Theatre Australia: Australia's magazine of the performing arts 3(1) August 1978

Description

Publisher
Theatre Publications Ltd., New Lambton Heights, 58p

This serial is available at Research Online: http://ro.uow.edu.au/theatreaustralia/21
NIMROD

Nimrod Upstairs
Until Sunday 13 August

HENRY IV
William Shakespeare
director Richard Wherrett
designer Tom Lingwood
John Bell Aileen Britton Peter Carroll
Drew Forsythe Ron Hackett Alexander Hay
Robert Hewett Norman Kaye John McTernan
Tony Sheldon George Shevtsov
Mary-Lou Stewart Frank Wilson

from Friday 18 August
Canberra Theatre Centre
from Monday 28 August
Orange Civic Theatre
Tuesday 5-Saturday 30 September
Theatre Royal Sydney

THE CLUB
David Williamson
director John Bell designer Tom Bannerman
Jeff Ashby Drew Forsythe Ron Graham
Ron Haddrick Ivar Kants Barry Lovett
Now over 100 performances!

Nimrod Upstairs
from Saturday 19 August

METAMORPHOSIS
Franz Kafka
adapted for the stage and directed by
Steven Berkoff
set Steven Berkoff costumes Silvia Jansons
Paul Bertram Richard Collins Margaret Cameron
Ralph Cotterill Janice Finn George Shevtsov
‘Connoisseurs of horror should on no account miss “Metamorphosis”’ — Harold Hobson/Sunday Times

from Wednesday 20 September
San Francisco and Los Angeles Alcazar Theatre

Gordon Chater
The Elocution of Benjamin Franklin
Steve J. Spears
director Richard Wherrett
designer Larry Eastwood
‘Brilliant’ — London Evening News
‘Spellbinding’ — London Observer
‘Hilarious’ — London Evening Standard
Now over 500 performances

from Wednesday 16 August
Queensland NSW and New Zealand Tour:
Peter Carroll
THE CHRISTIAN BROTHERS
Ron Blair
director John Bell designer Larry Eastwood
Now over 225 performances!
‘Peter Carroll’s playing is superb’ — The Australian
‘A stunning tour de force’ — Daily Telegraph

Wednesday 16-Saturday 19 August
Townsville Civic Theatre
Sunday 20-Wednesday 23 August
La Boite Theatre Brisbane
Friday 25 and Saturday 26 August
Trucking Company Theatre Wagga Wagga
Monday 18-Saturday 30 September
Mercury Theatre Auckland
Wednesday 4-Saturday 7 October
Centrepoint Theatre Palmerston North
Tuesday 10-Saturday 14 October
Court Theatre Christchurch
Friday 20 and Saturday 21 October
Downstage Theatre Wellington
Tuesday 24-Saturday 28 October
Fortune Theatre Dunedin

Theatre

Departments

2 Comment
7 Quotes and Queries
9 Letters
11 Whispers, Rumours and Facts
54 Guide: Theatre, Opera, Dance

Spotlight

3 John Waters talks to Jill Sykes
4 Quentin Crisp John Byrne
5 Playwrights Discovered Richard Murphett
6 You win some... Richard Fotheringham

Features

13 East and Australia Steven Berkoff
18 Shakespeare Production in Australia

International

16 Finding the Japanese Element Roger Pulvers

Playscript

35 Marx — Act II & III, Ron Blair

Dance

46 Just what is a classic? William Shoubridge

Opera

48 First performances with enlarged pit David Gyger

Theatre Reviews

25 VIC
Everest Hotel — Jack Hibberd
Electra — David Parker
King Lear — Vi Richards

27 SA
Les Darcy Show, Cedoona — Michael Morley

28 QLD
The Good Person of Sechuan Richard Fotheringham
Point of Departure — Katharine Brisbane

29 NSW
Pandora’s Cross — Bob Ellis
Henry IV — Robert Page
Mother Courage — Dorothy Hewett

32 WA
A Happy and Holy Occasion — Collin O’Brien
Big Bad Mouse — Margot Luke
Hancock’s Last Half Hour — Margot Luke

34 ACT
Witold Gombrowicz in Buenos Aires — Marguerite Wells

Film

50 Sydney Film Festival: Australasian Opposites Elizabeth Riddell
Foreign Shorts Solrun Hoaas

Records

52 Bernard Herrmann Roger Covell

Books

53 Metamorphosis and other playtexts — John McCallum

56 Thespia’s Crossword
They're not making a song and dance about it, but the Melbourne Theatre Company is celebrating its 25th Anniversary this year. In 1953 the Union Theatre Repertory Company started life at the University of Melbourne, and played out its first six years at the Union Theatre. Australia's oldest professional repertory company has come a long way since those days, and in spite of a certain amount of criticism of its stranglehold on Melbourne theatre, must be counted the largest and most successful state theatre company — particularly in view of what is happening to its Sydney counterpart the Old Tote, this year.

1977 was a year of some upheaval for the MTC — and some expenditure. It re-opened the Athenaeum Theatre, a theatre twice the size of either Russell Street or St Martins in which they were presently playing. It was converted from a cinema back into what had a record as a mainly unsuccessful live venue, and for a time the MTC were playing in three of Melbourne's theatres at once. The venture was a risky one and depended for its success on substantially bigger audiences, but the season of Sumner/Lawler directed classics, (of which Sumner's Merchant of Venice was the biggest draw) proved the effort and expense worthwhile.

Later in the year the MTC's new headquarters were complete enough for them to move into; this was a huge warehouse in South Melbourne, converted into administration, rehearsal, scenery building, costume making and storage space at a cost of hundreds of thousands of dollars to the Victorian Government. There were some dark comparisons made at the time between this and the Tote's Alexandria building, and questions posed as to whether this would lead to a manufacturing rather than theatrical centre to the company.

So far this doesn't appear to have been so; 1978 has turned out to be one of the most successful years, in artistic, critical and box office terms, that the MTC has ever had. John Sumner, the founder and continuing artistic director, saw through last year's changes and is away on long service leave this year. The improved critical response in '78 may be due to a fresh and often innovatory approach in productions, but there is also the possibility of particular, if unconscious, personal press antagonism towards Sumner himself, that is at least temporarily in abeyance.

For all the centralisation John Sumner has vested in himself in the running of the company, the continuation and status of the MTC is very much due to him. Of all incumbent directors in this country his is so far the longest and most assured rule, and must be deemed the most successful. He combines efficient administration with artistic direction in a way that few others have matched. Even at Nimrod these responsibilities are divided between three directors and a general manager.

In the absence of its artistic director, Mick Rodger, with Ray Lawler, is the man who has been more or less at the helm of the Melbourne Theatre Company this year. His previous productions for the company have been generally successful — notably last year's Ashes at St Martins — and in March his wheel-of-fortune based Richard III made inroads into the style of MTC classical productions. Currently he has Abyrkoon's Just Between Ourselves running at Russell Street and Under Milkwood at the Athenaeum. Rodger's artistic directorship is somewhat in demand, having just been reappointed Artistic Director of the Playwrights' Conference for the second year running — the first time this has happened in the history of the Conference. The other new directors of this year seem also to be excellent choices for the MTC; Frank Hauser's two productions have gone down more than well, and Bruce Myles is proving as good a director as he is actor.

The MTC has moved sharply to the forefront of encouraging new writers in 1978 with its recently inaugurated Tributary Productions. From April Judith Alexander has been running this programme which gives readings and workshops to new work from Australia and overseas, particularly that which is innovatory in styles. Many of this year's season have come either directly from the Playwrights' Conference, or from writers who have previously been involved with it, so perhaps Mick Rodger's involvement with both is playing dividends at each end.

Cross fertilisation has also been happening through touring, The Club, which ran for a record four months to packed houses at Russell Street last year, toured to Tasmania. And Dusa Fish Stas and Vi was not taken over by, but produced in conjunction with Parachute Productions especially for the purpose of a nationwide tour.

Their second season for 1978 bodes well for the continuing prosperity of the MTC. The choice of plays runs from Brecht's The Resistible Rise of Arturo Ui to Arsenic and Old Lace, taking in David Allen's Gone With Hardy and a couple of recent West End successes.

The MTC was planning a costume exhibition to coincide with the actual anniversary, but it looks as though this will be postponed. In an equally quiet way this month, Currency Press celebrates its seventh year of operation. With a hefty stock lift to Melbourne they are marking the occasion with their first stocktaking sale. Currency is offering reading sets to theatre and drama groups of eleven titles at cost price for delivery anywhere in Australia; they include Williamson's Don's Party, and Handful of Friends, Buzo's Martello Towers and Romeril's The Floating World. It's also Theatre Australia's second birthday, and so we move into Volume three.
John Waters as Dracula.

Photo: Patrick Jones

John Waters — the new Dracula

Jill Sykes

Why is John Waters in every Australian film? asked a friend the other day.

He isn’t, of course. But he does turn up on television and cinema screens with happy regularity — *Rush, Eliza Fraser, The Getting of Wisdom, Summerfield, Weekend of Shadows* in the last three years alone, plus a couple of telemovies already seen and two more in the can. Now he is heading for what should be Australia-wide exposure on stage as Dracula: the original, romantic Dracula of the London Majesty’s Theatre in Sydney on August 18, is brought up there. His father is an actor and his constant working pattern came about by chance, though when he talks about his career, that’s what it sounds like.

He was born in England thirty two years ago, and brought up there. His father is an actor and son John fell into the business without even thinking about it. “When I was coming up to leaving school, I was desperate to try other things. Acting wasn’t a burning ambition — yet it was something I knew I would probably end up doing. "I worked in various little jobs — temporary jobs like mowing lawns — and was obviously a person who took odd jobs to keep himself going. In 1963/64, I was bass guitarist and singer with a pop group, the Riot Squad. We got about 5 pounds each for a gig.

“My first professional theatre job came in 1966 at the Richmond Theatre, which was close to where I lived. It was a series of Shakespearean plays: I was an assistant stage manager who carried a spear. “Then I spent a year in France, selling peanuts on the beach, hitch-hiking”.

“I have never changed my approach to life. I still consider that I am just taking what comes up. I now have other people like agents, to plan my career. But if work suddenly toppled — and every actor faces that possibility — I would simply do something else. I am not suicidal when I am out of work ... though I am a little bit fidgety”.

I wondered if he was at all worried about over-exposure with such a successful screen career. “I think it is very good timing for me to do a play now,” he replied. "I suppose I have reached a mini-saturation point with movies, though I really don’t think there is a vast problem with over-exposure here because there isn’t that feeling among Australian audiences that you get tied to a particular character. “When I was doing *Homicide*, you could get parts in two episodes with only two weeks between them, whereas in England there has to be a separation of something like two months. There is a smaller pool of actors here, so they are bound to come up more often. In England, if you want a middle aged, bespectacled doctor, you open your file and there are hundreds of them.

In the ten years since he arrived in Australia on a 10 pounds assisted passage, thinking he might spend a two-year working holiday here, he has done shows like *Hair, Jacques Brel is Alive and Well and Living in Paris, Godspell*, and *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*, all of them requiring his singing talents. As a straight actor, he has done television series such as *Matlock, Division Four, Certain Women and The Box*. Recently he turned up by chance with a couple of songs on Marcia Hines’ program — he met her in the corridor at the ABC and she invited him along.

And then there have been plays, but most of them are quite a long way back. I saw him in his most recent stage appearance — with the Old Tote in *Cesar and Cleopatra* last year. He has a pleasing stage presence, but it seemed odd to see him as a distant figure framed by a proscenium when you’re become accustomed to that handsomely scarred face magnified in close-up on a movie screen.

“The actual techniques of film and stage are so different,” Waters commented. “The camera will pick up your thoughts, whereas these have to be projected and physicalised on stage. “I think the energy level required for Dracula is above all, a mental energy. He is talked about for twenty minutes before he appears, and when he does, he must be right up there. He has to maintain that. “Stage work means a very disciplined, almost monastic existence. Physical fitness and endurance are prime requisites. Film making is very rigorous, too, but when you are doing a play, your concentration and big effort is squashed into two hours, and your whole day is geared to that. You have to stop drinking and cut down on smoking.”

He sighed ruefully as he rolled himself another cigarette.

THEATRE AUSTRALIA AUGUST 1978
Quentin Crisp — an artist in life

John Byrne

“Could you meet him for lunch darling? I'm afraid it’s the only time left!”

Barbara James, PR for Quentin Crisp's current tour of Australia had no need to be apologetic — it is not everyday that one can meet a legend in his own lunchtime. Legend is, of course, overstating it a bit, but perhaps Mr Crisp has more claim to it than many others in this age of theatrical hyperbole, where epithets of "internationally acclaimed" and the like are thrown around like confetti. In a very few short years he has risen from almost total obscurity as a state paid artist's model, (the Naked Civil Servant of his book) to his present celebrity, at least in Britain and, I am sure I will be able to say, in Australia before he is through. Not that his has been an overnight success, for he has been seventy years putting his show together. Attempted resolutions of the enigma of existence do tend to take a little longer to prepare than cabaret acts!

We can discount the fact that his book, How to have a Lifestyle was referred to in the achievement-oriented States of America as a "how-to book for losers". We can even laugh at Mr Crisp's surprise that his other book, Love Made Easy was badly reviewed in New Zealand, "where I thought they would be glad of anything". The fact is that Quentin Crisp in his one man show, described as "an exercise in civilised debate" gathered the sort of critical acclaim by hard to please West End critics that make front of house managers beam with pride and bring out the sandwich boards.

Mr Crisp turned a few heads as we walked down from Sydney's Theatre Royal to our barramundi and chips, but not many. In the London of the 30's it was a different matter. Then, full Exorcist-type revolutions of the head were the rule, followed by abuse and often, physical attack. Effeminate homosexuals with henna-red dyed hair, painted nails and jewellery placed on parts of the anatomy where even he had not thought to place it. In short, the struggle was all about.

There will be many, I am sure, who will expect him to present the woman's point of view, but this is way off the mark. His point of view is quite simply his own and it owes nothing particularly to either sex. He is an academy of one. Nor is his show aimed at a homosexual audience. Moreover, (and this too may surprise) sex is not a predominant part of his professional theme at all, unless the audience turns it in that direction during question time which comes in part two, after his talk on style.

To Mr Crisp, style is all and nothing else matters. He laments the lack of stylists in the world today — the Bernhardts, ("more nerve than talent") the Eva Perons, the Isadora Duncans and says that this is due, paradoxically, to too much freedom. The sort of individualism we see today is not your grass roots genuine type, but grafted on from the many alternative lifestyle choices freely available and tolerated. It is not a direct and inevitable and consequence of what one really is. Mr Crisp had no such choice; forced to be himself, he forged out his lifestyle accordingly. He is here, as the champion of 'individual's lib', (a prerequisite for any other kind of lib, be it gay, women's or whatever) to suggest ways in which we may forge our own brand of individualism and be happy with ourselves. It is not, he says, a question of seeking ways in which to be different from other people, but rather one of being more like ourselves. To "work from the inside out" is his only rule.

This may strike you as an intangible message of no great originality, and his subjective approach may be sniffed at by the intellectuals, (pause here, and name me two intellectuals whose lifestyle you envy) but I can assure you that in his hands it has a breadth of meaning and application that will surprise, provoke and make you think. It may sound too like a pretty heavy evening in the theatre, but that is my fault. Few have the ability to speak with a serious intent in an entertaining way. Mr Crisp has it. "I don't have to be boring in order to be believed", and again, quoting Byron: "just because I'm smiling, don't imagine I don't mean what I say."

At the time I met him, he was just about to leave for Brisbane where he opened his Australian tour, but before he left he hoped to squeeze in a performance of Dame Edna's so that he might tune in more to the psyche of Oz. He did expect a certain amount of hostility in the Queensland capital, though it is certainly not his intention to offend. He was however not unduly nervous — "I have nothing to lose." Underneath that there is, I am sure, a large amount of bravado. Bravery, not to mention unlimited patience, tolerance and honesty have characterised Mr Crisp's entire life. I would be very surprised if the audiences at H M Theatre in Brisbane did not emerge, as I did from my interview, with the pervasive feeling that they had met a remarkable and very likeable man. In fact, if he was appearing here in Kabuki, I would unhesitatingly nominate him for this year's national living treasure award.
Barry Dickens for his play *Fool’s Shoe Hotel*. Mr Dickens’ plays have been performed at La Mama and the Pram Factory under private backing. *Fool’s Shoe Hotel* is a boarding house for old actors. It houses a retired, bitter comic, a retired trapeze artist, a retired bird imitator, a talking dog and other left over paraphernalia of the vaudeville world. It is a world of compulsive performance vying with rampant gluttony, as wild prophetic tirades are grounded by the sad, menial concerns and petty obsessions of old age. As Mr Dickens says: “There is nothing as sad, as pedantic and as impressive as a dozen pork sausages at three in the morning”. *Fool’s Shoe Hotel* will be presented at the Pram Factory in August/September this year.

Stephen Stewell for his play *The Dead Wood*. Mr Sewell is a Queensland writer who has had a play produced recently at La Boite. *The Dead Wood*’s theme is the nature of political/revolutionary activity in circumstances which have discredited the theory and practice of the party one is working for. Anna, an anarchist partisan fighter, and Alexander, a young bolshevik are lovers, on the run from the Russian secret police and caught in a barn in Nazi occupied Northern Russia in 1941. The play is incomplete, but the material at hand demonstrates an incisive ear for the detail of intimate chatter and all the sharp wit and sharp tongues that it displays in times of stress. *The Dead Wood* will be presented at the Pram early next year.

We split the third grant between:

Stephen Mastare for his planned play *My Life My Children*. Mr Mastare’s first play *Pharlap* was shown at the Pram in 1976. In *My Life My Children* he is intrigued with the huge change that the second world war wrought on Australian family life, particularly on Australian women who were the first to feel and spread the effects of the first cultural input that was not from Britain and that had nationwide impact — American cultural imperialism.

Terry Maher for his planned play *Hard to Come By*. Mr Maher is a Melbourne journalist. *Hard to Come By* deals with white collar crime and the highs and lows of an ambitious businessman. A kind of middle class catholic corporate tragedy it is modelled not too closely on the rise and fall of one of our recent financial commanders.

These two plays will also be presented at the Pram next year. In addition we are negotiating with several other entrants with a view to full productions of their work or its inclusion in public workshops and playreading performances planned for 1979.

The script development grants were an intensified process of what the APG does all the time — the reading and discussion of new material. The process was lengthy and the rewards satisfactory. And we hope that for those many writers with whom we have corresponded, it has been worthwhile, if for no more than shaking dust out of old, worn scripts, or bringing long cherished ideas to air for the first time.
Richard Fotheringham on Queensland's reaction to the Popular Theatre Troupe.

It was a quarter to eight in the morning, and the caller had rung from a private number where no one would overhear. "The police were in yesterday asking for information about the Popular Theatre Troupe", the voice said. "I thought you ought to know".

A year later, another phone call. Some of our members had performed at a Civil Liberties Rally in Brisbane's Festival Hall. This time it was the Queensland Department of Cultural Affairs ringing, asking if it was our company which had been involved. It was the only time the Queensland Government had approached us on any subject; and in April this year the token annual $2000 we'd extracted from their reluctant coffers was withdrawn.

In retrospect our problems started in Gladstone in 1976. The Amalgamated Metal Workers Union had asked us if we would perform after an early morning stop work meeting at the alumina refinery. It seemed appropriate, since our show The Millionaires' Handicap dealt with the treatment of aboriginal people by the Cape York aluminium mining companies, so we agreed. It was one of our best memories: setting up at 6 am while a thousand men stood nearby discussing their dispute with the company and, after they'd voted to strike, finding that 600 of them were prepared to endure drizzling rain for another three quarters of an hour to watch our show before going home.

The repercussions were immediate. The local catholic priest cancelled a booking we'd made in his hall for a public performance; we were told to explain our rights to perform anywhere to anyone. The police were in yesterday asking for information about the Popular Theatre Troupe, the voice said. "I thought you ought to know".

A year later, another phone call. Some of our members had performed at a Civil Liberties Rally in Brisbane's Festival Hall. This time it was the Queensland Department of Cultural Affairs ringing, asking if it was our company which had been involved. It was the only time the Queensland Government had approached us on any subject; and in April this year the token annual $2000 we'd extracted from their reluctant coffers was withdrawn.

In retrospect our problems started in Gladstone in 1976. The Amalgamated Metal Workers Union had asked us if we would perform after an early morning stop work meeting at the alumina refinery. It seemed appropriate, since our show The Millionaires' Handicap dealt with the treatment of aboriginal people by the Cape York aluminium mining companies, so we agreed. It was one of our best memories: setting up at 6 am while a thousand men stood nearby discussing their dispute with the company and, after they'd voted to strike, finding that 600 of them were prepared to endure drizzling rain for another three quarters of an hour to watch our show before going home.

The repercussions were immediate. The local catholic priest cancelled a booking we'd made in his hall for a public performance; we were told to explain our rights to perform anywhere to anyone. The police were in yesterday asking for information about the Popular Theatre Troupe, the voice said. "I thought you ought to know".

A year later, another phone call. Some of our members had performed at a Civil Liberties Rally in Brisbane's Festival Hall. This time it was the Queensland Department of Cultural Affairs ringing, asking if it was our company which had been involved. It was the only time the Queensland Government had approached us on any subject; and in April this year the token annual $2000 we'd extracted from their reluctant coffers was withdrawn.
ROCKY HORROR HORRORS?

"Queensland theatre is reeling in shock. The twelfth Night Company has suddenly seen the chopper in the executioner's hand; the Popular Secondary schools' programme was withdrawn; the Queensland Theatre Company's sensations in the shade was the sudden collapse supported patricide!) What put even these Monto said that the extract from of the Rocky Horror Show, with the Fraud technicians. There were doubts about the financial assets of the promoters early in the show folded the next Monday and a meeting of the creditors' meeting put G & M's total debts at a very conservative $28,000, with $70,000 being mentioned as a more realistic figure. The QTC is the major creditor; other financial losers are Harry M Miller (rights), Radio Station 41P (advertising) the Queensland Ballet (costumes), the Rialto owners (rent), the caterers for the incredibly lavish champagne and hors d'oeuvre opening night; the actors and technicians; and those who paid for advance bookings.

McCoubrie has left town. It looks like the bananalamaders were ripe for the picking."

HALF A TICK

HELEN HAAG

"The idea started in America; when Stephan was in New York last year he noticed the queues in Times Square at lunchtime for half price tickets for that day's performances and thought what a good idea it was. It has been slow taking off in Sydney, starting last September. Everyone who hears of it thinks it's the best thing that ever happened, but we can't advertise until we're making more money! The little we have done has worked very well. It would be financially viable if we were doing double the business we are now.

We cater for theatre lovers who can't afford the current prices — and there are a lot of them. We ring the theatres at eleven o'clock each morning to find out what unsold tickets they can allocate for us to sell at half price for that night's performance. On Friday we do it for the whole weekend. The only ones who don't work with us are the Australian Ballet — although they don't have full houses every day, and the Regent. We've been at the MLC centre who have very kindly found us a nook, until now we're at the Mayfair Theatre. Half A Tick is really a community service, to tourists as well. What we make out of it is the normal booking fee."

ILLUMINATIS CONTROVERSY

KEITH GALLASCH, Chairman of ACT

"It's exciting to be given a chance to re-think and re-direct my revue Gargoyles for the Melbourne Theatre Company. I know there were many who saw my original production at the 1974 Adelaide Festival who felt, as I did, that Robert Essex's hilarious, bravura embodiment of ten amazingly different roles — ladies as well as gents — deserved to be far more
widely seen. How fortunate we are that Robert is available for our spot in August which is when David Downer, of the MTC's regular company, has just enough time free between shows to squeeze in eleven performances as the other half of the zany two-man team. Those who think of David as typically the handsome juv. lead are in for a surprise when they're confronted by his manifold appearances in Gargoyles — for what its sketches have in common is not only their anonymous origin in the most outrageously bawdy reaches of medieval European drama, but the larger-than-life fantasy of their characterisation.

This production won't be by any means a carbon copy of my Adelaide original. It will be the first full production mounted in the old Art Gallery upstairs at the Athenaeum Theatre — the space which the MTC's exciting and enterprising programme of Tributary Productions has made its own. So this version of Gargoyles can be even more intimate and immediate than before, and I want to try an even rougher, gutsier approach. By the way, those who are shockable had better stay away — the medievals could be very blunt! Sackcloth and sweat will be the keynotes. After all, these are supposed to be fairground entertainers drumming up an audience from a rowdy medieval mob.

Several people have already asked me if the costumes will be as sexy as last time. I can't make any promises, but we'll do our best..."

FIRST OZ SPECTACULAR
TO EDINBURGH

JOHN STREHLLOW, Director, Triad Stage Alliance.

"We are a company based in Adelaide which specialises in performing to children and young people. Our work has been evolved to be performed in schools and involves extensive direction of movement, less of voice, virtually no props or scenery, fairly basic costuming. To date we have performed two plays to primary age children, the stories of Ali Baba and Aladdin and three Shakespearean plays to high school children; currently we are performing a new-look poetry reading to secondaries which uses three Shakespearian plays to high school children, the stories of All Baba and Aladdin and three Shakespearean plays to high school children; currently we are performing a new-look poetry reading to secondaries which uses three Shakespearian plays to high school children, the stories of

TOE TRUCK

RAY RICHARDSON

"Toe Truck Theatre, based at the Seymour Entertainment Centre, University of Sydney, is pursuing an integrated programme on the theme of "Multi-Cultural Australia" for secondary schools. Free workshop programmes for migrant children are running at Dulwich High and De La Salle Marrickville. Performances of two Australian plays, Nigel Triffitt's Juke! and Alex Buzo's Norm And Ahmed, which both deal with racial prejudice, are used to stimulate discussion and follow-up work in schools. Director Robert Love devised another programme with third year NIDA students entitled Outpost. The play, about a Jewish immigrant family arriving at the time of Federation, will be presented by the company in first term of 1979.

The company will visit Adelaide in August for the NADIE and INSEA conferences and Brisbane in October for a Theatre-in-Education festival. In September, Mary Fairbrother and the TROIKA TIE team from South Australia are being brought to Sydney to work in schools and devise primary programmes for Toe Truck Theatre. The company is assisting Theatre Workshop, University of Sydney, with its Sideshow season for kids in October/December. The company has also worked in youth centres, community venues and for Inservice courses with the NSW Department of Education.

