Theatre Australia

6-1980

Theatre Australia: Australia's magazine of the Performing Arts 4(11) June 1980

Robert Page
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Editor

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Circus Oz
His Majesty’s Perth Open
Colin George Departs
Tasmanian Puppets Closed
SYDNEY THEATRE COMPANY
PREMIERE SEASON 1980

THE SUNNY SOUTH
GEORGE DARBELL
JAN.

CLOSE OF PLAY
DARRYL GRAY

NO NAMES, NO BACK DRAIL
HERBERT
APRIL-MAY

I'M GETTING MY ACT TOGETHER
CLIFFORD LEE AND
WALLY NOON
APRIL-JUNE

GRAND DE BERGERAC
K. ROWLAND

MERRY WIVES OF WINDSOR
SHAKESPEARE

THE PRECIOUS WOMAN
SHAKESPEARE

DECEMBER 1
APRIL
NOVEMBER
Three companions to the British Theatre:

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Seven of our top theatre directors, Richard Wherrett, Rex Cramphorn, George Whaley, Kerry Dwyer, Malcolm Robertson, Mick Rodger and Aarne Neeme, are facing their first real test in film.

Now the shorts that have been a culmination of a crash course at the Film and Television School are at preview stage. From the start of this baptism by fire it was envisaged, with investment from the Australian Film Commission and Greater Union, that at least some of them should go on commercial release.

Despite the nervousness of having their first efforts immortalised on celluloid, the directors have found the experience, in Mick Rodger's word, "marvellous". Julia Overton of AFTVS somehow managed the nightmare logistics of finding free time in seven very heavy schedules and the films themselves were overseen by Tony Buckley, one of the best producers in the country.

At the time of writing only four films were available for preview, but already John Reid, the General Manager of GUO Film Distributors, is "very thrilled". He and I both agree that in terms of polish, interest and performances, Richard Wherrett's film The Girl Who Met Simone de Beauvoir in Paris, based on a short story by Frank Moorhouse, is of the four the most outstanding so far. A daunting title belies a wry and urbane study of what might loosely be described as the war of the sexes.

In that film, and George Whaley's moving and perceptive view of a migrant adolescent, Dancing, the hope for strength that theatre people would bring to film making, evoking fuller performances, has obviously paid off.

Kerry Dwyer has skilfully managed to bring an air of Melbourne's zanily rough theatre to the screen, in her surrealist film The Wedding. Rex Cramphorn once again worked with writer Louis Nowra on the culmination of a crash course at the Film and Television School are at preview stage. From the start of this baptism by fire it was envisaged, with investment from the Australian Film Commission and Greater Union, that at least some of them should go on commercial release.

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With an Alex Buzo scripted film by Aarne Neeme, an Alan Hopgood comedy by Malcolm Robertson and Mick Rodger's Buckle's Chance, a historical drama which he has uniquely written and directed himself, yet to come, an obvious range and diversity of product has resulted from the experiment.

Though it is still early days John Reid is predicting that commercial release will go ahead. Already screenings are arranged for the Sydney Film Festival, with negotiations for the Melbourne Festival currently in hand.

Such an ambitious venture has not been without its problems. Rumblings from those already established in the industry were suggesting that the whole exercise was a waste of money. Or that if these theatre directors really wanted to try their hand they should have been put through the full three year course at the School; impossible for people with such heavy commitments to the stage.

Commercial release itself throws up such problems as extra money for the well known actors involved - Kate Fitzpatrick, Tony Llewellyn-Jones, Anna Voika, John Clayton to name but a few - who worked for minimal AFTVS educational rates.

Despite criticisms and problems, the idea, initiated by Gil Brealey, recently appointed head of the Tasmanian Film Commission, has paid off. Many of the directors, their appetites whetted, want to continue, though are humble enough not to see one short as indicating fully fledged status as film makers. Mick Rodger, for instance, has secured script development money from the ADC and is looking to return for the backing to direct the film himself.

His suggestion, thinking of people like Jim Sharman alone in this country, and Peter Brook and Lynsdain Anderson in Europe, is that the exchange should continue. Now, he says, the AFTVS (or perhaps NIDA) should find the money for film directors to try their hand in theatre. A late night conversation with Fred Schepisi revealed that he felt as inadequate and daunted by stage work as Mick Rodger by film.

Perhaps this is the beginning of a whole new cross-fertilisation of film and theatre, with directors moving between the two with the same ease that actors have from the very beginning.

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**COMMENT**

**FROM THEATRE TO FILM**

Seven of our top theatre directors, Richard Wherrett, Rex Cramphorn, George Whaley, Kerry Dwyer, Malcolm Robertson, Mick Rodger and Aarne Neeme, are facing their first real test in film.

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Robert Page, Editor
PRAM FACTORY HANGING ON... On Monday May 5 Sir Billy Sneddon launched the Friends of the Pram Factory's public fund-raising Appeal to save the building — and hence the company — from the auctioneer's hammer. They need (at the time of writing) to raise $60,000 by May 29, auction day, to be able to put a deposit on the building and so gain another forty five days to come up with the rest of the cash.

One of the arguments used by Sir Billy Sneddon in support of the Pram was that the more Opera Houses and Art Centres that are built, the more need there is for the rougher spaces too. The cultural centres are wonderful places for lavish displays and very necessary as such, but it is not expected that any innovatory work should come out of them; the more we put up edifices, the more there is a need for original material to fill them, but that can only come out of such places as the APG.

