

For release:
IMMEDIATE

From

IBM

IBM Pavilion

World's Fair, New York 11380

Andrew J. Cella
888-5543

The Pentagon Theaters

On the raised pentagon at the center of the pavilion, mechanical puppet shows dispel the mystery of the world of computers.

Mechanical puppet-like devices are synchronized with lights, music, narration and sound effects to explain such subjects as computer logic and information handling systems.

The figures, operated electro-mechanically and electro-pneumatically, are made of miniaturized air cylinders, gears, bell cranks and applied exteriors. In the theater-in-the-round they rise and descend on air pistons, and in the rectangular theaters they ride on tracks.

Puppets, props and scenery are controlled by pre-programmed tape. The puppet theater operations follow the normal theater presentation format in that curtains, characters and objects move both vertically and horizontally at set times.

The Pentagon Theaters - 2

The puppet shows are presented under colorful canopies designed in the tradition of the great fairs and carnivals of the past. Supported by walnut posts and topped by gay flags of sheet metal, the canopies are made of triangular panels of inlaid Formica, framed in walnut. They are 13 feet high and their perimeters are strung with lights.

Each Show lasts approximately five minutes and an elapsed-time indicator on the front of each theater tells how long it is until the next performance.

The three shows are: "Cast of Characters," "The Case of the Elusive Train, Or the Plurality of the Singular Green Moustache" and "Computer Day at Midvale."

"Cast of Characters:"

At the octagonal theater-in-the-round the show, "Cast of Characters," introduces a complete repertory, in miniature, of communications devices, information handling systems and the people who employ them -- programmers, systems engineers and industry specialists.

The show presents the specialists who structure the problems, and the systems engineers and programmers who set the problems up in forms that computers can handle.

"Cast of Characters" describes the combination of men, machines and data necessary to solve such problems as the design of a highway, the blending of a new motor fuel, the handling of insurance premiums, the search of patent files and the computing of the path of a rocket from the moment of launching.

The performance is a dramatization of the way people relate to machines to solve a countless number of problems. It is the story of the people who study a real life problem and restate it in symbolic terms -- the machines that can handle, relate and translate such symbols at incredible speed -- and the people who can with intelligence and understanding interpret the output of the machine in a way that is meaningful to our real life situations.

"The Case of the Elusive Train, Or the Plurality of the Singular Green Moustache:"

At one of two smaller theaters, Sherlock Holmes employs some two-valued logic to solve "The Case of the Elusive Train, Or the Plurality of the Singular Green Moustache."

In this mechanical puppet show, Holmes exposes the evidence in the case to a series of true-false choices, much as a computer would solve a problem.

In the process, he recovers the stolen Glasgow Express and demonstrates to Dr. Watson the process of two-value logic, similar to that used in an electronic computer.

The Pentagon Theaters - 4

This show is complete with trains, bandits, police, green moustaches, Baker Street idioms and a surprise ending.

"Computer Day at Midvale:"

In "Computer Day at Midvale," a small-town mayor does his best to deliver a Fourth of July tribute to computers. His speech is punctuated with marching bands and fireworks.

Despite the well-intended coaching of a computer salesman, the mayor's explanation is alternately too simple and too complex.

The salesman's frustration indicates the danger of oversimplifying while the mayor's frustration indicates the difficulty of understanding what computers essentially are. The total effect of the presentation is to explode many of the popular fallacies about computers.

The show illustrates the confusion the layman is faced with in trying to understand computers. On one hand a computer expert says the computer is so amazingly complex that it has called forth a new kind of thinking. On the other hand, the same expert may say the computer is, after all, just another tool for man's use.

#