A second team has been brought together to create intensive drama workshop programmes and performances specially for the Far West region of the state. For both companies, the actor/teachers employed have been chosen for both their theatrical and educational expertise. 1978 is both a busy and a productive year for the company."

BUNNY FOR KRAKERJAX

ALAN GAUCI, Krakerjax Drama School

"Krakerjax Drama School is the result of Alan Gauci's daughter Angela's great wish to appear on the television, which started when she was four and continued for four years. When he started looking round for somewhere Angela could learn drama, he came up against a great blank wall. Eventually he met two young people in their twenties who agreed to come out to Baulkham Hills and teach Angela and anyone who wanted to come along. Things took on so well that he converted their rumpus room into a studio for the children, and every week the studio began to gain an extra facility. A few months later they were able to invest nearly $2,000 in video equipment, camera, microphones, monitor etc. These were useful too for the ever increasing number of parents to watch their children on from the waiting room so as to avoid embarrassing the kids.

Last April Krakerjax was delighted to accept one of Australia's best known TV directors and actresses as Director of the School, Bunney Brooke. She teaches their one hundred and ten students, made up of equal numbers of children, teenagers and adults, in their weekly classes. Krakerjax charges very little for classes, they are well within the reach of the average family living in the area, and haven't risen since 1976. In the short time of its existence students from Krakerjax have appeared on television, in live shows and have been successful in Eisteddfods. Baulkham Hills Council recently offered the School the use of its North Rocks Community Centre free of charge so the school can put on a play for the Shire's annual festival; directed by Bunney Brooke, the play will be Our Town."

ETHNIC MUSIC ASSISTANCE

JAMES MURDOCH, National Director of the Australian Music Centre.

"Ms Frances Paterson has just been appointed to the newly created position of Ethnic Music Promotion Officer. The Australia Music Centre's function is generally to promote and assist in the development of music in Australia, in particular Australian composers and musicians, and it has been active in collecting recordings and presenting concerts of ethnic music.

There are many fine Australian musicians of migrant backgrounds, largely unknown outside their own communities, whose music is part of strong and exciting traditions. Without some assistance for these musicians in contacting the music industry — organisations, festivals, recording companies, the media — opportunities to hear this music and for the continuity and growth of these traditions, will be lost. The appointment is on a national basis, and Ms Paterson will spend time in each state contacting community groups and individual musicians.

Frances Paterson has a wide experience with the media and music organisations in Australia (she researched and compiled the recent publication Directory of Australian Music Organisations) as well as practical experience in organising ethnic music concerts. Her role will be to act as a bridge between musicians who want to find wider audiences for their music and established organisations."

HELPMANN TAKES OVER TOTE

DALE TURNBULL, Chairman of the Tote:

"Sir Robert Helpmann, Australia's most distinguished theatrical son of our time, has been appointed Artistic Director of the Tote Theatre Company, Sydney. He will have complete artistic authority at the Tote and also had been appointed as a member of the Company's Board.

While it is true that recently we have talked with a number of other people about the position (Continued on page 44)"
Dear Sir,

Thank you for the 'Designing Minds' display in your June issue. However, I would like to point out that the display credited to Carol Passmore for Costume designs for ABC's Ben Hall should have been credited to Caren Needham, and Peter Holderness should have been credited for photographs.

Yours sincerely,

Alien Carpenter
Administrator, D.A.P.A.
(Designers Association in the Performing Arts)

Dear Sir,

NIDA, like a great white God, (in the righteousness, yes even Christian indignation of Peter Carmody and the cold rationality of George Whaley), has risen and with a giant hand whacked out an apology from Theatre Australia, for printing an article which severely slagged its (NIDA's) entrance procedures (apparently the accompanying article praising the place was permitted).

I feel that with active heated dissent, genuine argument and conflict so necessary in Australian theatre now — this is all rather disturbing. NIDA rocks a large part of the cradle.

Bea Star’s article “But what about the ingredients”, related as the experience of one particular girl to her NIDA audition is totally justifiable. I wish her objective had been more defined in writing the article, rather than the bitchy tinge of wanting to “hit back”, because she did touch valid points. None of which were bitchy tinge of wanting to “hit back”, because she did touch valid points. None of which were totally valid. And NIDA can only answer that it would say it could happen too easily.

She describes bitterly types who haunt auditions anywhere. She is angry at the use of NIDA senior students who take the warm up sessions. A small point, but valid. I have seldom seen this idea work. This “I’ve made it sweetie and you haven’t yet” attitude, in however “nice” a form it emerges, is ingratiating and almost impossible to avoid from even the most “moral” of senior students.

Bea’s point about the male female ratio is totally valid. And NIDA can only answer that it is turning out students to fit into the profession as it now stands in Australia. More jobs are available for men, so they accept more men students. Ah ha! Do we perhaps get a glint of senior students.

Bea’s final point about socio and politico “ingenue” types who haunt auditions anywhere. She is angry at the use of NIDA senior students who take the warm up sessions. A small point, but valid. I have seldom seen this idea work. This “I’ve made it sweetie and you haven’t yet” attitude, in however “nice” a form it emerges, is ingratiating and almost impossible to avoid from even the most “moral” of senior students.

Bea’s final point about socioeconomic “ingenue” types who haunt auditions anywhere. She is angry at the use of NIDA senior students who take the warm up sessions. A small point, but valid. I have seldom seen this idea work. This “I’ve made it sweetie and you haven’t yet” attitude, in however “nice” a form it emerges, is ingratiating and almost impossible to avoid from even the most “moral” of senior students.

Bea’s point about the male female ratio is totally valid. And NIDA can only answer that it is turning out students to fit into the profession as it now stands in Australia. More jobs are available for men, so they accept more men students. Ah ha! Do we perhaps get a glint of senior students.

Bea’s final point about socio and politico “ingenue” types who haunt auditions anywhere. She is angry at the use of NIDA senior students who take the warm up sessions. A small point, but valid. I have seldom seen this idea work. This “I’ve made it sweetie and you haven’t yet” attitude, in however “nice” a form it emerges, is ingratiating and almost impossible to avoid from even the most “moral” of senior students.

But what really worries me is the spectacle of seemingly all the staff and students at NIDA throwing up their hands in horror at Bea’s dangerous article. I would have hoped that NIDA might have welcomed the faint glimmer of a stirring of dissent or argument in, of all mags, TA. I would have hoped to see NIDA plunge in and seize the opportunity to scorch these pages with all sorts of discussion — rather than this defensive rush to preserve an image.

And I am sorry that TA felt it had to print an apology after Peter Carmody’s stamping of his literary feet. (Do you need the money?)

Yours sincerely,

Brigette Kilmartin
N.S.W.

— No — we just can’t afford the court case —

Ed.

Dear Sir,

The standard of theatre in a country is greatly influenced by the standard of its criticism. The theatre critic needs to bring to his work an expertise, based on his reading and experience, which is more specialised than that of his fellow theatre patrons. Good criticism provides the theatre-goer with criteria for discriminating.

As our national theatre magazine, and the only one, Theatre Australia has a vital part to play in measuring and improving the standard of theatre in this country.

It was thus with some surprise and disappointment that I read Raymond Stanley’s review of the Melbourne Theatre Company’s production of The Beaux’ Stratagem (TA June, 1978). I am not concerned here with criticising the production, but rather the review, which I found to be prosaic in style, inconsistent and contradictory in its comments and obsequious in tone.

To take the first point, expressions such as “every sentence appearing meaningful” and “again and again one blesses the revolve stage which speeds up the production and helps it to run so smoothly” are mundane and naive, and suggest, probably quite erroneously, that Mr Stanley is an unsophisticated visitor to the theatre, dazzled by this magical world of pretend.

His comments are inconsistent. To attribute the success of the production to the “masterly direction” of the English director, Frank Hauser, on one hand and then to blame William Zappa for the fight scene, in which “there is a tendency to overplay for laughs” demonstrates a serious misunderstanding of both the style of the play and the director’s role in establishing it. In other words, the director must have wanted to emphasise the broad comedy in the play, as he demonstrated in the production as a whole.

THEATRE AUSTRALIA AUGUST 1978
THEATRE AUSTRALIA AUGUST 1978

Dear Sir,

As an Australian theatre critic, I am concerned that Mr. Stanley's review of Sydney's Australian Opera production of The Revengers Tragedy may cause readers to believe that the event was a unique or unusual occurrence. I believe it is important to clarify the situation.

Mr. Stanley's review of the Sydney production of The Revengers Tragedy was not an isolated incident. Sydney's Australian Opera has presented this play on several occasions, and it is part of their repertoire. The performance was well-received and has received positive reviews from critics. I believe that Mr. Stanley's review was fair and balanced, and I do not believe that it is unfair or unreasonable for him to state under what circumstances he attended the performance.

I hope that readers will take into account the context of the performance when reading Mr. Stanley's review. I believe that it is important to consider the impact of a critic's review on the audience and the artists involved. I hope that future critics will take into account the context of their reviews and that they will be fair and balanced in their criticisms.

Yours faithfully,

Joel Macdonnell
Touring & Education Projects Manager

REPLY TO ABOVE LETTER

The whole point of my comments about Sid and Kobalt, which I admittedly did not stress explicitly enough in my article in the June issue, was that a heavily subsidised opera company ought to devote its educational energies to promoting opera rather than trying — in Mr Macdonnell's words — "simply to provide for children in the classroom an experience of live performance in which the activity of singing is predominant."

Since my criticisms were of the work itself and the fact it was being presented by the AO, and I did not comment either on the standard of the performance or the audience reaction, the fact I attended a preview performance is hardly relevant to this discussion.

I do not object to Sid, Kobalt, The Sound of Music, rock groups or community sing-alongs as such: merely feel that evangelising them is not the AO's province. In view of the official title of the program involved, and the fact that it is presented by the Australian Opera, those who attend — and their parents — can be pardoned for thinking it is intended as an introduction to opera and not something else.

David Gyger
Greenwich, NSW

Dear Sir,

Whilst I was delighted with Ray Stanley's warmly enthusiastic response to my production of Richard III for the MTC (May issue) I wish to correct a false impression given by your reviewer:

I did not direct The Revengers Tragedy. I was responsible however, for initially suggesting the play to John Sumner and for doing some of the early work with the designer Kris Fredrikson.

Yours sincerely,

Mick Rodger
MTC, Melbourne

Dear Sir,

We were recently given, by an unknown donor, a large picture frame containing forty photographs of Maud Jeffries and Julius Knight in the costume of the many productions they appeared in. Presumably the picture is of value in some way, but we cannot find out who these two people were.

The whole picture appears to be about 1920 vintage, and the photographs were assembled by a photographer "of Sydney and Melbourne", so presumably the two people were Australian. Their costumes indicate they could have been in opera.

We have looked through a number of theatrical and musical Who's Who at the National Library in Canberra, but can find no reference to them. Can you suggest where we might be able to obtain a short biography?

Yours faithfully,

W.P. Ryan,
Vice President, Canberra Repertory Society
Theatre Australia, MUSICALS FOR AMATEUR SOCIETIES AND SCHOOLS

J.C. Williamson Theatres Limited holds the amateur rights for many popular musicals, including great shows of the past with music by Lehar, Friml, Romberg, Jerome Kern, Victor Herbert and Lionel Monckton. Every one of these shows has been a success on the professional stage. Why not have your school or Amateur Musical Society do their own production of one of them? You can choose from many wonderful shows including the following:—

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>BRIGADOON</th>
<th>THE SENTIMENTAL BLOKE</th>
<th>MAID OF THE MOUNTAINS</th>
<th>PAINT YOUR WAGON</th>
<th>THE DESERT SONG</th>
<th>THE MERRY WIDOW</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>THE ARCADIANS</td>
<td>THE CHOCOLATE SOLDIER</td>
<td>A COUNTRY GIRL</td>
<td>KATINKA</td>
<td>GOING UP</td>
<td>THE QUAKER GIRL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>THE COUNT OF LUXEMBOURG</td>
<td>WILDFLOWER</td>
<td>THE GAIETY GIRL</td>
<td>VIKTORIA AND HER HUSSAR</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SALLY</td>
<td>HIGH JINKS</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

☆ New shows available soon — VAMP (the Vampire musical), GRAB ME A GONDOLA

For further information contact Mr J Bryson, Amateur Rights Department, Her Majesty's Theatre, Exhibition Street, MELBOURNE 3000. 'Phone: 633-3211.

Costumes for the above shows and may others are available from J.C. Williamson Hire Department, Cohen Place, Melbourne, 3000. Bookings accepted 12 months in advance. For free quote ring Melbourne (03) 633 2406.
KASPAJACK
by Richard Tulloch
For years 1-3 students

DRINK THE MERCURY
Devised by the Belgrade Coventry
T.I.E. Team, U.K.
For years 4-9 students

RED EARTH
Devised by the National Theatre Company
T.I.E. team, Perth. W.A.
For years 4-9 students

These three new T.I.E. presentations have recently returned from a highly successful country tour:

"It was the best produced and managed performance that I can recall being presented in a school and the thoroughness was evident throughout the extended visit." - Mr Gordon Smith, Principal, North Kalgoorlie P.S. (KASPAJACK, DRINK THE MERCURY and RED EARTH)

"I would like to express my admiration for the standard of the production in all aspects. Not only do the children appreciate the real purpose of theatre but their response to the performance was enthusiastic. The classroom discussion which followed as a result of my year 6 and 7 children attending the plays was most stimulating and fruitful." - Mr N.B. Williams, Deputy Principal, Primary School, Ravensthorpe. (DRINK THE MERCURY and RED EARTH)

The National Theatre Company, T.I.E., which presented CUPID-IN-TRANSIT, WINNERS, EUREKA and MAN FRIDAY continues to make available to schools, the very best in live theatre.

The National Theatre Company gratefully acknowledges the financial assistance of The Australia Council, The W.A. Arts Council, the W.A. Education Department and the Schools Commission.

NATIONAL THEATRE COMPANY, 3 PIER STREET, PERTH. W.A. 6000. PHONE: 325 3344
Yes. We have enjoyed Australia and I think Australia has been enjoying us at least it seems that way. From when we first touched down in Adelaide in 95° heat and threw ourselves into the blissful, briny sea we have been welcomed and many hands have clasped ours and fallen into our shoulders — our stomachs have been filled at barbeques, and our parchmenty-English pimply skins have been caressed and smoothed by the soft waning Summer sun, our mouths kissed, our passions assuaged and our ears seduced with trinkling music of praise. Truly we must not complain and it would be churlish to do so since we find the Ozy's warm hearted and kindly — charitable and concerned. And the audiences have been good they respond more from the gut than English audiences and whelp and yelp a lot.

Since the "scandal" blew up in the South Australian parliament about our "filthy play" much attention was drawn to its premiere in Adelaide. But the night was ours as well as our nerves and we all celebrated with that great Ozy impresario Eric Dare who had the foreskin to bring us over here — or rather sight. He has risked many outre ventures and in the end may have lost a little money on our Sydney season but it seems that in the great Australian bush few others have taken the kind of risks he has. After the first night in Adelaide we had dinner in a shit-house restaurant with the Premier, Don Dunstan, who was fascinating to talk to particularly referring to aboriginal art. While Eric Dare did wild impersonations of Frank Thring whom I had not heard of before, but the impersonation reminded me of an old ham actor so I assumed that he acted it. Well the company were reduced to painful looks and concern for Mr. Dunstan lest he throw up but he seemed to like it and so did we all and admired his bravura, if not his impersonation. Our Business Manager at this time laughed loudest since he was engaged in clinker picking and promoting new shows to sell to Eric.

After this, the show took a fortune in Adelaide which it promptly lost in Sydney at a urinal called the New Arts, where each seat that clacked upward sent an echo round the building reminding us of a vacating bum. The reviews were astounding — really humbling and again the Press welcomed us like a breath of fresh sea air in a room full of old farters. Sweet adjectives and superlatives were hurled at us like confetti at a bride and we thought we were laughing — we were, the audience weren't there to laugh. Raincoats came first but East was not a sex show, it is first and foremost a play bound together with strong sense of verse, dense prose, mime, dynamic acting and clowning. It is a gush an orgasmic gush maybe but not spotty enough for the "Let my people spunk" brigade. One or two of the Press were a bit hung up about "don't bring your Aunt Edna" which kept some serious punters away who thought it might be cod/camp which people here love so much. Strange how much theatre here is sexist or gay. The successful shows seen at the New Arts were the gay ones, Rocky Horror, Flowers, Reg Livermore, Benjamin Franklin etc. Female impersonators abound — while raunchy steaming heterosexual plays, or the description of this, was hard set to find an audience.

Usually, although not always, one of the manifestations of decadence in the theatre is where men drag up — where no vision is left but for the clotted wit of satirising the foibles of women. Some notable exception obviously exist — when energy and power has gone we rifle around the drawers for a suspender belt. When in New York, Berlin or Paris there existed a vital prodding theatre, its demise was usually marked by transvestite shows. But in Ozy land the theatre seems not yet to have had a great hay-day and has avoided its renaissance and opted straight away for decay. It managed to leap over the obstacle of creating a great ensemble but emulated
Instead of the worst of the worst English reps, the system of play by play casting with its limited payoffs and diminishing returns. Actors who work together for weeks then split up — no development or unity of the physical and psychic energies of the actors. Australia with its great sun and health giving seas could produce a strong physical theatre as great as the Polish mime — but must start from the power and the health of the performer. At NIDA when I did some workshops I witnessed enormous potential and lavas of energy but who will continue to train it for anything worth while after they leave. There is some talent here no doubt in the directing of plays, but there needs to be an Australian or European vision and not the Worthing Rep one. I couldn’t see much since we were playing every night but what I did see showed me that there is some potential there but lamentable lack of vision or originality.

The most astounding experience was seeing Chorus Line and being amazed at people here who could sing and dance and act. A perfect ensemble that has been together for a year and nearly all Australian. Watching the New South Wales Dance Company rehearse was also a great experience and I can see how dance, enriched by its own energy of the dancers and not some ideology from England, was a great experience and I can see how dance, enriched by its own energy of the dancers and not some ideology from England, was able to define itself and speak, influenced by the late Sir Tyrone Guthrie, with an elegant foyer and landscaped garden surrounded by pines — with full bio-box facilities and services — all in a beautiful garden setting.

The University of Western Australia offers an unrivalled theatre complex: six venues with approximately 4000 seats and a complete range of theatre facilities and services — all in a beautiful garden setting.

The Octagon Theatre
650 seats in a thrust stage theatre inspired by the late Sir Tyrone Guthrie, with an elegant foyer and licensed bar facilities. Large dressing rooms, orchestra pit and all the equipment necessary to stage a major presentation — 35mm projection equipment too!

The Dolphin Theatre
An intimate 200 seat theatre with proscenium arch and fly tower — ideal for theatre workshops or small scale productions.

The Somerville Auditorium
1000 seats under the stars in a landscaped garden surrounded by pines — with full bio-box facilities and screen.

The New Fortune Theatre
A unique 500 seater situated within the Arts Faculty building and modelled on the Shakespearean courtyard theatre.

Winthrop Hall
A magnificent hall capable of seating over 1000 people — ideal for concerts with its organ and large platform stage.

The Sunken Garden
An open-air amphitheatre with a 600 seat capacity nestling in a native garden — unlimited potential for the imaginative Director.

For further information regarding availability, technical details and our very low rates.
Contact:
Terry Craig,
Theatre Manager,
University of Western Australia, Nedlands,
Western Australia 6009.
(09) 380 2441.

Remember
1979 is Western Australia’s 150th Anniversary so if you need a theatre hurry and book one now. Better still why not come and see them all in action during the 1979 Festival of Perth February 10 — March 11. (Get off one stop past Adelaide!).

The best deal in the West!
Theatre Costumes

A & C Black publish a series of books covering all aspects of the design and construction of theatre costumes. The series includes:

Medieval Theatre Costume: Brooke
This book covers not only the elements of construction highlighting the practical problems, but also describes the costuming for religious dramas.

Costume Design and Making: Fernald & Shenton
A very practical book with pattern diagrams of costumes from Saxon times up to almost the end of the nineteenth century. All the diagrams have been drawn to scale for working patterns.

Historic Costume for the Stage: Barton
Costumes from ancient Egypt to 1914 are fully described in this book including jewellery, motifs and accessories. For a complete list of theatre costume reference books, contact:

Edward Arnold (Australia) Pty.Ltd.
373 Bay Street, Port Melbourne, 3207. Tel. 64 1346.

SEASON 5: AUGUST-NOVEMBER
by arrangement with harry m. miller and
michael white: RICHARD O'BRIEN'S THE
ROCKY HORROR SHOW
by arrangement with nimrod theatre: DAVID
WILLIAMSON'S THE CLUB
by arrangement with parachute productions: WILLY RUSSELL'S
JOHN PAUL GEORGE RINGO &
BERT
by arrangement with nimrod theatre:
PETER CARROLL in RON BLAIR'S THE
CHRISTIAN BROTHERS plus
CONCERTS/COMPANY DEvised
LATE SHOWS/READINGS/
CLASSES

THE NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF DRAMATIC ART
at the
UNIVERSITY OF NEW SOUTH WALES, SYDNEY
offers
THREE YEAR FULL TIME TRAINING COURSES
for the professional theatre in
ACTING
TECHNICAL PRODUCTION
DESIGN

There is a one year post-graduate STUDENT
DIRECTORS COURSE for people already experienced
in Professional, University or Amateur Theatre.
Applications for all courses beginning March, 1979
are now invited.
Applications close October, 1978.
Auditions and interviews will be held in all capital
cities in Australia between November and
Enquiries should be addressed to:-

THE DIRECTOR
NIDA
P.O. BOX 1, KENSINGTON 2033

GIVE
THEATRE
AUSTRALIA
TO A
FRIEND

A gift subscription to Theatre Australia is a present that keeps on coming.
(See Rates on page 56)

Theatre Publications,
80 Elizabeth St., Mayfield, N.S.W. 2304
Finding “th”

What makes Japanese theatricality so forceful and uncompromising? What is it that links the work of the major playwrights and directors — people presenting plays in enormously varying styles — that can be called “the Japanese element”? (I mean this Japanese element within the context of the country, not looking from the outside which makes everything look “Japanese”.)

Suzuki Tadashi: director/playwright, exploring the bases of Japanese physicality (as Grotowski and Barba explore the European).

Kara Juro: playwright/director, and his radical theatre that has made it through the seventies without watering down its message.

Betsuyaku Minoru: playwright, who has formulated his own poetic stage-language.

Inoue Hisashi: playwright, who is still the most prolific and popular dramatist in Japan.

I will mention the Tokyo Kid Brothers, Tsuka Koohei, and a variety of independent productions. But the heart of Japanese theatre lies largely within these four personalities.

Suzuki Tadashi announced, in early ’76, that he was moving his Waseda Little Theatre to the outback. His theatre, originally called the Free Stage, had first produced Betsuyaku’s Elephant. After that, in the early seventies, Suzuki trained
Japanese element”

and presented Shiraishi Kayoko in his show About the Dramatic. He took that show and later its sequel to Europe.

Now it is seven years later and Suzuki has moved out of town; in fact, way out of town: eight hours on express train, then three hours by bus into the mountains. Last August, he presented Shiraishi Kayoko in his show Night of the Feast. Like About the Dramatic, it is a collage. The main theme of the production is provided by Wilde's Salome, as interpreted by Suzuki. In addition, there is a portion of Watt by Beckett hidden within.

But plotting has never been Suzuki's concern. The text is only a jumping-off point for the high points in the presentation. The theme is madness and possession, female lust and female power. The text is only a jumping-off point for the high points in the presentation. The theme is madness and possession, female lust and female power. Throughout the performance, treats of wit in the form of gags, pop music, and outrageous gesturing provide both relief and contrast to the intense seriousness of the theme. Lines can be delivered in a manner totally unsuited, in broadly realistic terms, to the intrinsic meaning of the words. The effect is one of high send-up. Occasionally, however, this emphasizes the grotesque, as when Sugiuira Chizuko, Suzuki's latest "find", performs her night toilette, brushing her teeth, drooling white foam, and smearing lipstick to the strains of the Japanese hit, My Nighttime Visitor.

Shiraishi Kayoko is, in a word, an actress of genius. There is always the threat that she will break out and loosen her power. And in her voice she has the most uncanny variety of tone. Actually, this is what Suzuki's theatre is about: the use of words, the delivery of words, as a physical action. The voice is an instrument of physical attack; and so the distinction between things said and things done is obliterated. Our theatre has so long to go in coming to terms with this, in the way that Suzuki has.

The atmosphere, in this farmhouse, with 600 people from Tokyo packed in like shelled prawns, is, to say the least, dense. Suzuki also does his yearly Greek play in the big city, using the same actors as a core. But he doesn't achieve there what he does in his Night of the Feast.

Kara Juro and his Red Tent now do two shows a year, the May show which aims for a broad portrait of downtown Tokyo life, using the same actors as a core. The voice he has the most uncanny variety of tone. Actually, this is what Suzuki's theatre is about: the use of words, the delivery of words, as a physical action. The voice is an instrument of physical attack; and so the distinction between things said and things done is obliterated. Our theatre has so long to go in coming to terms with this, in the way that Suzuki has.

Kara Juro and his Red Tent now do two shows a year, the May show which aims for a broad portrait of downtown Tokyo life, using the same actors as a core. The voice he has the most uncanny variety of tone. Actually, this is what Suzuki's theatre is about: the use of words, the delivery of words, as a physical action. The voice is an instrument of physical attack; and so the distinction between things said and things done is obliterated. Our theatre has so long to go in coming to terms with this, in the way that Suzuki has.

The story of the play revolves around the untimely death of Sakata who is studying to be a policeman at a Wild-Cherry Police Academy. The main character is a policewoman, played by Li Reisen (who is one of Japan's best actresses, and is married to Kara). Relationships of authority, of rank and exploitation, are all part of this attack on the language and exercise of power. Li's teacher in the "school" is none other than William Shakespeare who wears a pink petticoat and speaks the bard in female Kansai dialect.

I saw five or six plays by Betsuyaku Minoru this time. Here is a playwright with his own logic — by the end of the night your mind works like his.

In A Place and a Memory a man walks on and sits on a bench. There is a bus stop sign by the bench. A woman with a pram enters. (The objects that appear in Betsuyaku's plays — prams, umbrellas, dolls, etc, are usually all the same.) She addresses the man, saying that he must be waiting for the bus. He says that he is, and how did she know? She replies that that is the bench on which people who are waiting for the bus sit. Therefore, he must be "a man waiting for the bus". In Betsuyaku's world the objects define the people.