John Timlin, Co-ordinator of the Friends of the Pram, is optimistic about eventual private sector support. The Australia Council Theatre Board and Victorian Ministry of the Arts are sympathetic, but do not have capital funds; however, the APG is firmly on both bodies' list of continuing grant organisations. Timlin does not anticipate any direct Government intervention to save the building.

If it can be bought, the plan is to build a 400-seat theatre within it to be used as an income-generating source. The APG itself would only use it for extended seasons of such highly popular shows as The Hills Family Show, but other producers and theatre companies would be invited to rent it as a touring venue.

John Timlin also has plans to move community radio station 3RRR, of which he is a director, into the Pram as a further source of rent income. He feels that $70,000 cash flow per year needs to be generated from use of the property. So far the Appeal is going well; the first three days saw $5,000 roll in and there has been enormous support from members and companies of the theatre profession.

The money is still desperately needed. All cheques should be made out to Friends of the Pram and sent to The Pram Factory, 325 Drummond Street, Carlton, Vic 3053.

DESIGNING MINDS II... The Designers Association in the Performing Arts aims to promote and protect the role of the designer in theatre, television and film and to heighten both professional and public appreciation of their work. It is based in Sydney with a committee of ten headed by Bill Passmore; at the moment they have about sixty five members — designers from all round the country.

In May '78 DAPA held its first exhibition, entitled Designing Minds in the Exhibition Hall of the Opera House, to which some 25,000 viewers went. Now they have a second one coming up which will open on August 15 in the same venue.

It will be divided into three sections, theatre, television and film and the major aim will be to show the process of design, from drawings to models through to actual costumes. Some of those on show will be James Ridewood's for MTC's Alchemist, The Triumph of Honour by Peter Cook for the Opera; four from the Sydney Theatre Company — Arthur Dicks' Devil's Disciple, Yoshi Toas's Long Day's Journey Into Night, Wendy Dickson's Lady of the Camélias and Vicki Feitscher's Sunny South. Nimrod will be represented by Bullie's House designs by Michael Pierce and the audio-visual show on Travelling North.

From television, Roger Cook's A Toast To Melba designs will be on view and Andrew Blaxland's Time-lapse. Bill Passmore is once more designing the whole exhibition, which is rumoured to be even more splendid than the last one.
AUSTRALIAN SILENT EPIC FOUND... A print of the only silent movie "epic" made in Australia, the 1927 production of For The Term of His Natural Life, has been found in the USA and given to the National Library. The film, whose producers boasted of its cast of thousands, was the longest, most expensive and one of the most successful films made in this country.

The print was found by the American Film Institute in Washington. Although it is of a shortened version made for the American market, it will enable the Library to reconstruct an almost complete copy of the full length film, using also an incomplete print it has been holding for fifteen years. Some of the most dramatic scenes, including the burning of a convict ship and the suicide of two boy convicts, were among those missing, but are contained in the American print.

Based on the Marcus Clark novel about a man wrongly convicted of murder and transported to the Tasmanian penal settlement of Port Arthur, The Term... was made by Australasian Films Ltd. It cost £60,000, required a special tramway to be built in Tasmania and took six months to produce. It was filmed in Sydney, Newcastle, Port Arthur and other locations in Tasmania. The film's stars, Eva Novak and George Fisher, and its director Norman Dawn were imported from America; they are virtually forgotten today, but Dawn was responsible for introducing a number of new techniques into the Australian film industry.

The Term... was an instant success in Australia, but in America its release clashed with the advent of the talkies. It had its premiere screening at the Theatre Royal, Newcastle on June 22, 1927 and there was a song of the same name written to accompany its release.

The cast of thousands for The Term... included many now anonymous actors and actresses playing character roles.
OVERSEAS PRODUCTIONS... 1980 seems to be the year for Australian plays in Britain, though not with any resounding success so far. For the story of The Club in London, see Norman Kessell's column on page 9. The Nottingham Playhouse put on a production of David Allen's Gone With Hardy in March, which had a critically good reception, but sadly the audiences stayed away in droves. Let's hope this is not the fate of the Ensemble-at-the Stables production of George Hutchinson's No Room For Dreamers, a play similar in style to Hardy but about a less well known (especially to English audiences) character. Dreamers will be the first Australian export under the World Theatre Exchange Programme since the Trust and Cladan combined to administer the programme. The production will tour provincial centres in England with performances at both the Edinburgh and Dublin Festivals and will also give a couple in Amsterdam on the way back. Perhaps they'll meet up with Circus Oz who are also off to Edinburgh and Amsterdam.

LA BOITE'S NEW SEASON is given over exclusively to Australian plays, and very propitious box-office wise they have all proved. Two musicals are the Boddy Ellis Legend of King O'Malley, which hasn't been seen on a stage for some years; and Dorothy Hewett's latest and most popular work The Man From Muckinupin. As the first producer of a Stephen Sewell play it's fitting that they should be putting on his now highly popular Traitors, and the season is completed with two South Australian pieces, Rob George's Let's Twist Again and David Allen's Dickinson.

