Theatre Australia: Australia's magazine of the performing arts 2(12) July 1978

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Editor

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Australian Film and Television School
## Theatre

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The flow of theatrical traffic between Australia and the two major countries of English speaking theatre, Britain and the US, seems to be very much on the up. And at last it looks as if the one-way system that made the journey from this end so frustrating and usually impossible, is slowly becoming two-way (and could perhaps become a full free-way system with a bit more road work en route).

Following Benjamin Franklin and the impact it has made in the West End (Richard Wherrett's photo has recently been used in Plays and Players to advertise the E15 acting school — with Chater's on the cover), though sadly not enough to keep it running for much longer, Williamson's The Club — renamed The Players — will be following in its tracks to London and the States, though there to Washington as opposed to Broadway. It is only sad that the London producers have not seen fit, as they did with Benjamin Franklin, to take the package of the excellent and commercially successful Nimrod production. As it is Michael Blakemore will be putting together a predominantly English cast; let's hope it doesn't have the same effect as the English production of Don't Piddle Against The Wind, Mate, was having its first run in America for the Peter Summerton Foundation, and was here while Don't Piddle Against The Wind, Mate, was having its first full production at Jane Street, Sydney. This year he is scheduled to direct that play on Broadway in the near future, after it was picked up by New York producers Sandy Farber and Stanley Barnett.

And it's not just our playwrights. After fifteen months travel and intense theatre study in Europe, designer Shaun Gurton is working in London as assistant to Timothy O'Brien and Tazeena Firth for the next six months. He is working on a number of their commissions, including the Rice/Webber Evita, and opera designs for Covent Garden, and, would you believe, Sydney! Perhaps as a small concession to the Australia Council's direct and indirect financial assistance of the University of Newcastle.

The Queen, too, has once again recognised theatre in the Antipodes, and has this year awarded Konn Brodziak the Order of the British Empire for his services. Brodziak has indeed brought to Australia much of the best that Britain has had to offer. It is he who has introduced here Moira Lister, Joyce Grenfell, the Beatles, Canterbury Tales, The Boys in the Band, Anna Neagle, Derek Nimmo, Charlie Girl, Godspell and Pippin, and also started the trend of putting Australian artists into these big shows, like Johnny Lockwood and Johnny Farnham.

The latest in the line of these shows is, of course, A Chorus Line, still running in Melbourne, but there is also plenty more on the way. With Michael Edgley, Brodziak and J C Williamson's Productions have just completed an existing looking line-up of drama, dance and opera from overseas that will be touring here in the next eighteen months or so. The drama front kicks off with Dracula this August, a new and subtly sensual version of the blood-sucking gentleman's adventures. Annie, the tear-jerking Broadway musical follows, and later another thriller called Deathtrap. It will be interesting to see how the much less obviously commercial duo of Chekov's The Bear and Cocteau's The Human Voice that Liv Ullman is coming over to play, will do for the entrepreneurs. Interesting, too, that an actress from the outre cinema of the sixties (though a fine talent) has become a figure that the public will pay to see, whatever the dramas she is in.

For ballet lovers the "greatest hits" approach has been taken, with assorted stars as the order of the day, from "Stars of World Ballet" to the Dance Theatre of Harlem, to the Full Bolshoi Ballet, to "Rudi and Friends". And the D'Oyly Carte Opera Company of ninety plus their full symphony orchestra will be here next May to cater for the G & S fans.

As Michael Edgley makes clear in Quotes and Queries, Australian actors will be working in the drama productions, but perhaps the next step for our increasingly adventurous entrepreneurs is to find the right Australian shows to export overseas — just to have some of them buried under the masks of Sesame Street characters for an opening in Japan is not enough.

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COMEDY AT THE COMEDY

WILTON MORLEY, Parachute Productions. "How wonderful for theatregoers in this country that the Comedy Theatre (Melbourne) has been sold to someone with such obvious theatrical flair and foresight as Mr Paul Dainty. When it comes to stating his innovative new artistic policy, Mr Dainty does not mince words. "Why should we turn out Australian stuff just because we're in Australia, the public becomes bored by it." Does this mean we can finally rid ourselves of all those dreadful old Australian farces like Don's Party, The Club and The Elocution of Benjamin Franklin? Yes, at last we can sit back and enjoy Doctor at Sea, Doctor In Trouble and Doctor at the Comedy without any fear of overtaxing our minds."

I only hope the public don't become bored at all this good theatre. Mr Dainty's latest production Love Thy Neighbour at Sydney's Theatre Royal has just finished playing to 50% of the audiences The Club attracted. Maybe they'll have better luck at the Comedy.

EDUCATION NOT CONDUCIVE

BARBARA MANNING, Director, Salamanca Theatre Co. "In June 1977 TA printed a two page article on "The Tasmanian Theatre In Education Company", by Axel Kruse. The Company now has a new name: The Salamanca Theatre Company (Tasmanian Theatre In Education Co Ltd).

This change of name was made mainly because the word "education" is not conducive to getting good audiences for community shows — apparently sounds too much like a boring lecture that will be "good" for you rather than as entertainment."

The Company's headquarters is at Salamanca Place, a row of historic stone warehouses now the Salamanca Community Arts Centre.

Eight members of the company will leave in late August for a tour of the USA, playing in schools, colleges, universities and community centres right across America, taking in Hawaii, San Francisco, Seattle, Grand Rapids, St Louis, Washington, Boston and finishing at the Eugene O'Neill Memorial Theatre Centre in Waterford, Connecticut. The ninth member of the company, Richard Meredith has been awarded a Director's Development Grant by the Theatre Board of the Australia Council and will leave Tasmania at the end of August. Richard Meredith has been with the company for five years."

NATIONAL YOUNG PLAYWRIGHTS WEEKEND

JOHN LITTLE, Promotions Officer, AETT. "Despite heavy competition not only from subsidised theatre companies, but also from the major commercial managements throughout Australia, the AETT has been granted the Australian rights to produce Alan Ayckbourn's most successful play, Bedroom Farce. Bedroom Farce has been playing to capacity audiences at the National Theatre in London since March last year and there is no end in sight to its current season. Because of its unprecedented success in England the National Theatre and Ayckbourn's agent insisted that it be produced and presented in Australia by a prestigious organisation capable of giving it national exposure with a top cast.

At the time of going to press six top actors have agreed to play in the Sydney season. They are Carmen Duncan, Jacki Weaver, Kate Fitzpatrick, Ron Haddrick, Ruth Cracknell and Barry Croghton.

The fact that the AETT was granted the rights indicates the high esteem with which the Trust is held by overseas managements. The full production is scheduled to open at the Theatre Royal in October and together with a number of major artists and properties ranging from jazz to classical ballet that the Trust is currently negotiating to obtain for Australia — is a major step in the return of the Trust to the position of the top non-commercial producer of quality theatre in Australia".

ERROL BRAY, Shopfront Theatre for Young People. "From 4th August 1978 the Shopfront Theatre is offering young playwrights from all over Australia the opportunity to work intensively on their craft with professional writers, directors and actors for three days. Young writers between the ages of ten and eighteen are invited to submit scripts — for TV, film, radio, theatre, puppets, mime; any drama medium — and to apply for inclusion in the Weekend. All young writers will be dealt with individually and not as representatives of any institution. No-one will be invited unless he or she submits a script.

The Theatre's complex includes a house where the young playwrights will stay so that the Weekend can also be a process of finding out about each other's work. The programme will include performances and videotapes of plays written by young people and submitted for last year's Weekend. We are planning to visit live theatre and videotapes of work done by our senior writers will be shown.

The Weekend will be supervised by the Theatre's staff of four and one or two of the senior writers will live in. Professional writers who have already agreed to attend are: Peter Kenna, Alex Buzo, Dorothy Hewett, Margaret Kelly, Michael Cove, John Dingwall, Bill Harding and Richard Bradshaw. Other writers will be approached and we plan to have a large number of actors with us this year. Last year eighteen professionals attended.

The Weekend will be free to young writers except for a contribution to $10 towards the food, and we anticipate that we will be able to offer some help with fares for interstate and country people.

Enquiries, phone Sydney 588 3948. Scripts to: 88 Carlton Parade, Carlton, NSW 2218.

HOLE IN THE POCKET

JOAN AMBROSE. "Theatre funding having been perennial a financial problem, it is highly probable that at some time in the past someone has staged a production with the title "Hole in the Pocket". This correspondent, however, has heard only of the stimulating concept which is being presented in July at the Hole in the Wall Theatre in Perth. Theatre funding having been perennial, there is a financial problem, it is highly probable that at some time in the past someone has staged a production with the title "Hole in the Pocket". This correspondent, however, has heard only of the stimulating concept which is being presented in July at the Hole in the Wall Theatre in Perth. Director John Milson has arranged a workshop to give young actors and directors an opportunity to work in the exciting professional atmosphere of the Hole.

Damiem Jamieson, who won a Theatre Board grant for Young Directors and who has been working with Joan Pope's CATS, is directing Orson Welles' Moby Dick Rehearsed. This play..."
has a four day season starting on June 28th and is followed for a similar period starting on July 5th, by Sam Shepard’s Geography of a Horse Dreamer directed by Stephen Amos who was formerly with the drama section of Arts Access. The company for Hole in the Pocket season has been formed with young actors mainly from the University Dramatic Society.

SEEKING THEIR FORTUNE

JOHN CUFFE, Fortune Theatre Co., Canberra.

“The company has been in existence for just under a year, formed by three people, Pam Rosenberg, Pat Hutchinson and myself. Its main function so far has been to provide lunchtime theatre, presenting predominantly plays by Australian playwrights. During its first year of operation the company has made its mark on the community by its continual high standard, both for lunchtime shows and performances in various high schools and colleges in ACT. Indeed, both the company and I were nominated for the Critics Circle Award for drama (albeit in the ACT).

The future policy of the company is to provide Canberra and its environs with a first class full time professional company. This, it is hoped will give further work opportunities for professional actors, directors and administrative staff who could come and work in Canberra, and thus broaden the scope of the standard by their expertise. Young actors could also gain more experience when first starting out in the hard world of professional theatre.

But as is the usual story, all this will depend on money. The high standard we hope to promote cannot be done on a week to week basis as is the case at present. Canberra does need a first class professional company, whether or not Fortune can be the beginning of it remains to be seen.”

FIVE SIDED THEATRE

STEPHAN HARGREAVE, producer.

“The 1970’s are a time of extreme unemployment within the Australian theatre; the theatrical profession is severely overcrowded, with insufficient outlets for the development of Australian talent.

The Five-Sided Theatre was born from these conditions. It is a non-profit organisation founded by a group of Sydney professional theatre people who, tired of spending half their lives doing nothing, thought it was time to create their own opportunities. It has two aims; to allow professional theatre people to advance their skills and provide good theatre at reasonable prices.

The company was officially formed on April 9th with Stephn Hargareave as producer and Julie Stafford as artistic director. Our first production will be Lovers by Brian Friell, opening August 10th at the Kirk Gallery, Surry Hills.

ALL POINTS WEST

TONY YOUDEEN, Administrator, National Theatre, Perth.

“The National Theatre Company in Perth are participating in the Western Australian Arts Council's Arts Access programme by providing drama services for the whole of the Western Australian Country areas.

Since the scheme started in March this year members of the National Theatre Company have travelled as far as Port Hedland in the North West and Bridgetown in the South.

We hope that funds will be available next year to employ a permanent country access team to serve the country areas.

Activities under the programme include workshops in both the performing and technical areas.”

CENTRE OF ENTERTAINMENT

MICHAEL EDGLEY just back from America talked at his recent press conference in Sydney about the shows he has lined up for the coming months, and his involvement with building entertainment centres for capital cities.

“The shows we’ve just been lining up promise to be some of the best Australia’s seen, with more dramas and musicals than ever. First of course there’s the stars of world ballet, which will be followed by the Georgian State Dance Company. Two Broadway shows we’re bringing over are Dracula, an erotic and stimulating interpretation of Count Dracula’s nightly escapades, and little orphan Annie. Liv Ullman will also be appearing in two shows she is working on at the moment. Next year, among other things, the D’Oyly Carte Opera Company will be coming, and the Broadway thriller called Deathtrap.

The cultural element of what we bring in is important, but I’m far too old not to do this for profit. We think that all these things will be successful, you can’t eat off prestige. We don’t need prestige, but if we’re successful we will make a lot of money.

We are talking at the moment with the Wran government about an entertainment centre for Sydney — the Government are looking for a submission that includes the Haymarket. A consortium may put in money, but the main point is not who builds it, but that it gets built. It needs to be in the city centre, to be totally flexible and to have adequate car parking. The Perth centre is like that, and after two years it is beginning to break even and will this year show a small profit. I don’t see any danger in one entrepreneur building it; it would still be open to everyone. In Perth we have a commitment to present a certain amount of entertainment in it each year, and we pay the full amount of rent for it when we do.”

(All plays and musicals will be presented in association with Kenn Brodziak — J C Williamson Productions.)
emptiness comes out of that

Canberra Theatre Centre
Marguerite Wells

Every few weeks, I send the Canberra Theatre Centre staff into a fluster. When compiling the Theatreguide, I ring to ask them what plays they will be staging. "Oh dear", is the reply I have often had, and I hear the pages flicking over frantically, "There are plenty of concerts and films". Then hopefully, "You don't want concerts or films, do you?"

As it happens, I don't. I want to go to the 'modest but handsome' 1,200-seat Canberra Theatre, or better, the 312-seat Playhouse to see plays. But the Playhouse can only have got its name in a moment of wicked cynicism on the part of the Canberra Theatre Trust that nominally — legally — administers it. This month the Playhouse offers us The Sound of Music; last month it was a dance/mime performance and Dale Woodward's puppets; the month before, nothing that could be put in a Theatreguide. Not one straight play in three months. The Canberra Theatre has had one play in those three months — East.

Meanwhile, an excellent production of Stretch of the Imagination plays alone and unsupported in the ramshackle and depressing, if theatrically flexible Childers Street Hall. Fortune Theatre, one of Canberra's four professional companies, is staging its lunchtime series in the foyer of the Canberra Theatre. (Of course it would prefer the Playhouse, but financial considerations you know ...). The Jigsaw Company, a professional youth/children's/TIE company whose excellent school holiday productions are more than worthy of the Playhouse stage, also perform them in Childers Street Hall. (Of course they would use the Playhouse ... if they could afford it ...). Now, probably for the first time since Boesman and Lena two years ago, a professional production on tour from outside Canberra is to play at — guess where? — Childers Street Hall!

It is Witold Gombrowicz in Buenos Aires by Roger Pulvers, a Canberra playwright whose works are increasingly produced outside Canberra, but cut no ice here. (Of course, Grapevine Productions applied to the Theatre Trust for support from the Trust's 'entrepreneurial' funds to enable them to use the Playhouse, but instead got $500 guarantee against loss on condition that they didn't use it!)

To quote one of the Theatre trustees, "It's better to leave it unused".

And so they do. Use of the Centre has declined steadily over the past three years — 601 usages in 1975, 591 in 1976 and 472 in 1977. Attendances have followed usage; 1975, 294,947; 1976, 269,001; 1977, 216,235. Terry Vaughan, the Director, prides himself on the high standards and facilities the Centre offers to those who can afford to use it. He contrasts its annual subsidy (for maintenance only, of course), favourably with those of the Adelaide Festival Centre, the Opera House and the Canadian National Arts Centre in Ottawa. But then, a building that overflows with action naturally costs more to run.

The Centre is caught in limbo between being what its annual report calls 'virtually a commercial enterprise', and a Public Service body subject to Ministerial direction, staff ceilings (life wasn't meant to be cultured), and Treasury. Terry Vaughan says with a world-weary sigh, "Treasury have at last stopped asking us 'When will you be self-sufficient?'" As any Canberra knows, Treasury does have a habit of asking rather naive questions.

The Trust's secondary function (after 'using and managing the Centre'), is to promote and encourage the development and presentation of, and public interest and participation in, the arts. The grants that the Trust manages to extract for this purpose go mainly on bringing in 'presentations which for financial reasons would not otherwise come'. In 1976/77, one of the three plays supported (out of 19 functions funded by the Trust), was local, and that had moved to the Playhouse after a highly successful season at Theatre 3. This was not promoting and encouraging local talent, but no-risk entrepreneurship.

The local groups that get to use the Centre tend to be large-scale musicals, which have outside subsidies because they involve so many people, i.e. 'public participation' in the arts. They would probably use the Theatre Centre anyway, because they are the give-your-daughter-a-whirl-on-the-stage-Mrs-Worthington productions where the cast would be willing to subsidise their own performance, if someone else didn't do it for them. Small cast plays are of course another matter. The whole of the entrepreneurial policy smacks of big-city cultural imperialism: bring quality productions from interstate and give the locals a bit of a turn on the stage too, which, except for Fortune Theatre, snug in their foyer, leaves 'quality' local theatre out in the cold. Literally out in the cold, for the sad anomaly is that the theatre centre of Canberra is not at the Canberra Theatre Centre, but at the drill hall style Childers Street Hall, where there are gaps between the floorboards and where in winter the audience come dressed like football crowds and stand around the one heater at interval. And then of course, there's Canberra Repertory at Theatre 3, which can also be quite chilling. But for Roger Pulvers, whose fourth professional production is to have such a cold welcome to Canberra, the most chilling of all is the Canberra Theatre Centre."

... It's so antiseptic and barren. They always stress how much they have to do to keep it clean. What they should do is not clean it at all, then spend the money on theatre and complain to the funding bodies that they've got no money to clean it ...

But of course no self-respecting Treasury would permit such a wicked, irresponsible dispersal of public funds. The Canberra Theatre Centre will stay clean, and for Roger Pulvers at least, barren: "When Peter Brook said 'the empty space', he wasn't talking about the Canberra Theatre Centre. No culture ever comes out of that emptiness."
The Mask and the Everyman Experience

Solrun Hoaas

The invaluable experience of making fourteen masks for a production of the Von Hofmannstahl Everyman, directed by Rex Cramphorn and performed outdoors in Canberra in March, has forced me to some new thoughts on masks and the curious resistance to their use in theatre here.

In most commercial theatre in the West there is a great emphasis on the physical assets or uniqueness of the actor. These are highlighted. Even without a star system one is very conscious of who is playing the role. The mask renders the actor anonymous — even inarticulate, if behind a full-face mask.

In Edward Gordon Craig's England it was perhaps tantamount to blasphemy to speak of the mask as "that paramount means of dramatic expression without which acting was bound to degenerate!" And even today it may seem a bit too simple to call it "the only right medium of portraying the expressions of the soul as shown through the expressions of the face."

Putting Craig's role in theatre history aside, these outbursts of his echo for me the frustration felt by anyone who believes that theatre can be visual poetry, and who is up against a tradition not only steeped in naturalism but also exceedingly word-based. Today's Australian theatre is more open to poetry on stage than a few years ago; but, so far, more to verbal poetry than that based on visual imagery.

This brings me back to the mask. In my little over five years in Australia I have met very few people in theatre interested in masks. Perhaps it is no coincidence that those who are tend to be in mime, puppetry or the visual arts. The mime artist recognizes that "to mask is to unmask", that the mask can liberate one to use the body as the prime expressive medium rather than rely on facial muscles.

(i should point out that my comments on resistance to the mask, the actor and the mask, are no reflection on the actors who appeared in *Everyman.*)

In Noh, the bare face (without make-up) is recognized as a mask category alongside with god and demon masks, masks for old men, ghosts or young men and women. Such unmasked main roles are considered among the most difficult to play because of the control required to maintain a single and natural expression throughout without it degenerating into a grimace when expressing strong emotion through vigorous body movements.

When as is often, though not always the case with Noh, a play focuses on one single emotion or emotional state, the mask is obviously a great help as it can crystallize a dominant emotion. And it can confront the audience with it; it is easier to avoid the human eye than the eye of the mask. For these and other reasons of more spiritual origin, the mask is accorded the highest importance in Noh — it is more than a prop or a part of a costume, something to cover up the face, allow for quick transformations, or create illusion. If fact, the whole tone of a performance is set by the mask as the main actor chooses the mask according to the way he wishes to interpret the role, then decides on costume and his level of acting to suit it.

There is nothing in these principles for the use of the Noh mask that is too esoteric to be applied in another theatre tradition. There are even Noh mask types that could work just as they are in Western theatre, aside from the masks for young women or young men, not all that many types have obviously Japanese features. A particular mask for a ferocious deity could well work as the ghost of Hamlet's father, without any touch of the exotic. I am as much against digging into antiquity for the authentic as against creating pastiches of orientalia from Asian theatre inspiration.

The commissioning of a Noh mask for one production is unusual in Japan and would be unthinkable in a Western repertory system for economic reasons; no theatre can afford to pay a months wages — a professional averages one month to make a Noh mask, a good Noh mask today costs at least $1000. It is possible to simplify the technique, however. I felt it must be possible, even in materials such as gypsona and paper mache, to try to apply some principles of Noh mask making to the masks for *Everyman* and even let myself be inspired by particular Noh masks for some. The morality play deals with types or categories of people, as does Noh, although in Noh they are not allegorical or archetypal. In Noh the voice is muffled under a full-face mask; this does not matter as the language is archaic anyway. When text is given priority there will be a tension between the visual and the verbal as expressed by the half-mask, which is even more obviously a mask than one that covers the whole face. Where to make the cut, was a problem. I don't believe there are any rules for where it should go on a half-mask. This was decided on the basis of type and expression. A straight, angular cut seemed right for Faith (I thought of the lines of some nun's habits). I wanted a full upper lip on Courtesan, etc.

Some Noh masks have an intermediate expression that appears to change as light and shadow play on the barely delineated features. The subtle effect is achieved by limiting expression. Carving the mask in wood, one takes away and takes away until the minimum needed for the expression remains. (After three years of training as a Noh mask maker I sculpted my first head in clay and found the reverse process very difficult; one is always tempted to add features and build up.) Faith should appear determined and severe, as well as celestial, compassionate even. In trying to achieve the smoothness and texture that can bring out a subtle expression, I experimented with the painting and sanding process and chalky powder used in the final stages of Noh mask making. The effect of subtle masks is very dependent on exploring movement and angle of the head in relation to lighting, and in this particular production lighting first appeared at dress rehearsal.

The mask for Everyman himself posed the greatest problems. Without too markedly individual features, it needed to evoke self-assured haughtiness and indolence on the one hand, but allow for the sudden anguish in the face of Death. All of this in a half-mask, therefore necessarily a somewhat neutral mask. The emotional transition brought to mind one of my favourite Noh masks, Kantan-otoko, although it is used to express a somewhat different register. In the Noh play *Kantan*, a man searches for enlightenment, dreams that he lives a life of splendor and pleasure as an Emperor, wakes up to find it but dream in the brief time it took the millet to cook and realizes the transitory nature of life. The Noh mask registers searching and the elated pleasure of the exotic. I am as much against digging into antiquity for the authentic as against creating pastiches of orientalia from Asian theatre inspiration.

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Katharine Brisbane reviews this year's Playwrights' Conference.

Canberra 1978

Probably the nicest thing about the 1978 Australian National Playwrights Conference in Canberra was that John Osborne was not there. Jack Hibberd and Dorothy Hewett were there, Bruce Myles, Robyn Nevin and Kris Fredrikson were there, Brian Sweeney and Bob Adams, Colin Ballantyne, Ken Horler, Frank Ford and Don McKenzie, Penne Hackforth-Jones, Terry Clarke, Tim Robertson, Tony Youlend, John Allen — and so on. And, of course, Bob Ellis.

There was also Professor Ochi, of Meiji University, who is translating Poor Fellow my Country into Japanese; and Vicki Ooi from Hong Kong University who is translating Long Day's Journey into Night into Cantonese (What makes us think we know about work?) who came of their own accord.

Quite enough luminaries, as Nick Enright pointed out in a discussion of future conferences, without any artificial gloss.

We have had some good hard-working visitors in the past from the great abroad, like Martin Esslin, Lloyd Richards and Helen Montagu. But what the low profile achieved this time was a conscientious concentration upon the work in hand, a minimum of press attention and a professional use of frankness.

Each year the personality of the artistic director makes its imprint upon the conference. This year it was Nick Rodger: dedicated, organised, very much concerned with the practical outcome both of innovations in the creative work and of the specific problems raised in the theatre conference held over the last four days.

Specific, I think, is the word to describe the style of the fortnight. Firstly there were the plays; each an innovation in its way, unlike anything recently familiar to Australian audiences. There were two short plays: The Centenarian, by Philip Ryal, a comedy in which a straightforward dramatic situation about the death of Grandma assumes absurdist dimensions; and Brisbane is Burning, a painter's experimental word picture, by Cecilia Charmock.

There were three documentary plays, or plays as was the analysis and discussion following the final performances. During the workshop period six seminars were undertaken, dealing with professional problems the playwright faces. There were technical discussions, seminars on how to earn a living, one of "what isactable" and two on the design problems within the workshop plays, conducted by the resident designer Kris Fredrikson. Six further play readings were held in the evenings and discussed with the authors.

A first-rate document was read by Colin Ballantyne, retiring chairman of the South Australian Theatre Company, on the duties and responsibilities of the chairman of a regional company. Ballantyne is a man who has been part of Adelaide theatre for two generations. He was opposed on the platform by Frank Ford, chairman of FOCUS and director of community theatre in SA — a man equally dedicated to, and experienced in, regional theatre.

