.
- TIMES:** Both performances start at 8 p.m.
- RATING:** ★★★★★ (out of five)

carves the girl of his dreams and sees her come to life. He's played by Harro Maskow, co-founder and artistic director of Theatre Beyond Words. Maskow, a former associate director of the Canadian Mime Theatre, uses body language to delight without words.

**CARTOON SLIDES WORK:** The production cleverly uses cartoon slides as scenery instead of cumbersome cardboard props. This works well, allowing the group to concentrate on special effects and the art of puppetry.

Jane Johanson is sensuous in her dual role of the maiden sculpture and a sexy chest of drawers who undresses and caresses her various knobs and handles, much to the delight of the voyeur Thadius.

The music, at times boosting the hilarity of a scene and at others emphasizing the eeriness of mime, ranges from classical to Celtic to k.d. lang.

Anne Rosenburg and Charles P. Schott play Thad's parents as he recalls his childhood. Costumes and oversized masks give the pair a grotesque, doll-like appearance. Sherri McFarlane as Thad's grandmother provides great comic relief, especially when she removes the top of her hummingongous head to store her knitting inside.