In his biggest production of last year, Thirty Days Hath September, once again we see the objects: the pram or cart, the pole, the terribly attenuated word-play itself. In this play, a young man who has not gone to his company for five months meets an older couple who draw him into their life. The man's wife joins them. The entire play is taken up with vague attempts at communication, until, at the end, there is a stroke of violent theatre.

Betsuyaku's is minimal theatre. Like Mondrian, he is restricting himself by nature and compelling the viewer to accept his conventions, not impose theirs on the world of the presentation. There is great poetry in his work, the poetry of the imagist. He is the creator, in Japan, of the theatre of paucity. One may get tired at times of the same symbols and same speech patterns recurring for years in his work, just as one may get tired of having the same dreams over and over. It adds to the terror.

Inoue Hisashi's major play of last year was the broad portrait of downtown Tokyo life, The Man Who Once Taught Me That You Didn't Have To Be Strong To Be A Man. This was produced by Geino-za and the brilliant comic actor, Ozawa Shoichi, last November. The style of the piece is basically music-hall. It is full of vaudeville skits, bad jokes, and historical character references. Virtually every character who made that part of Tokyo, called Asakusa, famous, makes an appearance. So does the Emperor, who, at the end, kneels in front of the audience, while a beggar and Nagai Kafu, a writer, slump down a bowl of pork-chop-and-rice in front of him.

Inoue will have four plays on this year, one of them a piece about Issa that he calls a "haiku musical". To give you an idea of his theatre, I'd say he's like a combination of Brecht and Billy (not Thornton) Wilder.

Of course, this is hardly all. There is the Tokyo Kid Bros who put on two superb shows last year in their new tiny theatre in Shinjuku. There is Tsuka Koohei, who lay low for a while, but only two months ago produced his own version of Salome at Shibuya. (Tsuka was Suzuki's "disciple" and would have his own Salome after the master had his...). Then there were the over thirty-odd productions I saw of western theatre. A Three Penny Opera on the commercial stage: close your eyes and it could have been My Fair Lady. It avoided making any point like the plague.

I saw No Sex Please (We're Japanese) at Teatro Echo, replete with moustachioed bobbies, kinky British underwear, and bank officials-cum-bondage men. It was done in good Eco style, with a loose lower jaw rather than a stiff upper lip, with aching corn and a lot of clowning. I think it was a success in Japan, a country where, traditionally, the penchant for leather has always gone beyond the pig-skin briefcase.

A very awful Seagull, not even as good as Canberra Rep! A Priestly play, An Inspector Calls, adapted to Japanese conditions. (It looked like it was adapted for radio as well.) And an all-male As You Like It in which one comely boy holds up a cucumber.

Finally then, what is it that, putting aside the inevitable bad productions, ties most of this together? This is a difficult question to answer. Outsiders have always looked at Japan and (Continued on page 44)
John Bell is hooked on Shakespeare. That is no surprise to anyone who knows the record; performances of at least half-a-dozen leading parts and a brace of supporting parts in England and Australia over the last fifteen years, and more recently six productions of Shakespeare in as many years at Nimrod.

There seems to be a strong — and generally visual — motivating image to every Nimrod Shakespeare. When you approach the text for the first time, does the image jump out at you, or do you mine it for a motivating image?

I think the first way. Something occurs to me when I think about the plays, which I do quite frequently. I think about the whole cannon: which plays should be done now, or next year or in this theatre, or in other theatres, and something might occur to me.

For instance, with Comedy of Errors I found an old book on merry-go-rounds, fairground snaps. I thought “I’d love to use this. Wouldn’t Comedy of Errors be wonderful in that kind of seedy, brassy fairground world?”

Much Ado was an enormous popular success both times you did it here. What set you off towards that?

It was very much coming to live in Surry Hills, and walking around among the fruitshops, shopping. I really got a big buzz out of that, you know, the vibrancy, and showing off and wheeling and dealing that was going on. I really hadn’t experienced that in England, and coming back here I found it very exciting.

That and then going down to the Garibaldi bar in Crown Street. There was a very primitive folk mural on the wall, of Garibaldi marching into some little town. I thought how beautiful it was, and what a wonderful, homely Italian-Australian expression of chivalry and small-town pride.

Then the two designers stepped in and did their own thing with it, made it much more circusy. I had imagined something more ragbag, perhaps a literal Garibaldi atmosphere, but I was pleased that we took it a bit further into the circus, because it meant that we weren’t acting naturalistic Italian-Australians; we could say, “We’re just pretending, we’re just playing.”

And was it Messina or Surry Hills?

It was very much Surry Hills, very much. People said they were Italian accents. They weren’t; they were Italian-Australian accents. And the action, I hoped, was very Australian, it wasn’t Italian at all.

And the Twelfth Night? How did you set about that?

Twelfth Night was perhaps less satisfactory in retrospect. It was too particular. I very much wanted to do the play. I was
very caught up in the language of it, and the ideas, the ambiguities of the play. But I
couldn't for a long time think of an image
till I started to associate it with Death in Venice. And I think what started
me thinking of that was the discovery that the
Illyria was a Venetian colony, supposedly,
in Shakespeare's time. And the idea of
water, and a crumbling city, youth and age,
sexual ambiguity, these things
suddenly started. So I talked about it with
Kim Carpenter. I wish now we hadn't been
quite so literal about it.

Do you mean literal in the sense of
having Viola as a boy?

Maybe that, although if I was doing it
again, I'd try it again, I think. I thought
there was a lot going for that idea. It
confused a lot of people, especially the people that hadn't seen the play before,
but I think people who did know the play
got an extra buzz out of it, because they
got an extra level.

I think if it's a girl playing the part it has
a pantomime quality, you know, "Come
on, Puss", that Dick Whittington sort of
thing. I've always felt that when there's
a girl playing it: it really escapes the sexual
crunch.

Why did you choose to have only Viola,
rather than all three women, played by a
boy?

Because, what he was doing with Viola
was mucking around with the convention.
He said "bugger this convention, I'll play
tricks with it, do another double flip with
it, have a boy playing a girl playing a boy." Now if you make the other women.
boys too, then you lose that.

It's a curiously dark view of the play. It's
a dark play anyway, I suppose, but it
means that the resolution in the fifth act
is having to come in the title; there isn't
going to be a marriage in the way that you
mention in the Comedy of Errors progra-
me notes, marriage as the comic
resolution.

Right. But I think all the resolutions in
Twelfth Night are very dark, you see—
Malvolio's reduction, Aguecheek and Belch
being split, Feste being virtually
kicked out of the household, and two
unsatisfactory, peremptory marriages,
each person getting the wrong twin.

Do you relate that to the way you saw
Measure for Measure in the 1972
production?

I do, yes. I think Twelfth Night is a
much darker play than people like to
admit, and I think Measure for Measure
is either a very bad play or else a very dark
and ugly play. And I don't think it is hilar.
I disagree totally with the Catholic,
romantic view of the Duke as a sort of
Christ-figure. To me, everything points to
the fact that he's an absolute bastard of the
first class. In fact Garry McDonald
played it.

Yes, sending it up slightly; very serious-
ly, I mean it was a very serious parody. The
man was a raving ratbag and an
arch-villain, and totally pious and hypo-
critical at the same time. He thought he
was doing the right thing by his lights, so it
wasn't just a comic thing; he was a
Belch-Peterson sort of figure in a way.

I was pleased with Measure for Measure.
It wasn't well received on the
whole, but I was pleased with what we did.
I don't think it totally worked, but if I had
the choice to do that production again, I'd
go even more baroque with it: not just
costume and detail, but investigating the
text and the characterisations more.

There's one thing I get cross about with
critics and journalists generally: they don't
look further than the costumes. They
think: "Aha! They've put people into modern
dress, what a gas, what a send-up". They don't take it seriously as a
comment or interpretation, or realigning
of the play with modern sensibilities.

So the Edwardian look of the Twelfth
Night is very much connected with the idea
of an affluent, decadent world?

Absolutely. I think the image is good. I
wish we'd got a bit further away from
Visconti, hadn't been quite so literal about
it. I wish we'd used it not as a quote but as a
starting point. But that's the trouble, I
suppose, with doing Shakespeare in this
country: you get one crack at it, then it's
on for five weeks, then it's scrapped. We
don't have that repertoire system where if
you can put it away for a year, bring it
back, change a few things, and reassess it.

Though you've proved with Much Ado
that you can have a second look at a
production.

Yes. I think we should do it more often.
I think all companies, Nimrod and the
others, should start to build a repertoire of
plays.

I think Shakespeare is the most pure
theatre we've got. You still get ideas, and
fun, and a story and a philosophy, and a
sumptuousness and a spareness. You don't
need to dress it up; you can have
sumptuous things built for you, very
sparely, on an empty stage virtually; and of
course you get a feeling of history, it's not
just Elizabethan, he's talking about
Greece, ancient Rome. And The Tempest
seems to go cosmic. It's an extraordinarily
free-ranging mind, and he makes associa-
tions with all one's interest and studies.
And as well as that he's totally contem-
porary. He's not being donnish about the
places and times and figures he's writing
about, he's looking for the universal, and
the anxieties and worries that one always
has oneself, and that one sees in society
and politics around one.

I would like to move into the romances,
and eventually into the tragedies.

Is that a deliberate ordering of
priorities?

Yes, it is. I don't know why, I just feel it.
Building an appetite in the audience
perhaps. Comedy of Errors or Much Ado
is so much more accessible.

Of course. And I think I do have a flair
for knockabout comic stuff. I find that
great fun to do and I've found a way of
doing it that the actors enjoy too. I like to
play the histories and tragedies as an
actor, but I don't feel yet ready to tackle
them as a director.

Would you be prepared to take a play
you loved and work with a company you
trust — I suppose it would take a longer
rehearsal period — and work towards a
common understanding of the play rather
than starting with a conception as strong
and specific as in your past work?

Yes I would if I had enough time. But
you need six months to do that well...

This image thing: I'm unsure how valid
it is. I have had a strong image for each
production and I think it's worked, but I
don't know how much longer one should
go on doing that.

There is a kind of groundswell which
came up with the recent Old Tote
Tempest, where the critical murmur, I
think, was: "Well it's good to see
Shakespeare not monkeyed around with".

Do you think you can approach the play in
a neutral fashion?

Certainly not, that's an absolute waste
of time. But you can perhaps play down
the designer's and director's dictatorship
of the play. I think what I want to avoid
from here on is the design and directorial
concept being too strong...

I'd be interested in trying to move away
from an image that's so strong that people
come out whistling the sets; because
basically Shakespeare is as much for the
actor as for anybody else, if not more so.
And this is another reason why he keeps on
being done I suppose, because every actor
wants to do it. It's still your Master Piece,
it's what you've got to do to prove yourself
as an actor, to play a good Shakespeare
part well. And it's such a thrill for actors
to have those people to play and those words
to say. And I do feel that one does at times
limit them by too strong a visual concept.
So that's my resolution for the New Year,
to loosen it up a little bit!

This was actually part of a much
longer interview which has unfortunately
dad to be severely cut to fit in with this
survey.

Maggie Dence, John McTernan and Malcolm Keith in Nimrod's Comedy of
Errors. Photo: Robert McFarlane.

John Bell
Every age has thought fit to re-interpret Shakespeare according to its own prejudices. His theatrical successors trimmed his instinctive genius to suit the theatrical proprieties of the time. Dryden's All for Love is Anthony and Cleopatra with the balls off. The eighteenth century saw his plays as sounding boards for the prodigious talents of actors such as Garrick and Kean. The Victorians smothered the plays in paint, canvas and operatic perspective. At the turn of this century William Poel cut through all this to point the way most modern directors have followed — uncluttered staging which allows the playwright's energetic Elizabethan stagecraft to have its head. Armed with all this foreknowledge the Director of today who plans a Shakespearian production still has a number of almost insoluble problems to surmount. He must first find a visual frame for the production. It was once fashionable to seek refuge in the style of a painter such as Watteau, or to set the piece in Medieval Mexico. This inevitably got the devotees chattering excitedly about "relevance". The sparse, bare, neutral setting which followed side-stepped the problem another way — "What the eye doesn't see, the text can't contradict". However, Shakespeare wrote of rooms with arrasses and inns with chimneys to piss into. In this area Shakespeare is nothing if not domestic. Then there is the verse which (for the most part) the plays are written. We suspect the author like his most famous Danish hero preferred it spoken "tripplingly on the tongue". But we must assume an English public school elocution prevailed at Elsinore? or an American nasality? or indeed (to use a recently coined phrase), "mid-Australian"? If "mid Australian" then, what is to be the accent of the gravedigger, or the pirates, or the soldiers of the guard, not to mention (in another context) the denizens of Eastcheap in Elizabethan London? We have not yet touched on the Director's "interpretation", which can founder all too easily by superimposing modern thinking on plays shot through with Elizabethan attitudes such as the divine right of Kings or the concept of chastity as in Measure for Measure, which nowadays can cause an immediate palliative. In recent months the SATC has presented two Shakespearian productions. Macbeth was acted in a clear pallissade setting by Hugh Colman, which, to my mind, served the action and locale of the play superbly, and one critic dismissed as a birdcage. The costumes were a mix of Jacobean and Samurai which provided a strikingly martial silhouette and I think even convinced the birdcage man. Henry IV, our most recent production, had a panelled wood surround and a bed into which everyone from the King, Hal, Doll Tearsheet, Hotspur, Kate and a number of whores and low life characters including the immortal Falstaff himself, dispersed themselves singly or in small numbers. This was considered good, clean fun, as were the costumes which were another mix — this time of Victorian and Elizabethan. A local drama lecturer, however who had spent a whole term expounding the theory that attire should conform to period, was in despair. He had omitted to inform his students that the precept was not, of course, one followed by Shakespeare's own company, when they performed the play originally. I have seen Shakespearian productions in cellars and palaces, in Communist Arts Centres and Capitalist Opera Houses. It is a tribute to the genius of the man that whenever the director and actors made contact with the audience by drawing their energy from the imaginative quality of the writing, rather than attempting to cover for its antiquity, those occasions have been among my most memorable in the theatre.
situation of casting about for a different approach: difference for its own sake.

Speaking personally, I would never direct a Shakespeare unless I had a specific response and commitment to that play. I had wanted to direct Richard III for some time because I had developed a certain attitude towards it: a point of view which seemed to me inherent in the text. Just in reading the play, without any thought of immediate production, I had come to see Richard as the crippled clown, the demonic court jester, the little Hitler-fool whom nobody took seriously until it was too late. Coupled with that idea, my own post-graduate drama work at Balliol had given me a very strong impression of the efficacy of the Wheel of Fortune as a Renaissance image for the plight of Princes (and the source of tragedy). The work I had done with my own company in the East Midlands of England had also given me a good working knowledge of medieval English folk-lore, around which my actors and I had improvised a number of group-created productions. Original researched material on the 'fool' of the Mummers plays, the eternal conflict of St. George and the Dragon — cum Saracen — cum Devil, the Lord of Misrule, the Maypole and the Morris Dancers had stuck in my head. All these disparate strands seemed slowly to come together in response to the text of Richard III. Suddenly, I had a concrete reason for wanting to direct the play and I was fortunate enough, eventually to find a company willing to stage it.

The Melbourne Theatre Company is, at present, the only company in Australia with a continuous, year-round presentation of the classics. In addition, the MTC has a superb technical and production back-up: it can encompass even the most bizarre experimental exercise. Richard III was not that, but at least it was possible to present a strongly innovative production within the balanced season that had been planned. In the event, the critics and the public responded well to the innovation. The production was an artistic success for the Company.

I have been asked to suggest a general rule for Shakespearean production. Obviously, there isn't one. All I would say is that everyone involved in the production must agree on a common attitude which will inform the text. That is how an organic unity is achieved in the production. It makes a statement; it communicates through the skill of the performer, not through that of the so-called 'translator'.

Ted Craig

Fidelity to the lines

The production of The Tempest by William Shakespeare was to spearhead the bright new policy of the Old Tote for 1978: Three theatres with three separate policies and each controlled by its own director. It was, a year ago, a heady time. I had been approached to direct the classics at the Drama Theatre. Checking the records, I found that Shakespeare hadn't been produced at the Old Tote for three years (Bill Gaskill's production of Love's Labour's Lost). This confirmed my decision to start with a Shakespeare — and also it seemed right that we should launch our new policy with the world's greatest playwright, and more particularly with his last play written at the quintessence of his genius.

The 'bombshell' burst in December as The Tempest was in the final stages of rehearsal and about to move onto the stage. By the time the play had opened, the 'new policy' was in tatters. The Seymour Centre plays had vanished along with Jim Sharman and Rex Cramphorn and the Company was existing on a day to day, hand to mouth basis.

The Tempest proved to be a bright spot in the gloom. It set attendance and box office records at the Drama Theatre and played to standing room only for the whole season. I approached the play quite directly. As it was leading off the "classic" season it should not be tricked up (ideas of Prospero running an Italian greengrocer's shop or an amusement park at Kings Cross were laid aside), but delivered 'straight'. This would be suggested first and foremost by the costumes which would be Elizabethan and Jacobean. Prospero, clinging on to the Elizabethan ruff and dressing his daughter and his island servants similarly and the shipwrecked party, eminently more fashionable and up-to-date twelve years after Prospero's exile, in their Jacobean collars. (We nevertheless decided to dress all the men in trousers and boots to bring a recognisably modern element into it rather than the somewhat quaint breeches and hose of the period.)

I wanted to emphasise the magic of the play and agreed with the set designer, Brian Nickless, that we should not really have a formal set but an environment that would allow the greatest amount of effects and surprises. It would also be a bare platform that would provide the actors with a strong focus and be a neutral background for the richness of the costumes. Shakespeare wrote The Tempest as the first play to go into the new Blackfriars Theatre which was equipped with all sorts of new fangled gadgetry and machinery — traps, flying machinery etc. — and he quite obviously wrote it with the stage effects in mind.

The humanity of the characters in the play was to be the dominant theme and naturally the one that most affected the actors. I took this a step further by humanising Ariel and Caliban as much as possible: Ariel as Prospero's closest companion for twelve years and a friend, Caliban as a kind of wolf-boy — twenty-four years old and Miranda's 'step' brother. Prospero above all was going to be a human being in a truly human dilemma — should he continue to remain isolated or go back to face his past? — and if he does so what will he do about his daughter, his servants and his enemies? Twelve years after things had gone very wrong in Milan, things were going wrong for Prospero on his island... Miranda was coming of age. Ariel wanted the freedom which Prospero had promised him and Caliban having been educated by Prospero was using his knowledge to rebel against him. I slightly rearranged the Harpy scene to create an effecting and cliff-hanging ending to the first part of the play and had the play typed out like a contemporary play script.

From the first reading of the play this script had the advantage of emphasising the approach that we would be making to the play — clear, no nonsense and faithful to the meaning and intention of the lines.

Bruce Myles (Richard) and Jennifer West (Elizabeth) in MTC's Richard III

Photo: David Parker.

Michael Craig (Prospero) and Celia De Burgh (Miranda) in the Old Tote Theatre Company's production of The Tempest

by William Shakespeare.

Photo: Robert McFarlane.
Updating the play

King Lear is an extraordinary play because it exposes human stupidity, savagery, and values through a drama of suffering.

Because the foolish old King, the 'nong' Edgar, and the buffoon Gloucester, suffer deeply and thereby gain an awareness and insight into the chaos of what it is to be human — they achieve an inner dignity which is close to heroic.

Recently in the media Solzhenitsyn criticised the West because we have become soft through self indulgent materialism — we are 'immoral' — our values corrupt. Much as we Australians abhor this kind of criticism, there may be some truth in it.

Yet madness or mental ill health is a feature of our age. Psychiatric suffering is common in the suburbs of our cities where food, house, car, pool, TV, and other gadget slaves, provide high standards of living. However, our madness is not like the madness in Lear. Ours is pinched, restricted, neurotic, deadening, self centred and does not necessarily bring about insight, dignity or visionary imaginations, like the madness described by RD Laing. The special madness of the divine fool in Russian literature is world's away from suburban deserts.

In Lear, people suffer, endure and seek a deeper insight into the nature of man. Edgar knows the "reality" of hunger and eats the slime on top of the horse troughs. Like an enlightened Buddha, he becomes Lear's guru philosopher. Gloucester has his eyes torn out and gains insight, appealing that all surplus wealth should be given to the poor. 'Every man should have enough.'

To me Change is the most significant element and mystery in the play. Every character undergoes a real change. I have done my best to reveal this phenomenal theme. This is the accelerating constant of our 'time' Change (as much as we try to withstand its inexorable flight) is contained within our greed for more. We are caught in our age between conservatism and economic expansion. The two are diametrically opposed. Thus we know change deeply inside our Australian way of life.

And the play King Lear, written in the English Renaissance of 1605, now translated by David Williamson, is as relevant and as disturbing as the Fox Report to the bedlam beggars of our society, the Aborigines. It is relevant to us because the message goes further; unless we change through compassion for suffering our values — our morality, will dog us to the grave. We may expect flattery as the access to wealth. Tell folks how great they are and how you care... and you may end up with a car, or a house, or their land...

The play is the ultimate answer to the trite phrase in our language 'No.'

To me it is a question of awareness. Are we aware of ourselves? If not, Lear's advice is, 'get yourself glass eyes then you can quite happily say you saw things you didn't.'

A decision to mount a production of any classic play is determined by the content — the rediscovery that it has something relevant to say, specific and timely. Shakespeare is rich of course in possibilities, not only in the number of plays to choose from, but also in the number of interpretations any one play gives rise to. Henry IV Part I has not been seen in Sydney since the late '40's and we could not find out when, if ever, Part II had been produced. In looking at them again (I had first encountered Part I as the set text for the Leaving Certificate in 1956), I found them rich in themes that spoke to us, here and now. Rebellion, Justice, Honour, Courage, Responsibility, Self-Deception, Waste — the list seems endless. But such themes are relevant to all times. What made the plays seem so particularly near to us had to do with the uncertainty of the time they depict, where everything is in question, most of all the concept of honourable action, a time ripe for the grabbing of gain. In the light of the "liberated" and easy 1960's the '70's seem very like this to me.

But to discover relevant themes is one thing, to evoke them in a production is quite another. Most of all it was going to be difficult to draw a parallel between the "Original Sin" of Henry, the deposition and murder of Richard II, which is the source of all his troubles, and the sacking of Whitlam which precipitated Australia as near as ever it has been into a state of revolution, albeit short lived. I felt the parallel was at least implicit.

Perhaps the most crucial question to be solved in doing any Shakespeare is that of period. It is easily forgotten that in his own time Shakespeare produced his plays in modern dress, that is Elizabethan costume, indicative of the setting being Italian, Roman, or England itself two hundred years earlier, as with Henry IV. So at the outset a decision must be made between a setting which is the time and place of the play, or some other time — hence the frequent practice of modern dress productions. The Histories are more difficult. They are filled with English place names which particularise the locale, unlike Ilylia or the Forest of Arden. Secondly they involve battle scenes with constant textual references to swords, daggers and armour and the like. The fights are often the climactic scenes of the plays and have huge potential for theatrical excitement — contemnorising them runs the risk of reneging on this potential, while posing great difficulties in textual alteration. Thus it was with Richard III, which happened to open on November 11, 1975, and produced much. To real comment regretting the lack of a modern dress production. Some other sort of solution is preferable to me. With Richard III I settled for abstraction, the play being so much less "real" than other Histories. But the Henry's are eminently real, by which I mean naturalistic. For all their epic sweep,
the portrayal of a nation in turmoil, the range of worlds and classes and lifestyles depicted, it is always the human issues that dominate, most of all the relationship between Hal and his two "fathers" Falstaff and Henry. So basic reality was essential.

One specific factor overrides all decisions for Shakespeare productions at Nimrod, and that is of course money. In the first place it would be impossible to realise the full panoply of naturalistic historical truth, a good reason for steering away from the play's legitimate period. So another solution has to be found. The Henry's have a very strong Medieval feeling. There is the roughness of tavern life, the horror of the battlefield, and much talk of death and disease, all of which is so evocative of the Middle Ages. It brought Breughel to mind, who was painting almost contemporaneously with Shakespeare and similarly depicting an earlier period in a mixture of realism and symbolic allegory. Looking at his paintings confirmed the connection. Our aim was to extract from the Breughel's as much as possible that felt modern as well as belonging to its time.

Economics also determine cast size. We have never exceeded thirteen at Nimrod (probably a little smaller than the Globe company), and so doubling is essential. This is particularly difficult with the vast casts that fill the Histories. Characters have to be cut and merged; but most of all some concepts need to be found. In Henry, this emerged from the basic counterpart in the play between the Court and Tavern worlds — mostly, each actor plays a character from each world.

Of course the other major factor which determines the feel of the production is the approach to the text. How to observe the disciplines of the verse and realise the music of the language without "singing" the words and forgoing the energies and naturalness more easily realised in contemporary colloquial texts. As well, there is the problem of accent. In John Bell's and my production of Hamlet five years ago, which had an essentially abstract setting in time and place, it seemed not to matter that a degree of Australian accent flavour the delivery. And of course this is possible while still observing the basic verse and imagery disciplines. John Bell took this step even further with Much Ado About Nothing and Comedy of Errors. But again, because of the overwhelming presence of place names, as well as character's names, which locate the Histories exclusively in England, they need to be spoken accordingly.

But how did the English speak in 1600 or 1400? The question is irrelevant of course, but that of regional variations is not. In the Henry's, Glendower is Welsh, Douglas is Scots, Hotspur from "the North", Justices Shallow and Silence are from Gloucestershire and so on, and Mistress Quickly, Francis, Bardolph and Co. are written in a rough dialect very suited to a cockney twang. England is symbolically torn apart in one scene of Henry, and is the prize everyone is fighting for. It is essential to capture this feeling of the country as a whole, and hence the respective accents are necessary. Again, in the more abstract Richard III, we tried to forge an original accent, comprised of various English regional dialects — something very rough, aggressive, brutal, as is the text of Richard as a whole. There is, however, a world of difference between the two texts, indeed one feels Shakespeare has matured a great deal in Henry IV, despite what is often so brilliant in Richard III. The most obvious difference is the great use of prose made in Henry IV, roughly half the play, and again, generally given to the tavern world, as the verse is to the Court. Those actors crossing from verse to prose are immediately faced with a radically different way of speaking.