Each conference throws up a special personality. This time it was Betty Roland, whose play Granrie Peak, written in the 50s, was given a reading. The conviction of its style, so different from other conference works, together with the author's tale of how the play was "almost" produced for the stage in three countries before becoming a TV drama, and of how she kept herself as a writer over fifty years, was sobering to those who heard her.

In the summing-up session on the last day a motion was passed that other older-generation writers should be guests at future conferences. Other motions included confirmation of the role of a resident designer, and the introduction of the resident established playwright and a composer.

The conference supported in principle the need for continued participation by the Film and Television School, which had joined the ANPC for the second year in succession, this time in a two-day seminar. But it was agreed that the content this time was unsatisfactory, being too generalised and unprepared. Two votes were carried on the future of Theatre Australia, recently restored to Theatre Publications Ltd after a period in partnership with Playhouse Press. The need for, and viability of, a national theatre magazine, were aired in detail in the subsidy session, and the meeting directed the committee to urge State and Federal funding bodies to recognise the value to the profession of a national medium of communication, and passed a vote of confidence in the editorship and management of the magazine.

A motion to move the conference date to January in 1980 was lost.

After heated discussion had been roused by the fact that the newly published Old Tote theatre magazine was included no Australian play, a unanimous vote was passed asking that funding bodies be urged to set and enforce quotas for Australian content in the programmes they fund, in accordance with their published policies of support for Australian work. There was a further vote that the committee approach the Theatre Board to urge the preferred use of Australian directors, actors and designers in our theatres.

There was discussion, led by Algis Butavicius, about the fact that the Immigration Act of 1975, prohibited the employment of imported professionals while a qualified Australian was unemployed. Tony Youlend said that his experience at the Perth Playhouse had been that it was easier for a foreign professional to immigrate than to work temporarily in this country. Chris Hood, who said he was writing a book on Australia's immigration policy, said that while the act was specific the Minister had absolute powers of discretion. The matter was put aside for the conference committee's investigation.

These were a few of the points of argument. As you see, it was a workmanlike conference. The months to come will show what seeds grow from it.
Dear Sir,

I am sorry that Paul Illes has taken my article as a poker rammed up the successes of the theatre he works for, and I am relieved to be reassured that Nimrod does not intend to be drawn into the dangerous area I adumbrated. I am genuinely pleased that the pot is boiling so nicely for him.

I stand by my argument, however, and he has not met it. I am quite aware that subsidised theatres in this country feel under commercial pressure. If I were being adventurous I am thing one dares not being regarded the theatre in this country) I might argue that companies with subsidies approaching a million dollars a year can afford a much more radical attempt at bringing popular audiences into the theatre than they do. Instead of spending a fortune for the 1 or 2% who can afford their shows (pace Alex Buzo — people don’t really enjoy spending all that money on rock concerts either, but rock concerts are so much more exciting) they might spend less money and let people in for nothing, and really make theatre an important small-c cultural activity. This does not, however, apply to Paul Illes’ theatre.

My point was not that commercial and subsidised theatre are antithetical, but that a pre-occupation with bums and seats can be self-defeating and destructive (and, again, I am relieved that in Nimrod’s case it may not be). Even if we conservatively accept that subsidy does not free theatres from commercial pressure, we are surely entitled to hope that it gives them some freedom to challenge audiences rather than pander to them. There is, of course, an implied artistic judgement in these comments. I cannot see that the theatre produced by the commercial/subsidised managements at present will have the far-reaching and culturally important small-c cultural activity. This does not, however, apply to Paul Illes’ theatre.

The whole business of The Club still worries me. Ten lines after informing us of the "enormous" risks involved in transferring it to the Royal, Mr Illes remarks that the transfer was pre-planned "because we knew of the MTC’s success with the original production." He can’t have it both ways. He says that the production was begun at Nimrod in order to "recoup from the expected successful commercial season, leaving Nimrod with public money for another production. In the matter of directors’ percentages I said that it was a good way to reward them for their commercial successes, but I still hope they can be trusted not to let it colour their artistic judgement. If Equity in Britain says they should get a cut, then no doubt they should.

For all this I accept that, in the case of Nimrod, at least, "subsidized theatre audiences are seeing better productions than they would do without the profits of the market place." I just wish that unsubsidized potential audiences could see them too.

Yours sincerely,
Douglas Flintoff
Brooklyn, NSW

PS. Mr Illes finds it curious that I make no reference to the Elizabethan Theatre Trust. I find it curious that he fails to recognize my first sentence as a direct, admittedly dismissive, reference to that terrifying entrepreneurial organization.

Dear Sir,

It is not often that lighting designers or lighting design rate many lines in reviews or articles, so it was even more of a blow, both personally and professionally, to find in your May issue that correspondent William Shoutbridge, in his admirably lengthy article on the Dance Company’s Poppy, credits Mr George Gittoes with "lazer holography", omits any reference to a quite substantial, co-ordinated film sequence, for which Mr Gittoes was responsible, but then also credits him with "lighting design" for which the writer was responsible.

I’m sure Mr Gittoes would object, and rightly so, had the credits been reversed. Keep on printing, though!

Yours faithfully,

Laraine R Wheeler,
Cl: Dance Company (NSW)
Woolloomooloo, NSW

Dear Sir,

I was a member of the Queensland audience of Don’t Piddle Against The Wind, Mate who took it upon himself to boo David Rowbotham’s critique of this play by the Queensland Theatre Company and am not ashamed of doing so.

Now in your May edition of Theatre Australia, your critic Richard Fotheringham supports Rowbotham; well more fool him. However he calls this booing of Rowbotham a "nasty spin-off". It's this gangling up of critics I object to. Don't audiences have as much right to their opinion as critics? Because they pay for their seats they have more right? Why should your critic Richard Fotheringham consider critics above audience censor? What your critic has failed to discern is that the audience booted not because they wished to protest that Mr Rowbotham wrote a bad review of the play, but that his crit was unpronounced and because of this unjust.

At least with your critic there is some irony in his review which he obviously has not the perspective to grasp. That is that in reviewing Don’t Piddle Against The Wind, Mate he has spent his time not criticising the play itself, but telling us what his acquaintances thought of it, then criticising the QTC audience and then getting involved in political argument over Right for Work, which is a Queensland political issue! All this could be excused as ah over reaction from a critic who unfortunately happens to live in a fascist state; however this can’t be used as an excuse because we the audience live under the same Draconian laws and yet liked the play. Thus he has shown there are still plays around that critics can become sophisticated about, that audiences can too (even if it be critics) and much more show that theatre as still alive and well — pity he couldn’t see this.

As Norman Lindsay wrote “no work is ever viciously attacked unless it has some genuine value”.

Yours faithfully,

Robert Morris
Dutton Park, Queensland.

Dear Sir,

Geoffrey Hutton’s article on the star system (Feb 1978) surely doesn’t reflect the views of most playgoers. If Mr Hutton remembers the stars of the past, he certainly has forgotten many other details.

Madge Elliott and Cyril Richard were well known here in shows such as Going Up, Mary. Oh, Lady, Lady and The Cabaret Girl long before going overseas, and the slighting remark about Our Glad maligns our greatest musical star. Her revivals of The Maid were at The Firm’s instigation and always drew in the customers. We may be sentimental about our favourites but I doubt whether a poor show ever succeeded just because it featured a popular star. Also, what about Glad’s other shows? After all, she starred in forty eight plays during her fifty years on stage.

Marie Tempest may have played in many poor plays, but surely Hay Fever and Dear Octopus were worthwhile. Mr Hutton forgets Dorothy Brunton, Florence Young, Oscar Asche, Claude Flemming, Carrie Moore, Stella Wilson and so many others. He may consider the star system outdated, but if we had a few of those great personalities today the theatre might be in a better financial shape. After all, most of us go to the theatre to be entertained, and the presence of a popular star gives added lustre.

A. Capern
The Gap, Brisbane.
Some management might take note that radio can still be a star builder. Understand that the recent South Australian Theatre Company's country tour of The Glass Menagerie broke quite a few records when large audiences turned out to see Patricia Kennedy in the flesh, after having admired her on radio for years. Following mounting by the MTC for him of Dusa, Fish, Stas and Vi, and his subsequent tour of the production, Wilton Morley apparently has a similar deal going for Death Trap, directed by Gregory Falls.

Walter Brown also in the cast ... And another Australian in England, Darlene Johnson, is in the current Stratford season playing Praed in a production of Measure for Measure. It'll be the first time for well over fifty years latter has been performed outside Britain. Some 6,000 column centimetres of coverage came in newspapers and magazines, plus over 130 hours of broadcasting time. Press material was distributed to an international press list of over 2,000 journalists and broadcasters. 20 press conferences were held, and there were distributed 420,000 copies of the programme brochure, 75,000 posters in three sizes, 750 showcards, 1,500 programme posters, 5,300 car stickers and 4,000 leaflets. Requests were processed for 2,993 press tickets. Would be interesting maybe to have comparative figures for this year's Adelaide Festival of the Arts.

Notice is a cabaret theatre in New Jersey, USA: "Do not photograph the performers while they are on stage. You may come backstage and shoot them after the show."
would afford a truly comprehensive overview
are each complete in themselves but
The programmes will cover traditional and big
The Bennelong Programme has been devised to
show something of the making of the arts — to
take audiences behind the curtain and to show the
development and reason for the final product.
With the co-operation of top managements all
programmes are presented for day time audiences
— tickets cost only $1.50.

2 AUSTRALIAN FILM INSTITUTE
behind the camera-
behind the screen
The Australian Film Institute will present five
programmes on films and film making in July.
These will examine some technical aspects of
film making and exhibition, show the why
and what of selection, editing and cutting and
demonstrate with footage of local foreign film
the pitfalls and triumphs of the film makers
art. Guest directors of already produced
feature films will discuss their approach,
philosophy and methods. These programmes
will be equally fascinating to both makers and
watchers of film.
MUSIC ROOM
11.00 am July 24-28

3 MUSICA VIVA AUSTRALIA
Swingle II in session
The art of using the human voice to imitate
instrumental sound is both universal and as
old as the hills: In Scotland folk archivists
call it "mouth music", in New Orleans it's
known as "scat singing" and in Paris in the
early '60s an American musician, Ward
Swingle, took the idea and applied it to the
works of Johann Sebastian Bach — the Swingle
Singers were born. Their world-wide
popularity brought the charms of swinging
baroque music to the pop charts and to the
attention of serious musicians.
Now there is a new group — a new sound.
Swingle II will tour Australia in August and
for the BENNELONG PROGRAMME will
examine the creation of the Swingle style in
terms of construction, rehearsal and
amplification techniques.
CONCERT HALL
11.00 am August 18

5 SYDNEY OPERA HOUSE TRUST
learn about jazz
Judy Bailey, together with some of Australia's
most outstanding jazz musicians will look at
the history, the development and the
mechanics of jazz in three workshop
programmes at the Sydney Opera House.
The programmes will cover traditional and big
band sounds and will also concentrate on the
small modern group. These exciting sessions
are each complete in themselves but
attendance at all three consecutive Wednesdays
would afford a truly comprehensive overview
of the world of jazz.
CONCERT HALL
12.30 pm October 4 Big Band
MUSIC ROOM
12.30 pm October 11 Small Group
MUSIC ROOM
12.30 pm October 18 Traditional

6 THE MARIONETTE THEATRE
of Australia
puppets-
the complete mask?
The internationally acclaimed puppeteer,
Richard Bradshaw, Artistic Director of this
national Company, examines this quote by
George Bernard Shaw.
This diverting programme will stimulate
interest in making and using quick, simple
but effective puppets. The performers will
create the puppets on stage and the surprises
will start when the puppets take shape.
You will discover that:
puppetry is adult entertainment
puppetry is children's entertainment
puppetry is a craft
but above all, PUPPETRY IS THEATRE.
MUSIC ROOM
10.30 am and 1.30 pm November 6 and 7

7 THE AUSTRALIAN BALLET
let's make a ballet
By arrangement with the Australian Ballet
Foundation, the Sydney Opera House Trust
presents members of The Australian Ballet in
"Let's Make a Ballet" introduced by the
Artistic Director, Dame Peggy Van Praagh,
D.B.E., with the Elizabethan Melbourne
Orchestra.
Part I The training of a classical dancer. Dame
Peggy will use artists of the company to
illustrate various aspects of training. She will
explain how this training is utilized by
choreographers to create a ballet. The
involvement of music, decor and stage craft
will also be discussed and illustrated.
Part II The presentation, with full scenery and
costumes of one Act from Frederick Ashton's
"La Fille Mal Gardée".
CONCERT HALL
1.00 pm November 16
In 1861 Coppin was having difficulties at the Theatre Royal. He lost a legal battle for possession, so decided to go into direct opposition to it by building another theatre a little up the hill on the opposite side of Bourke Street, extending through to Little Collins Street (1862). It was the Royal Haymarket, later the Duke of Edinburgh, destroyed by fire in 1871. It was quite up-to-date in design (by P.T. Conlon) being more conventionally Victorian in the auditorium, but still without a fly-tower above the stage. Although the latter was 86 feet deep, comfort was being introduced, with every seat in the stalls and dress circle being upholstered in red damask, and every bench in other parts of the house supplied with a back rail.

Coppin toured the USA as an actor in the company of Charles Kean and Ellen Tree from 1864, returning to Melbourne to once again take over the Theatre Royal (1866), but only to be devastated by the uninsured building being burnt to ashes in March 1872. He rented the St George’s Hall next door (later rebuilt as Hoyts Deluxe/Esquire cinema) and performed there until he arranged a partnership to purchase the ground lease on the Royal site and rebuild. The most extraordinary aspect of this venture was its being designed (by George Browne) and built within eight months. It opened in November 1872 as another large four level theatre, and hotel of similar dimensions to the previous one, but this time very much the English Victorian opera house style of design. The architects' constructional drawings are still in existence and from these Susan Clarke has set up a perspective drawing accurately showing the spatial design and major decorative elements; minor decoration has been assumed from written descriptions and similar designs of the time.

J C Williamson took over the lease of the Royal in 1882, had the auditorium rebuilt on three levels in 1904 then sold it for demolition in 1933. Apart from the predecessors to the Princess, Athenaeum, Palace and Her Majesty Theatres there were two other important houses built in the last thirty years of the 19th century and one in the first decade of the 20th century. They were the Prince of Wales Opera House later Tivoli (1872), and the Academy of Music, later Bijou (1876) and Kings, later Barclay cinema (1908).

Melbourne's Opera House, like the Royal, has been detailed elsewhere, however suffice it to say that this four level theatre was poorly designed from the aspect of audience safety and after a series of running battles with the licensing authority, it was forced to be rebuilt in 1899 for Harry Rickards of the original Tivoli vaudeville fame. (However the original Opera House was appreciated by Melbourne Punch 29/8/1872 for its decoration and lack of fleas.) The Tivoli opened in 1901 in Bourke Street opposite the Royal. The architects, Backhouse and Co. had designed it in the Victorian style on three levels still with the usual forest of cast-iron posts supporting the two tiers above the stalls. The stage was 60 by 64 feet with a large property room and block of dressing rooms off to the prompt side. It was originally fronted by a small four storey hotel in French Renaissance style. The capacity of 1,539 was reduced to 1,442 in 1956 when major alterations were carried out. It became a cinema for a short period after the Tivoli Circuit concluded its business until a fire prompted its removal in the 1960's.

The Bijou, a few doors up the road from the Tivoli was a much admired theatre even if it never achieved the good or ill fame of some of its competitors. It was small, seating on three levels only 1,000 persons and would therefore have had the intimacy now associated with Hobart's Theatre Royal. Also uncommon for the
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CARRILLO GANTNER
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the freehold for himself in 1947, and converted it to a modern cinema in 1959. Up until this date it had been the typical three tier theatre with domed auditorium and a stage 63 ft wide by 80 ft deep “arranged for the presentation of sensational scenes, in which live cattle or traps, motor cars, etc., may be necessary for the purposes of realism” (Herald, 18/6/1908).

These were the major city theatres which have disappeared without trace in the last 130 years. A future article will relate the history of the buildings on the sites of the current old established theatres.

* These buildings have been mentioned at length in books by the same author: Theatre Buildings in Australia to 1905 and Theatres in Australia distributed by Book People of Australia.

For the present Princess Theatre. Although leased for most of its stage life by Williamsons it was frequently sub-let and perhaps did not achieve the fame of the Royal or Her Majestys. William Anderson had the original management; he was running two companies at the time but most of his productions were “stirring” melodramas sprinkled with elaborate spectacle. In opposition to JCW’s, J and N Tait ran the theatre for their productions, starring amongst others, Maggie Moore and Edgley and Dawe (1919), until the Tait brothers amalgamated with the older entrepreneur. Finally Fullers and Garnet Carroll held the King’s before the Norman Rydge of Greater Union Theatres bought the freehold for himself in 1947, and converted it to a modern cinema in 1959.

During a season by Brough and Bouicault in 1889 it was burnt out in a disastrous fire which killed two persons. It was rebuilt in association with the Palace Hotel which also contained space which was used as the Gaiety Theatre, for music hall style variety. Brennan ran this with his National Entertainers in the early years of this century before it and the Bijou were taken over by the management of (Sir) Ben and John Fuller. The Bijou remained an old style theatre, occasionally being used for films, until an out-of-work actors company performed for a short period in The Depression before demolition in 1934.

The King’s in Russell Street also has received little historical attention, yet it was designed by William Pitt, the architect for the present Princess Theatre. Although leased for most of its stage life by Williamsons it was frequently sub-let and perhaps did not achieve the fame of the Royal or Her Majestys. William Anderson had the original management; he was running two companies at the time but most of his productions were “stirring” melodramas sprinkled with elaborate spectacle. In opposition to JCW’s, J and N Tait ran the theatre for their productions, starring amongst others, Maggie Moore and Edgley and Dawe (1919), until the Tait brothers amalgamated with the older entrepreneur. Finally Fullers and Garnet Carroll held the King’s before the Norman Rydge of Greater Union Theatres bought the freehold for himself in 1947, and converted it to a modern cinema in 1959.

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In the late sixties when little wars were being waged all over the country to have the “Arts” portfolios reprinted from their joint lumping with environment and the aborigines at the bottom of the Ministerial scrapheap, the idea of an Australian Film School was reborn. Reborn, because it was first mentioned in the 1928 Report of the Royal Commission on the Moving Picture Industry in Australia.

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Film Schools are problematical, particularly those which are of obvious benefit to students, encouraged when they can be fitted in, and especially those who have not had former experience in the commercial film and television industries. Attachments can vary from two days at a local film laboratory to six weeks on a studio shoot. Several students have taken attachments overseas. They can be purely observation and a means of getting to know people in the industry, or they can be definite jobs — albeit menial — which in many cases provide the student’s first real taste of the ten-hour day, six-day week. They are an experience of film-making. The experience is excellent (assuming that in this situation even bad experience is good) and the feedback from those who have taken School students has been overwhelmingly positive.

The Australian Film and Television School in turn provides short courses for students from related institutions. Last year it hosted the first course for students from the Conservatorium of Music, and early this year, first-year NIDA students spent two weeks working with the School’s facilities. These arrangements are obviously mutually beneficial.

Although attendance at the School is nominally nine to five, a forty hour week is a minimum for most students. A great deal of out of hours time is spent in preparing, shooting and editing productions whilst scheduled activities are attended during the day. Students are well-prepared for the sixty hour weeks they will meet in the industry, and the hum of Steenbeeks around deadline time serenades many into the eighty hour bracket. And as the Union has banned work on Sundays, so has the Film School. The doors are locked and the day of rest is spent catching up on the latest releases round town or writing the papers necessary to fulfill the School’s growing desire for academic respectability.

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In 1975, Professor Toeplitz described the School as “a testing ground for future film and television makers. Students are encouraged, when they are ready, to make their films in the days before government training and investment in the industry.” And whether the students can prove themselves and the School to the men who have their houses to make their films in the days before government training and investment in the industry.

Thirteen women and twelve men began the inaugural course in 1975 in less than adequate premises in Chatswood. On the first morning they were all presented with coffee mugs inscribed with their own names. It was all very cosy. Together that year they made twenty five films.

When two years later, interim-graduate Gill Armstrong was commissioned to make a film about the Film School, A Time and a Space, the students aptly responded: “What time and what space?”. With two subsequent years’ intake, the School reached its full complement of seventy two students, and the building suddenly shrank. Time became a four-letter word which came up frequently at meetings held to decide where to find enough of it to make films.

That problem has been partially solved by restructuring the School. For the first two years, twenty five and twenty four students respectively were initiated in every facet of film-making. The form and content of their second and third years was to be “evolved in consultation between staff and students”. That was optimistic.

By 1977 things had changed. Applicants were asked to nominate a workshop in which to specialize — production, editing, sound or camera. And it was made clear that in the third year, only a small number of selected students would direct a major work. This system is bureaucratically pragmatic, if not exactly popular with the students. And it is certainly more acceptable to an industry which wasn’t at all sure how it was going to cope with twenty four aspiring directors per annum.

First year’s experience, to initial part of the year becoming thoroughly familiar with their chosen craft. Each workshop is headed by an industry professional on contract to the School. Students also spend some time becoming at least minimally acquainted with every other workshop — and television. Concurrently they study the history of cinema under the eminent tutelage of Professor Jerzy Toeplitz, former head of Poland’s Film School, now Director of Australia’s. Students are also intensively drilled in the history and politics of the Australian film and broadcasting industries.

About half way through the year, first-years begin to crew up on second and third year films in production. Or they have the opportunity to take attachments on projects in the outside industry. Attachments are a method of learning encouraged when they can be fitted in, and are of obvious benefit to students, especially those who have not had former experience in the commercial film and television industries. Attachments can vary from two days at a local film laboratory to six weeks on a studio shoot. Several students have taken attachments overseas. They can be purely observation and a means of getting to know people in the industry, or they can be definite jobs — albeit menial — which in many cases provide the student’s first real taste of the ten-hour day, six-day week. They are an experience of film-making. The experience is excellent (assuming that in this situation even bad experience is good) and the feedback from those who have taken School students has been overwhelmingly positive.

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These sessions are open to interested people outside the School and are usually taped — with student crews.

Yet for all the fine facilities and compliments from the famous, the frenetic activity and golden opportunity, the atmosphere at the Australian Film and Television School is less than vibrant — and very different from the feeling that impresses visitors to NIDA. Are the divisions and differences anything more than one would expect to find amongst any group of rather odd, rather creative people thrown together in a public service place?

In 1975, Professor Toeplitz described the School as “a testing ground for future film and television makers. Students are encouraged, when they are ready, to make their films in the days before government training and investment in the industry.” And whether the students can prove themselves and the School to the men who have their houses to make their films in the days before government training and investment in the industry.

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Executive Producer on all student films, and since they are so concerned with industry acceptance of their optimistic, or even problematic producers have inevitably and perhaps even unconsciously crept in to limit the efforts of student filmmakers. However unfettered has been the creation, the assessment is often not made in the same state of mind. Whether this is a good or a bad thing is debatable; it just isn't quite what the Professor had in mind. and inevitably some disillusionment ensues from unrealized ideals and expectations.

Worse is the censorship role. Colin Young, Director of the National Film School in Great Britain, has pointed out that new and subversive ideas develop in Film Schools. In this country, it takes great strength for a government-financed institution to support new and subversive ideas, or even old but political ones. Last year the Australian Film and Television School wavered on censorship several times. Such a School should be capable of bearing a radical tag, and had they made a stand to establish a lead on contemporary issues, one wonders whether it might not have helped Film Australia's recent conflict over The Unknown Industrial Prisoner. When critics of the industry are screaming for contemporary themes and honest, clear-eyed appraisals of Australian society, it is disappointing that the Film and Television School is not paving the way in spearheading a frank and free approach. If Australian films are non-confrontational, is it any wonder?

Other problems include the ratio of women to men. After an idyllic inauguration in International Women's Year, when thirteen women took up the course, only three were selected the following year and seven in 1977. This year the number was down again, to only five. Any complaints about NIDA's selection of nine women and thirteen men, pale in comparison to Film School policy.

NIDA is older and it can already point to an impressive list of graduates, over twenty years, its first priority has remained creative development and well-directed technical competence, diversity of theme and budgetary emphasis is always on training. Perhaps this commitment, and its associated bureaucratic asceticism are factors contributing to the dedicated and creative atmosphere at NIDA.

One thing that countered the declining self-image of the Film and Television School was the recent festival of graduate films. At both public screenings, there was standing room only (although strangely enough, very few of the seats were taken up by School management and staff) and the audience response to the students' films renewed optimism. Industry screenings also provoked positive comment on technical competence, diversity of theme and style, and production values. It showed what could be achieved from the early atmosphere of idealism relatively free creative development and well-directed funds. The next few years will determine whether the Australian Film and Television School can recapture its early spark, its idealism and a sense of its own destiny in the Australian film and television industry, and can thus maintain its ability to attract the top people for which it was obviously designed. If it's standing room only at next year's graduation screening — and the one after.... perhaps the Australian School might not swell the ranks in the wastelands of Academe, but might take its place on the short list of internationally relevant film and television Schools.

...AND A COMMON GROUND.

AFTVS — an applicant's eye view

by May Kamillion (pseudonym for tax evasion dahlings!)

Bea Star did not get into NIDA, but May Kamillion was, to her great surprise, selected for the Australian Film & Television School.

