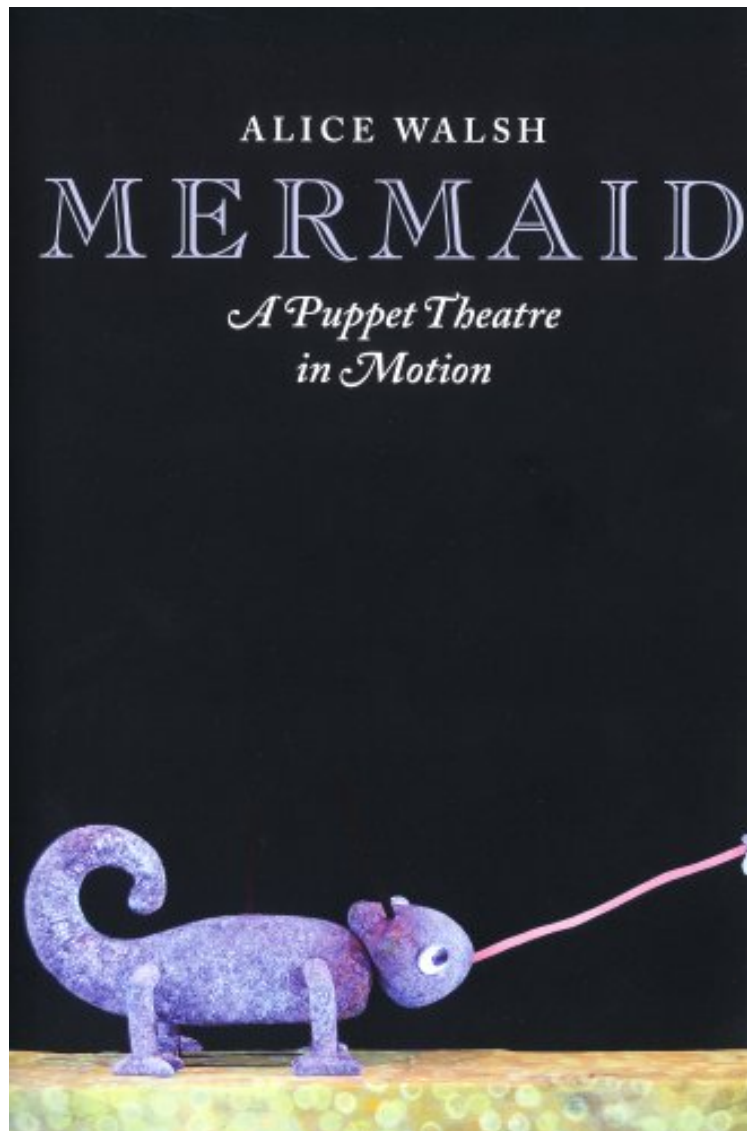


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Mermaid

Alice Walsh

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Alice Walsh : Mermaid before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Mermaid:

First established in response to the need for live theatre in rural areas, Mermaid Theatre based in Windsor, Nova Scotia swiftly rose to international acclaim. Author Alice Walsh uses Mermaids productions, from The Happy Prince

to *Guess How Much I Love You*, to tell the story of the companys evolution in the history of Canadian theatre. Walsh describes the first steps taken by its founders and provides an extensive look at the development of each production, as well as the creative trends and decisions that have contributed to Mermaids stellar reputation amongst children, parents, educators and directors. Founded in 1972 by Evelyn Garbary, Lee Lewis and Tom Miller, Mermaid Theatre, over the course of 30 years, has incorporated the work of many actors, collaborating authors, educators, youth, reviewers, designers and audiences worldwide. Beginning with the groups first seasons touring Nova Scotia with adaptations of fairy tales and fables, Walsh tells the story of Mermaids development, going behind the scenes and into the audiences, capturing the spirit of its success. In the early 1970s, Mermaids dramatizations of Mikmaq legends laid the foundation for its innovative design. This era, remembered by many of todays parents, is described from the ground up. Walsh brings us into the companys workshop and its early experiments with the masks and giant puppets that would become synonymous with the theatres name. What followed was a boldly creative approach to local literature, which integrated an astonishing variety of traditions, including Bunraku, Kathakali, black light, collage and mummies. Walsh takes a critical look at the personalities and influences that have shaped Mermaids evolving style and management as a company. Highlighting key players Garbary, Lewis and Miller, along with Jim Morrow, Graham Whitehead, Chris Heide, Stephen Naylor and others she examines the theatres growth from a garage in Wolfville to the current multi-storeyed headquarters and full-time staff based in Windsor. For decades now, the companys adventurous and ambitious approach to childrens theatre has proved successful both on stage and off, with hits like *The Very Hungry Caterpillar*, *When Dinosaurs Dine by Moonlight*, *Borrowed Black*, *Gullivers Travels*, *Peter the Wolf* and *Sam Slick*. Mermaid provides insight into the business and politics of managing a theatre company, as well as the creative energy and raw materials involved in building and touring productions around the world. In 30 years, Mermaid has become known for its dramatizations of fairy tales, legends, contemporary literature, and most recently, stories for very young audiences. Recreating productions from their inception, through the design and rehearsal phases, to opening night at childrens festivals, cultural exchanges and school gymnasiums at home and abroad, Walsh captures the magic of Mermaid. Photographs, quotes and reviews, coupled with Walshs clarity and comprehensive telling, bring the theatres history of inspiring designs to life on the page. This book measures 5.75 x 8.5 inches and is a Smyth-sewn paperback bound in an offset-printed cover. The text is printed offset on laid paper. Included are 32 pages of black white and colour photo reproductions.

About the Author Alice Walsh was born and raised in Newfoundland. She is the award-winning author of several childrens books including *Pomiuk: The Little Prince of the North* (2004), *Heroes of Isle aux Mortes* (2001), and *Uncle Farleys False Teeth* (1998). Walsh has received the Childrens Book Centre choice award and was shortlisted for the Hackmatack award. A former preschool teacher, she lives in Lower Sackville, Nova Scotia.