

# Squirrel Stole My Underpants

A poignantly silly adventure tale for families



## About the Show

A lonely, awkward girl is sent out to the backyard to hang up the laundry and keep herself busy. The moment Sylvie's back is turned, a mischievous squirrel appears, steals her favorite piece of clothing and runs off. When the girl gives chase, she finds herself lost in strange lands. As the story unfolds, an entire world emerges from her laundry basket and Sylvie learns that she is a strong girl with magic within herself.

With *Squirrel Stole My Underpants*, I am exploring that delicate time in childhood when you desperately want to be a grown up but you still need your blanket to make you feel safe. I am using puppetry as a way to fill the world of one lonely girl with many friends, foes, and magical creatures. I am using rod puppets, hand puppets, and object manipulation to bring to life an unordinary world. Blending puppetry, dance, and physical theater, I am creating a world that transforms in scale, color, texture, and time.

Austin Live Theater described my work, which mixes puppetry with other forms of performance, as "an artful world of silent dreams, mime, and dance." I am drawing inspiration from the worlds of magical adventure tales: *Alice in Wonderland*; *The Wizard of Oz*; *Where the Wild Things Are*; and, a new story, *The Girl Who Circumnavigated Fairyland in a Ship of Her Own Making*.

### *Highlights from the show:*

- *Pinned To The Max*: We meet Sylvie, see her get tangled up in the clothes she tries to hang. A sheet becomes a puppet stage, and a pair of lovely underwear is hung with great care in the center of the line.
- *The Deed Is Done*: On the puppet stage, the nefarious Squirrel appears, discovers the underpants, and makes off with them, before Sylvie can stop him.
- *Row, Row Your Boat*: Sylvie folds herself into her laundry bag, only to discover that it turns into a boat, floating her along on an ocean of gauzy nightgowns. She survives a storm and almost catches up to Squirrel.
- *Underpants Have Feelings, Too*: Sylvie's underpants perform an earnest love song for Sylvie.
- *Squirrel's Party*: Sylvie manages to sneak into a party at Squirrel's tree and attempts to steal back her underpants. Does she succeed? You'll have to see the show to find out!

*Squirrel Stole My Underpants* premiered at Puppet Showplace Theatre, Brookline, MA, January 2013, with a completely sold out 10 show run. It has since been featured in venues such as Outside the Box Festival, Boston; Puppets Take Long Island Festival, New York; Springfield Museum, Springfield, MA; and La MaMa E.T.C., New York, NY.

**This show was awarded a 2013 Jim Henson Foundation family project grant and was developed with the generous support of the Puppet Showplace Theater's Incubator program.**



## Why I make theater for family audiences

As a performer, I want audiences to relate to the story on stage in a way that sparks their imaginations and lifts them out of their ordinary lives. I make work that is delightful, and silly, and moving, and beautiful, all at once. I want the audience to discover the story for themselves. I want them to laugh, I want them to cry, then I want them to laugh again.

My shows are often stories told without words—I embrace the physical and the visual in theater. The result is a poetic, non-linear story that surprises audiences. One of the things that makes me happiest is when I meet children who have seen my show and their parents tell me how their child acted out my entire show for weeks after seeing it. This is the core reason why I make theater for young audiences: I want them to know in their hearts that they, too, can make theater wherever they are and wherever they are.



## Lead Artist



**Bonnie Duncan** has blended puppetry, dance, and physical theatre in surprising and delightful ways for the past 14 years. Her work has been described as “an artful world of silent dreams, mime, and dance” (Austin Live Theatre). She has most recently been working as one half of They Gotta Be Secret Agents with Tim Gallagher. Their show, *Poste Restante*, continues to tour worldwide, and won “Best Touring Show of 2011,” Austin, TX; Best of the Fringe, San Francisco, 2009; and a nomination for Most Innovative Show at Prague Fringe Festival. Prior to her work as a Secret Agent, Bonnie was a company member of Snappy Dance Theater for 8 years, performing sculptural, acrobatic dances nationally and internationally. Her movement was called “breathtakingly simple” and “delightfully crafty” by the Boston Globe. When Bonnie is not performing, she is the mother of three young children, an avid runner, and vegan cupcake maker.

