

Puppets!

The Walton & O'Rourke Legacy

THERE ARE NO SMALL PARTS, JUST (VERY) SMALL ACTORS!

Paul E. Walton and Michael O'Rourke, an ambitious team of cabaret puppeteers, founded the legendary *Olvera Street Puppet Theater* nearly a century ago in 1935 Los Angeles. While the art of puppetry may be thousands of years old, technology in the creation and operation of puppets continues to innovate to this day. Walton and O'Rourke were known to employ as many as 7-strings just to operate a single puppet arm! Their exquisite puppets defied the boundaries of the small stage to join the ranks of those rare puppeteers who practically became household names in the 1950s and 1960s. TV and films brought this intimate art into the mainstream – and our living rooms! – with the likes of *Howdy Doody*, *Bill Baird*, *Bob Baker*, and of course, *Jim Henson's Muppets*. Walton and O'Rourke puppets danced their way from the local *Olvera Street* venue and into national living rooms through TV shows and commercials, ultimately achieving international acclaim for their highly visible presence in the puppet-centric Leslie Caron movie musical, *Lili* (MGM, 1953). Whether you're collecting these one-of-a-kind, handcrafted, working puppets as historical relics or building your own personal or professional puppet theater, it is exceedingly rare to find such fine and famous examples of this beloved art form on this or any market. Studio Auctions is proud and privileged to be the exclusive auction house to offer hallmark pieces from the legacy of Walton & O'Rourke. We are grateful to the family for entrusting us to deliver their incredible collection into dexterous hands that will treasure them and give them life. Keep an eye out for more Walton & O'Rourke puppets in upcoming auctions!



PUPPETS!

THE WALTON & O'ROURKE LEGACY
THERE ARE NO SMALL PARTS, JUST (VERY) SMALL ACTORS!

FEBRUARY 22, 2025

STUDIO AUCTIONS

2907 N. SAN FERNANDO BOULEVARD,
BURBANK, CA 91504

[PREVIEWS BY APPOINTMENT ONLY]

CONTACT: 747-241-8255 / SUPPORT@STUDIOAUCTIONS.COM

REGISTER TO BID AT WWW.STUDIOAUCTIONS.COM

STUDIO
AUCTIONS



1

1. Walton & O'Rourke "Baby Brat" Marionette. Circa 1950s-1960s. Handmade, professional performance marionette puppet constructed of cast composite wood/plastic material from custom molds. Expertly painted and finished and with fabric costume and accessories. This elaborate jointed marionette is operated by approx. 18+ strings attached to its wooden controller, by which a puppeteer can articulate a nuance of movement, limbs, gestures, and operating mouth. The puppet measures approx. 26 x 11 x 7 in. and the entire puppet rig measures 54 in. from floor to stringed controller. Exhibiting expected age, performance wear, minor soiling. Lovingly preserved by the legendary family and fully operational. In vintage good condition. \$400-\$600



2

2. Walton & O'Rourke "Sylvia" Ballerina Marionette. Circa 1950s-1960s. Handmade, professional performance marionette puppet constructed of cast composite wood/plastic material from custom molds. Expertly painted and finished and with fabric and tulle costume and more. This elaborate jointed marionette is operated by approx. 20+ strings attached to its wooden controller, by which a puppeteer can articulate a nuance of movement, limbs, gestures, toe point, and blinking eyes. The puppet measures approx. 26 x 12 x 9 in. and the entire puppet rig measures 49 in. from floor to stringed controller. Exhibiting expected age, performance wear, minor soiling. Lovingly preserved by the legendary family and fully operational. In vintage good condition. \$800-\$1,200



3

3. Walton & O'Rourke "Piano Player" Marionette. Circa 1950s-1960s. Handmade, professional performance marionette puppet constructed of cast composite wood/plastic material from custom molds. Expertly painted and finished and with cloth tux and tie. This elaborate jointed marionette is operated by approx. 16-strings attached to its wooden controller, by which a puppeteer can articulate a nuance of movement, limbs, gestures, blinking eyes, and operating mouth. The puppet measures approx. 25 x 10 x 9 in. and the entire puppet rig measures approx. 49 in. from floor to stringed controller. Exhibiting expected age, performance wear, minor soiling. Lovingly preserved by the legendary family and fully operational. In vintage good condition. \$800-\$1,200



