Theatre Australia: Australia's magazine of the performing arts 3(5) December 1978

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Nationwide Reviews including film, ballet, opera, records, books; National Guide.

Pinder’s Last Laugh
Nowra on theatre
Opera Extra

Who’s sharing who’s stocking this Christmas?
Nimrod Theatre
500 Elizabeth St
Surry Hills NSW 2010

Until Sunday
26 November
Nimrod Upstairs

A Visit With The Family

Greg Bunbury
director Richard Wherrett
designer Larry Eastwood
Lou Brown, Brandon Burke, Tom Farley, Gillian Jones, Margo Lee,
Helen Morse, Robyn Neustadt, Rob Young

Until Sunday
19 November
Nimrod Downstairs

Fold Komfort Kaffee
devised by Robyn Archer
directed by Ken Horler
design by Martin Sharp
Robyn Archer, John Gaden, Sharon Raschke, Jerry Wesley

From Saturday
25 November
Nimrod Downstairs

Gone With Hardy

David Allen
directed by Richard Wherrett
designed by Anthony Babicci
Terence Clarke, Drew Forsythe, Henri Szeps, Kerry Walker

From Saturday
2 December
Nimrod Upstairs

JUMPERS

Tom Stoppard
directed by Ken Horler
designed by Larry Eastwood
John Gaden, Barry Lovett, Walter Pym, Geraldine Turner, George Whaley

The national magazine of the performing arts

Theatre Australia

December 1978

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Film Review — PATRICK P.54
The Festival Season is with us once more. With the proliferation of state festivals, the twelve months from the '78 Adelaide Festival must be the biggest year for these mass events to date. The dramatic ripples of the Adelaide Festival went on spreading around the continent as the international companies showed their works in most states. In that sense it is a national event, and one which really does inject fresh inspiration into the work done here. Croc's 2's Dead Class and Steve Berkoff's East seem to have been the pick of a remarkable and varied crop that had been chosen with great skill.

This year Queensland too, entered the festival stakes with its Brisbane Warrana Festival of the Arts, and the quantity and quality of theatre events there seem to have been an exciting new departure. With an open air Oedipus, Steve Spears as temporary writer in residence at La Boite and a mammoth production of The Ancient Mariner in St. John's Cathedral, the first harvest, who knows what future years will bring.

Melbourne celebrated Moomba once again, but this community festival is less interested than most in the dramatic side of communal activities.

Not to be outdone, Tasmania is joining the fray with an International Puppet Festival being held in Hobart during the first week of January '79. The reason that Hobart is hosting this major coming together of world-wide puppeteers is the outstanding work that has been done by the Tasmanian Puppet Theatre over the last two years. They have been recognised by the Tasmanian Premier, Mr. Lowe, who has been quoted as saying that the "dedicated team at the TPT is helping to put Tasmania on the artistic map, as well as providing entertainment and valuable educational assistance."

This dedication is now being borne out throughout Australia in the acclamation accorded to the tour of Puppets: Mime, Mask, Movement and Sound, and taking part will be companies from China, Japan, Russia and the USSR.

Perth will be starting its annual festivities — the Festival Season is with us once more. The subscription rate is $18.00 post free within Australia, the Queensland Cultural Activities Board, the Western Australian Arts Council and the Arts Grants Advisory Committee of South Australia, the Queensland Cultural Activities Department, the Victorian Ministry of the Arts, The Western Australian Arts Council and the Assistance of the University of Newcastle.

The first is written by Phillip Mann, presently an ABC TV Drama Script Editor, whose How Sleep The Brave will not be his first stage script, but the first to be produced in Sydney. Likewise Ken Hale is also an experienced writer, but Syndrome is his first stage play, about politics and corruption. The two remaining plays are a double-bill of one-acters by Graeme Nixon, who has worked in TV and film but has not written for the stage since doing the odd revue and plays at university in the fifties. This obviously valuable exercise could encourage an interesting new initiative in playwrighting in those who are mature and experienced in other media, and from which the theatre may have a lot to gain.

So, everything is set to go from New Year's Eve and "Australia's biggest free party" centring round a six and a half hour concert on the Opera House forecourt. Apparently there is a growing interest abroad in the now famous opening of the Festival so perhaps it will afford a chance to increasingly show overseas tourists that the infamous Qantas ads are not to be taken seriously.
NOEL FERRIER

“Christmas comes but once a year and once it used to bring us at least one, or sometimes two, pantomimes in each of our capital cities. The sad part about many of the kids today, yesterday and even the day before, is that they’ve never experienced a real live Tivoli Pantomime with all of the stars of the current night time variety show appearing twice daily as the Ugly Sisters, Babes in the Wood, Principal Boy, Dick Whittington etc. If any one single factor which made it to the upper circle, screaming at the gods, singing along, catching a few Minties allowed to do it, it will be real nice. Not chestnuts as one patron suggested but nuts nonetheless. Watch this space.”

LIGHT POWERED FESTIVAL

Mr Maurice J Williams,
General Manager of AGC.

“The Australian Gaslight Company is the principle commercial sponsor of the Festival of Sydney, and has been in each of the three years since its inception in 1977. They have taken on this role and supported the Festival because as the oldest commercial company in the country, they feel very much a part of the Sydney community. They have been supplying Sydney with gas since 1841.

It is as a result of discussion between AGC and the Festival Committee that they decide what parts of the Festival to participate in. This year the company is taking part in the opening party, sponsoring the Australian Festival of Folk Life at the Regent Theatre and the Childrens Theatre at Hyde Park — and of course the parade. These are leading activities within the Festival of Sydney and ones in need of financial support.

The Australian Gas Light Company wishes the Festival of Sydney much success, and congratulates the Festival Committee on what it has done for the community. They are pleased to be part of the whole venture.”

MAKING USE OF STATE RIVALRY

PETER HEMMINGS, Director Australian Opera.

“From 1971-1976 it was right and natural that most of The Australian Opera’s efforts should be concentrated on developing an audience for the magnetic symbol of the Sydney Opera House. With 98% audiences in 1978 that can be said to have been done. Now on the horizon are great new opera houses in Melbourne and Brisbane and one already existing in Adelaide. The Australian Opera must now fulfill the national commitment inherent in its title in tandem with the State Companies. In these three states combined subscriptions are now the order of the day and have led to greatly increased houses. The Australian Opera has also bought a production of Idomeneo from the Victoria State Opera and invited the Symphony Orchestra of South Australia to bring to Sydney their production of Nicholas Maw’s One Man Show. In this way the State Companies are strengthened and Sydney sees a wider repertoire at a time when financial problems might militate against this. Those involved in the cause of developing opera in Australia should use interstate rivalries to advantage.”

QTC PROGNOSIS FOR SUCCESS

ALAN EDWARDS, Artistic Director, QTC.

“Our capital city season for ’79 will start with Shaw’s You Never Can Tell, then Breaker Morant by Ken Ross, followed by Hedda Gabler. Another Australian play with Dave Allen’s Gone With Hardy, then Streetcar Named Desire. The play after that isn’t yet decided on, but for the Brisbane and Warrana Festival of the Arts we’ll be doing a huge open air production of A Midsummer Night’s Dream in Albert Park which hopefully will involve the Queensland Opera and Ballet, and possibly the..."
Q & Q

Queensland Theatre Orchestra. We end the year with what we hope will be a smash hit, Frank Thring in The Man Who Came to Dinner.

Well be keeping up our three country tours with Arts Council and next year's will be Clewerson, after it's played the Sydney Festival, and The Twenties and All That Jazz, probably directed by John Doedracht. I don't yet know what the third will be. Sleuth has been such a success this year that we have pulled it back from touring into a short season in December in Brisbane. I believe in capitalising on success and 1978 has been an extremely good year for us, especially Big Toys, Cherry Orchard and Lear. This means there are two possible new schemes for next year, budgets permitting, one is keeping on Warner Street Church Hall and doing 'poor theatre' productions in it; and the other is six o'clock theatre at the SGIO, which would mean giving young directors a chance of doing one hour, good plays before the main performance.

It looks like a good prognosis for the QTC in '79, and added to all that our TIE work will keep going, primary and secondary concentrating on International Year of the Child, and Project Sperhead in more specialised areas, particularly handicapped children."

FESTIVAL DRAMA

PAULINE STEEL, Press & Publicity Officer

"The Festival of Perth has announced its drama programme for 1979 together with a major breakthrough in the field of corporate sponsorship of drama in Western Australia.

Leading English playwright Tom Stoppard heads the list of distinguished theatricals coming to Perth from overseas and interstate. The Festival in association with Clifford Hocking will bring to Australia the world famous Prospect Theatre Company from London, with stars Derek Jacobi and Timothy West. From Sydney the Nimrod Theatre Company will present for Festival a new production of Shakespeare's Romeo and Juliet directed by John Bell and starring Mel Gibson, Angela Punch, Kerry Walker, Drew Forsythe and Peter Carroll, whilst the National Theatre Company will present the Australian Premiere of Stoppard's new play I'd directed and it did excellent business. Directing drama as opposed to opera means you use very different thought processes, you create your own rhythms and stresses. I'm looking forward to creating my own ensemble here and aiming for a professional core of actors eventually. Next year we will be doing Godspell, A Midsummer Night's Dream, which will be designed by Patrick Guaci of the Victorian State Opera, and then Anne Godfrey Smith will be directing Dasa Fish Stas and Vi. After that the Servant of Two Masters is on the cards, hopefully in a modern version.

I want to be very democratic and am going to great lengths to find new people; 150 were auditioned for Godspell. I see Rep as very serious in its work, it has been going now for forty years and I want to stretch it, as well as myself, in new directions. At the moment eighty people are attending the classes I give, with fifty on the waiting list. Coming from a musical family and background (I'm Jack's nephew) I find that it works very well.

I'm only sorry that what I am doing in Canberra is seen as valid and of interest here, but was ignored in Hobart."

NEW DIRECTIONS FOR REP

MICHAEL LANCHEBERRY, Director, Canberra Rep.

"This is all a new departure for me and one that I welcome. I left Saddlers Wells in 1973 after fifteen years of singing and directing around the world — a car accident stopped me singing — and went to direct the Tasmanian Opera Company for five years. Now I'm getting used to Australian drama; Buzzo's Mariello Tornino was the first Australian play I directed and it did excellent business. Directing drama as opposed to opera means you use very different thought processes, you create your own rhythms and stresses. I'm looking forward to creating my own ensemble here and aiming for a professional core of actors eventually. Next year we will be doing Godspell, A Midsummer Night's Dream, which will be designed by Patrick Guaci of the Victorian State Opera, and then Anne Godfrey Smith will be directing Dasa Fish Stas and Vi. After that the Servant of Two Masters is on the cards, hopefully in a modern version.

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PS POTSHOTS

TERRY VAUGHAN, Director, Canberra Theatre Centre

"The Australian premiere season of Flextime, New Zealander Roger Hall's comedy about the Public Service, turned out to be more popular with Canberra's youngsters than with the middle-aged public servants. The Canberra Theatre Trust's production directed by John Tasker ran for three and a half weeks in October at the Playhouse to full houses, and enthusiastic cheers and whistles from the 20-30 year-olds comprising 80% of the audiences.

After show comments from older public servants or thank-yous from P S guests of maturer vintage were rather noticeably absent. Maybe some of the lines cut a bit too deep — "Ever noticed a bloke's face when you tell him you're a public servant? He's sorry for you." "The bosses are so damn worried about what the public might think they don't give a stuff about the stuff." And the clincher "...my life's been just a waste of time."

However, Flextime's sending-up of the P S is mostly in lighter vein — "Look Mum, I can't talk now, it's teabreak. I'll ring you later" — and in Canberra obviously appealed to the general public. Which is clearly why Nimrod Theatre subsequently secured the rights; a potshot at local departments could be as popular interstate as in Canberra."

SYDNEY'S LAST PUB THEATRE

BILL YOUNG, Producer, Kirribilli Pub Theatre.

NZ BROTHERS

PETER CARROLL

"I am here to tell you that I have returned from NZ after a terrific six week tour for Nimrod in (what else?) Ron Blair's The Christian Brothers. All the major centres were hit: Auckland, Palmerston North, Wellington, Christchurch, Dunedin; and the audience girls and poms seemed to enjoy themselves very much. I found petrol dearer, food the same, rent cheaper, wages smaller, and I'm not saying anything about the wine. The whole place really is a most superb golf course covered with lamb chops and occasional earthquakes (of which we had two but slept through one).

The NZ theatre scene grows apace with the New Zealanders patent on success and 1978 has been an extremely good year for us, especially The Man Who Came to Dinner. Buzo's Mariello Tornino was the first Australian play I directed and it did excellent business. Directing drama as opposed to opera means you use very different thought processes, you create your own rhythms and stresses. I'm looking forward to creating my own ensemble here and aiming for a professional core of actors eventually. Next year we will be doing Godspell, A Midsummer Night's Dream, which will be designed by Patrick Guaci of the Victorian State Opera, and then Anne Godfrey Smith will be directing Dasa Fish Stas and Vi. After that the Servant of Two Masters is on the cards, hopefully in a modern version.

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"I decided to produce Kirribilli Pub Theatre after seeing and participating in similar ventures at the Civic Hotel and the White Horse Hotel. Those two venues have since closed which leaves us, to my knowledge, as the only professional pub theatre in Sydney.

Our first production, The Over the Rainbow Show Kirribilli Pub Theatre 1978."
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• 3 QUEENSLAND ONE-ACT PLAYS FOR FESTIVALS (VOL. II) (TWO MEN IN BUCKRAM by Ian Austin; THE KISS by Jacqueline McWilliam; FIREBUG by Helen Haenke)
• NOT EVEN A MOUSE by Barbara Stellmach
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THEATRE AUSTRALIA DECEMBER 1978
MY MISTAKE
I received a phone call from the Computicket office about last month’s comment in which I mentioned that London seats available through Computicket are probably the second best seats in the house. Well, they are not the second best seats in the house at all — they are the best.

ON STAGE
Ms Joyce Higgins a lady whose name is usually associated with casting has been spending the past few months looking for financial support for a theatrical company she is starting called On Stage. The concept of On Stage is to give opportunities to actors and actresses who are confronted with the problem of the chicken and the egg. Through this company potentially good actors and actresses can gain valuable experience on stage.

HAPPY 17th BIRTHDAY
Not so long ago the Music Hall in Sydney held its seventeenth birthday. The show, Crushed With Desire starring Anne Semler (above) and Bruce Barry was extremely good entertainment typical of the Music Hall. The price is right, the food is excellent and it’s a great night out if ever you are in Sydney. Their next production starts in February next year and if it’s anything like the current show it is definitely worth seeing. By the way, keep an eye out for our Theatre Restaurant Review in the May issue of TA.

ANTELOPE MART
Deberah Brooks and Joe Lebovic have started up a memorabilia market in the Antique Market in Surry Hills in Sydney. This mart specialises in movie posters and general theatrical memorabilia as well as art and so on. For enthusiasts this is a great place to browse but at the time of writing there was a possibility that the mart may not get underway properly before Christmas. I hope it is well underway by now as these sort of items make great presents.

LEGAL HASSLES
Last month The Canberra Repertory Society advertised their new production — Godspell! but at the last minute they were unable to put the play on. Why? I don’t know except that there was a problem with the rights etcetera. This is a shame because Canberra Rep is a very hard working bunch and deserve greater success than they are getting. A Midsummer Night’s Dream starts this month so get along to see it if you can.

CABARET
Last month Cabaret started at the actors company and unfortunately Anne Phelan (above) doesn’t remind me of Sally Bowles in the slightest but don’t let that stop you from seeing the show. Miss Phelan, an ex-Glitter Sister is a good performer and has an interesting voice and any way everything the Actors Company does is worth seeing.

FISHING FOR STARDOM
Greg Rowe of Storm Boy fame and Hardy Kruger star in the South Australian Film Corporation’s latest film — Blue Fin. This film is one of the best Australian films I have ever seen. It caters for a wide range of audience but mainly it’s a boy’s adventure film. I have heard that Greg Rowe has a three year contract with the SAFC and to my knowledge if this is so he is the only actor in the country with such a contract.

AN EXPENSIVE BALL
In the October issue of TA there was an advertisement for The Performing Arts Ball held by The Designers Association in the Performing Arts. The ball was to be held at the Paddington Town Hall, it was twenty dollars per head and it was fancy dress. The ball was cancelled because of lack of interest but in my opinion it was not lack of interest but lack of money that prevented people wanting to go. Twenty bucks is a lot of money for a night out at the Paddo Town Hall when the Black and White Ball at the Wentworth Hotel was only sixteen.
Ray Stanley’s

WHISPERS
RUMOURS & FACTS

Managements could perhaps save both them selves and investors much money and less anguish if, when staging American plays and musicals, they followed one simple rule: first far as I know there has success in London it can still fail here, but the selves and investors much money and less should like to hear of it.

Am more than a little confused as to just what is a superstar. It doesn’t necessarily go hand in hand with talent I know, but is usually associated with someone whose name is such a household one, the mere mention of it sets off furious activity at the box office. Right at the beginning of the advertising campaign in Melbourne for the two Quintero-directed plays, Liv Ullmann was particularly designated as a ‘superstar’. A little later, as if the promoters were a little unsure, posters appeared around the city displaying Ullmann’s portrait with the words “This is Liv Ullmann”. So am still wondering just what is the definition of a superstar. Anyone like to enlighten me?

See that Jack of all trades at the Australian Theatre Company (and what’s more master of all, actor, playwright, director, translator (plus many others we won’t name!) Nick Enright, is being referred to as “The Whiz Kid”. Couldn’t agree more . . . With people still talking about her stunning performance as Margo Channing in a non-professional production of Applause, wonder where producer Leonard Cooper will be staging Val Lehman’s upcoming one-woman show . . . Just when I thought we’d heard the last of The 20s And All That Jazz (and really, at this stage of their careers those kids ought to be moving on to other things), I learn the show definitely opens in Hong Kong next March. Seems it will be presented there by Derek Nimmo and his son.

Sounds like a good link up, that marriage between Garry Van Egmond and Robert Sturgess to jointly present classical attractions, with latter operating this division. Garry, who was once Harry M Miller’s right hand man in Melbourne, has been involved in presentation of a number of successful pop groups, made a lot of money out of the Doctors In Love tour and more recently the Bette Midler concerts. Robert for several years was general manager for the old JCWs and responsible for signing up Victoria de Los Angeles, Giuseppe di Stefano, Yehudi Menuhin and Leonard Bernstein with the New York Philharmonic. As an independent producer, he was responsible for the recent 14-week tour of Keith Michell and the Chichester Festival Theatre Company which grossed over one million dollars.

Memo to all state companies: Although he’s only been an exception to this rule. If anyone thinks they know of one, I should like to hear of it.

Story going around London of the fellow who went to the box office of the Prince Edward Theatre and asked for two tickets to see Evita.

“Sorry, sold out!”, he was told. He persisted: “If Prince Philip or Prince Charles wanted two seats for tonight would you have them?” “Of course”, came the reply. “Well, they’re NOT coming”, he said, “so I’ll have their seats!”

Yet another Dracula play in America. This time Dracula, the Vampire King in San Diego, with Michael Ansara starring . . . And, jumping onto the Dracula bandwagon, there’s going to be an Australian film called Thirst about women vampires. It will be produced by Tony Fantasm Ginnane, with screenplay written by The Australian once Ager columnist John Pinkney . . . Meanwhile, despite rumours floating around to the contrary, am assured by Kenn Brodziak that the John Waters Dracula will open in Melbourne next February.

After seven years Joe MacColum is obviously going to be missed as associate director of the Queensland Theatre Company, where his productions of One Flew Over the Cuckoo’s Nest, St Joan and The Cherry Orchard were obvious highlights. Now he’s going to free lance as a director, and first up will be Shaw’s You Never Can Tell — for the QTC early in 1979! Joe wants to remain in Queensland, directing for non-professional as well as professional groups, because of the considerable theatrical activity and growth he sees taking place in the state. As he puts it: “The theatrical pot is close to boiling here and, as I don’t mind the heat, I want to continue to work in the kitchen.” But, just occasionally, we’d like to see your work in some of the eastern states Joe.

Rumours that Diana Rigg will be coming out to play St Joan. Remember last time it toured, back in 1962 for the Australian Elizabethan Theatre Trust, Zoe Caldwell was the Maid. And back in the early thirties it was Sybil Thorndike . . . When is actor Brian James going to finish that Gothic type novel he’s writing? Isn’t generally known, but Brian has written several short stories . . . Is it true that Steve Berkoff’s production of Metamorphosis for the Nimrod is likely to tour next year? And what aboutTiny Tim going there next year?

Looks a strong cast John Finlayson has assembled for that revue-style play Bullshit Crammond, opening January 4 at Hobart’s Theatre Royal for the Tasmanian Fiesta: Sandy Gore, Betty Bobbitt, Gary Down, John Diedrich and Allen Harvey. Let’s hope it transfers to the mainland . . . Will Terry Donovan get the opportunity of re-creating his outstanding stage performance in the title role when the film of Breaker Morant is made? Bruce Beresford will be directing . . . Apparently career of composer Marvin Chorus Line Hamlish started when, as an 18-year-old rehearsal pianist for Peggy Lee, he was asked at the last moment to play the piano at a party. “I don’t play for parties”, he said, “and besides, I’ve got my homework to do!”

Told that Hollywood producer Sam Spiegel was giving the party, Marvin said: “I’ll be there in 10 minutes!” And that’s how it all started for him.

Derek Glyne, JCW’s one-time London rep, who was involved with Michael Edgley in presentation of Marcel Marceau on his last tour, and will be co-presenting with Michael the D’Oyley Carte Opera Company here May-September next year, has further ideas for Australia. He has acquired Australian rights to three London successes: Six of One, Shut Your Eyes and Think of England and Whose Life Is It Anyway? One British star will probably be imported for each production . . . Heard in the foyer after the opening of Annie in Melbourne: “The sets are lovely — but why must the cast keep getting in front of them?”

And at the Melbourne opening of the Liv Ullman plays, in the audience was New York critic Clive Barnes nodding off to sleep!!!

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Dear Sir,

I refer to Pamela Ruskin’s interview with Kristian Fredrikson in your October issue. Kris is a member of the Designers Association in the Performing Arts and we wish to support his views regarding the import of overseas designers. DAPA now numbers seventy members from film, theatre and television. Forty six are theatre designers and eight are NIDA students, three of whom are about to graduate.

DAPA has no objection to a designer of brilliant talent entering the country – this would always prove a stimulus. But we have protested strongly to managements and shall continue to protest if a subsidised company brings in a designer whose work we consider could be equalled or surpassed by one of our members.

Unfortunately, there are limited opportunities for designers to be resident with a company, thereby ensuring a regular weekly wage, and the remainder battle to secure commissions. Even those who may appear to be doing well, often have gaps between jobs. There is no guarantee of continuity of work. Surely, therefore, we have a right to expect Australian artists to be considered before an overseas one. Other countries are now tightening their laws against importing foreign designers in order to give employment to their own people. It’s about time taxpayers’ money by training people who cannot

Dear Sir,

Kristian Fredrikson asserted in your last issue that “We are turning out design graduates from NIDA at the taxpayers expense and they are not being used.”

If this is intended as a criticism of producers and managements who bypass Australians in favour of imported British or European designers, then I am most sympathetic. If it is intended to suggest that NIDA is wasting the taxpayers’ money by training people who cannot find employment, it is quite untrue.

There have been 16 graduates in Design since 1974. Peter Cook, Fiona Reilly and Stephen Gow are currently designing productions for the Queensland Theatre Company. Steve Nolan, Mark Wager and Lyn Forde are with the Melbourne Theatre Company. Phillip Edmiston has established his own Marionette company. Christopher Webster has been constantly engaged in film art direction and Louella Hatfield is with the A.B.C.

Bill Pritchard and Melody Cooper have freelanced with a number of theatre companies in Sydney and Melbourne. Anthony Babici designs for the Q Theatre.

Jane Hipsley has gone to England to undertake further studies in design and Eamon D’Arcy is an assistant designer for the British National Theatre. Eamon is sharing in the Loudon Sainthill Scholarship for Australian designers.

Before the Design Course was established, several graduates of the Production Course have become professional designers. Kim Carpenter designs for the Melbourne Theatre Company. Robert Dein has designed for the Young Vic Company in London and Lindsay Mcgarrity is also working in Britain.