## Collaborators

**Brendan Burns** (music) is a guitarist & educator rooted in Somerville, MA. He released his debut album *TimeStamp* (recorded live at the Somerville Theatre) in 2012. Brendan is a founding member of the music & puppetry troupe: Elephant Tango Ensemble (nominated for an IRNE), former director of the house band for Bent Wit Cabaret and a regular contributor with SchoolTree, Kristen Ford Band, Karin Webb, Molly Zenobia & Brendan Burns’ Roadhouse. Brendan holds a Bachelor’s Degree from Berklee College of Music and is the guitar department coordinator at Brookline Music School. <http://www.brendanburns.com/>

**Tony Leva** (music) Tony Leva is an educator, improviser, collaborator and performer. He performs regularly with Bury Me Standing, Jaggery, The Michael Dobiell Quartet and the Junk Kitchen Players. Since 2002 he has been actively studying and performing on the upright bass. He currently teaches bass at the Rockport Community School and is an active collaborator/educator at Tunefoolery, an artist collective of musicians with psychiatric disabilities. Tony also studies the sintir (a North African bass lute) and has occasionally performed on trumpet, melodica, accordion and clown nose. <http://anthonyleva.wordpress.com/>

**Penney Pinette** (costumes) is currently a Costume Design MFA student at Boston University. She most recently was the costume shop supervisor at Tufts University and worked as a lead pattern maker for the Huntington Theatre Company for 10 years. She still teaches costume production at Boston University. She was awarded a Boston Artist Certificate in 2006 and continues to design independently for theatre, film, and dance.

**Dan Milstein** (director/husband) is the founding Artistic Director of Boston’s Rough & Tumble Theater with whom he has made over thirteen original plays. He holds fast to his quixotic belief that theater should be cheap, fun, and deeply satisfying.

**Hamideh Rezaei-Kamalabad** (set) is a jewelry maker who sometimes dabbles in theater when asked. She is a recent graduate of Massachusetts College of Art and works as a fabricator for local jewelers. She is currently working on a new line of her own art jewelry.

**Show Listing Information:**

*Squirrel Stole My Underpants*

A poignantly silly adventure tale for families

Sylvie is sent to the backyard to hang up the laundry. The moment her back is turned, a mischievous squirrel steals her favorite piece of clothing and runs off. When Sylvie gives chase, an entire world emerges from her laundry basket, and curious characters show her the way through mysterious lands. Will our lonely heroine rescue her underpants and discover the magic within herself? Join us on this adventure to find out!

**Press Pitch Ideas:**

- Bonnie traveled the world, performing in acclaimed modern dance company Snappy Dance Theater and in her own award-winning fringe shows. *Squirrel Stole My Underpants* is her first full show for families.
- Puppets meet Physical Theater meet Music: Boston musicians Brendan Burns & Tony Leva composed music for the show and are available to perform live.
- What does a world-traveling dancer and puppeteer do when she finds herself with three kids under five at home? Make a show for kids, to tour the world again, of course!

**Technical Requirements:**

- Recommended Audience: ages 3 & up; family audiences; pre-K-5<sup>th</sup> grade
- Audience Size: up to 250
- Performance Time: 35 minutes plus Question & Answer session with audience
- Stage Requirements: minimum of 10 feet wide x 10 feet deep x 10 feet high, clear space with clean, safe floor
- Lighting & Sound Requirements: electrical outlet no more than 15 feet of stage area, adequate general lighting of stage area or focused stage lights
- Set-Up / Breakdown Time: 30 minutes for set up with arrival to space one hour prior to performance or house open; 30 minutes for breakdown

**For Photos & Video:**

For on-line videos: <http://www.bonnie-duncan.com/for-presenters.html>

For downloadable high-resolution photographs:

<https://picasaweb.google.com/112215696114981006647/SquirrelStoleMyUnderpants?authuser=0&feat=directlink>

**Shout Outs of the Show:**

Talented performer-creator Bonnie Duncan brings her handmade puppets, fanciful sets, charming stage persona, and always imaginative flair to this family-friendly piece.

-- Boston Globe

Bonnie Duncan's creativity is a thrill for audiences of all ages! *Squirrel Stole My Underpants* is filled with playful puppetry, simple-but-elegant scenery, and memorable music. Her work is a testament to the power of imagination and the magic of live theatre. You will never look at doing the laundry the same way again!

--Roxanna Myhrum, Artistic Director, Puppet Showplace Theatre, Brookline, MA

I thought there was going to be a laugh riot in my classroom when I told the students the name of the play! Then my students saw the show and the laughing and amazement continued. Bonnie's puppets, music, and story-telling ability had all my students fully engaged and talking about the show long after it was over.

--Lesley Strang, K-1 teacher, Boston Public Schools

""With *Squirrel Stole My Underpants*, a performer reshapes her career""

--by Karen Campbell, The Boston Globe, January 26, 2013:

<http://www.bonnie-duncan.com/uploads/3/5/6/6/3566936/squirrelglobearticle.pdf>

**Contact Bonnie for more information:**

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