4



5



4. Walton & O'Rourke "Dandy" Marionette. Circa 1950s-1960s. Handmade, professional performance marionette puppet constructed of cast composite wood/plastic material from custom molds. Expertly painted and finished and with fabric costume and accessories. This elaborate jointed marionette is operated by approx. 18-strings attached to its wooden controller, by which a puppeteer can articulate a nuance of movement, limbs, gestures, blinking eyes, and operating mouth. The puppet measures approx. 27 x 11 x 9 in. and the entire puppet rig measures 56 in. from floor to stringed controller. Exhibiting expected age, performance wear, minor soiling. Lovingly preserved by the legendary family and fully operational. In vintage good condition. \$800-\$1,200

5. Walton & O'Rourke (2) "Love Bugs 1" Marionettes. Circa 1950s-1960s. Handmade, professional performance duo of marionette puppets constructed of cast composite wood/plastic material from custom molds. Expertly painted and finished and with cloth costumes. These jointed marionettes are operated by approx. 6-8 strings attached to wooden controllers, by which a puppeteer can articulate a nuance of movement. The puppets measure approx. 24 x 8 x 7 in. and the puppet rigs measure approx. 45 in. to 11 in. from floor to stringed controllers. Exhibiting expected age, performance wear, minor soiling. Lovingly preserved by the legendary family and fully operational. In vintage good condition. \$400-\$600



6

Two Man Show

WALTON & O'ROURKE'S PUPPETS

A few of Walton and O'Rourke's ingenious marionette entertainers, currently featured in Olsen and Johnson's "Sons o' Fun" at the Winter Garden, are shown here.

Walton and O'Rourke and their puppets will also double into the Club Cockatoo, on East 55th Street, when that spot premieres March 2nd. They will present an entirely new show, in the same sophisticated vein that established them as perennial favorites of the Rainbow Room.

The team started professional puppetry about eight years ago in Los Angeles, establishing a permanent marionette theatre in that city and later doing a number of pictures for Columbia, Universal and Paramount. After playing theatres and night clubs all over the country, they made their local debut three years ago at the New York Strand. From there they went to the Rainbow Room, where Olsen and Johnson booked them into "Sons o' Fun." During the Winter Garden stint they doubled into three Rainbow Room shows.

For the Club Cockatoo engagement, Walton and O'Rourke promise a full-length puppet show, comedy, revue and musical comedy, blended into a unique and interesting entertainment.



The Hoet

6. Walton & O'Rourke "Cokey Joe" Marionette. Circa 1950s-1960s. Handmade, professional performance marionette puppet constructed of cast composite wood/plastic material from custom molds. Expertly painted and finished and with hand painted cloth costume and a lighting element in the right palm (electronics present but untested). This elaborate jointed marionette is operated by approx. 16-strings attached to its wooden controller, by which a puppeteer can articulate a nuance of movement, limbs, gestures, and operating mouth. The puppet measures approx. 29 x 12 x 8 in. and the entire puppet rig measures approx. 53 in. from floor to stringed controller. Exhibiting expected age, performance wear, minor soiling. Lovingly preserved by the legendary family and fully operational. In vintage good condition.

\$800-\$1,200



7

7. Walton & O'Rourke (2) "Love Bugs 2" Marionettes. Circa 1950s-1960s. Handmade, professional performance trio of marionette puppets constructed of cast composite wood/plastic material from custom molds. Expertly painted and finished and with cloth costumes. These jointed marionettes are operated by approx. 6-8-strings attached to wooden controllers, by which a puppeteer can articulate a nuance of movement. The puppets measure approx. 24 x 8 x 7 in. and the puppet rigs measure approx. 45 in. to 11 in. from floor to stringed controllers. Exhibiting expected age, performance wear, minor soiling. Lovingly preserved by the legendary family and fully operational. In vintage good condition.

\$400-\$600

8. Walton & O'Rourke (2) "Funny Boys" Hand Puppets. Circa 1950s-1960s. Set of (2) handmade, professional performance hand puppets constructed of cast composite wood/plastic heads and hands from custom molds. Expertly painted and finished and with fabric costumed body/glove. Grinning boy features soft sculpture dangling legs. Elf retains a rod in its neck for operating the head. The puppets measure approx. 21 x 7 x 6 in. Exhibiting expected age, performance wear, minor soiling. Lovingly preserved by the legendary family and fully operational. In vintage good condition.

