

# WIN TICKETS

## The Performant: The Stiltwalkers Union

08.06.13 - 10:29 am | [Nicole Gluckstern](#) (category/author/nicole-gluckstern) | (2)

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In an iconic sequence from Winsor McCay's eccentrically beautiful [Little Nemo in Slumberland](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Little_Nemo_in_Slumberland) ([http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Little\\_Nemo](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Little_Nemo)), Nemo's bed sprouts elongated legs and strolls through the city as Nemo and his cantankerous friend Flip cling to the bedsheets and try not to fall out. Whenever I see performers on stilts, the exaggerated limbs of that unexpectedly animated furniture are one of the first things that spring to my mind, their death-defying acrobatics furthering the resemblance to an unnerving dream sequence.

Tapping into both the whimsical and the deeply unsettling nature of stiltwalking as art form, San Francisco's [Carpetbag Brigade](http://www.carpetbagbrigade.com/) (<http://www.carpetbagbrigade.com/>) and [Nemcatacoa Teatro](http://www.nemcatacoateatro.org/) (<http://www.nemcatacoateatro.org/>) from Colombia performed their unique brand of physical theater in tandem over the weekend, along with Tucson, AZ's VerboBala and Hojarasca Andina from Colombia, as part of their transcontinental "[Bi-Cultural Road Show](http://www.nemcatacoateatro.org/arcosanti/) (<http://www.nemcatacoateatro.org/arcosanti/>)."

At [Dance Mission](http://www.dancemission.com/) (<http://www.dancemission.com/>), Carpetbag Brigade's *Callings* featured a quintet of stiltwalkers, suggesting the virtually alien clime of the deep sea with nothing more than a few rowboat paddles and a soundtrack heavy on implication. A trio of overall-clad performers with impossibly long legs moved in and out of the center point of the stage, paddles aloft, menacingly brandished as weapons, then put to more utilitarian purpose as propellers. A single performer clad all in white held another aloft like a seagull skimming the surface of the waves. Performers recreated the motion of rolling waves and tempestuous storms in synchronized group groundwork and intense, contact improv-style duets.

An innocuous wooden swing on a sturdy rope lost all innocence, serving both as life preserver and obstacle to the performers as they grasped for it from the "sea" and became entangled in it, singly and in pairs, as the pre-recorded music shifted from darkly ominous underwater electronica to sprightly accordion tunes to dramatic strings and clattering percussion in the style of Cirque de Soleil.

Meanwhile, outside the 24th Street BART station, Nemcatacoa Teatro was embarking on a site-specific exploration of the area as part of its "Landscape Re-Invention Society" series. Like reanimated [Diggers](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Diggers_%28theater%29) ([http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Diggers\\_%28theater%29](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Diggers_%28theater%29)) or extraterrestrial visitors, the troupe turned the mundane into occasion for wonder. Painted black-and-white and clad all in fluttering white garments (streaked, perhaps inadvertently, by their body paint), the stiltwalking group towered above the crowd and many of the familiar landmarks of the area: the metal fences surrounding the station entrances, the busses pulling up to the stop outside El Farolito, the looming McDonalds across the street.

Followed by Hojarasca Andina, a trio of enigmatic musicians with pan pipes, the intrepid bunch felt their way boldly from corner to corner, gazing in puzzlement through windows, hugging trees, tumbling across pavement, and lounging along the BART station walls (the latter segment inadvertently bringing to mind the recent [tragic breakdown of Colombian acrobat Yeiner Perez](http://missionlocal.org/2013/07/yeiner-perez-man-arrested-naked-at-bart-speaks) (<http://missionlocal.org/2013/07/yeiner-perez-man-arrested-naked-at-bart-speaks>), though fortunately for all, the mood is strictly playful, not aggressive), until at last they came to rest, posed flat against the vibrantly-painted mural outside Dance Mission.

Sorry you missed the spectacle? Watch all four companies (Carpetbag Brigade, Nemcatacoa Teatro, VerboBala, and Hojarasca Andina) in their collaborative piece [Dios de la Adrenalina](http://www.diosadrenalina.com/) (<http://www.diosadrenalina.com/>) at [Union Square](http://www.unionsquarelive.org/) (<http://www.unionsquarelive.org/>) Sun/11 at 2 p.m., and [Yerba Buena Gardens](http://www.yerba-buena-gardens.com/) (<http://www.yerba-buena-gardens.com/>)

<http://www.yerbabuenaagardens.com/> on August 17 at 2:30 p.m.

(Don't panic! The Performant will be on hiatus for one week as she packs her bags for the Canadian Fringe Festival circuit. Check out her tweets for up-to-the-minute dispatches from the Great North [@enkohl](https://twitter.com/enkohl) (<https://twitter.com/enkohl>.)

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**The Yerba Buena Gardens** (/pixel\_vision/2013/08/06/performant-stiltwalkers-union#comment-111102)

The Yerba Buena Gardens Performance is at 1:00 pm...

<http://www.ybgfestival.org/Events/carpetbag-brigade/> (<http://www.ybgfestival.org/Events/carpetbag-brigade/>)

Posted by **GuestJay Ruby** (<http://www.carpetbagbrigade.com>) on Aug. 07, 2013 @ 10:32 am

**performance time** (/pixel\_vision/2013/08/06/performant-stiltwalkers-union#comment-111099)

The Yerba Buena Gardens performance is at 1:00 pm.

Posted by **GuestJay Ruby** (<http://www.carpetbagbrigade.com>) on Aug. 07, 2013 @ 10:28 am

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