It took a whole day to prove to the selection panel that you were "creative". There were several tests — and four different interview panels each consisting of three people — the relevant workshop head, a member of School management, and an industry person.

Applicants were closeted in rooms doing the various tests prescribed by the workshop of their choice; editing, camera, sound or production. Others were looking at a movie, others "rehearsing" for their panel interview. And this carousel of student hopefuls was being choreographed by a couple of terribly nicely dressed and nicely spoken ladies who read Cleo between takes. It was all a bit unhinging.

The first test for aspirant editors was to be locked in a room with a view, a splicer and a strip of film containing thirty shots, twelve of which were to be used to make a story. "Where's the button?" I asked, betraying my nasty background in the electronic media. They weren't amused, but politely introduced me to the splicer. The exercise wasn't easy, so I took the funny way out with something reminiscent of Monty Python — but again they were not amused. So on to the next test — a series of still photographs — put them together to make another story. There were three predictable options — I didn't use any, "I don't link zit upit vorks" was the comment. Well, that wasn't unexpected. Next we had to watch a movie and answer specific questions about it. It was a National Film Board of Canada production which made me a bit crabby as an entrance test to the Australian Film and Television School.... however I buried that and answered the questions. Another applicant was madly writing six pages as my brain dried. I gave up and went to lunch.

Coming back, I got stuck in a traffic jam — but it didn't matter because by this time I knew I wouldn't get into this esoteric institution. I couldn't relate to the ladies reading Cleo, the applicant with long hair and patched jeans — or the great minds of the interview panel. "What's your favourite movie?" "The Wizard of Oz". Silence. "Favourite Filmmaker?" they asked hopefully. "Walt Disney". Dead silence! We moved guardedly around a few more topics. "What do you read?" (they were getting desperate now) Why is it that when somebody asks you what you read you can't think of a single title you've put away in the last five years!" "Why do you want to do editing?" "I enjoy it". "Do you want to direct?" "No". (that was a crucial question I later discovered) We moved on to television, a subject in which I was a little better grounded than European cinema. And finally we reached the only rapport for an hour on the subject of Picnic at Hanging Rock.

Then mercifully it was all over. I flew for the door. "You vill vait outside pleaze". Oh no — the parking meter would run out. Terser by the minute I was called back to be told I was still in the running — the surprise to end the day of surprises. I knew that meant nothing. Borderliners get axed a little later. And I got the dreaded pink parking slip — $10.00 for all that!

A couple of months later, I got a yellow slip — a congratulatory telegram. So did the little guy in the patched jeans. It didn't matter much to either of us. I would have gone on working in television. He would have gone on making a crust from commercials while he made his grant films. It is difficult to judge where we might have been if we hadn't been transported to Sydney, but perhaps the most important thing is that we represented the extremes of the School intake. For three years we now work together with eighteen other such. When we go our separate ways again, we will share a common ground, a common understanding which is unique in the history of the Australian film and television industry.
The story of the Paris Theatre has not yet been fully researched but we know that when it opened in 1912 as The Australian Picture Palace in a Burley Griffin designed complex that also included shop and office space, it presented silent films interspersed with stage shows. Later renamed The Tatler, it housed live companies, including one associated with Peter Finch. When the theatre, then known as The Park, was taken over by Hoyts in the 1950's it was again renamed, this time as The Paris, and used as a long-run movie house. Hoyts allowed the lease to lapse and the theatre was empty for some time until, in June 1977, John Allen, an independent manager, took up the lease for the presentation of new wave concerts and underground films. When, at the end of 1977, our projected season of new plays for the Seymour Centre fell through, John Allen offered the Paris as a possible home for a new theatre company. In taking up this offer we have had two closely related objectives: to present the Australian plays intended for the Seymour Centre season on an independent basis (the plays in question are Dorothy Hewett’s Pandora’s Cross, Louis Nowra’s Visions and Patrick White’s A Cheery Soul which, together with a pantomime by Bill Harding, make up our projected first season), and to form a company for their presentation. We see this as an opportunity to set up a better working situation for all concerned than any we have hitherto encountered. For the press conference which announced the venture we devised the three broad policy statements which follow. Each of the statements is here accompanied by some specific comments from one or the other of us, or from a member of the company.

1. The aim of the Paris Company is to tell the story of our times.

JIM:

Early experiences like seeing the first productions of the Patrick White plays and the first Barry Humphries shows gave me an insight into the way theatre can reveal our own lives to us in an immediate and direct way. I’ve since come to feel that this is the vital role of the theatre. To show people who they are, how they relate to one another and to the world around them, is to enrich a culture, however unwilling it may be to accept the reflection of itself. Of course, since the ’60’s there have been many other writers with explicit aims of the same kind, but the life-giving element of poetry and imagination, first revealed to me in the White plays, has always seemed to me an insight into the way theatre can reveal our own lives to us in an immediate way towards a style of performance that will be uniquely suited to telling ‘the story of our times’. The planned work for this year, being new and Australian, will give us a chance to discover such a style for ourselves, on our own terms and later, from the security of it, we will be able to re-examine classics and the work of other cultures and other periods.

2. The aim of the Paris Company is to make the story-tellers responsible for the way the story is told.

REX & JIM:

It would be impossible to start a theatre company in Australia without some notion of a co-operative and democratic ideal — just in reaction to the conventional managements for whom we have all worked. How far these ideals can be pursued into practice will become apparent as we go along — our first step has been to assemble a group of actors, designers and technical people who wish to be associated with the idea of the company, who can contribute to its formation, and who can also present the first season of plays. Such artists will be known as associates of the company and will continue to work with it as often as is possible.

REX:

One of the great difficulties we face is the insecurity of the venture. At this moment we are uncertain as to whether initial fund-raising will take us any further than the first production. This puts an unfair pressure on it — we cannot humanly solve all the problems of beginning the sort of company we want in a short period of time before we begin rehearsal on the first play. The establishment of the principles on which the company operates needs to be seen as a developing process not as a kind of immediate declaration of human rights. However, it seems to me that at least one long-standing pre-occupation of mine may be included for consideration in these planning stages: the development of a distinctive company style — not only in relation to the selection of material, the design of the productions, the choice of graphic style in which the company presents itself but, most importantly of all, in relation to the performance itself, the acting style. We must feel our way towards a style of performance that will be uniquely suited to telling ‘the story of our times’. The planned work for this year, being new and Australian, will give us a chance to discover such a style for ourselves, on our own terms and later, from the security of it, we will be able to re-examine classics and the work of other cultures and other periods.
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possible while the company continues in existence. In each production one member of the acting company will be elected as a representative in all planning decisions made by the artistic, business and theatre managers. The main consideration in planning the working structure is to allow for all degrees of involvement and responsibility, not only for the actors but also for the technical staff, the designers, the publicists — to some extent our whole image of the company is formed in reaction to those working situations we have all encountered where anxious hired bunnies dig there individual burrows hoping that someone up above knows what the plan is.

3. The aim of the Paris Company is to make the story worth the price of a ticket.

**REX & JIM:**

The trend in theatre seems to be towards increasingly small companies playing in increasingly large subsidies. One of our primary intentions is to confront the problem of commercial viability — we feel that with an eight hundred-seat theatre, large-scale plays and productions, and an all-star company, that there is a good possibility of the venture’s financial success. We propose to keep the price of the five hundred and fifty stalls seats at $5 and, while tickets will be available in advance at the usual agencies, the stalls will not be numbered. This, together with the central city location and the availability of seats at the door, should make the decision to see a play as easy and impromptu a matter as the decision to see a film. In short we hope to interest a large, general audience in the Paris and we do not think we will, in the words Patrick White used at our press conference, ‘send them yawning back to their suburbs’. For indication of our financial arrangements I have asked Elizabeth Knight, our company manager, for a short statement.

**ELIZABETH:**

At present we are constituted as a trustee company. The four trustees are the two artistic managers, the theatre manager and the company manager. Our initial capital for production costs is being raised by donation and by fund-raising events like the recent auction of paintings given by twelve Sydney artists. At date of writing we have raised two-thirds of the estimated first production budget. Our on-going financial arrangements include the donation of the services of all personnel during the rehearsal period of the first production, the acceptance of minimal salaries ($150) during the run, and the sharing of profits after it. We hope that the cost of essential renovation of the theatre will be borne by the State Government and the City Council. A large number of talented people are, as usual, subsidising this theatre venture with their time, energy and money in the hope of founding a company on principles of integrity, idealism and professionalism.

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The personnel already assembled in the name of the Paris Company make an impressive list: actors include Jennifer Claire, Arthur Dignam, Kate Fitzpatrick, John Gaden, Julie McGregor, Robyn Nevin, Neil Redfern, Geraldine Turner and John Paramor; designers include Luciana Arrighi and Brian Thomson; company manager is Elizabeth Knight; stage manager is Bill Walker; production manager is Jono Enemark; publicists are Gil Appleton and Fran Moore. Arthur Dignam has been elected actors’ representative for the first production and it seemed appropriate that I should ask him for an indication of the sort of contribution he sees himself making. His reply, which follows, shows Arthur’s interest in the director’s role — an interest we hope to see pursued into practice at the Paris.

**ARTHUR:**

An actor’s first responsibility is to the text. What does it say? What does the playwright intend? This may sound simple but it is not. Think how often, even with someone whose conversational style is familiar to you, you are forced to ask ‘What did you say?’ and further, ‘Well, what do you mean by that?’ Unfortunately as actors, we don’t do this often enough. The four-week rehearsal period, imposed by considerations of economy rather than craft, is no help, but the real problem is our own tendency to assume rather than investigate. And we make assumptions not only about plays but also about ourselves, about our craft. Usually, in my experience, the director has made several sweeping assumptions about the play before he starts rehearsal. These assumptions may or may not be relevant to the text — they are more probably relevant to a performance he saw in Winnipeg in 1963. In these circumstances an actor’s function has little to do with the craft of acting and a great deal to do with survival. And the end result? Well, a text isn’t a play — a play is a public experience and a text is a private one. The gap, is rarely bridged. Mostly what the public see is a more or less animated text, constantly threatening to breathe its last, and manifesting symptoms of life only because the actors have abandoned their serious, absorbing and rewarding craft, in order to man the oxygen pump.

Jim Sharman
Geraldine Turner
Arthur Dignam
Julie McGregor
Hungary has never known avant-garde theatre.

Hungary with its population of ten and a half million has thirty four theatres. But its capital, Budapest, the cultural centre of the country, has only eleven playhouses. This is not much for a two-and-a-half-million metropolis. The theatre does not seem to be the strongest side of Hungary's cultural life and this state of affairs is frankly admitted by Hungarians themselves. A similar conclusion suggests itself when you consider the building of theatres there: apart from the modern Madach Theatre, all the other theatre halls either date back to the 19th century or have been adapted from cabaret and cinema halls, and even tenement houses.

In spite of the fact that the first theatre in Hungary was opened in the town of Sopron in 1769 and another in Budapest in 1774, the development of this domain of art has been uneven and many aspects of it neglected. Dominant in the tradition of Hungarian theatre have been light opera and low comedy, with plays about the life of the middle classes accounting for a considerable share of the repertoire. The great romantic dramas by Mihaly Vorosmarty (1800-1855) and Imre Madach (1823-1864) were often and respectfully staged, but somewhat remained outside the mainstream of theatrical life and had little effect on it. Hungary has never known what we call avant-garde theatre. Nor has it ever had an outstanding director-innovator able to shake or even slightly rock the fossilised tradition. Hungarian theatre has positively been an actors' theatre, inclined to stardom and impervious to fads from the outside world. This long, conservative tradition still weighs heavy on it. The audiences which have got used to it must be first re-educated and shown new horizons.

First attempts have already been made. In Budapest, Laszlo Gyurko has for seven years been running the experimental 25 Theatre. In the provinces, where, they say, things look livelier, young directors are trying, with varying success, to realize their innovatory ambitions. Also the staging of plays by contemporary Hungarian and foreign playwrights compels directors to look for new forms and ways of producing them. According to Hungarian theatre makers themselves, their theatre is in the doldrums.

Eminent Hungarian actors sometimes look for new ways of doing things. The renowned actor Miklos Gabor gave up Budapest for the little town of Kecskemet where thirty odd year old director Jozsef Rusz, who is believed to be an advocate of Grotowski's ideas, works in the local theatre which is noted for its artistic community spirit. This theatre also produces mainly classical works - the famous productions of Schiller's Don Carlos, Shakespeare's tragedies, Euripides - but it treats them as a means of expressing its stance in relation to the world and not as material for building up a performance. The leading actress of the National Theatre in Budapest, Mari Toroczk, has for almost four years appeared on the stage of the 25 Theatre as a guest artist in Endre Fejes' successful play Cserepes Margit Hazassaga. The play was directed by a former actor of the National Theatre, Istvan Iglodi.

The 25 Theatre is an experimental theatre, representing the current of artistic quests. In the incipient stage of its existence - the theatre was characterised by a certain homogeneity of its interests as regards literature and actorship, it had a preference for poetic-reflective works. Their realisation was based on a composition of the word and, often, of ballet-like movement. Today, one can hardly speak of a homogenous stylistic of the theatre; eg the gross satirical play Belly by East German Kurt Bartok provided an opportunity for putting on a neat musical show with some elements of epic theatre and circus.

The 25 Theatre also staged Ballad of Mason Kelemen's Wife, a travesty of an old Hungarian ballad by the theatre's manager and director Laszlo Gyurko: A castle is being built, but the walls crumble instantly. To propitiate the gods, the masons offer Mason Kelemen's wife as a sacrifice and immure her. So runs the ballad. In the director's version it is a story of futile efforts to build the edifice of human life, happiness, beauty, peace. It, however, keeps crumbling. The sacrifice of Kelemen's wife is not an act of coercion, but will it serve any useful purpose? The symbolic sense of the play is quite obvious.

The 25 Theatre has a small auditorium, seating no more than a hundred. Before this house, eight actors perform this poetic tale made up of voices, gestures, symbolic scenes in which violence rubs shoulders with philosophical reflection. The actors are very skilful. They use their voices in a masterly manner; they begin with articulating separate sounds which gradually combine into words and whole sentences. Also the use of the body is very impressive.
Othello is played by Ferenc Bessenyei, an actor with a splendid low voice and a subtly toned-down expressiveness, he has a majestic appearance and dignified demeanour and his acting is restrained and spare in its outward manifestations. If Othello is a great creation, then lago, played by Peter Huszt, is stunning because of a quite new conception of the part. He is a young, gay, likable man. No fiend. He is simply mischievous and likes to play nasty tricks on people. Just an enfant terrible. The Budapest production of Othello was one of the most interesting theatrical events of the last season.

The National Theatre in Pecs is a big enterprise. It has on its staff fifty actors, twenty singers, a ballet, a choir and an orchestra. It operates two stages, and, apart from evening performances, gives a great number of matinees for children and young people. The National Theatre in Pecs seems to prefer modern plays to classical works. At least such an inference can be made from the programme for the last season. In the first half of the season Hungarian drama was represented by two writers: the outstanding poet Gyula Illyes and the recent debutant Istvan Sarospataky. The former wrote a historical comedy Daniel Among His Folks, a ballet, a choir and an orchestra. It operates two stages, and, apart from evening performances, gives a great number of matinees for children and young people. The National Theatre in Pecs seems to prefer modern plays to classical works. At least such an inference can be made from the programme for the last season. In the first half of the season Hungarian drama was represented by two writers: the outstanding poet Gyula Illyes and the recent debutant Istvan Sarospataky. The former wrote a historical comedy Daniel Among His Folks, the action of which is set against the background of a struggle to defend the Reformation in Transylvania, while the latter is the author of a metaphorical play called The Plague-stricken Dance, which is thematically related to Camus The Plague and Ionesco’s Playing At Being Killed. Sarospataky’s play was made by the theatre into a great show about fear, fanaticism and orgiastic debauchery. It was not by chance that the historical and costume drama made its appearance in Pecs. A characteristic of Hungarian theatrical life is a preponderance of historical themes in plays by modern playwrights. Historical plays are turned out, for instance, by writers so different as Gyula Hernadi, Gyula Ilyes and Magda Szabo. Their work is based on a thorough knowledge of history and an insight into the nature of social processes.

A Hungarian speciality is operetta, above all the traditional repertoire of Lehár, Offenbach, Kalman. Modern musicals are also very popular. I saw one of them on the studio stage of the Operetta Theatre. It was Harvey Schmidt’s Fantastic, which a few years ago made a hit on Broadway. Hungarian director Laszlo Seregi staged it in one of the foyers of the theatre, a small hall, seating no more than one hundred. No stage, full lights. Actors-singers without makeup, in everyday clothes — anyway the action takes place in modern times — mingle with the audience — move among the chairs, sit on chair arms. The whole has the air of an informal musical party.

What is Hungarian theatre — Színház — in Hungarian — like? Neither very good, nor very bad. It is an average theatre, perhaps even quite good. It may not be very original, but it is sometimes ambitious and tries hard to find its own style.

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**NATIONAL THEATRE COMPANY at the PLAYHOUSE**

**Performing June 28 to July 22 at the Playhouse**

**A HAPPY AND HOLY OCCASION**

*by John O’Donoghue*

The W.A. premiere of this nostalgic comedy, which won the National Play Competition in 1974. The O’Malon family hold a party for their son Christy, who is about to start his long studies for the priesthood. They hope the guests will present the boy with some much-needed cash to cover the costs of outfitting him. The evening, however, produces many unexpected developments! The dialogue is brilliant, with a fine understanding of the blood and guts of the typically Irish and Australian characters.

Directed by Stephen Barry

Artists appearing in these productions include:- Roz Barr, Merrin Canning, Robert Faggetter, Margaret Ford, Andy King, Ivan King, Robert van Mackelenberg, Jenny McNae, Leonie Martin-Smith, Edgar Metcalfe, Joan Sydney, Leslie Wright. Both Productions designed by Sue Russell.

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These two plays by Ted Neilsen are the first to emerge from the Sunday evening workshops organised by Hoopla in association with The Age and Penguin Books, and according to Neilsen they were written in VicRail carriage on the Glen Waverley Line. In a gentle, ironic way, both plays scratch away at the fantasies embedded in the smooth domestic veneer of suburbia and suggest more profound disturbances in everyday life at other levels. They are direct and accessible without being locked into, or defined by their basic naturalism and while critical of suburbia they are mercifully free of pretensions to a deeper, more tragic vision. As a theatrical whole Oh holds together better but Let Me In is more ambitious and points to directions which could follow in the future.

Oh begins over the conjugal kitchen sink in a suburban home as a properly married couple Mike(Peter Cummins) and Sue(Anne Phelan) engage in their evening ritual-doing the washing up together. The director, writer and actors have all deftly observed this mini power struggle and bring its plays and counter plays — “I’ll wash, but if you’d rather I’ll dry” — to life, and there is some nice ego-battle business about who can stack the stoneware coffee cups highest and most dangerously. Manoeuvring between the dishes, the detergent and the rubber gloves they begin a tentative low key discussion about their sexual fantasies — he wants to watch her with his mate from a vantage point in the wardrobe, she wouldn’t mind getting off with her girlfriend. They repeatedly dismiss their wishes as idle and silly while obviously enjoying the licence, and eventually they admit what they would really like....

And no sooner has he said he fancies a mermaid on a platter of soft, fluffy rice and she a surgeon in a white mask and boots with Dettol scrubbed hands, than there is a knock at the door and a surgeon bearing an injured mermaid in a wheel barrow appears. What was so delightful about what followed was that for the most part everyone — husband, wife, surgeon and mermaid — was very cool and untroubled. However towards the end the writer lost his nerve and introduced common or garden moral concern for the other (the surgeon/lover begins to worry the wife about whether her husband is adequate to the task of satisfying the mermaid) and the magic dissipates, leaving the play to what now becomes an awkward naturalistic resolution.

As the husband and wife, Peter Cummins and Anne Phelan have a sure sense of the restraint required of them and like the characters they play they never really have a chance to let go whereas Michael Duffield and Jillian Archer can let go but only in the direction of being more surgically or mermaidly. Peter Corrigan’s Display Home kitchen setting was disappointing, notwithstanding the amber glitter of the hundreds of beer bottles suspended from the ceiling, it told us nothing more than what the play established in the opening minutes.

For the second play, Let Me In the bottles remained and park benches replaced the kitchen ware to no greater effect. In Let Me In five characters who have in some way missed out on La Dolee Vita in Doncaster or Dandenong are waiting somewhere for something and when the play ends they are still wondering why they missed out. Again the setting is the real unremarkable world of contemporary Australia and its necessary antidote — escape into the collective unconscious of the Australian Dream. The fantasies of the programmed unconscious of a nation are all there — be they a big win at the races in Tatts, or the newer opiates of consumerism — red spot specials at K Mart or multiple orgasms by courtesy of Forum Magazine.

Let Me In is seeped in hopelessness and smallness, so many battles lost and dreams dashed before they’ve hardly been dreamt but there is also an inverted courage in the way everyone just goes on. They neither give in nor get out and there is no voice explicit or implied to protest the society that has propagated such unfulfilled lives. Angst and existential doubt can be shelved, rather than transcended, because the ideologies of the lucky country— mateship, giving it a go and making do without whinging — reign supreme.

By showing the cultural artefacts which maintain without sustaining, the lives of his characters, Neilsen has hit upon the ‘personal’ reasons why most socially radical action in Australia invariably flounders in a sea of hire purchase and footy scores. In the end the play is a victim of its own inertia — characters bubble to life and reveal themselves with wit and telling detail and then subside until it’s someone else’s turn, but no one ever makes sustained contact with anyone else or for that matter ultimately with the audience: it is all a series of flashes in the pan. Let Me In is more demanding on its actors than Oh and Peter Cummins, Anne Phelan and Jillian Archer have an opportunity to show their mettle, but they no sooner take off than the play drops back and shuffles forward again.

Both plays indicate that Ted Neilsen is a writer of considerable promise with wider and more sensitive empathy for suburban Australia than Williamson and a subtler more ironic wit than Hibberd but his talent needs to be more probing and critically focused than it is in Oh and Let Me In.
With the exception of *Breaker Morant*, every Australian play I have seen recently has bored me through being extended revue material, badly and incompletely written, or blatant copying in style and/or content of overseas plays of past decades. Some have been partly redeemed by outstanding performances and direction, but for me the point has been rapidly approaching when I felt I never wanted to see another Australian play, unless it was by David Williamson, Ray Lawler or the all too rare *The Elucution of Benjamin Franklin* or *The Last of the Knucklemen*. It is my firm belief — shared I have recently discovered by many others — that the average far-from-finished, mediocre, locally written play is driving people away from live theatre, despite the lavish praise from playwright and publisher critics who obviously have axes of their own to grind.

Now there comes upon the scene Mervyn Rutherford’s *Departmental*, which does much to restore my faith that there are dramatists other than Williamson and Lawler capable of writing first class plays which have appeal for the majority rather than the minority.

*Departmental* is an Australian play simply because it is set in Australia, is about members of the NSW police force, and is written by an Australian, who also happens to be an ex-member of the police force. Apart from that it can mingle with the best from England and America. It is obviously written with great background authenticity — possibly based on incidents and characters the author has come across. Whether the events could be applicable to overseas police forces — or even interstate law enforcers — one does not know. The simple fact is, this play stands up as it is as sheer entertainment, capable of holding audiences anywhere in the world. Unlike many Australian plays, it does not rely upon four letter words or scenes of violence for its kicks; it also happens to be extremely well written, with exceptionally well drawn characters.

Although *Departmental* lacks an involved plot, it grips throughout. A substantial sum of money has been stolen during the night from a police station safe. Within hours of the theft — and before able to obtain any sleep — the two constables are interrogated, both separately and together, by Inspector Cook and his visiting superior, Superintendent Spartan. Cook is an average police officer: an honest, good upholder of the law, with little imagination. Spartan, saddled with a family from his early years, thinks he can handle all situations with his own brand of bullying, aiming to trap the culprit into confession and then forgive, believing the man will be a better policeman for the hold that will remain over him for the rest of his working days.

The interrogation, however, does not go entirely according to Spartan’s plans and ultimately it is he who can be found to be guilty of not performing his duties satisfactorily. Although the culprit is revealed, the play provides several intriguing twists, one of the four policemen suicides, and the play ends on a note of possible vengeance with McIlveney’s mysterious motivations still veiled.

Rutherford’s dialogue is true to life and flows along naturally, so that one is conscious most of the time of a sure and skilled craftsman at work. Only early in the second act does it sag a little when Cook and Spartan, relaxing over a sandwich and coffee, talk about their careers and personal life. Much of this dialogue contributes little to the play’s progress and appears to be the playwright getting a few personal chips and experiences off his chest. Deletion or pruning of the sequence could be to the play’s advantage.

Bruce Myles, in his directoral debut for the MTC, does well by playwright Rutherford, never allowing the pace to lag and bringing out all the necessary points, without over-stressing in any direction. He is greatly assisted by Maree Menzel’s sparse but most practical skeletal set.

Simon Chilvers as the Superintendent gives one of the most notable performances of his career — suavely authoritative, slightly sinister, but behind it all intensely human. Rod Williams, who plays Pyers, also is utterly believable, managing humour and moments of pathos with equal efficiency.