Verse or prose however, Shakespeare is either way always a very difficult text to make clear, and a basic acting problem is how to achieve clarity without becoming static and dull. Our basic concern at Nimrod is that Shakespeare, as with any contemporary dramatist, be lively, entertaining, and dynamic. The balance between the dynamic and special disciplines required is a very fine one.
Overcoming prejudices

Some background first. Warren Mitchell replied to an invitation from Joe MacColum in 1977 that the role of Shylock — or the play did not interest him all that much but King Lear did. We took it from there and scheduled the play for 1978.

I met Warren a couple of times in Sydney and talked generally about the play whilst he was in Australia in 1977. Afterwards we corresponded by cassette.

He had seen the famous Buzz Goodbody production for the RSC and been tremendously impressed by its theatrical vitality and clear storyline. This version had been heavily cut and ran only about two hours.

I knew from our previous experience in presenting Shakespeare that there were certain prejudices to be overcome amongst our audiences — particularly the schools: Shakespeare was boring because he was incomprehensible; he had no relevance to today; the plays were 'too long'.

So I was very sympathetic to Warren's ideas about a cut version of the play which would retain the basic storyline but lose many of the side issues and proliferations. He sent me Buzz Goodbody's script and suggested we use it. I must here acknowledge the tremendous debt I owe her as I incorporated many of her cuts in our final production. Roughly one-third of the text had gone. Of course in such a truncated version many of the speeches that belonged to original characters were now given to other people. This created some problems in rehearsal where some of the cast felt their characters had been changed, but we finally agreed that our production was 'a version of King Lear' and that reference to the original text would only hinder us: we played what we had.

The storyline was clear and precise. The play flowed logically into two parts: from the majestic ritual of the opening scene through to the horrific blinding of Gloucester as Part One and from Edgar's entrance "Yet better thus and known to be condemned" to the final tragic end.

Then we looked at the language in detail. Whenever a word or phrase was obscure we tried to find a modern equivalent. Thus Kent's "She summoned up her meiny, straight took horse" became "She summoned up her household, straight took horse". Sometimes, particularly with the Fool and Poor Tom it was difficult and on occasion we left the original. Sometimes inspirations struck. One delight was a change from the Fool's "If a man's brains were in his heels were he not in danger of kibes" to "If a man's brains were in his heels he was not in danger of chilbrains" and the pun got a laugh at every performance.

In discussion with Peter Cooke, the designer, we agreed about the production concept: we were after an environment — or the play did not interest him all that much but King Lear did. We took it from there and scheduled the play for 1978.

In solving it Warren was an inspiration not only insofar as his own role was concerned but in helping others to clarify their objectives. We laboured long and hard over some scenes, particularly the most difficult 'mad' scenes. Fortunately I had Robert Kingham as Assistant Director and he was able to take other actors off and rehearse them elsewhere. Nonetheless the scary joke was being bandied about 'we're doing Act Two as a programme note'. It was slow, grinding work.

Eventually this side of the work began to be mastered and we introduced other problems: handling the language, verse speaking, selective emphasis. I set as a goal William Poel's "Twenty lines a minute" and this without gabbling or hurrying. We proved it could be done. There were no pauses between scenes, as characters exited in one scene the new ones entered and the text was picked up. We tried to make the play flow and not let the audience 'off the hook'.

Then came the run-throughs with costumes and props and the dress rehearsal period. Even at this late stage we were changing — cutting odd lines, putting back others, changing blocking. But under Warren's leadership there was excitement in the air and a feeling we were 'on to something'.

David Read did some beautiful lighting. Joe MacColum harangued the company about speech generally and audibility particularly. John Humphreys wasn't too happy about the fight scenes, the sword kept bending, certain costumes didn't fit or were "hell to wear" the smoke gun wouldn't work — it was the usual story.

But it finally came together.

Did we achieve all we set out to do? No. So we're all looking forward to remounting the production for the Seymour Centre in Sydney in September. But it was a success with our audiences, particularly the 5,000 school kids who saw it, it got good notices and gave all of us who worked on it a tremendous sense of involvement. I think we all learned a lot.

ANN MCDONALD
COLLEGE OF DANCING
(Ext. 1926)

Ballet (R.A.D.) Examinations
in all grades, pre-preliminary to solo seal.

Full-time day classes also

Classes and Private Tuition
Ballroom, Latin American, Old Time, Social, Theatrical, Modern, Jazz and Classical.

The Greenwood Hall Complex
196 Liverpool Road, Burwood, N.S.W. 2134
Phone 74 6362 (A.H. 428 1694)
A throw-away play

EVEREST HOTEL

JACK HIBBERD

Everest Hotel by Snoo Wilson. Hoopla Theatre Foundation, Playbox Theatre, Melbourne. Vic. Opened 20th June 1978. Director, Garrie Hutchinson; Music, Red Symens and Andrew Ball; Stage Manager, Maryanne Grey; Lighting, Nicki Leecompte. Sandra, Jillian Archer; Tracy, Helen Hemingway; Deidre, Lulu Pinkus. (Professional)

Snoo Wilson, who was brought out here for last year's Playwrights Conference, on the evidence of The Everest Hotel, should never have been allowed to return to England. Any one of several of our playwrights could have conducted a dramaturgical operation on the play and stitched it into theatrical shape. The Conference has got it all wrong. Playwrights like John Osborne need our help; not vice versa. Indeed a policy of international aid for wound-down writers, hacks and poseurs could readily be implemented, though this would be a luxury even in these heady days of Australian drama.

In general, the stalwarts of traditional conservative theatre in Australia can be guaranteed to swoon uncritically before a Big Name. The avant-garde, another pack of dedicated cultural cringers, will usually grovel before a New Name. Deep down both groups share a detestation of Australia, so much so that, unlike P White and B Humphries, they cannot even bear to creatively utilize their odium. They live in Australia but their minds reside in London or New York.

I don't know where Snoo Wilson's mind was when he wrote The Everest Hotel — it's one of those amorphous extrusions that could be variously labelled a theatrical joke, ur-Dada, hip Liverpudlian serendipity, or just plain awful. Wilson has snapped up a few satirical ideas, shuffled them, then left them marooned, anchored and cleanly seen as such, as the playful emanations of three distinct characters, as the satirical and cynical sublimations of those caught in some social quagmire. Instead we are given little to purchase upon, the characters merge rootlessly, interactions are rarely face-to-face, sexuality is crude and male-imposed, ideas flit past arbitrarily, the disordered theory ends up disordered practice. One marvels that Snoo Wilson could be linked, at any level, with Stoppard, Brenton and Hare if this is a fair example of his work.

Given these difficulties, Jillian Archer, Helen Hemingway and Lulu Pinkus throw everything they've got at the audience, who like me seemed dazed and befuddled by the level of energy and commitment, as if it were a game of hockey with only one team, no sticks, no ball and no goals. The best things in the evening are the songs, warmly yet pugnaciously performed by the cast.

A very great performance indeed

ELECTRA

DAVID PARKER

Electra by Sophocles, translated by Nick Enright and Frank Hauser. Melbourne Theatre Company, Athenaeum Theatre, Melbourne. Vic. Opened June 15, 1978. Director, Frank Hauser; designer, Anne Fraser; music composed by Helen Gifford. Orson, David Downes; Tutor, Dennis Olesen; Pyrades, Michael Edgar; Electra, Jennifer Hagan; Chrysothemis, Sandy Gore; Clytemnestra, Irene Hiscourt; Agamemnon, John Stanton; Choeas, Betty Bobbitt; Valma Bolton, Sally Cahill; Judith McGrath; Jennifer West, Katy Wild; Hand Maidens, Merola Deane-Johns, Adele Lawin; Musicians, Peter Mander, Dalef Bauer. (Professional)

Let me unreservedly say that Frank Hauser's production of Electra for the MTC is the very best I have ever seen of a Greek tragedy. Not that I have really seen many. Off-hand I can recall Olivier in his Old Vic Oedipus Rex (with Sybil Thorndike as Jocasta), Wolfit in both Oedipus the King and Oedipus in Exile, Eileen Herlie as Medea, Ashcroft as Electra (the only time a performance from Dame Peggy disappointed me) with Catherine Lacy as Clytemnestra and Leo McKern The Tutor, and several local Australian productions (including of course Guthrie's Oedipus for the Old Tote).

Normally I am not enthusiastic at the prospect of seeing Greek plays. For me
there is usually too much ranting, long dreary speeches in high flown verse translations, and generally static productions. This _Electra_ though held me spellbound, with a taut, compelling and straight-forward production in which not a word seemed to be lost, and made it really seem more of a play than a recitation. How much was due to Nick Enright and Hauser's easy-to-follow simplified translation or to the latter's actual direction one does not know. Possibly a marriage of the two.

The backstaging of drums and cymbals at crucial moments heightened the suspense and frequently underlined otherwise silent areas of action. On the evening I saw the play, it was noticeable that proverbial pin drop — which is surely from Anne Fraser helped considerably, as otherwise silent areas of action. On the tension or to the latter's actual direction one does not know. Possibly a marriage of the two.

Two performances jarred. Firstly Sandy Gore's Chrysothemis, Electra's sister, which was all right in repose and sometimes achieved results but, all too often presented with a bright and breezy set. A really comfortable, warm and rich set. The backstage beating of drums and cymbals at crucial moments heightened the suspense and frequently underlined otherwise silent areas of action. On the evening I saw the play, it was noticeable that proverbial pin drop — which is surely from Anne Fraser helped considerably, as otherwise silent areas of action. On the tension or to the latter's actual direction one does not know. Possibly a marriage of the two.

As Electra's mother, Clytemnestra, Irene Inescort was right up to her very highest form, building up a towering figure that was grasping, chilling and horrifying. David Downer too succeeded with Orestes, making every phase seem meaningful.

Jennifer Hagan, after disappointing me somewhat with her Mrs Sullen in _Senitmental Bloke_ in the theatre. A more audacious approach to the sort of play going class. It served up to prompting for so doing. My theory is that he started off by giving his well known impersonation of a quivering old man, that this did not meet with Hauser's approval, the director tried to stamp it out and in doing so left the actor mid-stream with the rather unsatisfactory characterisation he ended up with.

One is surprised that, since _Electra_ at one and a half hours is a short play, the MTC did not back it with a short classic. When the Old Vic staged it they also presented Chekhov's _The Wedding_.

A production that combines the undoubtedly talents of William Shakespeare. David Williamson and Peter Oyston should have been a triumph: the fact that is a great deal less than successful is sad, but comprehensible. It indicates a failure of nerve.

Adapting Shakespeare, whether to give _Romeo and Juliet_ a happy ending or to make some crypto marxist point or in this case to try and make the language and story understandable, has a long, somewhat disputable history. We need not go into that, save to say that Shakespeare is a good deal better writer than his erstwhile improvers.

What I would dispute in the case of David Williamson is that the language is almost impossible for a modern Australian audience to understand. Especially the language of _King Lear_ and especially when Williamon has only done a line for line transmogrification of poetry to (dull) prose. It is rather like a Classic Comics version of _Paradise Lost_.

It seems to me that the problems of Shakespearian language arise not from the fact that it is Elizabethan English, but from the fact that it is dramatic Elizabethan English written scrilly for a particular play going class. It served up to that class what they wanted: masses of characters, complicated plots, poetry, allegory, myth.

One has to ask what the essence of the plays is: narrative or mythologised characters speaking poetry. Telling the story is simple; you could do _King Lear_ in three paragraphs, but the felt meaning, the purpose of the play can't come from changing the great language to journalese.

However it might have been possible to give it another language and another structure to achieve a similar effect; if the concern was for the meaning of the play (as the director says in the programme) then make a play and production about that subject. Don't confuse a battle with the straw men of academe with what happens in the theatre. A more audacious approach might have considered the power and sympathy of CJ Dennis' piece on the _Sentimental Bloke_ on _Romeo and Juliet_ or Charles Marowitz's versions of _King Lear_.

May it be that Williamson, who on more than one occasion has indicated that he thinks Shakespeare is un producable,
feels that Shakespeare shouldn’t be produced, as Trevor Nunn does of the Greeks, but to then do a version that is even less workable than the original is very strange. He has taken out the great speeches and exposed the creaky structure and made a much diminished Lear. Even the story of the play is no more comprehensible than it is in the original; there are still the worder of characters, the multiple plots. And Oyston’s production doesn’t help either. The focus on Lear is spoilt by his smallness, and apparent equality with the subplot of Gloucester/Edgar/Edmund. A more meandering and prosaic procession of inaudible speeches would be hard to find.

Oyston has set the thing in a polystyrene Stonehenge for a mystical reason or two, not apparent in the production. In this wide expanse we have a shuffling cast of actors of no great skill. Reg Evans offers a Lear of some dignity, but no power, who seems more puzzled than crazy. Neither he nor Oyston have solved the peculiar problem of the opening of the play, the hinge on which the narrative development depends. That is the silliness of Cordelia in not conforming to the social niceties required by her father, and the monumental arrogance of Lear in not accepting her anyway. It’s not helped by Jackie Kerin’s Cordelia, who was too insipid to be provocative. For the rest, the less said the better. Joe Bolza’s Fool shows that he should stick to mime; and Robbie McGregor’s Edgar has a few signs of life. Oyston has failed to give the play a purpose for being, except some intellectual glosses in the programme. It is a production without ideas.

Colin Friels Darcy is something of a tour de force

LES DARCY SHOW
CEDOONA

MICHAEL MORLEY

The Les Darcy Show by Jack Hibberd, South Australian Theatre Company, The Playhouse, Adelaide, SA. Opened 20 June, 1978. Director, Ron Blair; Designer, Richard Roberts; Lighting, Miguel Leving; Dances, Fights, Michael Fuller. Les Darcy, Colin Friels; Margaret Darcy, Leslie Dayman; Neil Darcy, Isobel Kirk; Mick Hawkin, Wayne Jarratt; Tex Rickard, Michael Fuller; Faith Cuddy, Mel Gibson; Winnie O’Sullivan, Judy Davis; Woman, Michele Stanley; Jack Kearns, Toney Prehn. Cedoona by Roger Pulvers. Mother, Isobel Kirk; Father, Leslie Dayman; Girl, Michele Stanley; Chuck, Mel Gibson; Garrie, Colin Friels; Doctor, Judy Davis.

The SATC double bill of Jack Hibberd’s The Les Darcy Show and Roger Pulvers’ Cedoona is hailed on the program as a “double knockout”. In its way, an apt enough description: for Hibberd’s play at least leaves the observer feeling that he has been hit with something real and tangible. Pulvers’ piece, on the other hand, is more like an amateur featherweight with a powder-puff punch masquerading as a heavyweight champion who sadly suffers from a glass jaw. Give him one solid poke and he collapses in a crumpled heap of deflated ideas and humbled hopes.

Hibberd’s vaudeville-cum-sideshow treatment of the Les Darcy story is ebullient, funny, vital and constantly theatrical. One hesitates to proffer suggestions to a writer of his ability, so the following observations should be read as a muted, if nevertheless firm plea — can we please have the next ten rounds featuring Darcy against the forces that finally defeated him? There is surely the material here for a full length play in which the sideshow elements are more extensively deployed, in which Darcy’s opponents in the ring and out are fleshed out and set against the central figure. As the work now stands, it seems like a first draft for a more extended play, a drama in which Hibberd could make more use of his skilful assimilation of ideas and techniques from Brecht, Arden, and popular theatre.

I was left feeling somewhat cheated that more was not made of the American experience, and that the pathos of Darcy’s situation seemed deliberately excluded. Not that a scenario along the lines of “the tragical rise and fall of the great Australian folk hero” is called for. Part of the play’s strength is that it never overly sets Darcy up as the archetypal Australian figure. He is an individual; and yet precisely because of this and the situations in which Hibberd sets him, he can also be seen as the expression of concerns and qualities which are representative. In spite of the swagger and engaging “take-it-or-leave-it” tone of Hibberd’s preface, the play itself seems curiously lightweight and at times almost constricted in its deployment of character and incident (though some of this is undoubtedly due to the direction). What one misses in the play and what Mr Hibberd undoubtedly has the ability to give us is something akin to those
questions Shaw throws up in his reflections on the prize-fighting scene in the witty and perceptive preface to Cashel Byron’s Profession: “the spectacle of a poor human animal fighting faithfully for his backers, like a terrier killing rats... is one which ought to persuade any sensible person of the folly of treating the actual combatants as the ‘principals’ in a prize fight... The prize fighter is no more what the spectators imagine him to be than the lady with the wand and star in the pantomime is really a fairy queen.”

The performances in Ron Blair’s production are considerably more convincing and energetic than those on view in recent SATC work. In particular, Colin Friels’ Darcy is something of a tour de force; energetic, professional, and displaying a rare degree of physical agility in the boxing workouts (well staged by Michael Fuller). It was certainly not the fault of either that the jig that closes the play did not quite achieve the degree of excitement and release of energy that it surely needs. Similar in its way to Musgrave’s dance, it climaxed in being staged in such a way that the audience experiences a feeling similar to the elation caused by a last minute goal, or the collective release of breath at a tumbling trick that closes an acrobatic act. Here it seemed almost an afterthought, in spite of Friels’ skilful and rhythmic combination of dance and boxing footwork.

As Margaret Darcy, Les Dayman was impressive, avoiding for the most part the pitfalls of the pantomime dame impersonation and convincing one of the apinities of the casting. Looking at times like a larger, more authentic version of the Anthony Perkins character in Psycho, Dayman managed the mother/son exchanges well and neatly steered the character past the stock Irish mother clichés. Isobel Kirk was less successful as the father: though not quite physically right for the role, she could have done, one felt, with a little guidance with which she adapted the role for the male persona. The other characters, with the exception of Judy Davis as Winnie, Les’s girlfriend, seemed rather pallid and underwritten.

Ron Blair’s direction lacked focus and tended to lose the performers on the thrust stage, allowing them to ramrod and lengthly entrances and exits. Far better to have staged the piece as a side-show with a gallery of figures playing front-on to the audience. In this way the excellent songs, which tended, alas, to get lost, could have been integrated more effectively projected.

The second bout of the evening resulted in a double victory to Roger Pulvers over both cast (on points) and the reviewer, who threw in the towel somewhere in the fourth round (appropriately entitled ‘Nodding’). Wallowing around in another’s murky pool of free association is not my idea of theatre and after a hotch-potch of images and motifs from Oriental theatre, Bond, Jonesco, Beckett, Jung, and the “American Connection”, I could only conclude that the author must presumably share the view, expressed by one of his characters in the very last thing I needed”. My sympathies to the cast, gallant and unbowed in defeat.

---

THE GOOD PERSON OF SECHWAN

RICHARD FOTHERINGHAM

The Good Person of Sechwan by Bertolt Brecht. La Boite Theatre, Brisbane Qld. Opened 23 June, 1978. Director, Fred Wasley; Design, Gregame Hattrick; Shen Te, Shu Shu, Tetsu, Gottschall; Yang Sun, Paul Haswell; Mrs Yang, Lorna Bol; Mr Shen, Bath Prescott; Liu To, Paulman, Presi, Robert Koebner; Mrs Mitsu, Doreen Wilson; Siser in Law, Prostitute, niece, Andrea Moor; Unemployed Woman, Verity Ridgman; Walter, nephew, John Tyeryer; Prostitute, girl, Penny Bundy; Grandfather, John Bombadler; Woman, Penny Brown; Mao, Ken wall; Wu Fu, Mike Vaughn; Carpe Dealer, Gol, Harry Watson; Wife, Patricia Furman; Limping Man, God 2, Stephen Billitt; God 3 Lyn Moorfoot. (Amateur)

The main disadvantage with La Boite’s system of professional artistic direction and amateur casts (further complicated by the occasional involvement of the professional TIE team actors) is the unevenness of the end product. Just as Rick Billinghurst’s excellent Young Mo was marred by generally lamentably weak performances, so this current offering is well below the standards we have come to expect of La Boite, and is only spasmodically rescued by an effective scene of a good perfor­mance.

It’s particularly unfortunate that it should be The Good Person of Sechwan (by my reckoning one of the great plays of the century) which has suffered in this way. A masterwork like this, which we’re likely to see once in a decade if lucky, needs the post-performance foyer party with even the slightest twinge of conscience.

---

LITTLE STIMULATION FOR AN AUDIENCE

POINT OF DEPARTURE

KATHARINE BRISBANE

Point of Departure by Jean Anouilh. Queensland Theatre Company. Directed by Richard Fotheringham. Designer, Ian McDonald. Director, Joe Meculom; Decectors, Fiona Reilly; Lighting, Rodney Threlkeld; Stage Manager, Lynne Kennedy; Costume, Darrell Henderson; Light, Bruce Parr; Lighting, Stuart Kemph; Sound, Gary Poole; Mother, Pat Thomson; Vocal, David Collinson; Music, Geoff Carterwright; Host Water, Allan Wilson; Scenic Design, Robart Koabnar; Costume, Lorna Cashel Byron; Lighting, Lyn Moorfoot. (Amateur)

I suppose every theatre afficionado of my generation must have once been in love with Jean Anouilh. Memories of his qualities of romantic perfection, worldly cynicism and uncompromising sincerity must still bring shivers of nostalgia to emotional recall.

In my case the only professional production I ever directed (in the sense that everybody was paid) was The Walts of the Toreadors at the Perth Playhouse in the 50’s. I think I must have read everything that Anouilh had written by that point. Much later, in the Paris of 1969 still upturned by the revolutionary events of 1968 (led by young people not too far removed from Anouilh’s Antigone) I saw the opening of his Cher Antoine, another version of his Recherche de Temps Perdu, in the drawing rooms of ancient chateaux, which had become his chosen style. The time seemed very far from Antigone and Point of Departure.

So it seemed an impossible but intriguing idea that the Queensland Theatre Company should choose to revive the latter in their current season at the SGIO Theatre. What appeal would it have for
Brisbane audiences, one asked oneself. Was it to celebrate Mr Bjelke-Peterson's abolition of death duty? The answer proved simpler than that: the author was Governor-General, Sir Zelman Cowan; and the play by the director, Joe MacCullum, because he liked it — and, no doubt the presence of the beautiful, fragile-looking Gaye Poole, certainly a find for the company, had something to do with it.

Point of Departure is a modern adaptation written at the height of the Second World War, of the legend of Orpheus and Eurydice. It opens in a railway café where a poor musician and his son (Orpheus) are waiting for a train. The father is absorbed in the problem of how to preserve his modest pleasures; the son with the sadness of their pedestrian life. A travelling company of actors arrive: they too are self-absorbed, play-acting pride and passion.

Among them, wistfully, is Eurydice who, upon hearing the strains of Orpheus's violin, is drawn to him. They move, hesitatingly, into a state of mutual self-absorption. Lightly they discard Orpheus's father and Eurydice's love, who throws himself under a train; and with an obsessive sense of their own destiny they set out on a new life together unhamppered by realities, with the blessing of the mysterious M Henri.

For the rest of the play we watch the assault upon their idyll of the grubby incidents of every day, like a nosy hotel keeper and aspects of each other's character and past which do not match the preconceptions. Eurydice dies while running away from her imperfections and in due course, seduced by the portrait M Henri draws of the impossibility of preserving perfection in life, Orpheus joins her.

The play, like his Antigone of the same period, is filled with the urgency of its wartime context: the invading forces of death, deprivation and imprisonment; the need to believe in a perfection beyond the reality one knows; and the need to grasp it without question wherever and whenever it is offered.

Today and in Australia and in colloquial English the play does appear a little quaint. It is as if the bomb on which the principal characters are sitting has been defused. There is very little stimulation in such a situation for an audience: for the serious theatre-goer it has interest as a genre piece. The reason is no more than its music and its uproarious characters, will long survive their petty footnotes, and dance the tango on their forgotten graves.

The story (though story is not quite the point) concerns a number of once-prominent Satanist bohemians remembering better days, and the developers' efforts to replace their dreams with high-rise buildings. Out of the mind of one of them, Mac Greene the shabby novelist (John Gaden) long dipped in the bottle, comes his famous creation Ern Malley, the great Australian soldier-poet who never was (Neil Redfern) to save them from their doom, but Ern like all of us is more corruptible these days and goes off chasing sex instead of resisting the multinational invader and their save operation falls into a melancholy autumnal shambles: the old dreams grow, and engulf them, until they are no more; the Cross absorbs them all.

Even them, the grubby titans, the special tawdry circle round Pandora the witch (Jennie Claire) whose funnel web of fading lust unites them till the end.

And they did cut fine figures in their day.
milksoppy Ern Malley, is in good brash voice but consummately miscast in a role both unplayable and underwritten: one becomes bored rigid after the first half hour with a plaintive puppet upbraiding his creator for creating him in the first place, and sulkyly refusing one night stands to anything that moves. Geraldine Turner, on the other hand, who gave profound pause to several convinced homosexuals on the opening night with her ostrich-feather strip, has precisely that combination of gauche vulgarity and enormous breasts that should assure her place as a great lady of the Australian musical stage, if such a glory still exists in the gloomy nineteen nineties.

It should. It must. For too long have we laboured in the sub-Williamson quagmire of bickery naturalism with casts of three in dingy rooms, on the stupid premise that this made more commercial sense than song, soliloquy and supernaturality (in short, theatricality) in an age of dwindling salaries and colour television. From O'Malley then to Ern Malley now, and back to Brecht and Shakespeare and music hall and beyond, it is clear that what people will come out on a cold night to see is theatre and nothing less... and theatre to them is a lot of actors on a big stage doing clever things to music they can hum in the way home in the car; like Ralph Tyrell's intermittently lovely music on this particular evening, at least one song of which the elegiac "Jack of Hearts" at the end of Act One, which should stand as Dottie's epitaph, would in a slightly better world have achieved that place on the jukebox now bestraddled by Leonard Cohen.

The honours of the evening, however, go to two ladies. Robin Nevin, as Ethel Malley, Ern's constructed suburban sister forever quivering on the verge of radiant beauty and triumphant incest, once again, as she did in Season at Sarpsparilla, creates and defines an archetype so truly that we feel we have known her all our lives. But best of all is Julie MacGregor as the Shrewishly CREEPY Backwater ("crack a fat or your money back") whose profession reeks from every crack in her ill-used body and croak in her infantile voice. Her Lilliputian tragedy, her stupidity and her poignancy are conveyed with such exactitude and such poetic vehemence it takes the breath away...

... It might be appropriate to say one more thing. It is this. La Hewett, who is in no way inferior to Shakespeare in her breadth of vision, her verbal facility and her insights into character, does in fact lack one ability that the overpraised old Jack was able to bring to knitting things together so they seem (only seem) to both begin and end. To this long lack in herself she should devote some study, and rather less paranoia. May I direct her attention to that other great poet of the Australian theatre, just down the road, Barry Humphries, to see some part of how it is done.