The NIDA Design Course does not pretend to graduate finished artists. It is primarily concerned with training craftsmen competent to work in the design department of professional theatre companies, in film and television, who will hopefully progress to greater responsibility, as they gain experience. This is exactly what most of them have done.

Yours sincerely,

JOHN R CLARK
Director

Dear Sir,

John Clark can rest assured that I intended no criticism of NIDA – a national school of design is unquestionably required. If there is any question of taxpayers’ money being wasted, the fault lies not with NIDA, which is fulfilling its function, but with any subsidised theatre management which favours overseas designers at the expense of competent resident artists.

That NIDA graduates of the last few years are satisfactorily employed is reassuring, but does not lessen the fact that any increase in import designers will decrease their future prospects. NIDA graduates make up only part of the total design force in this country. Let an overseas designer take one of the few resident positions here and an Australian could lose a career and a living. For every imported design an Australian is out of work.

The hard fact is that at the best of times a design career is tough to negotiate, particularly as it takes many years for a free lance designer to gain the number of credits necessary to command enough fees in a year to be commensurate with the average annual wage. The young Australian designer on the first rungs is in double jeopardy – he/she is not only competing with numerous compatriots, but also with the possibility that a future commission could be lost to an import designer.

The first case is part of the normal cut and thrust of theatre and usually resolved by the individual’s talent quota, but the second is a discouraging situation for those young craftsmen who would ordinarily hope one day to accept – as John Clark says – “greater responsibility”.

Yours sincerely,

Kristian Fredrikson
Fitzroy, Victoria.

Dear Sir,

Much as I regret having to cast doubts on a fine and dramatic yarn, the account of the performance on 22 July, 1936 of Till The Day I Die by the New Theatre in your last issue would appear to differ somewhat from the recollections of my parents who were on the stage of the Savoy that evening. Unfortunately they have not kept documentary evidence but they have written their memories down for me. My father, Jack Maclean writes as follows:

“I played the role of Ernst in Till The Day I Die on the night of 22nd July, 1936 at the Savoy Theatre when the police were present. I also played the part of Ernst for over 20 times after that performance at the New Theatre in 36 Pitt Street on Sunday evenings to invited audiences as the play was banned.

The police did not crash into the Savoy Theatre but remained at the back of the hall taking notes.

There was no interference from the police and although the police wagon was parked outside the theatre, the play went on without a hitch and no arrests were made.”

My mother, Pat Tucker, adds the following:

“I was in Waiting for Lefty at the Savoy in July 1936 and remember the police standing along the back wall taking notes. It was a good

(Continued on page 14)
Alexander Hay on acting

Recorded by Joan Ambrose

"There is a quality about the theatre that I like, which many actors find disturbing, the ephemeral quality, the idea that there is a performance on a given evening, and that an actor utterly commits himself; then it is gone, and then there must be another performance with an equal amount of commitment on the next evening, — that excites me. I like being in a play, building a character, living with it for a long time, and then when the final curtain comes on the last night, there is some sense of regret, but then there is change. The set must come down but a new set will be built, and then there will be a complete change, an organic change, a difference in style, in century even, a difference in temperament with a new part. All that fascinates me.

"And there are many other aspects. The work. The actors concept. It is a very complicated thing, for I believe the business of the actor is to hold up a mirror. No. For that would imply realism — the theatre is not realism. The business of an actor, is I believe, to illuminate humanity to humanity, and if a play does not interest me.

"But I didn't always regard theatre so seriously. In fact I became an actor more or less by chance. I wanted to leave school. The careers master had a list of possible occupations that began with Able seaman and ended with Zoologist. None appealed but I thought I'd try Actor.

"The audition piece was to be from Shakespeare. I thought Hamlet. I decided that "To be or not to be" was tacitly inappropriate for this occasion and had chosen "Oh what a rogue and peasant slave am I!" and with what composure I had, I was about to launch off on "Oh what a rogue" etcetera when lunch was served to the committee. And from there on, apart from waving a fork at me to proceed, they took no notice of me at all, and the dog continued to chase rabbits in his dreams.

"I left the audition thinking, well, I wonder what's on the careers master's list under B.

"No one was more confounded than I when a letter came a fortnight later to say that I had been awarded the scholarship. "Students did not learn a lot at RADA at that period, in the sense of formal lessons. These days some of those lessons would be regarded as somewhat quaint. Lessons on the correct way to pour tea for instance, but my tutors created an atmosphere of theatre that one absorbed, and of course, London theatre at the time, was magic. Students, for a few pence could sit in the gods. I think I went to the theatre every night of the week.

"Then I joined a company as an assistant stage manager and eventually understudied. There was marvellous talent to observe and work with. And my seriousness of purpose grew. For I believe that the eventual importance of an actor depends on his own spiritual development. Acting I believe is not completely a matter of talent. You can see many talented actors perform but unless he or she has a depth to call upon, that performance will not be memorable and haunting. Some performances I have seen have sustained me all my life. I believe that to be, in essence is greater than to do. This is not a play on words. Unless you are, you cannot do. Unless there is a light burning within him, an actor is less than he should be.

"Ruth Draper is the performer who had this inner quality, in my opinion, to a greater degree than any other performer I have seen in my life time. She was the great inspiration of my acting life. Although she had been in London many times, for some reason I had never been to her performance. I suppose I considered, who is this disease? Well finally I did see her. She came on stage, a middle-aged lady in a chocolate coloured, velvet gown, with corrugated iron grey hair. Not a beautiful lady. But within moments without any change of costume or covering her hair she became a young girl from Crian Larich, The Immigrant on Ellis Island, and there followed a performance of total magic. Complete entrancing magic.

"And yet by saying that an actor must have an essential inner quality I am not denying technique. Certainly not. In fact if I hear someone saying that I am a technical actor, my reply is — excellent! But of course that person may have a different connotation of the word technique in mind to the connotation that I have. To me technique is everything. Technique is the way you have found to reveal your conception to your audience. But of course, if all that an audience is aware of is a technical process going on, then I can only say that that particular technique is very bad. But to deny technique is to deny craft. And I won't subscribe to that.

"And yet I always want an audience to be aware that they are in the theatre, in the sense that they are present and drawn into dramatic action that is not life, it is more heightened, magical, and again, I use the word, illuminating than anything in real life can offer. And I want to create a performance that provokes a response from the audience that involves both the intellect and the imagination. I am a cerebral actor. I am at my best when I feel there are many levels to portray.

"In recent years it is Genet who has excited me most and who has brought me closest to what I believe theatre is all about. It is to do with falsity. A bunch of real flowers on the stage, strangely, inevitably looks false, but artificial flowers look real. Falsity, in the theatre therefore contains truth. Genet was completely concerned with fake. Illusion. His craving was for flowers, jewels, the splendour of royalty. But he was a criminal, utterly and completely depraved, a recidivist, and a betrayer of friends. Not at all attractive, but this perverse and basically despicable human being could find the beauty that he needed, in the most tawdry circumstances of his life. And despite his deprivation, his vision created diamonds from spittle, roses in drops of blood from the executioner's knife, a pearl coronet from stained dentures. His belief and beauty came from illusion, and the process of imagination. "To me, in theatre, in the falsity, in the illusion, in the lie, there can be found a profound reality and truth".
“What was the effect on you of working with the QTC as director for seven years?”

In the seven years I did thirty productions. Over those years the company of actors of course changed considerably, but always there was a core of six or eight actors who remained for several years and as this core changed only slowly, there was continuity of working with the same group over a series of productions.

This, for me, was the most interesting and important aspect of the period — to work year after year, on several productions per year, with a largely constant group of actors.

It is generally accepted that the optimum conditions under which actors work is one which provides security of employment, encouragement to continue exploring and acquiring new skills and techniques, the opportunity to risk the occasional mistake without damaging career prospects. These conditions are not often found, they imply long term contracts and large permanent companies.

Hard as it may be for the actor to find his optimum conditions, it is even harder for a director. Usually only by founding and building his own company of actors in his own theatre can a director find this continuity but, more often than not, the administrative burden grows heavier and heavier and the would-be director finds he’s spending more time at his desk than on the rehearsal floor.

Fortunately for me I know virtually nothing about administration and a balance sheet is a mystery I’ve never been able to solve; the fact that they always balance astounds me, for I have never once come to agreement with my bank as to how much money I have to my credit, the bank statement invariably shows I have less than homewreck reckoning. Although this meant I wasn’t able to give much help to the Director of the QTC, Alan Edwards, in his figuring, it also meant I could devote more time to the work of the actors and my own work. I was given a virtually unique opportunity to plan work on my own craft over a long period, as were many of my actors and we worked closely together on this, devoting many a night to the analysis of our combined efforts, seeking to find better methods of working together to get the best out of each other.

Only in my very early days as a director, before I came to Australia some seventeen years ago, did I place any faith on the actor, the free-lance director tends to play safe, further work may be jeopardised by an idea which doesn’t succeed. It is for this reason I realise I have been very lucky in having these seven years, I would wish the opportunity for others, especially young Australian, directors. Future free-lance directing appears very challenging and important aspect of the period — to

During these 1963-1970 NIDA years a wave of young actors emerged who now form the main treasury of Australian actors capable of tremendous further development, could look to as a place where, from time to time, they could work on several consecutive productions in an atmosphere of further exploration of their talents.

The director, I have discovered, is as liable to fall into a rut as the actor, when the temptation to choose what you know will work as against the dangerous possibility of failure arising from the attempt to try new methods. Again as with the actor, the free-lance director tends to prize some stage ‘picture’, or bit of business, in my production, but the actors and I know it was not solely ‘my’ idea, it grew from our agreed belief that movement and gesture is as much part of the process of communication as speech is and just as I would not dream of telling an actor how to speak his lines, I would not state that a move should be so-and-so. Together we would have discovered what we believed to be the truth of a situation and moves and gestures as well as lines or silence were dictated by and arose out of the necessity of stating this truth as clearly as possible.

“Notes” at the end of a rehearsal, especially at the end of a run, are an accepted part of a director’s role. I have slowly come to believe they are not only time-wasting, but a wedge driven between actors and director, keeping them apart and dividing too sharply the roles of these two components of a theatrical production.

Once the “trust-the-actor” relationship had become not a pious piece of lip-service, but an essential part of the day-to-day work it became evident that ‘notes’ should not be an end-of-the-day ritual. But should be given when their necessity arises, when they can be most useful, when alternatives may be tested, when the actor can explain his intentions and test them on the director-audience and adjust as necessary, when they can be either private or public as the occasion demands, when they can be a two-way process between actors and director rather than a teacher-pupil relationship as normal ‘notes’ often tend to be.

Only less than two years separated my several years as tutor at NIDA from the commencement of my work with the QTC. During these 1963-1970 NIDA years a wave of young actors emerged who now form the main treasury of Australian actors, directors. Future free-lance directing appears very challenging
Telethon Appeal

The Telethon Appeal is sponsored annually in South Australia by NWS Channel 9, Radio 5DN and "The News" to aid various charities. Charities are selected according to their particular needs and help is mainly given as a result of an application by the charity with due consideration to obtain help from other sources.

Telethon is the only Charity Appeal conducted in South Australia which varies its charities and this gives all charities who are not regularly sponsored by Appeals through the various media, a chance to appeal to the generosity of the people of our State. Over the past 18 years, Telethon has raised well in excess of $2,000,000 for very needy and worthwhile charities in South Australia. This amount does not include Government subsidies.

Fundraising includes the running of the Miss Telethon Quest, SDN-Telthon Fair, Telethon lotteries, Fashion Parades, many private functions, Telethon Door-knock and our annual Channel 9 on-air Appeal. On Saturday 16th December from 6.00am to midnight, the station will deal exclusively with raising money for Telethon, with national and state personalities and artists giving their time to aid the Appeal. Radio 5DN greatly assists Channel 9 with radio coverage and the event has always been heavily promoted through "The News".

Personalities already invited for this year include Diane Cilento, Ed Devereaux, Jimmy Hannan, Mark Holden, cast members of "The Young Doctors" and "The Sullivans" with the list growing daily.

This year, for the first time, Telethon will be extended to the Northern Territory. Our main beneficiary, Minda House, has been providing residential care and training for intellectually handicapped people from the Northern Territory for 80 years but has never before appealed for funds there.

A Letter-Drop in conjunction with the Appeal will take place throughout South Australia and the Northern Territory in early December. All envelopes returned to us will be included in a free lottery with a prize of $1,000 from the Adelaide Permanent Building Society and we hope that, with the generosity of the general public, it will achieve a record result.

Profile: Joan Sydney

Colin O'Brien

"Some men must love my lady" remarks Berowne in Love's Labour Lost, "and some, Joan". I cannot comment on Navarre, but here in Perth we always seem to have a theatrical Joan on whom to dote. It used to be Joan Bruce before she left us for the Flesheasts of The East, a desertion for which we have just brought ourselves to forgive her. Currently we have Joan Sydney.

Ms Sydney ruefully admitted to me that she was not born in a trunk, but could lay claim to reasonable theatrical antecedents. Her maternal grandmother was wardrobe mistress for Edith Evans' Saint Joan in Liverpool, and remembers handing on a note from GBS himself: "Please ask Miss Evans not to wear quite so much lip rouge". The young Noel Coward also crossed her bows. On her father's side were uncles who could boast being pub entertainers. Perhaps all this explains the range of Joan's work: she has appeared in everything from Hello Dolly! (as guess who) through a magnificent Aggie in Peter Kenna's A Hard God to Vladimir in a recent Mike Morris directed all-female Waiting for Godot.

There is no question that Joan has a wide following. I would suspect for her command of both the bravura Dolly requires and a very accessible emotion she can give, based on a deceptive degree of technical skill. She is also popular in the profession for her hard work and professional dedication. To cap it all, she both writes and presents regularly an ABC children's programme, Let's Join In, the proceeds of which keep her out of the doghouse in these perilous times.

Joan returned to straight theatre as part of a children's company in Rhyl, North Wales. Since entry to the profession for a young girl in those days depended on being svelte and West End, she reluctantly looked to becoming a librarian, but took an offer for a summer company in Aberystwyth. Thence to Oldham in stage management, but moving on to character parts. Sacked when a letter she wrote supporting a visiting critic's slamming of the company for doing North Country comedies (which the paper deplored), she moved back to London. Still in the theatre mind you — but as an usher, rising to ice-cream seller.

Marriage and migration to Perth followed. Joan told me that she and her husband picked Western Australia because they were impressed with its having a Ninety-Mile Beach: They were sick of big cities ....

Family commitments kept her out of the theatre for some years in Perth, but eventually she appeared in Priestly's When We Are Married at the Playhouse. Frank Baden-Powell saw her and Oldtime Musicals followed, then the persona which brought her general public notice, Diamond Lil. Joan returned to straight theatre in Tennessee Williams' Small Craft Warnings, and has been seen regularly since, both as a contract player with the Playhouse and freelance. Joan finds the present situation for actors in Perth — no contract players, all catch-as-catch can — "terrifying and stimulating".

So what if Joan is tempted to cross the Nullabor? We are used to watching — or were, used, because even such homey shows must now be beyond ABC-TV — Certain Women and musing how Ron Graham and Joan Bruce graced, for so long, the Western Stage. Well, if Joan is drawn to the Northern Stage, at least we have something to thank the Ninety-Mile Beach for. Until Charlie Court finds a way of selling it overseas, it is just quietly sitting there.

THEATRE AUSTRALIA DECEMBER 1978 11
Whose stocking would you like to

Barry Eaton’s name-droppers’ guide to who wants to be with whom this Christmas

In the theatre world Christmas can sometimes present problems of separation, for one reason or another. So we at Theatre Australia decided to ask some of the actors in Sydney who they intend sharing their Christmas stocking with this year, or failing that who in their wildest dreams they would fancy sharing it with — and why? As you can imagine the reactions were to say the least interesting.

Alfred Sandor feels that Christmas is all about peace and goodwill and would like to share his with Messrs Begin and Sadat. Knowing Alfred he could probably talk them into accepting whole new peace agreements!

John Waters in a typical Dracula like gesture would like to empty his stocking and then send it to Ronald Biggs to wear for his next holdup. (Does he have advance information, I wonder?)

The cast of Bedroom Farce weren’t lost for a few well chosen words about the issue.

Carol Raye has had the problem of separation all year, as her husband has been working in Central America and she hasn’t seen him for ages. But he will be home for Christmas, so Carol is all smiles. But she is prepared for a little covering bet that, “if the air traffic controllers go on strike, I will settle for Paul Newman, or if he can’t get away from Joanne, then Bob Hawke!”

Anne Haddy will be spending Christmas as the newly wed Mrs James Condon and the best of luck to both of them. Although Anne wouldn’t mind opening her stocking with Lord Louis Mountbatten.

Bob Hawke

Carol Raye

Barry Eaton

Bob Hawke

Carol Rave has had the problem of separation all year, as her husband has been working in Central America and she hasn’t seen him for ages. But he will be home for Christmas, so Carol is all smiles. But she is prepared for a little covering bet that, “if the air traffic controllers go on strike, I will settle for Paul Newman, or if he can’t get away from Joanne, then Bob Hawke!”

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GOOGIE WITHERS:

Marshal Tito

Google Witers and John McCallum interrupted their rehearsals for Kingfisher to compile a list. They agreed on Greta Garbo, Marshal Tito, Solzhenitsen and Iris Murdoch. What an interesting Christmas dinner party that would make.

Elizabeth Taylor

Barry Creyton

BARRY CREYTON:

Elizabeth Taylor

John Waters in a typical Dracula like gesture would like to empty his stocking and then send it to Ronald Biggs to wear for his next holdup. (Does he have advance information, I wonder?)

The cast of Bedroom Farce weren’t lost for a few well chosen words about the issue.

Jacki Weaver is not telling anyone who she is sharing her Christmas stocking with.
Share this Christmas?

Kate Fitzpatrick: Jack Nicholson

Kate Fitzpatrick replied, "I was going to write yet another variation on my Jack Nicholson for Christmas wish fantasies. But I've decided to leave the poor bugger alone. I'll not be sharing my stocking with anyone."

Ruth Cracknell feels similarly. "I have my own Christmas stocking and I don't want to share anyone's. I'll share their Christmas though!"

Carmen Duncan feels that Christmas is for children and will be sharing her stocking, "with my two adorable children."

Anne Semler: Miss Piggy

At the Music Hall, Anne Semler wants to share her stocking with Miss Piggy — cause she's a real ham!

Reg Gillam being of sound mind and body is open to offers.

Amanda Noble is about the most truthful of all. She will definitely be sharing her stocking with her lover as he is the only guy she fantasises over — and he has the cutest bottom. (Her words, not mine I hasten to add) "Not only that, he is looking over my shoulder at the moment to check out who I am fantasising over" (Spoil sport).

June Salter: Pooh Bear

June Salter, having a temporary rest before Crown Matrimonial goes on tour replied, "Pooh Bear, cause he gets lots of honey for Christmas and I love honey." So that's why she's such a sweet lady.

At the Ensemble Theatre, rehearsals for Flesh and Blood were interrupted to ponder over the more important question of Christmas stockings.

Judy Ferris: "Choppie"

Judy Ferris wants to share her stocking with Choppie — a very special doggie friend of hers. Why? I hear you cry. Well because he's in New York. What better reason?

Peter Williams: Barbra Streisand

Director Peter Williams would like to share his stocking with Robert Redford and find Barbra Streisand inside. Kinky!

Don Reid, always the gentleman, would like to open his stocking with "whichever gentle lady had left her stocking for him to hang up." Happy Christmas, Don!

John Howitt: The Fickle Tickles

John Howitt whose new 269 Playhouse has recently opened at the old Independent Theatre says, "the wife of the president of the Black Stump workers club, Mrs Fanny Flute and her backing group The Fickle Tickles." To have an idea of what all that is about, you'll have to refer to John's advertisement in this issue, or else go and see the show.

Brian Young would like to open his stocking with the Luton Girls Choir. Greedy little devil!

Alistair Smart off cruising with the Sitmar Theatre this Christmas is on the lookout for the perfect woman. "In the words of W.C. Fields, she must be deaf and dumb and oversexed and own a liquor store!"

Max Meldrum: Almost anyone

Max Meldrum however deserves the final word. Who would he fantasise about opening his Christmas stocking this year? "Almost anyone!"
Dear Sir,

A propos of Marguerite Wells' piece about the Theatre Centre of some months ago and Max Purnell's letter in reply, I thought I would enclose for information the list of attractions put on by ourselves either in partnership or as solo ventures during 1977/78. These were supported mainly from our grant from the Australia Council and I think it's a pretty good coverage of the performing arts including "Australian-made" for less than $30,000.

The list does not of course include the hundreds of things put on in both theatres by other management; too many to list, but ranging from the Australian Opera and Australian Ballet through East, Side By Side by Sondheim premiere season, Marcel Marceau, etc etc etc to Doctor In Love. rock groups, artists such as Jose Feliciano, not to mention the ABC concerts and exciting conventions like the Australian Institute of Political Science!

As both theatres were occupied for around 85% of the year, and the average attendance was 76% (not counting conventions) I am still wondering what Marguerite's "empty spaces" meant. And the wide scope of the Trust's presentations plus all those from other management makes me wonder what she meant by "no culture". What kind of culture?

Sincerely,

Terry Vaughan
Director, Canberra Theatre Centre

The Canberra Theatre Trust
Entreprenurial Activities
1/1/77 to 30/6/78

Operations

The Hard Word
Witold Gombrowicz in Buenos Aires
(Pulvers)

Children
Richard Bradshaw & His Shadow Puppets
9
Patrick's Hat Trick
10
My Country (Leonard Teale)
14
Robin Hood (December 1977)
2
Robin Hood (March 1978)
8
Dale Woodward: Glove Puppet Workshop
4
Cinderella
14
Dale Woodward: Rod Puppet Workshop
6
Charlie, the Green Dragon
10

Concerts
Adelaide Symphony Orchestra
(with Irene Plonskova)
9
Ut Hoy! (Christmas Choral Concert)
1
St. John's College Choir, Cambridge
1
Roger Woodward: Beethoven Recital:
1
Lunchhour concert (Eliz. Trust
Melbourne Orchestra)
1

Musicals
Bells Are Ringing
9
Tarantara, Tarantara!
7
Never the Twain
4
The 26s All That Jazz
13

Variety
Wasuha of China
2
Old fashioned Show
1
Memory Lane
1
Comedy
Chris Langham's One-Man Show
6

Films
Love Letters from Tereiba Road
2
The Sinner and the Dancer
6
Children's films: Smokey Joe
5

Exhibitions
Brushmen of the Bush
11 days
National Collection
28 days
Meetings
Seminar on Festivals
1

Dear Sir,

Ray Stanley's column "Whispers, Rumours and Facts" in the October issue was misleading in its comments on Hoopla's attitude to the problems of the Old Tote Theatre Company.

For the record I enclose a copy of a statement made by Hoopla's chairman, Mr. Lloyd O'Neil, considering this issue. You are welcome to reprint this in full.*

May I also say that:

1. We have enormous admiration for Nimrod and have frequently acknowledged their contribution to this theatre and the Australian theatre in general.

2. Katharine Hepburn is a superb actress. The question is whether subsidies should be directed towards the presentation of overseas stars and whether a policy of presenting such stars in a heavily subsidised company is an appropriate response to the needs of the Australian theatre.

3. Hoopla, like all subsidised theatres, needs bums on seats. Indeed we would like to see Ray Stanley's here more often.

Sincerely,

Carrillo Gantner
Executive Director

*Space restriction unfortunately does not allow us to reproduce this statement. Anyone wanting copies should contact Hoopla in Melbourne — Ed.)
Who will be the major figures in commercial theatre — or what will pass for commercial theatre — in ten years time? With government hand-outs probably very depleted, only those possessing business acumen combined with dedication to the theatre presumably will be the survivors, not the flinging idealists or those merely out for a quick buck.

Michael Edgley of course will be right out front in the late '80s, Tony Frewin prominently around and I suspect Paul Iles (if he has not been lured back to England) will be a significant name, very likely John Diedrich and possibly Peter Williams (never having met him I cannot be more definite). I should not be surprised to see substantial contributions coming from two as yet untried unknowns: Leonard Cooper and JCW's Ashley Gordon.

Of one thing I can be certain — barring mishaps, John Pinder will be well to the fore. But it will be a commercial theatre such as we cannot conceive of now.