MAD DOG GOES HOME... RTC — The Riverina Trucking Company — in association with the Arts Council of NSW. is presently touring its world premiere production of Mick Rodger's The Pariah Dog. Directed by Peter Barclay and Ken Moffat, the play traces the life of the infamous bushranger Daniel "Mad Dog" Morgan. The unique aspect of this undertaking is that the production will tour many of the areas in which the action of the play is set. It is the most extensive tour yet undertaken by the RTC in its four year history, taking in the southern and central regions of NSW. Barclay elaborates: "It has been fascinating to rehearse at such places as Morgan's lookout to get a sense of the country as he must have seen it. Though I don't want to suggest that The Pariah Dog is mere documentary, rather it uses the historical context to focus on the perennial conflict between the individual and authority."

The Pariah Dog is the second play in the RTC's 1980 season; the first, Boys Own Macbeth played to capacity houses.
PROMCON ... After working in the world of subsidised theatre for the past few years, two new faces have stepped into the commercial jungle to form their own entrepreneurial company. Jon Nicholls, who worked as Director of Activities with the Arts Council of SA and Adrian Bohm, Publicity Officer with the State Theatre Company, are the founders of the Promcon Corporation.

Based in Adelaide, Promcon’s main business is to mount and promote concert and theatrical attractions both in South Australia and other states, in some cases acting as entrepreneur and in others publicising for other interstate or overseas impresarios.

Nicholls and Bohm are not new to the business of promoting the arts. Jon Nicholls worked with the Arts Council for four years and was responsible for bringing to Australia Pam Ayres, Nola Rae, The Spinners, Richard Stilgoe, the Argentinian Dance Company, Malambo Latino and later this year Hinge and Bracket and Mike Harding. Together they have promoted a number of visiting companies and artists such as Blossom Dearie, Cleo Laine, the Old Vic Company’s Hamlet, George and Mildred, Keith Jarrett, Pam Ayres and Flexitime.

Promcon began officially in February and their first presentation was a one-man comedy show with world famous cricket personality Freddie Trueman. They will be following this with national tours of Welsh comedian Max Boyce and Jasper Carrott, as well as presenting musical concerts and stage productions.

AYPAA TO ADELAIDE ...

The Australian Youth Performing Arts Association, a national information and resource centre for youth performing arts, is moving its headquarters from the Seymour Centre, Sydney, to SA to establish an expanded national base in Adelaide.

AYPAA will be based at the Carclew Arts Centre and Executive Officer Geoffrey Brown is looking forward to the benefits of this expansion: "In South Australia there is a very supportive atmosphere for the development of youth performing arts and the extra resources and support available will enable AYPAA to more effectively serve and stimulate this kind of activity throughout the country.

"Performing Arts activities for young people have often been neglected in Australia, but there is now a growing interest and enthusiasm which will continue to expand. We are looking forward to developing AYPAA as a backbone of support, information and resources for these activities."

PLAYSCRIPTS AT THE OPERA HOUSE ...

The Friends of the Australian Opera have just opened a shop in the booking foyer of the Opera House, not just for opera goers but for all theatre patrons. It carries a wide range of books on music, opera, drama, dance and other performing arts, along with postcards, posters and the souvenir 1980 Opera Diary.

All published playtexts of plays in the Sydney Theatre Company’s current season are on sale, together with recordings of the AO’s 1980 repertoire on record and cassette. The shop is open till 9.30pm on all performance nights, and for Saturday matinees.

SALAMANCA SCRIPT RESOURCE CENTRE ...

With terms like "coordination" and "rationalisation of resources" jostling strongly for space alongside "excellence" and "innovation" in the arts these days, the establishment of a national script resource centre in Australia this year is something of a happy venture from any perspective.

Funded by the Literature and Theatre Boards of the Australian Council, the Centre, entitled the Salamanca Script Resource Centre, has just begun to operate out of 79 Salamanca Place, Hobart, home of Salamanca Theatre Company, and will seek out store and catalogue unpublished scripts, primarily suitable for performing to or by young people, from Australian authors.

Information about scripts received, such as content, area, number of characters, age suitability, length etc., will be compiled bi-monthly and made available to interested companies, organisations and individuals for a $20 annual subscription fee.

The Centre will act as a vital link between script writers and users in the area of youth performing arts - where the complaint has always been that not enough scripts exist, despite the suspicion that they probably could with a little encouragement to authors.

To date seven scripts have been received and all forthcoming will be welcomed. Playwrights with scripts to offer and anyone seeking further information should contact Doris Moore at the above address or phone (002) 234 259.
STATE THEATRE COMPANY

WORLD PREMIERE

ALAN SEYMOUR

Directed by Kevin Palmer
Designed by Vicki Feitscher
Lighting designed by Nigel Levings

with

THE PLAYHOUSE
Adelaide Festival Centre

JUNE 13–28

8 THEATRE AUSTRALIA JUNE 1980
The cast was told not to be perturbed by doing nothing to earn his money. The where
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Norwich, but has been forbidden to do
the show had been reasonably certain
unpredictable and beyond control,
losing money in the theatre, some
accountants, I'm told, estimate the
such as $100,000. After Brisbane
cent capacity before the more than

There are, of course, many ways of
losing money in the theatre, some
Robert Morley's unfortunate
Cancellation of The Old Coun­
ry, I hear, meant a loss to the
Elizabethan Theatre Trust, Wilton
Morley and their associates of some­thing like $100,000. After Brisbane
had made up the losses in Melbourne,
the show had been reasonably certain
to break even in Sydney.

