LIFE

# LARRY REED'S LEGACY LIVES THROUGH DISPLAY AT BALLARD

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The Ballard Institute and Museum of Puppetry opened its doors for the first time since October for the opening of its new exhibit, "Larry Reed: Cinematic Shadows," which celebrates and showcases the work of Larry Reed, an American shadow puppeteer and one of the first Western artists to train in Wayang, traditional shadow theater from Bali, Indonesia.

The opening consisted of a tour of the exhibition led by its curators, Farley Gwazda and Caryl Kientz, who took spectators through the archival items of Reed, and through an interactive portion with recreations of Reed's puppets. Gwazda and Kientz also led a panel moderated by professor Matthew Cohen from the Department of Dramatic Arts at the University of Connecticut.

Reed founded ShadowLight Productions in 1972 and is best known for eventually combining techniques from cinema, modern theater and dance for a new method for casting shadows. His best-known works are the 1979 documentary "Shadow Master" and the multimedia shadow theater production "In Xanadu."



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PHOTOGRAPH BY MATHIEU PINTO, GRAB PHOTOGRAPHER/THE DAILY CAMPUS

Kientz, the managing director of ShadowLight Productions, and Gwazda, Reed's archivist, worked closely with each other to put the exhibition together.

"This exhibition is almost archival, coming from my side, but also a theatrical production," Gwazda said in an interview. "So, it's very ambitious and very immersive."

Through the interactive portion, viewers can put on recreations of Reed's 3D shadow masks and play around with their shadows on a screen, offering them a unique perspective of what it would be like to be a live performer during a Wayang performance.

Though shadow puppetry has a long-standing reputation as a game for children, Reed sought to bring deeper themes to it, spending 10 years learning the art form and learning two languages to perfect it.

In traditional Wayang performances, some characters speak Kawi, and then other characters translate that into Balinese.

"Larry took those characters and made them translate Kawi into English, so he made this theater widely available," Gwazda said. "I hope that when people walk into this exhibition, they can look at the depth of this tradition."

Throughout the panel, Kientz and Gwazda spoke of their respective friendships with Reed, emphasizing how much of a collaborator he was.

"What I learned from Larry is that collaboration means coming to a project with other artists with an openness to the ideas that will be generated when we are all together," wrote Kientz, who met Reed in 2008. "Those ideas that do not exist in us individually, but that happened in the same space when we are all working on the same project."

Reed died in March 2026, and Kientz hopes that the exhibition at the Ballard serves as a "living legacy."

"I hope that people see how Larry's curiosity and wide range of interests led him to have a very rich and meaningful artistic career and also a rich and significant artistic community," she wrote in an email.

Gwazda said that the exhibition should preserve the art form as well.

"Larry wanted his work available to practitioners: people who wanted to pick up a puppet, people who want to play and people who want to make something beautiful. This is a way of playful creation that anyone can do," Gwazda said.

"I think that if Larry Reed could know that he could continue to inspire people to do that, that that would be really meaningful to him."

# PUNCH BROTHERS HOST STELLAR CONCERT AT JORGENSEN

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The Punch Brothers put on a remarkable performance at the Jorgensen Center for the Performing Arts on Saturday.

Formed in 2006, Punch Brothers is an acoustic band with five members: mandolinist Chris Thile, banjoist Noam Pikelny, violinist Brittany Haas, guitarist Chris Elderidge and bassist Paul Kowert. Much of the band's music revolves around modern strings.

Friday's performance was more than a concert, according to Pikelny. It was a time to honor the release of "The Adventures of Punch Brothers," the band's very first all-instrumental album.

When discussing the album, Pikelny joked that songs don't really need lyrics to depict a message.

"If you put in earbuds or put on headphones and you hear words, that's called a podcast," Pikelny said. "What we're doing is music, and it might be our most commercially viable music yet."

Over a dozen songs were performed, and most of them included lyrics.

The show began with a powerful performance consisting of beautiful country-like melodies, variable tempos and mystical vocals. As Thile sang the beginning lyrics in a foreign language, green mist illuminated the stage. Thile eventually switched to English while his colleagues sang with him, creating a sublime echo.

At the end of the first song, Punch Brothers received much applause from the audience. Afterwards, they jumped into the next one, which was mellower. While violins dominated the background, Thile sang about a voyage to the New World. While his pitch remained mostly constant, he sometimes sang high-pitched notes. At the same time, his tone consistently fluctuated from neutrality to melancholy.

The third song was also laid back. Throughout its duration, the band created a cohesive blend of banjo, guitar, bass, vocals and violin melodies. After remaining static for over half of the song, the tempo dramatically accelerated while lower chords dominated the background music.

After performing two mellow songs, the band switched their groove on the fourth song, which had riveting lyrics, a sassy tone and swift tempos. In some moments, orange lights electrified the stage.

The fifth tune was an audience favorite, receiving many cheers and applause. Consisting of high vocals and uplifting violin harmonies, the song is about loving the colors of the rainbow. While Thile sang most of the lyrics, there were times when the other band members chimed in, producing a gorgeous blend of voices.

Next was "Solve Knut," an uplifting Norwegian tune with elegant banjo, guitar and violin notes. Many of the song's elements remained unchanged, including the tone. In the middle of the song, the tempo slightly picked up, which made for a grandiose ending.

The seventh song began with a light guitar solo. The other instruments eventually joined while Thile used an emotional tone to sing about his wife waking up and going back to sleep.

Afterwards was "Saturn: Pogo Ball of the Gods." The beginning had a countdown until liftoff, intimidating an outer space theme. The rest of the song had an exquisite banjo and violin blend.

The ninth song was one of the longer ones. It had solos, strong violin notes, tempo changes and a mood that frequently shifted between hope and desperation. Sometimes, the song alluded to John Williams and the London Symphony Orchestra's "The Imperial March (Darth Vader's Theme)."

Like its predecessor, the 10th song had various moods, such as joy and groove. The tempo was constant, and the audience sang along sometimes.

Punch Brothers brought back country vibes with their 11th tune. The audience clapped along in the beginning when Thile used a southern accent to sing about whiskey.

The final three songs received the most applause and cheers. They showcased instrumental breaks and graceful melodies. The last song was unique because the beginning was a cappella. While Thile adorned the air with motivational lyrics, the audience sang along, producing a lovely sound.

At the end of the show, Thile said he and his colleagues feel united between themselves and the audience every time they perform.

"It's always us," Thile said, later expressing that "us" symbolizes the band and those who came to watch the performance.

Tyrese Fenton, a seventh-semester sociology student, said his favorite part about the concert was the audience singing along. He also said the concert was very good overall.

"I was surprised by how funny it was," Fenton said. "Like, they played the instruments pretty well."



**Violonist, Brittany Haas plays alongside her bandmates. The band's latest album released on July 24, 2026.**

PHOTOGRAPH BY MATHIEU PINTO, GRAB PHOTOGRAPHER/THE DAILY CAMPUS



**The string band Punch Brothers performed at the Jorgensen Center for Performing Arts on Saturday, November 7, 2026. The band is currently on tour showcasing their new album: The Unsung Adventures of Punch Brothers.**

PHOTOGRAPH BY MATHIEU PINTO, GRAB PHOTOGRAPHER/THE DAILY CAMPUS