



## Hobey Ford's Golden Rod Puppets

***"Funny, talented, wonderful, creative, delightful. Absolutely great to work with!"***

Clark Performing Arts Center, Springfield, OH

Hobey Ford has never had another career. Internationally renowned in the puppetry field, and an award-winning performer and Kennedy Center Partner in Education teaching artist, Ford knew early on what he wanted to do after seeing a puppet show while still a youngster. He was bitten by the puppetry bug! While studying at an arts college, Hobey eventually found "... one of my cornerstones - that I would approach puppetry as storytelling with puppets."

Ford designs and constructs all of his Golden Rod Puppets as well as the beautiful sets that surround them. Now a resident of Asheville NC, Hobey also draws on his early experiences growing up in coastal Connecticut or living in a Nevada Native American community in writing the scripts for some of his performances such as "Whale Walker" and "Turtle Island Tales." He first created the Golden Rod Puppets in 1980 and often adapts folk tales and global cultural traditions for his performances, always adding a special "Golden Rod" twist. His performances incorporate a variety of puppetry styles: Bunraku, rod, marionettes, Foamies and shadow puppetry. Hobey is quick to credit his audiences for completing the creative spark that is ignited with every live performance and he has brought his amazing talent to family audiences all over the world for over two decades.

Ford has received the highest awards for his brilliant and priceless contributions to the world of puppetry: two-time winner of puppetry's highest honor, the UNIMA Citation of Excellence, recipient of three Jim Henson Foundation grants, and The Hermitage Fellowship, Hobey Ford is renowned for excellence in his craft. Chosen as a Kennedy Center Partner to teach teachers (and other artists) how to use the performing arts in the classroom curriculum, Hobey not only performs his original works all over the world but offers workshops to teachers and students alike.

Hobey is considered by his peers both an innovator in puppetry craft and a master storyteller. He created both the "Foamies" and the clever hand puppet known as "Peepers," an imaginative, patented set of plastic eyes - for hands of any size- worn in several ways that turn the bare hand into an innovative and inexpensive instant puppet! The "Foamies" are large animal puppets that Hobey designs, carves and paints from blocks of foam. After studying each animal's characteristic movements, Hobey designs various rod control mechanisms to make the puppets themselves move in an incredibly life-like manner. The "Foamies" are presented using both stage and house performance spaces, often flying or "walking" right out over the audiences' heads!

***"Ford is a remarkably original and refreshingly authentic artist whose passion just happens to express itself through the rather unusual...medium of puppetry!"***

Tom Kerr, Marquee