However, money, as they say, is
only money. The real loss is that such a
fine actor and well-liked man as
Morley will almost certainly never
appear on stage again. He had been set
to play this month in William Douglas
Home's new comedy, After The Ball Is
Over, at the Theatre Royal in
Norwich, but has been forbidden to do
anything at all before the end of the year.

Ron Haddrick, on his return from
the successful London season of David
Williamson's The Club, told how
astonished he and his colleagues were
at the lack of vitality and almost total
absence of ensemble playing in Lon­
don theatre today. Shows had one,
two or perhaps three "names", with the
rest of the cast mediocre or worse.

Haddrick said that for the small
Hampstead theatre at which they
opened, the Australians had to con­
tract their performances to the point
where Barry Lovett said he felt he was
doing nothing to earn his money. The
cast was told not to be perturbed by
lack of reaction from preview aud­
ences, which were conditioned to an
unresponsive appraisal of play and
performance. They were surprised,
therefore, in the first few minutes to
hear a titter, then a shout of laughter,
then a roar that persisted throughout.
"Well, if that's non-reactive, what does
a real audience going to do?" they
asked.

Haddrick reasoned the audience
had become so accustomed to the
apathetic fare now generally on offer
that when Barry Lovett made his first
explosive entrance it was shocked into
realisation that here, for once, some­thing
was really happening.

The cast was never quite sure why
The Club was moved into the
unsuitable location and image of the
Old Vic instead of the West End's
Ambassadors, which was also nibb­
ing. But when, after the Old Vic
season, the Ambassadors came up
with a firm offer, the actors declined,
saying they could get plenty of work
at home at much better money.

Eleanor Witcomb, Australia's most
successful woman scriptwriter, is as
busy as ever. Among the items
cluttering her drawing board at the
moment are a new dramatisation of
Lindsay's The Magic Pudding; a new
children's play for the Nimrod's 1981
Christmas season (she expects them
to repeat her Pirates at the Barn this year)
and a one-woman show for Patricia
Kennedy with the 1982 Adelaide
Festival in mind. Meanwhile, Eleanor
has accepted an invitation to Los
Angeles where, among other attrac­tions,
there's a lucrative film script offer
she is trying to persuade herself she can
afford to refuse!

Australian-born London producer
Helen Montagu, here again last month
on family business, told me she is
planning to begin production in
America where, despite managerial
rip-offs and union featherbedding,
working conditions for the entre­
preneur are more attractive than those
in London.

The centenary issue of Britain's
theatrical trade newspaper, The Stage
— it preceded America's Variety by
twenty five years — is full of nostalgia
and wonderful early-days photo­
graphs. I enjoyed especially an ad by
the lighting firm, Cosby Controls,
founded in 1872 by Sir Cornelius
Cosby who, it states, "started his
career as a candle snuffer at Drury
Lane". Formed to maintain oil and gas
lamps in theatres, the company was a
pioneer experimenter with an incan­
descent lamp and in 1881 made
London's Savoy the world's first
theatre lit entirely by electricity. In
1882, the firm was consultant on the
building of Eddystone Lighthouse and
in 1887 Cosby was knighted by Queen
Victoria for his services to lighting.

That prolific playwright Alan Ayck­
bourn is determined to be different.
His newest comedy, Sisterly Feelings,
is written to be staged in four ways.
Start and finish are fixed, but the two
middle scenes are changeable. More­
ever, the actors decide which scenes
to play on any given night by the toss of a
coin!

It's happened before and it will
again. When Ringling Bros Circus
opened its 1980 season at Maddison
Square Garden, the high wire act
could not appear because of lighting
difficulties, but one New York daily
report went ahead and reviewed the
act as if it had played. As Variety
commented: "Perhaps he was clair­
voyant — or just wanted to leave
early".

The Australian Elizabethan Theatre
Trust now has the rights to Eduardo de
Filippo's Filumena, which Peter
Williams originally hoped to stage
here. Approaches have been made to
Gina Lolabrigida to star. Helen
Montagu, who staged the play in
London, thinks there's a good chance
Gina will accept. At fifty three, she
adds, Gina still looks twenty three.
The Trust also has the rights to Stage
Struck and approached Michael York
to play the Alan Bates role. Other
possible Trust attractions are Amas­
deus, Peter Shaffer's play about
Mozart, and a tour by Roy Dotrice as
Abe Lincoln.

As I speculated here last month,
however, the Trust did drop plans to
tour Alex Buzo's Big River. Instead,
it is likely to back a return season at the
Theatre Royal of Bob Herbert's No
Names... No Packdrill. It will also
remount Peter Williams' production
of The Gin Game, with Leonard Teale
in the Ron Haddrick part, for a tour of
North Queensland and Williams' Crown
Matrimonial for the official re­
opening of Perth's His Majesty's
Theatre. The Trust will also handle a
Queensland tour by the Sydney Dance
Company.

THEATRE AUSTRALIA JUNE 1980
Circus Oz is now two and a half years old, and after extensive performing within Australia is about to take off for a four month international tour.

Circus Australia Ltd was incorporated in January 1978 and the company came together from the fusion of two other well-established groups. New Circus from Adelaide specialised in aerial and clowning work; they got together in 1974 and toured in vintage trucks and sidewalls (tent sides without the top). Two years later Soapbox Circus emerged from the Australian Performing Group; an eccentric mixture of rock'n'roll, jug band, acrobatics, juggling and socio-political satire, they set up as a roadshow and played a wide variety of venues in every State.

