



Two of Gary Friedman's puppets

Puppet artist returns to work in Cape Town

TALLULAH was born in 1979 at the age of 32, Sir Thomas had a head transplant recently and Archie's head was built in London. And Zachariah? Well ... he died last year. It was very sad.

They're still all friends, mind you, along with Oscar, Toscar, Sir Thomas and Monkey-Nunkey. Their *numero uno* friend is 23-year-old Gary Friedman, who is at a loss whether to describe them as dolls, dummies ("I'd rather they weren't dummies", he says) or puppets. "I call them friends."

Gary (he's real) returned home to Cape Town last Monday after travelling and working extensively in Europe, England, Scotland and the United States. He's a puppeteer, ventriloquist and cabaret artist who first became interested in puppets at the age of three when he was given a puppet as

a present. "I've never grown up," he says.

Gary built all the dolls himself — all except Archie's head, which was built by the famous London doll-maker Innes, who died some years ago.

While overseas, Gary taught puppetry in an Israeli kibbutz, took part in the Unima Puppet Theatre's international festival in London last year, did street theatre in various countries, became fluent in German, Dutch and Hebrew, studied marionettes in Switzerland under Hanspeter Bleisch, and was interviewed on television in Vienna. He sailed the Mediterranean in a luxury Californian yacht and put on shows everywhere he went, including the Georges Pompidou Centre in Paris.

In the United States Gary performed in CBS Channel 2's Christmas family variety special and did a five-month stint at Poppy's Star, a Los Angeles nightclub.

Locally, he intends to do as much television and cabaret work as he can, and hopes eventually to get his own children's television show.

"I'm available to do cabaret, puppet and ventriloquist shows in Cape Town," he said. He can be contacted at 61-4011.

TONY JACKMAN