\$600-\$800

9. Walton & O'Rourke (2) "Identical Strangers" Hand Puppets. Circa 1950s-1960s. Set of (2) handmade, professional performance hand puppets constructed of cast composite wood/plastic head and hands from custom molds. Expertly painted and finished and with fabric costumed body/glove and hair. Featuring soft sculpture dangling legs. The puppets measure 18 x 6 x 3 in. Jacketed puppet retains wire plungers that operate mouth and eyes. Both figures are missing hands. Exhibiting expected age, performance wear, minor soiling. Lovingly preserved by the legendary family and fully operational. In vintage good condition.

\$600-\$800



8

9



12



10



12



11



13

10. Walton & O'Rourke (2) "Odd Couple" Hand Puppets. Circa 1950s-1960s. Set of (2) handmade, professional performance hand puppets constructed of cast composite wood/plastic head and hands from custom molds. Expertly painted and finished and with fabric costumed body/glove. Male puppet is outfitted with an interior rod in the neck, which has become detached from the internal mechanism housed in the head to operate eyes and mouth. Also retains a bulb and tubing for an unknown effect. Male is missing hands. The puppets measure approx. 15 x 8 x 3.5 in. Exhibiting expected age, performance wear, minor soiling. Lovingly preserved by the legendary family and fully operational. In vintage good condition. \$600-\$800

11. Walton & O'Rourke (2) "Punch & Co." Hand Puppets. Circa 1950s-1960s. Set of (2) antique handmade, professional performance hand puppets constructed of carved wood and cast composite heads and hands. Expertly painted and finished and with fabric costumed body/glove. The puppets measure approx. 23 x 6 x 9 in. Exhibiting expected age, performance wear, soiling. Some rubbing to the paint. From the collection of Walton & O'Rourke. Lovingly preserved by the legendary family and fully operational. In vintage good condition. \$600-\$800

12. Walton & O'Rourke (2) "Wolf & Clown" Hand Puppets. Circa 1950s-1960s. Set of (2) handmade, professional performance hand puppets constructed of cast composite wood/plastic heads and hands from custom molds. Expertly painted and finished and with fabric costumed body/glove. Wolf features soft sculpture dangling legs. Clown retains a rod in its neck for operating the head. The puppets measure approx. 17 x 9 x 10 in. Exhibiting expected age, performance wear, minor soiling. Lovingly preserved by the legendary family and fully operational. In vintage good condition. \$600-\$800

13. Walton & O'Rourke "Punch and Goofy" Hand Puppets. Circa 1950s-1960s. Set of (2) handmade, professional performance hand puppets constructed of cast composite/wood heads and hands from custom molds. Expertly painted and finished and with fabric costumed body/gloves. Goofy features soft sculpture dangling legs. The puppets measure approx. 22 x 8 x 6 in. Exhibiting expected age, performance wear, and minor soiling. Lovingly preserved by the legendary family and fully operational. In vintage good condition. \$600-\$800



14. Walton & O'Rourke "Lazybones" Marionette. Circa 1950s-1960s. Handmade, professional performance marionette puppet constructed of cast composite wood/plastic material from custom molds. Expertly painted and finished and with fabric costume, feather duster, and more. This elaborate jointed marionette is operated by approx. 16-strings attached to its wooden controller, by which a puppeteer can articulate a nuance of movement, limbs, gestures, blinking eyes, and operating mouth. The puppet measures approx. 24 x 10 x 8 in. and the entire puppet rig measures 42 in. from floor to stringed controller. Exhibiting expected age, performance wear, minor soiling. Lovingly preserved by the legendary family and fully operational. In vintage good condition. \$800-\$1,200



Lazybones" one of Walton and O'Rourke's amazing puppets, featured at the Fairview Room. **The Host**



15. Walton & O'Rourke "Garçon" Marionette. Circa 1950s-1960s. Handmade, professional performance marionette puppet constructed of cast composite wood/plastic material from custom molds. Expertly painted and finished and with fabric costume and accessories. This elaborate jointed marionette is operated by approx. 18-strings attached to its wooden controller, by which a puppeteer can articulate a nuance of movement, limbs, gestures, blinking eyes, eyebrows, and operating mouth. The puppet measures approx. 28 x 12 x 8 in. and the entire puppet rig measures 57 in. from floor to stringed controller. Exhibiting expected age, performance wear, minor soiling. Lovingly preserved by the legendary family and fully operational. In vintage good condition. \$800-\$1,200