Lloyd Cunningham and Gary Day, as Cook and McIlveney, are less comfortable in their roles — at least at the official opening performance. Fluffing several lines, Cunningham just the same turns in his best performance since portraying Jason in *The Last of the Knucklemen*. Day has a somewhat restricting role which provides him with little scope for more than a one-level characterisation. He has to create an air of mystery, be precise and respectful, and above all never on the
surface appear ruffled. The actor obviously finds difficulty in getting into McIlveney's skin to his own satisfaction, and his uncertainty tends to show. Doubtless after playing a few more performances, both Cunningham and Day will be as tip top as their fellow players. "Departmental" is a play which should be in the repertoire of all national companies. It appears to possess much potential for a telemovie. And if Mervyn Rutherford's other plays can reach the heights of this one, he undoubtedly is all set to become a big international name.

Misguided idea about what acting is

TROYLUS AND CRESSIDA

VI RICHARDS

Troylus and Cressida by Shakespeare. Presented by Old Scream, Pram Factory, Melbourne. Vic. Director, Peter King. (Amateur)

Of all the things that have been done in the name of, in spite of, against the spirit of, despite, to and on Shakespeare, most are understandable in terms of their locale, fashion and time. The man wrote a few plays off which the imagination of the language has been feeding ever since. He's part of Australia's heritage too, and the pity of it is the lack of interest by the major companies (Nimrod excepted) to discover an approach stemming from our culture. It has been left to fringe groups to have a go. Some have been successful: James McCaughhey and Theatre Projects' "Othello" of a few years ago, and some not, like Old Scream's "Troylus" at the Pram Factory.

It's one of those occasions when a misguided idea about what acting is results in a production that is more or less unintelligible, especially when the acoustics of the Pram Factory require a real sense of diction for any words at all to be heard. In this production the rather undergraduate vocalising meant that about every twentieth word was audible. And I do not think that director Peter King was unaware of this. There was, with one exception, a deliberate attempt to physically and vocally portray the opposite of what the sense of the speech intended. This perversion of the language is OK if some kind of theatrical point is being made, but in a production which was supposed to emphasise the narrative and sexual aspects of the play it was more than a distraction. It was a disaster.

The same applied to the physical aspect of the production. Every opportunity for artificial groupings, buffoonery running around in circles, and making things hard to follow was taken. The exception to all this was David Kendall, who used experience and skill in the service of sense to give a beautifully controlled series of performances. Not that he wasn't stretching sentences and using the odd bit of grotesquerie, but he seemed to know what and why he was doing it. His performance gave some idea of what might be done. By some other group.

Deftly constructed humorous play

DA

ROBERT PAGE

Da by Hugh Leonard. Old Tote Theatre Company, Parade Theatre, Sydney, NSW. Opened 30 May 1978. Director, Peter Collingwood; Design, James Ridgwood; Lighting, Jerry Luke; Stage Manager, John Frost; Reginald Werner.

Charlie (now): Max Meldrum; Oliver, Alan Tobin; Da: Tom Farley; Mother, Maggie Kirkpatrick; Charlie (then): Tom Burlinson; Drum, Des Rolfe; Mrs Prynne, Jessica Noed; The Yellow Peril, Claire Growther.

Hugh Leonard's "Da" is in the recherche du temps perdu mode, a vision and revision of homeland and past through the eyes of a middle aged emigre. Usually such autobiographically based pieces are the first opuses of awakening talent, not the painful beginnings in a working class household from the mind of a now successful middle class writer by committing all the bric a brac to the flames. But the appearance of one-time friend Oliver, appropriately ineffectual as played by Alan Tobin, stirs old embers, and the first fleeting image of Da appears (to an incongruous lighting change, never repeated). The friend has not flown the nets, but remained in the small Irish village, married with four offspring and a monument to what might have been.

Charlie, though, was always different. More adventurous both in his concern for literature, outstripping his parents by early adolescence, and his first sexual stirring in a gawky flirtation with the Yellow Peril, the local bike. Each had earned parental disdain, the one a betrayal of class, the other of small town Catholic morality. The young man does not feel guilt, but resentment and rejection, which Tom Burlinson as "Charlie Then" admirably brings out.

A major influence in his formative years is Mr Drumm, philosophical mentor and later employer, casting pearls of wisdom, sometimes cultured sometimes home spun. The character is, one assumes, based on Joyce — and played as a look-alike by Des Rolfe — a hero of Leonard himself of whose works he has done many adaptations. Unfortunately the play is no Portrait of the Artist revolving around moments of benediction of budding genius, nor even a Proustian burrowing under the face of reality. Rather it hinges on the son's realisation, after all the erudition he yearned for of all that was past, that Da

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had a good soul, wanting the best for his adopted son though often holding him back.

One cannot condemn the play for what it is not; the problem is that the play arouses expectations of a stature that it never achieves. The final assessment is that of unsophisticated professionalism in the writer, of a deftly constructed and humorous play, and a production under Peter Collingwood that admirably serves it. One cannot help musing that if this is a worthy example of the work of “the finest Irish playwright alive today” then our own writers can hold their heads up high.

Substantial, moving and funny.

A DAY IN THE DEATH OF JOE EGG

ADRIAN WINTLE

A Day in the Death of Joe Egg by Peter Nichols, Riverina Trucking Company Theatre, Wagga, NSW. Opened June 1. Director: Les Winsky; costume, Eleanor McDonald; Brian: Terry O'Connell; Sheila: Elaine Mangan; Joe: Christine Fisher; Freddie: John Francis; Pam: Sharon Hiltis; Grace, Ida Buckley. (Professional)

The Riverina Trucking Company’s production of Peter Nichols’ A Day in the Death of Joe Egg represented almost illusory successfulness in blending play, performers, theatre and audience into a rich theatrical experience.

Measurement is man’s only safeguard against illusion, as Plato so long ago observed; therefore let it be said immediately that the physical properties of the small (120 seat) Trucking Company Theatre made it an ideal forum for the intimacies this play demands; that playwright Peter Nichols is a jokester of Perelman proportions; and that the play’s pathos and wit were explored convincingly at such close quarters.

These two elements are pursued relentlessly by Mr Nichols. In the first act he achieves a plangent balance between reality and fantasy: between the consuming immediacy of spastic illness and the desperately humorous word-games enacted by the parents to serve as counterbalance, explanation and perhaps expiation as well. The fact that much of the humour is of an undergraduate variety in its concern for making a pun at any price practically guarantees a high level of overenthusiasm, as well as incidentally creating sharply defined emotional polarities.

Nichols is shrewd enough to employ the vaudevillian device of having his characters address the audience, a technique that enables a great deal of necessary detail, as well as incidentally dulling the dialogue, to be accommodated gracefully.

Yet his command of verbal counterpart, engagingly displayed in the first act, is put to stringent test in the second act, when the knockabout element threatens to obscure the corrosive issues at stake.

Brian’s mother, for instance, emerges as a veritable fount of platitudes whose contempt for Sheila is thinly concealed: I can’t help feeling the denouement would have been strengthened in terms of credibility had she been introduced at an earlier point in the play — even during Act I. These structural considerations did not diminish the styliness of this production, nor in general the finely textured quality of the acting. Terry O’Connell by some magical process of his own devising (the unimaginative might term it ‘technique’) created a chameleonic character of Brian, moving fluently from morose wit through alert mimicry to desperate funniness, by far the most consistently compassionate performance we’ve seen from him in Wagga.

Elaine Mangan, while not texturing her Sheila quite as richly, was rarely less than compelling, her primary attribute a superb stage fluency. John Francis’ highly amusing Freddie never slipped into caricature. Ida Buckely’s Grace was poised but needed more relaxation, Sharon Hiltis was a capably middle-class Pam and Christine Fisher brought a kind of sepulchred dignity to the spastic child.

Faced with performances of this overall calibre, Les Winspear could hardly have failed to succeed in his major production debut. Yet this production must qualify as the finest piece of theatre the Trucking Company has given us, substantial, moving and funny.

A far cry from “a nice night’s entertainment”

ISN’T IT PATHETIC AT HIS AGE?

GREG CURRAN

Isn’t It Pathetic At His Age? by Barrie Humphries, Her Majesty’s Theatre, Sydney, NSW. Opened 24 May 1978. Barrie Humphries (one man show) (Professional)

In the early and mid 1960s (how long ago that seems readers!), no one enjoyed the adventures of Edna Everage and Sandy Stone more than yours truly. Edna was then the indomitable suburban mum, anchored, as it were, at Moonee Ponds. Her attempts to sponsor a migrant while mother minded little Kenny at home, and Sandy and Beryl’s Easter with young Wayne and Marilyn Hiscock, were but two of the sketches heard, many, many times and oft, on our microgroove. In the theatre, too, the characters (for then they were characters) and the situations were fresh, life-like, believable, irresistible really when-you-come-to-think-of-it. And last, but not least, marvellously imitable (to boot).

However, by 1968, I was beginning to have a few doubting thoughts in the Australian Quarterly I wrote “Edna is still as formidable as ever, but I think Barry Humphries has run dry on this subject”: Pompous youthful twaddle, I suppose. But I get worse! In 1971, reviewing A Load of Olde Stuf$e in the Sunday Australian I remarked that the material had become “overfamiliar” as that Edna was now merely a satirical figure”, that BH was in danger “of turning like Sandy and Edna before him, into a National institution” and that I thought Aussie humour should discover a new direction “away from our limited notions of satire, away from ‘relevance’...” from literal minded humour”.

All somewhat highfatulin’ no doubt. But humour did take off in another direction (Woolongong the brave, Flash Nick, Aunty Jack, Norman Gunston etc). And no one could’ve known that Edna herself would become an institution in a very real sense, as “Dame” Edna Everage. After Gough Whitlam has dipped his sword, the former homemaker from Humoresque Street was no longer “just a show”, but a living breathing, not to mention, talking, celebrity somewhat beyond the ken of the crusty old grand Dame Edna’s appearances at Ascot (in a mad hat replica of the Opera House) at the Palace, on TV and radio, indeed all over the place, became once again convulsively funny and original. She also found time to present Dame Edna’s Coffee Table Book which Miss Joan Bakewell, whom our heroine once memorably encountered on the BBC, has said “You couldn’t do worse than follow her every example”. I found I was besotted with the former Edna Beaasley all over again. The lady had become, nay is, a real event!

It was certainly an event when our properly regal protagonist was mistaken for the Queen in the second Barry Mackenzie film (in which she also visits Transylvania). An event too, was the London show Housewife Superstar in the long hot summer of 1976, a record breaking entertainment which has been recorded for posterity. Dame Edna is now dropping names like confetti and her free and frank references to Dame Peggy Ashcroft (“in a wonderful state of preservation”), Dame Margo and Dame (sic) Joan Plowright are hilariously improbable. Dame Joan was playing the theatre next door to her Australian rival and, according to the stage boys “used to listen through the wall with her toothbrush mug just to hear what a real audience sounded like”. This is the international superstar talking and the script fits (ditto the tiara). The record is wonderfully memorable and again, perhaps edible, — you can dine out on it.

Having (micro) grooved on Dame E (and indeed Les Patterson), especially early in London 1977 when every old acquaintance and antipodean expatriate whacker, seemed to have seen the 1976 show or possessed (sic) the record I was expecting a lot from the new show in Sydney. However, I was disappointed by Isn’t it Pathetic at his age? In the first place the peripheral characters don’t help on this occasion. Lance Boyle the most notoriety by playing up in Hong Kong, and Les Patterson Australian cultural attaché to the court of St James both seemed much fresher and funnier (and in Les’ case,
The effects of causes on attachments

WHAT EVERY WOMAN KNOWS

SPOKESONG

LUCY WAGNER

Barrie Humphries as the Ghost of Sandy Stone.

wonderfully vulgar), in a recent Bulletin article and on that record (respectively). Sandy Stone was killed off in 1971 to the best of my recollection; his present reappearance as a ghost is stretching things somewhat.

As to Edna (and Les too) perhaps the humour no longer seems (to me anyway) to have a local context that's really interesting; may-be it's the English context that creates the event — the incredulity and falling about of a pommy audience plus a more distinctively theatrical atmosphere, that makes for piquancy eg "Why is this the most successful show in the history of the English speaking world — Because people are sick to death of the theatre?". And of the Globe Theater where the star was playing "Little Shakespeare himself used to jump around up on this stage, dressed as a woman most of the time". Perhaps the by-play with the West End audience is better. To a woman answering a question — "Do you often interrupt West End shows dear?". In fact a lot of the London show is based on playing the audience. Again may-be the idea of DE on a record (or on TV or in the papers) is now funnier than the reality on stage. But I think the main reason I felt let down is that the London material is or seems much more interesting, it certainly hangs together better. Back in Terra Australis, (a) the tone of some of the spiel (eg Edna's mixed feelings about Joyleen, Brucie's wife (now returned to Roselle) is rather unconvincing on this occasion and, despite similarities, hardly compares in interest with the suspenseful 1976 number about the contents of Joyleen's Ruislip (London) bathroom), (b) the seeming thinness of the material (like the poor those gladges are still with us) and (c) the bitter way in which some characters are treated, are all curious to say the least.

For example Beryl, Sandy's widow, has a sort of wake in which, among other things, Sandy's side of the wardrobe is thrown open to the friends and neighbours — for pickings! I found this incredible — an unnecessary kick in the pants to the memory of a character who, like Madge Allsop, one of Edna's bridesmaids, used to be humourously and humanely observed. I could've done without the reference to the state of Madge's skin, and the ending of the Sandy sketch, not to mention Norm Everage's colostomy.

The lack of really funny moments highlights these matters, which critics and commentators tend to label "dark" or "black". But such labels imply some degree of depth of significance in the material. I don't really know whether these somewhat cruel jibes are just a desperate attempt to keep the locals happy with something they can relate to (and they sure do) or whether this so-called "humour" springs from a subconscious desire to do the characters in, or both, or what. It might make an interesting seminar after the show one night. In the meantime, this odd evening is a far cry from the "nice night's entertainment" enjoyed in happier, more innocent days.

Barrie Humphries as Dame Edna Everage.

We seem to be getting a spate of celtic plays in Sydney; following Da at the Old Tote, Marian Street have opened J M Barrie's Scottish comedy What Every Woman Knows a canny lass who manages her husbands affairs without letting him know, and at the Ensemble is Spokesong, an Irish musical about the Belfast troubles, the history of the bicycle and the championing of causes.

What Every Woman Knows, and what every man does not, is that behind every good man is a good woman. The case in point is Maggie Wylie, an ageing (twenty seven), charmless spinster whose father and brothers manage to marry her off to the turn and coming MP John Shand. The Hon J Shand started life as a railway porter, and Maggie's background is one of regretted lack of education, but as John moves up the parliamentary ladder, so she learns French, and everything he studies, to be the perfect wife to him. When they get to London, and a ministerial post appears to be in the offing the system starts to break down. The catalyst is lovely Lady Sybil who forms a romantic attachment with the previously immovable Scot, and Maggie stays true to her promise not to behave like any other wife under such circumstances. She ships them off to the country together where they quickly tire of each other. John also discovers there, that strangely he has lost the inspiration needed to write the speech of his life time, and after a period of shock happily accepts that his success is the outcome of the matrimonial partnership.

Alastair Duncan's direction captures the essence of the play; it is light and smartly paced, but doesn't miss out on the compassion with which J M Barrie has drawn his characters. The casting could not be bettered. Janice Finn's unusual looks smoothly encompass the early charmless Maggie through to the self-assured but sexless wife whose humorous outlook forces even her dour husband to
loved her. And the pomposity of Tom McCarthy is tempered with enough enduring mannerisms to make her love and his final conversion quite credible. As a Scot himself, Gordon McDougall has the father to a tee, and Phillip Hinton is both funny and moving as Maggie's favourite brother.

The play itself should not be scorned because of its very dated title; its Wildean wit surrounds the very reasonable proposition that no man is an island, and often partnerships in work allow a drawing from a greater range of skills. That a wife prefers to subordinate her own ego and career to her husband's is in general a hardly acceptable position to take today, but the reasons, both deep and superficial, why people form attachments and work for causes are most accurately charted in this play.

The effects of causes on attachments is also one of the themes of *Spokesong, or the Common Wheel*, by Irish writer Stewart Parker. Belfast bicycle shopkeeper Frank Stock has inherited a love of these machines from his grandparents Francis and Kitty. The story of their romance, marriage and involvement in the first world war parallels in flashback and his memory, Frank's involvement with a young school teacher and the Irish civil war. In spite of its more modern perspective and concerns, the play's comments are really of less profundity and perception than those of What Every Woman Knows.

However, again the characterisation carries the evening with Brian Young as Frank and Rosalind Speirs as the teacher Daisy Bell complementing and sparkling off each other's performances most effectively. His lackadaisical manner belies his deep concern for righing the wrongs of the city — albeit through the provision of 50,000 municipal bikes — which meets at a final point with her early inability to cope with the situation that grows into the realisation that living with the problem is the only way to possibly help it. Harold Jones' Trick Cyclist and assorted characters was versatile and interesting, but suffered from a lack of coherence in the writing. He plays all the peripheral characters, most of whom are anti-cycle, but as the trick cyclist and kind of MC he is the singer of "Spokesong" the paean to the bicycle.

The music was pleasant enough, but distinctly unmemorable, as is generally perhaps, the metaphor of cycling for the balanced straightforward way of life. Don Reid's production though, certainly has those attributes; the set is spare but balanced straightforward way of life. Don Reid's production though, certainly has those attributes; the set is spare but 

The political biography in the theatre is a genre bristling with difficulties: maybe the appropriate form for a treatment of Karl Marx could be a modified version of the 'epic theatre' used by Brecht in *Galileo*. But the dramatist would still be faced with a crucial problem: will the audience see a political figure (particularly one from the recent past) as possessing that combination of -- possibly mythical -- historical significance and intrinsically interesting -- even if mundane -- private concerns that one observes in figures like Marat, Danton and Galileo? For it is in this area that much of the tension necessary for the play's momentum can often (though not invariably) be found. And if a writer chooses to write a play about Marx, he must presumably be trying to say something more significant about that figure's place in history than one would expect if he were concentrating on the day-to-day concerns of an unknown, yet typical German emigre of the 1850's.

Ron Blair's play all too often sounds like "The Secret Life of Walter Marz" mixed with something more ambitious. Dramatists have always had problems with the attempt to write a drama centred on political figures and creative writers. Kings, queens, generals and saints have always proved more manageable for the dramatist and more convincing to his audience; and there are few examples of plays in which the personality and spirit of an important political figure are successfully conveyed in either the public or the private sphere. Robert Bolt's *State of Revolution*, in spite of character studies of Lenin and Trotsky which are more effective than any in Ron Blair's *Marx*, is still only intermittently convincing in its attempt to relate such figures to the wider and real historical stage on which they moved. And Buchner's *Danton's Death* and Weiss' *Marat/Sade* are special cases in as much as both authors locate the action of their plays in extreme situations and moments of unusual crisis for the protagonists.

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Ron Blair's play all too often sounds like "The Secret Life of Walter Marz" mixed
up with "Revolutionary Analysis of the Class Situation among the Oppressed of Europe as Provided at the Lodgings of K. Marx". He has chosen to set the three acts of his play in a London which seems the comfortable familiar starting point. The orthodox naturalism of the piece and its conventional characterisation prevent the audience from gaining any new insights. As Marx sips wine with emigre friends and armchair revolutionaries, spicing his conversation with supposedly revealing pronouncements ("If you attempt to influence workers . . . without a body of doctrine and clear scientific ideas, that is what you are playing an empty and unscrupulous game") we are clearly meant to see seeing alive before us the selfish, arrogant yet fascinating figure who advocated solidarity and revolution. Instead we get a cardboard cut-out, mouthing ponderous platitudes in between glaringly anachronistic scenes, which would seem more appropriate in the mouth of a bad stand-up comic, or an escapee from a sub-Neil Simon conversation caper. (Sample: "Lenchen Oh, Moor [Marx nickname], you've got enough problems without mine. Marx Tell me. Lenchen I'm overdue. Marx So is the rent. What's new? I feel sure that a cursory reading of Marx' correspondence would have yielded better examples of His wit than the above tired joke.

Of course, one can counter such objections to the play by saying that it is Blair's picture of Marx rather than Marx himself's history which is relevant for the play. True — were it not for the fact that, far from offering us an ironic or even travestied view of Marx, Blair merely trivialises him. The structure of the play points to its mechanical, second-hand quality: Act One — Marx chez soi in Soho, playing chess, discussing revolution, being rude, screwing the servant; Act Two — Marx and the capitalist world without, what better than a pawnshop (microcosmic-image of the macrocosm—where exchange and exploitation hold sway) with chats with the butcher and pawnshop owner and finally shouts from yet another abortive revolution off? Act Three — as for Act One, though now it's time for a darker mood and more serious things, Marx the mighty man surmounting formidables. The most formidable barrier confronting the Marx of this play is the pile of verbiage: and all things considered, Neil Fitzpatrick copes well, especially in the first act, where he imparts energy and ebullience to the lines. But the characterisation, complete with stock stage German accent, lacks nuances and any real motivation, so that by the third act, one knows that the ground has been well and truly covered. Some of the supporting roles are quite sharply written and observed: Paul Sonkilla's Willich and Michael Siberry's Schramm stood out here, with the former providing a nice counterweight to Neil Fitzpatrick's coarseness (of the role, not the performer). The others had fairly thankless tasks, and one felt for Ronald Falk and Robin Bowery who were clearly deposited in the pawnshop more for the author's convenience than for the conducting of any business. They were not helped either by the setting or Colin George's direction, both of which appeared excessively, deliberately neat and unimaginative. In particular, the pausing for audience response to supposedly effective cap-lines merely showed how both author and director had miscalculated.

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out to a dark oblivion but after due penance is welcomed back into a life plentiful and chaste. The play to the audiences of 1 610 must have appealed as the movie legends of 'love will win through' do to today's. The characters in the play seem so manipulated as to be puppets, the strings very obviously controlled with a purpose. We see a king caught up in a fit of jealousy, the seeming death of his family and a sixteen year burden of guilt. But how slender and mercurial are the characters in this play; small cameos band picked from the wardrobe. In the end all is reborn as if nothing had passed merely fate at work. The Adelaide Theatre Group in presenting the play seem to be saying 'look what we can do' which is fair enough for indeed they do do it. The production holds together because it is paced to sustain; scene follows scene at lightning pace. Using the seemingly many, in fact few, entrances at the Sheridan Theatre you sometimes felt you were at a meeting place of tunnels deep within the ground. The stage environment was functional yet gracious to look at utilizing gauzes, orbital
modular seating and a large sun come painted pentacle upstage on the famous Sheridan back wall. It is a pity the sheer space available was not larger for I believe the play would benefit.

Brian Debnam the director has a fine group of hard working actors with him who produce on the whole balanced yet still individual performances. As the two kings, David Reed and Andrew Clark deliver well and handle their many upheavals of fate with aplomb. As Hermione the somehow saintly, Myfanwy May does something difficult to do on such a small stage and that is to become at times quite separate and alone. Christine Harris as Perdita exudes a youthfullness befitting the idyll that *Winters Tale* is, though the transformation from son to daughter is a tricky one. Shakespeare had to have his cordon-blue character and this time it's Florizel, the prince of Bohemia; playing this role as well as Antigonus is Martin Portus doing it with ease and character. Possibly the greatest extension of characterisation came from Dina Panozzo playing the clown son of the old shepherd who fathers young Perdita. The transformation was much altered and she wore padding out to her ankles instead of her vaudevillean ways certainly won the audience over. The mildness of Shakespeare's venom for rogues and villains in this play is demonstrated in the character of Autolycus. Hardy Stow who played the role tried too hard at times, seeming too busy at what he was doing; it can be easy to play a sham within the frame work of a play of sham and deceit.

A funny thing happened at interval. As the actors trailed off and the music took over the musicians, who played the musical oddities, beautifully I might add on a site type instrument and an ancient snake charmer role as well as Antigone sat on the bench whilst continuing to play. It had all the touches of sit back ladies and gentlemen let our sound roll through your minds; but alack, wasn't long before the flute started wrinkling his cheeks and puckering his brow. The vibes between them kept saying "we're out of the way know". To the people it sounded fine but after heavy facial dialogue it was decided to peter out again and discreetly leave the stage. The music during the evening helped the flow of things and even provided comic relief in an incident where a flute magically played itself. The music during the evening helped the flow of things and even provided comic relief in an incident where a flute magically played itself. The music during the evening helped the flow of things and even provided comic relief in an incident where a flute magically played itself.

The Adelaide Theatre Group's *Winters Tale* is a play interpreted for an audience to enjoy and with the resources available a credit to those involved.

What has not survived is the dramatic form

### STREETCAR NAMED DESIRE

**COLLIN O'BRIEN**

A *Streetcar Named Desire* by Tennessee Williams National Theatre, Playhouse, Perth, WA. Director: Stephen Berry; Designer: Graeme Maclean; Lighting: Duncan Ord; Stage Manager: Christine Randall; Stage Assistant: Brian Debnam; Lighting: Margaret Anketell; Stella Kowalski: Leith Taylor; Stanley Kowalski: Steve Jodrell; Harold Mitchell; Leslie Wright; Eunice Hubbard; Patricia Skewington; Steve Hubbard; Andy King; Pablo Gonzalez; Ivan King; The Collective Doctor: Robert van Mackenstein; Mexican Woman: Wanda Davidson. Nurse: Margaret Fletcher; Sailor: Bob Clarke. (Professional)

An especially stunning performance of a play or a particular character so dominate a whole generation that it must affect all subsequent performances. The effect is particularly strong when the performance is committed to film, as was the case with Olivier's Richard III. With Tennessee Williams' *Streetcar Named Desire* the skewing factor is the film starring Marlon Brando, Vivian Leigh and Karl Maldon.