Some fifteen years ago I suggested to Harry M Miller, then importing people like Roy Orbison and Louis Armstrong, that eventually he would become involved in presenting plays and musicals. "No way. Not interested in them", Harry M curtly said, and dismissed the subject.

John Pinder does not regard his involvement in the commercial area as utterly impossible; he simply refuses to look more than a year ahead.

Pinder's career so far has all the hallmarks of a success story. New Zealand born, as a child his parents would take him to the theatre.

"I remember seeing Salad Days... I remember seeing a lot of the Williamson musicals, and being very intrigued by live performances as opposed to movies."

"I spent my formative years in Dunedin, a city which was very active theatrically. There were two professional dramatic companies, two major amateur companies, a semi-professional opera company and a very active university theatre company, plus touring productions. It was also known as the "graveyard of touring productions". You could also pick up cheap sets — they used to dump them in Dunedin. Dunedin Repertory Society had one of the best workshops ever seen; it was full of old JCW stuff that they’d dumped for next to nothing there."

"It was a very active town to grow up in; it was a good town. I saw as much, or more — admittedly imported stuff — than I saw in the subsequent five years in Australia, ranging from Greek classics through to Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?"

In Dunedin Pinder was training as a fine arts teacher. "Because of that I got roped in to do sets for Gilbert and Sullivan's Patience. It intrigued me and I did a subsequent one for a teachers' college production, and from then on was asked to do several for the local amateur rep society, which I did."

One play Pinder designed for was The Caucasian Chalk Circle, also working backstage. Teaching for a while, he was involved in a few amateur things in the various towns in which he was resident, then drifted into journalism, actually doing some theatre criticism. Moving to Australia, Pinder worked as a journalist for the ABC, first in Sydney and then Melbourne, and became involved with rock musicians. After five years he left the ABC.

"I was fed up with the absurd notion that objectivity is an attribute that one should have as a journalist. I just thought that that was ridiculous. I couldn’t face that sort of concept of journalism at all."

Before long (in the late '60s, early '70s) Pinder was promoting rock concerts. They were mainly at the Muchmore Ballroom "which had a good reputation for promoting local bizarre talent. We used to put on revue sketches and sight acts in between rock bands... the APG used to do the sketches, and there were jugglers and so on. Bands which started there and became well known included Matchbox, Circus Oz and Daddy Cool. If you liked to do a family tree of Australian rock music, you'd find a lot of people floated through there.

"Ultimately I became more interested in the theatrical possibilities of it than the musical possibilities, and we staged quite a number of quite bizarre events that were specially put together, bands that were put together. We did almost comedy shows, which had in more sophisticated and that sort of stuff. Effectively it was a dance hall, but we were spending twice as much as anybody else in the dance hall business on the production of the shows."

It was a full time job for Pinder. He would run between twelve and fifteen concerts a year, as well as doing things with radio stations and at the Myer Music Bowl.

"I staged the concert at which Billy Thorpe reputedly had 200,000 people at the Myer Music Bowl. It was supposedly bigger than The Seekers concert, which has the reputation of being the biggest ever concert there."

"That was the era when 'fringe' entertainment wasn't acknowledged by the daily media. It's very different now... well, time has gone by and the '70s period is a very different period to the '60s. That sort of era wasn't documented by the daily press at all in terms of what was really going on. In fact, in musical and theatrical terms, it was really an active period in Melbourne."

After the rock concert period Pinder went to Europe for some time, and when he returned to Melbourne it was to work for a company which had plans to construct a complex which eventually, because of lack of finance, failed to materialise. Despite this Pinder learned a lot.

"The complex was to be in Bourke Street and was to include a cinema that would have been like the Longford, a cabaret room that would have been like The Last Laugh, a shopping arcade—market situation of the currently fashionable type, coffee shop hang-out places, plus a live theatre. The people that were gathered together for that included the folk who now run Foibles, Tony Ginnane (producer of Patrick and the
Fantasm films), and people who subsequently became major figures in the current generation APG.

When the complex scheme folded, Pinder was so enamoured with the idea of a theatre restaurant, he decided to open The Flying Trapeze in Fitzroy with about $2,000. It had been a Yugoslav cafe, and the rent was about $25 a week.

"I've always been a great believer that the creation of venues causes a flow on of quite considerable significance in terms of the talent that's attracted to a place. It doesn't happen to legitimate, but just that's an empty space within which you do something. But I've always worked on the principle of creating something more than just a working place, that it has to have its own ambience. And that was true of the Muchmore Ballroom; people would go there without knowing what was on, and in marketing terms I think that's important. You create an ambience which people want to be in, and to a certain extent they trust your judgement about what is in it in terms of personnel."

After two and a half years Pinder sold The Flying Trapeze, but made nothing out of the sale. It was sold for what the plant was worth, plus a couple of thousand dollars.

"It's kept going and it's continued to develop new people, which I think is great. The Flying Trapeze is still the most important theatre restaurant in Australia. You can afford to fail there. They can take risks that we can't take, and none of the bigger places can take".

Pinder then went into partnership with Roger Evans for his current successful venture, The Last Laugh, a theatre restaurant seating around two hundred, which opened September 1976. Evans, with much all round restaurant experience, ran his own in Sydney. He would visit The Flying Trapeze when in Melbourne. Pinder would eat at Evans' restaurant seating around two hundred.

"We form one complete person working together. We both have attributes which complement each other. We make the decisions about what happens at The Last Laugh jointly and the emphasis tends to lie that I am involved in the running of the restaurant, the entertainment, and he in running of the rest of it. But when it comes to saying yes or no to a show, Roger's as involved as I am.

"Lots of rumours go around that I'm going to do such and such in the future. My method of finding out whether I'm on the right track is to fly kites with people all the time. I like using people as a sounding board — all sorts of people. I talk a lot, but I also listen a lot. And what people are thinking is the most important thing. So I tend to ask other people whose opinions I'm interested in: 'What do you think of idea XYZ?' And that's how I come to a decision."

"The two of us will check out other people and then we'll make the final decision together about what show's going to go in. Roger's much better with money than I am. I'm totally irresponsible and he's pretty rigorous. We complement each other in terms of what we think we like, and basically we start from that premise when we put a show together.

"I'd never put a show in here purely because I thought it would make money, much as the idea of making money has great appeal. Cliff Hocking is a guy who I admire a lot, and Cliff once said he promotes things that he wants to see, that he'd like to have the best seats for, and largely we operate from that premise as well."

At the time of interviewing Pinder eight main productions had been staged at The Last Laugh. Seven of them had proved to be box office successes, one had closed in a hurry.

"We don't really have the resources to create shows from the ground up. We tend to pick up a show at a certain point, or part of it will be in existence. We haven't got resources to commission a writer really to write a show, then put it into production, workshop it and do it."

"Back to Bourke Street was a typical example. It started originally as a three-people one-hour thing at the Back Theatre of the Pram Factory at midnight, and we loved it and couldn't happen to add to the production, and they doubled the size of the cast and it was completely re-worked and then came here.

"The Circus [Writer, There's a Circus In My Soup] was an example where we did have more involvement in putting it together, because that was pretty weird stuff and nobody had ever done anything like it before. We were involved in that in terms of its development. I'm quite proud of that. To me that was one of the most exciting things I've ever been connected with. It was the longer run we've had, five and half months — and could have lasted much longer.

"What's really exciting about the outstanding shows we've had here, each of them could, in terms of places like Tikki and John's continue the same theme and have the same company and become a circus theatre restaurant. Back to Bourke Street could have continued indefinitely, but it would have driven us all mad.

Pinder certainly did a service in providing the opportunity for Melbourne to see Momma's Little Horror Show. To many it appeared as a risky operation, presenting such a show, however brilliant, in a theatre restaurant atmosphere. Now, having seen it in such a venue, it is difficult to imagine it anywhere else. Despite the ready availability of liquor, one could have heard that proverbial pin drop during performance. We were a source of great regret to Pinder that, owing to other commitments, the season could not have played indefinitely.

In the past The Last Laugh has provided opportunities for new acts to develop at late shows. This is going to occur again with the opening of another room, upstairs, seating ninety and standing midnight shows where the entertainment will change every couple of weeks.

"Almost anybody will be able to perform there; comedy, cabaret acts. Many well known people who we couldn't tie up for a major season, but who think the place is good fun, have said: 'Gee, that'd be fantastic, I'd love to come and do five nights when I'm in town, at midnight, after a show or whatever. Then there'll be totally unknown people who've never worked before'.

The bar will be a place for theatrical people to hang out late at night. Despite what Pinder says and thinks himself at this period in time, one would be surprised if he remains content with just The Last Laugh. Ultimately one would expect him to extend to other fields. He shows no liking for other Australian cities though. Melbourne he thinks is "the most exciting city in Australia to work in. I think in terms of performance it is the best city in Australia to be in, because it doesn't have the sort of 'arty farty' pretensions of Adelaide and the superficial flash pretensions of Sydney".

He is full of praise though for "the flexibility of the Adelaide Festival Centre, the quality of its staff and non-bureaucratic nature; it's run efficiently and effectively."

As far as importing attractions goes, Pinder is only interested in 'alternative Theatre' type attractions, not likely to catch the eye of a commerical management, but which he feels nevertheless should be seen here. That is why he brought direct from San Francisco his present show, LOSloun's Three Black and Three White Refined Jubeke Minstrels.

Pinder really is far more interested in the export of Australian talent. "We have things happening here that should be shown to the rest of the world in that they are quite unique".

Pinder has strong feelings about subsidies, believing these should be restricted to experimental type theatre only. He cannot understand why a company like the MTC does not reduce its subsidies with the undoubted profits installation of liquor bars in its theatres would bring. He believes such companies could follow the example of picture theatre people and tie in merchandising effects with their productions.

A man of the calibre of John Pinder inevitably is destined to play an important role in Australia's theatre world of the future.
Louis Nowra at twenty-eight has already made an enormous impact in the theatre. His play ALBERT NAMES EDWARD was broadcast by the ABC in 1975; INNER VOICES first performed at Nimrod has since been produced all over the country; VISIONS won considerable acclaim under Rex Cramphorn's direction as part of the Paris season. With THE MISERY OF BEAUTY[1976] he showed his great talent as a novelist. Here he discusses his own standpoint as an uncompromising loner among new writers.

There is no such thing as the history of Australian playwriting. We have a past which contains the irregular occurring achievements of a Louis Essex or Patrick White, but Australian playwriting is all present. Most of the playwrights of any merit are alive and writing, yet to reach white-haired middle age. This vigorous development of our playwriting has happened in the past ten years and now, if I interpret some recent articles correctly, a tiny, heterogeneous group of playwrights, dubbed 'the new wave', of whom I am supposed to be one, is considered to have arrived. The journalistic term 'new wave' seems to have been coined, not in order to help understanding of the playwrights involved, but to shove disparate writers into a neat category. As far as I'm concerned the term is so vague as to be darkness itself, and it's under the cover of this darkness that I escape. Unaligned to any theatre, and writing plays which are not part of the mainstream, I can stand alone, watching those around me with the lucidity and brazen detachment of a loner.

Although free of the tag of belonging to any new movement or group, I must, of course, acknowledge that in both content and purpose my work is a break from what has come before. This break has more to do with my personal disposition and ideas rather than a deliberate desire to be different. My demiurgic impulses and predilection for solitary activity has also led me to shun the mediocrity of group compromise. The upsurge in Australian playwriting during the late 1960s and early 1970s, with its group oriented activities and attitudes, centred in Melbourne around La Mama and Pram theatres, and with its conscious desire to concern itself with Australian society, although having my sympathy, ultimately meant very little to me because it was too obvious, too direct, lacking in ambivalence and what the great South American writer and filmmaker, Jose Cuevero, called 'the resonance of the personal vision confronting reality.' More importantly, I realised that Australian playwriting was limiting itself, not only because of what it wished to express, but also how it expressed it; that is, through naturalism.

Apart from some notable exceptions, the most popular and esteemed Australian plays have been naturalistic, and, to be blunt, I abhor. Naturalism is a constricted and constricting approach to the world. A play written in the naturalistic mode has no greater resonance than the sum total of its parts. No matter how funny or technically astute such a play may be, it comforts its audience, and confirms their 'reality'. Art should not confirm or duplicate; it must rephrase and recast. Plays should pull the carpet from under the audience's feet and make them see the world differently so that they can perceive things anew or question their own reality. If naturalism raises any 'worthwhile' questions (god preserve us from Eminent Ideas, Big Themes and Important Causes in literature) they relate more to ephemeral social or political problems which never jolt the most important part of an audience — its psyche. It's noticeable that even a naturalist like the overrated Ibsen realised that such a method cannot provide a tool for digging through the many layers of experience and he resorted to symbolism, clamping it on his work (Lady from the Sea, for example, where we almost drown in it) to try and provide a greater resonance and depth. But such attempts never work, as it's a bit like erecting permanent scaffolding on a slum exterior in order to make it appear beautiful.

Gradually, I've come to see that plays, not only those written in Australia, but anywhere, should develop a style that is not as deliberate and negative as the term 'anti-naturalism' implies, but something positive along the same lines. It genuinely puzzles me that many Australian playwrights are writing in a mode that movies and music gave up long ago and which television has appropriated and excelled at (on occasions). While such senecest plays have scenes filled with tedious explication, rhetoric and 'stagey' confrontations, movies have developed a narrative technique that modern audiences have assimilated into their regular patterns of thought very quickly. A film's elliptical narration, minus dissolves and clumsy narrative explication, results in pared down scenes and a culminating effect that can be extremely powerful and evocative.

Modern music (Webern's pieces, for example) has been able to strip music to its essentials, and whereas with the romantics texture was obvious and overtly stated with great insistence, modern music implies the texture and, by juxtapositions and careful paring, can provide just as rich a resonance as the romantics achieved, but without the dropsy. My concern with evolving a new form without going to avant (sic) garish extremes, and which would be considered natural and unforced, has led me to study the mechanisms of thought and visualisation, and, in turn, has led me on to projects outside my plays and fiction. A set of 'games' and 'strategies' called The Topology of Imagination will be published.
WRITER'S VIEW: LOUIS NOWRA

soon, and sometime after that a book of visual and mnemonic thinking (incorporating, for instance, Camillo's Idea del Theatro and Kurt Stadler's Visual Thinking) will be completed. These projects perhaps sound Kurt Stadler's Visual Thinking) will be completed. These projects perhaps sound more grand than they really are, but such interests have helped me develop and clarify my ideas as regards form and narrative structure.

Each scene, in a play of mine, is important unto itself and serves an emblematic function. The scenes are to be performed as if they were a series of humorous or serious facts, rather than revelations. The stage and scene should contain only what is necessary in order to help each piece slot firmly into the other, with the juxtaposition of scenes and their interplay eventually creating the thematic concerns and resonance. A bit like watching strands being plaited to form a rope. This approach must be done in a detached manner so the audience can occasionally draw back from the play, like a reader stopping to underline a passage in a book. This does not mean I dislike the audience to have a certain empathy with what's happening on stage (remember, I do not mean identification; which is a form of mental instability), but I think they should also judge a scene with their intellect and be aware of the overall interplay of scene and character.

This approach has been called, by one embonpoint critic, 'fleshless', and for Australian audiences brought up on a diet of cosy familiarity with the middle class three walled world of our theatre, then my approach does provide a slight chill; though I'd like to think it's the initial shiver of being confronted with fresh air after having left a stuffy room. With my play Inner Voices, for example, when I found I may be creating too much sympathy, and therefore involvement, I used the simple, but effective expedient of dark humour and irony to undercut gratuitous emotion. It's an approach I've also used in my novel The Misery of Beauty where, because of unusual and unfamiliar characters and situations, an ironic detachment, I hope, is maintained. It should also be added, within this context, how highly I esteem the playwrights Orton and Congreve, whose valuable lesson in creating a sardonic distance I've tried to adapt to my own purpose.

Ideally, I would like to create a constant dramatic tension, where the audience felt the taut connection between empathy and detachment, vision and fact, heart, head, dead-pan irony and commitment and emotional release and repression (an oxymoronic tight rope walk as it were). I think this approach has occasionally worked in Edward Bond's plays. Brecht, whose debt I'm sometimes considered to be in (by those who should know better), is a playwright whose nursery-land ideology and mechanistic technique is anathema to me. His theatre is embalmed for all to see at any Berliner Ensemble production. Any debt I do owe (and any literary banker at any Berliner Ensemble production. Any debt I do owe (and any literary banker)

One of the main problems, to which I've alluded to above is that Australian audiences love to recognise and identify with what's on stage. The affairs of the middle class, its habits, speech and behaviour hold immense attraction for them, even after ten years of constant exposure. My play Albert Names Edward was criticised because, although set in Australia, I had the characters speak English, rather than 'Australian English'. My attitude to language is in keeping with my idea of detachment, just as is my use of analogy and metaphor. This interest in having Australian audiences detached led me in Inner Voices and Visions to even distance my audience through geography by setting my plays in other countries. The lack of Australian props was considered almost subversive by some people, as if a lack of Australian scenery made my work 'un-Australian'. Interestingly, such criticism reinforces our parochialism. Only in Australia could one be accused of deserting one's country by not writing about it directly. Yet Kleist's purpose in setting his work in Greece, West Indies and Chile was to stand aside and look on. Kleist in setting his plays in Japan and America and Witkiewicz's in setting one of his in New Guinea and Australia. Perhaps such criticism is symptomatic of all young nations. Henry James' disappointment in being criticised for similar reasons pertains to New Zealand who remembers those writers praised at the same time for not 'deserting' America?

Implied with my style is also an interest in the scope of plays. Instead of a living room, I want space and freedom to move. The current crop of monologues, no matter how good or bad they may be, have proved to be immensely popular. I realise such plays are a boon for theatres who are very fond of their cheapness to produce, but I wonder if they're healthy for our theatre in the long run? For I see theatre (and in all that I've said, it has been a generally haunts me, asking unless it can offer something more than naturalism and plays of small scope.

Perhaps I'm hypercritical of Australian plays and theatre, but contrary to what some may think, I believe some of it has, in its own wayward and immature fashion, a vulgar vitality and vigor missing from overseas theatre. It still amazes me that Australians applaud the success of our playwrights in a country like England and measure us against its theatre, as if it were automatically better. How many of those cheering spectators have ever seen the theatre of our Mother Country? It's more akin to embalment than an enriching experience. A sign of its poisonous quality is its attitude to some of its best playwrights (Edward Bond for example) who are forced to find respect and success in overseas. Even when few of our playhouses are adventurous enough and the same old stuff is so lucrative. New directions must be respected and encouraged by our playhouses, or else Australian playwriting will soon be history, past history. This entropy of our theatre I'm attempting (in my own peculiar fashion) to forestall, by helping to open up our drama when it seems on the verge of enclosing in on itself, by offering one of the alternatives, not the alternative, and by promoting variation rather than adding to a single colour. Every other country has taken such a wish to expand for granted, and as a natural out-growing of things, only in Australia does it seem a heresy.

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THEATRE AUSTRALIA DECEMBER 1978
Mid-October. The mild, sunny autumn is turning cold and misty. The fog also descends on a mind trying to sort out the confusion of impressions of a theatrical, film but we have even the most cherished up with all that’s interesting — whilst running a pretty active professional career.

One night in the Festival Hall in late September it struck me, not for the first time, that the skills marshalled by theatre practitioners to project an artistic experience look shoddy when compared with the skills and energy still running. The subsidised theatres (the three auditoria at the National, the RSC’s Aldwych and Warehouse Theatres, and the Royal Court) of course have been presenting new work. But the commercial theatre (the Stadium Theatre Club or the Court) for which time the performers, conductor and auditorium components seem able to offer us, contemporary practitioners, rarely people of the theatre even conceive that there will be more time (and main in the small Cottesloe. And it is mostly have voted with their feet pointing in the direction of the auditorium. This is not to ask for a wholly star-orientated metropolitan-fringe theatre. But it is inconsistent for some people to demand, as they do, that the National, the Royal Ballet and Opera should get out of the Great Wed more often to give regional audiences the pleasure of their company, whilst criticising theatres and management when they do the equivalent.

Incidental pleasures. Robert Stephens has blossomed into one of our most lovable character actors. After a bumpy period in his career, the traditionally bad stretch between dashing young lead and senior practitioner, he now unrolls as from an endless spool of finest silk, a succession of some of the repertoire’s finest characters. This I first noticed a year ago when Robert played superbly in my film-for-television adaptation of L P Hartley’s novels Eaton and Hilda; giving a wry elegance and touching insouciance to the weaselmouthed, haphazardly wastish eccentric Jasper Bentwich. Some months ago he gave a rich expansiveness to the sometimes irritating character of Gayef in the National’s Cherry Orchard and by the end of the evening had the audience in that most extraordinary state of not knowing whether to laugh or to cry at this most exasperatingly lovable man. Now he has won delighted notices for his performance in Congreve’s The Double Dealer, a new production at the National, less dry and brittle than has been the fashion for some decades, more mellower and bither-sweet, no doubt thanks to the temperamental approach of the director Peter Wood. The National at last seems to have hit consistent form. This week’s announcement that Christopher Morahan and Bill Gaskell are to run two companies in the big open-stage Olivier and Michael Rudman (American ex-director of Edinburgh’s Traverse and London’s Hampstead) is to take over the prosenium-staged Lyttleton promises some new excitement. Peter Hall, the boss, is going to content himself with experimental work mainly in the small Cottesloe. And it is said that there will be more time (and money) for touring, something the theatre needs to do. Above all, to justify monies lifted from the British, not just the London, taxpayer.

Robin Ramsay did a brave thing, came to town and managed to convince, by dint of auditioning it in somebody’s living room, his one-man Henry Lawson show The Bastard from the Bush which (Armstrong’s My Brilliant Career) and here, despite attempts from the NFFC’s Film Development Fund, few films of any significance are getting started. True, Rank have come back into feature film production with some aplomb, about nine new Australian film in production (Gillian Armstrong’s The Bastard from the Bush was ripe material for Riverside Studios at Hammer­ smith, one of our most vigorous community theatres now. On five Sundays at 5pm Robin roared and rampaged through the neatly assembled material and though his light voice may at times miss some of the authority, deep feeling to the work. Much Grotting on the Naze. Difficult to agree, however, that regional audiences do not enjoy the excitement of new plays especially if done with more accomplished performers than they might otherwise see. Purists have always fulminated against regional audiences being given London plays with London stars. The audiences have voted with their feet pointing in the direction of the auditorium. This is not to ask for a wholly star-orientated metropolitan-fringe theatre. But it is inconsistent for some people to demand, as they do, that the National, the Royal Ballet and Opera should get out of the Great Wed more often to give regional audiences the pleasure of their company, whilst criticising theatres and management when they do the equivalent.

One night in the Festival Hall in late September it struck me, not for the first time, that the skills marshalled by theatre practitioners to project an artistic experience look shoddy when compared with the skills and energy still running. The fog also descends on a mind trying to sort out the confusion of impressions of a theatregoer, descends on a mind trying to sort out the confusion of impressions of a theatregoer, where the performances are now to look to the top-echelon fringe of social oddities and even the most cherished aspects of our mores, a send-up of our political or moral propositions. It takes us a long way out of ourselves. It returns us, nourished, some of the repertoire’s finest characters.

In mid-October The Stage is complaining that no new plays have been presented in the West End since August, surely the longest dry spell in years (This of course does not mean there are no plays, only that the West End is not running). The subsidised theatres (the three auditoria at the National, the RSC’s Aldwych and Warehouse Theatres, and the Royal Court) of course have been presenting new productions either of classical revivals or of new work. But the commercial theatre sequences we’ve said to the top-echelon fringe or community theatres (such as Hampstead Theatre Club or the Court) for which time the performers, conductor and auditorium components seem able to offer us, contemporary practitioners, rarely people of the theatre even conceive any of this to be their function. An evening’s mild titillation, a few comments on our mores, a send-up of our political or moral propositions. It takes us a long way out of ourselves. It returns us, nourished, some of the repertoire’s finest characters.

