



SHADOWPLAY OF THE MONKEY KING AT SOMARTS

The fantastic adventures of the mischievous Monkey King, Sun Wu Kong, from the satiric novel (a favorite of the poet known as Chairman Mao) 'Journey To The West,' which dates from the Ming Dynasty, telling of the dire straits and ingenious escapes that mark the overland trek of a monk who is charged with bringing the Buddhist scriptures

back to China, have long been a staple of Chinese performing arts, for all ages, from acrobatic Chinese Opera to high-tech anime'--

And now they're fleshed out again by living shadows at San Francisco's SomArts Cultural Center, 934 Brannan St.

(between 8th & 9th, near Trader Joe's and The Concourse), as SF's ShadowLight Productions and Taiwan's Puppet and Its Double Theater stage a collaborative marvel with live actors as masked shadow puppets, mingled with real shadow puppets and projections, moving fluidly through Chinese landscape paintings that form and dissolve, cloud-like, across an enormous screen, to the percussive sounds of Chinese Opera, in MONKEY KING AT SPIDER CAVE, through Sunday afternoon, Oct. 29.



Three beautiful sisters, who just happen to be spider women, plan to eat the holy monk as they play with a ball of light or bathe in a stream; an evil alchemist, posing as a Taoist hermit, broods over his malevolent potions; Monkey and his friends, the companions of the good monk, wage a wild, slapstick battle with a plague of insects; the Monkey King, caught in a spell, turns into a pangolin and burrows through the earth to seek help from a lady Bodhisatva ...

Larry Reed, ShadowLight's founder, learned shadow puppetry in Bali, founding ShadowLight here in 1972. Since that time, he's brilliantly expanded on the traditional art, learning its secrets from different cultures and adapting techniques from other performing arts, notably cinema, to bring such stories to his 30 x 15 foot screen as IN XANADU, the tale of Kublai Khan; the Jazz Age poem, THE WILD PARTY; COYOTE'S JOURNEY, a California Indian myth narrated in English and Karok by a Native American elder; as well as tales from the Gold Rush; Dia de los Muertes, the Mexican Day of the Dead; and the ancient Indian epic, The Mahabhrata. (DVDs are available from Shadowlight.)

MONKEY KING AT SPIDER CAVE's due to tour Taiwan in March--but catch it quick! while this glorious fantasy's still Stateside--a spectacle for all ages, enchanting and original, the perfect combination of all the arts, old and new.

Tickets: \$15-20 www.ticketmaster.com discounts for children, seniors and groups available.

Info: www.shadowlight.org --or call (415) 648-4461



Wednesday, October 25, 2006

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