With that small reservation however (and it is a small one), go see it. Beat a path through broken bottles to its door. Australia needs you.
The quality of strolling medieval players

**MOTHER COURAGE**

DOROTHY HEWETT

Mother Courage and Her Children by Bertolt Brecht. NIDA at Jane Street Theatre, Sydney. Opened 26 June 1978. Director, Aubrey Mellor; Designer, Edie Kurzer; Musical Director, Roma Conway; Stage Manager, Fiona Williams. Mother Courage, Kerr Walker; Käte, Janese Walsh; Edifi, Ron Rodger; Swiss Cheese, Robert Menzies; Cook, John Clayton; Chaplain, Robert Alexander; Yerke Pater, Peasant Woman, Angela Punch; Sergeant, General Peasant, Bill Charlton; Recruit, Young Soldier, Lieutenant, Stuart Campbell.

Mother Courage and her Children worked fantastically at Jane Street because of the honesty and simplicity of Aubrey Mellor's direction, some good strong ensemble playing from the company, and the extraordinary power of Kerry Walker's Courage.

The homespun clothing, Brecht's plain, brown half-curtain, the tableaux and groupings of peasants and soldiers, the colloquial bawdy translation, gave the production a rough homogeneous quality, so that the epic journey through the thirty years war was always tough, savage, humourous, tragic, and utterly believable.

The direction allowed Brecht's great text to illuminate the tiny Jane Street theatre with its minute apron, so that the audience seldom lost their sense of a chronic, a morality play. The actors had the quality of strolling medieval players who had set up their booth in the village square.

Kerry Walker is, by all the laws of averages, too young to play Mother

Stuart Campbell, Bill Charlton, Robert Menzies (Swiss Cheese) and Kerr Walker (Mother Courage) in NIDAs' Mother Courage. Photo: Robert Walker
Courage, but she is an extraordinary actress with the guts, the presence and the voice to overcome the problems of her youth. A piece of inspired casting gave her the lead in the Sharran/White film The Night, the Prowler. It was another inspiration to cast her as Courage. Her strength held the text and the company together on a barely adequate stage.

She had great support from Jenee Walsh with the speaking face and body as the mute Katrin, and Angela Punch, fresh from her triumph as the snivelling bride of Jimmy Blacksmith, who played a double role as one of Brecht’s high cheekboned, hoarse voiced, haggard whomes, and the terror-stricken farmer’s wife clinging to her piece of ground.

The acting honours went to the women, but the men provided solid back up, particularly Ron Rodger as Elilf, the elder son, John Clayton as the Cook, Robert Menzies as Swiss Cheese, the younger son, and Robert Alexander as the chaplain. Clayton is always good in a role that needs his particular quality of realism and honest playing.

There were many scenes to remember... the parting of Courage and her Cook, the death of her elder son, the scattering of Katrin, the strutting whore and her genital lovers, Katrin perched high on the wall warning the sleeping town with her beating drum. Her fall was perhaps even too realistic. Fear for the safety of the actress seemed to intervene in one’s willing suspension of disbelief.

Of course there were problems... Courage and Katrin dragging the wagon around that very small circumference with no room to manoeuvre, the sometimes waverering voices in the songs, the clumsiness of some of the “crowd” players, but the marching feet and the marching songs off helped to create the rhythms and the epic proportions of the play. The tableaux around the wagon were particularly useful in elevating the journey. They worked like inspired film clips, and the whores’ fancy hats and fancy boots became, in that bare setting, images of soiled whore’s fancy hat and fancy boots became, the march of war.

The acting honours went to the women, but the men provided solid back-up, particularly Ron Rodger as Elilf, the elder son, John Clayton as the Cook, Robert Menzies as Swiss Cheese, the younger son, and Robert Alexander as the chaplain. Clayton is always good in a role that needs his particular quality of realism and honest playing.

There were many scenes to remember... the parting of Courage and her Cook, the death of her elder son, the scattering of Katrin, the strutting whore and her genital lovers, Katrin perched high on the wall warning the sleeping town with her beating drum. Her fall was perhaps even too realistic. Fear for the safety of the actress seemed to intervene in one’s willing suspension of disbelief.

Of course there were problems... Courage and Katrin dragging the wagon around that very small circumference with no room to manoeuvre, the sometimes wavering voices in the songs, the clumsiness of some of the “crowd” players, but the marching feet and the marching songs off helped to create the rhythms and the epic proportions of the play. The tableaux around the wagon were particularly useful in elevating the journey. They worked like inspired film clips, and the whores’ fancy hats and fancy boots became, in that bare setting, images of soiled whore’s fancy hat and fancy boots became, the march of war.

The Jane Street production proved once again that a great play doesn’t need a huge stage or a gigantic budget... what is needed is perception, tenderness, toughness, honesty, and a little ingenuity.

Contemporary Australian drama — indeed Aust Lit in general — owes a very real debt to the Roman Catholic Church, especially to its Inductiontion Wing, good old Catholic Education (Irish Australian Branch). Without a reaction to its process of implanting Instant and Irreconcilable Guilt Pacemakers deep in the psyche of its charges we would have no Tom Kennally, Peter Kenna, Ron Blair or Jack Hibberd. To their regret the Dorothy Hewetts of this world have to rub along as best they can with mere High Anglican Boarding School, which on their own admission is at best a pale imitation. Doctor Jack and I might come to blow over whether the Marist or Christian Brothers were the more adept at finding the right mix of physical and psychological terror tactics, but it would be a quibble, doctrinal infighting.

Of course acknowledging the Church’s skill in plutonising the spirit is somewhat backhand praise, rather like thanking the pox, plague and Machiavelli for Webster and Shakespeare. For every breakaway into imaginative literature there are countless souls sitting dutifully in public services awaiting their pensions, voting Liberal (since the demise of the DLP) and carefully steering a canny course through the stylistic changes, and the actors handled them dexterously. Joan Sydney grabbed the part of blowzy Breda Mulcahy with both hands, as did Margaret Ford smell-up-her-nose Cecilia; Edgar Metcalfe’s Tocky Keating — somewhat of a one-note part — had the right air of mealymouthed, embittered viciousness Joxer Daly with spiritual leprosy; and Ivan King made the most of the old sod, Houses O’Halloran. It was also a fine debut for a very young actor Jeremy Syns as the boy Chrissy.

I found that the performances of Jenny McNae as Mary and Leslie Wright as Father O’Gorman were gems. A welcome return of Jenny to Perth. She managed here to bring off the difficult feat of making Mary’s incomprehension of the nature of her feelings for the priest completely credible, and the nervous tension slipping towards madness chillingly plausible. Leslie Wright is one of the most unpredictable actors around. His skill is unquestionable, but the results of his playing uncertain. It seems (to me, from out front) that if he likes what he is playing and gets with it he can be remarkably powerful, as he is here in making this lecherous, morally india-
The performances of rubber priest not only credible but likeable. If on the other hand he seems not to get with the part — I felt this with his Mitch in Streetcar — it looks as though he is just winging it, playing from stock. I’m pleased to see him show us again what he can do with something that challenges him.

They perform and perform non-stop

**BIG BAD MOUSE**

MARGOT LUKE

*Big Bad Mouse* by Philip King and Falkland Carey from an idea by Ivan Butler. Regal Theatre, Subiaco, WA. Producer, Paul Biljon.

Fiona Jones, Jaki Cummins; Harold Hopkins, Keith Reid; Miss Spencer, Elizabeth Calacob; Mr Price-Hargreaves, Jimmy Edwards; Mr Bloom, Eric Sykes; Lady Chesapeake, Joang Young; Dora Povey, Jo Barry. (Professionally)

Big Bad Mouse is the sort of play no self-respecting critic goes to see, let alone praise, but ends up coming out babbling incoherently about them not making them like that no more. Performers, that is, not plays. It is, in fact, your sub-standard West-End farce, in which the contempt it deserves, and hyped up by the simple means of using, or abusing it, as a Vehicle for bombastic Mr Price-Hargreaves, it’s stereotypes. The setting is the office of Jimm by bombastic Mr Price-Hargreaves, Jimmy Edwards and Eric Sykes, rollercoast around the world on something modestly described as a seventh farewell tour. The story line has the sort of plot that thins instead of thickening, and revels in the ready reference to showbusiness names . . . one keeps asking how far we, the audiences, are supplying the material.

The facts given are sparse and oblique. We watch and listen while a man is drinking himself to the point of suicide. But would the whole thing be quite as powerful if we didn’t know the man is Hancock? Is the process of self-destruction dramatic enough in itself or only if the victim is a household name? How far do we care about the pudgy man in the seedy room buttonholing us between conferences with the woolly moose-head on the wall and the nips of vodka shared with a captive potplant?

In fact, of course, we care quite a lot. The man has flashes of wit. He is, on the whole, unaggressive and in line with the world at large. Above all, he is not a bore — he is ruminating on his failed life, but beyond the personal dilemma he asks the larger questions, ranging widely as a compulsive reader of encyclopedias. The basic philosophical questions, even if only sketched in somewhere between the punish long-stemmed office beauty, and Keith Reid as the office junior has a longish scene playing straight man to Jimmy Edwards, and one longs for him to hit back, which he doesn’t. Jo Barry manages to hide her own good looks to contribute the last of the quartet of female joke chelices, the dopey, short-sighted ugly girl who ought to be grateful for being accosted by a perv in the dark.

When one comes to think about it (which one doesn’t), the basis of the whole play is nasty and offensive, and a good target for any self-respecting women’s action group. However, the performers manage to defuse it, by ignoring practically anything that interferes with their comedy routine and turning it into a man finding himself to the point of suicide. But would the whole thing be quite as powerful if we didn’t know the man is Hancock? Is the process of self-destruction dramatic enough in itself or only if the victim is a household name? How far do we care about the pudgy man in the seedy room buttonholing us between conferences with the woolly moose-head on the wall and the nips of vodka shared with a captive potplant?

The reasons for his despair are only gradually pieced together as the deluge passes over us — anecdotes, suppressed fits of weeping, bizarre pieces of useless jokes, witty one-liners. The transition from success to failure is much less precisely charted than the constant preoccupation with Being Funny. It almost seems as if there never was a moment of true success — just audiences, insistently demanding — Mr Hancock, say something funny! And then there were the failures — in marriage and business partnerships. One cannot quite believe that this funny and intelligent man could have had such an unremitting run of bad luck, but that’s the way the play has it, which possibly makes it not so much a piece about a man as a piece about the nature of failure.

Much of the enjoyment in the play is contributed by the verbal high-jinx as in the line that can stand for the play as a whole, when Hancock shouts out of the window — “It’s all in desperanto!” Geoff Gibbs in the role is very good indeed. He is of naturally solid build but here manages to be pudgy and febrile, spacing his lucid intervals well in the rambling, self-indulgent passages and even in moments of childishness never becoming mawkish or embarrassing. He does the music-hall turns with gusto bursting strongly into song, throwing away lines with the knowingness of the skilled performer Hancock was. Even though he is not attempting an obvious imitation, the intonation, the occasional gesture and the overall feel of the character evoke echoes of recognition.

The Greenroom’s stage area has been reduced, with the seating encroaching on the tiny seedy room with its unmade bed, graffiti on the wall (a womb with a view) and the game of noughts and crosses on the window — giving the whole thing a suitably claustrophobic note.

**Echos of recognition**

**HANCOCK’S LAST HALF HOUR**

MARGOT LUKE


How good would this play be if Heathcote Williams did not have a readymade framework of tragedy? The real-life figure of the sad clown, who was a regular guest in millions of homes...
Life does not have a monopoly on randomness

WITOLD GOMBRWICZ IN BUENOS AIRES

MARGUERITE WELLS

Witold Gombrowicz in Buenos Aires by Roger Pulvers. Grapevine Theatre Company, Children Street Hall, Canberra. Opened 14 June. Directed by Adrian Guthrie. Lighting, Tony Martin, Chris Ellyard; The Man, Bill Debal; The Woman, Julie Hudepohl; The Soldier, Glenda Lum; The Real Enemy, Howard Stanley; The Old Man, Adrian Guthrie.

To settle all bets at the outset, Witold Gombrowicz begins with a veet and ends with a vitch. Those who see Roger Pulvers play fall broadly into two factions. There is the "I didn't understand it" faction, who speak with a whine and a conviction of having been maltreated, and there is the "I really enjoyed it (but I didn't understand it)" faction, who speak in a conspiratorial whisper. I would like to start a new faction. It will be called the "Do you really need to understand a play, as long as you enjoy it?" faction. A play doesn't have to be a slice of information any more than it needs to be a slice of life. Not everything a playwright writes is necessarily symbolic, so when the Soldier climaxes an impressive speech about sex being dead and the conventions about theatrical convention. As so many asides in the play point out, there isn't anything to understand. It's just that trying to follow a lateral thinker's arabesques when you are from birth a martyr to the modern disease of linear logicality only makes you nervous... The millions of Japanese who hate the No theatre stand witness to that. Witold Gombrowicz is a play about history, a history that can be seen in its clearest form in Japan. The fatigue of war breeds pacifism, The Real Enemy changes from unreasoning militarist to religious guru, and finally reveals television as the central Truth of his faith. War is emshrined, ennobled, pacifism is soon forgotten; women return from their wartime equality with men to decorativeness and childbearing, violence again becomes respectable and will no doubt lead to more wars. To all this there is only one possible defence for the sensitive — withdrawal. When Witold Gombrowicz was living in Argentina, for instance, as The Soldier explains, he had completely anaesthetised his outer self to the most excruciating pain of all — that of everyday banktelling among the Argentinians. And since withdrawal, which keeps you immune from torture, will also keep you immune to the pain of others, war and history will begin all over again. What then, can you do? Write a play about it perhaps.

— brown horizon, blue sky, trenches, one with incumbent TV aerial for The Man to run up his white surrender trousers on, tent and bird's nest and rock. Then, of course the indispensable bag of twenty-three poisonous snakes, for dragging bodies around in, for without martyrs religions are not made. It is a play that depends greatly on lighting. Each scene ends with a picture. Each picture makes a point. The spotlight on the Madonna-and-children that fades to the strains of "Advance Australia Fair", tends to linger in the mind. The final scene, "I want to take my face and hold it up to the Sun in both my hands", with the red sun rising, is especially moving if you don't see why... The Canberra season was marred by the fact that The Soldier from the original Newcastle production. left the cast after the Newcastle season; there were some differences were soon settled, since all parties were on the same side, but the struggle between Childers Street Hall and the Canberra climate ended as it ends monotonously every year. The sub-zero temperatures won.

Of course, the fact that it is not necessary to understand, doesn't mean that there isn't anything to understand. It only means that things are not so hard to follow, that reasons for what is going on are not so difficult to find. It's just that trying to follow a lateral thinker's arabesques when you are from birth a martyr to the modern disease of linear logicality only makes you nervous... The millions of Japanese who hate the No theatre stand witness to that. Witold Gombrowicz is a play about history, a history that can be seen in its clearest form in Japan. The fatigue of war breeds pacifism, The Real Enemy changes from unreasoning militarist to religious guru, and finally reveals television as the central Truth of his faith. War is emshrined, ennobled, pacifism is soon forgotten; women return from their wartime equality with men to decorativeness and childbearing, violence again becomes respectable and will no doubt lead to more wars. To all this there is only one possible defence for the sensitive — withdrawal. When Witold Gombrowicz was living in Argentina, for instance, as The Soldier explains, he had completely anaesthetised his outer self to the most excruciating pain of all — that of everyday banktelling among the Argentinians. And since withdrawal, which keeps you immune from torture, will also keep you immune to the pain of others, war and history will begin all over again. What then, can you do? Write a play about it perhaps.
A PAWNSHOP IN SOHO, THREE MONTHS LATER

An atmosphere of misery pervades the place. There is the counter, and a series of booths for shy borrowers. Long ranges of shelves line the walls and run far back into the recesses of the shop. These shelves are loaded with goods — shoes, books, clothes, linen and books which are in ragged and dog eared volumes.

The articles in the shop are for sale — all pledges being deposited in the rooms above. Up the centre of the open space, and close to the counter runs the "spout"; a classic piece of pawnshop machinery. The spout is simply a long wooden pipe down which bundles of pledges are thrown from upstair's by an assistant. A bag, with string attached, hangs down it, and when an article is required the ticket is placed in the bag, which is drawn up by the clerk above who then flings the pledge down the spout.

ACT TWO

MARX enters the Pawnshop. The bell on the door jangles. He looks around the shop and notices the family silver for sale in the display case. Enter Uncle, the Pawnbroker.

Uncle: Lovely silver that. You're just in time docto'r. The three months are up today. To tell you the absolute truth, I didn't think you were coming.

Marx: Is it three months already?

Uncle: Yes, I brought it down this morning first thing. Strictly speaking, of course, it's not for sale until next Monday, but there's nothing wrong in exciting the market. I've had a lot of trade today. Saturday is a great time for redeeming.

Marx: Oh? Why Saturday?

Uncle: All the lads and lasses come in to redeem their Sunday best. It all comes back on Monday. Through the door and up the spout.

Marx: A brisk little business then, you have?

Uncle: I don't complain doctor. But I think we have seen the best of the best of the day, though. (consults the ledger) Let me see ... Coats, bonnets, dancing pumps — all redeemed for tomorrow. It does them good to get out, I always say.

Marx: I'm sure it does uncle.

Uncle: Now doctor, I know most of the pledges from your place come by way of your very pleasant maid, but I appreciate that I owe the honour of this visit to the family silver! Say no more doctor. Servants aren't what they used to be. Only the other day, I had to discharge a clerk when I learned a number of musical instruments had found their way out of here into a similar establishment down the road. I can tell you it was very embarrassing when the owners came in here to redeem them. I felt I had breached a sacred trust. (Uncle goes to the case to get out the silver) Well, it's been an honour having your silver here, doctor. It's rare to get something of this class in here.

Marx: No uncle. Leave it there.

Uncle: Leave it?

Marx: I will have to bid farewell to the family silver.

Uncle: Farewell? Oh I am sorry to hear that doctor. Still, I am sure you'll be glad to hear that it's bound for a good home.

Marx: Oh?

Uncle: Yes, I'd only just put it down here this morning when a well-to-do gent from Golden Square put his head in. Slapped five on it straight out.

Marx: Five sovereigns you say?

Uncle: Woah! I said to him. This here's Doctor Marx's silver. Still under pledge, I said. Not for sale. That made him want it all the more.

Marx: Because it was mine?

Uncle: No doubt about it doctor. If it belongs to somebody else, you can be sure people will want it even more. Come back Monday I said. That is, unless Doctor Marx comes here in the meantime.

Marx: Well here I am uncle. But not for the silver. I believe you are holding a book of mine.

Uncle: As a matter of fact doctor, I'm holding a good many of your books at the moment. Which one was you referring to?

Marx: (sorting through several pawn tickets) It will be one of these. Try that one. Uncle places the ticket in the bag on the spout, rings a bell and the bag is drawn up the spout.

Marx: What would you do uncle, if people owned nothing?

Uncle: I'd be out of business. If they owned nothing, they'd have nothing to pawn. But there's no danger of that doctor. People find plenty to pawn, even if they own very little.

Marx: You never know uncle. It might happen one day that people would, say, decide to own nothing.

Uncle: Can't see it. If people owned nothing there wouldn't be no music. For that matter, there'd be no loving because there'd be no pride in making, no heirlooms for the dead to be remembered. No Doctor; people would always get things to own and sooner or later they find their way down here, the music and the pride and lovers' gifts. (the book comes down the spout) And the books, too. Here you are doctor.

Marx: However, I cannot redeem this day, uncle. I only want to refer to something.

Uncle: You take your time, doctor. Read whatever you want. Your eyes won't wear out the pages, although if you read by this light, there's no saying what the pages will do to your eyes.

He lights the lamp and draws the blind over the door. He looks out. He reads.

Uncle: Well, I think the best of the day's over. I'm not expecting any more at this time. The door opens. Enter Bodfish.

Uncle: Closed!

Bodfish: Not yet you ain't. Well look who's here! The mad doctor of Dean Street. Don't tell me someone's got and pawned him! What's he doing here, uncle?

Uncle: Shh! Reading.

Bodfish: So he is! How very handy us meeting here like this doctor, because I've been trying to catch you for some time now. Everytime I put my head in at number twenty-eight, I'm told you ain't home, though anyone can smell your cigar. (takes out a list) You owe me doctor. Lamb chops, bladecbone, silverside ... it's all there. A month's meat on tick.

Uncle: The only one who conducts business in my shop Bodfish, is me. Don't harass the customers. Be on your way.

Bodfish: (producing a ticket) Just a minute uncle. I'm taking out the doctor's maid tomorrow. (throws ticket) It's my suit.

Uncle: Rings the bell and sends up the ticket. One suit.

Bodfish: Do you know Lenchen, uncle? Marx's attention wanders from his book to Bodfish.

Uncle: A charming creature. One of my most regular clients, eh doctor?

Bodfish: Yeah, well I met her cooling my heels outside his place and if he only paid his bills I wouldn't have to hock my Sunday suit. I mean a feller can't take a girl out if he ain't wearing his best.

Uncle: Ah, but just think Bodfish. If he had paid his bills, you wouldn't be taking Lenchen out at all.

Bodfish: Yeah. I never thought of it like that.

Uncle: Marx? Bodfish —

Bodfish: What is it?

Marx: Have you read Francois Bernier's La description des etats du Grand Mogul?

Bodfish: No. Good read is it?

Marx: I can recommend it.

Uncle: Marx? Bodfish —

Bodfish: Yeah. Sounds a laugh a line.

Uncle: Depends on how you look at it. This man Bernier was the physician to the court of the grand mogul in seventeenth century India.

Bodfish: Fancy that.

Marx: The Mogul society was a military one and its leader was the sole owner of all land.

Uncle: Oh? That's fascinating, ain't it uncle?

Uncle: Thank god for democracy.

Marx: Being a military society, all traders depended for their livelihood upon the army.

Bodfish: They probably got paid then.

Uncle: Soldiers rarely redeem. Just look at all that trash. You won't find many swords and guns at the retreat from Moscow. On these shelves Bodfish, you will find a history of military courage and foolishness.

Marx: Listen! Listen to me!
Marx: This is important. Wherever the army went, the traders followed. Everyone and everything lived on the move, right down to the last human. Marx touches a saucepan.

Uncle: Brought in last week. Probably stolen.

Bodfish: Just a minute. If everything was on the move like, how could you find anyone? Tell me this, man, what work do you do? People are supposed to stay put here and even then you can't find them, eh uncle?

Uncle: I give everyone three months to return and sometimes they never come back. Most do, though. People are more fond of their goods than their freedom.

Marx: But what if you went along too, uncle? Took everything with you. What if the whole city moved about without being rooted to the spot?

Bodfish: From what I can see, people with no money move about quite enough.

Uncle: Not true Bodfish. They cling like flies, waiting to be squashed.

Marx: No private property — (the regains their interest in private property in land existed. For the Mogul home was wherever you stayed for the night.

A roll of clothes comes down the spout. Uncle unrolls what is in fact, Bodfish’s Sunday suit.

Bodfish: Are you telling me we should pack up and run around England like a lot of savages? Is that what you’re saying?

Marx: I am suggesting to you Bodfish that the evils that come from owning property can be avoided by owning property at all.

Bodfish: That’s just the sort of argument you can expect from a pauper. What do you say uncle?

Marx: Uncle has no quarrel with paupers. They cling like flies, waiting to be squashed.

Uncle: That man who owns your house, the man who has world.”

Marx: He’s the man who owns your shop; the man who owns your house, the man who has controlled this meat ring at Smithfield. The Bourgeoisie feeds on making money, on commercial confidence, confidence in trade and traffic.

Bodfish: Sounds very healthy to me. What do you say, uncle?

Uncle: Decidedly healthy.

Marx: How can you say that? You thrive on poverty. Where the streets are most crowded and the houses brimming with sickness and squalor, there you thrive. Places like here?

Uncle: I gave you what you wanted.

Bodfish: I need no more. I won’t accept. I will accept no more pledges.

Uncle: You're quick enough to eat what I give you.

Uncle: I gave you what you wanted. But at a considerable profit.

I am never closed to hardship. The bourgeois theory will outlast all your shelves of tarnished silver.

Bodfish: Just a minute. If everything was on the move, right down to the last human? Marx: That's just the sort of argument you can expect from a pauper. What do you say uncle?

Uncle: I gave you what you wanted.

Bodfish: Just a minute. If everything was on the move, right down to the last human? Marx: That's just the sort of argument you can expect from a pauper. What do you say uncle?

Bodfish: Just a minute. If everything was on the move, right down to the last human? Marx: That's just the sort of argument you can expect from a pauper. What do you say uncle?

Bodfish: Just a minute. If everything was on the move, right down to the last human? Marx: That's just the sort of argument you can expect from a pauper. What do you say uncle?

Bodfish: Just a minute. If everything was on the move, right down to the last human? Marx: That's just the sort of argument you can expect from a pauper. What do you say uncle?

Bodfish: Just a minute. If everything was on the move, right down to the last human? Marx: That's just the sort of argument you can expect from a pauper. What do you say uncle?

Bodfish: Just a minute. If everything was on the move, right down to the last human? Marx: That's just the sort of argument you can expect from a pauper. What do you say uncle?

Bodfish: Just a minute. If everything was on the move, right down to the last human? Marx: That's just the sort of argument you can expect from a pauper. What do you say uncle?

Bodfish: Just a minute. If everything was on the move, right down to the last human? Marx: That's just the sort of argument you can expect from a pauper. What do you say uncle?

Bodfish: Just a minute. If everything was on the move, right down to the last human? Marx: That's just the sort of argument you can expect from a pauper. What do you say uncle?

Bodfish: Just a minute. If everything was on the move, right down to the last human? Marx: That's just the sort of argument you can expect from a pauper. What do you say uncle?

Bodfish: Just a minute. If everything was on the move, right down to the last human? Marx: That's just the sort of argument you can expect from a pauper. What do you say uncle?

Bodfish: Just a minute. If everything was on the move, right down to the last human? Marx: That's just the sort of argument you can expect from a pauper. What do you say uncle?

Bodfish: Just a minute. If everything was on the move, right down to the last human? Marx: That's just the sort of argument you can expect from a pauper. What do you say uncle?