When, in 1977, New Ensemble Circus arrived in Melbourne and created *Waiter There’s A Circus In My Soup* for the Last Laugh — Australia’s first hard-top circus event, which ran for five months — and Soapbox returned home after touring, discussions began about amalgamating the two groups and resulted in the new company.

Oz claims to be the first truly Australian circus, and indeed its whole style is marked by that peculiarly Australian mixture of serious, skilled performance presented as a send-up of itself.

They are “committed to creating a circus responsive to contemporary trends in popular entertainment” and their success is due in no small part to
the theatrical form of their show. Like the immensely popular Hills Family Show, also APG spawned, the form of Circus Oz is that of a company of actors performing a circus. A troupe of fourteen make up the band, crew and (in their latest season at the Paris Theatre, Sydney) fourteen acts, all with differently named performers. They allow an audience to experience the excitement and wonder of traditional circus while at the same time sending up aspects like the trad

commentary, showbiz names and personae and ludicrous animal acts.

Far preferable to poodles in skirts jumping through hoops is “Kangaroos”, where four human big reds and a libidinous Queensland cane toad are made to perform bizarre animal acts “live on stage” by Alfonso and Joanie Spagoni. And rather than a spangled lovely, it is a bad-tempered Dalek who holds the crockery, dishwasher style, for the plate balancing act.

The main area in which the company has brought the circus form up to date is the music; Andrew Bell, Celeste Howden, Geoff Toll and other members of the troupe replace the big band circus sound with especially composed rock music. This is creatively integrated particularly with, for instance, the juggling acts and “Roof Walk” where Geoff Toll leaves his earthbound kit to perambulate up the wall and along the ceiling where he plays an extended drum break hanging upside down.

Although Circus Oz is very much an ensemble, two performers stand out as in some way dominant; Jon Hawkes is literally at the centre of things as the circus strong man — he also juggles, sings and does the company accounts; and Sue Broadway who, with remarkable versatility, appears in almost every act from trapeze and rope aerobatics, to a delightful whistle-speaking clown, to juggling, balancing, playing a roo and also the horns and ukelele.

But it is contrary to the ensemble set-up of Circus Oz to allow any kind of hierarchy to develop, so no one member acts as director with an overall vision for the production. Though the theatrical concept is a bonus for the circus it is also in itself, the weakest area of performance.

Their circus skills are impeccable and original, but though most of them have had acting experience they go nowhere near fulfilling the theatrical potential of the situation, as did The Hills Family Show. Personae need developing, clowns and performers, the back-up stage comedy could be worked up to greater effect, audiences ‘involved more and the whole show could be given both more structure and variation — without losing its gutsy quality that it takes a directorial eye to elicit.

These criticisms notwithstanding, Circus Oz has proved itself through enormous popularity with audiences. After the outstandingly successful season at the Last Laugh — thirty two weeks in all! — the Sydney Paris season has been slow to build, but its steady improvement has led the producers to take up the option of an extended six weeks there, which ends in mid June.

It is then that the company will test reaction out of the country, first at the South Pacific Festival in Port Moresby from June 23, and after in Luxembourg, Amsterdam, Bonn, Brussels, Paris, the Round House, London and finishing up in October at the Edinburgh Festival.

If all goes well and they aren’t snapped up for further overseas tours, we should see Circus Oz back for a return season at the Paris in November.
Colin George Departs

his time in Adelaide reviewed by RON BLAIR

"Not another Pom" they groaned — those who didn't know him, those who had never met him. That was when Colin George was appointed the Artistic Director of the South Australian Theatre Company in 1977. Contrary to general belief, he was not "brought cut" to fill the post. He was already here as the Head of Drama at the University of New England. I had worked with him there when he commissioned a play from me and had enjoyed the experience enormously. He's an unusual man with energy to match his ambition and a passion for work tempered by warmth and humour.

Now, after three years with the Company in Adelaide, he is returning to the UK leaving a fine and vigorous company in the hands of his successors Kevin Palmer and Nick Enright, both, you will be relieved to learn, native sons.

Artistic Directors can be excellent stage directors or good planners who flourish in both conferences and board rooms: they are rarely both. Colin George is both. There is not another director in the country who has his meticulous visual precision and gift for moving actors on a stage. It's not surprising that his best work is done with the classics. The highlights of his time in Adelaide would include his productions of Macbeth, Peer Gynt, Oedipus, Hamlet and the five hour Wakefield Mystery plays.

Neither does he hide in the rehearsal room. After a full day with the actors, he can meet an agenda as if he had just finished breakfast. Red tape and budget limitations are all turned to advantage. He delights in artful circumvention.

He directed three of my plays, so you might say I am biased and you would be right. What criticism then, have I to make of his directorate? Only one: I felt he plunged from one production to the next too hard and too fast. In three years he did twenty one productions!

"I work at my best capacity under pressure," he told me when I asked him about this. "There's no doubt when I started in Adelaide I was determined to take the reins very firmly myself because I wanted to form a company where we could forge a style between us, an approach to plays. In this way I very deliberately took on most of the directoral work the first year. I enjoy setting the pace and being an Artistic Director encourages it."

