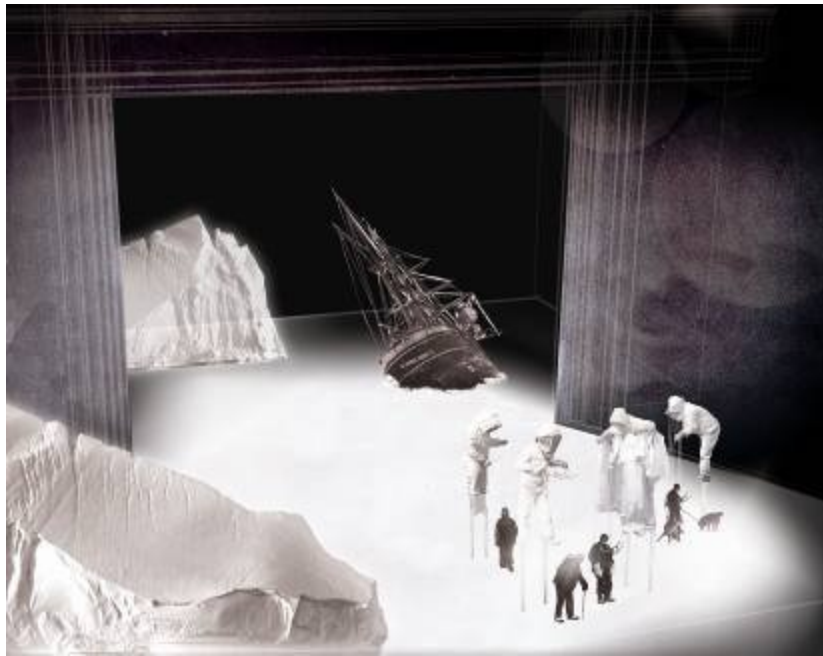


MASS MoCA

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69° South: The Shackleton Project Recreates an Epic Journey to Antarctica



(North Adams, Massachusetts) – A smaller-than-life reenactment of the 1914 trans-Antarctic expedition by Ernest Shackleton and 27 brave souls will be played out in 69° South: The Shackleton Project by the exciting young puppet theater company Phantom Limb, directed by Phil Soltanoff. Fresh off a trip to Antarctica, the troupe’s founders Eric Sanko and Jessica Grindstaff will be in residence at MASS MoCA prior to this work-in-progress showing of their new work on Saturday, March 13 at 8 PM. During the residency they will focus on combining the music composed for the renowned Kronos Quartet with the action in this historical marionette performance.

Described as “a series of dynamic tableau vivants” this show will take viewers on a journey of adversity, endurance, and camaraderie. In 1914, Sir Ernest Shackleton set out on an expedition to be the first to successfully traverse the continent of Antarctica. This ambitious -- and somewhat reckless -- mission set the stage for one of the best stories of human survival, tenacity, and heroics. Before even reaching Antarctica’s mainland, Shackleton’s boat, the Endurance, became trapped in an ice floe. During the next 497 days, Shackleton and his men lived on the ice, converting the

ship into a winter station, and patiently waiting to be freed from the ice and attempt an escape for land and survival. All together the performance aims to bring the unknown Antarctica to an audience and reinvigorate the spirit of forgoing individual glory for the sake of collective survival.

This workshop performance focuses on the musical composition performed live, and aims to involve a portion of the theatrical elements being explored in the creation of the work, including puppetry, photography, and film combined with an unconventional acoustic palette to create an artistic and emotional journey. *69° South: The Shackleton Project* is the result of a newly formed puppet theater company Phantom Limb and a chance collaboration with the renowned Kronos Quartet. The two were introduced to each other when Kronos' violinist, David Harrington, asked Phantom Limb's co-founder (and renowned musician) Sanko to trade CDs. The *Shackleton Project* will be Phantom Limb and Kronos Quartet's second collaboration. For their first collaboration, *Dear Mme.*, Sanko created a marionette stage within a 15-foot tall puppet's chest, where the puppet's romantic dreams were enacted and accompanied by the Kronos performing an original soundtrack composed by Sanko.

Sanko and wife Jessica Grindstaff are relatively new to puppet theater having created their first marionette play, *The Fortune Teller*, featuring music by Danny Elfman and narration by Gavin Friday in 2006, and recently premiered their latest collaboration with theatre wizard Ping Chong entitled *The Devil You Know*. Grindstaff has an established reputation as a creator of haunting, meticulously constructed music box dioramas and paintings in wax and chalkboard, while Sanko has been long admired as a singer, songwriter, and bassist in the experimental-alternative music scene, including 16 years as the bassist of the Lounge Lizards, and leader of his own renowned band, Skeleton Key. Sanko emerged in recent years as a talented self-taught puppeteer and Phantom Limb's first creation, a Gothic horror hit whose characters embody the seven deadly sins, was performed to sold-out houses. The Company was subsequently commissioned to create a score and theatrical presentation for Kronos Quartet, with Sanko authoring a musical composition entitled *Dear Mme.* and the Company devising a live theatrical presentation. The company has become well known for using Sanko's zeal for puppetry and Grindstaff's history as an installation artist, painter, and set designer to create and direct memorable marionette puppetry. Upcoming projects include an adaptation of Lemony Snicket's latest best-selling work for young readers, *The Composer is Dead*, directed by Tony Taccone and premiering at Berkeley Rep. in Fall 2010.

Tickets for the work-in-progress showing of *69° South: The Shackleton Project* are \$12. MASS MoCA members receive a 10% discount. Tickets are available through the MASS MoCA Box Office located off Marshall Street in North Tickets can also be charged by phone by calling 413.662.2111 during Box Office hours or purchased on line at www.massmoca.org.

MASS MoCA, the largest center for contemporary visual and performing arts in the United States, is located off Marshall Street in North Adams on a 13-acre campus of renovated 19th-century factory buildings. MASS MoCA is an independent 501c(3) whose operations and programming are funded through admissions and commercial lease revenue, corporate and foundation grants, and individual philanthropy. Except for an initial construction grant from the Commonwealth, and competitive program and operations grants from the National Endowment for the Arts and the Massachusetts Cultural Council, MASS MoCA is privately funded: 90% of annual operating revenues are from earned revenues, membership support, and private gifts and grants.

69° South: The Shackleton
Project
Saturday, March 13, 8 PM
Tickets:
Box Office: 413.662.2111 or