It is not just that the performances were brilliant, which they were. *Streetcar* was one of those films which transformed our consciousness of what is possible in the medium, shattered the conventions. The animal sensuality of Brando's Stanley Kowalski exploded the sham Hayes Office bakelite Blondie and Dagwood Hollywood version of sexuality. A Method actor, Brando simply ignored the cliches and played closer to reality than anyone had dared for years. Vivien Leigh, as his antagonist, was virtually set up years before by her role of Scarlett O'Hara in *Gone With The Wind*, so that another angle went to the wall; Southern Gentility. As an image of reality in the cinema *Streetcar* was as important for its time as, later, Ingmar Bergman's *The Virgin Spring* and Truffaut's *The Four Hundred Blows*.

I therefore went to see *Streetcar* at the Playhouse with some apprehension. I need not have worried — well, not much. Certainly Margaret Anketell's playing of Blanche Dubois alone was worth the trip; and Williams' play has survived the thirty years, but for one or two aspects which I will deal with in a moment.

If you have paid the price of admission says a character in Williams' more symbolic play *Camino Real*, 'deisparation'. Blanche is arguably Williams' most compassionate and articulate exploration of the despair which is necessarily at the end of the road of that false view of life, Southern gentility. It is the reality of Scarlett O'Hara twenty years on. Here we see such gentility at the point of despair, a snobbish overheated yet arid sensitivity, a hothouse flower which withers at the touch of reality. A gift for a good actress, and Miss Anketell took it in both hands.

One of the delights of the production was Leith Taylor's Stella. She managed the balance between compassion for her sister (tinged with long-standing sibling resentment) and her genuine response to Stanley's unashamed sensuality. I cannot remember seeing the role more memorably played.

It seems to me that what has not survived the thirty years is the dramatic form. I think we now find eleven scenes in sequence on the 'later that night and
Working on the melody itself

WAITING FOR GODOT

CLIFF GILLAM

Waiting for Godot by Samuel Beckett. National Theatre Company, Greenroom, Perth WA. Operated 2: June 1978. Director, Mike Morris; Lighting, Steve Amos; Stage Manager, Liz Donaldson; Estragon, Nita Pannell; Vladimir, Joan Sydney; Pozzo, Jenny Silburn; Lucky, Celeste Anthonese; Boy, Rae Gibson.

Remember when people rioted over Beckett’s classic Waiting for Godot, back then when Parisians greeted the really new with howls of pain, having been punched in their theatrical prejudices? That was over a quarter-century ago, and since then Waiting for Godot has been done almost to death, the irratent injection became pleasantly, innocuously familiar, a popular brand name among those that narcoleptics collectively known as Classics of the Modern Theatre. This is not to knock the play itself, merely to point out that contempt is easily bred by time, and thus directors who choose these days to do a Godot find themselves looking about for an angle, a way to refurbish the familiar. The problem however is what to do with a tree, a rood, two tramps, the sun and moon? Which is to say, a play which dictates its own rhythms so precisely? What to do with something so uncompromising that any addition becomes glaringly obvious gimmickry?

Mike Morris’s answer to these questions was to do Godot with an all-female cast. A cunning play this, potentially limpet-like: Questions about death. “Godot, in reverse drag?” “What about Didi’s prostate problem?” “Will Godot’s boy be called girl?” etc. As it turned out, all irrelevant questions. The boy was still Boy, Didi and Gogo still politely called Pozzo mister. The issue of the gender of Godot was a non-issue, a concept for what Morris gained in terms of alienation effect. His design for the production also stressed the “play” aspect of (forgive me) the play. The Hole was dressed out like the inside of a foldout toybox with a nursery style Sun and Moon hung on the back wall either side of an oblique band of yellow bisecting a kiddy version of a Magritte sky. On the stage proper the white stand-up tree and, replacing Beckett’s mound, Morris’s Magritte-styled cracked egg. So the old familiar tune was to be cranked out qua qua qua Theatre, not as so has often, and misguided been done, Life. Wind up Didi and Gogo and Pozzo and Lucky and all and set them going and what did we have? Well, Joan Sydney as Didi and Nita Pannell as Gogo for two. Morris eschewed the familiar bowler, and gave Sydney a Holmwood deerstalker worn sideways and Pannell a battered old Akubra, but otherwise they were the tramps we’d known and loved.

As Gogo, eternally the pessimist, Pannell was a miniature dead-beat with a down-turned mouth. As the sempiternally optimistic Didi Joan Sydney was a superannuated stand-up comic who’d served time in the working men’s clubs of Northern England. I was initially put off by the broad accent, but she had settled into it halfway through, mostly because Sydney’s range and flexibility in the role defied its potential limitations and turned it to a positive virtue. The two tramps are the core of the play: the entropic frenzy of their “canter’s” is its rhythm, their waiting its meaning. Here I felt Nita Pannell sometimes lost, not tuned to the rhythms, sometimes hesitant. But Sydney was pulling her through and along, as it is only right Didi should for Gogo.

I can’t remember having seen Jenny Silburn and Celeste Anthonese (Pozzo and Lucky respectively) before, but I do remember thinking that Pozzo should have been given, in every sense, that it was in Silburn’s power, despite terrific effort, to make him. But oddly enough, after Joan Sydney’s excellent performance what remains in my mind about this Godot was something which has been thrown away, walked through, hurried over, or otherwise neglected by directors in every other Godot I’ve seen. This was part of the Boy, Godot’s messenger, played in Morris’s production as a semi-mute by mime artist Rae Gibson. There was something both immediately affecting and absolutely true in her “conversations”, part mimed, part grunted, with Didi. A messenger from Godot must be an innocent on the frontiers of language, for Godot lives before and after words. If Morris’s other innovations were in the end but a new bandstand on which to play the same old tune, this was working on the absolute melody itself, a new and felicitous arrangement. For this alone the production was well worth seeing. Not that I’d miss a production of Waiting for Godot anyway — wherever it’s done and by whom, they’re playing my song.

The QTC production of King Lear is certainly the best Shakespeare they have done. The direction was intelligent, the stage environment was powerful, visually economic in its means and well suited to the peculiarities of the QTQ, the costumes and command of its considerable resources on presenting the paradigm of suffering man, made wise by affliction and redeemed by love.

All round the periphery there were elements that detracted from the primal force — certain gaucheries of performance, especially in the role of Edgar and Cordelia, the costumes and command of Poor Tom, a somewhat feeble storm, the alienation effect of having some audience on stage, which was out of style with the rest of the production, amateurish thumps and bumps back-stage, a broadband that bent in Gordon Glennwright’s hand after a few desultory innovations were in the end but a new bandstand on which to play the same old tune, this was working on the absolute melody itself, a new and felicitous arrangement. For this alone the production was well worth seeing. Not that I’d miss a production of Waiting for Godot anyway — wherever it’s done and by whom, they’re playing my song.

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The QTC has spoken with the voice of Shakespeare.

KING LEAR

DON BATCHelor


Lear: Warren Mitchell; Goneril: Pat Thomson; Regan: Fay Kelton; Cordelia: Ingrid Mason; Gloucester: Ben Gabriel; Edmund: Ivar Kantis; Edgar: Warwick Comber; Kent: Gordon Glenwright; Fool: Geoff Geoffrey; Ruffian: Huston Blake; Gentleman: John Geoff; Cartwright: Arthur J. Ron Hayne. (Professional)

Warren Mitchell shaped his performance very well. His blustering old fool of a king, demanding outward shows of love at the beginning of the play had really come full circle by the end to a much more compassionate and personal authority, bred of wisdom and nourished by the love of Cordelia and the Fool. The dramatic function of Fool/Cordelia as the loving catalyst in Lear’s painful journey to self-realisation is central to the play, and neither Geoffrey Rush nor Ingrid Mason
made the most of it. Rush was admirably funny (which Fools in Lear often aren't), a sort of independent zany, and as the motive force in Lear's self-discovery he was very deliberate. What one missed was the quality of his caring for the old man, particularly in off-focus moments. Ingrid Mason achieved this alright, and her unerring sense of line gave her a stylish physical presence (she's a costume maker's dream), but vocally she lacked command. I wonder how far each of these performers was the victim of diffidence towards the stage.

Jim Cotter's music provided a sound environment which was interestingly evocative and always sympathetic to the action. It is commonly remarked how, for all their resources and money, the State companies produce theatrical monstrosities. Often the available hardware and personnel seem to get in the way of any direct contact between playwright and people. How refreshing, therefore, to report that on this occasion the play was well served — that the QTC has opened its collective mouth and spoken with the voice of Shakespeare.

The play doesn't know where to go either.

CITY SUGAR

VERONICA KELLY

City Sugar by Stephen Poliakoff, La Boite Theatre, Brisbane, Qld. Opened 26 May 1978. Director: Jennifer Bloxsidge.  Rex: Bruce Morley; Leonard Brazil, Craigh Cronin; Nicola Davies, Sue Mclay, Sean, Mary McCammon, Big John, David Byrne; Jane, Monica Gilfedder.

The noisome sounds of commercial radio permeate Australia's aural collective memory; but, as the programme notes for La Boite's City Sugar remind us, they are for the British an experience of a mere five years' duration, ever since Radio Caroline pulled down her Jolly Roger and sailed ashore to become part of established big business. Jennifer Bloxsidge's production invites us to see with fresh eyes — and hear well served — that the QTC has opened its collective mouth and spoken with the voice of Shakespeare.

Through grotesque manipulations of his prestige Brazil and Nicola front up for the clash where he sadistically pushes her in order to find out how much monstering she can withstand, and discovers that it's quite a lot; in fact rather more than he can. After all, despite the disadvantages of relative youth, the recession generation has had rather more practice in the role of social victim. A parallel grittiness drives Brazil's tenacious assistant Rex (Bruce Morley) to imitate and eventually replace him. The star himself eventually accepts the offer of the big "SM network", decamping from his defeat to purvey in greener southern fields his technicolor transmitted valium, supporter and suppressor of salesman and consumer alike.

Note: In order to pay post-election debts the state Labor Party machine recently sold to 2SM its interest in 4KQ, the "Labor" station.

The play's direction is basically firm: in parts one misses some emotional variety in the interpersonal tensions of inimical colleagues condemned to prowl the same small cage. The climactic competition is rewardingly black and funny, the primary coloured set of electronic gadgetry expressive and elegant. Off-mike. Craig Cronin's Brazil suggest more bile than panicked fury; when on air he exudes the right manic mid-Pacific speed-popping cadences. He becomes far more compelling amplified, which I guess just goes precisely to show.

ROCKY HORROR SHOW

YOUNG MO

RICHARD FOTHERINGHAM

The Rocky Horror Show by Richard O'Brien, G & M Productions. The Rialto, Brisbane Qld. Opened 2 May, 1978. Director, Bryan Nason; Musical Director, Ralph Tyrrell; Designer, Fiona Reilly; Choreographer, Keith Sankey; Lighting, John Hoening; Sound, Leigh Wyper; Production Manager, Graeme McCoubrie; Ushers, Magpie, Kathryn Porrill; Brad, Chris Bell; Janet, Rosemary Rickette; Crocodile, Brian Blain; Riff Raff, Ric Herbert; Columbia, Candy Raymond; Frank N Furter, Michael McCaffrey; Rocky, Mark Hembrow; Eddie, Doctor Scott; Paul Johnstone; Drums, Peter Hudson; Bass, Gary Broadhurst; Keyboards, Peter Harvey; Girls, Kate Steen; Saxophonist, Eddie Thomson.

Young Mo by Steve J Speare, La Boite Theatre, Brisbane. Qld. Opened 14 April, 1978. Director, Rick Billinghurst; Designer, David Bell; Pianos, Mary Anne Murphy; Drums, Chris Williams, Stage Manager, Paddy Taume; Mo, Rod Wooler; Heckler, Lisa, Queense Paul, Kaye Stevenson; Sadie Gae, Kats, Mary, Lisa, Dolly, Barry Perry; Rabbs, Sr Harold, Professor, Bruce McCormack; Mr Shue, Bones, Steffy, Dave Watson; Mrs Shue, Patrin, Mary Anne Murphy; Borman, Lawyer, Workman, 1, Sean Mee; Dream Dolly, Workman, 2, Chief, Garry Cook; Joe, Chris Williams.

(Professional)

There was a feeling of excitement and goodwill at the Rocky Horror opening. Here was something which was attracting younger different people to theatre. Here was a major showcase for some great and hitherto unrecognized Queensland talent. Here was the rediscovery of part of Brisbane's theatre history — the Rialto at West End, ideal atmosphere for Rocky Horror. And just when we'd forgotten that theatre doesn't have to start at the proscenium line, here was a total event. So it was easy to be impressed; but afterwards I could only agree with widely held opinion: that this production had its moments, but it wasn't a riotous success. It still could be, for the actors gave one of the tensest opening night performances I can remember, and the staging was a technical jungle through which neither actors nor technicians had yet beaten a safe and secure path. Only Mark Hembrow's Rocky
was up to size, and his Sword of Damocles number was the one genuine show stopper — an amazing display of youthful joy. Amongst other good points were Fiona Reilly's adventure playground set, and the fine musicianship of all concerned. The show occasionally took off, but it never stayed airborne.

The simplest flaw was the leaden slowness with which all the actors delivered the fairly feeble dialogue which links the numbers; lightness and slickness would have cut five minutes off the show and made it a lot more fun. Rather more serious was the lack of eroticism. The play's only justification is as a celebration of the breakdown of the heterosexual fifties into the do what thou enjoy liberation. The technical effects and rock music will see to that. Whether it will be more depends on the possibility that many of these flaws simply reflect the tentativeness of a production which wasn't quite ready to open. I hope so, for it's a worthy venture which deserves to run till Christmas.

Meanwhile across the river at La Boite Rick Billinghurst's production of Young Mo is having a successful run. He's boldly attacked the main problem with this uneven script (the fact that as penned Mo is too often in the show's own play) by bolstering the second act with more Mo routines. Rod Wissler is a first rate physical Mo, and is backed up by a clever soubrette duo in Kay Stevenson and Kay Perry. The other performances however range from the eccentric to the dreadful, and the inelegant unhelpful hodge-podge which splattered little bits of the action all over the theatre. It was an error perhaps to let us hear thirty seconds of the real Stiffy and Mo in one of their radio shows — it is faster, lighter, and funnier than anything in the show. And pointed up the fact that this play makes Mo an obvious and coarse 1970s pub entertainer rather than the subtly vulgar genius of a less liberated age.

My only quarrel with the production was that it made no attempt to develop the theme of Mo as both great comic and thoroughly ungodly blonson. In all the catalogue of Mo's backstage crimes (in Act Two) was cut, and the 'real' scenes were played either for laughs or for mawkish and false sentiment, thus losing the nastiness of the real Mo. But it's a theme only hinted at in the script anyway, and given the limitations of the play and the unevenness of his cast, Rick Billinghurst clearly opted for rough energy and enriched comic material to keep us entertained if not enlightened.

Politicisation on a non-issue

ACT NOW

MARGERITE WELLS

As far as politics go, I could only describe ACT Now as naive Frasian Federalism, tinged with the self-righteous sentimentality that Americans, and now, Gawkelpus, Australians, reserve for motherhood and democracy (clutch your hat to your heart and wipe your eyes).

Yes, Virginia, there are people who disapprove of motherhood. There are those who are not stirred to fury at the thought that they in Canberra are deprived of their Democratic Right to a State or local government like those lucky people out there in the Federated States of Australia. There are even those who regard local and state politicians as bloated big-fish bull-frogs in little ponds who croak out of tune and even more out of time, without sense and with only pernicious effect. Some people (voice sinks to a whisper), even think that there aren't enough smart or honest people in the country to make one parliament, let alone eight, and that the trick would be to reduce the number of parliaments to one, not add another just so that the people of the ACT don't feel left out of Truth, Justice and the Democratic Way.

But abuse isn't criticism, and if the Jigsaw Company managed to provoke such venom in one so placid, sweet tempered and silken-tongued as I am when I'm asleep, then they achieved exactly what they set out to achieve; the politicisation of a non-issue that, despite its enormous importance, has kept all but the bull-frogs of Canberra in a state of gentle torpor for too long.

If I had been able to keep my mind off politics, I would have loved ACT Now. It's not hard to love politicians who lay foundation stones in the outback and then, fanning themselves with relief at having got it all over, rush back from Canberra's prohibition to Melbourne's pubs or to their property at Nareen or to their peanuts, because their peanuts need them, and leave the poor public servants whining that "Canberra's a word, a sentence incurred, they're hundreds of miles from home".

You hear that now, often enough, but always seriously..... It is nice to see it parodied. Then there were the meat pies the sixty thousand meat pies for the noble People of Australia who were to turn up, in their sixty thousands presumably, and camp out in Canberra's zero temperatures, that May fifty-one years ago when the Temporary Parliament House that still sits under Camp Hill, was inaugurated. No doubt the burial of those sixty-thousand symbols of Australian good taste and apathy, when the people of Australia failed to turn up, accounts for the flourishing state of the parliamentary rose gardens to this day.

When, as we progress through the twentieth century, 1948 brings a member to represent the ACT Federal parliament, and the benighted people find that he's only allowed to vote on Territory matters, their dismay at still being non-voters like "lunatics, criminals, aboriginals, children and aliens", somehow fails to bring a lump to the throat. A squirm perhaps. If anything in the play belittled the horror of the injustice of the disenfranchisement of the people of Canberra, it was that comment.....

But then, dashing heroes, dastardly villains, put-upon public servants and demented bureaucrats are always fun, squirms and belittling not withstanding. And the Jigsaw Company is always fun too. Their energy and deftness are qualities sadly lacking in the rather depressing theatre of Canberra, all to obviously made for demented bureaucrats. When I was a child theatre for children was all patronising pantomime. Now I am an adult, the best theatre in Canberra is for kids (The Jigsaw Company's TIE) or by them (The Children's Theatre). And then, when the Jigsaw Company does a production for adults (also for high schools), they fail to take my politics into account! Thoughtless.....
The fortunes of theatre in Tasmania change like the tides which wash the shores of the Island State. Times of high activity are followed by periods when nothing much happens, while events of genuine importance in theatre are rare. One of the reasons for this calm state of affairs is that the State's old established companies, for instance the venerable Anglesea Theatre Club (est. 1868), and Hobart's Repertory Theatre Society, have loyal support from a wide circle of friends which enables them to mount three night or six night seasons without difficulty. From time to time new companies form, announcing often grandiose plans and quite often exiting after staging a few unexciting plays. It all proves that Tasmanian audiences are well able to distinguish between good theatre and bad, whether amateur or professional. This has happened to several groups formed during the "Whitlam Spring" when subsidies were freely available, and more recently, to the Tasmanian Opera Company, which quietly passed away after a prolonged illness. The final blow came when the Australia Council announced there would be no more subsidies. There were the obligatory shrieks of horror by politicians; however, those who genuinely love opera largely remained silent.

One man prominent in operatic matters said it was better to import opera from other States than to tolerate mediocre work by a local company, even if it professed to be "professional". And the vacuum thus created is being filled. Hobart opera lovers will see productions by the Tasmanian Conservatorium of Music, the Australian Opera, Showboat, staged at Hobart's Theatre Royal was a success. It was directed by Arthur Sherman, of Sydney. Earlier in the year, Hobart Repertory presented a two-week season of No, No Nanette, and the annual University Revue did particularly well. It is rumoured that the Old Nick Company made a lot of money and that it intends to invest some of it in a production of a more serious nature. Among the small stages, the Riverside Arts Club and the Hobart Theatre Club are doing valuable work. Meanwhile, another theatre restaurant has opened in Tasmania's capital, the Cedar Court, at Hadley's Hotel. The other two are the Explorer Motor Inn, located on a hill high above the city, and Wrest Point Casino, which has invested some $300,000 in this venture. The Explorer has a strong local flavor, while the Cedar Court stresses dance routines and live music. Wrest Point features imported dancers and lavish costumes. The Salamanca Theatre, whose main sphere of work is theatre in education, is getting ready for its tour of the United States, and its neighbor, the Tasmanian Puppet Theatre recently returned from a tour of Indonesia, not much richer but with considerable prestige. And Puppet director Peter Wilson is organising the first international puppet festival to be held in this part of the world.

Vacuum created is being filled

TASMANIAN SURVEY

KARL HUBERT

The fortunes of theatre in Tasmania change like the tides which wash the shores of the Island State. Times of high activity are followed by periods when nothing much happens, while events of genuine importance in theatre are rare. One of the reasons for this calm state of affairs is that the State's old established companies, for instance the venerable Anglesea Theatre Club (est. 1868), and Hobart's Repertory Theatre Society, have loyal support from a wide circle of friends which enables them to mount three night or six night seasons without difficulty. From time to time new companies form, announcing often grandiose plans and quite often exiting after staging a few unexciting plays. It all proves that Tasmanian audiences are well able to distinguish between good theatre and bad, whether amateur or professional. This has happened to several groups formed during the "Whitlam Spring" when subsidies were freely available, and more recently, to the Tasmanian Opera Company, which quietly passed away after a prolonged illness. The final blow came when the Australia Council announced there would be no more subsidies. There were the obligatory shrieks of horror by politicians; however, those who genuinely love opera largely remained silent.

One man prominent in operatic matters said it was better to import opera from other States than to tolerate mediocre work by a local company, even if it professed to be "professional". And the vacuum thus created is being filled. Hobart opera lovers will see productions by the Tasmanian Conservatorium of Music, the Australian Opera, and possibly also by the Victorian Opera during the next twelve months. It is of interest to note that the Tasmanian Theatre Company has successfully pursued such an entrepreneurial policy for some time now, with the blessing of the theatre board of the Australia Council. Its artistic director, John Unicomb, makes periodic trips to Melbourne, Adelaide, and Sydney, to buy productions. This enables audiences in Hobart, Launceston, and Burnie, to see professional productions which could not be mounted locally. Love Thy Neighbour and Steven Berkoff's East are in this category. Tasmanians love musicals and this explains the popularity of Theatre Royal Light Opera Company productions. Showboat, staged at Hobart's Theatre Royal was a success. It was directed by Arthur Sherman, of Sydney. Earlier in the year, Hobart Repertory presented a two-week season of No, No Nanette, and the annual University Revue did particularly well. It is rumoured that the Old Nick Company made a lot of money and that it intends to invest some of it in a production of a more serious nature. Among the small stages, the Riverside Arts Club and the Hobart Theatre Club are doing valuable work. Meanwhile, another theatre restaurant has opened in Tasmania's capital, the Cedar Court, at Hadley's Hotel. The other two are the Explorer Motor Inn, located on a hill high above the city, and Wrest Point Casino, which has invested some $300,000 in this venture. The Explorer has a strong local flavor, while the Cedar Court stresses dance routines and live music. Wrest Point features imported dancers and lavish costumes. The Salamanca Theatre, whose main sphere of work is theatre in education, is getting ready for its tour of the United States, and its neighbor, the Tasmanian Puppet Theatre recently returned from a tour of Indonesia, not much richer but with considerable prestige. And Puppet director Peter Wilson is organising the first international puppet festival to be held in this part of the world.

"The elusive good night out can be found here!" ... says Peter Smark's Eating Out In Melbourne 1978

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INTRODUCTION

By Colin George

Ron Blair began writing Marx in 1974 when he was living in London. He had read Edmund Wilson's book To The Finland Station and his immediate inspiration was that period in Marx's life when he was living in Soho as a political exile. The years 1850 to 1851 were dark ones for Marx and his family life was fraught with great unhappiness.

The Marx family were living in two crowded rooms in 28 Dean Street, to which they had moved from an equally squalid environment further up the street. A young son had died and the move was an attempt to escape from the depressing memories of their former living quarters. The place they found themselves in, which is the setting of the play, was to prove an equally harrowing resting place. It was in this squalor that Marx's wife Jenny gave birth to a baby daughter which subsequently died; then Lencen, the family's maidservant, became pregnant by Marx.

Ron Blair has taken this sequence of events and shown how Marx the man entangled in domestic upheaval; at the same time there runs through the play the vision that could cut through the empty rhetoric of the revolutionaries of 1848 and was finally to be enshrined in Das Kapital.

It is a tribute to his quality as a writer that Ron Blair has deliberately chosen to lose his play with comedy: few playwrights would have dared, as he does in the second Act, to edge near farce, with his revolutionary hero about to pawn his trousers and join the ranks of many a stage villain. By placing his second Act in the back room and one to the landing and the third, he has gained immediate theatrical access to the political argument of the play and the protagonist himself becomes involved in the confrontation of the proletariat and the bourgeoisie. In the first and last acts the misery of Marx's penury at this particular time is captured, as is the love that bound him to his aristocrat wife, and the equally unshakeable attachment of the maid, Lencen, to all in that extraordinary household.

To write a play about any great historical figure is a hazardous business, there are so many preconceived ideas to counter. Ron Blair's achievement in Marx is to offer us a credible human being and so involve us as to send us back again to re-examine the legend.