He himself feels that an Artistic Director should stay with a company between three and five years. I asked him why he was going. "I feel it's time for me to move. I have a particular spur in that my family is in London — that's where I want to live and where I want them to grow up. Naturally, I hope to come back to Australia sometime to do a production but I'm happy to make London my home. I'm well aware of the rubbish that goes on there in the name of theatre, but it remains one of the few cities in the English speaking world where there is still a small but healthy choice of establishment theatre which is questioning, challenging and experimenting."

What did he think were the company's weaknesses at the moment? "If the company's strength is its vitality and youth, then the converse is that we haven't got a large number of mature actors such as you would find at the RSC or the National in London. This is a surface disadvantage only. Good theatre doesn't depend on slavish naturalism: we don't have to have old men played by elderly actors. Theatre is often at its best, as in Shakespeare, where the language and the imagination of the actor and audience are the deciding factors and not just the eye, as say in TV where there is a lot of type casting. Nevertheless, I am sure that in twenty years, when this generation of young actors is middle-aged, a company such as ours will be stronger."

What difficulties were facing the Australian theatre? "I think the distance separating the companies and the performers in each city is something that has to be worked at. Keeping in touch with one another's work is the only way to avoid the parochialism which is death to any artistic endeavour. Television offers immediate rewards to young actors and actresses but more importantly, they need theatre experience if they are to develop. It's important then that there are enough theatres in Australia, given the few cities which support theatre."

What had he got out of working in Australia? "I have no doubt that I've been more daring here in my own work than I ever would have been in England. Here one is aware that both the public and one's colleagues — the actors and the technicians — were only too happy to try something new. I felt that whatever challenge I offered the company, it would rise to it without the sort of bitchy debate one might have encountered in some places in England. I shall remember the good weather, the pleasure with which one has introduced plays like Peer Gynt or indeed Hamlet to audiences which haven't seen the play before and I've also learnt much about Australia from working on Australian plays. And I value the friendships I've made here, people's energy, their sense of humour and their commitment."

RON BLAIR
By Cathryn Robinson

The Tasmanian Puppet Theatre, which closed its doors and ceased productions this March, preparatory to easing out of existence altogether, leaves behind the memories and physical remnants of more than sixty productions; a sense of untapped potential in a medium yet to be fully realised; and an enormous vacuum in the genre of puppet theatre in Australia.

Ten years ago, two gifted Tasmanian puppeteers, Peter Wilson and Peter Oldham, returned from England to float the idea of starting a small puppet theatre in their home state. They received lots of moral support and some financial backing through the efforts of teachers, friends and parents — enough moral support for Peter Wilson to continue when Oldham left Tasmania for the mainland, and enough financial support to mount a first production in 1971 involving four puppeteers. This was *Hansel And Gretel* — a traditional tale presented in traditional puppet style.

Aware of the need to also develop indigenous drama Peter devised *The Tales Of The Bushland*, four tales based loosely on Aboriginal myth for the major 1972 production — using Australian and local source material was to become another characteristic of the company's work. *The Tales Of The Bushland* ushered in another characteristic of the embryo company that was to dominate its artistic development — a willingness to experiment and explore new techniques of presentation in puppet theatre. In this production, enormous string puppets operated by manipulators on stage dressed in black were taken out of the "puppet box". It was a dramatic departure from the previous year's traditional puppet fare, more fully realised in the use of huge red puppets in the later *The North Wind And The Sun*, and developments in such productions as *Once A Jolly Swagman, Click Go The Shears, The Golden Nugget Show, Rub A Dub Dub* and *Kidstuff.*

His determination to explore innovations was perhaps *Momma's Little Horror Show*, directed by Nigel Triffet, which packed out in Hobart Adelaide and Melbourne and proved that puppet theatre could offer exciting adult theatre.

In the meantime the Tasmanian Puppet Theatre toured infant and primary schools throughout the state annually; established children's workshops, adult education programmes and in-service teacher's courses in puppetry; began to tour Victoria and South Australia each year as part of the Australia Council's policy of three regional puppet theatres developing to service the country; and continued to co-ordinate the talents of local composers, writers, designers and directors. Overseas directors, such as John Blundal from England and Takeshi Hoshino from Japan, were also brought in for production.

What developed in Tasmania then was a truly indigenous community theatre that reached out to the public on a multiplicity of levels yet nevertheless managed to acquire the respect and attention of overseas artists. In 1978 the company toured Indonesia, followed by Japan in 1979. Also, in 1979, it provided the focal point for the highly popular international puppet festival in Hobart. If this is not success for a small company from a small state, what is?

What went wrong?

Well, in 1976, after shuffling from one temporary premise to another for six years the company found a permanent home. Even though the State Government did not respond to their appeal for assistance in purchasing the building, the company's board decided to buy 81 Salamanca Place, a three-storeyed Georgian warehouse, situated next to the community arts complex, and the Salamanca Theatre Company. The building afforded adequate space for a workshop, rehearsals, offices, a gallery and small theatre.

However, promised funds from the then Division of Recreation did not eventuate and although the State Government eventually provided a guarantee and a loan, annual mortgage repayments of $20,000 now had to be met — from a theatre whose income derived largely from performances to children.

Thus, from 1977 until 1980, the Tasmanian Puppet Theatre began to suffer from this financial burden. It was never adequately resolved; it crippled the board; it ate into company morale; it beleaguered artistic policy. With no real injection of funds from private industry or the State Government in Tasmania, to match the Commonwealth Government's consistent support, the puppet theatre was fighting a losing battle in trying to maintain a small company with some artistic integrity whilst facing a new decade of spiralling costs and financial austerity. It was a losing battle on the level of budgets only. The Tasmanian Puppet Theatre did not fade out or lose its vitality or strong presence in the market place. There was merely an enormous discrepancy between the praise the State Government gave it and the funds they gave it.