16. Walton & O'Rourke "Holiday Elf" Marionette. Circa 1950s-1960s. Handmade, professional performance marionette puppet constructed of cast composite wood/plastic material from custom molds. Expertly painted and finished and with fabric costume, pelt hair, and jingle bell embellishments. This elaborate jointed marionette is operated by approx. 8-strings attached to its wooden controller, by which a puppeteer can articulate a nuance of movement, limbs, gestures, blinking eyes, and operating mouth. Measuring approx. 24 x 8 x 7 in. The entire puppet rig measures approx 43 in. from floor to stringed controller. Exhibiting expected age, performance wear, minor soiling. Lovingly preserved by the legendary family and fully operational. In vintage good condition. \$800-\$1,200



17

17. Walton & O'Rourke "Hula Girl" Marionette. Circa 1950s-1960s. Handmade, professional performance marionette puppet constructed of cast composite wood/plastic material from custom molds. Expertly painted and finished and with fabric costume, grass hula skirt, lei, and more. This elaborate jointed marionette is operated by approx. 18-strings attached to its wooden controller, by which a puppeteer can articulate a nuance of movement, limbs, gestures, blinking eyes, hip action, etc. The puppet measures approx. 29 x 11 x 10 in. and the entire puppet rig measures approx. 45 in. from floor to stringed controller. Exhibiting expected age, performance wear, minor soiling. Lovingly preserved by the legendary family and fully operational. In vintage good condition.

\$800-\$1,200



18

18. Walton & O'Rourke "Jingle Elf" Marionette. Circa 1950s-1960s. Handmade, professional performance marionette puppet constructed of cast composite wood/plastic material from custom molds. Expertly painted and finished and with fabric costume, pelt hair, and jingle bell embellishments. This elaborate jointed marionette is operated by approx. 16-strings attached to its wooden controller, by which a puppeteer can articulate a nuance of movement, limbs, gestures (static mouth and eyes). The puppet measures approx. 25 x 9 x 9 in. and the entire puppet rig measures 48 in. from floor to stringed controller. Exhibiting expected age, performance wear, minor soiling. Lovingly preserved by the legendary family and fully operational. In vintage good condition.

\$800-\$1,200



19



20



21

19. Walton & O'Rourke "Little Professor" Marionette. Circa 1950s-1960s. Handmade, professional performance marionette puppet constructed of cast composite wood/plastic material from custom molds. Expertly painted and finished and with fabric costume glasses and more. This elaborate jointed marionette is operated by approx. 10-strings attached to its wooden controller, by which a puppeteer can articulate a nuance of movement, limbs, and gestures. The puppet measures approx. 18 x 8 x 5 in. and the entire puppet rig measures 49 in. from floor to stringed controller. Exhibiting expected age, performance wear, minor soiling. Right arm detached but present. Lovingly preserved by the legendary family and fully operational. In vintage good condition. \$400-\$600

20. Walton & O'Rourke's Pelham Puppet Store Display. Circa 1960s. Vintage commercial retail display of beloved Pelham Puppets. For many growing up in the 1960s era, this British puppet brand was the first introduction to puppetry, which nurtured an appreciation for the art and craft as well as encouraging creativity and imagination. This electronically animated display (wiring and mechanicals present but not working), features Pinocchio, a clown, and three animal friends. The store display measures 21 x 14 x 9.5 in. and shows age and use. The puppets are rubbed from operation and contact with each other. Pinocchio is missing a right foot and his felt hat. The display is in fair to good condition and carries the additional provenance of being owned and loved by Walton & O'Rourke. \$400-\$600

21. Walton & O'Rourke "Sassy Cat" Marionette. Circa 1950s-1960s. Handmade, professional performance marionette puppet constructed of cast composite wood/plastic material from custom molds. Expertly painted and finished and with fabric and golden faux fur. This elaborate jointed marionette is operated by approx. 20+-strings attached to its wooden controller, by which a puppeteer can articulate a nuance of movement, limbs, gestures, tail, and blinking eyes. The puppet measures approx. 32 x 12 x 18 in. and the entire puppet rig measures 54 in. from floor to stringed controller. Exhibiting expected age, performance wear, minor soiling. Lovingly preserved by the legendary family and fully operational. In vintage good condition. \$800-\$1,200