Alan Seymour

RANDOM JOTTINGS
ON LONDON THEATRE AND FILM

Mid-October. The mild, sunny autumn is turning cold and misty. The fog also descends on a mind trying to sort out the confusion of impressions of a theatregoer, descends on a mind trying to sort out the confusion of impressions of a theatregoer, descends on a mind trying to sort out the confusion of impressions of a theatregoer, descends on a mind trying to sort out the confusion of impressions of a theatregoer, descends on a mind trying to sort out the confusion of impressions of a theatregoer, descends on a mind trying to sort out the confusion of impressions of a theatregoer, descends on a mind trying to sort out the confusion of impressions of a theatregoer, descends on a mind trying to sort out the confusion of impressions of a theatregoer, descends on a mind trying to sort out the confusion of impressions of a theatregoer, descends on a mind trying to sort out the confusion of impressions of a theatregoer, descends on a mind trying to sort out the confusion of impressions of a theatregoer, descends on a mind trying to sort out the confusion of impressions of a theatregoer, descends on a mind trying to sort out the confusion of impressions of a theatregoer, descends on a mind trying to sort out the confusion of impressions of a theatregoer, descends on a mind trying to sort out the confusion of impressions of a theatregoer, descends on a mind trying to sort out the confusion of impressions of a theatregoer, descends on a mind trying to sort out the confusion of impressions of a theatregoer.
There can be no doubt about it this time. JCWs, Michael Edgley and the Adelaide Festival Centre Trust have a big block-buster success on their hands in Annie, based on the American strip cartoon Little Orphan Annie.

Every child in the country is going to insist its parents take it to see this musical — and I should not be surprised if, in the show's final days, some of its present wee tots have graduated to the adult roles.

With overdosings of syrup — that include appealing orphans, a cuddly dog, the biggest stage Christmas tree ever seen, with snow flakes gently falling outside — Annie cannot fail with the General Public, 99% of which is going to adore every sugary moment of it.

This is not to say the show is really good, nor that it has quality. One has only to look at some of the high-rating TV programmes to know how undiscriminating the General Public is.

Annie is calculated to pull every trick in the American show-biz book, to woo and brainwash an uncritical audience into a joyful evening of pure escapism. All those people who disliked A Chorus Line, complained about its heart-rending realism, lack of sets and costumes, and four-letter language, are going to fall about at this harmless piece of nonsense which probably would better accommodate its patrons if it was played six matinees a week and two evening performances.

A Chorus Line was by no means perfect, but at least it excitedly pointed to new directions in which theatre might be going. Annie simply puts it several decades back to pieces like Irene, The Sound of Music and Love From Judy — which, based on Daddy Long Legs, also featured inmates of an orphanage. (Theatre Australia and myself of course will yet again be accused in certain quarters of anti-commercial leanings!)

Very briefly, Annie is set in New York in December 1933 during the Depression period. The title's 11-year-old heroine refuses to accept she is an orphan; she was dumped on the orphanage doorstep when...
Extending collage’s theatrical viability

THE SPALDING FAMILY ALBUM

By Margaret McLusky


Fred Wallace.

Forget Me Not: Mrs Esther Gertrude Spalding, Anna Gilford; James Frederick Albert Spalding Esq., Graeme Dale; Miss Annie Priscilla Carter, Anna Mizza; Miss Beatrice Elizabeth Carter, Jo-Anne Moore; Mrs Rose Grimpole, Kimlarn Frecker; Mrs Sarah Wholesworth Carter, Jenny Sawdaman; Mr Archie Cassman, Iain Christie; Miss Rose May Spalding, Chantelle Cox; Violet, Susan Shoe, The Panut, Angela Gill. Esther, Mrs Esther Gertrude Spalding; Anna Gilford; Miss Rose Grimpole, Kimlarn Frecker; Miss Annie Priscilla Carter, Anna Mizza; Miss Beatrice Elizabeth Carter, Jo-Anne Moore; Miss Phoebe Carter, Shirley Orange; James Frederick Albert Spalding, Esq., Graeme Dale; William Oscar McDonald, Esq., Laurie McDonald.

For anyone who thought nothing happened in small country towns, and were amazed that people were even able to tie a marital knot in a hick town like Dimboola just wait and see what Esther Gertrude Spalding does with a hat pin in Horsham!

Without wishing to damn several hundred plays there are only two productions I’ve seen on the ‘alternative’ circuit over the last decade which measure up to La Mama’s latest and perhaps finest offering. Not since The Removalists in 1971 has La Mama ventured a play of such general excellence and certainly not since Ian McFadyen’s zany and inspired Macbeth at Why Not in 1976 has direction combined innovation, intuition and a high regard for theatrical fundamentals — virtues dismally lacking in much of our local theatre, in spite of the counter cultural cognoscenti.

The Spalding Family Album has one reaching for the Thesaurus — vignette? tableau? mosaic? pastiche? It is clear from a great number of recently written plays by more or less unknowns that collage is taking over from more conventional theatrical forms. Most of these attempts are courageous. Some are even commendable. Colin Ryan’s Family Album goes a great deal further, extending collage’s theatrical viability.

The score is not very notable. “Tomorrow” is of course likely to swamp the airwaves until we are all heartily sick of it. Personally I prefer the Kurt Weill-ish number “We’d Like To Thank You” sung by the down and outs, and the show-stopping “Easy Street” performed by Jill Perryman, Kevan Johnston and Nancye Hayes.

Annie is one musical I have no desire to revisit.

Anna Gilford (Esther) and Glen Barker in La Mama’s The Spalding Family Album. Photo: Robert Chuter.
No smell of dank sawdust

THE NEXT GREATEST PLEASURE

JOHN BRYSON

The Next Greatest Pleasure by D M Scott, Hoopla Theatre Foundation. Playbox Theatre, Melbourne, Vic. Opened 13 October 1978. Directed by David Kendall; Designer: Sandra Matlock; Stage Manager: Tessie Hill; Production Manager: Frederick Parslow; D Dostoevsky/Mick O'Brien. Dostoevsky and O'Brien's adaptation of Dostoevsky's novella is tied to his desk by the inconstant line with a dextrous snap. Fun, she sneers to let the faster one-liners work, but it's all over the track. The phonograph intercessions of Frederick Parslow's 'voice' could not impel Sebastian's compulsive abstractions beyond the first act. He may have moved the part more, but the man is tied to his desk by the inconstant demand of twelve telephones. Maurrie Fields heaved his Sgt Jack (Kick y'r brains in) Bourke as well as it would allow, but felt uncomfortable as an implausible Taxman and an amorous Suitor. Her 'voice' is right — whatever she has done is right — whatever she has done. She does not confess. It is tantalising to think of her both ways; as the unfairly maligned innocent crucified by small town idleness; and as the infamous black widow — malign, crow-like, the essence of death hovering over Horsham.

Colin Ryan has a quite exceptional ability to write conversation of a time long gone without making it pretentious or even much of it has the sharpness and impeccable understatement of the best of Emma and a flair for juxtaposition which gives even the most trivial comment of the most fatuous character a rapier thrust. As a complement to Ryan's skill as writer, Robert Cluter has employed in bringing the script to life, combining the formal period dialogue into believable and precise exchange, neither cliché'd nor caricatured.

The Everyman Collective unlike many other "ensembles" works as a harmonious whole — each theatrical entity is given equal weight and is delicately balanced to form an exquisite, almost fragrant performance and production. All hail Everyman!

Element of risk missing

LIV ULLMANN

ROGER PULVERS


In this country a match between horses and theatre is no race, and that's why The Next Greatest Pleasure is at the Playground during the Spring Carnival. Steve Mysteré's Pharlap was a more adventurous play but did not pull many of the racing set in 1977, and on Thursday night before the 1978 Caulfield, the Playground looked less than one-sixth full. No real wonder. There is no smell of dank sawdust, none of the old sporting portraits that Jack Hibberd makes visible in The Les Durey Show, no frozen triple-dead-heats.

The play is about a sudden loser. Sebastian (the King) O'Brien, dux of school and university, has become a successful SP, and on the day he was felled by the Melbourne Cup. The King accepts an immense rush on Gold & Black and arranges to knuckle it, though he can't keep it secret; then Sgt Bourke demands a trebling of his graft; young brother Mick boasts of screwing Sebastian's present wife since the honeymoon; he is busted by ferreting taxman; only son commits suicide; his secretary and true-love throws him over; and his guilt-noire wins the Cup unknobbed. It's been a hard day.

The Hoopla team handles these sloppy horse-pats with steaming fortitude. David Kendall has tried to keep the play straight, to let the faster one-liners work, but it's all

THEATRE AUSTRALIA DECEMBER 1978 23
Elegant formality without impact

THE RESISTABLE RISE OF ARTURO UI

ROGER PULVERS


Arturo Ui: Edwin Hodgeman; Gini, Anthony Hawkins; Govi, Lex Marinos; Roma, Malcolm Keith; Old Dogehoorah, Edward Hepple; Young Dogehoorah, Gary Day; James Greenwood; David Downer; Shorty, Red Williams; Young Jona, Ian Suddards; The Barker, Gary Down; Shee, Roy Baldwin; Clark, John Stanton; Buscher, Bruce Spence; Bowl, Lloyd Cunningham; Rag, Gerard Mugrue; O'Casey, Michael Edger; Actor, Sydney Conabere; Goldman, John Sawman; Fish, John Heywood; Dollfist, Don Bridges; Dockfizz, Betty Bobbit; Bees Dullfier, Jennifer Hagan.

Everybody hates Hitler. This being the case, we can all vent our liberal's conscience on the man. The MTC production of The Resistable Rise of Arturo Ui gave us a chance to do just that. It was a production of bland display and subdued veneer.

In a word, it lacked daring.

The play follows the progress of a Chicago gangster whose racket is protection. He uses intimidation, extortion, and murder to further his career. Brecht paralleled Ui's rise to power in and around Chicago to the rise of Hitler in and around Germany. The play is about the connection between politics and crime, where certain politicians can use public office for private aggrandisement. We have our own Uis in Australia, of the homegrown, if not the 'dees, dems, and dose' variety.

Edwin Hodgeman played Ui quite masterfully. It was an essentially Chaplin-esque Ui, a pint-size pea of a man who grows into a giant. In a sense, it may have been a villain too endearing. For the final speech, as horrific demagogue, did not feel as threatening to the audience as it should have.

Some of the supporting work, too, was excellent. Malcolm Keith's Roma was an honest-to-goodness send-up of the Chicago mafiosi. And his accent was consistent. On the whole, the American accents were a very mixed bag. It is only a technical point, actually, but I know that some of these actors can hold an accent longer than they did. I heard at least five variations on a theme by James Cagney.

David Downer's character was spot on. He brought to the part an intensity that cut through much of the blandness.

From the outset it was clear that the interpretation of the play by Bruce Myles was taking an easy, acceptable-to-everybody, way out. The set was much too smoothly conceived, with crates piled up in...
back in the neatest disarray. And the costumes were so beautiful, very much Romare Bearden's *The Stage*. This is the crux of the problem. If this production is to set a pattern for Brecht in Melbourne, then what we are going to get is a cultural orthodoxy, a smoothed over contemporary 'resonance'. A one in fifty choice. (Two plays about Chidley for instance, two about Melba. Phar Lap Les Darcy. King O'Malley. Melodramas, even Charles Hornsby for Christ's sake.) However the search does go on, more's the pity perhaps.

Another advantage the English have is that their incidents are more important in the overall scheme of things. Compared to the English Civil War and the Putney Debates, say, the Sake Stockade and Rafaelo Carboni pale a little bit. Not sentimentally, but intellectually. We Australians have sentiment aplenty, it being the emotion that has fuelled a whole generation of playwrights. And whilst real Australians cannot hold with de Tocqueville's sly dictum that without history there can be no culture. I would say that part of our problem is that in a small country there are a smaller number of big imaginations. So the intellectual, imaginative, theatrical consciousness here has been left to a small and diminishing number of writers, who have the misfortune to be surrounded by charlatans. From Louis Esson to John Romeril large imaginations have been forced out of the theatre by small ones who know meeting procedures, bank managers and funding bodies better.

The charlatans pile unperformed on unperformed scripts, using up the small store of history left and leaving huge areas of the theatre unexplored. If there is one trend in all the unperformed scripts around it is that in transferring an imaginary production the way the writer sees it in his head the page has to be right out the window in favour of operatic effects, fake poeticism, formlessness and an absence of a point of view. Most of all they try to do too much.

So to *Light Shining in Buckinghamshire*. This is incredibly simple idea, and one that in the APG production directed by Wilfred Last has come out a bit boringly. The idea is to have twenty or so aspects of the left of Cromwellian England and present them in the form of monologues/dialogues/sermons/recruiting speeches and listless scenes put these on a bare stage and let the ideas of the Levellers, Diggers and the Common Man, and Woman, speak for themselves. Written in the style of 17th century English, the language has the sound of poetry and importance, and the subject matter. Cap D Democracy is a very subversive doctrine even now. The failure of any society to listen to their prophets and grasp it as a sad commentary on the subsisting selfishness of human beings, a disillusionment expressed at the end of the play.

Performed in the Pram Factory's small Back Theatre the play makes use of a lot of close-up-theatre techniques, in a simple and moderately effective way, that could have done with a bit more expostatory flair. Educational yes, exciting no. But some beautiful writing. And a play so obviously well worth doing; every playwright who can't get performed in Australia and wonders why, should read it.

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**Some beautiful writing**

**LIGHT SHINING IN BUCKINGHAMSHIRE**

V. I. RICHARDS

Light Shining In Buckinghamshire by Caryl Churchill. The Australian Performing Group at The Pram Factory, Carlton, Vic. Opened 30 August, 1978. Director, Wilfred Last; Costumes, Lightning, Michelle Johnson, Ponch Hawkes; Comedians, Rose Chong. Richard Murphy, Peter Hooking, James Shukus, John Ley, Sue Ingleton, Ursula Harrison. (Parts are shared amongst the cast). (Professional)

Caryl Churchill's play *Light Shining in Buckinghamshire* has the advantage of being English. Its subject, is therefore, chosen from the millions of historical, comical, pastoral philosophical etc incidents available to the research conscious playwright looking for a moment with contemporary 'resonance'. A one in a million choice should have more going for it than the historically deprived Australian...
theater of the absurd. As Trevor Griffiths puts it, "rather facile data of the play's unsuccess fulle.

In terms of plot, it is this medical Machiavel who comes unstuck on his profession's aptitude for screwing all patients indiscriminately, whether privately or on the National Health — whoever said farce couldn't be topical? Unsurprisingly, the opportunity for a sharper pointing out of underlying social realities is here passed up in favour, justifiably perhaps, of assimilation to the Molieresque archetype of the crazy medecin, and the whimsical harmony of the play's multiple reconciliations and compromises was not greatly disturbed. For Bennett, unlike Moliere, even the perennial dottore is forgiveable as, whether guilty or innocent, we are all let off in the end by the great Doctor's Certificate of our common mortality.

A luminary almost in its own right is Peter Cooke's bare, radiantly white set. It is simply the best design I can remember seeing in the SGIO Theatre. Not only does the set finely complement the production, it harmonises with the intractable architecture of the theatre rather than let itself be attacked by it. The austere and restrictive semi-circular proscenium arch is a constant visual problem, and here it is triumphantly and wittily overcome.

The published edition of Musaphia's Mothers and Fathers reminds us that comedy is a serious art, and by Bergson, it is a dynamic one, finding heart for the play. Mitchell Foy's Claudius integrates tact with flair. The casting is spot-on. Kerry McGuire is a very funny mercenary wife, whose aspirations are considered. What then is one to make of a profession's aptitude for screwing all sorts of intimate complications? For Bennett, unlike Moliere, even the perennial dottore is forgiveable as, whether guilty or innocent, we are all let off in the end by the great Doctor's Certificate of our common mortality.

The way all central characters, not just Claudius, but all of them, relative the unnavigated waters of theGP repertoire and, to stretch the metaphor a little, have come through with flying colours.

Heartbreak House was seen by Shaw as his ideal for immortality — "Behold my Heart"! He also admitted that it was a "frightfully long play". Here it has been judiciously pruned to a tidy two and a half hours without losing any of its developing ironies. The fable of society as a moral vacuum, of the necessity for stout souls to service the inexorable demands of the state of a New Zealand society feeling itself vulnerable by reason of its small population, and where the cops are more powerful than the lawyers? I guess not. As Bergson, it is a dynamic one, finding heart for the play's multiple reconciliations and compromises was not greatly disturbed. For Bennett, unlike Moliere, even the perennial dottore is forgiveable as, whether guilty or innocent, we are all let off in the end by the great Doctor's Certificate of our common mortality.

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THE FESTIVAL OF SYDNEY
SPECIAL PERFORMANCE HIGHLIGHTS SUPPLEMENT

The Third Sydney Jazz Festival At The Sydney Town Hall

Following the sensational success of the Jazz Festivals in the first two Festivals of Sydney, Horst Liepolt and the Festival are proud to announce the Third Sydney Jazz Festival.

**Monday 15 JANUARY 8.00 p.m.**

"JAZZ QUARTET USA"
Direct from New York
Featuring: Chico Freeman — Flute/Tenor Sax/Bass Clarinet
Mike Nock — Piano
David Friesen — Bass Violin
Al Foster — Drums
Together with "RICHARD OCHALSKIS' STRAIGHT AHEAD" and "BRUCE CALE QUARTET"
with special guest CHARLIE MUNRO

**Admission Prices:** (includes booking fee)
$7.50 $6.50 $5.50 Students & Pensioners $5.50

**Tuesday 16 JANUARY 8.00 p.m.**

"THE GUITAR IN JAZZ"
Featuring the top guitar talent of
George Colly
Don Andrews
Peter Boothman
Steve Murphy
John Conley
with
David Levy — Piano
Ray Martin — Bass Violin
Barry Woods — Drums

**Admission Prices:** (includes booking fee)
$6.50 $5.50 $4.50 Students & Pensioners $4.50

**Wednesday 17 JANUARY 8.00 p.m.**

"THE INTERNATIONAL JAM SESSION"
with
Laurie Bennett — Drums (Sydney)
John Hoffman — Trumpet/Flugelhorn (USA)
Keith Hounslow — Cornet/Flugelhorn (Melbourne)
Nancy Stuart — Jazz Singer (Sydney)
Dutch Tilders — Blues Singer/Guitarist (Holland)
Smoe — Tenor Sax (Adelaide)
Tony Buchanan — Tenor Sax (Sydney)
Jimmy Sloggett — Tenor Sax (Sydney)
Jack Grimsley — Trombone (New Zealand)
Bob McVoy — Trombone (New Zealand)
Ron Toussant — Violin (Brisbane)
Tony Esterman — Piano (UK)
Dieter Vogt — Bass Violin (Switzerland)

**Admission Prices:** (includes booking fee)
$6.50 $5.50 $4.50 Students & Pensioners $4.50

**Thursday 18 JANUARY 8.00 p.m.**

"DAVID LIEBMANN/MIKE NOCK ALL STARS"
Direct from New York
"JELLY ROLL BAND"
Featuring U.S. Saxophone Star David Van Kriedt
(ex Stan Kenton Dave Brubeck)
Together with "DICK HUGHES FAMOUS FIVE"

**Admission Prices:** (includes booking fee)
$6 50 $5.50 $4.50 Students & Pensioners $4 50

**Friday 19 JANUARY 8.00 p.m.**

"JAZZ QUARTET USA"
Featuring: Chico Freeman — Flute/Tenor/Sax/Bass Clarinet
Mike Nock — Piano
David Friesen — Bass Violin
Al Foster — Drums
"JAZZ CO/OP"
Featuring: Roger Frampton
Together with "KEITH HOUNSLOW/TONY GOULD DUO"
Direct from Melbourne

**Admission Prices:** (includes booking fee)
$7.50 $6.50 $5.50 Students & Pensioners $5.50
A SERIES OF 10 EXTRAORDINARY MUSIC CONCERTS FEATURING INTERNATIONALY RENOWNED LOCAL & OVERSEAS ARTISTS

FRIDAY JAN. 5
EWAN MAC COLL AND PEGGY SEEGER
Two of the world's greatest singer/songwriters. A concert of ballads, broadsides and hard-hitting songs. Tickets $7.50, $6.50, $5.50, includes booking fee.

SATURDAY JAN. 6
BUSHWACKERS AND LARRIKINS
From Melbourne, Australia's premier bush band, The Bushwackers and from 'Steak N Kidney' The Larrikins. A full programme of Australian folk music to stop the hens laying for a week! Tickets $6.50, $5.50, includes booking fee.

SUNDAY JAN. 7
MARGRET ROADKNIGHT IN CONCERT
(with some special guests) saluting her favourite songwriters — Randy Newman, Tom Paxton, Bill Davis/Peter Doley, Oscar Brown Jr., Joe South, Malvina Reynolds and Taj Mahal. Tickets $6.50, $5.50, includes booking fee.

MONDAY JAN. 8
IRISH HOOLEY
The best of Irish music in Australia ... fiddlers, banjoists, fluteists, pipers and singers. Tickets $6.50, $5.50, includes booking fee.

TUESDAY JAN. 9
BLACK OUT!
A concert of black Australians. From Brewarinna comes the talents of Essie Coffey and the Black Images, Jack O'Lantern, Manny West, Wanjuk Marika. Tickets $6.50, $5.50, includes booking fee.

NOTE: all concerts start 8pm sharp and seating is by preferential booking. Book early!

REGENT THEATRE

A Festival of Sydney Production: Sponsored by the Australian Gaslight Company Co-ordinated by Warren Fahey.
The 1979 Festival Dance Week
at the SYDNEY TOWN HALL

Local and interstate dance companies present the latest in modern dance, contemporary ballet and folkloric/traditional in this five night long Festival of Dance in the Sydney Town Hall. Each evening, dance companies will perform a programme of different works — an ideal opportunity to catch up on what’s happening in Australian dance and develop your interest in this most graceful art form.

Tuesday 9 January
7.30 p.m.
The One Extra Dance Group
The Dance Company (N.S.W.)

Wednesday 10 January
7.30 p.m.
Busy Bodies
The Melbourne State Dance Theatre

Thursday 11 January
7.30 p.m.
Dance Concert
Kolobok (From Victoria)

Friday 12 January
7.30 p.m.
Contemporary Dance Theatre (From Queensland)
Dance Exchange (From Victoria)

Saturday 13 January
7.30 p.m.
The Dance Company (N.S.W.)

Book early for this exciting week of contemporary dance.
Admission prices: Adults: $4.50 (for each performance), Children, Students & Pensioners: $2.50 (Includes Booking Fee).

‘THE MYSTERIOUS POTAMUS’
(By The Marionette Theatre of Australia)

"The Mysterious Potamus" is an amusing tale for children set in the jungle land of Bimbambo.

It follows the story of a long and sometimes dangerous search made by young Leo the Lion for a real, true friend.

The little lion and his companion Harry the Hippo, meet all sorts of animals and get involved in all kinds of situations on their mission to find a friend for Leo.

The show is full of the adventures they have in the jungle.

Written by : V. Lifschitz and I. Kichanova
Director : Richard Bradshaw
Design : Norman Hetherington
Puppet Maker : Ross Hill
Music : Judy Bailey
Puppeteers : Michael Creighton, Ross Hill, Ines Judd, Linda Raymond

Richard Bradshaw, Norman Hetherington and Ross Hill were all in Moscow in 1976 to see the original production by the State Central Puppet Theatre for the International Festival of Puppetry and the Marionette Theatre’s production will be like the original Moscow version which was so acclaimed.

“The Mysterious Potamus” will play a three week season in the Drama Theatre of the Sydney Opera House during the Festival of Sydney.

Opening Performances: Tuesday, 9th January at 11.00 a.m. & 2.00 p.m.
with a special evening performance at 8.00 p.m.

Then daily at 11.00 a.m. & 2.00 p.m. Each Saturday at 2.00 p.m. concluding on Saturday, 27th January.

Admission Prices: Adults $4.00, Children, Pensioners, Students: $2.50.
Variety Programme

2nd January (Tuesday) at 8.00 p.m.
“Salute to Sydney” featuring Tommy Tycho’s Festival Orchestra and leading Sydney vocalists. This will be the exciting opening night for the month-long programme of music and dance at the Sydney Town Hall, sponsored by Caltex.
Admission: Adults $6.00 $5.50 $4.50; Children $4.50 (including booking fee).

3rd January (Wednesday) at 8.00 p.m.
The Turk Murphy Traditional Jazz Band, direct from San Francisco. This band was first established in 1948 and it’s prime objective has always been the playing of genuine traditional jazz.
On the bill supporting Turk Murphy will be Sydney’s own leading jazz band, the Dick Hughes Famous Five.
Admission: Adults $8.00; Children $6.00.

