

# ***PuppetMaster***



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THEATER

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**Q:** What contains a mile of “el (electroluminescent) wire”, one hundred AA batteries, PVC pipes, fishing poles, duct tape, zip ties, backpacks, skateboard wheels, four performers —and *Puppetry*?

**A:** *Dino-Light*, a dance-mime-Puppetry piece, an enthralling, “electrifying” — pardon the pun — experience, from start to finish, sixty minutes later. Performed on a darkened stage, bright, neon-colored outlines of an assortment of characters: human, dinosaur and bird, cavort, dance, fight — and die, to recorded musical accompaniment.

After the show, co-creator Ian Carney (*middle photo*), told the audience of his dance background and having appeared on Broadway in Twyla Tharp’s *Movin’ Out*. (Lightwire’s website mentions Corbin Popp as co-creator.) The two men shared a mutual love of “art, theater and technology,” and fortuitously discovered flexible “el wire,” into which a mild electrical charge results in colors that change, as the current is increased — from dim to fully bright, resulting in neon-bright yellows, reds, blues and greens.

Together with their wives, Eleanor and Whitney, they experimented with

## ***Dino-Light***

**Lightwire Theater  
Symphony Space, NYC  
March 17, 2018**



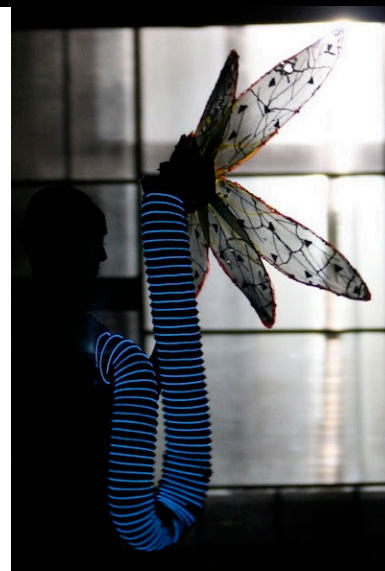
**Top Left: Neon-outlined masks hang backstage Above: Costumed co-creator Ian Carney greets a young post-show visitor. Upper Right: Oversize neon flower glows blue in the dark. Photos courtesy of Lightwire Theater**

shapes and designs, resulting in the development of Puppetry-based creatures of light that come to life on stage.

This technique requires no theatrical lighting or external power source, and emits 360 degrees of glowing light. Powered by scads of AA batteries contained in backpacks, this gives the fleet-footed young dancer-puppeteers freedom to move about the stage — and, *do they ever!*

Shows from their repertoire include sixteen-foot-tall birds, ducks, soldiers, swords and, in this case, *dinosaurs*.

Lightwire has performed worldwide, in



Hong Kong, Estonia, Canada, Belarus, China and Abu Dhabi. Lightwire was also a semi-finalist on Season 7 of *America’s Got Talent!*

The story line of this show, performed without dialog, presents an elderly scientist and his pet Tyrannosaur, who are set upon by a Velociraptor-like dinosaur.

Mortally wounded, the scientist dies, but his heart flies out of his body, into that of a bird. (This is heavy-going for a family show, but children in the audience seemed not to mind a dose of reality, in this fantastic show.)

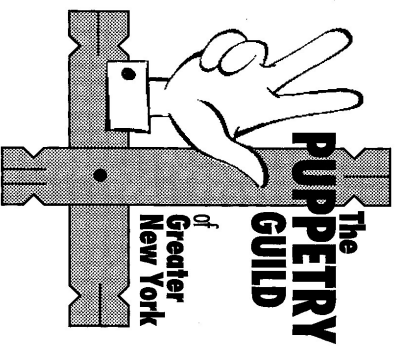
Characters appear, are “magically” animated, disappear and . . . reappear. The illusion is spectacular, and constantly surprising, thanks to the el wire medium, coupled with the talent and imaginations of the hard-working performers, and the creative team.

*Dino-Light* also contained a fair amount of sentiment, with its depiction of the tender relationship between human and animal — something we can all relate to.

**PL**

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PGOGNY  
PO Box 117  
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