ORIGINAL CAST

Karl Marx: Neil Fitzpatrick
Wilhelm Liebnecht: Peter Schwarz
Jenny Marx: Daphne Grey
August Von Willeich: Paul Sonkilla
Karl Marx: Michael Siberry
Ronald Falk

CAST

Karl Marx (the Moor), 32
Wilhelm Liebnecht, 27
Jenny Marx, 36
August Von Willeich, 40
Ronald Schramm, 28
Christian Westling, 42
Helene Demuth (Lencen), 30
Uncle
Bodfish
Doctor

The play was directed by Colin George and designed by Axel Bartz. First performed by the South Australian Theatre Company on 1 June, 1978.

BIography of playwright

RON BLAIR

Ron Blair was born in Sydney, his father worked in shipping there, and he has two brothers both chemists. However, after attending the Christian Brothers High School in Lewisham he majored in English and History at Sydney University and left determined to earn a living as a writer.

For four years he did precisely this as an advertising copy writer, working on assignments such as welding fluxes excising the self-indulgent and baroque from his writing.

He joined the ABC Drama Department in 1970 following a show called Sons and Lovers. He wrote and directed episodes of this show which have received successful professional productions and have been taken to the Edinburgh Festival and a number of European festivals as well.

He began writing for the theatre in 1970 when involved in the creation of the Old Nimrod Street Theatre. A list of his plays given below, all of which have received successful professional productions confirm his standing as one of Australia's contemporary writers. Marx was written in 1974 when on a visit to London. The original inspiration had been Edmund Wilson's To The Finland Station: "I was drawn to Marx by an extraordinary person who endured hardships under which a normal man would crumble. Then I realised that he thrived on opposition; it fed his obsession."

In the very footsteps of his protagonist he visited the British Museum to read more about Marx, and dined in Dean Street's Quo Vadis Restaurant — the present offices upstairs being rooms the Marx family occupied at the time of the play. At the request of the SATC, he completed the play for its premiere in Adelaide.

A champion of new Australian work (other than his own) he directed John O'Donoghue's Happy And Holy Occasion last season and is now working on Roger Pulver's Ceduona.

"Working as a director, taking a play apart and reassembling it with the performers has given a new theatrical impetus and awareness to my own writing" he comments.

1970 Biggles
1970 Hamlet on Ice
1971 Flash Jim Vaux
1973 Kabul
1973 President Wilson in Paris
1975 The Christian Brothers
1976 Mad Bad and Dangerous to Know
1977 Perfect Strangers
1978 A Place In The Present
1978 Marx

ACT ONE

The front room of the Marx lodgings in 28 Dean Street, Soho, 1850.

It is a large room with two entrances: one to a back room and one to the landing and the corridor. There are three windows on one wall looking down onto the street from the second floor.

We have a vivid description of life at Dean Street from a Prussian police spy whose report came to light in 1921:

"Marx lives in one of the worst, therefore one of the cheapest quarters in London. The one looking out on the street is the salon, and the bedroom is at the back. In the whole apartment there is not one clean and solid piece of furniture. Everything is broken, tattered and torn, with a half inch of dust over everything.

The furniture. Everything is broken, tattered and torn, with a half inch of dust over everything. In the rooms in 28 Dean Street, to which they had moved from an equally squalid environment further up the street. A young son had died and the move was an attempt to escape from the depressing memories of their former living quarters. The place they found themselves in, which is the setting of the play, was to prove an equally harrowing resting place. It was in this squalor that Marx's wife Jenny gave birth to a baby daughter which subsequently died; then Lencen, the family's maidservant, became pregnant by Marx.

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We have a vivid description of life at Dean Street from a Prussian police spy whose report came to light in 1921:

"Marx lives in one of the worst, therefore one of the cheapest quarters in London. The one looking out on the street is the salon, and the bedroom is at the back. In the whole apartment there is not one clean and solid piece of furniture. Everything is broken, tattered and torn, with a half inch of dust over everything and the greatest disorder everywhere. In the middle of the salon there is a large old fashioned table covered with an oil cloth and on it there lie manuscripts, books and newspapers, as well as children's toys, the rags and tatters of his wife's sewing basket, several cups with broken rims, knives and forks, lamps, an inkpot, tumblers, Dutch clay pipes, tobacco ash and all on the same table. A seller of second hand goods would be ashamed to give away such a remarkable collection of odds and ends. When you enter Marx's room, smoke and tobacco fumes make your eyes water so much that for a moment you seem to be groping about in a cavern, but gradually, as you grow accustomed to the fog, you can make out certain objects which distinguish themselves from the surrounding haze. Everything is dirty and covered with dust, so that to sit down becomes a thoroughly dangerous business. Here is a chair with only three legs ... but none of these things embarrass Marx or his wife..."

The set may include the staircase up to the door of the Marx flat. Dialogue has been included to cover entrances and exits on the stairs.

(Liebnecht and Marx are playing chess. Liebnecht moves)

Lieb: Check. What were you saying? (pause) About emigres. You were saying that —

Marx: I know what I was saying Liebnecht.

Lieb: Sorry. Um ... check.

Marx: Pushes back his chair and without taking his eyes from the board, takes a cigar and lights it.

Marx: I was talking about that foolish Russian baroness who keeps her doors open in St. John's Wood. We can keep count of the emigre bedbugs crawling into her aristocratic lofts.

Lieb: But she is an intelligent woman. You must concede that.

Marx: They say that parts of her body are worth the enjoying. Believe me Liebnecht, one of them is not her brain.

Lieb: I think she is a woman of beauty, wit and charm (indicating the board). You resign?
Marx: The sad truth my young friend is that emigration turns everyone into a fool and an ass and a common knave unless ... (the contemplates a move until ... the lifts his hand to move) unless he manages to occupy his mind usefully. Just like him ich dich (Now I've got you)!

Enter Jenny Marx: she is heavily pregnant.

Jenny: Who's winning?

Lieb: The move is winning ... as usual. I thought I had him but he just took my queen.

Jenny: He has a weakness for aristocratic women.

Jenny exits to the back room.

Marx: Your move Liebnecht.

Lieb: What's the point? You'll have me in six moves.

Marx: My friend, do not give up so easily. Remember the French. They lost both their king and their queen and still defeated the revolution. The forces of reaction are vicious indeed. Take this case in front of us. I have come near to defeating you with a miserable knight. A medieval mountebank, an insipid anachronistic nonentity, some ferret faced Pomeranian who, if he could talk would be nothing more than a loud noisy and impudent windbag. Come. Liebnecht. Your move.

Lieb: Oh well, if it gives you any pleasure. Marx: It does. He moves.

Lieb: I think chess must have been invented by emigrants to avoid having to talk at all.

Marx: (moving a piece) A pity so few of them can play it well.

Lieb: Have we played the revolution any better?

Marx: If we failed, it is because so many of the revolutionaries themselves are failures. Look at our fellow countrymen who have infested this city in the past few years. Most of them are romantic liars or experienced swindlers — blowflies wrapped up in a robe of speculative cobwebs.

Lieb: Some good men too.

Marx: Very few. Believe me, I know what I'm talking about. I have just finished an article on the horrors of German Jesus Christism and wrote to the Times. I am the only man who has swarmed into London and infested Soho since 1848.

Lieb: (moving a piece) May I see it?

Marx: If you don't respect my ideas you're welcome. Marx surveys the board.

Lieb: Where are you going to publish this?

Marx: (moving a piece) In Germany.

Lieb: But you can't publish this.

Marx: And why not may I ask?

Lieb: Well, it's — it's...

Marx: Proceed Liebnecht.

Lieb: The men you have written about here are colleagues. Or have been.

Marx: Your verb is pertinent. Liebnecht. They are hasbeens every one and yet each pretends to have the sacred flame of truth burning within him. Closer examination reveals them all as mendicant charlatans.

Lieb: Attack their politics, their heresies — yes! But everything here is very personal. Merely abuse.

Marx: Abuse has a secure and honourable place in political journalism. If you seek to destroy your opponent, destroy him utterly. Brutality and brutality are essential ingredients found in any polemic worthy the name. Politics is not a sport for gentlemen Liebnecht. It is a fight to the death.

Pause. Move a piece — takes a piece.

Lieb: Who is this printer?

Marx: I forget his name. Jenny will know. (calls) Jenny! Jenny, are you awake?

Jenny: What is it? I am lying down.

Marx: What is the name of that German printer.


Marx: The printer who offered me 25 pounds. (pause) You remember?

Jenny: Isn't his name Eisenmann?

Marx: That's right — Eisenmann. A berliner. Do you know him Liebnecht?

Lieb: No, not at all. Is he in London?

Marx: Yes: I have to get him to this today.

Lieb: Eisenmann. No, I don't know him.

Jenny: So long as he pays. We could do with the money.

Exit Jenny.

Jenny: Have you ever met Weitling?


Marx: I trust you are well.

Schramm: I trust you are well.

Marx: Come in and close the door! Do you want to let a bailiff in?

Jenny: Your coats please gentlemen.

Schramm & Schramm: Thank you. Here you are.

Marx: Some fellow was loitering on the staircase all morning. I was in the lavatory when he arrived and had to stay there until he had gone. Spend three hours locked in a lavatory and tell me there is a god.

Jenny: You enjoyed it.

Marx: How do you mean, my dear?

Jenny: You were still there after the bailiff had gone.

Marx: That's true. I finished reading "Guarantees of Harmony and Freedom."


Marx: Yes. Since we are to be honoured this evening with a visit by Herr Weitling, I thought I should read through it once again.

Schramm: Ah! You think it stands up?

Marx: It is a brilliant work Schramm. Yes, a brilliant work. It is of course a great pity that his life has not been as intelligent.

Willich: You're wrong Marx. Not only Weitling is a writer of genius.

Marx: Men rarely live up to their writings.

Jenny: Gentlemen — please sit down. I know you want to talk.

Marx: Yes, yes. Make yourselves at home gentlemen. What's the matter Schramm?

Schramm: I was wondering Moor. If I might have my coat back. It seems to have got cold.

Marx: Has it? Stook up the fire Schramm.

Jenny: There is no more coal. Lenchen has gone out for some.

Lieb: Do you think she is all right? She has been gone for some time.

Marx: Perhaps she has gone to fetch coals from Newcastle.

He laughs hugely at this joke. No one else joins in except Schramm.

Jenny: There is a little wine, gentlemen. Should you want some.

Schramm: Please don't worry about us Frau Marx. We shall look after ourselves. You must rest.

Marx: Schramm is right, my dear. You go in and rest. Lenchen will take good care of us. Meanwhile, we shall warm ourselves with this.

Schramm proceeds to pour wine.

Jenny: Good night gentlemen.

Ommes: Good night. Good night Frau Marx.

Exit Jenny.

Schramm: And who is winning, Wilhelm?

Lieb: The Moor has won. He took my queen.

Willich: A game between Weitling and you, Marx. Now that I would like to see!

Marx: It would be an unequal match Willich. Herr Weitling would first of all behead his own king and queen and then hang the rest of his pieces until they fell asleep.

Others laugh except Willich.

Schramm: That's a cheap joke. Weitling is no ordinary exile. Marx. He has seen blood split for the cause.

Marx: Spilling blood is easy. Doctors do it every day.

Lieb: But Weitling does have a reputation. Moor.

Marx: So do strumpets. Yes, yes, yes Willich, I will keep an open mind.

Willich: You seem to have made up your mind already Marx.

Marx: Let us say I have my suspicions.

Schramm: But to be fair Moor —

Willich: To be fair! To be fair! Revolution is not a sport subject to the strictures of a gamekeeper Schramm. Nor is it a pastime for idle demagogues.

Willich: Have you ever met Weitling?

Marx: I may have. I meet many people!

Lieb: You must admit, Willich, that Soho is lousy with emigres.

Willich: Just a minute. Christian Weitling is not just another emigre. He is a serious student of the revolution and is recognised as such by the secret police who hunt him from one country to the next. He is far from a sportsman or a demagogue.

Schramm: Perhaps.

Willich: He is wanted by the police in three countries at least.

Marx: Who isn't?

Schramm: Touche, Willich.

Willich: He has suffered for his beliefs. He has been thrown into prison in one country after another.

Marx: So he likes prisons.

Willich: Don't be stupid Marx. There's not a gaol in Europe that can hold him. No sooner he's in, than he's out again spreading the revolution.

Schramm: In prison, out of prison, in prison out of prison. What is he — an escape artist? He should be in a circus?

Willich: He is important Marx. The workers identify with him. They can recognise a leader when they see one.

Marx: I don't doubt they can.

Willich: When he comes here tonight. I want you to treat him seriously.

Lieb: We will. We've all heard of Weitling.

Willich: He is only coming here because I asked him. He has no reason to see you Marx.

Marx: None whatsoever.

Willich: But I convinced him that you might write about him, publicise his ideas.

Marx: His ideas!

Willich: I believe Weitling will be a force in the revolution.

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Marx: Perhaps he will. Perhaps he will.

Lieb: (pause) What have you got against him Moar?

Marx: Nothing specific. It's just that all these emigres stumble into London with fabulous notions about revolution. Most of them have made a series of shattering discoveries which would rock an egg. The other day I ran into one typical German. He told me with bated breath that — wait for it gentlemen — that in this city of London he has observed distinct contrasts between the rich and the poor. Imagine that!

The door opens quietly and Weitling enters unobserved.

Weitling: Weitling has no illusions about — Marx: I have no doubt gentlemen that this fellow has told others of this bizarre discovery and that he is, at this moment, being feted as the Saviour of Tottenham Court Road. But we know him...

Weitling: This has nothing to do with Weitling. Marx: ... for what he is: a rowdy, loudmouthed, impudent windbag.

Willich: Ah! Weitling: Get out! there is no one here called Marx! He left last week. Get out and close the door!

Weitling: Christian! Here he is Marx! This is Christian Weitling!

Marx: (closing the front door) Won't you come in Weitling?

Weitling: Um... I am in.

Marx: So you are. Well: so at last I meet the celebrated author of **Guarantees of Harmony** and **Freedom**.

Weitling: And I am honoured to meet you Dr Marx.

Weitling: Let me take your coat Christian.

Marx: You may want to keep your coat on. It's quite cold in here.

Weitling: No. no. I have been in much colder places. I assure you.

Marx: You have? Pray tell. What kind of places?

Weitling: I have been a reluctant connoisseur of the dungeons of Europe.

Marx: You mean we have a hero in our midst?

Weitling: Oh no, Herr Doktor, nothing like that.

Weitling: Yes Christian, a true hero.

Marx: In that case, let me take your coat. It is not often I have the pleasure of taking a true hero in my arms.

(There is a moment of silence as the two men stand together.)

Weitling: It is a well cut overcoat: it reveals a red waistcoat,

Marx: What colour would you call that?

Weitling: Red.

Marx: It is quite a generous offer Marx.

Marx: I am overwhelmed. If you make revolutions with such care as you make your frockcoats, who could complain.

Weitling: Who has been complaining?

Marx: Do you think about anything when you sit sewing, or do the stitches just happen?

Weitling: (at a loss) I thought my business here tonight was more of a political nature.

Weitling: And so it is.

Weitling: You did not tell me August, that the Herr Doktor needed a coat.

Weitling: (grimly) That's not all he needs.

Lieb: Weitling, do you consider that the spirit of 1848 is dead?

Weitling: The revolutions of 1848, in themselves, may not have succeeded.

Marx: Granted that you make coats with care and attention. Should not revolutions be made the same way?

Weitling: Of course. What is your point?

Marx: The revolution of 1848 is dead; so dead it stinks. Agreed?

Weitling: If the revolution failed, its spirit lives. Slumbering perhaps, rather than dead. But it is alive.

Weitling: And it is our duty to see that it sleeps to good advantage. When the spirit is roused again, then we must be ready.

Weitling: Tell me gentlemen — what are we to do with ourselves while the revolution "slumbers"?

Schramm: Educate the workers to our methods. Implement what we have learned from our own past failures.

Weitling: Implement with action. The time for theories is past. The bourgeoisie are glutted with our theories. Let us prepare a harsher diet: bayonets and grapeshot.

Weitling: What do you say Weitling?

Weitling: Everyone knows we did not succeed in 1848. We are still counting our losses. But the other day I ran into England and France and Germany learn they belong to a universal brotherhood.

Marx: Universal Brotherhood! And what is that, pray? I will tell you: universal brotherhood is nothing more than a random fracternization of any regard one holds towards the kind.

Weitling: Did you ever remain in the one place long enough to see the full effects of your oratory?

Weitling: If I had to leave a country quickly, it was not through choice. I am not an exile by choice. Herr Doktor.

Lieb: Which of us is?

Marx: Just a minute Liebnecht. I am not questioning your commitment or your integrity or your bravery but I am saying Weitling, that to offer people hope and nothing else, is pure fraud.

Weitling: Someone has to tell the workers that they are not alone in their misery, that there are others in other countries who suffer with them. Revolution is more possible when workers in England and France and Germany learn they belong to a universal brotherhood.

Marx: Universal Brotherhood! And what is that, pray? I will tell you: universal brotherhood is nothing more than a random fracternization of any regard one holds towards the kind.

Weitling: It has been my experience that workers in every country share sufferings in common and

Weitling: Let me hear no more snivelling about the sufferings of mankind and your humanitarian drivel about universal love. What is your doctrine?

Weitling: In the first place

Marx: Have you thought out a clear intellectual plan for revolution?

Weitling: I think I should mention Herr Doktor —

Marx: Based your views on sound scientific ideas? (pause) Well, I'm waiting.

Willich: I refuse to have my friend interrogated in this fashion.

Marx: I am not talking to you Willich. I am talking to our revolutionary tailor here. I am sure he can speak for himself. He seems to find it easy enough to speak for others. Well?

Weitling: The human spirit needs no doctrine
Weitling: Thank you Herr Doktor. It is a comfort indeed to learn that my life has been a fatuous gesture. I can only wish that the police sergeants.

Marx: You are well meaning, Weitling. But you have lost your courage and are not prepared to do a good tailor.

Willich: But a good one I'm sure.

Marx: The revolutionary period we have been through is finished.

Willich: Rubbish. Marx: An unpleasant fact, but true. The next revolution will be petit bourgeois in character. You are a fatuous gesture - an elongated sewer rat.

Weitling: But isn't it important to keep the fire of revolution burning, Marx, between uprisings?

Marx: It will bring the craftsman and the small trader to power and the petty shopkeeper. Weitling: Why don't you join in.

Weitling: I am indeed, as you have said, a demagogue to mesmerise a lot of open mouthed donkeys.

Willich: Your business of revolution cannot be entrusted to a dummy.

Willich: Get his coat! Schramm, I'll come with you. I have the greatest respect as it is without my causing another. You stay. Besides I'd like to walk by myself a while. (to the others/Gentlemen)

He nods. Willich closes the door after Weitling. Moor: I am sorry you are going Weitling. We so much had had enough as which as we know gentlemen, does not take long — in battle or in bed. We need men with harder appetites. Let us have done with fatuous gestures. If there are any, let us give them ideas and not just words. We need thinkers, not recruiting sergeants.

Marx sits

Weitling: Thank you Herr Doktor. It is a comfort indeed to learn that my life has been a fatuous gesture. I can only wish that the police throughout Europe could dismiss me so blandly. I might then still have a home.

Marx: You are well meaning, Weitling. But being wanted by the police is no guarantee of integrity. There is not a man here who is not wanted by the police in at least three countries. Oh, I have not the least doubt you mean well.

Weitling: Thank you. But to tell you the truth, Herr Doktor, I am heartily sick of your condescension. I am indeed, as you have thought to remit to remind me often enough, only a tailor.

Marx: But a good one I'm sure.

Weitling: I have not been to one university, let alone two.

Marx: Three. I have been to three universities. Get something right, for God's sake!

Willich: How do you feel about dying for the rabbi here?

Weitling: But don't you think of this "gutter journalist"?

Willich: But isn't it important to keep the fire of revolution burning, Marx, between uprisings I mean?

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Willich: But don't you think of this "gutter journalist"?

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Willich: Get him his coat Schramm. I will vomit through the front door and goes to the lavatory on the landing.

Lieb: Oh gentlemen, please!

Schramm: You are well meaning, Weitling.

Willich: (pauses) I demand satisfaction.

Marx: What are you complaining about. It was a good wine. Engels sent it, it must be good. You will have worse thrown at you than this, Willich.

Willich: Choose your weapons, Marx.

Marx: Oh get out. I have no time for Prussian tailors.

Willich: Choose whatever time; whatever place. But I insist on satisfaction.

Mishkovsky: Please.

Lieb: Keep out of it Schramm.

Willich: What did you say?

Schramm: I said pistols. I am accepting your challenge on behalf of Dr Marx. Yes Schramm, you are more use to me alive. Liebnecht: show this non-commissioned cockroach to the door. We have serious matters to discuss.

Willich: Make up your mind. Marx. Who am I to kill? You or Schramm.

Schramm: Pistols it is. I am ready. Name the place Willich.

Lieb: Schramm — Willich. What is the point of killing each other when we all have an enemy in common.

Schramm: (laughs scornfully) So the High Priest of hot air has his altar boys fight for him.

Lieb: I would be wise to leave now Willich.

Willich: Get your hands off me, you toady. (Liebnecht lets go) And you, Schramm. how do you feel about dying for the rabbi here?

Schramm: Dr Marx has more important things to do than shoot fools. You are a fly it will be my pleasure to swat.

Marx: Oh leave him Schramm.

Willich: (to Schramm) Are you old enough? Or do I have to get your mother's permission before you can play?

Lieb: Anyway, duelling is out of the question in this country.

Willich: Can you keep your courage long enough to cross the channel sonny?

Schramm: I shall take the night boat to Amsterdam. We shall meet there on the beach. Mishkovsky will be my second.

Willich: Excellent! Well Marx, when I have picked off your pupils, perhaps one day you'll allow me to shoot the headmaster. Until Antwort.

Marx: He meets Jenny outside, pauses, and then moves ironical, clicks his heels and leaves. He meets Jenny outside, pauses, and then moves past her. She is puzzled and half goes after him.

Antwort: (wep.)

Lieb: Why did you take his bait, Schramm?

Schramm: Der mensch at ja nur ein blutegel (The man is but a piece of flesh) Yes it was stupid, I can see it now: a scene from Pushkin.

THEATRE AUSTRALIA JULY 1978 37
An extract from the play "Theatre Australia" dated July 1978. The scene is set in a room where three characters are engaged in a conversation.

Marx: Your duel with Willich. It reminds me of a scene from Pushkin. The beach at night, the dark tide, the indifferent stars. A Prussian standing with a smoking pistol in his hand and a dead boy bleeding on the sand. Liebnecht is quite right. Schramm. You shouldn’t have bothered. If one is to die in a duel, let it at least be for woman of surpassing beauty, not a Doctor of Philosophy with both on his backside.

Schramm: But Moor, it is a question of honour.

Marx: My young friend, look around this room. What do you see? Dust and broken furniture, stuff so wretched even the bailiffs despise it. But there is little honour.

Schramm: But Moor, your honour is you. What care for furniture?

Marx: If I had cared what people thought of me I would have been dead years ago. You’re more use alive.

Enter Jenny.

Jenny: What’s the matter with Herr Willich? He just walked past me stiff as his waxed moustache.

Marx: He has just challenged me to a duel.

Schramm: Actually Frau Marx.

Marx (silencing Schramm): Yes, at ten paces.


Marx: It seems we are to meet on some beach in Europe and shoot out each other’s brains.

Jenny: Dear God, are you insane? You didn’t actually go to — a duel!

Schramm: But Frau Marx, the one who is actually going to —

Marx: Quiet Schramm! Why should I not fight? Honour is at stake. Willich has insulted me, and through me, you. You know, an aristocrat, gentlemen, and as you know, aristocrats worship honour.

Jenny: You must be demented Karl. Willich has been a soldier. He’ll kill you!

Marx: Better far to die in honour than live in disgrace. Don’t you think so, my dear?

Jenny: No, I don’t. Not when you have a wife and children. And what of your work? Is that forgotten too because of a fit of mad pride? You’re joking, aren’t you? (to others) Is he joking?

Schramm: He wants to speak. Marx stabs him into submission.

Marx: (to Jenny) It is you who is the aristocrat. I would hate it thought that Willich had besmirched the Westphalen family crest.

Jenny: Crest? Honour? What are you talking about? We live in poverty and — and filth and forgotten too because of a fit of mad pride? We live in poverty and — and filth and children. And what of your work? Is that also forgotten too because of a fit of mad pride? We live in poverty and — and filth and forgotten too because of a fit of mad pride?

Jenny: If only we could leave this wretched place and get away.

Lieb: Where?

Jenny: Somewhere, anywhere, America even.

Marx: America! Ha! Ha! Women are such comical creatures. It is in their nature to demand the impossible.

Lieb: Things will get better Frau Marx, you’ll see.

Jenny: Yes, but when? We need money and he won’t get a job.

Marx: I am working already. Besides I did apply for a job. You know that.

Lieb: Did you Moor? What doing?

Marx: A ticket collector for the railways.

Jenny: They couldn’t read his writing so he didn’t get the job. But they will be able to read mine.

Marx: There is no call for female ticket collectors.

Jenny: Oh! I won’t be working for them.

Lieb: But what will you work at Frau Marx?

Marx: When this child is torn, I shall take a position as a governess. Then we shall have some food at least. You’re very quiet Schramm.

Schramm: I forbud you to work as a governess.