4th January (Thursday) at 8.00 p.m.
An evening of organ and brass — a rare concert, presenting a programme including the works of Gabrielli, Purcell, Bernedetto Marcello. The city organist and members of the Gordon Webb ensemble will work together to present this fascinating evening of organ, brass and trumpet.
Admission: $2.50.

5th January (Friday) at 8.00 p.m.
“The Mike McClellan Show” featuring Irish comedienne Geraldine Doyle and the Newcastle songman, Bob Hudson.
Mike McClellan, well-known singer/songwriter headlines an evening of music, comedy and song. Mike’s brilliant guitar-picking will be a highlight of the fare and, on the lighter side Geraldine Doyle will amuse with her very own brand of humour. Bob Hudson will present his more infamous works of wit and humour in song.
Admission: Adults $5.50 $4.50 $3.50; Children $2.50.

6th January (Saturday) at 8.00 p.m.
“Music of the Moment” featuring the extraordinary music of David Tolley and FALSE START and incorporating the exhilarating SOUNDS FROM EARTH. This will be a special presentation of exciting modern music-making by the leading exponents of a whole new movement in Australian music, using an exciting range of electronic synthesizers.
Admission: $2.50.

“Treasure Island”
Back on Clark Island again Twice daily throughout January

If you missed out on the sell-out seasons of the Nimrod Theatre’s production of Robert Louis Stevenson’s classic novel of adventure, book now for your trip across the mighty deep of Sydney Harbour to Clark Island where you will meet Long John Silver, Jim Hawkins, Blind Pugh and dozens of other colourful characters in this greatest of adventure stories for children of all ages.

“Long John Silver” will be played by Hugh Kenys-Byrne, “Squire Trelawney” by Terence Clarke, “Jim Hawkins” by Justin Byrne and “Ben Gun” & “Blind Pugh” will both be played by Ralph Cotterill.

Ferries depart twice daily at 10.25 a.m. and 1.40 p.m. from the Farm Cove side of the Opera House near the “Man of War” steps.

Admission Prices which include return ferry trip and booking fee will be $5.40 for Adults and $3.90 for Children and Pensioners.

YO HO HO AND A STREETS ICE CREAM!
FESTIVAL OF SYDNEY PLAYWRIGHTS
THE ENSEMBLE THEATRE
(in association with the Festival of Sydney)
proudly presents a unique quartet of new plays by Australian writers. Each play will be presented for a week only at the Stables Theatre, 10 Nimrod Street, Kings Cross, Sydney.

2-7 January, 8.00 p.m.
How Sleep The Brave by Phillip Mann. An intriguing play of personalities set on board an Australian warship. Directed by: Stanley Walsh.

16-21 January, 8.00 p.m.

9-14 January, 8.00 p.m.
Syndrome by Ken Hayles. A drama of conflict between a young man and his political father whom he accuses of corruption. Directed by: Tony Ingerisent

23-28 January, 8.00 p.m.
Demand by Derek Mortimer. A drama of conflicts both personal and industrial when workers occupy a factory. Directed by: Gary Baxter.

Admission price to each play: $4.50. A subscription ticket to each of the four plays will cost $12.00 — a saving of $6.00 on single ticket purchases.

World-famous, chart-breaking group from the U.S.A., often called "the cultural phenomenon of the decade", CHICAGO's eight-man group will set the Sydney Sportsground alive on January 20th at 8.00 p.m. Admission: $12.50 (Reserve) $10.50 (Unreserved).

Members of the group are: Peter Cetera (bass), Donnie Dacus (guitar), Laudir de Oliveira (percussion), Robert Lamm (Keyboards), Lee Loughnane (trumpet), James Pankow (trombone), Walter Parazaider (woodwinds), Danny Seraphine (drums).

Presented for the Festival of Sydney by A.G.C. Paradine Entertainments.
The Australian Opera

Performances during the Festival of Sydney with the Elizabethan Sydney Orchestra

**OPERA THEATRE 7.30 p.m.**

January 10, 12, 13, 16, 17, 20, 27 and 30

**"ALBERT HERRING"**
by Benjamin Britten

Conductor: William Reid  Director: John Cox

Admission Prices: Jan 10 — $26.50 $21.50 $15.00 $9.00, Other Evenings $21.50 $16.50 $12.00 $7.00, Matinee Jan 20 $18.00 $12.50 $9.00 $5.00, Students & pensioners half price.

STOP PRESS... The performance of **ALBERT HERRING** on January 12 is being offered as a special Festival performance at bargain basement prices.

**CONCERT HALL 7.30 p.m.**

January 13, 15, 18, 20, 23, 27, and 31

**"FIDELIO"**
by Ludwig von Beethoven

Conductor: Carlo Felice Cillario  Director: Bernd Berthaak
Featuring Marilyn Richardson, Glenys Fowles, Donald Smith, Anson Austin, John Shaw, Donald Shanks, Robert Allman.

Admission: $15.50 $12.50 $10.50 $5.50, Students & pensioners $8.00 $6.50 $5.50 $3.00.

**STARS OF THE BOLSHOI OPERA**

These distinguished Bolshoi Opera artists will perform excerpts from magnificent Russian Operas in semi-staged concert performances. The operas will include Boris Godanov, Eugene Onegin, Ruslan and Ludmila, Sadko, Francesca da Rimini, Prince Igor, The Stone Guests, The Tzar's Bride, Mazepa, War & Peace, Ivan Susanin, Khovanschina, and Iolanta.

Admission: $15.50 $12.50 $10.50 $5.50, Students & pensioners $8.00 $6.50 $5.50 $3.00.

**The Sydney Symphony Orchestra**

Two special Family Pops Concerts are organised for the final week of the Sydney Town Hall programme: 20th January and 24th January at 7.00 p.m.

The programme for both evenings will be conducted by Patrick Thomas.

Admission: Family ticket for two parents and two children (19 years and under) $16.50 (including booking fee) and $1.70 for each additional child in the family.

Adults $6.70 and Children $3.70 (including booking fee).
ST PHILIP'S MUSIC FOUNDATION

The St Philip's Music Foundation was formed in 1975 and consists of a chamber orchestra and two choirs which give numerous concerts in the beautiful St Philip's church and in other historic buildings. The Foundation encourages talented musicians to perform important music which might otherwise be neglected and, when possible, to combine the performances with historical, architectural or literary interests.

The Festival of Sydney is proud to announce the following programme of concerts:

Chamber music recitals at the newly restored St Philip's Church.
January 14th (Sunday) at 7.00 pm — "Ayres Baroque", instrumental and vocal music from 17th and 18th centuries.

January 21st (Sunday) at 7.00 pm — Music by Mozart, Carl Nielson, Arnold, Michael Haydn, directed by David Potts.

January 28th (Sunday) at 7.00 pm — Music for flute, harp and viola.

January 29th (Monday) at 2.30 pm — Music for brass and organ featuring the Gordon Webb Brass Ensemble and Peter Bray (organ).

Admission: $2.50.

January 27th (Saturday) and 29th (Monday) at 7.30 pm. — Choral and an Orchestral Concert by the St Philip's Singers with the St Philip Chamber Orchestra, conducted by Michael Dyer and programme includes Missa "In Tempora Belli" for chorus, soloists and orchestra by Joseph Haydn and orchestral works by Hummel, Samuel Wesley and J.S. Bach.

Admission: Adults $5.50
Children $3.50

Sydney Town Hall Concerts
23rd January (Tuesday) at 8.00 pm — St Philip's Chamber Orchestra conducted by Michael Dyer with soloists Ronald Dowd (tenor), Elizabeth Powell (piano) Gordon Webb (trumpet). Programme includes "On Wenlock Edge" (Vaughan Williams), "Irkanda IV" (Peter Sculthorpe), and Piano Concerto No.1 (Shostakovich).

These two concerts will be preceded by a Recital in the Foyer at 6.00 pm representing music by 19th century composers.

Admission for the whole evening: Adults $5.50, Children $2.50 (All pieces include booking fee).

THE LONDON EARLY MUSIC GROUP
Directed by James Tyler
Presented by the Festival of Sydney by arrangement with the Festival of Perth

Two unforgettable concerts for lovers of music of the Elizabethan era.

St Mary's Cathedral
January 26th & 28th — 8.00 p.m.

The Festival gratefully acknowledges the generous co-operation of His Eminence Sir James Cardinal Freeman for making the Cathedral available for these two historic performances.

"The group is as versatile as anyone has any right to expect of an assembly of four players and a singer. They can muster a consort of viols, a range of mini-wind bands and endless change of continuo ensemble. Mr. Tyler and his friends have worked very hard on questions of authenticity and performance practice."

The Times, London, 1977

Because of restricted sight lines in the Cathedral, a total of 2,000 tickets only will be sold for each of these performances — so book early.

Admission price:
$7.50 $6.50 $5.50
Students & pensioners: $5.50

L to R: Alan Lumsden — Alto and tenor sackbutt, bass flute, tenor and bass recorder; Paul Elliott — Tenor (seated); Oliver Brooks — Bass viol. Standing extreme right: David Watkins — Harp; James Tyler — Lute, tenor viol (seated).
“Bed Before Yesterday”

“This without doubt, is the funniest play any of us are likely to see, not just this year, but in this decade.”

(Sandy Wilson, PLAYS & PLAYERS)

Ben Travers, has surprised and delighted the British Theatre scene in his 89th year by coming up with what many regard as his funniest play — “Bed Before Yesterday”. An audacious romantic comedy, set in the 30’s giving an accurate picture of morals 40 years ago and interpreting them with an enlightened modern insight.

Lindsay Anderson directs a cast headed by Rachel Roberts. The play is designed by the famous expatriot Australian designer, Allan Tagg and is presented for The Festival of Sydney by the MLC Theatre Royal Company by arrangement with H M Tennant Ltd.

Performances: From 11th January, Monday through Saturday at 8.15 p.m., with a 2.00 p.m. matinee on Wednesdays and Saturdays.
Admission: Adults $10.80; Children & Pensioners $5.50 (Matinees only).

“Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs”

Live on Stage!

This ever popular stage adaptation of The Grimm Brother’s Musical Fantasy, suitable fun for children and adults alike, will be presented by Rudus Organisation and the Regent Theatre during the 1979 Festival of Sydney.

Performances: Commence Tuesday, 2nd January, 1979 daily at 10.15 a.m. and 2.00 p.m. and each Saturday at 1.00 p.m. and 4.30 p.m. until Saturday, 27th January, 1979.
Admission: Adults; $4.75 Front Stalls & Dress Circle $4.00 Back Stalls & Dress Circle
Children & Pensioners: $2.95 Front Stalls & Dress Circle $2.20 Back Stalls & Dress Circle
(Includes Booking Fee)

“Sleeping Beauty”

This musical and magical dancing pantomime, featuring “Dame Trotalot” and “Fairy Fluff” of the Cherly Regan Dancers, will be presented at the St. James Playhouse as part of the 1979 Festival of Sydney.

Children will be able to participate on stage at performances twice daily, Monday — Friday at 10.15 a.m. & 2 15 p.m. and each Saturday at 2.15 p.m. from 6th January — 27th January.
Admission: Adults $3.60 Children $2.60.

THE SEYMOUR ENTERTAINMENT CENTRE

“THOUGHTS OF CHAIRMAN ALF”
(York Theatre)

Starring Warren Mitchell as “Alf” telling the world what is wrong with it and at the same time disclosing his own life. Nightly performances at 8.30 p.m. commence Tuesday, 9 January — 27 January.
Admission: Adults $8.50 Students & Pensioners $4.50

January 22nd 11.00 a.m. Seymour Centre, the Sydney Theatre Critics Award Presentation.

“STATEMENTS”
(Downstairs at the Seymour)

A dramatic love story starring Olive Bodill & Anthony Wheeler. Performances commence Saturday, 17 January to Saturday 17 February at 8.30 p.m. Friday and Saturday performances at 6 p.m. & 8.30 p.m.
Admission: General Public: $6.50; Trust Members $5.50; Parties (10 or more) $5.50; Students, Pensioners & Equity Members $4.50.

The programme will include “The Busker’s Story” (Alison Bauld 1978), and “The Soldier’s Tale” (Igor Stravinsky 1918).
Performances: Wednesday 10th January and Friday 12th January at 8.00 p.m.
Admission: Adults $4.50 Children & Pensioners $2.50.

THE SEYMOUR GROUP ENSEMBLE

A young contemporary music ensemble, specialising in 20th century music, particularly the younger generation of Australian composers. The Festival of Sydney is proud to present a special programme by this Ensemble at the historic Pitt Street Uniting Church, 264 Pitt Street, Sydney.

Computicket is the official ticket seller for the 1979 Festival of Sydney. In addition, each Computicket outlet will be happy to give you any information you may require about the Festival.

The main Festival Information Office will again be situated on the Ground Floor, O.T.C. Centre, Martin Place, and tickets to Festival attractions may be obtained there.
Festival of Sydney information by telephone (after December 26), 949-8111 (Tourist Information Service).
Gained in interest and direction

**A HATFUL OF SYKES**

**THE HOSTAGE**

**COLLIN O'BRIEN**

When as a stripling I studied physics under the iron fist of Brother Murphy we learnt about an instrument called the micrometer screw gauge, capable of measuring minute diameters and thicknesses. Such a device would be essential for calculating the microscopically thin plotline of *A Hatful of Sykes*. But then plot is not where its at, the play being a thinly disguised excuse for Sykes to strut his stuff aided and abetted by straight (rotund) person Hattie Jacques and Deryck Guyler, in the roles they fill in the TV series. Ex Miss Australia Ann Sydney makes a couple of eyes-and-teeth appearances, and that's about it.

In *Big Bad Mouse* with Jimmie Edwards a while back Sykes demonstrated his considerable command of mime and mugging, skills not evident on the small screen, and just as he was the best thing in *BBM* so of course does he warrant the price of admission here. The re-emergence of commercial theatre in Perth — and theatre set up from here, not the fag-end (if you'll excuse the expression) of shows brought out for The East — is to be welcomed by all but the culturally snobbish. It does appeal to people who might otherwise never go to the theatre, and who knows they may move on to Higher Things . . .

A different kind of exercise in apparent shapelessness at the Playhouse: Brendan Behan’s *The Hostage*. It would appear that every fifty years or so the English theatre deserves, and gets, a kick in the naice middleclass pants delivered by an Irish boyo. In the fifties it was Bevan, as it had been O'Casey before him.

*The Hostage* is built like an Irish wake: everyone knows what they're there for, but the divil they're going to let that interfere with the singin' the dhancin' and the leppin'. The play hails from the era of the kitchen sink, but Behan seems to have misinterpreted the term to mean that you therefore throw in everything *including* the kitchen sink. It was first presented by Joan Littlewood’s Stratford-nte-Bowe Theatre workshop, arguably the most vital popular theatre movement in England since the war. Like all plays worked up from improvisation it probably had a coherence and unity related to the particular style and personality of the particular actors who first worked on it; but also as usual with such plays, it tends not to quite work in spots when committed to cold print and then revitalised by others.

This, plus the problem of the audience getting themselves accustomed to the accents and idiom, probably explains some slowness and lack of direction in the first act. But from then on it gained in interest and direction. The play is a hotch-potch of song, dance and backchat, outrageous characterisation and moments of tender realism. The Guinness flowed like the Liffey, and I seriously wondered whether one or two of the actors would still be coherent by the third act: they were, just.

What plot there is concerns a young English National serviceman held hostage in a Dublin brothel, to be shot if a convicted IRA boy is hanged in Belfast. This sort of theatre is Mike Morris’s forte: well, one of his fortes. It would be almost a travesty of such Total Theatre to dwell on individual performances, but I especially liked the warmth of Wanda Davidson’s portrayal of the young Irish skivvy who finds a brief moment of love with the Tommy, in which part Alan Fletcher turned in the best performance I’ve seen from him yet. Remembering Mauri Ogden’s work in that other fifties revival, *The Knack*, I suppose we have to grant him the Theatrical Scaffold of the Year Award for shoring up shapeless plays. Joan Sydney, Rosemary Barr, James Beattie and Leslie Wright all gave of their best with zest and brio, and Richard Williams handled well the uneasy role of the only menacing character in the play.

I still remember the impact of the first production of the play in Perth, directed by Frank Baden-Powell in the since demolished McNess Hall. Full of life for all its shapelessness, of love for and frustration with Irish sentimentality, petty aggression and genuine anger over centuries of bland English oppression, it too left a lasting impression from the haunting final image. The Tommy, shot, starts to rise from the floor in a ghastly greenish light singing at first in a thin ethereal voice but building to fortissimo backed by the whole company:

*The bells of hell go ding-aling-aling,*

*For you but not for me;*  
*O Death where is thy sting-aling-aling,*  
*And grave thy victory . . . ?*
A reasonable ‘contact high’

**ROCK-OLA**

CLIFF GILLAM

Rock-ola is by Tim Gooding, National Theatre Workshop Company at the Hole in the Wall Theatre, Perth, WA. Opened 11 October, 1978. Director and Designer Mike Morris; Jet Deluxe, Mike Price; Angel Sugar, Michelle Stanley; Pagliacci, Rupert Burns; Velvet, Carole Godarde.

Rock-ola gives the impression of being one of those 4 am hash-fed fantasies that was for once remembered, and what’s worse, written down next day. I don’t see myself that it says anything very coherent about its ostensible subject or properly creates that subject, (late 20th century incoherence and the CAUTION — SS panic, Hiroshima panic) as a junction of its form. And it does display a lamentable tendency to take the rock mythos on the valuation of some of its more extravagant promulgators and more or less faithfully regurgitate the standard cliches about transistors and teen-angst. I can’t see it, in other words, being anything like the final word, nor the final treatment of that big and so far, (in any medium other than the three minute single) hamfistedly treated subject, that neon-lit plum which has tempted so many and been attained by none, THE ROCK VISION OF LIFE.

But Rock-ola at the Hole-in-the-Wall had its good points. Such as the occasional appearance in the script of some keen insight into the significant distortions which follow from the transposition of American imagery into the consciousness of a New Australian Suburbanite. Such as an occasionally acerbic undercutting, in the dialogue, of the overwhelming inertia of nostalgia which the subject (even to an extent the style) tended to encourage in the audience. But best of all, such as the opportunity it gave four young actors—singers from The National Theatre Workshop Company to really strut their stuff. I hadn’t seen any of these people before, although I’d been forewarned by spies north of The Tropic of Capricorn who’d seen them touring in the North-West Road Show about their considerable talent. Energy, intelligence, sensitivity and skill marked each performance, and if I make special mention of Michelle Stanley (Angel Sugar) it’s not because her performance was better than that of Carole Godarde (Velvet), Mike Price (Jet Deluxe) or Rupert Burns (Pagliacci) but only that I’m a sucker for the type of mythical “street-tough but sensitive” lady she was playing.

The show was, by the way, beautifully cast, and Mike Morris’ hand was strongly evident not only in the tightness of the show but also in the extension of the design concept (horrible phrase that, but very in on the rock scene nowadays) from the juke-box dominating the stage to the 45 rpm singles served up as programmes. The only really disappointing feature of the show was the band, which was I suppose, adequate for the purpose — but just.

Let me try to sum up the whole experience for you this way — I found that the energy levels of the performance induced a reasonable ‘contact high’ but that my head stayed straight enough to respond the play, as a play, in terms of SO WHAT. Tim Gooding seemed to have gone to a lot of fuss to tell me less than I can learn from, say, Bruce Springsteen’s Racing in The Street.
Derek Moore Morgan

Twenty minutes spent brooding on opera in a sideways bus shelter the other day convinced me once again of its total intractability as an art-form. Brave or foolhardy people the world over remain undeterred by the difficulties, spending months of hard labour on scenery, costumes and rehearsals galore in the pursuit of opera's elusive magic. Of such was Perth's Die Zauberflote production by Opera Viva which commenced on Thursday October 19th and ran for a total of six nights.

Unfortunately, whatever the restrictions, financial and otherwise of a small theatre like the Octagon, Mozart's fullest bloom of orchestral maturity from his life's barest essentials of a nine-piece orchestra. This was cutting beyond the bone, and as a result, the whole thing had a flat trajectory which grew steadily flatter as the evening progressed, and the lack of horn warmth, trumpet/drum-edged brilliance and the cushion of trombone roundness made itself felt.

Inevitably the singers at no time stood in danger of being outweighed, since their every note had a stark clarity emphasised by the somewhat unflattering acoustic of the theatre, which presents the facts without glossy halo.

Among the singers, Norma Breese as Pamina was most successful in injecting humanity, life and warmth into her part, together with a sense of phrase-shaping which was lacking in John Ryall's Pamina, though he brought a fair degree of princely presence to his part. Marie McKinnon sang the Queen of Night's two superb arias with commendable accuracy of intonation, but the lower part of the range failed to come through with any punch, emphasising the music of the lilting elegance which grew steadily flatter as the evening progressed, and the lack of horn warmth, trumpet/drum-edged brilliance and the cushion of trombone roundness made itself felt.

In the second-title role, Barry Preece, as the poseur, Reginald Bunthorne, was most effective, establishing many interesting facets of the character, and proving very popular with the audience. Such a performer is most welcome at the present time, when few actors, it seems are prepared to change their own image in any way. With his skill, Mr Preece could have been directed to delay some of his lines, in the second title role, Barry Preece, as the poseur, Reginald Bunthorne, was most effective, establishing many interesting facets of the character, and proving very popular with the audience. Such a performer is most welcome at the present time, when few actors, it seems are prepared to change their own image in any way. With his skill, Mr Preece could have been directed to delay some of his lines.

There was nice work done by other players, keeping up the spirit of the style, but, regretfully, many lines did not reach us, as especially in the songs, the last several words trailed off. It is a feature of English that essential material is always contained in the final syllables of a sentence, and we had to forgo the enjoyment of Gilbert's lyrics when we did not hear. Nevertheless, Desmond Lucy had a pleasing voice and worked hard. David Holmes showed an admirable sense of timing and moved very well. The good work of Anne Watson and Christopher Waddell was subdued by costumes which did not seem to contribute to their characterisations.

The G & S Society is worth its salt.
METAPHOR IS REALLY HYPERBOLE

FLESH AND BLOOD

ANTHONY BARCLAY

Flesh and Blood by William Henley. The Ensemble Theatre. Sydney, NSW. Opened November 9, 1978. Director, whose agonies are reasonably universal you younger generation: a triptych with Faye children, the larger problem of extra-
other hand, is the conventional sister herself from family ties. Nona, on the occupy the two acts of the play. There is of three children. The other results include twenty years of knowing deceit but I found that to be all the more
play has more warmth than Summons' Ive^ keen on Nona getting into couple­
ways than one -for Henley's play, centred at the centre, illegitimate, honest and
an equally neat mechanism for the similar themes: the twisted fabric of
happened, of course, when Harry was
neatly twisted love triangle between the
wife Della and Harry's brother John. It
beings, gnarled with suffering, unsche­
matic, drenched with pain and joy. In a
word, simply people. If anything Henley's
play's metaphor is that the acting was fine. Ron Graham's
Harry ... walking narrow edges at great
heights from the ground.

But really the metaphor is not accurate as metaphor. No one character in Henley's
play is at great heights, they are simply people. And if I may excuse myself for
delving into so much plot detail I will return to the problem I hinted at in my
opening paragraph. Henley's play is shot through with 'metaphors' of steelwork
(twisted relationships) bridgemen (heights
in hyperbolic emotion. Not that this is
enough but no doubt it will settle down as
the season progresses.

The play is clever, fast-moving, witty and very funny. The complications are too
numerous to list but suffice to say it all revolves around a vivacious prostitute,
The Shrimp, and a respectable doctor who spends most of the play pretending she is
his wife while her real wife who is a religious fanatic and his uncle who is a
crusty old general — well, they get into some very strange situations. All of
French society is involved, from a Duchess to a dustman and, amidst the fun,
the play makes some pointed observations about manners and morals.

A farce like this, with so many chances for little gems of performances, will
respond best to a company that has worked as an ensemble and that has more
evenness of acting strength than this Old Tote cast shows. There was a fair degree
of uncertainty and hesitation in the cast. The second act in particular, where
Dawson managed the interesting character of Faye well though her jerky stage
movement which may have been designed to give a sense of 'cuteness' - was too
overdone. Maggie Platt's Nona was aptly balmy and touchingly comic at just the
right moments. But it's definitely a production in which the acting as acting will
hold interest. In short, too much flesh and not enough blood.

