

SAN FRANCISCO



MIME TROUPE

presents

Gutter Puppets

and, *after an* Intermission

Ruzzante,

or THE VETERAN

From a play by Angelo Beolco (16th century), translated by
Suzanne Pollard, adapted by Joan Holden, and directed by
R. G. DAVIS



Ruzzante, *a veteran* Boris Morris

Gnua, *his wife* Melody James

Menato, *a friend* Steven Friedman

Dottore, *a mentor* Keith Nason

Il Bravo, *a bully* Eric Berne

The Gadfly, *himself* the Gadfly



Sets by Wally Hedrick, Costumes by Joan Wright & Megan
Snider, Masks by Daniel Chumley, Technical Director: Peter
Snider, Stage Manager: Ron Nystrom.

Ruzzante premiered April 5, 1968 at Chabot College, Hayward



The puppet shows were built and written by members of the
company to address subjects present to the minds of us all,
in the streets & other places where we cannot go with a full-
scale show. The Gorilla Band was born during an anti-Dow
demonstration at Madison, Wisconsin.

An imperialist war has one healthy effect: it exposes the
foundations of the imperialist society. We must change those
foundations. We give ourselves ten years to do it.

The San Francisco Mime Troupe Inc.

(non-profit) 450 Alabama St., San Francisco 94110. HE 1-1984

NO CAMERAS IN THE THEATER

On the San Francisco Mime Troupe

The Mime Troupe started in 1959 doing silent mime (the art of Chaplin — Marceau does pantomime) with the idea of restoring movement to a stage crippled by decades of realism. We broke into noise, and then speech, when our ideas became more complex we now do plays, but mime is still the point of departure for our style, in which words sharpen and refine but physical action carries the substantial meaning. We did our first movement - noise happening, Event I — with artists Robert Hudson, William Wiley, and Judy Davis — in 1959, and our first commedia dell'arte play, THE DOWRY — from Moliere, Goldoni, and improvisation — in 1960. Our interest in this 16th century form is not antiquarian. We use it because it is funny and adaptable, and because comedy is ultimately more serious than tragedy or realism.

In 1962 we went outdoors with a portable stage and performed our commedia show twice in San Francisco parks, passing the hat afterwards. We have done new commedias outdoors each year since. In 1965, the San Francisco Park and Recreation Commission refused us a permit to play CANDELAIO on the grounds of "vulgarity"; we played and were arrested, the ACLU appealed, and the refusal was ruled an unconstitutional attempt at censorship. (The controversy cost us our first and only grant.) In 1968, after another court fight, the Mime Troupe liberated the parks of Mill Valley, a suburb, and did six park shows a week from April through September

We opened our indoor theater in December, 1963, with Jarry's UBU ROI, followed by original plays, events, and movies: we presented a regular film series in 1964 under the direction of Saul Landau, showing such artists as Brakhage, Conner, and Genet (UN CHANT D'AMOUR). This phase ended in 1965 when our theater became a parking lot; since then we have lived from the parks and from engagements. We did mixed media: Brecht's EXCEPTION AND THE RULE with a talk on Vietnam by Robert Scheer, De Ghelderode's CHRONICLES OF HELL with poets Lawrence Ferlinghetti, David Meltzer, and Lew Welch, and the first light-show rock dance at the Fillmore Auditorium (November, 1965).

Our work always referred to political concerns; it has come gradually to direct engagement. CENTERMAN, an original play about American brutality by Peter Berg, opened in 1966 at a teach-in rally in San Francisco and played Bay area theaters; SEARCH AND SEIZURE, about drug law enforcement, opened at a benefit for Timothy Leary and played as a cabaret theater piece. A MINSTREL SHOW, OR CIVIL RIGHTS IN A CRACKER BARREL (by Saul Landau and R. G. Davis) which exploded racist and integrationist cliches before Black Power, opened in 1965; it toured the U. S. and Canada for two years, during which time its prophecies became realities. Vietnam has escalated our consciousness as it has that of many. THE EXCEPTION AND THE RULE was our first play about the war; in 1966-67 we did a Brechtian production of Sartre's CONDEMNED OF ALTONA, which tries the individual for crimes of state; in 1967 Goldoni's L'AMANT MILITAIRE, freely adapted (by Joan Holden) to demonstrate the absurdity of pacifism in the face of the military machine; in 1968 Beolco's RUZZANTE RETURNS, about the disillusion of the returning soldier, and his response.

L'AMANT MILITAIRE and another commedia, OLIVE PITS, toured across country in 1967, hitting universities a jump ahead of Dow recruiters, then winning an Obie award in New York; when we came back we started our Gorilla Marching Band. We found that to play for an audience conscious of crisis, we had to know what we had to say. The new or guerilla theater (as opposed to the "New Theater" of neo - absurdist destinationless trips) accepts this responsibility; the next step is for radical theater to become revolutionary: from theater of exposure to theater of example.

We have placed ourselves outside; outside the commercial market and outside in the streets and parks, because outside is the only place a revolution can grow. We have spent 10 years clearing a place; in the next 10 we will build a concrete alternative.