Lieb: (to Jenny) He’s in Anwerp. That’s where he has agreed to meet Willich.

Jenny: Don’t go Schramm. You are so young. You have so much to do.

Marx: I forbud you to work at all! Please.

Jenny: Very well. We shall continue to starve and Schramm can go off and get killed.

Schramm: But Frau Marx. I don’t mind. Really I don’t.

Jenny: Don’t you? Don’t you like life, even a little bit?

Schramm: It’s not that. It’s just that Willich said things about the Herr Doktor. He needs to be taught a lesson.

Jenny: But what if he teaches you a lesson instead? Think about it Schramm. We only get one life, you know.

Marx: If Schramm dies in this escapade, we shall have lost a fine comrade. It will be a regrettable loss.

Schramm: Thank you Herr Doktor. Schramm: We should have turned his youthful energies to better ends but — there it is.

Lieb: He’s not dead yet, Moor.

Marx: You are set on going through with it?

Schramm: Yes sir.

Marx: Then it is only a matter of time before you are done. It is well known that Willich is a good shot.

Schramm: I must go! It’s not just a question of your honour, Herr Doktor, but tonight Willich showed he is a threat to the revolution.

Marx: True. He would like to start shooting everybody.

Schramm: His kind must be plucked out root and branch.

Leib: He may pluck you out Schramm. Consider that.

Schramm: I’m not intimidated in a reputation got by a buffoon.

Jenny: Tell him he can’t go. You can forbid me to not work easily enough.

Marx: The circumstances are somewhat different. Schramm is not my wife. His life is his business.

Jenny: Is that what you really believe? That other people’s lives are not our business? (pauses) If that was true why have the secret police of three countries taken such an interest in us? Why have we been pushed across Europe to the point where we are living in this vile street? If we don’t care about the welfare of people, why don’t we pack up and go home and live in some kind of comfort?

Lieb: Are you listening to this gentleman? It is called female logic. Ha! Ha! Politik ist schon verruckt genug, ohne dass die faven dazwischen funken. (politics is crazy enough without women too).

Jenny: You care so much for "the people" but nothing for the good friend.

Schramm: Please. Frau Marx! I don’t mind going in the least. I am exercising my free will. It has nothing to do with Hegel’s historic inevitability.

Marx: Quite right. Schramm. nothing whatsoever. If Schramm lives, Liebnecht, we shall have the makings of a philosophe.

Jenny: Oh do what you like! Go and get killed.

Marx: Ha! Ha!

Schramm: Well gentlemen, I suppose I must go and ask Mishkovsky to help me in this business. Goodbye Herr Liebnecht.

Lieb: I won’t say goodbye. Aufwiodesen. You’ll be back Schramm, never fear.


Marx: Keep a steady arm Schramm and turn sideways.

Jenny: What do you know about it?

Liebnecht climbs the stairs with two bags of coal, one bigger.

Jenny: I fought with an arso when I was at Bonn University. He cut my eyebrow. I wish now I’d lopped his head off. Well, you shall redress the balance Schramm. Take that petulant wind bag Willich out of currency. Goodbye my boy, and good luck.

Schramm: Thank you sir. Goodbye Frau Marx. (pauses) Perhaps I should be angry. (pauses) Aren’t you going to wish me luck?

Jenny: Oh! Of course I am Schramm, of course.

Marx: Do come back.

Enter Lenchen from the door of the flat. She is carrying one coal bag.

Lenchen: Well at least you might have opened the door for me. What are you all looking so gloomy about?

Schramm: Goodbye Lenchen.

Lenchen: Oh? Where are you off to?

Schramm: Antwerp.

Jenny: To fight a duel Lenchen.

Lieb: He’ll be back.

Lenchen: Some people get all the luck. Well before you go you can bring in the bag of coal I’ve left on the landing.

Schramm: Of course.

Exit Schramm.

Lenchen: Going off to get killed is he? (pauses) I always thought duelling was for idle buggers.

Enter Schramm with another larger coal bag.

Schramm: Here you are.

Lenchen: No, bring it right over here.

Lieb: Did you carry both of those? Lenchen?

Schramm: Both of them, all the way from Charlotte Street. That wasn’t so bad. The worst part was some bloke who kept trying to put his hand up my dress. So I turned around and let Schramm.
him have it. That's why there's a few coals missing from that bag.

Schramm: Well, that's that then. (pauses) Is there anything else I can do before I go? Any messages?

Marx: Yes, I'll tell you what you can do, Schramm. Drop this article off to Eisenmann. It is an attack on some German simpletons. He will give you 25 in return. Make sure he does.

Schramm: What shall I do about the money?

Marx: Oh keep it. You can give it to me after you get back from Antwerp.

Lrenchen: (pauses) Better still, tell Eisenmann I'll pick up the money tomorrow morning. There's no telling when you'll get back from Antwerp, is there?

Schramm: No. There's... no telling.

Lieb: Yes Schramm?

Schramm: will you do me a favour?

Lieb: Of course, name it...

Schramm: Will you come with me — at least as far as Mishkovsky's. To tell you the truth. I'm damned frightened.

Antwerp, is there?

Schramm: Yes Schramm?

Marx: Goodnight all.

Schramm: Ja gut, gut. He has sex with her on the table, she lying, he standing.

Lrenchen: Quickly Moor, quickly.

(Jenny has gone to a drawer and taken out a box. Jenny puts the box on the table and opens it.)

Lrenchen: Don't play chess now; not like this. Moor.

Lrenchen gets up and pulls down her dress. Marx looks about him and feels trapped. He

Schramm: (stoking the fire) Franziska?

Lrenchen: Franziska?

Jenny: That's what he calls the baby. But I don't believe me. I can't blame him; I wouldn't either.

Marx: What's this then? To there. (pauses) Now. I will counter that cunning move with my obliging bishop. the does so Now. he can attack your queen.

Lights go down and out briefly, then up again.

Schramm: (off) Ja gut, gut.

Lrenchen: (off) Ja gut, gut.

Lrenchen: I'm coming now. I'm coming now. Gnadige Frau.

Marx: (off) Karl? Please, can you come here?

Schramm: (off) Karl? Where is he? Karl.

Jenny: (off) Karl? Karl? Karl?

Schramm: (off) Jenny. What is it? Karl? Karl?

Marx: (off) Jenny. What is it? Karl? Karl?

Jenny: (off) Karl? Karl? Karl?

Schramm: (off) Jenny. What is it? Karl? Karl?

Marx: (off) Jenny. What is it? Karl?

Jenny: (off) Karl? Karl?

Schramm: (off) Jenny. What is it? Karl? Karl?

END OF ACT 1
William Shoubridge

Dance

Poppy as their creation

By the time this article appears, Poppy will have probably been given its return Sydney season and the Company will be winging its way to Brisbane to present the work there. Doubtless changes for the better will have been made to it and I'll end up looking a right charlie again, but anyway here goes.

Strictly speaking this is not the first time there has been an attempt made to create a balletic work based on the work and mind of Jean Cocteau. Maurice Bejart created L'Ange Heaurtebrise a few years ago for the Ballet of the Twentieth Century. It had Jean Marais declaiming Cocteau's poetry and Jorge Donn flitting about in a diaphanous butterfly robe, trying to encapsulate the fantasies and obsessions of the French poet. It was all terribly woolly, rhapsodic and confusing as only Bejart can be.

Graeme Murphy with Poppy, on the other hand, has stringently tried to avoid obscurity and gone for direct historical reference, specifically in the first half where he spells out all the influences on the young creator, mother, childhood loves, the cabarets, Diaghliev and Raymond Radiguet etc. The trouble is some of those influences are almost impossible to transmute into a dance term. The opening duet for Cocteu as a child and his mother, apart from being a rather flacid opener does nothing to illuminate that particularly loving but tortured relationship. The same goes for the trio involving Cocteau, his precocious novelist lover Raymond Radinquet and the Angel of Death. Although this comprises some of the most knotty and succinctly conceived choreography of the whole production, it bursts upon us too suddenly, is totally
unprepared for and therefore exists in isolation; audiences are left wandering why Cocteau is so fraught about having the young man taken from him.

I think Murphy has tried to cram too much into this first part, giving us a harried and abrupt Cook's tour of the man's early life. He then casts us adrift in the liminescent waters of Cocteau's works and mind in the second part. The audience has to work overtime on programme reading and that's bad.

The drollery and frivolous elegance of the early Cocteau is adequately conveyed in his jazzy and slightly malevolent group tango and quirky use of body puppets (created by Joe Gladwin of the Marionette Theatre). Although the transvestite aerialist Barbette didn't have all that much influence on Cocteau he/she pops up here, to delightful theatrical effect, portrayed by Robert Olup.

Diaghilev and the Ballets Russe had a far greater effect on Cocteau and I don't think enough was made of it in Poppy. Diaghilev and his barmstorming troupe more or less devoured Cocteau for a time and made the association a changed man, more intellectually honest, artistically secure and emotionally stable. He had, in his own words a "love affair" with the whole world of this company.

In Poppy, this association is reduced to one sparse scene showing a bit from Fokine's La Spectre de la Rose and a rather pointless back stage snippet of the opening night debacle of Nijinsky's Opium. The Diaghilev puppet was made to look grotesque which he was not and Cocteau never considered him so; an ogre he sometimes was, grotesque never.

Surely there could have been more choreographic and dramatic force if Cocteau could have been included in this scene, perhaps dancing an extended "pas de quatre" with Diaghilev, Nijinsky and Fokine. I have given it as my impression that the三個 amidst the scratchy image that slipped Cocteau's working mind in the first part instead of dumping it all into part two.

I know all this sounds like carping, or that I'm angry at not having my interpretation of Cocteau, visualized — I'm not, the structure is there, but it needs reappraisal and I suggest what was of real importance to Cocteau was and was in the most dramatically workable.

The problems of Act Two are different only in manner not in kind. Murphy again has tried to cram too much in; the plays, the poetry, images from the films, spoken dialogue from same and a seemingly endless parade of characters from Cocteau's psyche. Admittedly all those personages (Orpheus, Oedipus, Lancelot, the Sphinx etc) have a mesmerizing appeal in their own right, but rarely do we get a glimpse into the closed universe of Cocteau's fantasy the glimpse that could help it all fall into place. As a result, we rarely see Murphy's authoritative thumbprint on this sprawling section.

In trying so hard to represent Cocteau fairly, having a peek into every nook and cranny, Murphy has lost the overview, the personal interpretation that makes a work live. We don't discover what Murphy found so exciting about the man, why he wanted to play the lead part, or why he sees him as pertinent to dance and relevant to modern society. He has his reasons but theatrically, they rarely come across. Poppy is full of marvellous things, but it is not everywhere marvellous. An audience admires the stuff and work that has gone into it, but doesn't quite admire it.

A couple of smartarse have said that what Murphy needs is either Diaghilev to tell him how to go along with Poppy and where it should be changed for greater audience impact. Well, practically all of the theatre in Australia and a fair slice of it overseas could do with another Diaghilev to give its creations some style and coherence, not to mention a chance to extend them. But I do think that Murphy could have consulted a "straight theatre" playwright, or at least a script editor to help him fossick for the pivotal points of the story and the nodules of theatrically exploitable material.

All of this sounds as though I hated Poppy. I didn't. I saw it four times because I wanted to see it. The collaboration of all these talents on such an ambitious work is a signpost in the development of the dance in this country.

Carl Vine's music, while not being the great theatrical revolution that some were hoping for (and I doubt that any artist can give us one of these things), guides Murphy's attenuated plotline through some of its murkier passages and acts as a constant sonic reassurance through the drier bits. George Gottes' visuals were consistently supportive throughout, never degenerating into an attempt to outshine the show. Admittedly there was some laser beam light. I did think, however, it was far more integrated in the second half, where the "ballet" takes the audience through the maze of Cocteau's characters and symbols. In fact everything came together more effectively here because the audience had already "otherworlded" the aspect of the man and therefore could contain the free flow of idea, thought and image.

That self-same structureless structure gave more inspiration to Murphy too, gathering from the evidence of more aptly conceived choreography and well marred flow of images. But then the work being a collaboration, one can't say for sure whether the music inspired the image, the image inspired the choreography or whatever, all I know is, it held the attention while at the same time astounding one's sense of time and space.

Admittedly there was a bit of "borrowing" here and there. So those marvellously stretchy gowns for the nurses in the clinic might have come straight from Alwin Nikolas Tribe, or those moving laser lights on dancers' tights from his Tent. Who cares? Creators are always borrowing from each other and the fact is it was used well and were used constructively.

Essentially what was most expressive in this phantasmagorical second half was the pith and potency of Murphy's choreography and the focus and conviction of the company's dancers. The duets for Oedipus and Jocasta were subtly different in content and from those for Orpheus and Euridice, the first characterised by its catches and knife-edged balances, while the second twined and twisted in an apparently seamless flow. The choreography delineated character, it didn't just meander along in a monochromatic stream.

Similarly the nude excerpt for the men during the extended film sequences wasn't swallowed up by those large images, it was absorbed into them.

When it comes to the actual dancers, the task of analysis is harder and the comparison will be skimpily relevant to modern society. He has his reasons but theatrically, they rarely come across. Poppy is full of marvellous things, but it is not everywhere marvellous. An audience admires the stuff and work that has gone into it, but doesn't quite admire it.

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WA BALLET COMPANY'S WINTER SEASON

A quiet low-key programme

The West Australian Ballet Company's winter season at the University of Western Australia's Octagon Theatre was a quiet, low-key programme of works mixing 19th and 20th century choreographers. It's easy for low-key entertainment to slip into dullness if everything isn't exactly as it should be, and dullness is what happened to the three 19th century pieces by August Bournonville.

We haven't seen much Bournonville choreography in Western Australia since the Scottish Ballet's beautiful production of La Sylphide a few years ago, starring Margot Fonteyn partnered by Ivan Nagy. Back in Bournonville's day, male dancers didn't do much more than stand around supporting the starring ladies in various lifts and poses. He changed all that with his own brilliance as a dancer and choreographer, giving male dancers a lot of vigorous, technically complex and show things to do.

It's only fair to say that the male dancers in the West Australian company simply don't have the powerful classical technique required to let the Bournonville choreography live and breathe as it should for the audience to appreciate it. Some of the company's males do have individual strengths: the modern work Jeux gave Paul Tyers an opportunity to prove again his considerable strength as a partner and as a theatrical presence, but he'll never make a Bournonville dancer. Ronald vanden Bergh has a freshness and a clean sparkling style and he is gaining in technical strength with each programme.

Just before the season, the company had The benefit of two weeks of the best Bournonville teaching around: Danish teacher Hans Brenaa was in Perth as a guest of the company (his visit to Australia was shared by the Queensland Ballet Company). But two weeks' specialist teaching can't do more than introduce young dancers to a singular classical style which they've probably never seen before and let alone danced. Bournonville is really tough stuff to dance well, and putting three of the master's works into the repertoire at this early stage is, I think, a mistake.

I've no doubts at all about the wisdom of producing Peter Darrell's Jeux and Jacqui Carroll's Summer Dances. They are very good pieces indeed, quite dissimilar in mood and structure, but they share a wittiness, a sense of irony, and a musicality which make them very much the product of 20th century dance and likely, therefore, to grab the audience's imagination.

The eternal triangle of Jeux, danced stylishly by Margaret Rust, Paul Tyers and Vanessa McIntosh, tells us about some of the emotional games we play with each other. It's full of a sort of brittle Gallic charm and sharp edged irritability, and sits very well on the company. Summer Dances is the second Jacqui Carroll work the company has produced — her lovely Night Songs was featured in the Christmas season last year. Summer Dances is a delicious piece of pastoral humour which, like Night Songs, uses the beauty and strengths of the company's women dancers to considerable effect. Six almost transparent winged lovelies resting in dappled summer shade come to life to Respighi's The Birds. They quarrel and chat and play and dance for pure summer pleasure. Carroll's dance vocabulary is full of clean, sharply profiled angularities which Vanessa McIntosh, the company's undoubtedly star, makes the most of, and as the work builds in ensembles and short solos, we are given the chance to appreciate each dancer's affinity with the choreography.

With just eight dancers, company director Robin Haig has her work cut out developing a repertoire varied and entertaining enough to attract a regular audience for chamber ballet in a town where the visiting star-studded extravaganzas have become the synonym for ballet. There's a very good prospect that, later this year, more dancers will be added to the company. This expansion will make a more varied repertoire available and hopefully — will enable the director to concentrate more on the important task of creating within each season a programme that builds in audience impact and pleasure from the opening work to the final blackout.
Hans Brenaa's Master classes in ballet.

Terry Owen

The superstars in classical ballet today are the males — Baryshnikov, Nureyev, Vasiliev from Russia, Bujones and Peter Martins from New York to name just a few. And without August Bournonville they might all just be standing elegantly around lifting and supporting superstar ladies.

Bournonville, who died in 1879, had a long and illustrious career as choreographer, dancer, ballet master and teacher with the Royal Danish Ballet. At a time when the role of the male dancer was fading into that of a *porteir*; Bournonville, himself a brilliant dancer, created many roles which showed off his powerful jumps and beautiful turns.

Hans Brenaa, the world's foremost authority on the Bournonville choreography and technique, paid his first visit to Australia earlier this year as guest of the Queensland Ballet Company and the West Australian Ballet Company. In Brisbane he mounted a production of *La Sylphide*, and here in Perth he reproduced *Dances from William Tell*, the pas de deux from *Flower Festival at Genzano* and *La Ventana*.

During a rehearsal break I shared a lunchtime beer with this courtly, elegant man, now in his late sixties, who has been putting the ten known Bournonville works into company repertoires around the world. Australia is the twentieth country he has visited teaching Bournonville, he told me, and he's probably never been busier than he is at this moment. Next year is the centenary of the master's death, and Brenaa returns to the Royal Danish Ballet this August to help them put on their first new Bournonville production in some years — *Kermesse in Bruges*. Before that he will be working in London with Fonteyn and Nureyev on a Bournonville BBC television feature.

Returning to work with the Royal Danish Ballet will be something of a triumph for Brenaa, who joined the Royal school as a child and who was part of the company as corps member, premier danseur, teacher and producer until he left, aged forty two, to work and teach outside. The company's repertoire has increasingly been given over to modern works but, as Brenaa sees it, Danish people are realising that their Bournonville dance heritage is uniquely valuable and must be kept alive in the current repertoire.

In the politest way Brenaa suggested that Bournonville training still produces the best male dancers. I muttered something like, what about the Russians, and he told me about a Danish teacher who fifty years ago in St Petersburg taught Bournonville to the dancers of the Maryinsky Theatre (now the Kirov). The Kirov male dancers have their own style now but, said Brenaa, the foundation of their strength comes in part from the Danish technique. And it's certainly true that Stanley Williams, who gives arguably the world's best class for male dancers in his studio in New York City Ballet company's School of American Ballet, is himself a product of the Royal Danish Ballet school.

On 15 August this year, sixty years ago to the day that he arrived as a child at the Royal Danish Ballet school, Hans Brenaa begins rehearsal in Copenhagen on the first of the 1979 Bournonville productions: the company plans to renew their Bournonville repertoire to include all ten known works. If we're lucky, we'll see Mr Brenaa again in Australia in 1980 — he's promised the Queensland Ballet Company a production of *The Whims of Cupid*. 
George Ogilvie’s production of Mozart’s *Don Giovanni* for the Australian Opera, which opened in Melbourne early in May, is an almost aggressively play-it-safe realisation of the work.

On the one hand, it will raise few hackles; on the other, it is not exactly scintillating, will prompt few if any patrons to wax eloquent about its virtues. It is an understandably conservative approach in the aftermath of two rather more daring productions of the piece, by Jim Sharman in 1967 and John Bell in 1974.

Its most positive virtue, perhaps, is that it can reasonably safely be predicted to last a good many years in the repertory for the very reason that it is so neutral in its approach. At its second Melbourne performance, the one I saw, it was nicely sung and played without at any stage even looking like taking fire.

John Pringle’s interpretation of the title role has come a very long way since his performances in the Bell production four years ago, but he still lacks a measure of the flamboyance-cum-bastardry that must characterise the ideal Don. He sings the role well, but not memorably; histrionically is at his best toward the end, when expressing the terror-cum-arrogance of the proud sinner who refuses point blank to repent even in the face of proximate death and judgment.

Nance Grant was in magnificent vocal form as Donna Anna, and Margreta Elkins was in fine form all round as Donna Elvira. Clifford Grant was a good Commendatore and Jennifer Bermingham a thoroughly acceptable Zerlina. Henri Wilden was a fair Don Ottavio who did not invest the role with any particular vocal or dramatic interest.

Ronald Maconaghy’s Leporello is too similar to his Figaro to be thoroughly convincing: Leporello must be at the same time more worldly wise and more easily corruptible than Figaro, and yet retain a significant streak of self-righteousness that manifests itself at each new successive outrage committed by Don Giovanni. He must seem to be an ordinary, basically well-meaning man in contrast to the flamboyant excesses of his master, if the opera is to achieve anything like its maximum impact in performance.

Perversely, perhaps, I found the most convincing performance of the night Gregory Yurisich’s Masetto: one had no doubt from the moment he set foot on the stage that he was just exactly what Masetto is supposed to be, a rather dim but thoroughly honest, hard-working man of the earth. Even those who understand not a single word of Italian could hardly have failed to get his acting message; and he sang very well to boot.

The Elizabethan Melbourne Orchestra, under Carlo Felice Cillario, turned in a most acceptable reading of the score. If they are still not the professional equal of their Sydney opposite number, their overall standard on the strength of this performance could be deemed to have risen markedly since I last saw them a year ago.

The Adelaide production of Mozart’s *Marriage of Figaro* I saw the night after the AO *Don Giovanni* was generally excellent. Yes, it fell down in some details (but what *Figaro* doesn’t), but it had far more than enough positive points to make good such defects.

One of its more interesting features, one that could hardly escape the notice of patrons who were thoroughly acquainted with the opera beforehand, was the lack of
disparity between the ages of Susanna (Eilene Hannan) and the Countess Almaviva (Carolyn Vaughan). Being visually-ly of the same vintage, they were a good deal more credibly rivals for the attentions of the Count than in most productions.

This was a moderately off-beat aspect of a production which was full of surprises — all pleasant. Another was the marvellous visual coup of having Marcellina (Ruth Gurner) and Bartolo (Keith Hempton) played skinny as rakes instead of portly to obese. Patsy Hemingway's Cherubino, played skinny as rakes instead of portly to obese, was more than a trifle comical for the dying tenor to sing a paean of praise for the fair city of Chicago which any fool knows is the traditional home of American gangsterism (even this production itself made a good deal of visual capital of the Mafia image, by having the conspirators sauntering around in Mafia-gangland style).

Musically, this Masked Ball was a good deal stronger than the previous Canberra productions I have seen: conductor John Curro extracted some very good playing indeed from his orchestra and the amateur chorus sang well, and the general standard of the solo singing was acceptable if not scintillating.

Kayroz made some very pleasing sounds, though displaying an unfortunate tendency to beat time with his whole body and sometimes having lapses of accuracy in the pitch department. Neville Wilkie was a good Ranto vocally, but must loosen up immensely in the acting department to be credible dramatically. Fran Body was rather nice as Angela Giambastiani, secretary to the mayor (equivalent of Oscar the page boy, sung by a woman anyhow in the original versions); and Joan Richards was a pleasingly lyrical Amelia.

Very brief mention should also be made, finally, of the first complete performance of Vincent Plush's Australian Folksongs, a most promising music theatre event, at the York Theatre of Sydney's Seymour Centre on May 12. This is an expanded and refined version of a work first performed in mid-1977, and shows considerable promise both in its unusual use of unusual instruments and its flair for theatrical impact.
What distinguishes *The Night the Prowler*, which opened the 25th Sydney Film Festival, from the general run of Australian films — though perhaps “general run” is too grand a term for what is still only a trickle — is its intellectual content, the evidence that a mind has been working behind the speeches and the action. Emotion and instinct have been dominating factors in the Australian output so far, with not much appeal to reason.

*The Last Wave* attempted to pose questions but switched to melodrama before they could be answered. *The Night the Prowler* stays with its proposition of self-discovery, in a cool and often funny way. Which is not to say that I don’t think the story of the same title, published in a collection of Patrick White’s short fiction, *The Cockatoos*, makes the point better.

Patrick White wrote the filmscript, his first, and he has stuck very closely to the original plot and amazingly close to the original dialogue which comes off the screen as authentically as it does off the page. The characters use words defensively, more often to hide rather than express their thoughts or emotions. Mr and Mrs Bannister, the astonished and appalled parents of Felicity, continue in this vein for the entire film Felicity’s breaking out into plain speech for which no translation is needed is a painful process, for the audience as well as for her.

The Bannisters live in a “good” street in Sydney. The period is the sixties, not that it matters much except that Mrs Bannister’s security is in that period not threatened by unsanctified cohabitation or soft or hard drugs. Mr Bannister has a good job, upper executive type. Mrs Bannister wears linen dresses with patent leather belts, a back-combed hairdo and has bridge afternoons; Felicity works with nice people.

The film opens with Felicity sobbing and shrieking, telling her parents that a man came in the window and got into her bed. Police and a doctor are summoned, Felicity refuses a physical examination, retreats into a sullen mood, lets her dressing gown flop open to reveal her breasts, writes a letter to her fiancée in Foreign Affairs to break off the engagement. The knife with which the prowler threatened her cannot be found.