Fair representation of the Old Tote

THE LADY FROM MAXIM'S

ERROL BRAY

The Lady From Maxim's by Georges Feydeau. The Old Tote Theatre Company at the Opera House Drama Themselves, Sydney. NSW. Opened 8 November, 1978. Director, Ted Craig; Music, Frank Eisler-Smith; Choreography, Christine Rowan; Lighting, Jerry Luke. Dr Mongoose; Ronald Falk; Evonne. Gary Files; Dr Peysson; Barry Otto; Mine Peysson; Maggie Dance; The Steward; Judy Nunn; General Peysson du Grele; Jon Ewing; The Butler; Willie Fennelly; The Abbe, Walter Plinge; Mine Valastian; Margot Lloyd; Mine Pouati; Rubyn Gilchrist; Mine Claux, Helen Banbow; Mine Sannard, Joyce Jacobs; Mine Hauitgoud; Marie Lloyd; The Duchess de Valmonte; Colleen Clifford; Leonarnna Gormann; Alex Pope; Lieutenant Chamerot, Peter Fisher; Lieutenant, Michelle Fawdon; Emile. Gary Files; Monsieur Vidasan, Ed Thompson; Le Duc de Valmonte, John Cobley; The Prefect, Willie Fennelly; Lieutenant Cogernon, Patrick Howa. (Photograph)

The Old Tote has gone out with a grin on its face. Its production of Feydeau's The Lady From Maxim's, if not exactly a romp, is a leisurely trot of great enjoyment. The play itself is ingenious and totally delightful. The performances ranged from barely adequate to marvel­lous. James Ridewood's sets and costumes were very good. Ted Craig's direction is a bit careless. The production is not tight enough but no doubt it will settle down as the season progresses.

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numerous to list but suffice to say it all revolves around a vivacious prostitute,
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of uncertainty and hesitation in the cast. The second act in particular, where
The focus of attention was often blurred attempt with flashes of brilliance.

excellent, lots of good elements, but all that, it's entertaining and lively show and sometimes absent entirely. But, for was slack and the acting far too uneven. others he has done for the Tote: almost somehow not all held together. The pace her religious ecstasies, but there was a struggling with the role. Maggie Dence good moments but always seemed to be playing. It was wonderful to see Willie Fouldon on stage again. He brought a fine sense of confidence and control to his two small roles. Of the rest of the cast, Michelle Fawdon was outstanding in a small burst as the fiancée, Clementine. Colleen Clifford was disappointingly low-key, but then she was only in that second act where most of the cast looked pretty lost.

Ted Cruig's production was like many others he has done for the Tote: almost excellent, lots of good elements, but somehow not all held together. The pace was slack and the acting far too uneven. The focus of attention was often blurred and sometimes absent entirely. But, for all that, it's entertaining and lively show and a fair representation of what the Old Tote usually achieved — a pretty good attempt with flashes of brilliance.

Vehicle for star talents

A LAD AND HIS LAMP

ROBERT PAGE

A Lad in His Lamp. Words, David Thomais, David Mitchell; Music, Hugh O'Keeffe, Phillip Scott, A. Sullivan, Puccini, Bransum, Wagner, etc. Marian Street Theatre. Sydney, NSW. opened 31st November, 1978. Director, Alastair Duncan; Designer, Michael O'Kane; Choreography, Keith Little; Lighting, Michael Nye; Stage Management, Frances Taylor, Scott Thiele, Michael Nye. Aladdin, Bunny Gibson; Widow Twanky, David Mitchell; Abanazar, Raymond Duparc; Princess Aly Khan, Caroline Blake; Czar Nicholas, Walter Walker; Thumper Pickering; Emperor Twankey, John Faassen; Chorus Gentlemen, Stephen Thomas, Rod Dunbar.

Marian Street is a theatre of ups and downs resulting from an attempt to fuse North Shore appeal with a building and settings which look as if the place is still struggling to make ends meet. Pantomime at least suits the one and is forgiving with the other — so long as the changes are rung and the show rattles along.

A bevy of writers and musical sorts have contrived to make A Lad'n his Lamp do just that and have used the pantomime's murky and illegitimate past — the term alone beggars definition — to shoat this offering more towards a hybrid with revue. Of course pantom itself is a lord of misrule event where everything, including the script, is burlesqued, and being Christmas theatrical hair can be let down (literally in Abanazar, Raymond Duparc's case) and the bounds beaten.

Pantomime — despite the scorn of critics, and of such high-minded actor-managers as David Garrick, who nonetheless introduced it to Drury Lane in the need of a quick quid — has a fairly distinguished history. Its origins, in the improvisational theatre of the Commedia dell' Arte, suggest that however hard to pin down as a form it has always provided thousands. Can I mention the voice of Jeannie Little without letting the genie out of the bottle? Perhaps not.

There is old China and the wicked uncle, the lovely princess who marries Aladdin, the magic ring and lamp but nothing of the lavishly set caves of plenty and the over-elaborate. I had much the same feeling watching the other night an Australian version of The Lamb of God at the Ensemble. Perhaps this tendency is endemic to first plays. Other critics have invoked the name of Eugene O'Neill. A joke in the dialogue about a play in which people sell a cherry orchard confirmed an impression I had that Mr. Bunbury might be nurturing a gentle passion for Chekhov and looking for the same sort of complexity and depth of sub-text in performance as is customarily accorded to the revered Russian. In this connection, and particularly in relation to the problem of fatal illness in a family, the play reminded me of Ray Mathew's Spring Song.

Not surprisingly, what with the poverty, the TB and the communication problems, the tone is generally somewhat melancholy, although a robust sense of self-awareness and Irish humour are detectable, a fact that in Sydney's Dixon St? Indeed the whole is about as authentic, though intentionally so, as one of those terrible take aways and like those isn't filling for very long. Still it's very palatable, sweet and appealing, and after all Christmas isn't a time for being sour.

All words and small events

A VISIT WITH THE FAMILY

GEX CRAPMORPH


About the play. A Visit with the Family is a straightforward reminisce of life in Redfern in the '30s. Its style is mainstream Australian naturalism — thoughtful observation of the characters, some nice interaction between them, and a rather pleasantly naive flashback framework in which the writer/visitor arrives at the house in which he was once a child to begin the memory/play and concludes it by interrupting the action at the conclusion of the remembered day. The visitor's introduction material is couched in a fairly literary style to which, for some reason, I found myself a little unsympathetic. From time to time I thought the dialogue itself a little over-elaborate. I had much the same feeling watching the other night an Australian play I've seen recently — The Lamb of God at the Ensemble. Perhaps this tendency is endemic to first plays. Other critics have invoked the name of Eugene O'Neill. A joke in the dialogue about a play in which people sell a cherry orchard confirmed an impression I had that Mr. Bunbury might be nurturing a gentle passion for Chekhov and looking for the same sort of complexity and depth of sub-text in performance as is customarily accorded to the revered Russian. In this connection, and particularly in relation to the problem of fatal illness in a family, the play reminded me of Ray Mathew's Spring Song.

Not surprisingly, what with the poverty, the TB and the communication problems, the tone is generally somewhat melancholy, although a robust sense of self-awareness and Irish humour are detectable. The play's greatest strength seems to me the handling of some of the family relationships — they are slowly unveiled in a way that is as good as developing dramatic action. I particularly liked the brother and sister (Liz and Mick) relationship and the ones between the mother and son and the mother and...
Managemen
t would like to take this opportunity
to wish all their clients a
Happy Christmas and a Prosperous New Year.

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MARION BOND  IRINA MITCHELL  PANOS CARRE
DIANE CILENTO  DEBORAH NICOLSON  PHILLIP CORBEN
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of the other characters and I had some difficulty in deciding whether Liz was the mother or elder sister having read the programme I couldn't tell — not a problem, of course, is casting a tight-knit family unit in relation to physical appearance. I thought Robyn Nevin and Brandon Burke looked as if they might (Belong together and, to some extent, Helen Morse and Gillian Jones did too — not all four. I saw one of those not-so-good-as-the-night-before performances (according only to some of the cast but also to friends who had seen the night before) and I have to report that I followed the play on a narrative level — mildly interested in what would happen to the characters - without being gripped by the recreation of the relationships between them. For me the play was all words and small events — I would have liked half as much said and done and twice as much felt. Nevertheless I could see sections that had the spark of life and felt that on a good night the whole thing could fire. I particularly liked what Robyn Nevin and Brandon Burke bring to their relationship (bickering and anger slowly abate to reveal the affection between them). Helen Morse plays Kit, the sister who alternately accepts and rejects her gentleman-caller as she struggles to come to terms with her newly-discovered TB, with those characteristic qualities of modesty and intelligence which make Miss Morse's work so attractive. It is also a great pleasure to see Gillian Jones on stage again — she is Mim, the sister with the advanced TB and her first-act exhaustion and slowness is beautifully played. I also very much liked Margo Lee's scene with Tom Farley (the father and mother) although I must, in fairness, remark that when seeing a play that one does not know, for the first time, it is sometimes a little difficult to disengage the performance from the role. I particularly liked the writing of this scene.

The set (Larry Eastwood) had to work hard to give us so many rooms in such a small space and it did seem, sometimes, as if the lounge room was too small for people to face one another and have a conversation. But perhaps when they faced front they were looking out of a window. I also wondered why the set seemed to be raked when most of the audience were seated above it. I needed the reassurance of the programme to feel that the symphonic nature of the surrounding music (Sullivan's Irish Symphony) was really appropriate. Altogether, Richard Wherrett's direction seemed to concentrate on the narrative aspects of the play, leaving the character development and the more subtle aspects of relationship to look after themselves. Perhaps this impression was associated with the particular performance I saw and perhaps, too, a certain sense of forward narrative momentum is needed to sustain attention and interest.

## Fall off in standard

**CYMBELINE**

MICHAEL MORLEY

Cymbeline by William Shakespeare. State Theatre Company at The Playhouse Theatre, Adelaide, South Australia. Opened 3 November, 1978. Director, Colin George; Lighting Designer, Nigel Lewings; Stage Manager, Wayne Jarry; Costume Designer, Brian Jones; Imagin, Linda Wilkinson; Posthumus Leonatus, Michael Siberry; Queen, Daphne Grey; Cesare, Colin Friel; Prasid, Wayne Jarrett; Belarius, Edmund Pegge; Guiderius, Tony Strachan; Arvindra, Peter Schwarz; Philario, Edmund Pegge; Iachimo, Kevin Milles; A French Gentleman, Michael Fuller; Cornelius, Paul Sonkilla; First Lord, Nick Enright; Jupiter, Tony Prahn; Scilla Leonata, Colin Friel; Scilla Wife, Daphne Grey; Leonata's Brother, Chris Mahoney; Leonata's Brother, Michele Stayer; Caius Lucius, Paul Sonkilla; A Roman Captain, Michael Fuller; A French Captain, Michael Freundt; A Garder, Tony Prahn; Soothsayer, Colin Friend; Ladies In Waiting, Chris Mahoney, Michele Stayer; Lords In Attendance, John Saunders, Andrew Munro.

The performances ranged from the histrionic through the embarrassed to the anonymous. Kevin Miles' Iachimo seemed to have spent much time recalling past bad performances of Olivier and putting to good (if that is the word) effect patricial delivery, the outstretched expressions — not-so-good-as-the-night-before performances (according not only to some of the reassurance of the programme to feel that the symphonic nature of the...
doing on the stage at any particular time. Likewise, Brian James and Daphne Grey were mostly merciful to Shakespeare's text and the audience's ears: what the other verse-speaking — excepting, on occasions, Linden Wilkinson's Imogen — was simply suggesting that the actors had as little idea as the audience of what they were saying. Such lack of attention to the sense of Shakespeare's language is hardly the fault of the actors alone.

Colin Friels — with the director's approval? — had clearly decided that what Cloten had to say wasn't really worth the trouble, and had opted for an Ocker version of Derek Jacobi's clever, if sometimes mannered, stammer in the TV adaptation of Eliot's Murmurs of Spiritu Affairs. But Jacobi, much of his use of incidental music. In this case may be); and an ear-splitting version of a sledgehammer; martial band blaring through the South-Australian Theatre, to a more sophisticated venue specifically for the Italian Festival. Ken Ross has used a cartoon quick scene method to plot the transit of a pre-Australian and post-Australian immigrant. A descent from the payoff Italian society of legends, probably not wrongly, of being straitjacketed. The fight between the professor, the colonel and Mario. All three characters being friends of the social right; while Mario suffers a kind of Duntroon. David Hursthouse as the enigmatic figure who strolls on stage under great duress and who in fact has the longest nose in the world? Light and airy but extremely well performed.

On the Edge in Search of Happiness, the curtain raiser to Windows and so large a work that in its present form, it was designed for inevitably the result will be theatrical muzak. In the light of this, the choice of the Sheridan Theatre by the maturing Stage Company becomes especially interesting when the actors have held more but the performances departure had a clarity and wit pleasing to the sense of entertainment. Physically displayed with a zest in group scenes that mingled with the narrative helped lift the play out of a monosyllabic rut.

The director Brian Debnam crafted both plays into a wholesome product. A director whose solid use of actor and space have won for him many productions of Pino Bosi's Cymbeline, Windows and Ken Ross' On the Edge in Search of Happiness to small houses as part of an all too short five day season. The plays were received enthusiastically and must surely wet the public's appetite for things to come from a company growing in stature and ability.

It was pleasing to see the S C move from its regular home, the Sheridan Theatre, to a more sophisticated venue allowing production to be technically better equipped and space have won for him many productions. Pino Bosi's Cymbeline, the Stage Company mounted scenes that mingled with the narrative helped lift the play out of a monosyllabic rut. A quiet tribute to continued application and resourcefulness was carried out at the Union Theatre by the maturing Stage Company. As part of the Italian Festival, the Stage Company mounted productions of Pino Bosi's Cymbeline, Windows and Ken Ross' On the Edge in Search of Happiness to small houses as part of an all too short five day season. The plays were received enthusiastically and must surely wet the public's appetite for things to come from a company growing in stature and ability.

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Act II

Stop. I've stopped. You can stop.
Kate: You haven't stopped. Come on. Have a drink. Be nice.
Stan: No, Kate!
Kate: You do love me, do you?
Stan: Of course I do. (Hiram voice) As the bee loves honey: buzz, buzz, buzz.
Pause.
Kate: I got frightened.
Stan: Good: keeps you on your toes.
Kate: I get frightened of being left on my own.
Stan: Everybody does.
Kate: Not you.
Stan: Me too, but I don't let it get me down.
Kate: When I was a little girl I was frightened of growing old. Being alone was being old...
Stan: I was on my own a lot when I was little. Playing on the verandah. That was in the mornings. In the afternoons—sometimes—mother'd get out her old dresses—and we'd dress up, and dance together. In the heat. There'd be red dust everywhere.
Pause.
Kate: Why don't you go back. Kate? You obviously miss it.
Kate: What?
Kate: Why don't you go back?
Kate: What are you up to?
Kate: Go back—take a holiday...
Kate: No... (pause) Mother said 'Get out! Make something of yourself. Get out...'
Kate: Just a holiday.
Kate: I got out...
Pause.
Kate: Do you miss home?
Stan: Wherever I work is home. Home is where the garbage grows.
Kate: Come to bed. Stan.
Kate: No. I'm working on a new character.
Kate: We don't need one.
Kate: I don't.
Kate: They're all the same, your new characters: baggy, strides, funny walk—Chaplin!
Stan: This one's different.
Kate: How?
Stan: Well for one thing, he's American. (Demonstrates with accent) Hiram's the name, marble! Hierarchy, Hiram! Howdy? (shakes hand with great enthusiasm) I'm jist up from the country and I'm amnin' ter make a fine career for myself, here in the city. Yup! You see. Innocent. Open. Friendly with everybody. Always ready to lend a hand.
Kate: But things go wrong for him?
Stan: Yes, that's it.
Kate: Charlie Chaplin's trap!
Stan: No! Hiram's different!
Kate: Sounds the same to me.
Stan: You don't see, do you? Look, stop boozing and listen. (Takes glass from her) Chaplin's little trap is basically a city guy—city born and bred—a go-getter. You know, down and out but cocky. A bit silly, even cruel...
Kate: I know the type.
Stan: And he always comes out on top. He can lose the girl, but he's still there on top. Like Charlie himself. In the end you don't really feel sorry for him: you admire him.
Kate: Nice to be admired...
Kate: They won't understand all that! They'll just say it's another tramp, like Chaplin's.
Stan: No; they won't.
Kate: Of course they will! (Grabs glass back)
Stan: Oh, what do you know about it?
Kate: I know as much about the business as you.
Stan: Do you?
Kate: I've been in it as long as you.
Stan: Longer!
Kate: (angry) You're no spring chicken yourself, Mr. Stanley Jefferson! Are you? And how far have you got? Think about that! And then look at Chaplin!
Stan: I've thought about it! Believe me! You know what Chaplin did, don't you?
Kate: What?
Stan: He wasn't a sucker: he went it alone!
Kate: And what's that supposed to mean?
Stan: You know what it means.
Kate: Look—do you carry me?
Stan: I didn't say that—you did!
Kate: You smug Pommy bugger: you needed me!
Kate: You forced yourself on me.
Kate: What? I didn't need you! I was doing fine...when I was with Cissy Morgan.
Stan: The Morgan Sisters! Big Cissy and you! The elephant and the kangaroo!
Kate: You little shit!
Stan: Oh yes, the Morgan Sisters! We all knew about that act...!
Kate: What do you mean? What about it?
Stan: I'll tell you what! Just one step up from the tent show. That's what: A Song, A Dance And A Shag! (beat) At least Cissy Morgan could sing and dance!
Kate: Rotten bastard! We didn't all have the easy time you did!
Kate: Easy?
Stan: Too right! Easy!
Kate: Because I wasn't born in some slum like Chaplin! Or some rural Australian backwater!
Kate: Easy! Yes! We didn't have theatre managers for fathers: we had to learn the hard way!
Stan: We! Don't compare yourself with Charlie, you arrogant cow! You learned nothing!

Graphics: MTC
You just loved the glamour of it. You still do. You think it's enough just to want to do it. Typical bloody colonial arrogance! No respect for tradition.

**Kate:** Tradition! Oh yes! I've been your what do you call it? tradition at work with that drunken Scotch shit you call your mate; falling all over the place, messing in his strides, touching up all the girls...

**Stan:** You should know...

**Kate:** (slapping his hand away) Drinking the what, you bastard! Little Edna... Hell, the People's Popet. You know who I mean?

**Stan:** Of course I know who you mean. So what?

**Kate:** You bastard!

**Stan:** (as if what she means) For Christ's sake, she's only ten years old.

**Kate:** Fifteen!

**Stan:** Rubbish!

**Kate:** That routine doesn't fool me. I'm in the business...

**Stan:** (She does Shirley Temple type send up, making it gross and suggestive) --- won't you sing? --- I will for you! --- won't you dance? --- I love you true!

**Kate:** Fills with a brief suggestion of a soft-shoe and an obscene pose. Breaking. Fifteen if she's a day!

**Stan:** Ten years old. She's only this big! (indicates).

**Kate:** A dwarf! (she's still drunk) A clever dwarf! I've got the newspaper picture (scrabbled round in bed for the paper: finds it) Look at it you bastard! (shoves paper in her face).

**Stan:** I've seen it. It's a publicity picture.

**Kate:** She's sitting on your lap!

**Stan:** I can see that.

**Kate:** And you're feeding her a lollipop!

**Stan:** I know! I know!

**Kate:** Look at her face. Look at it!

**Stan:** I'm looking, I'm looking!

**Kate:** Look at those cunning goo-goo eyes gazing into yours and that little red tongue slithering out between those rosebud lips and oh so gently going lick, lick. (impersonation) Fank you, Mister, it's very kind of you to give a little lull of your lollipop!

**Stan:** You're drunk!

**Kate:** D'yer wonder I am — with all this! (throws down paper)

**Stan:** I thought we were both going on the wagon...

**Kate:** ...don't you change the subject, you bastard...!

**Stan:** You're sick. It's all in your mind.

**Kate:** (drunken dignity) All in my mind, is it? Oh yes! (laughing). Well there's more to it than a picture...

**Stan:** What do you mean?

**Kate:** (thinking) I had a visitor.

**Stan:** Who?

**Kate:** The mother! (triunphant)

**Stan:** Whose mother?

**Kate:** The dwarf's mother, stupid. The mother of little Miss Sick Up herself. So there!

**Stan:** (calm) Go on.

**Kate:** (changing tack: sentimental) A lovely lady. Really, Stan. She was. D'yer know who she reminded me of...

**Stan:** Your mother.

**Kate:** That's right, you bastard, my mother. Don't you say anything against my mother!

**Stan:** I wouldn't dream of it.

**Kate:** A lovely lady: Mrs Little Edna. Greens hornets. Little Edna. The Morgan Sisters. Said it was our routines that inspired her to get Little Edna into show.
business. And she had to work hard. Just like mother. She had to overcome all the opposition. back from the men... the bastards!

KATE: What's all this leading up to?

JOCK: I'll tell you what it's leading up to. It's leading up to men who take advantage of innocent girls.

STAN: Who are you talking about?

KATE: You. I'm talking about you. And that simpering juvenile siren. (impersonation) Ooh! Fank you Mister Laurel.

STAN: I thought you said she was innocent. Make up your mind!

KATE: Don't you tell me what to do! She was innocent — yes she was — her mother told me — we sat here together and had a few drinks and talked.

STAN: ... and had a few drinks.

KATE: (bursts out) It gets lonely here, on my own. Bloody lonely. I hate being on my own. I've told you — when I was a kid — I've told you...

STAN: Yes. You've told me...

KATE: Now's my act, but I press on.

STAN: She won't listen.

KATE: D'yer want me ter have a go at her.

STAN: She won't listen to you either.

KATE: She might. And what's the alternative? Make love.

STAN: She's a big woman. Poison her booze.

JOCK: That'd be an awful waste o' good whisky. No, let me have a go. We've got lots o' things in common, me and Kate.

STAN: Talk hard Jock.


KATE: (sings) It gives her lots of pleasure. It rarely gives her pain. If she couldn't blow her bagpipes She'd never come again.

TOGETHER: We blow and we squeeze

And we squeeze and we blow

We pump it for all we are worth.

We're often mistaken by the tourists

For the Loch Ness monster giving birth.

For — I love his bagpipes.

They fill me with delight.

I blow them every morning

And blow them every night.

But now our time is ending.

We find it sad.

That our years of blowing bagpipes

Were the finest years we had.

Mock Highland dance and bagpipe sounds. End of routine. Lights change.

JOCK: A great routine, that!

KATE: I bet that takes you back a few years.

JOCK: You and me both, Kate.

KATE: (laughing) What are you talking about — That was before my time.

JOCK: It's your style!

KATE: Aw — stick your head up your kilt!

JOCK: See what I mean.

KATE: I do it to humour you, you crook-sdden old man has been!

JOCK: How's are you, Kate?

KATE: Go play with your sporran!

JOCK: Have you looked in the mirror lately?

KATE: What do you mean?

JOCK: Tempus fugit, hen! That's greek for that's past. She wants to know the costume she'll be wearing.

Jock: 'As good as' isn't enough, Kate.

KATE: Oh, get out! Leave me alone.

JOCK: The studio's got big plans for Stan.

KATE: Stan and Kate!

JOCK: No, Kate! No Kate. They wouldn't wear it.

KATE: That's where you belong, my love. Like me. Gundagai'playing and audience applause. Kate watches. Then, suddenly...

KATE: You! Music stops! Stuff you! Stuff both of you!

JOCK: Kate!

KATE: No! I'm not giving it away! Just because it suits him. He's not going to use me! No chance!

Gundagai' suddenly loud. Kate marches off. Light change. Spot on Jock who wearily begins his act.

STAN: There y'all are! Ker-ist but you're persistent! Like you! (nods towards Kate) What's that, pal? A little the worse for wear? Me? Aren't we all! I'm no too happy about you. I can tell ya! Anyway, as you're here: did you catch the one about the Squatter's Daughter? Her name was little Kate.

KATE: She gave more than she oughter When they took her on a date But from Bundaberg to Dallas She never had much luck Cause you can't rely on tellers Who only want a bed for the night, clean sheets and porridge in the morning.