Bodfish: Just a minute. If everything was on the move, right down to the last human? Marx: That's just the sort of argument you can expect from a pauper. What do you say uncle?

Bodfish: Just a minute. If everything was on the move, right down to the last human? Marx: That's just the sort of argument you can expect from a pauper. What do you say uncle?

Bodfish: Just a minute. If everything was on the move, right down to the last human? Marx: That's just the sort of argument you can expect from a pauper. What do you say uncle?

Bodfish: Just a minute. If everything was on the move, right down to the last human? Marx: That's just the sort of argument you can expect from a pauper. What do you say uncle?

Bodfish: Just a minute. If everything was on the move, right down to the last human? Marx: That's just the sort of argument you can expect from a pauper. What do you say uncle?

Bodfish: Just a minute. If everything was on the move, right down to the last human? Marx: That's just the sort of argument you can expect from a pauper. What do you say uncle?

Bodfish: Just a minute. If everything was on the move, right down to the last human? Marx: That's just the sort of argument you can expect from a pauper. What do you say uncle?

Bodfish: Just a minute. If everything was on the move, right down to the last human? Marx: That's just the sort of argument you can expect from a pauper. What do you say uncle?

Bodfish: Just a minute. If everything was on the move, right down to the last human? Marx: That's just the sort of argument you can expect from a pauper. What do you say uncle?

Bodfish: Just a minute. If everything was on the move, right down to the last human? Marx: That's just the sort of argument you can expect from a pauper. What do you say uncle?

Bodfish: Just a minute. If everything was on the move, right down to the last human? Marx: That's just the sort of argument you can expect from a pauper. What do you say uncle?
trousers.

Bodfish: Look, you don’t have to do this.

Uncle: 3½ doctor. That’s all I can do. No one will buy these in three months. You know that. I’m giving you a good price.

Marx: Hear that Bodfish. He’s giving me a chance. Come on uncle. I’ll give you my trousers.

He begins to take them off.

Uncle: I’ll give you ten shillings to keep your trousers on! If you take anything else off I’ll give you nothing. That’s my last and final offer.

Marx: Should I take it Bodfish?

Bodfish: Look here, I’ll give you your meat. You don’t have to do this.

Marx: But I do have to. If not to pay you, then to pay off the others. After careful consideration, uncle, I accept.

Uncle: Right. Here is your ticket. And here is your money. ten shillings. Now please gentlemen, the shop is closed.

Marx: Take it Bodfish. In payment for a month’s meat.

Bodfish: You didn’t have to do that guy’n’er.

Marx: Oh but I did have to Bodfish. You’re only feeling a twinge of guilt because you have never been here. Do not say I have never taken the money. I have quite cheerfully. All over Soho, men do this to the shopkeeper.

Marx: Even if anyone could hear you out there, they wouldn’t lift a finger. And when you lie dead on the floor, they will all pour into the shop to lug out the rubbish you have stolen from them over the years.

Uncle: No — please.

Marx: Look at him, Bodfish. - a wizened insect cowering in a cocoon of offal, cringing for the blow to end a lifetime of bloodsucking. Uncle rings the bell again.

Uncle: Police! Police!

Marx: Listen to him squawking for the paid assassins of the bourgeoisie.

Bodfish: (avoiding the sabre) Here, go easy with that!

Marx: (cornering Uncle) Get up. Come on, get up!

Uncle: Don’t hurt me. I’ll give you back your things.

Marx: Listen to his bargaining, Bodfish. His sort only give when they are cornered. There is only one way of shortening the murderous death pangs of the old society revolutionary terrorism! Uncle begins to ring his bell again.

Uncle: Help! Someone for God’s sake help.

Marx: Your God will not hear you now.

Marx strikes the bell from Uncle’s hand. Bodfish is peeping behind the blind over the door.

Bodfish: Hey, there’s a peer coming this way.

Marx: (to Uncle) Not a word out of you or I will slice you like a sausage.

Pause during which the policeman passes Bodfish joins Uncle and raises his hands as if he too is at Marx’s mercy. The Policeman gone, Bodfish drops his arms and relaxes.

Bodfish: Whew! That was a close shave.

Marx: (pauser) Why did you do that?

Bodfish: Do what?

Marx: Put your hands up. You weren’t in danger.

Bodfish: Yes I was. What if the peer had come in? He would have seen Uncle here, and me over there with you. He might have jumped to the wrong conclusion.

Marx: What conclusion?

Bodfish: That we was about to give Uncle what for.

Marx: And so we were.

Bodfish: Not me. Not me guv. I was just minding my own business.

Uncle: That’s right Bodfish. Get the policeman and I won’t mention you in court.

Bodfish: What court?

Uncle: When we have charged this madman charged with attempted murder.

Marx replaces the sabre.

Marx: No one is going to be charged with anything Uncle. And why? Because nothing happened.

Uncle: Are you saying that your trying to split up my skull was nothing?

Marx: What he’s talking about Bodfish?

Bodfish: I don’t know guv’n’er. I never seen a thing and I've been here the whole time. Ha ha.

Uncle: Get out, the both of you.

Enter Lenchen.

Lenchen: Is this where you are? I’ve been looking all over.

Uncle takes the opportunity to escape to the back of the shop.

Lenchen: (seeing Bodfish) Oh hello.

Bodfish: Hello Lenchen! (holding up suit) Just getting out my best for tomorrow.

Lenchen: Looking at Marx? What’s been going on here?

Marx: Bodfish —

Bodfish: Yes guv’n’er?

Marx: If Uncle has gone for a constable I trust you will be as good as your word.

Uncle: What constable? What’s been happening?

Bodfish: The Doctor here’s been rampaging about the shop like a pirate. Give uncle the fright of his life.

Lenchen: You’ve been doing what?

Bodfish: (to Marx) Don’t you worry doctor. But we ought to get out of here before anyone comes.

Marx: Bodfish, you stood by me then. Why did you?

Bodfish: We are on this side of the counter after all, aren’t we?

Marx: We need members of the proletariat in the party. You and I could start a revolutionary cell.

Bodfish: If you and I were there much less, we’ll be in one — at Wormwood Scrubs. He’ll be back in a minute.

Lenchen: Who?

Bodfish: Uncle and the whole police force. Come on! Alright, have it your own way. See you tomorrow then.

Exit Bodfish.

Marx: A pity. We could have used someone like Bodfish.

Lenchen: I am using him.

Marx: How do you mean?

Lenchen: If I didn’t make eyes at him and wag my tail we would have run out of meat a long time ago. Come on Moor. Get your clothes and we’ll go.

Marx: I can’t. I’ve pawned them. They went up the spout to pay Bodfish.

Lenchen: Wait until I have a word to that worm. Oh that’s lovely, that is. I spend weeks fobbing him off with a promise and he still gets his money. They’re going to love you when you turn up to the British Museum.

Crossed over to the other side.

Lenchen: Come on, you’d better come home. From what Bodfish says, the place will be swarming with police in a minute anyway. And Frau Marx is wondering where you are.

Lenchen: Were there any letters today?

I was hoping that Engels might have sent money today.


Marx: Don’t talk to me about it. I spend half my life trying to understand how it works and the other half scratching for it. And look at me! Half naked in this festering temple, run by a high priest who is so entangled with our lives we call him “uncle”. (Lenchen has sat down) Don’t you be depressed. We shall beat them in the end.

Lenchen: It’s not that bothering me Moor. I only wish it was.

Marx: What’s the matter little one?

Lenchen: You’ve got enough problems without mine.

Lenchen: Tell me.

Lenchen: I’m overdue.

Marx: So is the rent. What’s new?

Lenchen: Only I’m not laughing.

Marx: None of us has been eating properly. Is it any wonder our bodies are in chaos. My backbone is a mass of boils.

Lenchen: I don’t want to know about it.

Marx: How can our bodies work properly on the food we get.

THEATRE AUSTRALIA AUGUST 1978 37
Lenchen: If it was only a month I wouldn’t bother either. But it isn’t. I haven’t had a period for three months now. And I’ve been sick too—every morning.

Marx: That’s just what I meant. As if there aren’t enough jobs in the place.

Lenchen: I suppose you think I want to get pregnant!

Marx: First these damn boils on my backside, then Franciska born and now you!

Lenchen: (dryly) Thanks. (pause) You could have left me alone. It’s a wonder it hasn’t happened before the way you’ve been at me.

Marx: Verdamm! What a standing joke. “Have you heard the latest about Marx?” He’s been fucking the servant and she’s got a brat to prove it!

Lenchen: And Jenny — what’s she going to say.

Lenchen: Oh stop whining. I’ve already told her.

Marx: (pause) What exactly have you told her?

Lenchen: That I’m pregnant of course.

Marx: Oh: that’s perfect. Perfect! It’s not enough for the world to know, so you have to go and tell my wife.

Lenchen: She’d notice soon enough anyway. I won’t be able to hide it much longer. (pause) I could go and say: (pause) I’ll go if you like.

Marx: Go where?

Lenchen: I don’t know. Back to Germany. The Baroness would take me back. After all, I needn’t be worried. I’m not in love with him any more. I couldn’t be.

Marx: How do you think of yourself—on loan? Like a serf?

Lenchen: It would be better if I left anyway. You’ve already got enough mouths to feed.

Marx: You are wanted here Lenchen. Needed. Lenchen: Oh? And who wants me? Who needs you?

Marx: Women have children all the time. You don’t have to go rushing across Europe. People who do that never return. Look at Schramm.

Lenchen: He went off to defend your honour, the revolution.

Marx: But aren’t you trying to do the same thing?

Lenchen: Yes! And you didn’t stop Schramm going. Why stop me?

Marx: I’m not stopping you. All I’m saying is that it’s pointless for you to go back to Germany when ...

Lenchen: Yes?

Marx: When you’re needed here.

Lenchen: Needed or just useful?

Marx: Frau Marx needs you — to wash and cook and look after the children.

Lenchen: I can wash and cook and look after children in Germany. Do you need me?

Marx: Of course I need you! (pause) I need you to look after Frau Marx.

Lenchen: Oh, I see.

Marx: Please Lenchen, listen to me! Please!

Lenchen: Well?

Marx: Lenchen: are people’s lives shaped by their work or by how much money they get? What good is most from their labours? Look at this place, full of things which have been made and sold. Here they are piled up, each with its own marked value. Who controls that value? Who says our silver is worth more than that family bible — or any book for that matter. I’ll tell you who — a black, flapping vulture we call “uncle”. He has neither wrought the silver nor written a book, but he has set a value upon it. Marx: Pottency isn’t pregnant instead of me. Get your clothes on and come home. (call) Uncle! Are you there?

Lenchen: Marx: What did Jenny say when you told her you were pregnant?

Lenchen: She wasn’t exactly delighted. Especially when I told her who the man was.

Marx: (graby) Lenchen: I told her it was Engels.

Marx: Engels! (pause) Is it?

Lenchen: Of course not stupid. It’s you.

Marx: All right. Not so load. Who is going to tell Engels?

Lenchen: You will of course. After all, he’s your friend.

Marx: What? Tell him just like that? That’s he’s the father of your child.

Lenchen: Since he lives in Manchester and we haven’t seen him for months, he’s not likely to believe you. Just ask him to say he’s the father of the child — in case Frau Marx ever says anything.

Marx: I can’t do that.

Lenchen: If you want me to stay you will. Besides Engels will do it. He’d do anything for you.

Marx: But what on earth do I say to him?

Lenchen: Tell him all about your poverty. And while you’re erecting statues to each other, I’ll go and have the child.

Marx: You will stay then?

Lenchen: You know I will.

Schramm: Liebnecht! Aren’t you in the front door opens and Marx breaks away from her.

Marx: The shop is closed.

Schramm: Moor! It’s me!

Lenchen: Konrad Schramm?

Schramm: I’m alive Moor! Aren’t you in the least surprised.

Marx: It took Christ three days to rise from the dead; has it taken you three months. What kept you?

Lenchen: Withich told everyone he had killed you.

Schramm: Yes, it’s true. I was left for dead but the bullet only grazed my skull. Then I had to go into hiding. The police got wind of it all and had a watch set on the ports. Besides, I have been working with groups in Belgium and France. Moor, I told them of the work we were doing in London.

Marx: That would take three seconds, Schramm, not three months. Nothing is happening in London.

Schramm: But that’s not true Moor.

Marx: I have been busy selling my shirt for loin chops.

Schramm: Haven’t you heard?

Lenchen: What’s happened?

Schramm: The streets are full of it. You must have heard.

The door bursts open and Liebnecht enters, breathless.

Lieb: There you are Moor! I’ve been looking everywhere. The revolution has begun!

Schramm: Liebnecht! It’s me.
Lieb: Shut up or I'll lop your head off.
Marx: Right Liebnecht. Are you ready?
Lieb: Ready.
Marx: We'll have to move.
Lieb: It's alright. I've got a cab waiting outside.
Marx: A cab. Gut!
Lenchen: Only in London could you get a cab to the revolution.
Lieb: Ready.
Marx: We'll have to move.
Lieb: It's alright. I've got a cab waiting outside.
Lenchen: Moor —
Marx: What is it?
Lenchen hands him the sabre.
Lenchen: You forgot this. (He takes it. They both hold it for a moment) Don't get killed.
Marx and Liebnecht exit.
Schramm: The revolution begins and I have to sit through it like this.
Lenchen: It seems Schramm, you are not fated to die yet. Be patient; your luck will change.
What do you say, uncle?
Uncle: The shop is closed.

END OF ACT 2

ACT 3

The room in Dean Street, six months later in 1861. Lenchen, fully pregnant, is watching the kettle boil on the stove. She begins to make tea.

Lenchen: (calling) Shall I bring it in?
Jenny emerges from the back room buttoning her blouse.

Lenchen: No I've finished now.
Jenny: How is she?
Lenchen: Not so well. It'll be good thing when your milk arrives. I'm almost dry; my nipples are like cracked acorns. All I can give her is a miserable trickle, and what she gets she can't keep, poor little mite.
Lenchen: Don't count on me. I hate to think what my milk will be like after the sort of trash we've eaten all these years. If only I could get my hands on some money.
Jenny: What about Engels?
Lenchen: Well what about him?
Jenny: He must have sent you money.
Lenchen: No. Why should he?
Jenny: He is responsible for your ... condition, after all.
Lenchen: Any money he can spare, he sends to the Moor. You know that.
Jenny: When was the last time we had anything from Engels. He's always sent something in the past. And he must be getting more than ever now that he's been made a partner in his father's business. If the money's not coming here, where is it going?
Lenchen: I'm not seeing any of his money.
Jenny: I must say I am disappointed in Engels. I thought he might have had the decency to pay for his folly.
Lenchen: What else do you expect from men.
Jenny: That's if he is the father of your child.
Lenchen: He is. I'm not the sort who loses count.
Jenny: But I know Engels well. He's just not the sort of man who runs away. Since he hasn't sent you any money — are you sure I'm right about that?
Lenchen: Positive.
Jenny: Then you must forgive me for thinking that you may be covering up the identity of the real father.
Lenchen: Why should I do that?
Jenny: I don't know why. Unless it was someone ... well, someone who didn't want me to know. Do you understand?
Lenchen: I can tell you Engels wasn't too happy that I'd broken the news to you. I can tell you.
Jenny: You're due anyday now. Its curious; I can't remember Engels coming down to London nine months ago.
Lenchen: Well he didn't send this through the mail, I can tell you that. I would have saved the sheets for you if I'd known you were so interested.
Jenny: Don't be disgusting.
Lenchen: Who's being disgusting? I scrounge the streets begging for you and your family and you accuse me of fucking with your husband.
Jenny: Lenchen! That's quite enough of that.
Lenchen: Who's kept this place together, that's what I'd like to know. Who's washed, cleaned and cooked for you? While you were lying on your back having one child after another, I've slaved for the lot of you.
Jenny: You're forgetting your place.
Jenny: I'm not forgetting a damned thing! I'm just beginning to remember. How I was handed over by your mother as a wedding... (Maxx enters downstairs and begins to mount steps) present just like a set of silver. The only difference is I can't be pawned which is a great shame at least I'd get some rest in Uncle's shop what I don't get here. As for sleeping with that hairy pile of boils you call a husband — Enter Marx. He goes to pour himself some tea.

Marx: Don't mind me. Go on. Continue what you were saying.

Lanchan: Engels is clean and kind. Is it any wonder I like him.

Jenny: We were talking about Engels. He hasn't given Lrenchen any money for her confinement. So shan't be here.

Lrenchen: I've never asked him for any money.

Jenny: He might at least visit you.

Lrenchen: I think he feels he's visited me once too often.

Marx: You know well enough why Engels doesn't visit here. It's no good nothing to do with Lrenchen. You don't approve of him; it's as simple as that.

Jenny: I don't know. Engels has always been good to us. Many's the time he has sent us money. With arranged holidays for us. Always at the eleventh hour of course. His timing is perfect. In fact I admire Engels. It's just that I cannot approve of his relationship with that woman.

Marx: Engels has been living with Mary Burns for years, my dear.

Lrenchen: Perhaps he likes maid servants. Some men do you know.

Jenny: I think it's very bourgeois of a man to do such a thing, (she drinks tea) I don't care whether he is Irish or German.

Lanchan: He knows you think that; that's why he never comes here.

Jenny: That's not the point. It's just that a man like Engels, an employer after all, is taking advantage of his position when he goes about looking at this ibis — that's right — that he is sitting hunched at his workbench with his eyes. All your birds and beasts and men look at them. It was quiet with no getting away from it.

"Now, which one shall I take today" asked the toymaker out of the bargain we struck years ago. You have your fame", said the voice, "Enjoy that while it lasts".

"I have kept my side of the bargain, now you must keep yours".

"But I made my bargain with you when I was young and proud", said Hans Rockle.

"And you must keep it until you are old and humbled" said the vile smell. "I have made you the most famous toymaker in the land. Every toy you make has an exact copy of your own eyes, your own hands and feet and man and woman look at the world with your own eyes".

"But just look at those eyes!" said the toymaker, "All they see now is the pain of the world, woe and wretchedness. They cannot sell one toy from your own pain. That was our bargain. And now you are old Hans Rockle for every new toy you make, I will take an old one away. That was the bargaining we struck years ago. You have your fame", said the voice, "Enjoy that while it lasts".

Then Hans Rockle said "One day I will give all my toys away" and "What will you do then O Lord of the Flies?" For indeed it was the devil he was talking to. Satan laughed.

"If you want or give away a man as much as a toy, all their eyes will vanish and you yourself will be as blind as a worm".

Ja, Hans Rockle had made a pact with the devil and there was no getting away from it.

"Now, which one shall I take today" asked the devil.

"That king", said Hans Rockle, "Ignore his weeping queen".

The devil sniggered and the snagger became a hiss and the hiss became — silence. It was quiet in the shop.

Conrad waited a long time before he crept from the cupboard. It was night time. The toymaker was sitting hunched at his workbench with his head in his hands. Conrad could see a space where the king had been. As for the rest of the toys, they stood there saying nothing, their
Jenny: It's a damned place Jenny. It's a sewer even the rats avoid. But she'll be all right. She's a strong baby. Franziska. She's like the others in that. You'll see.

Jenny: She's not like the others Moor. She's nowhere near as strong. Her sleep is hot and feverish. It's this place. Can't we leave Moor?

Marx: Leave for where? We have no money. None. I can't think what's happened to Engels. Why doesn't he send something? (pause) But don't worry! Things must change soon. A newspaper in New York seems interested in our lives.

Jenny: Yes. Marx: Well that's good. Isn't it?

Jenny: I'm not sure. It's not a healthy sleep. She's not well. I can't feed her properly and whatever milk she gets, she can't keep. We eat so badly, how can she be well? Oh Moor......

Marx: Hursh. It's this damned place Jenny. It's a sewer even the rats avoid. But she'll be all right. She's a strong baby. Franziska. She's like the others in that. You'll see.

Jenny: She's not like the others Moor. She's nowhere near as strong. Her sleep is hot and feverish. It's this place. Can't we leave Moor?

Marx: Leave for where? We have no money. None. I can't think what's happened to Engels. Why doesn't he send something? (pause) But don't worry! Things must change soon. A newspaper in New York seems interested in taking my articles.

Jenny: We can pay him nothing.


Marx: Leave for where? We have no money. None. I can't think what's happened to Engels. Why doesn't he send something? (pause) But don't worry! Things must change soon. A newspaper in New York seems interested in taking my articles.

Marx: Leave for where? We have no money. None. I can't think what's happened to Engels. Why doesn't he send something? (pause) But don't worry! Things must change soon. A newspaper in New York seems interested in taking my articles.

Marx: Leave for where? We have no money. None. I can't think what's happened to Engels. Why doesn't he send something? (pause) But don't worry! Things must change soon. A newspaper in New York seems interested in taking my articles.

Marx: Leave for where? We have no money. None. I can't think what's happened to Engels. Why doesn't he send something? (pause) But don't worry! Things must change soon. A newspaper in New York seems interested in taking my articles.

Marx: Leave for where? We have no money. None. I can't think what's happened to Engels. Why doesn't he send something? (pause) But don't worry! Things must change soon. A newspaper in New York seems interested in taking my articles.

Marx: Leave for where? We have no money. None. I can't think what's happened to Engels. Why doesn't he send something? (pause) But don't worry! Things must change soon. A newspaper in New York seems interested in taking my articles.
pretensions to virtue and a little probing reveals you. Marx: Get out.
Bodfish: Where's Frau Marx?
Bodfish: Where's the mother of Mrs Marx.
Bodfish: What's she got to do with it?
Marx: When my wife and I were living in Brussels, little Jenny was a year old and Laura was about to be born. My mother-in-law, the Baroness von Westphalen, sent us her own personal maid — Lenchen. Miss Demuth. So if anyone is to be consulted about her future, I suggest you consult the Baroness.
Bodfish: Come off it guv'nor. You mean I've got to go all the way to Germany?
Marx: Even further: the Baroness is dead.
Bodfish: (pause) Are you trying to insult me? (pause) Eh? Is that what you're trying to do? Well let me tell you square, you ain't going to get rid of me that easy. Not by a long shot. Do you know what? It wouldn't surprise me if you were the father. (pause) That's it, isn't it. You don't want to let go of your little bit on the side, do you?
Marx: So the child's parenthood does concern you!
Bodfish: Well, I have thought about it, yes.
Get out.
Bodfish: Then you listen to me — Marx: You come up here with your lofty pretentions to virtue and a little probing reveals you as nothing better than a simperon and a slybobs. Scurry back to your till, shopkeeper!
Bodfish: Right! No more meat for you!
Door opens and Lenchen enters, carrying a small package.
Lenchen: Oh hello. What are we debating now at the top of our voices?
Marx: Your virtue.
Bodfish: I asked him Lenchen. He's barmy. I can't talk to him.
Lenchen: I managed to get some potatoes. Where's Frau Marx?
Marx: She's gone for the doctor.
Bodfish: Can I have a word with you for a moment Lenchen? Alone?
Marx: When you manage to shake off the butcher. I would like to talk to you also.
exit Marx into the back room.
Lenchen: Well, what is it?
Bodfish: I asked him like you said but he's a nutter.
Lenchen: Is he?
Bodfish: Come on Lenchen. I get out of here. I can't talk to him.
Lenchen: There's a baby in there and she's sick. He's half out of his mind with worry and all you can do is tell him he's not getting any more meat.
Bodfish: He didn't mention a sick baby. How was I to know? All we talked about was you — and us getting hitched.
Lenchen: I've got his permission.
Bodfish: We don't need no permission. Lenchen. Let's go now.
Lenchen: Did he or didn't he? (pause) I'll ask him, if you wish.
Bodfish: I don't know what he was up to. He said you was owned by some Baroness or something. Someone dead! You can't talk to him.
Lenchen: Did he tell you the Baroness was dead?
Bodfish: (pause) Isn't she?
Lenchen: What did he say about this? she points to her own unborn child.
Bodfish: Lenchen, if he's the father why don't you just say so. Either way, it doesn't matter to me. It's just someone who wants to be felt, isn't it? I can't offer you much, but you'll get more from me than you would if you stayed here.
Lenchen: Do you have any idea why I stay here?
Bodfish: Duty I suppose. Because you was some kind of gift. But you don't have to stay. You ain't a nigger slave.
Lenchen: This morning, when you asked me, I could have wept with relief Bodfish.
Bodfish: Well, I'm waiting for an answer.
Lenchen: No answer. You are my answer: there's more to life than fresh meat.
Bodfish: Eh?
Lenchen: You're a good man Bodfish but I'll stay here, thank you.
Bodfish: Gawd, it seems some kind of crime to be a butcher around here. All right then. But as soon as your stomachs start rumbling, you all come crawling to me. What are you lot doing here anyway? What on earth are you waiting for?
Lenchen: For revolution.
Bodfish: You'll need a lot more to eat before that comes up this street. You're all crazy, not just you and him, but all you foreigners. High flown ideas and empty pockets, the lot of you. As soon as you stop getting a free meal you get ratty. A blowfly's got more pride than you lot. At least they lay eggs.
Lenchen: I've got my egg too.
Bodfish: Yes, and I bet I know who. (lenchen silences him with a look). Why don't you come clean Lenchen.
Lenchen: Clean?
Bodfish: I know it's him. It's nothing to do with any revolution. You're staying here because he is. I'm not so stupid.
Lenchen: I made a promise to the Baroness.
Bodfish: But she's dead. You don't have to keep a promise made to the dead.
Lenchen: Good night Bodfish.
Bodfish: You'll be sorry Lenchen. (points to Lenchen's baby) Boy or girl, it will want to be fed — even after the revolution.
Lenchen: Can I ask you something? Bodfish: Well? What is it?
Lenchen: Could I have my sheep tomorrow? Bodfish: Gawd you've got a cheek. exit Bodfish. He goes down the stairs. She goes to the top of the stairs.
Lenchen: Well, can I?
Bodfish: (from the bottom of the stairs) I'll see. Exit Bodfish. Lenchen re-enters the room.
Lenchen: I've got to get the baby. I can't see Jenny.
Lenchen: How's the baby? Let me look. Let me past Moor.
Marx: She is sleeping Lenchen. Don't disturb her.
Lenchen: How is she sleeping?
would have come earlier. It is only the incessant pleadings of your wife at my house which has made me come out at all. Now, may I see the baby?

Marx: But surely you would like to get paid first? You tell me all whores do.

Doctor: Now look here Marx — very well, Doctor Marx. I've not come here to be abused by you. You've owed me money for months. This street's full of sick children. I've got my time cut out seeing half of them. At least other people make an effort to pay their debts.