\$800-\$1,200



22



23



24



22. Walton & O'Rourke "Scruffy Dog" Marionette. Circa 1950s-1960s. Handmade, professional performance marionette puppet constructed of cast composite wood/plastic material from custom molds. Expertly painted and finished and with faux fur and yarn hair. This elaborate jointed marionette is operated by approx. 20-strings attached to its wooden controller, by which a puppeteer can articulate a nuance of movement, limbs, gestures, tail, and ears. The puppet measures approx. 14 x 14 x 12 in. and the entire puppet rig measures 49 in. from floor to stringed controller. Exhibiting expected age, performance wear, minor soiling. Lovingly preserved by the legendary family and fully operational. In vintage good condition.

\$800-\$1,200

23. Walton & O'Rourke "Soho Joe" Marionette. Circa 1950s-1960s. Handmade, professional performance marionette puppet constructed of cast composite wood/plastic material from custom molds. Expertly painted and finished and with fabric costume and accessories. This elaborate jointed marionette is operated by approx. 18-strings attached to its wooden controller, by which a puppeteer can articulate a nuance of movement, limbs, gestures, blinking eyes, eyebrows, and operating mouth. The puppet measures approx. 30 x 13 x 9 in. and the entire puppet rig measures 57 in. from floor to stringed controller. Exhibiting expected age, performance wear, minor soiling. Lovingly preserved by the legendary family and fully operational. In vintage good condition.

\$800-\$1,200

24. Walton & O'Rourke "Specs" Marionette. Circa 1950s-1960s. Handmade, professional performance marionette puppet constructed of cast composite wood/plastic material from custom molds. Expertly painted and finished and with fabric costume and accessories. This elaborate jointed marionette is operated by approx. 18+-strings attached to its wooden controller, by which a puppeteer can articulate a nuance of movement, limbs, gestures, and operating mouth. The puppet measures approx. 26 x 11 x 7 in. and the entire puppet rig measures 54 in. from floor to stringed controller. Exhibiting expected age, performance wear, minor soiling. Lovingly preserved by the legendary family and fully operational. In vintage good condition.

\$800-\$1,200

American
Master
Puppeteer



25



26

25. Walton & O'Rourke "Stripes" Marionette. Circa 1950s-1960s. Handmade, professional performance marionette puppet constructed of cast composite wood/plastic material from custom molds. Expertly painted and finished and with fabric costume, and embellishments. This elaborate jointed marionette is operated by approx. 16-strings attached to its wooden controller, by which a puppeteer can articulate a nuance of movement, limbs, gestures, mouth and eyes. The puppet measures approx. 23 x 7 x 59 in. and the entire puppet rig measures 47 in. from floor to stringed controller. Exhibiting expected age, performance wear, minor soiling some reparable tears to costume. Lovingly preserved by the legendary family and fully operational. In vintage good condition.

\$800-\$1,200

26. Walton & O'Rourke "Doc Jones" Marionette. Circa 1950s-1960s. Handmade, professional performance marionette puppet constructed of cast composite wood/plastic material from custom molds. Expertly painted and finished and with fabric costume and accessories. This elaborate jointed marionette is operated by approx. 18-strings attached to its wooden controller, by which a puppeteer can articulate a nuance of movement, limbs, gestures, blinking eyes, eyebrows and operating mouth. The puppet measures approx. 28 x 11 x 9 in. and the entire puppet rig measures 54 in. from floor to stringed controller. Exhibiting expected age, performance wear, minor soiling. Lovingly preserved by the legendary family and fully operational. In vintage good condition.

\$800-\$1,200

PRICES REALIZED



Walton & O'Rourke Vintage
Female Jazz Singer Marionette.
(Estimate: \$800-\$1,000)

FINAL PRICE: \$2250.00



Walton & O'Rourke Vintage
Cowboy Bass Player Marionette.
(Estimate: \$800-\$1,000)

FINAL PRICE: \$4062.50



Walton & O'Rourke Vintage
Cowboy Guitar Player Marionette.
(Estimate: \$800-\$1,000)

FINAL PRICE: \$3562.50



Walton & O'Rourke Vintage
Beatnik Conga Player Marionette.
(Estimate: \$800-\$1,000)

FINAL PRICE: \$2500.00