Brightening. But we can't be sentimental, can we pal? We've got to change with the times, haven't we. I mean, Jesus, Christ, it's 1924. Me, I'm going into the promotion business (takes off sporran and kilt, puts on trousers. Tides himself up. Puts on glasses. Lights a cigar. No longer a caricature, but a typical business man: talks the while) We Scots know when ter change our image, yer ken. We move with the times. You'll find us everywhere all over the world, shaping lives, controlling careers. We're particularly big in the entertainment industry. Artists are of course creative people, and they need to be able to devote themselves fully to that creativity. They need people like us. To smooth the way for them, you understand. Iron out money problems. Personal problems...

Light on Stan. Smiling knowingly. Wouldn't you agree, Stanley?

STAN: Whatever you say Jock.

JOCK: James.

STAN: Sorry, James.

JOCK: Jock's just a nickname. You understand?

STAN: Sure.

PAUSE.

JOCK: Ready to start shooting, Stanley?

STAN: Just about.

The crew ready to go.

JOCK: Everything set.

PAUSE.

STAN: Well, I'll just er... and — oh, by the way, er Kate wants to know what costume she'll be wearing.

JOCK: (cold) Who wants to know what?

STAN: She wants to know the costume she'll be wearing in the picture.

JOCK: What picture?

STAN: You know what picture James...

JOCK: ...McTavish.

STAN: Mr. McTavish.

JOCK: (Detained) the picture we start tomorrow.

JOCK: The picture we start Stanley. You and I. And that doesn't include Kate.
Stan: Look Mr. McTavish. Sir, Kate and I had a long talk last night. We think it’s important we go on working together.

Jock: Important for whom?...

Stan: For me as much as anyone. I think I need a partner.

Jock: You’re right. A business partner. A working partner — somebody like Oliver Hardy — but you don’t need Kate. I don’t need Kate. Nobody needs Kate. In fact Kate’s absence would be a positive advantage as far as this or any other picture you were in would be concerned.

Stan: I think that’s going too far! She’s not that bad.

Jock: She’s a menace! She lies, she boozes, she boasts! She’s a hater. I think, deep down — and I’m sorry to say this to you kid — she hates you.

Stan: I’ll kill you! You’re not going to be in it!

Jock: It’s going to be me! Me! On my own!

Jock: I’ll kill you first.

Jock: I’m going to dump you!

Jock: No you’re going! We’re finished!

Jock: I’ll finish you!

She claws his face. He smacks her. They pummel each other and roll away exhausted.

Stan: We start shooting tomorrow. I’ll be there at that studio bright and early! Alone!

Kate: You won’t make that picture without me.

Stan: But I can’t make it with you. Even if I wanted to. If you turn up they’ll just cancel.

Kate: No they won’t. Not with all their money tied up and the picture ready to go. Sets built, extras hired. They can’t afford it. And you’ve got a contract.

Jock: Stan: For pity’s sake, Kate. I can’t. I’ll be with you all the time. At the studio. On the set. Stan: I’ll have the police throw you out!

Kate: O.K. But I’ll just come back. (Builds) I’ll keep coming back. I’ll be everywhere you go. On location. At all the parties. And I’ll yell after you.

Jock: Stan: You’ll what?

Kate: I’ll yell after you. In the streets. In restaurants. I’ll follow you everywhere you go. I’ll shout out of every window and I know about you. Mr. Stanley Jefferson. I’H’ll wreck you!

Kate: Crickey!

Kate: (with amusement) Contortionist?

Stan: (sadly) Masochist.

Jock: (laughs) Light change to spot on Jock.

Jock: (harder) Light change to spot on Jock.

Jock: Could you come over here a minute? I’d like a word with you.

Jock: (smiles) Light change. Film music.

Jock: Good morning.

Jock: (to Kate) I’m very terribly sorry. I am. I do love him —

Kate: (sadly) (tends to help her)

Kate: (softly) Crickey.

During the following scene Jock begins to transform into his Laurel and Hardy alter-ego. Stan into his Laurel of Lafayette and Hardy, bringing out the costume, combing the hair up, etc. The Hardy costume is also brought.

Kate: I’m most terribly sorry.

Jock: She’s my partner!

Stan: You’re right. A business partner, a working partner — somebody like Babe Hardy. Laurel. Even that’s a millstone round Stan’s neck for years. You say you love him... (Kate turns sharply to look at her)... You say you love him... (Builds) I’ll turn that picture on you, Stan... no... listen to me... you say you love him but what you’re doing now is keeping him from making a living. Wait until you think I won’t be able to get another comedian. It won’t work. Kate. I mean it. Kate: What about Stan’s contract?

Jock: (slowly) Disjointed! I do. I love him. I do. He’s lost without me — you depend on me, Stan — we’re good for each other — you know that, you know you do.

Silence.

All right. O.K. Get up and goes. Jock takes torn contract from Stan and hands him a new one. They shake hands. Stan watches Kate go. (softly) Crickey.
Stan: A lot of it. When you start out, you need women. You know that.

Jock: 'Aye!

Stan: The drive’s so strong. All that creative energy — and the sex — they’re the same thing.

Jock: Oh, absolutely!

Stan: Mind you, she seduced me!

Jock: Is that a fact?

Stan: I wanted her to, of course. I needed security.

Jock: Getting it regular?

Stan: That’s it.

Pause.

Jock: I was the same.

Stan: Were you?

Jock: Oh aye. In my performing days. A regular ram. Opening night and closing performance in particular.

Stan: I know what you mean.

Jock: I’d rush out and shag anything that moved. (pause) Though I could do without if I needed to (pause). Sometimes I found that being randy gave me performance a finer edge, do you know what I mean?

Stan: Playing off your frustration.

Jock: Aye, promising yer prick a poke. (pause) She’ll have to go.

Stan: What?

Jock: Kate. She’ll have to go.

Stan: (looking round nervously) But I thought...

Jock: No, no, Stanley. As we agreed. Right away. Out of the country. You won’t be safe until she’s completely out of your hair.

Stan: Perhaps you’re right. (Shivering) The way she looked at me then, before she went.


Stan: Well, she’s still got relatives there.

Jock: Has she now?

Stan: Oh yes. She’s even got a husband there. Somewhere. A proper one.

Jock: (mock astonishment) You don’t say.

Stan: I’ve known for years.

Jock: Why, she’ll probably be welcomed back with open arms.

Stan: More than likely.

Jock: They’re a very close-knit people: the Australians.

Stan: So I’ve heard. They look at each other and laugh guiltily, realising the ingenuous game they’ve been playing.

The transformation has taken place. Outwardly, Stan is now the complete Laurel of Laurel and Hardy.

Jock: (as Hardy) Stanley. You are basically the innocent victim of circumstances.

Stan: (as Laurel) I am, aren’t I?

Jock: If you hurt people, if you upset them — none of it’s intentional.

Stan: In fact, I’m always doing my damnest to help people.

Jock: Of course you are.

Stan: People don’t understand.

Jock: Now isn’t that the truth?

Stan: You’re all heart. Ollie.

Jock: (as Hardy) You too, Stanley. Stan goes off stage. Jock watches him and then goes to the Hardy outfit and transforms himself into Oliver. As he does so he talks to the audience.

Jock: (as Hardy) He wasn’t! He had more wives than I had hot dinners! Some of ’em he married more than once: up and down like a yo-yo. Socialites, actresses, singers: a different one on his arm every year — or so it seemed. Strong-minded women for the most part: they all had a bit of Kate in them, I guess. (Pause) But, not too much. He was careful about that. You can’t really blame him, pal, can you? Not after her. Mind you, there were still rows and fights and battle but on a much more domestic level. If you take my meaning: there was never any artistic conflict. After Kate, Stan made sure of that. Doubly sure!

Himself

He finishes himself. Looks in mirror, a few Hardy expressions. Starts to leave stage.

Kate: It’s lovely — and I say this very very sincerely — It’s lovely to be back here with you all in Australia again.

Jock’s voice: (from audience) How much did they pay?

Kate: (sharply) What?

Jock’s voice: How much did they pay yer tae pass of home?

Kate: (shading eyes to peer into audience) Who the hell’s that?

Jock’s voice: Never you mind! Answer the question.

Kate: I came back for a working holiday!

Jock’s voice: Call what you’re doin’ work!

Kate: Bloody hard work, sport! (still peering) Who is that?

Jock’s voice: Come on, how much did they pay yer?

Kate: Not enough! I can tell you that!

Jock’s voice: They conned yer, didn’t they?

Kate: (almost to herself) Rooked. Yes. I was rooked.

Jock’s voice: Yer sold out, Kate; that’s what yer did!

Kate: (realising) Oh, it’s you. (Pause) Yes. I suppose I did. It happens. You do things you don’t mean. I thought I just come back for a holiday. But it’s a long way — and when you’ve travelled this far you realise just how tired you are.

Jock’s voice: Well, it’s certainly not a very lively performance yer givin’ the noo!

Kate: Coming from you, that’s rich!

Jock’s voice: I changed with the times, hen. You’re back where you started. And you’re not much good on yer own, are yer?

Kate: I don’t need him. I got along alone before I met him — and I’ll get along alone now!

Jock: (very coolly) Aye! And the sooner the better. I reckon! (chuckles)

Kate: Very witty! Go smoke yer bagpipes!

Jock’s voice: Tsk, tsk, do I detect a note of bitterness?

Kate: (sarcastically) Bitterness? What have I got to be bitter about? I was treated with every consideration. It doesn’t matter now? (Pause) Do you know why I did finally agree to come home?

Jock’s voice: Why?

Kate: Because Stanley, that little shit, — him!

Lights up on Stan in costume. He gives a friendly ‘Laurel’ smile and wave.

— he said — after all those years he said it at last — that if I came back to Australia and (hesitates) sorted out my problems...

Jock’s voice: ...got a divorce...

Kate: ...never you mind what — but if I sorted them out he’d marry me.

Jock’s voice: And you believed him?

Kate: Long pause: Kate thinks.

Jock: (honest with herself) No. Of course I didn’t. I just wanted to. It was a way of keeping my pride. What a finale! When I got back Mother had hung on: they’d put her in a home: she died two days after I got off the boat. (Pause) A week later I heard Stan had got married in Los Angeles...

Phone rings. Stan mimes picking it up and listening: The dim Stan Laurel of Laurel.

Stan: Yes. This is the residence of Mr. Stanley Laurel, Mr. Stanley Laurel of Hollywood. Mr. Stanley Laurel speaking. (Pause) What? Sydney Australia? Would you repeat that name, please? (Pause) No, sorry. I don’t know anyone of that name. I don’t know anyone in Sydney, Australia. No. I’m sorry. I can’t accept the call! (Pause phone down)

Jock as Oliver Hardy has come down on the stage where Kate stands.

Jock: (Hardy’s voice) So there you are, my good woman. On your own. No more Stanley.

Kate: Gone.

Jock: Claimed by the films and the future. Sensible fellow, walks past Kate towards Stan. Stanley are you ready?

Stan: Yes Ollie! You’re darn tootin’ I am!

Jock: (brushing him down) Come then...

Stan: (holding back) Ollie?

Jock: Yes, Stanley.

Stan: Do I know anyone called Kate Laurel?

Jock: Kate Laurel? I should say not!

Stan: Yes, I thought I didn’t; did I?

Jock: Kate Laurel indeed!

They smile at each other and shake hands.

Jock: Come Stanley we have work to do, you and I. And just remember (plucking back at Kate) This is another fine mess I’ve got you out of...

Kate: They exit to ‘Cuckoo Waltz’

Kate: Is left on stage. Single spot. ‘Cuckoo Waltz’ fades.

Kate: Gone. (sad laugh) Gone with Hardy. Slow blackout.

“Gone with Hardy” was originally a one act play. It underwent first major changes at the 1978 Playwrights Conference, including the extension into two acts. Further changes were made for the Melbourne Theatre Company production. I have been helped immensely for the Nimrod production by Terence Clarke, who directed it for the Playwrights Conference, and further rewrites have occurred, though mainly confined to Act 2. Hence it is Act 2 as performed at Nimrod published here. We have also called Kate by her first name, Nellie, for the sake of its turn of the century feeling, but she is still called Kate here as in the already published Act 1.

— Richard Wherrett

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Bill Beresford

Melbourne has been muttering and snarling for some years about its relationship with the Australian Opera, with a list of 'poor relation' complaints as long as your arm — most of them justified. Then the 'New Deal' was introduced that has swept away most of those complaints so successfully that the new joint subscription series with the Victoria State Opera and including two Sutherland operas, is sold out.

One of the complaints and one that caused a great deal of frustration in which, I, as a journalist shared, was that there was no one in Melbourne — or in the other states either, representing the Australian Opera except during the actual season. There was nobody to give one information, nobody to whom a complaint could be made and no contact with the company of any kind.

That problem has been solved triumphantly in the person of the very urbane, experienced and efficient Bill Beresford whose official title is that of Melbourne Administrator of the Australian Opera but whose bailiwick extends to a roving commission around Canberra, Adelaide, Perth and, to a lesser extent, Tasmania.

Bill left Australia twenty five years ago. As he says, "In those days, there was no real opera here and no subsidies. Now, particularly since the Sydney Opera House was built, and there are opera houses being built in Melbourne, Perth and Brisbane, we have far better opera facilities than most other parts of the world — or we will have. After all, America with its 178 million people has nothing to compare with what we will have with 14 million and we'll have more opera houses per head of population than anywhere else in the world except for Germany."

In the UK Bill Beresford got a job with the Daily Express, working in Glasgow, Manchester and London. "I had always been opera mad and went to it every night when it was on in Glasgow. I had met the resident producer of Covent Garden when I was in Manchester and one day, what I can only describe as a voice from heaven, told me to go to Covent Garden and get a job. By a combination of sheer effrontery, poise and reasonable knowledge of the opera world, I conned a job as public relations officer, and stayed with the Royal for thirteen years."

After so long a stretch Bill thought he was due for a change and set up his own PR firm and freelanced for ten years working as an entrepreneur, agent and publicity officer. He brought dance companies to England from South Korea, from India and from Burma. He handled the publicity for Dame Margot Fonteyn for a film and managed what he thought was brilliant coup. He threw a huge party and borrowed a tame anteater named Bruce from Harrods for the occasion, who absolutely charmed the media who photographed him in every conceivable way. Next morning every paper had a front page picture of Bruce but not one carried a photo of Dame Margot. Bill's face was redder than red. "One can" he says sadly, "be too clever!"

What precisely is the tall and tactful Mr Beresford's role in the Australian Opera's Melbourne offshoot. Some people seem to see him as the head of the complaints department. "Certainly I'm here to be helpful to all opera lovers and to those with valid complaints but really some of the complaints I've heard are absurd. Some people have complained that their seats are one row behind the ones they had before or a couple of seats across the aisle. Certainly, with the current brochure there have been anomalies and the big mistake made was not to tell everyone, even old subscribers, it was definitely to be first
International

Bayreuth Ring

William Shoubridge

In terms of the arts, it doesn't take long for last year's "outrageous and controversial" to become this year's standard procedure. In specific terms of Wagnerian music drama, what was once an "epoch making affrontery" at Bayreuth in 1976, is now in 1978 the signal form of performing Wagner elsewhere. It is the new style.

The raison d'etre of Bayreuth has always been to explore Wagner, to keep him alive from age to age. Wieland Wagner, the Master's grandson swept away all the literal obfusc of Cosima Wagner's pettifying naturalism after the war with his radical bare-stage abstractions of psychological drama, but by 1974 even that was looking rather tired. It was obvious that Wieland's style had been tried and tested but it was time for some fresh air, a different cast of mind was needed.

Perhaps Wieland had he lived could have done that, but he died in 1967. His brother Wolfgang took over the reins but Wolfgang's strength was always administrative (he admits it himself). However Wolfgang could always spot the born raconteur and though he has certainly has it now with Patrice Chéreau's "historical allegory" production of The Ring.

With this Ring, instead of gloomy, howling expanses of bare stage populated with statues, we have realistic sets (and real horses), great believable characters, gripping drama and Gods in frock coats. What Chéreau as director (with Richard Peduzzi as designer) and Pierre Boulez came up with in the new centenary Ring production in 1976 had audiences in pitched battles inside and outside the Festspielhaus, tin whistles to drown out Boulez's quicksilver, lyrical reading of the score and vehement boos whenever the stage action outraged, which was often. Many times were the police called in to quell the riots.

Now in 1978, demure audiences are realizing that unexpected as it may be, this new Ring is a production of truly original thought and Chéreau's staging follows its line of logic right through to the very end. This is a Ring, though it had earlier caused outrage was not created to do so. It has forced audiences to acknowledge in The Ring the presence of something more disturbing than a grand musical adventure of mythological gods in Nordic legend, it shows the pathways of power, the devouring momentum of greed, the place of personal endeavour within a vast social maelstrom. It is an intrinsically political production. Power portrayed literally on the stage as a huge iron wheel also allegorical I suppose of Fate is the driving force of all the sudden nervous violence that propels the action.

It is historical in the sense that Chéreau has

Die Walkure III AKT 1977
defined it as the history of the German (or Western European) people since Wagner’s death to the present day. It is allegorical in the sense that parts of it are clearly labelled as representative (Wotan is the power dealer in a frock coat. Siegfried is the gullible working class dressed in a khaki boiler suit) but the whole production flashes through so many facets of theatrical production. There is mime, there is cabaret grotesquerie, there is almost farcical cartoon strip (witness Siegfried’s battle with the Dragon), there is Expressionism in the forging of the sword and Impressionism in the meeting between Siegfried and the Wanderer. It sounds like a veritable rag bag, but it is all there, dictated in the music and libretto.

The very opening is still enough to cause a fit of the vapours from some. Rather than a bevy of female aquatics at the bottom of the Rhine we are presented with three females looking for all the world like the cigarette girls out of Carmen lounging about on the steps of a huge hydroelectric station; Alberich the evil dwarf steals a vital component of machinery and the chase is on from there. Alberich’s realm of Nibelheim is a black void lit only by a harsh lamp swinging over the stage, bringing uneasy reminders of the search lights of Auschwitz. The Valkaries’ Rock looks like a burnt out building in fire bombed Dresden while the territory of the Gibichung vassals in Gotterdammerung is a row of towerings tenements out of which a cluch of peasants creep to rake over the coals of a demolished Valhalla.

But what still angers people about this Ring is the violence (they are calling Chereau the Sam Peckinpah of opera). It angers because there is a physical urgency about it, everyone who knows about that piece of machinery’s power becomes possessed with a blood lust (Siegfried for example in Gotterdammerung is not merely stabbed once by Hagen but repeatedly, and his blood splatters all over the stage in great gollops). It would seem that the machinery, like atomic energy can be used to power the world but it can also become the agent of total annihilation.

Chereau has reigned in all the vast woolly parts of The Ring into a huge tapestry of power mania, greed, revenge, innocence, personal freedom, bravery and cowardice. There are many “contradictory” parts in this Ring, but there is a fuller and profounder comprehension of human behaviour, violent or noble, underlying the characters and often simultaneously; a seriously limited scope of time scale but ultimately a sense of huge forces and vast issues portrayed as epic adventures; a work that aggravates, overcomes and deepens awareness and one whose argument leaves one ringed with associations and parallels even as one watches it. For me at least, who was getting ready to dismiss Wagner forever as a bore, it brings to life those images that surely must have been in the composer’s mind as he battled to bring them to life.
In a good many ways, the Australian Opera production of Benjamin Britten's *A Midsummer Night's Dream* which ended the company's 1978 winter season at the Sydney Opera House was the crowning glory of a season that had previously produced more than its fair share of artistic triumphs.

Predictably, if sadly, it drew a certain amount of published criticism in the letters columns of the daily press; and the ultra-conservative subscribers stomped out of performances in their scores throughout the season. No matter: from just about any point of view it is better for opera-goers to stomp out of the new and the different than for them to doze quietly and snugly through an unadulterated diet of standard repertory fare. As a peer group, they must surely be the most resistant to new repertory blood of any body of patrons of the performing arts save perhaps the traditional balletomane.

In partial defence of their sensitivities, it must be admitted that musical language evolves much more rapidly than verbal language; hence, there is an almost inevitable tendency even among experienced opera-goers to prefer to probe the depths of an old friend in a familiar idiom rather than embark on the beginnings of a friendship with a new chum in the repertory. There is no language barrier between GBS and David Williamson, for instance, but Wagner and Verdi and Puccini — each of whom spoke quite a different musical language at the turn of the 20th century — are worlds removed from Janacek or Britten or Stravinsky, all of whom are now undeniably "classic" opera composers.

All this amounts, I suppose, to a plea to the Australian Opera not to take undue notice of the dozens who stomp out of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. Clearly, the only way to cure this kind of reaction due to unfamiliarity is exposure supplemented by repeated exposure; and it is regrettable to note that *A Midsummer Night's Dream* is not scheduled for further performances anywhere in Australia during 1979. Given the heavy dosage of repeats apparently forced on the AO by economic conditions next year, it is extraordinary that this production to fly Oberon in on a lateral swing this feet never touched the stage until Act III. Moshinsky made much comic use of a mid-stage pool containing real water, particularly in handling the earthly lovers misenamored by Puck's inefficiency. They fell into it, walked into it unwares, leapt over it, splashed each other, used it as a reflecting glass; the cumulative effect of their antics lent particular aptness to Puck's "Lord, what fools these mortals be!" delivered from the upstage ramparts as he surveyed the mayhem below.

Puck himself was made into a Dickensian, Chaplinesque, tramp in top hat and black cloak: the rude mechanics beautifully realised as the none too bright earthy individuals they are; the boys chorus usually placed as far front as possible when it had to sing, right on the brink of mayhem below.

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opportunities to keep things moving which exist; it was also the most pleasing vocal performance I have yet heard from him. Combined with his Flaminio in Scarlati’s The Triumph of Honor, which I saw in Brisbane early in August, it indicates a significant development in the level of Ewer’s artistry.

Finally, mention must be made of William Reid’s conducting stint. Reid has long since demonstrated a particular affinity with the works of Benjamin Britten through his excellent performances of Albert Herring in recent years; and he consolidated that impression with his expert handling of the Dream. His, finally, was the musical co-ordinating force that drew together all the disparate elements of this intrinsically fragmented opera and moulded them into an overall unity of great theatrical effectiveness.

Puccini’s Madame Butterfly, which opened this year’s major Sydney winter opera season on June 14 with Leona Mitchell in the title role, returned early in October with Joan Carden making her debut in the part — and a very auspicious debut it was. She made some glorious sounds, and projected considerable dramatic impact even as far as the dress circle where I was sitting, no mean achievement in the Bennelong Point opera theatre.

The major regional opera season of the month was in Brisbane, where the Queensland Opera Company mounted overlapping productions of Gounod’s Faust and Bizet’s The Pearl Fishers. All round, the more successful was The Pearl Fishers, though the most interesting individual performances were in the minor roles of Faust.

John Wilson’s surefooted production of Pearl Fishers, to excellent evocative designs by Graham Maclean, efficiently exploited the opportunities to keep things moving which exist within this definitely flawed work; the stage picture was suitably exotic, the sounds of the chorus excellent.

Sally Robertson was a fine Leila. Yusef Kayrooz sang Nadir nicely, though his acting left a good deal to be desired (nevertheless it was a considerable improvement on his recent Masked Ball in Canberra). Paul Neal was a suitably sonorous Zurga.

The night I saw it, the Faust was not as effective overall. I rather liked the use of projections carefully synchronised with the orchestra both to represent Faust’s vision of Marguerite in the opening scene and to portray her redemption and ascent to heaven in the final one. Elsewhere, Peter Cooke’s designs were mostly adequate, but not up to the best we have seen from him.

John Thompson’s direction worked effectively enough in the more intimate scenes, but left occasional blanks in the crowd scenes and failed to make plausible the church scene, with Mephistopheles popping in and out more like a human yo-yo than a supernatural presence.

Bergomask with a magnificently comic and energetic dance solo of indeterminate origin but immense effect. This was, overall, Ewer’s most original and effective dramatic portrayal I have seen; it was also the most pleasing vocal performance I have yet heard from him. Combined with his Flaminio in Scarlati’s The Triumph of Honor, which I saw in Brisbane early in August, it indicates a significant development in the level of Ewer’s artistry.

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The five ballets in the Australian Dance Theatre's workshops season were all by members of the company, and vindicate Jonathan Taylor's policy of cultivating the talent available there. Presented with flair, technical assurance and as finished productions, they showed a wide range of imagination, movement and style.