Marx: Ah! So that's it. You are a Doctor of Debt Collecting. I knew such a discipline existed but not that it was recognised by a British University.

He has been waving Engels' letter in the Doctor's face. Jenny comes out of the back room.

Jenny: Oh stop it. Let him go. You can go Doctor. You're too late.

Doctor: But the child —

Jenny: She's dead. Oh my God, why didn't you come days ago when I asked you? Why?

Marx: (opening the envelope) He was too busy counting his money, that's why.

Doctor: I'm sorry your baby has died Mrs. Marx. But you have too many living in this cramped space. My advice is to move right away from here before you all die. Now, if you would be so good as to let me see the baby, I will give you a death certificate.

Marx: (looking at the letter) We are out of luck with Engels, my dear. He writes that he has been given a horse by his father. He cannot send us any money at present because he must buy feed for the horse.

Schramm: And new shoes. If our baby had been a horse, you, doctor, would have prescribed hay? Well? Would you?

Doctor: It is natural for you to be upset, Doctor Marx. Let me give you a sedative. Would you like one too Mrs. Marx?

Marx: Or would you suggest making hay while the sun shines, doctor? Making money while children die by the dozen!

Doctor: What in God's name are you talking about?

Marx: Is that what you could recommend? Is that what you would advise? Is it, doctor?

Doctor: Have you taken leave of your senses?

Marx: Yes I have! I don't want... senses! What is to be done? First: patience and redistribution.

Jenny: They've gone Marx. Our little one. Moor. Envy her. Envy her.

Jenny: I saw it to her to live.

Marx: Live for what? For this? No, no, she's a lucky one our little Franziska. She is spared all this sickness and suffering and stupidity we call life.

Jenny: And Lenchen's gone. I didn't say a proper goodbye to her.

Marx: She will be back soon.

Jenny: Where is she staying? Should I go and help her. She has done so much for us.

Marx: Rest now. You must rest.

Jenny: How can I? The child has to be buried and a coffin got from somewhere. And there's nothing from Engels?

Marx: He sent his "best wishes". Useless for burying bxbbies.

Liebnecht and Schramm are coming up the stairs.

Liebnecht: Well we're sure to see some action now.

Schramm: Trust the French. They cannot breathe without a uniform to lead them.

They enter. Jenny, hearing them come goes into the back room.

Lieb: Have you seen the papers! Moor, have you read about Louis Napoleon?

Schramm: The tailor's dummy has made himself a hero overnight.

Marx: What news is this? Louis Napoleon, you say?

Lieb: He has staged a coup d'etat.

Schramm: History's dunce has done it again.

Lieb: Ja, du hast recht, Konrad.

Marx: Well well. The French have a king again and all's well on the Bourse. Louis Napoleon, eh? An adventurer set upon the throne by drunken soldiers whose allegiance he has secured with wine and sausages.

Lieb: Right first time!

Marx: Sit down gentlemen. We cannot let this pass without a game of chess. Re-assemble those pieces Schramm. I have not hocked the chess set...

Lieb: Not the bourgeoisie?

Marx: Probably not. Who stood most to gain?

Lieb: The small-holding peasants.

Marx: Right. The first Napoleon gave them land and so will this one. Small holding peasants form a vast mass in France.

Jenny re-emerges from the back room.

Jenny: Before you begin gentlemen — Schramm and Liebnecht stand.

Schramm: Good evening Frau Marx. How is little Franziska?

Marx: She died today. Sit down both of you. They don't.

Jenny: Do either of you gentlemen have any money?

Lieb: Well I have a little, yes.

Jenny: It's for a coffin.

Schramm: Here is some. No Liebnecht, you keep yours. (to Marx) Liebnecht hasn't eaten today.

Marx: Is that so?

Lieb: Oh I'll get something soon.

Marx: Keep your money Liebnecht. It is better the living should eat than the dead be wrapped in gold.

Jenny: I should get some kind of a box with this Schramm, thank you.

Schramm: I'm sorry to hear about the baby.

Jenny: Could I ask another favour, Schramm?

Schramm: Of course. Please.

Marx: Set up the rest Liebnecht.

Jenny: I have wrapped the baby in a sheet, but I cannot bring myself to hold her without crying. Schramm. I will get her of course.

Liebnecht sits. Marx has finished setting up the chess pieces.

Marx: Come along Liebnecht. So, they have made that glove puppet king of the French. Louis Napoleon. The very name has that ring of counterfeit coin. He has swept from his path so many men and principles for what? For whores, wars and fashion. In the meantime, children die like flies at summer's end.

Lieb: Ready Moor. You lead.

Marx: What is to be done? First: patience and propaganda. And then — yes! Pawn to king four.

END OF PLAY
of Artistic Director, Sir Robert became the Board’s unanimous choice the moment his availability became known to us.

His credentials speak for themselves, for example, he has had an extensive working relationship with the Old Vic Company both as an actor and director. He has worked with the Shakespeare Memorial Theatre Company at Stratford on Avon and been actively associated with such influential giants of the theatre as Michael Benthall, Sir Peter Hall, the late Noel Coward and the late Tyrone Guthrie.

He is a versatile and consummate professional with an astutely measured understanding of the relationship between theatre arts and the box-office.

The Tote is very pleased to entrust the direction of its artistic policies to this great Australian.

Sir Robert Helpmann: “I am delighted to accept the invitation to join the Tote and to further the long practical association I have had with the dramatic theatre.

I will devote my creative energies to this most exciting and challenging job concurrent with the responsibilities I have to my overseas commitments.

It would be premature for me to start talking now about some of the things I have in mind, but I have many ideas on which I am already working.

The Tote has a very strong following and it will be my intention to devise an artistic policy which will create a period of most invigorating theatre for Sydney.”

GLENN DERRINGER IN CONCERT

Wurlitzer Australia proudly presents the brilliant American organist Glenn Derringer in Concert 1978 Australian Tour.

Glenn is a dynamic concert artist, entertainer, composer and recording artist and has an extensive musical background having made his debut with the Philadelphia Symphony Orchestra at the age of ten.

He works as Product Manager for the Wurlitzer Organ Company and, as a principal representative throughout the world on all product development matters, he participates in concerts, international trade fairs, seminars and has made many appearances on top-rated US television network programmes.

Glenn Derringer in Concert promises to be a superb free-wheeling experience giving a new dimension to electronic organ music.

Glenn will give one performance in Brisbane, Sydney, Melbourne and Adelaide between August 15th and 22nd.

International

answered so simply; they seem to see the “Japaneseness” of it all without asking themselves in what it consists. Within Japan there are many different Japans, however. The language, the presentational styles, the themes and predilections have much more variety than they do, say, in Australian theatre. Our theatre has drawn on limited sources. Japanese theatre has drawn on China, Europe, and America, and, of course, on its own special, long explorations.

What the best of Japanese theatres have is a commitment to a special manner of presentation. The most effective Japanese theatre has always been manneristic; it is the how of an action, not the why. And it is how to perfect a particular style to its limit, even if this takes decades. Each good Japanese presentation redefines the dramatic. The text has never been more than one of four or five elements in a production, the lesser of equals if anything. And Japanese audiences have the patience to allow a particular group to perfect a new style. That’s why loose conglomerations of actors and directors calling themselves theatres don’t work. They never get to the destination before they find themselves going back to the beginning.

P.S. I have just received a letter from Senda Akihiko with extra information on developments of recent days. I have excerpted small parts of that letter to add to the above article.

“Inoue Hisashi’s latest play, The Tale of Princess Hinoura, is on at the Bungaku-za in July, directed by Kimura Koichi. This Tokyo season follows a season in the provinces in June. It appears to be a Tohoku version of the Oedipus legend.

“Kara Juro’s latest was on till the end of June at Ikebukuro (in Tokyo). I was disappointed in it. It was called The Story of the Unicorn.

“Tsuka Kohei’s Salome, a rock opera, opened at the Seibu Theatre on 12 June; and Terayama Shuji’s new plays, two in a row, apparently did well in London recently and opened at the end of June in Kimokusuya Hall in Shinjuku (Tokyo).”

Presented by Wurlitzer Australia

1978 AUSTRALIAN TOUR
Brilliant American Wurlitzer Organist...Glenn Derringer
An evening of superb family entertainment with Glenn at the new Wurlitzer 950 Console Organ.
Adults $2.50 Children $1.50.
Proceeds to aid The Young Organists Association.

BRISBANE
Tuesday 15th August
SYDNEY
Thursday 17th August
MELBOURNE
Saturday 19th August
ADELAIDE
Tuesday 22nd August
Q theatre

WHAT IF YOU DIED TOMORROW
by DAVID WILLIAMSON
Aug 2 - 20 —Penrith
Aug 23 - 26 —Bankstown Town Hall
Aug 30 - Sep 3 —Marsden Auditorium, Parramatta

ENTERTAINING MR SLOANE
by JOE ORTON
Sep 13 - Oct 1 —Penrith
Oct 4 - 7 —Bankstown Town Hall
Oct 11 - 15 —Marsden Auditorium, Parramatta.

THE Q THEATRE
PO BOX 10, PENRITH 2750. Tel: (047) 21-5735

VIDEO TECHNICS
Plaza Level, Bondi Junction Plaza
500 Oxford Street, Bondi Junction
Tel: (02) 387-2555, 367-4007

A NEW WAY TO LOOK AT TV

- Direct Recording — Record a TV programme directly as you watch it.
- Parallel Recording — Watch one channel and simultaneously record another programme on a different channel.
- Unattended Recording — Pre-set the Recorder (up to three days in advance) to record a programme when you can't be there.

Blank Video Tapes
1/4 in., 1/2 in. VCR U-matic. Always in stock. All video accessories new and used. Trade-in accepted. All makes repaired, serviced, modifications.

RIVERINA TRUCKING COMPANY
ARTISTIC DIRECTOR and ADMINISTRATOR

WANTED: TWO IMAGINATIVE, ENERGETIC YOUNG PEOPLE FOR THESE POSITIONS. START EARLY '79. APPLY NOW WITH RELEVANT DETAILS: BOX 344, WAGGA, N.S.W. 2660. FOR FURTHER INFORMATION: TERRY O'CONNELL/CHRIS JONES ON (069) 252052.

THEATRE AUSTRALIA AUGUST 1978 45
Just what is a classic?

"Never but never dance to the music of Debussy", wrote Isadora Duncan in one of her letters to the world, "it is all surface emotion and sentiment...there is no music for the soul and the spirit!"

Yes well, by this stage Miss Duncan, whatever her other achievements, was well noted for her musical myopia (dancing to the Beethoven symphonies that had no need of her embellishment). Whatever rule one wants to use to measure the "soul and spirit" in a piece of music, the sensuality is superficial only to a superficial listener. Vaslav Nijinsky and Jerome Robbins were not superficial listeners when they considered Debussy's _L'Apres du midi du'un Faune_ for a ballet. Robbins himself has said that _Faune_ is practically fool proof, only a rank amateur could look bad in it. That's true as far as it goes, but it takes a great dancer to touch all the nuances and halflights in the work and not just reveal one aspect at a time.

Nijinsky set his faune in a wooded glade with nymphs that seemed to have stepped out of Greek vase painting but for a ballet. Robbins himself has _set_ it in a dance studio on a hot summer's day. That's true as far as it goes, but it takes a great dancer to touch all the nuances and halflights in the work and not just reveal one aspect at a time. Nijinsky's version of _L'Apres du midi du'un Faune_ was considered to be better than Robbins's. However in some of his former work and to his credit Robbins has said himself that _Faune_ can only really work when both dancers have a "virginal" quality about them, untouched and un-sullied, it is the _awakening_ to sensuality that matters. Of all the Fauns, David Burch was the most complete and satisfactory. He looked like a startled faune, he had that air of fantasy and part "technical associate". Marilyn Rowe seemed to be more at ease here, more the teasing duena, the pert little ballerina who'd washed her hair and come into the studio to preen, and far more the distant "nymph" around whom the possibility of entertaining a love affair hung like a warm but delicate perfume. It was a lovely version and I hope it grows (what I think would be the ideal partnership would be David Burch and the Dance Company's Sheree da Costa, but...)

No matter what the casts were, this production of _Faune_ made up for the nagging inanities of Massine's _Massie_ (lots of snappy dancing but no heart or mind) and the curiously laboured and half-baked configurations of Graeme Murphy's _Tekton_.

I've heard that few of the dancers in the AB gave the choreographer any help or inspiration in the creation of this work and I'm afraid it shows. (But then what can you expect when the Administration demands a continually high performance level, an "exploitation of our product"?)

Murphy states that he wanted to illustrate in dance terms the architecture and sculpture of Spanish born Erico Gaudio. It strikes me that he had this concrete image too firmly in his mind and when the dancers didn't give a damn, that "image" just took over and robbed the work of any spontaneity. One of Murphy's gifts is to upset expectations as to how a dance phrase should progress. He creates disconcerting and fascinating twists to a work and makes it look fresh. However in some of his former work and to a larger extent here in _Tekton_, those sculptural twists seem to be an affection, a conscious striving for a signature style. I do wish he'd relax. Unexpected poses and

---

**HALF A TICK**

**PHONE** 232 2645

in the FOYER of MAYFAIR THEATRE (Sydney) Noon to 6pm Monday to Friday

WE SELL UNSOLD **TICKETS at 1/2 PRICE** ON DAY OF PERFORMANCE for live THEATRES CONCERTS THEATRE RESTAURANTS

ON FRIDAYS WE SELL FOR SATURDAYS & SUNDAYS
dislocated configurations are all very well but they tend after a while to become inhuman, computer-programmed even.

Tekton progresses by cursory jumps, its ideas of Gaudi's architecture (not that I'm all that familiar with it) seems literal. Mass and line are used for a momentary purpose; shapes and angles gather and disperse as if for no other reason than to gather and disperse, its so fractured that one can't even see the fracture lines. Even geographic tektonic plates (from which I think the work draws its title) have a line of progression, a predictable one even.

Not that everything in the work is a mess, there are marvellous instances in it, one in particular where at the beginning and end of the piece the corps as a single body sweeps around the stage leaving a huddle of soloists like driftwood on the sea shore and gathers them up later. One duet in particular, danced with exemplary nervousness by Ross Stretton and Christine Walsh, splits and fuses its protagonists like some human equivalent of mass and space and their redefining of each other, but that's just it, it seems an equivalent.

The décor by Yan Pahl was interesting in its own right. It didn't distract from the dancing, enhancing it even, acting almost like some calligraphic clue to the goings on on stage, and as such was most welcome. I fear that Tekton came upon Murphy too soon after his outpouring in Poppy and the work subsequently looks arid, wandering around looking for something. It wasn't emphatic enough, it wasn't fluid or alive enough, really it wasn't anything enough.

Neither were the earlier performances of Cranko's Romeo and Juliet, which as far as I was concerned were a slap in the face after the incandescent performances the work received here in Sydney back in 1974. The choreography looked half-remembered, the dancers went through it by rote. Only Marilyn Jones saved the opening night with her warm portrayal of Juliet, but even she seemed to play one note too often. All the anguish of love and imminent immolation was there but I missed the growth of Juliet from the tentative green girl to the deeply resolved woman at the drama's end.

Ross Stretton and Michaela Kirkaldie seemed on odds as the second cast of lovers. Stretton darted and rummaged coltishly around looking for Romeo but didn’t ever seem to find him and Kirkaldie, partner of Juliet looked like she was laquered on from the outside. They danced their duets adequately but little more, and there has to be lots more if Cranko's epic poem is going to live! Alan Alder glowed and fumed endlessly from start to finish, pitched at such an emotional screech all the time that when he was killed off one was merely thankful that a street punk nuisance had been dispatched and one wondered why Lady Capulet was making all the fuss on his funeral bier.

Jan Stripling in a later cast was much more satisfactory in this role and gave the rest of the cast an object lesson in acting technique. His Tybalt didn't just plug into one emotional socket at the beginning and trundle along on it until the end, he was truly solicitous for Juliet's safety when he caught her flirting with the intruding Romeo at the ball. Stripling tried his hardest to beef up the performance from the rest of the cast, but it was a losing battle, mainly because the orchestra seemed to be dropping off from boredom.

The Elizabethan Sydney orchestra can rise to quite capable heights when under the baton of a Bonyng or a Tintner, but here, under Robert Rosen it literally plodded its way through Prokoviev's passionate score.

But perhaps this is all symptomatic of the ruling view being held at the Australian Ballet these days, by the Administration at least; find the cheapest means possible to achieve the greatest box office return. I can understand why it wants the AB to have proper administrative and rehearsal quarters in Melbourne, but one wonders what they will do when they find themselves in their bright shiny new quarters with a demoralised company, dissatisfied audiences, lousy orchestra and a sniggering press.

The Administration (Peter Bahen) gave instance in a programme note recently to the fact that the AB is a classical company founded in the classical technique (so is the New York City Ballet Mr Bahen but go on). As such it doubts very much whether it should concern itself with these modern works with their contortions and writhings and cacophonous music” (Murphy's Tekton be warned). It thinks it should focus only on the “classical” works.

Apart from all the subjective value judgements rolling around, one could ask what is a classic? Tchiakovsky's Swan Lake was "cacophonous" in its day, the Ballets Russes works were "contortions" once and people hated Martha Graham when she first started out, now all of those pieces are, by common consent, "classics". The rest of the world seems to have matured since then and only the Australian Ballet Administration seems to be wilfully conservative.
First performances with enlarged pit.

Wisely if undramatically, no new productions marked the first three weeks of the Australian Opera’s major winter season, which opened at the Sydney Opera House on Wednesday, June 14.

Indeed, it was even being cruelly alleged in some quarters of the daily press that the real opera drama of the moment was off stage rather than on, focussed on the fizzler of a takeover bid staged by a few dissidents in the opera world at the annual general meeting of the AO the following night.

But it turned out to be a month far from devoid of artistic success, even if the first new production of the season, and one of the undoubted highlights of the year, at least in prospect — Joan Sutherland’s Norma — was not scheduled to open till July 5.

Even at opening, in the certain knowledge that opening performances are never any season’s best, both Madama Butterfly and The Marriage of Figaro were very good indeed. If Figaro was undeniably the better of the two, that was only to be expected in view of the fact it is perhaps the company’s most universally acclaimed production and has been continuously in the repertory for seven years.

The only newcomer in the opening night cast was Eilene Hannan as Cherubino; but there were considerable improvements to be noted in the performances of several of the old hands — in particular, that of Isobel Buchanan’s Countess.

It is hard to know where to start in talking about this Figaro, for the greatest strength of the 1971 John Copley production right from the start has been teamwork and that is still its greatest strength. Good to begin with, well above the Australian Opera’s general performing level of the time, it has steadily gained in stature ever since. Each individual performer has grown over the years, as any performer worth his salt always inevitably does; and at the same time the collective depth of their combined interpretation has developed enormously.

I have seen this particular Copley production eight times so far. All eight times with Ronald Maconaghy as Figaro, John Pringle as the Count and Rosina Raisbeck as Macellina. Neil Warren-Smith has done six of my Bartolos, Robert Gard five of the Basilios and Glenys Fowles four of the Susansas — in each case including the first and the last. I saw Jennifer Bermingham seven times straight as Cherubino before this year’s performance by Hannan.

When one considers that those eight performances were spread over eight years, and that no more than two of them fell in any one year, that is remarkable stability of casting indeed; but far from resulting in stkeness and monotony in performance, the very stability of this Figaro cast has resulted in a fairly steadily rising standard.

Predictably, the old hands have long since so completely mastered their respective roles that the most that could be expected of them this year, or last, was that they should maintain and slightly refine previous excellence; and that is precisely what they have done. Thus, the most fascinating performances of this particular opening night, to me at least, were Isobel Buchanan’s Countess and Eilene Hannan’s Cherubino — though for quite different reasons.

Buchanan had bothered me when she first played the Countess two years ago. She sang beautifully, as she has always
This year she is singing even *The Magic Flute*. This year she is singing even more beautifully than before, and tackling those florid arias with more self-confidence. But far more important from the point of view of the overall dramatic success of the evening, she has acquired in the interim the extra stage experience necessary to be convincing as the ever-so-slightly elevated and aristocratic and dignified woman she must be if she is to contrast satisfyingly with Susanna's less sophisticated (if equally effective) sort of womanhood.

Hannan qualifies for some sort of *Figaro* versatility prize in my recent performance annals; for I saw her do three Barbarinas in this AO production, as well as an excellent Susanna in Adelaide earlier this year, before she cropped up as Cherubino. It was no surprise that she succeeded almost totally as Cherubino, just as she had succeeded almost completely as Susanna (Barbarina is hardly a big enough role to warrant an attempt at assessment of comparative standards).

And after having spent a good deal of time talking about the vocal refinements of this *Figaro*, it is only fair to conclude with a brief accolade for conductor Richard Bonynge and the Elizabethan Sydney Orchestra, which responded by and large magnificently to his sensitive direction. In any ensemble triumph — as this so unequivocally was — the conductor must inevitably claim a significant share of the credit for piecing together the fragmented bits of excellence of individual performance, and making them into a cohesive whole.

One visual complaint, though: a strangely out-of-place pillar, in the Easter Island style, involving a rather large cherubic belly aimed directly at the audience, seems to have infiltrated itself into Act IV in the aftermath of the fire which destroyed the original *Figaro* sets earlier this year.

The winter season opened, of course, with a revival of last year's *Butterfly* which started off most inauspiciously but ended up on a most moving level. Despite the best efforts of Carlo Felice Cillario, who was manning the baton, the ESO's first act was very sloppy of detail; the first brass renditon of Puccini's quotation from the American national anthem was really not up to the job, and the second act, with beautifully, rich Puccini string sounds soaring out from the newly enlarged opera theatre pit in an overwhelming torrent of melody; and by the end, aided by stunning vocal performances from the two leading ladies, the sins of Act I had all but been erased from memory.

Two leading ladies in a *Butterfly*? Yes; for much of the credit for the success of this particular opening night must be attributed to Jennifer Bermingham's delicately sensitive Suzuki, which acted as a magnificent foil for Leona Mitchell's Cio Cio San. I was not so aware of Mitchell's immense vocal power this year as last, when she made quite a stunning aural impression before she ever appeared on stage, riding effortlessly over the top of the off-stage chorus; but there was no dearth of power when it was needed, and her acting performance was fascinating in its minute detail as well as — in the final moments — the grander gestures of hopelessness and tragedy. She still does too much crawling about after her suicidal knife thrust, but a good deal less this year than last; just about none at all would be even better.

Bermingham provided a deeply sympathetic foil to Mitchell, as she must if *Madama Butterfly* is to transcend the tear-jerker soap opera. She sang the role much more effectively than last year; equally important, her characterisation was superb throughout.

While it was pleasingly sung, by and large, Lamberto Furlan's Pinkerton only occasionally came to life dramatically: admittedly, he was hampered by a temporary limp on opening night, but there was a good deal more to it than that. Pinkerton is not entirely lacking in depth of character; he must be seen to develop from thoughtlessness to remorse as he realises how he has destroyed Butterfly. This progression was virtually absent from Furlan's performance.

Robert Allman's Sharpless was suitably benign and well sung, though he seemed to have some difficulty with some of his top notes on the night.

These performances were the first staged in the opera theatre of the Sydney Opera House since the enlargement of its orchestra pit at a cost of a several hundred thousand dollars — and it is pleasing to be able to report that the results seem to more than justify even that large expenditure.

The size is still less than optimum, of course, and has not yet been put to the sort of test which will crop up in mid-August when Wagner's *The Mastersingers of Nuremberg* opens. But as well as enlarging the pit, the recent renovations opened up its top somewhat by the installation of wire mesh across a portion of the forestage; and the improvement in terms of directness of sound, particularly for those sitting in the stalls area, is dramatic. This directness of orchestral sound seemed to throw out the pit/stage balance during Act I of *Butterfly*, but performers quickly adjusted to the new inbuilt balance of the house and the balance since has been near-perfect.

The story is a simple, probable one. A man named Terry has a boat which sleeps four. He invites his friend Mark, a biologist whose subject is ants, aboard for a weekend with Danny, a schoolteacher who tries to make socially committed films of old people and Beth, a young wife and mother married to an architect. The architect is also invited, but can't make it, so he stays at home with the small child. The only one used to the boat is Terry, an extrovert, or perhaps show-off, would be a better word. They crash around the harbour, eat watermelon, drink champagne, swim, talk but say nothing. Danny works on Mark, Terry and Beth leap into a bunk. When the weekend is over Beth wants the love-affair to continue but not on the same terms. She contemplates leaving her husband, to Terry's embarrassment. Mark and Danny make it. He bores her with ants, she bores him with sociological "concern".

And so on. Earlier in the Festival, Ricketson's Drifting reached the short list of Greater Union Fiction candidates, and won a commendation from the Reuben Mamoulian Award judges and in fact the style of both films is similar - uncommitted, loose, adlibbed talk, a cast in which the characters seemed to be interchangeable. It was pointed out to me later that the four noses were long ones. When they leaned together over the watermelon they bore a resemblance to four anteaters. Experienced directors would have looked around for a snub nose. And, incidentally, voices of a distinctive timbre. In radio the noses would not have mattered (though the voices would) but in films noses are important.

James Ricketson wrote the screenplay and directed the film. The interesting photography is by Tom Cowan. The Australian Film Commission put up the money, and was right to do so, because Ricketson will undoubtedly make a good film when he starts telling his actors what to do and say and keeps a tighter rein on the whole enterprise.

In enormous contrast to Ricketson's fuzziness was the NZ film Sleeping Dogs, which followed Third Person Plural on the same night. It is a piece of gee-whiz-boy's own-paper adventure that brought whistles, cat calls, hisses and clapping from the audience in recognition of its splendid absurdity and a list of twenty credits from NZ Government instrumentalties, all of which are pilloried and/or ridiculed in the film.

The film is the first fictional feature film made in NZ in eleven years and has done very well at home, I am told, before turning up at the Festival. The director is Roger Donaldson and the principal players Sam Neill, Ian Mune (Monaghan of the NZ/ABC series about a union leader seen here in 1976) Nevan Rowe and the visiting American actor, Warren Oates.

The story assumes that things go so bad in NZ — strikes, petrol shortages etc — that the hardline PM sets up an anti-terrorist militia force which in turn spawns a guerilla and resistance movement. Heroes take to the hills, moving by night against Warren Oates' mercenaries. Sam Neill as Smith, of no specified avocation, chooses to retire to an island with his dog, encouraged by the fact that his wife has ditched him for Bullen, played by Ian Mune. But in this apparent haven all hell breaks loose.