Felicity changes, in the course of her behavior unsettling her parents and the neighbors. The only totally satisfied person is the discarded fiancée, John Galbraith, who is glad to be rid of her and can offer the engagement ring, which she has placed unobtrusively in the glove-box of his Aston Martin (about to be sold because he has got a Rome posting) to somebody more suitable to a career diplomat.

A great deal of *The Night the Prowler*’s success depends on the understanding of the actors, who have been carefully chosen to interpret social attitudes as well as characters, and I do not mean by this that they are stereotypes. A White story, like a White play, requires not just aptitude. Ruth Cracknell as Mrs Bannister, John Frawley as Mr Bannister, John Derum as John Galbraith, and above all Kerry Walker as Felicity Bannister are exactly right. The smaller parts are equally well cast.

The audience is led into supposing that what it has under consideration is a satirical comedy, with roles stopping just short of parody. Mrs Bannister especially is first seen as a comic snob and climber who will never make the Black and White Committee although she would never, on the other hand, be at home in Moonee Ponds. But soon the climate changes, becomes crisper, frostier, then ice-cold, until it thaws for Felicity.

The director is Jim Sharman, whose skill with Patrick White material was earlier demonstrated when he revived *Season at Sarsaparilla*. He deserves a special award for having chosen Kerry Walker for the lead; it must have been one of the trickier decisions of his relatively short theatrical life. The film was produced by Anthony Buckley with interesting music by Cameron Allan, the whole production...
The candidate short films for the Greater Union Awards were filtered down to twelve, four in each category of Documentary, General and Fiction. For curious or dedicated (or both) types of viewers this worked out at 273 minutes viewing from 10 a.m. until 4.45 with ten minutes off for morning coffee and sixty six minutes for lunch. The winners were announced after the day’s screenings and the 1978 Reuben Mamoulian Award, much coveted, just before The Night the Prowler. I am happy to say, and have witnesses to prove it, that I early nominated the Mamoulian winner as the best local short film, but had no expectation that anybody would agree with me. The film is All In the Same Boat, directed and scripted by Debby Kingsland and produced by Robin Hughes for Film Australia; photographed by Dean Semler; edited by Colin Waddy; sponsored by the Department of Health, which wants to promote discussion within counselling groups dealing with the abuse of everyday drugs, ie the ones you buy at the supermarket or greengrocers.

But never mind all that. This is an entertaining film, with the immediacy of a television interview. The non-professional protagonists probably rapped on and meandered about their Hills Hoists and kitchen tables for hours, but the finished project is beautifully controlled and edited and will set your teeth on edge while calling forth unaccustomed waves of sympathy and almost positive love for those husbands and wives and mothers and fathers who are all in the same boat.

The films, apart from the above in which the children were safely out of their mothers’ wombs, tended to emphasise the pleasures and pains of motherhood. It was impossible to avoid the feeling that one was being hit over the head with a foetus.

Maidens has some good bits when it sticks to the photo album, but it wafts off into trance, as does Secret Storm (a mixed group). Bruce Petty’s film for the Australia Council, The Magic Arts, is pretty to look at and sometimes funny but suffers from an unexpected cuteness. Sonia Hofmann’s Letter to a Friend, with misshapen flowers and birds, is art deco.

To return to chronology and category, Birth at Home, produced, scripted and directed by Barbara Chobocky, is an honest attempt at reality but the narration failed to interest. Garry Greenwood produced by Capricorn for the Craft Council and directed and scripted by Dinah van Duysen is too long and also crippled by boring narration. Malbunaka Country has warmth and appeal, and the interest of a foreign (Central Australia) land and people. But the photography is routine and sparse glimpses of Aboriginal life and character actually make it to the screen.

The most interesting of the films in the fiction category is Steve Jodrell’s forty-minute The Bucks’ Party, as reviewed in TA by Terry Owen in the April issue. The three films that won $1000 each from Greater Union were Maidens, Garry Greenwood and The Bucks’ Party.
The Restoration of Boris

The tangled history of Mussorgsky's 
Boris Godunov has been full of false starts and disappointments. Most opera houses give the opera in the revision of Rimsky-Korsakov, which radically revised the composer's scoring and altered many of his harmonies and dynamic markings. More recently, some major Soviet theatres have adopted the practice of using Shostakovich's scoring, which does not alter other aspects of the musical material.

The first recording to leave the composer's scoring was, harmonies, dynamics and other musical intentions untouched has just appeared. It is the work of Polish choruses and largely Polish cast under the direction of Jerzy Semkow, with the Finnish bass Martti Talvela in the title role with the Russian State Music Publishers produced the vocal and full scores of the work in an edition by the Soviet musicologist Pavel Lamm. David Lloyd-Jones produced an English version of the vocal score in 1968 and, most recently, has revised and amplified Lamm's researches in relation to the score as a whole. The third decisive step will prove to be, I am sure, EMI's decision to record a composite version of the two sequences of scenes devised by the composer. The recording's characteristics are not ideal for bringing out the incised economy of Mussorgsky's score. Nor are the Polish choruses as resonant or decisive as their Russian counterparts can be. Jerzy Semkow is a flexible conductor, lacking a complete feeling for the clanging strength of some of the scenes but making up for this in his obvious determination to see that every detail is given its due. The new recording gives us all the scenes of both versions. As the Simpleton's final song was also originally in the St Basil scene this part of the score is omitted to avoid duplication and the Simpleton is heard foretelling the woes of Russia in his usual place at the end of the final scene. A listener who knows the history of Mussorgsky's revisions of the opera could construct either of his two main sequences from this recording with a little stylus-hopping.

Boris seems to have possessed from the beginning some properties of what Stockhausen calls open form. Its themes are not necessarily consecutive. They do not present the progress of a single action or of two related actions but pick out vivid incidents and ceremonies which make their connections in our mind rather than explicitly on the stage. This is not as novel and Russian as it first appears. I believe that Mussorgsky, like all the other Russian composers of his generation, was very influenced by the drameurgy of the French theatre, as exemplified in the major works of Berlioz. French opera has always tended to present dramatic narrative in discontinuous form. Its ceremonies, vignettes and diversions have always been far more important than they are in Italian opera. We know that Berlioz was a powerful influence on the thinking of the young Russian school of whom Mussorgsky was a member in the middle of the nineteenth century and that Mussorgsky played through the scores of the French master with joy and admiration. At the same time there is no doubt that Mussorgsky's transitions tend to be more abrupt and his ceremonies less decorative. Even the longer scenes turn out to be an accumulation of short episodes presented in a way that has some affinities with the French tradition.

The other composer of opera who habitually works in this way is the Moravian musician Janacek, who was, significantly, also a Slav. Indeed, Janacek carried on and even developed further Mussorgsky's interest in using the characteristic pitch patterns of speech as one of the bases of operatic conversation. The penguiny of Janacek's scoring also resembles the absence of cushioning in the way Mussorgsky handles his orchestral resources in Boris. Georg Buchner's Woyzeck, probably the most extraordinary drama of early nineteenth century Europe, survived its author's death with an anthology of unnumbered scenes and pieces which strongly suggest that some of them at least could be subjected to a kind of fragmentary rearrangement. Alban Berg's Wozzeck made a selection from these brief scenes; and this opera, too, has something of a suggestion of cinematic technique to it, with the orchestral interludes acting as lengthy dissolves. Britten's The Turn of the Screw deploys its fifteen short scenes in a manner that seems even more closely related to film; and here the interludes bring with them an inevitable suggestion of quick cross-cutting.

It will probably be apparent by now that I think Mussorgsky's Boris is to be preferred to anyone else's version of the same score. Critical comments based on an inspection of Mussorgsky's scoring have made much of the composer's alleged miscalculations of balance. Some of these comments are certainly based on the assumption that Mussorgsky was trying to sound like Rimsky and failing. I am not the only listener to find a consistent and consistent character in Mussorgsky's scoring which seems inseparable, after even short acquaintance, from the authentic sound world of the piece.

There have been three main stages in the restoration of Mussorgsky's Boris. The first of them occurred in 1928 when Oxford University Press in conjunction with the Russian State Music Publishers produced the vocal and full scores of the work in an edition by the Soviet musicologist Pavel Lamm. David Lloyd-Jones produced an English version of the vocal score in 1968 and, most recently, has revised and amplified Lamm's researches in relation to the score as a whole. The third decisive step will prove to be, I am sure, EMI's decision to record a composite version of the two sequences of scenes devised by the composer. The recording's characteristics are not ideal for bringing out the incised economy of Mussorgsky's score. Nor are the Polish choruses as resonant or decisive as their Russian counterparts can be. Jerzy Semkow is a flexible conductor, lacking a complete feeling for the clanging strength of some of the scenes but making up for this in his obvious determination to see that everybody, not excepting the singer of the title role, sings the music faithfully and without resorting to free variations on it in the tradition inaugurated by Chaliapin. The Finnish bass Martti Talvela is in tune with the essentially troubled nature of Boris from his very first appearance. Nicolai Gedda is a particularly fine Dimitri and the Polish soloists and orchestra help endow this historic recording with the high musical standard it deserves.
John McCallum

The importance of theorising

Artaud and After, Ronald Hayman. OUP, $5.95
Artaud at Rodez, Charles Marowitz. Marion Boyars, $4.50.
The Theatre of Bertolt Brecht, John Willett. Eyre Methuen, $8.90.
Conference of the Birds, John Heilpern. Faber and Faber, $18.50.
The Measures Taken and other Lehrstucke, Bertolt Brecht. Eyre Methuen, $3.75.
The Mother, Bertolt Brecht. Eyre Methuen, $4.50.
Mr Puntilla and his man Matti, Bertolt Brecht. Eyre Methuen. $4.50.

At the Playwrights' Conference in Canberra recently, Dorothy Hewett said that people working in the theatre in Australia did not “theorise” enough. There is a cult of “doing” (evident even at such a talk-fest as the Playwrights' Conference), which panders to what Max Harris calls the revival of the philistine-chic in Australia. People often quote approvingly Mark Twain’s flip remark, “Those who can, do, and those who can’t, teach” — a approvingly Mark Twain’s flip remark, “Those who can, do, and those who can’t but do. There is an idea, a notion of what must have been the most untutored audience — a relationship hardly explored at all — a relationship hardly explored at all. Artaud at Rodez

As a theorist who has had enormous influence, but who did very little to implement his ideas successfully, is Antonin Artaud. For all his lack of practical success (although he seems to have been a fine actor) he has had influence on such practitioners in the theatre as Jean Louis Barrault, Roger Blin, Jean Genet, Eugene Ionesco, Peter Brook, Charles Marowitz, Jerzy Grotowski, Julia Beech and Judith Malina, Joseph Chaion and Jean Claude Van Italie, as well as R L Daing, Pierre Boulez and Michel Foucault in other areas. It has been said that “the course of all recent serious theatre in Europe and the Americas can be said to divide into two periods — before Artaud and after Artaud.”

To Anglo Saxons, Artaud’s concern with self consciousness, nothingness and being is difficult to come to terms with. He wanted to integrate the ontological and the personal — to see the world as a metaphor for his own private pain and to understand his pain in terms of a general idea of the problem of being. His writing is confusing and intentionally ambiguous, but often very provocative. Whatever the philosophical implications of his life and work they have a theatrical implication in Grotowski’s work in trying to abolish the gap between impulse and expression for his actors — to make the impulse to act and the action one, so that “the body vanishes, burns and the spectator sees only a series of visible impulses.”

Ronald Hayman’s Artaud and After is an interesting introduction to these and other issues, and achieves one of the most important goals of such critical, expository writing — it drives one into the arms of Artaud himself for expansion if not clarification.

On the way there is Charles Marowitz’ Artaud at Rodez, a loose episodic play showing Artaud at the last of the many lunatic asylums where he was a patient. He is attended by Dr Ferdiere, a man of science and would-be writer, envious of Artaud’s artistic success. Almost as interesting as the play is the background material — a series of interviews with the real Dr Ferdiere, Roger Blin and Arthur Adamov, with short pieces by Artaud’s sister and the doctor. To see Artaud the centre of a nasty controversy about his treatment at Rodez after his death is sad. That we had such madmen — hoping, with Alec Hope “if still from the deserts the prophets come”.

A theorist in an opposing camp was Bertolt Brecht, although Peter Brook has pointed out that Marat/Sade triumphantly brings the two together in one play; with Marat and Brecht wanting to change the world by potential action and Sade and Artaud wanting to “change human nature by making it truer to itself”. A re-issue of John Willett’s standard English work on Brecht is welcome. It is as useful and as clear as seems possible in any work on any theorist of the theatre. It demonstrates, if such demonstrations are needed, that there is still, for any theatre production, a great deal to be got from a study of Brecht’s work.

Unlike Artaud he was perhaps more successful practically than theoretically — at least there is the often stated complaint that his plays succeed in spite of, rather than because of his theory. In some ways Australian theatre is still stuck in the style and approach against which both Brecht and Artaud were in their different ways reacting.

Peter Brook is not so much a theorist as a researcher. In these days of discussion about the problems of subsidy it is well to look at the million dollars Brook received from the Ford Foundation and others to set up the International Centre of Theatre Research in Paris. He gathered a group of actors from all over the world and worked with them behind closed doors for three years, only occasionally performing publicly — in Persepolis for the now famous Orghast, using a sound-language devised by Ted Hughes, before audiences of at least there is the often stated complaint that his plays succeed in spite of, rather than because of his theory. In some ways Australian theatre is still stuck in the style and approach against which both Brecht and Artaud were in their different ways reacting.

THEATRE AUSTRALIA JULY 1978 49
THE BARD'S THEATRE RESTAURANT
Command Performance. Thursdays to Saturdays (continuing).

CANBERRA OPERA (47-0249)
Opera in the Schools Series
The Puppet Master by Tchaikovsky. Producer, Nina Cooke; Design, Ron Butters. Touring schools.

CANBERRA THEATRE (49-7600)
Dick Emery Concert Show
1 July.

JIGSAW COMPANY (47-0781)
In repertory: Act Now, Crumpet and Co., The Empty House, Prometheus in schools and various other locations.

PLAYHOUSE (49-7600)
Canberra Philharmonic Society
Sound of Music by Rogers and Hammerstein.
Conductor, Keith Hegelson; Producer, Eileen Gray. 5, 8-11,15-17 July.

Canberra Opera
Albert Herring by Britten andCrozier.
Conductor, Christopher Lyndon-Gee; Director, Ken Healey; Design, James Ridewood (courtesy ACTORS COMPANY (660-2503)
— Japanese tour. From July 22.

MARIONETTE THEATRE OF AUSTRALIA
A.C.T.
by Anthony Shaffer; with Sydney Stafford; Producer, Stephin Hargreave. From July 26.

MARIAN STREET THEATRE (498-3166)
From 10 August (bookings from 1 August)

MUSIC HALL THEATRE RESTAURANT
Crushed by Desire, written and directed by Michael Boddy (continuing).

MUSIC LOFT THEATRE (977-6585)
Encore, a musical revue starring the Toppano family and Lee Young, (continuing).

NEW THEATRE (519-3403)
Friday the Thirteenth, by Kevin Morgan. Director, John Armstrong (continuing throughout July).

NIMROD THEATRE (699-5003)
Henry IV, by William Shakespeare. Director, Richard Wherrett; with John Bell, Frank Wilson, Alex Hay and Peter Carroll. Throughout July.

NO. 86 THEATRE RESTAURANT (439-8533)
Al Capone’s Birthday Party by Pat Garvey. Director, Pat Garvey; choreography, Keith Little; sets, Doug Anderson; costumes, Ray Wilson. (continuing)

OLD TOTE THEATRE COMPANY (663-6122)
Parade Theatre: Da, by Hugh Leonard. Director, Peter Collingwood; with Maggie Kirkpatrick, Max Meldrum, Alan Tohin, Tom Farley, Tom Burlinson, Des Rolphe, Jessica Noad, Claire Crowther. To July 11.

PARIS THEATRE (61-9193)
The Paris Company in Pandora’s Cross, by Dorothy Hewett, with composer Ralph Tyrrell, and lighting designer, David Read. Throughout July.

OSCAR'S HOLLYWOOD PALACE THEATRE RESTAURANT, Sans Souci.
(529 4455)
Fasten Your Seat Belts by Don Battye and Peter Pinne. Director, Jon Ewing (continuing).

Q THEATRE, Penrith (047-21-5735)

RIVERINA TRUCKING COMPANY, Wagga.
(069-25-2052)
Rocky Horror Show, Director, Terry O’Connell. From 21 July.5 Aug. Christie in Love by Howard Brenton. Late night performances.

SEYMOUR CENTRE (692-0555)

SYDNEY OPERA HOUSE (20588)
Exhibition Hall: Tapestry, Paintings and Graphics Exhibition by noted New York artist, Pierre Clerk.

THEATRE ROYAL (231-6111)
An Evening with Quentin Crisp. July 5-22.

WHITE HORSE HOTEL, Newtown (51-1302)
Done to Death by Peter Stevens. Director, Foveaux Kirby, with Peter Fisher, Grant Dodwell, Julie Kirby, Graeme Richards, May Howlett and Sian Pugh. To mid July.

For entries contact Su Paterson on 357-1200.
QUEENSLAND

ARTS THEATRE (36-2344)
Nude With Violin by Noel Coward. Director, Marion Gould; designer, Ian Thomson. 29 June - 29 July.

CAMERATA (36-5651)
Avalon Theatre
A Handful of Friends by David Williamson. Director, Gary O’Neill. To 8 July.

HER MAJESTY’S (221-2777)
The Australian Ballet: Swan Lake. 28 July - 5 Aug.

LA BOITE (36-1622)
The Good Person of Szechwan by Bertolt Brecht. Director, Fred Wessely. To July 13.

Royalty Opens 21 July.

REGENT CINEMA (ring 221-2777)
Gala Closing Night — Film and variety.

ACT (223-8610)
Another Almost Free Season at the Balcony Theatre:
Adelaide Theatre Group
Turning Points
by Helen Cunningham
5-8 July.

ALEXANDER THEATRE (543-2828)
King Lear by William Shakespeare. Adapted by David Williamson, directed by Peter Oyston. Starring Reg Evans as Lear and Joe Bozla as the Fool.

ARENA CHILDRENS THEATRE (24-9667)

CAT CALL: Tractoship scheme for schools (pupils and staff)
BOW: TIE: Theatre in-education programme.
1. Whizzy the Wizard, prep to grade 2
2. Crew fruit juice, grades 2-6
3. Truck-a-lack, grades 5-6
4. Shake, Rattle and Roll, ages 10-14

SATURDAY matinees, every Sat. for all ages.

AUSTRALIAN PERFORMING GROUP (347-7153)
Front Theatre: Comedian Chris Langham. To July 8

Every Night, Every Night, written and directed by Ray Mooney. 9 July - 5 Aug.

Back Theatre: Programme of independent films, July 4-9. Also during July, the APG “Night-shift” team will tour NSW and Queensland.

COMEDY THEATRE
Love Thy Neighbour with Jack Smethurst and Nina Buckle-Semper. To 22 July.

 Isn’t It Pithetic At His Age Barry Humphries. From 24 July.

FOIBLES THEATRE RESTAURANT
(continuing).

FLYING TRAPEZE CAFE (41-3727)
The Slim Whistle Show featuring the Tamworth Hot Shots.

HER MAJESTY’S
A Chorus Line (continuing).

HOOPLA PRODUCTIONS (63-7643)
Played in the Rocks, directed by Peter Oyston.

I’LL BE IN ON THAT (Tasmanian Theatre in Education)
Touring July, August.

I'M DINNERING (Tasmanian Theatre in Education)
Touring July, August.

MELBOURNE THEATRE COMPANY (654-4000)
Russell Street Theatre: Departmental by Mervyn Rutherford. Director, Bruce Myles; designer, Marie Menzel; with Lloyd Canning, Simon Chivers, Gary Day and Rod Williams. To 8 July.

Workshop production of a new play 10-15 July.

Just Between Ourselves by Alan Ayckbourn. From 18 July.

ATHENEUM THEATRE: Electra by Sophocles. Translated by Frank Husker and Nick Enright. Director, Frank Haner; designer, Anne Fraser; with Jennifer Hagan, Dennis Olsen, David Downer, Michael Edgar, John Stanton, Irene Inescort, Sandy Gore and company. To 22 July.


OLYMPIC POOL (94-1810)

PALAIS THEATRE (662-3620)
Stars of World Ballet, Director, Robert Helpmann. July 7-12.

PIGRIM PUPPET THEATRE (818-6650)
Alice In Wonderland Adapted by Bert Cooper; director, Robert Akins.

PRINCESS THEATRE (662-2911)
Admoneo by Mozart. Director, Robin Lovejoy; Conductor, Richard Divall; Lighting Designer, Sue Nattrass.

TIKKI AND JOHN’S THEATRE LOUNGE (652-7558)
Old Time Music Hall: John & Tikkie Newman, Myrtle Roberts and Vic Gordon.

VAUDEVILLE THEATRE: Terry Norris, Brian Hannan, Berrie Cameron Allen, Alan Easter.

VICTORIAN ARTS COUNCIL (529-4355)
Victoria State Opera: The Barber of Seville. Musical Director, Richard Divall; producer, Robin Lovejoy; designer, Jennie Tate; features Halina Nieckarz, Ian Cousins, Graeme Wall, Russell Smith, Pauline Ashley, Barry Purcell, Peter Cox. Touring July, August.

Five Funny Folk Tales from the Brothers Grimm — adapted and directed by Don Mackay; features Paul Karo. July, August.


VICTORIAN STATE OPERA (41-5061)
I’ll Be In On That (Tasmanian Theatre in Education)
Touring July, August.

SOUTH AUSTRALIA

ACT (223-8610)
Next Almost Free Season at the Balcony Theatre:
Adelaide Theatre Group
Touring Points
written and directed by Helen Cunningham
5-8 July.

Lunchtime Play:
Hancock’s Last Half Hour by Heathcote Williams. Director, David Allen. 10-22 July.

Triad Stage Alliance
Dragon King written and directed by John Strachan. 12-15 July.

AUDS
Noah’s Nuclear Niche. Written and directed by Anthony Thorogood. 19-26 July.

Doll City by Tony Strachan. Director, Linda Bates. 26 June - 19 July.

Globe
Cinderella written and directed by Christine Johnston. Lunchtime, 24-30 July.

Sunday Playreadings, 4.00, 9, 16, 22, 30 July.

ADELAIDE DANCE THEATRE (212-2084)
Country tour during July.

SOUTH AUSTRALIAN THEATRE COMPANY (51-5151)

For entries contact Chris Johns on 223-8610.
Thoughts of Chairman Alf Warren Mitchell. 25 - 29 July.
For entries contact the editorial office (049) 67-4470.

WESTERN AUSTRALIA

CIVIC THEATRE RESTAURANT (72-1595)
Laughter Unlimited. Director, Brian Smith.
HOLE IN THE WALL (381-2403)
Hole in the Pocket Workshop:
Moby Dick Rehearsed by Orson Welles. Director, Damien Jamieson. 28 June - 1 July.
Geography of a Horse Dreamer by Sam Shepard. Director, Steven Amos. 5-8 July.
The Knack by Anne Jelicoe. Director, John Gill. 12 July - 12 Aug.
NATIONAL THEATRE, PLAYHOUSE (325-3500)
A Happy and Holy Occasion by John O'Donoghue. Director, Stephen Barry. 28 June - 22 July.
The Ghost Train by Arnold Ridley. Director, Edgar Metcalfe. 26 July - 19 August.
The Greenroom:
Hancock's Last Half Hour by Heathcote Williams. Director, Stephen Barry.
PERTH ENTERTAINMENT CENTRE
Australian Ballet: Romeo and Juliet. 7-8 July.
Swan Lake. 12-15 July.
THE REGAL (381-1557)
The Harry Secombe Show. 3-15 July.
WA BALLET COMPANY (380-2440)
No season
WA OPERA COMPANY (322-4766)
On tour:
Sid the Serpent Who Couldn't Sing by Malcolm Fox.
The Telephone by Manotti.

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Down
1. Low life characters of an Indian play? (7)
2. What the theatre has that cinema doesn’t (1,4,4)
3. Ring master of German music drama? (6)
4. What if he died tomorrow? (5, 10)
5. Is Shakespeare's Ephesus one of these? (8)
6. For Krapp’s tape (5)
7. What a bad review does to a show (5, 2)
14. Scaling the limelight (9)
15. Beatrice's burden (8)
17. Julia's friend (6)
18. Beseech diplomatically (7)
20. Fixings for stars (3, 3)
22. Where Ubu Roi ends and The Tempest begins (1, 4)

Across
4. Those who wait in the wings to (dis)robe you (8)
8. Shortened theatrical greeting gives first class flower (6)
9. State of not being amused (8)
10. Mozart’s Juan (8)
11. Death comes the with a little pin Bore through his castle wall and farewell King. Richard II (2, 4)
12. A female rodent tamed in Shakespeare (3, 4)
13. Being unequally a member of the union (2, 6)
16. Fortune’s device when flown (8)
19. Such rage is unnaturally (8)
21. But that's all one, our play is done And we’ll strive to you every day (Twelfth Night) (6)
23. The ten per cents of the theatre industry (8)
24. Juliet, we gather, didn’t wear them (8)
25. Pointed classical poet (6)
26. Lines should not be left thus on stage (8)

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