Joseph Scoglio's *Songs of Innocence* was the major work, attractive to look at, not lacking in serious thought, and danced superbly by the cast of five. Without any special claims to originality, the ballet is a suite of nine dances to parts of Bach's "Magnificat" — abstract interpretations of the music, with a suggestion of divine-human relationship in a couple of places, most notably in the pas de deux for John Nobbs and Darryl Phillips. The title is misleading, as there is no discernible connection with William Blake's work of the same name, unless it lies in the joyousness of the finale.

If Alain Israel is given more opportunity he could develop into an important choreographer, for he has imaginative strength, a sensuous apprehension of music and a growing sense of formal structure. He needs more practice in using these attributes so that he can overcome a certain tentativeness of approach. So much is clear from *Intrusion*, in which a protagonist, danced with dramatic clarity by Tony Westwood, climbs down a web-like rope ladder, hung centre-stage, to defend himself behind the fragile rubber strands which hold it to the ground. Four intruders attack him, destroying his shelter and leaving him dead, hanging limply from his escape route, the ladder. The eerie sonorities of Ligeti's music (movements 2 and 5 from the String Quartet) and Robert Last's lighting are essential to the ballet's effectiveness; its weakness is in the movement for the intruders, which degenerates at times into melodramatic gestures of menace.

In *The Room*, Pamela Buckman has developed a promising idea from last year's workshop, when she made a solo for Scoglio expressing frustration and boredom, but her additions only partly succeed. In the first, Nobbs expresses despair at the death of his beloved; in the second Israel as an old man remembers himself as a young one, Westwood. The choreography, individual in its alternation of stillness and broad, sweeping gesture, is interesting enough to exist without the framework of the stories, and each solo would be better on a bare stage, as unencumbered reactions to the music.

The *Three Brides* is Julia Cotton's excursion into the world of the Symbolists, especially Jan Toorop, in which a young man finds Death the most demanding of the three ladies he is wooing. Pretentious to a degree, the ballet is saved if at all by the performers: Claire Stonier deliciously pre-Raphaelite as the young virgin, John Nobbs, overcoming a faint ridiculousness of costume, as Death, Julia Blaikie hauntingly lyrical as the third bride, who is left to lament over the body of Alain Israel, the intense, bewildered suitor. The music, from the film *Performance*, is in continual argument with Michael Pearce's medieval costumes.

The generally serious tone of the programme was enlivened by Blake Brown's *Happy Hooker*, in which a jaunty Sylvia Yamada (or a slinky Julia Blaikie) provokes and gets the better of Tony Westwood, whose bar she hip-swing into, and the choreographer himself or Joseph Scoglio, whoever is dancing the role of the stud. All good fun, if a little repetitive, and danced in the right spirit to Leo Kottke's thudding guitar.
Patrick — holes just too big

The three most recent Australian films to be taken seriously have been *The Chant of Jimmy Blacksmith*, *Newsfront* and *Mouth to Mouth*. No three could be more dissimilar, but they were clearly made with a total commitment to art as well as a hopeful look at the market.

*Patrick* is different. *Patrick* is a frankly commercial film in the psychokinetic range of *Carrie*, *Omens One* and *Two*, *The Exorcist*, *The Phantom of the Paradise* etc but made with less money and, compared at least with *Carrie* and *Phantom*, a good deal less finesse.

The critic P. P. McGuiness writing in the *National Times* expressed the view that the people of Australia would not be happy to think that their tax money — which is what the Australian Film Commission and the various State sponsored film corporations spend — was going to movies like *Patrick*. In other words films which include some public funds in their financial arrangements should aim at quality.

In this connection, *Patrick* is a one off. It is a spinechiller, or it would chill the spine if it had a plot which hung together and was not quite so silly. For instance, when the head doctor at the private hospital where *Patrick* lies on a bed, wired for sound but little else, wishes to do away with *Patrick* — who has become an embarrassment — he approaches him with a giant syringe full of some lethal mixture and failing to make contact with *Patrick's* body substitutes a visitor’s chair for the syringe and flails away at *Patrick's* head, to no effect.

When all he had to do was pull a plug, thus cutting off the electricity that kept *Patrick* alive, or at least half alive.

In films of this type there are always great plot holes around which the imagination has to make its way, or all enjoyment is lost. But the plot-holes in *Patrick* are just too big. To start at the beginning, there is *Patrick* lying on his bed, his great grey-blue eyes, set in a fringe of dark lashes, open, but not showing so much as a flicker of human intelligence, his limbs, guessed to be shapely, hidden under a sheet. The new nurse arrives — *Susan Penhaligon*, better known to British audiences for television performances. She is an appealing actress but the script turns her into a ninny. She believes that she can "get through" to *Patrick*, while his response is to spit. It is his only response, to anything...or almost.

*Nurse Penhaligon* does not spend all her time in the hospital, though her mind is never far from *Patrick*. She chums up with a neurosurgeon (*Bruce Barry*) and seems prepared to swap him for the husband from whom she is estranged, played debonairly by *Rod Mullinar*. But her particular interest in the surgeon is in getting a second opinion on *Patrick's* condition.

In the meantime she has made certain physical experiments with *Patrick*. Not to put it too delicately, she finds out, by slipping her hand under the bedclothes, that *Patrick's* sexual urges are not as played out as the rest of him. He falls in love with her and this brings on the homicidal impulse that landed him in hospital in the first place — he threw a heater into the bath where his mother was frolicking with her boy friend.

*Patrick* has supernatural powers and uses them against both the husband and the would-be lover. He arranges for the latter to get an attack of the bends in his own swimming pool, in an incident that comes right to the edge of farce.

The film was produced by Anthony Ginnane and Richard Franklin and directed by Franklin. It is hard to say in the face of all this silliness whether the cast is performing well or not. They are possibly just doing as they are told. But it can be said that Robert Helpmann once again (as in *The Mango Tree*) grossly overdoes it. Dr Coppelius rides again.
When Wiener Blut (Vienna Blood) is performed or recorded or broadcast it is invariably described as being by Johann Strauss Jr, despite the fact that this is an operetta that Strauss did not write. The music is all by or derived from Strauss, but it was put together by another musician, Adolf Muller Jr, when the seventy-year-old Strauss felt too tired even to rummage among his older melodies to fulfil an operetta commission. The justification for describing this arrangement of existing Strauss music as an operetta by him is that the composer approved of its being done by Muller and, presumably, had no violent objection to the text by Victor Leon and Leo Stein. Strauss himself was dead before the work reached the stage in Vienna on what would have been his seventy-fourth birthday. After a false start it was a success and, unlike most such patched-together works, it has retained a place in the operetta repertory. Muller did his work with skill, in fact, not merely selecting a string of waltz tunes but putting together some of Strauss's earlier music, most of it forgotten at the time, with skilfully calculated contrasts and with the ability to build a sequence of melodies into sustained scenes and sound. The music is, of course, the principal attraction of the set; and it is very idiomatically conducted and played and sung with spirit and a sense of fun that make it uncommonly vivid. Some of the singing is not absolutely true in pitch, but this occurs mostly in the comic parts where some exaggeration of style and characterisation probably contribute to this effect. The recording is made in stereo/quadrophonic compatible sound and is full, robust and reverberant.

Among a batch of five recordings of ballet music there are three that I can recommend and two that have defects either in musical quality or in performance. Louis Fremaux, chief conductor-designate of the Sydney Symphony Orchestra conducts the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra in a conflation of the two suites from Walton's Facade and, on the other side, Walton's arrangement of music by J.S. Bach in the form of a ballet suite entitled The Wise Virgins (HMV stereo/quad compatible, reissued by the World Record Club QR 04234). Walton's Facade music is among the most durable of all 20th century compositions. It preserves a happy balance between the amusement of parody and the possession of ample musical substance and invention in its own right. This performance of it is not outstandingly brilliant or precise, but the tempos are well judged and the music is presented in a convincing spirit and in abundant sound. The Wise Virgins was a ballet score from the start, unlike the original Facade, but has never rivalled the success of the Ashton ballet set to the first suite from Facade in effectiveness or popularity. It is a masterly piece of scoring, however, and does no disservice to the reputations of either Bach or Walton. I doubt whether Charles Mackerras's arrangement of Sullivan tunes for John Cranko's ballet Pineapple Poll will prove quite as durable as Facade; but I should expect it to have a currency at least rivalling that of Rosenthal's Gâteau Parisienne ballet suite based on Offenbach. It has a similar kind of exuberance in orchestration and surpasses it in the ingenuity with which it combines tunes from different Gilbert and Sullivan operas or reveals new aspects of their charm or buoyancy. Mackerras himself conducts the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra in a recording originally issued in 1962 and now dusted off and freshened up with no loss of character. I recommend this strongly to anyone who has not yet heard it; and Mackerras's notes identify in general terms the sources of each section of the ballet so that you need not be teased by the problem of working out which Gilbert and Sullivan work he has drawn on at any given moment. When Mackerras first produced this score in 1951 it announced the high order of talent of this young Australian musician to the world in general. Mackerras has since amply confirmed the promise of Pineapple Poll, though he has chosen to do it more in terms of conducting than in continuing to work as arranger and composer. The only other ballet score put together by him that I know draws on the music of Verdi. These days he is more likely to be using his skill in orchestral dovetailing in trying to arrive at the final solution of a score by Janacek or some other composer whose work is still to gain its full measure of recognition. CBS has brought out one of Leopold Stokowski's last recordings, a version of Aurora's Wedding, the ballet score extracted by Daughley for reasons of economy from Tchaikovsky's The Sleeping Beauty. Even in its shortened form this Tchaikovsky score is one of the glories of traditional ballet; and the sumptuous effects and contrasts of the music suit Stokowski's unrivalled feeling for orchestral colour in this performance with the National Philharmonic Orchestra (CBS SBR 235900).

I would be less inclined to rush to acquire excerpts from Glere's ballet The Red Poppy, not because there are any serious defects in the performance by the Bolshoi Theater Orchestra under Yuri Fayer (Melodiya/AM 043D 7566) but because so much of the music is heavy, shortlived in invention and bogus in feeling. The Russian Sailors' Dance is the best known number in the score and deserves to be by a good margin. There is nothing wrong with the quality of the ballet score, Les Petits Riens, which the young Mozart wrote for no less a person than Noverre in Paris in 1778; and the ballet music that Mozart wrote for his opera Idomeneo three years later is of a standard nothing less than magnificent. Unfortunately, the combination of these two scores on a record made by the Vienna Chamber Orchestra conducted by Philippe Entremont (CBS SBR 23519) is not particularly inviting solely because of the limpness of the performances themselves.
The great revealed — for Christmas reading

For Christmas and holiday reading biography has many rewards. It appeals to the instinct for gossip while implying that such gossip is important. It reassures us about the ordinariness of the great while romantically evoking their extraordinariness. For those with ambitions it allows vicarious indentification with success, as well as heartening, if strained, comparisons with their own progress so far. An uncrtical journalistic biography, such as Ruth Jordan’s *Nocturne: A life of Chopin* (Constable, £10.95) is doubly satisfying in that it does not require serious appreciation of the subject’s genius. This is in accordance with Kingsley Amis’ dictum that for hangover reading (another important consideration for Christmas) the very great should be treated carefully. At such times you do not want to be reminded of your inferiority to the man next door, let alone Milton. (On the same principle, he suggests, you should avoid Mozart, restricting your hangover listening to someone who is merely a towering genius.)

And Chopin is an ideal subject. Unquestionably great yet satisfyingly inadequate in other ways. Romantic, consumptive, admired and worshipped yet reticent about public performances. A stirring success story with a suitably pathetic downturn at the end. Ms Jordan’s biography claims to revise the image of him as an ethereal “sylph of the piano”, yet manages to retain the sentimental, romantic feeling about his life. Perhaps he really was like that — from Marie Wodzińska to George Sand to Jane Stirling is an odd progression. The new “plain, earthy” Chopin depends largely on Jordan’s acceptance of the authenticity of the controversial letters to Countess Delphina Potocka. She reproduces large parts of them and their explicit and unsophisticated sexuality is startling, even in the context of this sympathetic biography.

For opera-lovers not mad keen on reading Hutchinson has two volumes in the Metropolitan Opera Guild Composer Series, *Verdi and Puccini* (£9.95 each). Again the texts (by Paul Hume and William Weaver respectively) are not critical considerations of the work, although the composers and their audiences are allowed to make some sort of assessment (Verdi getting thirty eight curtain calls, the entire last act as an encore, etc). The books are very handsome, richly illustrated, and with complete descriptions of the repertory as appendices. The texts are factual and anecdotal, and the publishers have thoughtfully summarised them in the picture-captions for the semi-literate. Perfect presents.

Valery and Galina Panov are famous in the West among people who have no interest in ballet. Their attempts to leave the Soviet Union, the two years physical and mental persecution they suffered there, and the massive public campaign in the West which saved their lives and finally forced the Russian authorities to allow them to leave are told from a personal point of view in the last part of *To Dance*, by Valery in collaboration with George Feifer (W H Allen). This is probably the most important book in this selection. Panov talks about his life as if he were a romantic little boy hero in a children’s story. He tells of his confused and rebellious childhood; his passion for dancing, apparently not shared by many established dancers when he was young; his rise to become one of the greatest of his generation of new, athletic, male dancers; his fairy-tale meeting with Galina, when he realised she was The One after a long search; and finally the long time of trial, with a happy ending at Tel Aviv airport. “I felt so happy I had to dance.”

The book shows its origins, told in a series of long conversations between Panov and Feifer, and it has some of the faint feeling of self-indulgence which attend such autobiography, but Panov is sincere, unpretentious and really does have a fascinating story to tell. It is not only a book for ballet lovers. If you get it as a gift don’t start reading it or you’ll end up keeping it.

To continue this list of the great revealed is *The Theatres of George Devine*, by Irving Wardle (Jonathan Cape, £12.80). This is an excellent account of the work of a man little appreciated outside England. His work with a succession of different groups of people — OUDS, Molesy, the London Theatre Studio, the Old Vic Centre — led to the founding of the English Stage Company. The influence of the ESC at the Royal Court in the last twenty years is well known, but Devine himself was in some ways in the background. As Wardle says “While other people at the Court were making their reputations, he was minding the shop.”

Charles Schwartz’s biography *Cole Porter* is now published in its British edition (W H Allen, £18.20) and is an obvious present for those interested, or those keen on his successful biography of Gershwin.

Finally, for children, are two books which might cater for a developing interest in the theatre. The Facts About a Theatre Company follows the Prospect Company in Britain through auditions, rehearsals, technical production, performance and touring for a year. Assuming readers will not take this as the only way to run a theatre company, it should be valuable, entertaining and interesting. Model Theatres and how to make them by Alan J Allport (Hutchinson, £7.95) introduces a craft which I shouldn’t have thought was very popular among Australian children. There is an appeal, no doubt, in making models of any kind, but this book is not likely to create much interest in the tired and pointless kind of theatre it describes; in spite of the author’s promise that his readers have the chance to become godlike artists of the theatre as envisaged by Edward Gordon Craig.
A.C.T.

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For entries, contact Marguerite Wells on 49-3192.

THEATRE AUSTRALIA DECEMBER 1978

NEW SOUTH WALES

ACTORS COMPANY (660 2503)
Caberet by Masteroff, Kander and Ebb; with Anne Phelan, director, Steve Agnew.
Throughout Dec.

ARTS COUNCIL OF NEW SOUTH WALES (357 6611)
The Bandelles — Magical family group.

AUSTRALIAN BALLET (20588)
Opera Theatre.
Spartacus, premiere — Laszlo Sergegi's production, given for the first time to a Western company and arranged with Interkontek, Budapest. Music by Khatchaturian.
1 Dec - 23 Dec.

AUSTRALIAN THEATRE FOR YOUNG PEOPLE (20588)
Saturday Morning Workshops — National Institute of Dramatic Art, from 10 am to 1 pm.
Age limit 12.22, to 16 Dec.

AUSTRALIAN OPERA (231 2300)
Yeoman of the Guard by Gilbert and Sullivan.
1, 2 Dec. Opening again 10 Jan.

ENSEMBLE THEATRE (929-8877)
Flesh and Blood by William Hanley; director, Robin Lovejoy with Ron Graham, Judy Ferris, Don Reid, Joanne Dawson, Maggie Platt, John Hageman. Throughout December.

FRANK STRAINS BULL 'N BUSH THEATRE RESTAURANT (357 4627)
Magic of Yesterday with Noel Brophy, Keith Bowell, Julie Fullerton, Neil Bryant and Alan Norman; director, Frank Strain; choreographer, George Carden. (continuing)

GENESIAN THEATRE (827 3023)
A Woman of no Importance, by Oscar Wilde; with Tony Hayes, Marlene Harrell and Margaret Morrison, director, Margaret Rieneck.
To 9 Dec.

Two Christmas plays by Henry Gheon:
The Journey of the Three Kings
Face at Devils Bridge
Throughout December.

HER MAJESTY'S THEATRE (212 3411)
Dracula, director, Sir Robert Helpmann; starring John Waters. To 16 Dec.

KIRRIBILLI PUB THEATRE (92-1415)
Kihinbi Hotel, Milsons Point.
The Over the Rainbow Show by Rick Maier and Malcolm Frawley; director, Malcolm Frawley; with Paul Chubb, Laura Gabrielle, Richman Young, Susan Asquith, Steven Sacks. Throughout December.

LES CURIIE PRESENTATIONS (358 5676)
Mike Jackson folk singer, will tour infant, primary and secondary schools in the Central West and Riverina districts. To 16 Dec.

MARIAN STREET (498-3166)
A Lad 'n his Lamp, an adult pantomime.

MUSIC THEATRE COMPANY (660 2503)
Caberet
Fridays and Saturdays (continuing).

Spartacus, Opera Theatre.

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Mr Herod's Christmas Pageant by John O'Toole; director, Jennifer Blockidge. To 16 December.

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Sleuth by Anthony Shaffer; director, Terrence Clarke; with Brian Blain and Robert Alexander.
In association with Q'ld Arts Council — 6-23 December.

Queenstown devised and directed by Geoffery Rush. 8-16 December at 10.30 am plus 11,12,13, 14,15 Dec at 2.00 pm.

LA BOITE (36 1622)
Mr Herod's Christmas Pageant by John O'Toole; director, Jennifer Blockidge. To 16 December.

WELTWICH NIGHT THEATRE (52 5888)
Catch Me If You Can by Robert Thomas; director, Babette Stephens; with Kit Taylor. To 9 December.

For entries contact Don Batchelor on 269-3018.

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O THEATRE (223-5651)
Call Me Madam, producer, Bill Munroe; musical director, Barry Hill. To 2 Dec.

SHERIDAN THEATRE (267-3751)

THE SPACE (51 0121)
ACT Hatrick Season: Troupe: Dickinson by David Allen with David Young; director, David Young. 8:30 pm to 2 Dec.

Stag Company: The Fall Guy by Linda Aronson; director, John Noble. 8:30 pm 14-16, 18-23 Dec.

STATE THEATRE COMPANY (51-5151)
Summer of the Seventeenth Doll by Ray Lawler; director, Ron Blair. To 16 Dec.

For entries contact Chris Johns on 223-8610.
TASMANIA

TASMANIAN PUPPET THEATRE (23-796)
Momma's Little Horror Show; Seymour Centre. Sydney. 23 Nov - 23 Dec.

THEATRE ROYAL (34 6266)
Hobart Hospital Charity Show 2 Dec. For entries contact the Editorial Office on (049)167 4470.

VICTORIA

ALEXANDER THEATRE (543 2828)
Forthcoming Alexander Theatre Company production: Children's Holiday Show, Peter Pan. Director, Marie Cuminisky. At 10.00 am and 2.00 pm Monday to Friday Sat matinee, 2.00 pm 3-27 Jan.

ARENA CHILDREN'S THEATRE (24 9667)
Plays in Performance: Lower Primary Sticks and Bones, Upper Primary Vertabiblii (Touring Metropolitan and Country schools).

BOW TIE — Theatre in education programme — Shake, Rattle and Roll.

ARENA THEATRE COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES — Youth Theatre, Wednesdays 5-8 pm.

Women's Theatre Group, Thursday 10-12 or Tuesdays 7.30-9.30 pm. Dance/Movement Workshop Mondays 4.30-6.00 pm. Drama Workshop, Saturday morning for 13-15 year olds. After School Drama Workshops 9-12 year olds, Tuesdays 4-6 pm, 6-8 year olds Thursday 4-5.30 pm.

CAT CALL. Tutorial scheme for schools (pupils and staff) SLAT Suitcase Activity Theatre (one actor/teacher drama experience).

AUSTRALIAN PERFORMING GROUP (PRAM FACTORY) (347 74-33)

Back Theatre: The Unemployment Show. Group devised production; acted by people who have been recently unemployed. Assisted by Allison Richards and Claire Dobbin.

COMEDY THEATRE (663-4993)
Kingsfisher by William Douglas Home; starring Googie Withers, John McCallum, and Frank Thring; director, George Ogilvie. From 29 Nov.

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Original comedy entertainment. Special Christmas show, with Rod Quantock, Mary Kenneally, Stephen Blackburn, Neville Stren and Geoff Brooks.

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Playbox Theatre: The Unspeakable Adams with Phillip Adams. Upstairs Playbox: programme to be announced.

HER MAJESTY'S THEATRE (663-3211)
Aldwych producer, George and Ethel Martin, starring Hayes Gordon and Jill Perryman. Continuing.

LAST LAUGH Theatre Restaurant (419 6226)

LA MAMA (350 4593/347-6085)

MELBOURNE THEATRE COMPANY (654-4000)
Russell Street Theatre: Once A Catholic by Mary O'Malley; director, Ray Lawler.

Bodies by James Saunders. From 23 Jan.

Athenaeum Theatre: The Resistible Rise of Arturo Ui by Bertolt Brecht; director, Bruce Myles. To 9 Dec.

Arsenc and Old Lace by Joseph Kesselring; director, Simon Chivlers. From 14 Dec.

Tributary Productions: (Artistic Coordinator, Judith Alexander). Workshops of new and unconfined Australian and overseas plays.

Russell St Theatre: The Centurian by Phillip Ryall; director, Lex Marinos. 6.00 pm performance times. 1.2, 6, 7, 8, 9 Dec.

Also: Saturday Morning Club, youth classes, Curtain-Up, country bus to theatre programme.

OLD MILL, Geelong (652 21-1444)
Drama Centre of Deakin University. Thursday evening productions.

PILGRIM PUPPET THEATRE (618 6650)
The Tale of Mr Tod by Beatrix Potter; adapted and directed by June Epstein. To 16 Dec.

Peter Pan, written and directed by Graeme Bent. At 10.15 am and 2.00 pm Tues to Fri. 2.00 pm Sat. From 5 Jan.

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Multi cultural puppet theatre, with Mogg the Cat and Friends. Touring schools and community centres.

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THEATRE AUSTRALIA DECEMBER 1978 51
Show, opened at the end of October to a capacity audience. My confidence in the show and everyone connected with it was confirmed by the overwhelming audience reaction. Written by Malcolm Frawley and Rick Maier, with music by Sandra Ridgewell, the audience is taken through a hilarious journey through an Oz of the seventies. Full credit go to an extremely talented cast headed by Laura Gabriel (ex Restless Years) and Paul Chubb; they are supported by Steven Stacks, Susan Asquith and (modestly) myself.

The venue enables us to supply a tasty meal and first class entertainment from 7 pm to midnight. The bar is open during this time as well. We are trying to put the “E” back in entertainment.”

PUTTING TOGETHER A ONE PERSON SHOW

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“In a one-person show a very special, vulnerable, trusting and totally personal relationship is set up with an audience. Once the trust is established, they will go anywhere with you and accept a range of things from you: an exciting responsibility. One’s whole energy and concentration is involved.

Playing a one-person show heightens one’s response to audience awareness. It was exciting to go from the one-person show to Under Milk Wood in which one was making direct yet anonymous contact with the audience in a variety of roles through the use of masks.

As We Are is a one woman show which I devised, researched and presented for the Festival of Perth last February and have since presented for the Victorian Arts Council and at the Theatre Royal in Hobart. After Under Milk Wood for the MTC I’ll be touring it in Tasmania at the end of October, the Northern Territory in March and Western Australia in April.

Staged for me by Don Mackay, it is an entertainment showing aspects of life, people and relationships through the writings of Australian poets, writers, journalists and journal keepers, from our beginnings until now.

In choosing material, I have two criteria: does it entertain? do I laugh/cry/think/smile/understand as a result of this poem/diary/letter/short story? Does it have something to say about us — as we are?”

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