I don't believe Tasmania is fully aware of what a unique state theatre has been allowed to die. Nationally, the field of puppetry has also suffered — the rare physical resources of a workshop honed for puppet productions over ten years are to be dispersed; a tradition of vigorous experimentation is lost; a company that introduced artists in other fields to puppetry and yoked their talents to the medium is gone; and excellent training ground for young puppeteers also gone; and gone the only yardstick for the one puppet theatre company left in Australia, the Marionette Theatre, based in Sydney.
Graeme Murphy, in his fourth year as its artistic director and chief choreographer, follows his instinct and flair for creativity. Impossible is a word that rarely finds its way into his vocabulary. Janet Vernon, his assistant and creative partner, does the demanding follow-up work that ensures Murphy's ideas are brought to a full flowering in performance.

The dancers work in an extraordinary milieu of trust and disbelief, courage and rebellion, exhilarating...
challenge and deadening exhaustion. Murphy constantly asks them for more, stretching their performing abilities until they think they can go no further. Until next time, of course.

Murphy's dancers have to be strong individuals and ambitious for themselves. He quotes Miss Jean Brodie's marvellous line about Anna Pavlova: "If she had believed in team spirit, she would have stayed in the corps de ballet." At the same time, as a small company, they need a spirit of comradeship and the ability to work closely as an ensemble, "to be harnessed through their individuality into something rare," as Murphy puts it. As a regular observer, I can report the company gives every impression of answering all these qualifications.

"We are working at a rate of physical pressure that we have never equalled. The ballets I am doing this year are much more demanding," he says of the works being shown in the Sydney Dance Company's season at the Opera House Drama Theatre in May, June and July. The three programmes have an exciting selection of new works as well as the return of the full-length Rumours. Murphy's dance portrait of Sydney which was first seen in April 1979.

"The first programme is a romantic one, with two new ballets that have been done at a time when so many awful things are happening in the world that there seems a great need for romance," he describes Veridian, created for a new musical work of the same name by the Australian composer Richard Meale, as romantic and lush — but a hard-hitting contemporary dance work at the same time. "John Rayment has done this extraordinary lighting that makes it seem as though the dancers are performing in a black hole. It's terribly hard for them, poor darlings, but it looks fabulous."

The other new work in this all-Murphy programme is Daphnis and Chloe, choreographed to Ravel's symphonic poem. "A 55-minute dance epic that will be the death of us all," says Murphy dramatically. "There is something magical about working to a story of such divine innocence as Daphnis and Chloe. To expect people today to believe that young love could develop so slowly and painfully... It is a ballet about naivety."

Daphnis and Chloe stars a young dancer who has grown with the company, Victoria Taylor, and an experienced performer who joined the company only this year after seven years with the Stuttgart Ballet, Carl Morrow.

The sensual Sheherazade, already a favourite with Sydney audiences, completes the first programme.

Murphy is having an interesting time bringing Rumours together again. He thinks he has strengthened the first section with minor choreographic changes and increasing the number of dancers at some points. The second and third sections — nude bathing at Lady Bay, and the old people — are shaping up slightly differently with new people in some of the roles for which Murphy always left a certain amount of freedom for the individual interpretation.

Three contrasting works by other choreographers make up the third programme. Barry Moreland has choreographed Dialogues to music by Mahler for Janet Vernon and Jennifer Barry. Paul Saliba, who joined the company after several years overseas, has used music by Honegger for his Interiors. Joseph Scoglio, of the Australian Dance Theatre, has choreographed a big company work to Debussy.

"One can sense the influence of Joe's development through Ballet Rambert, and it is interesting to see this coming out on the company. He uses two pieces of music, one of which is repeated with such completely different choreography that you would hardly relate it to the first hearing."

The content of these programmes says a lot about the company itself. Overwhelmingly, its creativity comes to the fore. Five major new works in a season of seven ballets is a gargantuan task to take on in a company of only eighteen dancers — a figure that includes Murphy, Janet Vernon and the ballet master, Robert Olup.

The strength of its artistic director's creativity must be measured by the fact that four of the ballets are his — the first in the season, I note! But also, that he has invited outstanding young dance creators to contribute their individual ideas to the company, and is excited by what they can bring to his dancers. The company's technical scope is illustrated by their tackling a performing range from pure dance to the dance drama of the third section of Rumours, much of which could be described as mime. Equally, there is a breadth of vision that extends from the peculiarly Australian themes of Rumours (with music by Barry Conyngham and design by Alan Oldfield, both Australians), to the mythical Greek source of Daphnis and Chloe.

It's no wonder that so many people find the Sydney Dance Company the most exciting and original contemporary dance group in Australia.

With any luck, people overseas will soon have the chance to add their opinions. Negotiations are going ahead for the company's season in New York later this year, a tour that would also take them to Italy and several other European countries. In 1981, they are looking at a season in London followed by appearances at festivals in Paris and West Berlin. They also have exciting plans for some unusual events in Australia.