There are shootouts with bodies swarming into a swimming pool, and spectacular chases. Smith and Bullen escape the militia in a truck carrying fat lambs for the slaughterhouse and then begins a long and somewhat boring trek through the bush. The ending of Sleeping Dogs, if predictable, is also the occasion for a ludicrously attenuated death scene from Mune, whose talents need to be controlled by a stronger hand than Donaldson's. Mune shares the honor of the film script, taken from the novel Smith's Dream by CK Stead, with Arthur Baysting.

The script is full of holes, but with men and vehicles and aircraft roaring about in that magnificent NZ scenery it probably doesn't matter too much.
Foreign Films
Probe Compromise and Inertia

Solrun Hoaas

Limited to a non-stop first week only of the Sydney Film Festival, this view can fortunately cover some memorable low-key films that might otherwise be lost between Alain Resnais, Satyajit Ray, Luis Bunuel or others of the second week.

Even after thirty films the first day lingers both for Krzysztof Zanussi's Camouflage, a subtly incisive dissection of the unconscious motivations behind acting 'noble' and seeking justice in a corrupt and swampy academic milieu, and for Nikita Mikhalkov's An Unfinished Piece for a Mechanical Piano, based on a very early Chekhov play, Platonov, the name of its main character. For the Polish Zanussi 'truth' can be used as a camouflage for self-betrayal, decisiveness may in fact be evading rather than taking responsibility. Compromise is not a clear-cut grey, but muddy, and its boundaries diffuse.

In Chekhov's run-down country villa, compromise is a way of life. The painful awakening to self-betrayal as Platonov, now a school teacher, is confronted by his former love Sofia who thought him a Russian Byron, leads nowhere. She has settled for a sop instead. Accusations and new yearnings but create another impasse. The inevitable doctor puts off his emergency call for the warmth of merry company. When the servants bring a pig to be ridden around the house, no one knows what to do with it; the joke is no longer on. When the carriage is ready for him to leave after finding his wife loves another, Sofia's husband falls asleep in it. Nothing changes, but the humour in the absurdity of it all is undefeatable in the film; it is the best acted Chekhov I have seen either on stage or screen (Alexander Kalyagin as Platonov is brilliant).

The week showed intelligent programming of films that allowed for comparison of style or theme. There were notably more films than usual by women directors, three of them Scandinavian. Norwegian Anja Breien [Wives] disappointed this year with her heavily-handled treatment of Games of Love and Loneliness based on Swedish writer Hjalmar Soderberg. (A few years ago Mai Zetterling showed in her Dr Glaas that, with a greater sense of irony and humour, the seeming banalities of the same author's dialogue can work). There is a certain cultural element of non-verbal communication and wooden movement that often render Scandinavian films ponderous (as also with Japanese non-action films). In her somewhat simplistic but very competent debut, Us, Laila Mikkelsen controls this quality and uses it to advantage in focussing on a young couple helpless in a national crisis.

Gunnell Lindblom's Paradise Place is peopled with articulate characters who can verbalize their emotions. It is the social outsiders, King and his mother, who cannot. Despite its bleak outcome and social concern, there is no plodding tedium. It brings a passionate approach to the problems of caring in a world of events that insensitize. The theme of friendship between two older women with professional interests in common is not only rare in film, but here explored with the dramatic skill of a woman who has given Inngmar Bergman's films some of their strongest performances.

The concern with an inexplicable teenage suicide of Paradise Place is echoed in an unusual Swiss film that followed it, The Indians Are Still Far Away, by Patricia Moraz. A film that grows on me in retrospect, partly through the impressive performance of Isabelle Huppert, who projects acute sensitivity and blocked despair through minimal expression in an environment of inertia and boredom. Often dwelling on long shots where little seems to happen, it reconstructs the non-events of a week preceding the girl's suicide. Similarly, in Diary of a Lover Sobrah Shahid Salees allows each shot the time it needs to record the isolation and inability to communicate of his meat-salesclerk, as he reconstructs the routine of the week after the man's girl-friend disappears, until her body is found under his bed.

For film makers concerned with social documentary and with self-reflexivity in film (often attempted through film on film making), perhaps the most significant of all was Reinhard Hauff's The Main Actor, a film prompted by his previous Paule Paulander, in which an actual father and son act out their real-life conflicts on their poor farm. The Main Actor begins with the end of such a filming situation; the focus is on conflict between the exploiting filmmaker, fascinated by the overt expression of aggression in a social class other than his own, and the boy. Unwittingly a star exposed to the corrupting power of the film medium, he is incapable of again submitting to his dominating father. As in many of the week's films, the dilemma is unresolved. It is an important film here, where commercial film on Aboriginal themes often seeks out tribal or outback talent.

After so many films with an obvious and despondent message, films that reject the illusion-creating effects of cinema in order to find a truer angle on contemporary reality, Black and White in Colour provided a welcome change of pace. It makes its strong point about colonialism, the corrupting effect of power and the absurdity of war through caricature and satire and is a very impressive debut by Jean-Jacques Annau, made in the Ivory Coast.

Judging by vocal response, the popular favorite of a Sydney audience with a penchant for style was Outrageous, a Canadian feature debut by Richard Benner, perhaps a much-needed relief after a week of inertia and blocked emotion. Immensely entertaining, mainly due to Craig Russell's brilliant female impersonations, its message of loving care as cure-all and 'Let's be mad and happy together' is somewhat trendy and facile. Craig Russell from Outrageous.
Bernard Herrmann: The Composer as Mimic.

The disc entitled The Mysterious Film World of Bernard Herrmann [Decca, reissued World Record Club R 04427] enables us to listen to excerpts from the scores of three films in which Herrmann's music was inseparably linked with the wizardry of Ray Harryhausen in creating giants, monsters and other special effects. In the music for Mysterious Island Herrmann sets his large orchestra bouncing to the motion of a giant balloon, even in the nightmarish choppiness of gesture of a great crab, engages in comprehensive buzzing for a giant bee and sends an 18th century fugue through grotesquely amplified and distorted motions to accompany the appearance of an enormous bird. childish stuff, you may say. Perhaps: but Herrmann brings to its musical characterisation highly developed orchestral skill and an awareness of what has happened and what is possible in music comparatively rare among film composers. The 18th century fugue is said to be by a pupil of Bach, Jl Krebs. As Krebs means crab in German it might have been even more fitting if his fugue had been appropriated for the appearance of the giant crab; but we can't have everything. The striking thing about the grotesqueries of Herrmann's music for Mysterious Island is how much more enlivening they are than the excerpts taken from another Harryhausen-Herrmann collaboration, Jason and the Argonauts. There is a certain stiff brassy memorability to the music accompanying the Man of Bronze, but the Triton who rises from the depths of the sea and holds back the clashing rocks is not discreditable to Herrmann that his music is mimicry and that the more grotesque and nightmarish the image the better the mimicry and the more Herrmann's solution to the stylistic problem of writing music for The Three Worlds of Gulliver (on the other side of this disc) is to mimic and, on occasion, playfully distort the characteristic paces and turns of a phrase of mimic English composers of the 18th century. A sturdy minuet is identified with Gulliver's hometown of Wapping. The Liliputians are accompanied by music scored with silvery lightness and fragility of timbre. The 18th century touches are mildly entertaining; and it is hardly fair to Herrmann to point out that they are immeasurably inferior in wit and colour to Stravinsky's reworking of 18th century themes and conventions in Pulcinella. I doubt whether the music for The Three Worlds of Gulliver has an existence truly independent of the film, despite its unusual formal shapeliness. The two movements in which Herrmann seems to speak vividly as a composer are, significantly, concerned with monsters: gigantic chessmen and the pursuit by the Gigantic chessmen and the pursuit by the

The question lurking in the back of many listeners' minds when they encounter the film music of a composer like Herrmann whose technique is consummately professional and whose general culture is wide tends to go something like this: what sort of music would he write if there were no films to go with it? Herrmann stands up to such an inquiry better than most composers who have written consistently for film. He had already written a number of his best concert works at the time that he began composing for films and the impulse to compose such works went on for at least a time after his film career began. His Symphony (I take it that it is his only one) dates from 1941. He had made his first appearance as a composer for feature films a year earlier, very auspiciously, with the score for Orson Welles's Citizen Kane. (There are two discs at least of this music, one a United Artists record of the original soundtrack and one recently recorded by the National Philharmonic Orchestra under Charles Gerhardt for RCA). Herrmann went on to work with, among others, Truffaut and Hitchcock. His association with Hitchcock was especially long and memorable. There is a record devoted to his music for Psycho on Unicorn, newly played under the composer's direction; and a Decca recording brings together excerpts from Herrmann's music for five Hitchcock thrillers, Psycho, Marnie, North by North West, Vertigo and (in a reworking dedicated to Hitchcock himself) The Trouble with Harry. The Psycho score was for strings alone. Herrmann wrote for them most effectively in the taut neo-classic style of many of Stravinsky's compositions for strings. Note that I am only saying that Herrmann borrowed a style and made it seem appropriate to his subject matter, not that he was indulging in plagiarism. (The borrowing from Stravinsky's The Rite of Spring to be found in the music for Jaws, in contrast, seems to me much closer to a straight pinch.) I think Herrmann may be most at ease in his mimicry of a style as clearly defined as neo-classic Stravinsky. In the Symphony, left to his own devices, Herrmann shows less consistency of style or personality. Yet the Symphony has nothing about it of the stale cigarette ash of a composer who only comes alive in relation to a screen image. The sleeve notes mention Sibelius. Even if that comparison can be sustained with any exactness only in brief passages of the score the Symphony [Unicorn, reissued World Record Club R04257] does have the tone of epic or saga. Herrmann clearly had a great impulse to musical expression even if he needed the specific references of a film or of other kinds of dramatic work (such as his opera Wuthering Heights or his dramatic cantata Mohy Dick) in order to give that impulse memorable definition. The Symphony has scale, sweep and some good ideas. I am inclined to think that the most successful movement is the most nightmarish: a scherzo which is like a relentless hunt and which derives part of its impact from a grotesque variant on the scherzo of Beethoven's seventh symphony. It is Beethoven with a limp and a hunchback. Herrmann is, characteristically, the mimic but, equally characteristically, needs something grotesque to bring out the best in his mimicry.
Play texts not the proper basis for theatre?

Fight for Shelton Bar Peter Cheeseman. Methuen. 

Plays published by Methuen, Calder and Penguin.

Does theatre have a single creator, in the way poetry and painting have? It is obviously a collaborative activity (like building a monument or performing a symphony) but should it have a single guiding “artist”? All the best known actor-centred companies in modern Western theatre are closely identified with a leader/director — Jerzy Grotowski, Julian Beck and Judith Malina, Joseph Chaikin, Joan Littlewood and, now in this country, Steven Berkoff. After all the flirtation this century with texts and playwrights, the actor has a greater and greater importance than ever in the directing of the leading actor — albeit justified on the democratic-sounding grounds that the company of actors, being “up front”, are the true creators of the performance.

Steven Berkoff, in the first of his “Three Theatre Manifestos” in Gambit 32 (which also includes the text of his Metamorphosis) after Kafka) claims that the actor “is more interesting than the event” and that the playwright, “like a predator, seeks for live flesh to give form, blood, heat, flesh and interpretation to his grubby thoughts”, Like Grotowski, Berkoff appeals to the argument that the actor can exist without the play but not the play without the actor. This begs the question.

Whatever the actors do becomes the play — it still doesn’t meet the issue, what is a good way of making plays? One answer is, undoubtedly, Berkoff’s way. He is a theatrical auteur who, far from demonstrating the primacy of the actor, demonstrates the primacy of Berkoff. As actor, author and director he creates performances as a single artist, whatever collaborative creative effort he may get from his company.

For illustration we have the annoying fact that his text, Metamorphosis, reads superbly. This is partly because it evokes Kafka’s story, and partly because it is a description of a production rather than a prescription for one as yet unrealized. In deference to the Artaudian view, referred to by Berkoff, that playtexts are not the proper basis for the theatre I can say no more, other than that life will seem empty until I see his production of this great story at Nimrod later this year.

The script of Fight For Shelton Bar (Methuen) is even more uncompromisingly a record of production — not at all for other directors. It is the annotated text of one of the documentary productions of the Victoria Theatre in Stoke-on-Trent, under the direction of Peter Cheeseman. It deals with the threat to close down the Shelton steel works, and the struggle of the local work force to prevent it. Again we have the problem that Peter Cheeseman is well known as the leader of this company but in this case there does seem to have been genuine creative collaboration. Cheeseman proudly announces, “the words you are about to read were not written by me, or by the actors, but by the men and women who work at Shelton Steelworks, and some of the workers’ wives.”

This column is falling far behind in covering the books received by Theatre Australia that a great number must be done at once. This is just as well, as the rest of these plays look suspiciously to me like playscripts, by playwrights. In Australia, on the whole, theatre still operates on the basis of a handful of artistic directors choosing playscripts to produce, but those people will no doubt have already made their decisions on these plays, so all I can do is present them for the consideration of potential readers.

These plays, then, also ran: The Cake Man. by Robert J Merritt (Currency Press) is a study of the lives of aborigines in a NSW country town. It has obvious political intent, but its low-key, generally naturalistic style, while very moving, seems to preclude its having much political impact. An ironic footnote to the comments above I admit that the memory of Justine Saunders’ fine performance as Ruby in the original production contributes a lot to reading the play. Howard Brenton’s Epsom Downs (Methuen) is yet another reminder of how much we could learn from this great playwright. Like Barrie Keeffe’s A Mad World, My Masters (Methuen) it was originally performed by the Joint Stock Theatre Group and is a comic pageant of English life. New plays which deserve much more attention than I can give them here are Howard Barker’s Stripwell and Claw (Calder playscript 79) and Alan Brown’s Wheelchair Willie (Calder playscript 80). In Methuen’s Master Playwrights series we have Plays: One of Edward Bond, which contains Saved, Early Morning and The Pope’s Wedding.

Finally there are the “why not?” plays. I cannot think of any reason why the following plays should not have been published: Michael Frayn’s Clouds (Methuen) and Alphabetical Order, and Donkey’s Years (Methuen), and David Mercer’s television scripts, Huggy Bear and other plays are all very funny. Penguin’s volume of Three Plays (Willis Hall’s The Long and The Short and The Tall, Michael Hastings’ Yes, and After and Doris Lessing’s Each His Own Wilderness) is worth getting if only for an unexpected page 154. Harley Granville Barker’s The Madras House was revived last year at the National so we can expect to see it at the Old Tote shortly.

Except for The Cake Man all these plays are English.
For entries contact Marguerite Wells on 315-2592.

**NEW SOUTH WALES**

**ACTORS COMPANY (660 2503)**
The Removalists by David Williamson; director, Michael Rolfe. In repertoire with Halloran's Little Boat, by Thomas Keneally; director, Kevin Jackson (continuing).

Death of a Salesman by Arthur Miller; director, Michael Rolfe. From August 25.  

**ARTS COUNCIL OF NEW SOUTH WALES (31 6611)**
While the Billy Boils — Henry Lawson's stories by Leonard Teale. August 14 — Muswellbrook; August 15 — Quirindi; August 16 — Tamworth; August 17 — Armidale; August 18 — Glen Innes; August 19 — Tenterfield. In repertoire with Halloran's Little Boat. 

**THEATRE 3 (47 4222)**
Canberra Repertory Born Yesterday by Garson Kanin. Director, Ross McGregor. 2 to 5 August. 

**TIVOLI THEATRE RESTAURANT (49 1411)**
Canberra Professional Group Vaucluse Capers. Fridays and Saturdays (continuing).

**NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF DRAMATIC ART (663 3815)**
Little Boat, written and directed by Michael Boddy (continuing). 

**THE JIGSAW COMPANY (47 0781)**
Nimrod Street Theatre Company. To August 23. 

**OLD TOTE (663 6122)**
Drama Theatre: Hay Fever, by Noel Coward; director, Ted Craig; with Patricia Kennedy, Ronald Falk, Suzanne Roylance, Barry Otto, Judy Nunn and Connie Hobbs. From August 2. 

**PARIS THEATRE (61 9193)**
The Paris Company in Pandora's Cross by Dorothy Hewett; music, Ralph Tynrell; lighting by David Read; director, Jim Sharman. To end of August. 

**WHITE HORSE HOTEL, Newtown (51 1302)**
Brenda by Ian Tasker, written by Peter Stephens. Throughout August. For entries contact Sue Paterson on 357-1200. 

**QUEENSLAND**

**ARTS THEATRE (36 2344)**
Jean Trundle Memorial Drama Festival. To August 5. 

**COCONUT (61 9193)**
The Father We Loved on a Beach by the Sea by Anne Jellicoe; Director, Peter Collingwood; with June Salter and John Hamblin. To September 9. 

**PARIS THEATRE (61 9193)**
The Father We Loved on a Beach by the Sea by Anne Jellicoe; Director, Peter Collingwood; with June Salter and John Hamblin. To September 9. 

**DELLWOOD ROAD PUPPET WORKSHOP**
Sydney Metropolitan tour from August 5. 

**GENEALIAN THEATRE (827 3023)**
Crushed by Desire, written and directed by Michael Boddy (continuing). 

**MUSIC HALL THEATRE RESTAURANT (357 1638)**

**KIRK GALLERY (698 1798)**
Q Theatre: The Sunshine Boys by Neil Simon; director, Rex Williamson. August 3, 4, 5, 10, 11; Bankstown; August 30 September 3 Parramatta. 

**SEYMOUR CENTRE (692 0555)**
York Theatre: Crown Matrimonial written by Royce Ryton; Director, Peter Williams; with Paul Toomey and John Hamblin. To September 9. 

**THEATRE ROYAL (231 6111)**
Big Bad Mouse by Philip King and Faulkland Perry; with Jimmy Edwards and Eric Sykes. From August 1. 

**WHITE HORSE HOTEL, Newtown (51 1302)**
Brenda by Ian Tasker, written by Peter Stephens. Throughout August.
QUEENSLAND OPERA COMPANY
The Magic Flute by Mozart; Director, John Thompson; Musical Director, Graeme Young. All being at SGO Theatre with Australian Opera’s production of Triumph of Honour by Scarlatti; Director, France Cavarra; Conductor, Richard Divall. To August 4.

QUEENSLAND THEATRE COMPANY
(221-5177)
Big Toys by Patrick White; Director, Bill Redmond; Designer, Peter Cooke. August 16 - September 2.

QUEENSLAND ARTS COUNCIL (221-5900)
Hutter Family Australian Folk Music — on tour. Mark McCelan Australia’s Song and Dance Man — on tour. Errl Collins Trio — on tour. The Larrikins authentic Australian Folk Music — on tour. While the Billy Beams with Leonard Teale — on tour.

BRISBANE ACTORS COMPANY (52-7843)
Just Between Ourselves by Alan Ayckbourn; Director, David Glendinning. At Twelfth Night Theatre. August 17 to September 2.


POPULAR THEATRE TROUPE (36-1745)
Out for a Duck — a night of hot harmony and humour. Makin Wicky Wacky, Grasshopper, Butt You, Bum, Oates and Jones. For entries contact Don Batchelor on 049)67-4470.

SOUTH AUS TRALIA

ACT (223-8610)
Playwrights’ Seminar at the Box Factory. Speakers, Ken Ross, David Allen, Rob George. 20 August at 2.30 pm.

AUSTRALIAN DANCE THEATRE (212-2084)

FESTIVAL CENTRE (51-0121)

Q THEATRE (223-5651)

SOUTH AUSTRALIAN THEATRE COMPANY (51-5151)
Peer Gynt by Henrik Ibsen; director, Colin George. Aug 11 - Sep 2.

STATE OPERA (51-6161)
La Rondine by Puccini. August 23, 25, 26, 30.

TROUPE

UNION THEATRE

For entries contact Chris Johns on 223-8610.

TASMANIA

POLYGON THEATRE COMPANY (23 2911)
at Leuna
What the Dickens? A Christmas show devised and directed by Don Gay and John Phelps. To Aug 12.

SALAMANCA THEATRE COMPANY (23-5259)

TASMANIAN PUPPET THEATRE (23-7996)

THEATRE ROYAL (34-6266)

For entries contact editorial office on (049) 67-4470.

VICTORIA

ALEXANDER THEATRE (543-2828)
King Lear by William Shakespeare; Adapted by David Williamson; director, Peter Oyston; with Reg Evans and Joe Bolza.

ARENA CHILDREN’S THEATRE (24-9667)


SCAT: Suite Activity Theatre (one grade 5-6)

FOIBLES THEATRE RESTAURANT (347-2397)
Whimsy — a nostalgic look at the mid 70’s. Original comic revue, with Rod Quotancock, Mary Kenneally, Geoff Brooks, Stephen Blackburn and Neville Stirm. Wed. to Sat. New acts, Mon. nights.

FLYING TRAPEZE CAFE (41-3727)
Amie Gastin in a jazz/blues program, and the Rags and Ribbons Magic Show.

HOOPLA THEATRE FOUNDATION (63-7643)

COMEDY THEATRE (663-1822)
Isn’t It Pathetic At His Age? with Barry Humphries.

LAST LAUGH THEATRE RESTAURANT (4196226)
Makin’ Wicky Wacky, a night of hot harmony and humour.

LA MAMA (550-4593 / 347-6085)

At Home — Part II devised by Lyndal Jones. Aug 31 — Sep 3.

An event devised by Corinne and Arthur Carrrill — film makers. Sep 7 - 10.

MELBOURNE THEATRE COMPANY (654-1025)
Russell St. Theatre: Just Between Ourselves by Alan Ayckbourn; director, Mick Rodger. To September 9.


PALIS BEACH THEATRE (94-0655)
No information available.

POLYGLOT PUPPETS (818-1512)
Multi-cultural puppet theatre, with Mogg the Cat and Co. Touring schools.

PRINCESS THEATRE (662-2911)
An Evening With Quentin Crisp. July 31 - Aug 12.


TIKKI & JOHN’S THEATRE LOUNGE (663-1754)
Olde Time Music Hall with Tiki and John Newman, Myrtle Roberts and Vic Gordon.

VICTORIAN ARTS COUNCIL (529-4355)
Five Funny Folk Tales from the Brothers Grimm. Adapted and directed by Don Mackay. Touring August - City and Country. Australian Dance Theatre in An Evening of Fun Ballet. Artistic Director, Jonathan Taylor. Touring Victoria — August/September. ON TOUR IN NSW — Theatricals, On Tour, with Anthony Shaffer; Director, Don Mackay; with Sydney Conabere and Shane Porteous. Touring August.

VICTORIAN STATE OPERA (41-5961)

Major Amateur Companies: please contact these theatres in the evenings for details of current productions.

HEIDELBERG REPERTORY (49-2262)
MALTENY THEATRE COMPANY (211-0020)
PUMPKIN THEATRE, Richmond (42-8237)
1812 THEATRE, Ferntree Gully (796-8624).

For entries contact Les Carrington on 781-1777.

WESTERN AUSTRALIA

CIVIC THEATRE RESTAURANT (72-1595)
Laughter Unlimited. Revue, director, Brian Smith.

HAYMAN THEATRE, WAIT (350-7026)

HOLE IN THE WALL (35-7026)

POLYGLOT PUPPETS (818-1512)
Multi-cultural puppet theatre, with Mogg the Cat and Co. Touring schools.

PRINCESS THEATRE (662-2911)
An Evening With Quentin Crisp. July 31 - Aug 12.


TIKKI & JOHN’S THEATRE LOUNGE (663-1754)
Olde Time Music Hall with Tiki and John Newman, Myrtle Roberts and Vic Gordon.

VICTORIAN ARTS COUNCIL (529-4355)
Five Funny Folk Tales from the Brothers Grimm. Adapted and directed by Don Mackay. Touring August - City and Country. Australian Dance Theatre in An Evening of Fun Ballet. Artistic Director, Jonathan Taylor. Touring Victoria — August/September. ON TOUR IN NSW — Theatricals, On Tour, with Anthony Shaffer; Director, Don Mackay; with Sydney Conabere and Shane Porteous. Touring August.

VICTORIAN STATE OPERA (41-5961)

Major Amateur Companies: please contact these theatres in the evenings for details of current productions.

HEIDELBERG REPERTORY (49-2262)
MALTENY THEATRE COMPANY (211-0020)
PUMPKIN THEATRE, Richmond (42-8237)
1812 THEATRE, Ferntree Gully (796-8624).

For entries contact Les Carrington on 781-1777.
director, Edgar Metcalf. To Aug 19.
Greenroom: Hancock’s Last Half Hour by Heathcote Williams; director, Stephen Barry.
THE REGAL (381 1557)
Dick Whittington and his Cat. Director, Kenny Cantor. Aug 17 - Sep 1.
W A OPERA COMPANY (322 4766)
In Concert. On country tour from Aug 4.
For entries contact Joan Ambrose on 299-6639.

Theatre Australia
What next?

Next Month
Political theatre in Australia
Mick Rodger
Playscript: Pandora’s Cross by Dorothy Hewett.

Reviews: Opera, Theatre, Ballet, Film, and lots more.

Thespia’s Crossword

Across:
1. Resting actors might . . . . (6)
5. Throw one when you next applaud (8)
9. Where Back to Methusalem begins (8)
10. Feeling after a heavy night (6)
11. . . . lamp replaced gas (12)
13. “I can call spirits from the . . . . deep” [Henry IV Pt I] (8)
14. The teeth of a winch (8)
17. The . . . . Smile, play and short story by Aldous Huxley (8)
18. All the . . . . girls love a sailor (4)
20. Playing with intent (12)
23. What the sexist Virgil said of women (6)
24. Cosmos in single stanza (8)
25. Sanctified Wildean hero loses indescribable article to become severe (8)
26. “So do our minutes . . . . to their end” Shakespeare sonnet (6)

Down:
2. A civil wrong (4)
3. The type of performance Stanislavski strove for (9)
4. Show (6)
5. St Andrew’s earth shattering mistake (3,7,5)
6. Are these ever beaten with honour? (8)
7. Shakespeare’s archaic word for dark continent (5)
8. Above the door in theatre (4,6)
12. Handy make-up artist (10)
15. Sweet buzzing entourage for queen (5,4)
16. How the Jumbies went to sea (2,1,5)
19. May have one horse and be open (6)
21. “. . . should not be played in a house with women in it” [Streetcar Named Desire] (5)
22. Scept’r’d or full of noises (4)

Last month’s answers