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Going Underground

By Staff

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As Black History Month comes to a close, Western New Yorkers will have one last chance this weekend to see a unique interpretation of the story of Underground Railroad. Puppeteer Michele Costa will perform her piece "Underground, Over the Moon" at 2 p.m. Sunday in the Buffalo and Erie County Historical Society (25 Nottingham Court).

"I've always been intrigued by the Underground Railroad, so I set out to put together a puppet show," Costa said. "I thought it was something crucial to show to people of all ages."

Costa's show follows a mother, father and baby ("a small, loving family who could be any family," Costa said) as they make their journey north toward freedom. It is mostly devoid of dialogue and includes dreamy appearances by the likes of famous abolitionists Sojourner Truth and Harriet Tubman.

A challenge in conceiving the piece, Costa said, was figuring out where she, as a white puppeteer, fit into the story. "I had to figure out what I was as a white person telling the story," Costa said, adding that she sees her character in the show "as an abolitionist or someone who wants to get up the gumption to be an abolitionist."

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Costa conceived the show three years ago, with the help of a small grant from the Jim Henson Foundation, and she has been touring to schools and museums ever since. Her work has become a popular highlight of the summerly Infringement Festival (scheduled for July 22 to Aug. 1), for which she is already working on a new piece.

Tickets to the show are \$6. For more information, call 873-9644 or visit **www.buffalohistory.org**.

-- Colin Dabkowski