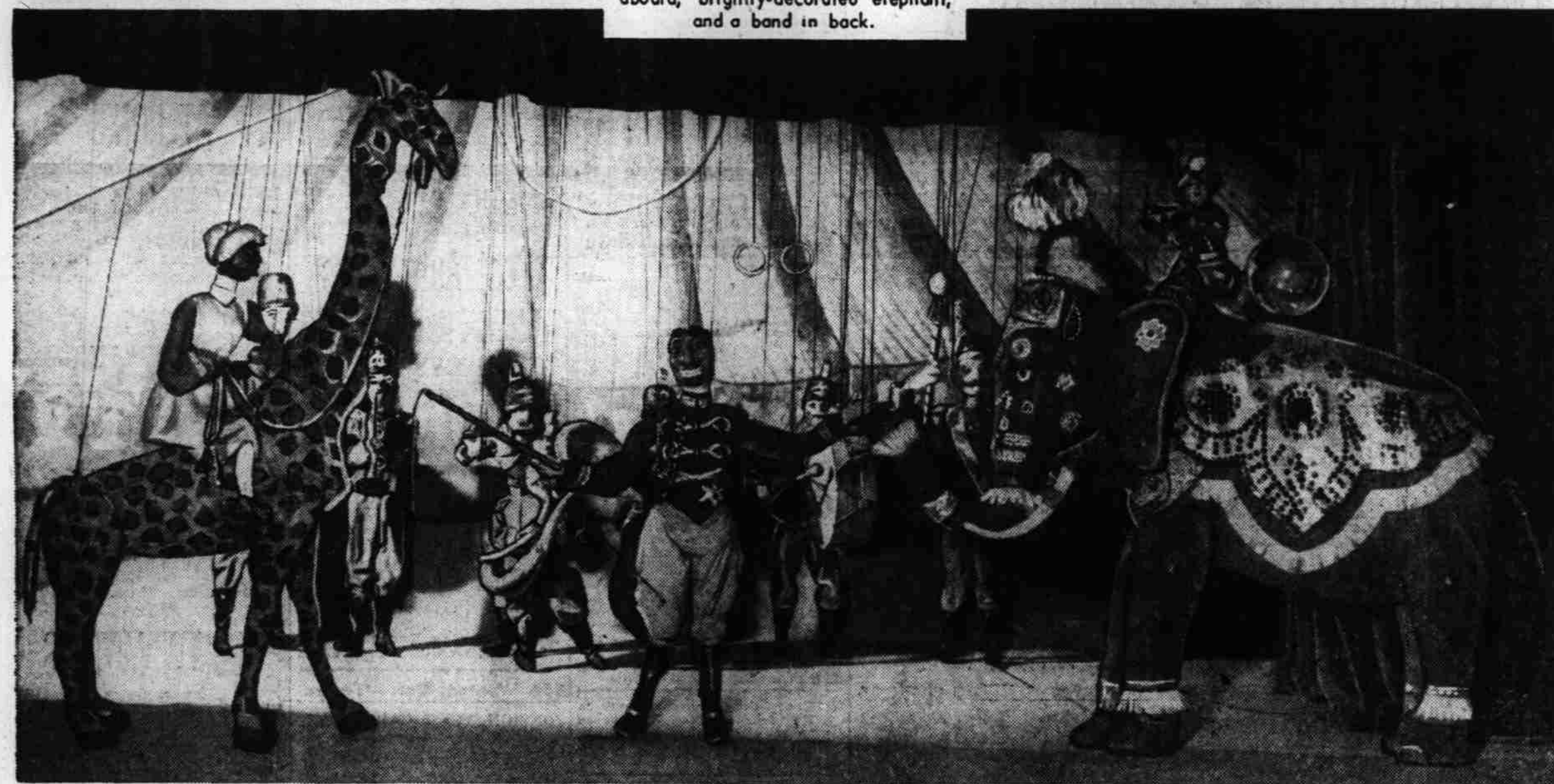


WOODEN ACTORS



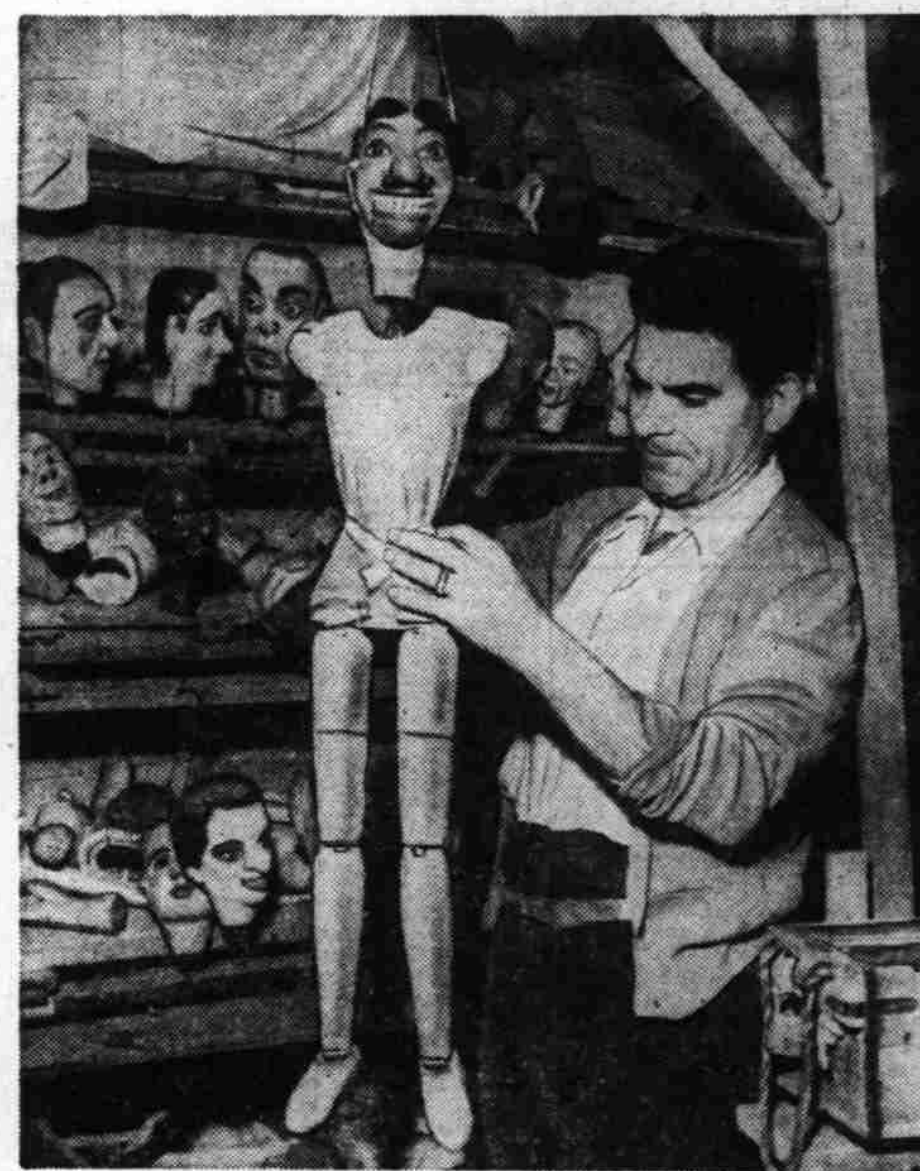
High up, a battery of string-pullers—ten of them—manipulate an entire cast of marionettes performing on the stage below. It's a circus, with an animal tamer, giraffe with jockey aboard, brightly-decorated elephant, and a band in back.



Artist files head of marionette in Rome workshop.

"Marionetteers must treat their puppets as if they were human beings—they must be in love with them." This is the feeling of members of the Vittorio Podrecca "Piccoli" show, one of the world's best-known marionette companies which has its workshop in an old convent at the Piazza Anastasia in Rome, Italy. They build the marionettes themselves of wood, plastic and other materials. Some of them look like famed actors such as Maurice Chevalier, Greta Garbo, Charlie Chaplin and Josephine Baker. Others are made to appear as people of many eras and many countries. Or they represent animals and fish. The show is a huge undertaking. When the company goes on tour it often travels with as many as 1,000 marionettes. The average program includes bits of traditional Italian folklore and opera. In the 40 and more years it has been in business, the company has put on some 20,000 performances in Italy and other countries throughout the world.

The "Piccoli" marionettes are pictured here—in the making and before the footlights.



Grinning marionette, hanging from ropes, is worked on in shop. Heads and other parts are on shelves in back.



Producer Vittorio Podrecca intently watches dressing of one of his marionettes.



Women are kept busy sewing all kinds of garments. Half-dressed marionette is sprawled out on table.



Comedy scene involves accordionist, man up lamppost and magician.

The Week's PICTURE SHOW—AP Newsfeatures.