The company has grown to a point where it can be confident of having a varied and individual repertoire to offer — and to where it would benefit from the impetus of travelling beyond Australia and getting outside opinions by playing to totally unknown audiences. I have no doubt that Murphy's inventive choreography, the freshness of his ideas and the assurance with which the dancers put them across, would delight as broad a range of people abroad as they do here: not only dance aficionados but simply people who like to be entertained and stimulated.
In January 1977, after the JC Williamson's crash, the State Government of Western Australia bought the beautiful Edwardian His Majesty's Theatre — a valuable piece of city real estate — for $2 million, in response to pleas from all over the state to save it from demolition.

Once saved the question was what to do with the Maj: obviously it needed rehabilitating and it seemed at first that only its rococo facade might be preserved as the frontage to a completely new theatre.

Peter Parkinson was appointed project architect in 1977 and spent the first three months thinking about it and making a quick tour of Edwardian theatres of similar vintage in Britain. When he decided to opt for a restoration job inside as well as out he knew it was no easy way out, but as he said "The old girl had something."

The "something" was originally created by Polish architect William Wolf, who built the theatre for Perth businessman TG Molloy at the turn of the century. The doors were first opened on Pollard's visiting Adult Comic Opera Company (with top seat prices at 7/6) and has since housed performances by George Musgrove, Nellie Melba, Moiseiwitch, Harry Lauder, Galli Curci, Pavlova, Eric Edgley and Clem Dawe, Sybil Thorn-dike, Vivien Leigh and Margot Fonteyn.

It was first estimated that renovations would cost $4.6 million, but even at the final reckoning of $10 million, Parkinson feels it has been somewhat less costly than a new building would have been. It is in some ways a compromise, being now a partly modern, partly Edwardian theatre, but it has kept its Edwardian feel and it is one of the few of its kind left. "There is a price you pay for sentiment, but if you give up sentiment you die", said Parkinson.

On March 1, 1978 he and his team moved in, armed with only a few early photos, some historical notes and press clippings, a plan for a back-up building to go at the rear of the south west wing, and some pencil sketches of ideas for the theatre's interior.

What has resulted is housed in the old theatre plus the hotel next door and a new building constructed alongside, which contains all the back-up facilities: dressing rooms for a hundred-odd people, three major sprung-floor rehearsal rooms (of which an upper one could be used as a green room theatre), insulated practice rooms, offices for the two resident companies (the WA Opera Company and the WA Ballet Company) and the air conditioning plant. The old hotel has become the foyer space, of which there was originally none, and also houses a replica of an Edwardian bar.

The central marble staircase, which used to be a bottleneck, has now been moved to the right of the entrance and now continues on up to the gallery; there is also a lift that will accommodate wheel chairs.

And what of the changes to the theatre itself? The original stage was at the same level as the new one, but — as was common then — had a one in twenty five slope. Below it was a cavern that would have been an excellent fire-trap and some poky little dressing rooms. Peter Parkinson and his team have levelled the stage (now twenty one metres square) and divided the below-stage cavern in two, so the stage chamber is four metres high from the basement, with space above to accommodate an orchestra of seventy musicians.

There has been some complaint about the number the renovated auditorium can seat; where the old Maj could hold some 1,800, it now can only hold 1,247 — a source of annoyance to entrepreneurs needing larger box office returns. "They may have squeezed more in before," says Parkinson "but about five hundred of those couldn't see and we're very sensitive about restricted seating. If all the people who told me they'd sit behind pillars in the Maj had, it would seem that almost every seat was restricted. The size was worked out by the Steering Committee and theatre consultant Tom Brown; we could have had 1,400, but it would have been like trying to squeeze two quarts into a pint pot." The infamous doric columns were made of pressed metal and difficult to do anything with; "the bits that were damaged we just had to paint over and leave, as you can't get a panel heater to do anything with them. We have tried to get a great deal of it copied, and we went to the extent of getting mouldings made, so if it fell to pieces we could replace it. You could say we're doing an Edwardian pastiche, but I prefer to look on it as a restoration job."

The theatre's original colour scheme of gold, bronze, turquoise, silver and crimson was decided "too rich for our effete 1980's tastes", and there was no chance of getting similar materials today, so Parkinson "went back to the sort of colours that Edwardian theatres had in England; relatively light creams, browns and pinks. There have been cries of red plush and gilt, which is fine, but this theatre is about ten years too late for that."

It now stands as a gingerbread delight in russets, creams and golds, with the curtain in heavy bronze velvet and surmounted by a replacement of the long lost mural of Day and Night, repainted by two Perth artists.

That curtain went up for the first time on May 28 on the opening concert presented by individual performers and artists from a number of West Australian companies. Following that the WA Opera and Ballet Companies have moved into residence there, and as well as their seasons the theatre will be available to other companies and producers.

Summing up just over three years of work, Peter Parkinson said "I'd like people to come into the theatre and say 'Well here's the old Maj, spick and span, bright and comfortable, just like it once was. What can they have spent all that money on?' Then I think we can say our job's been well done."
In favour of the old school

by Irving Wardle

Britain's actor-managers, from as far back as I can remember, have been a standing joke of metropolitan reviewers: megalomaniac bullies, herding substandard companies around the provinces on miserly salaries, and butchering Shakespeare on the altar of self-esteem and "bardic" delivery — such was the legend up to the death of Donald Wolfit, the last of the kind of melodramatic suspense story in the line, in 1968.

It was Wolfit's good luck to have engaged a dresser called Ronald Harwood who commemorated him in one of the finest theatrical biographies of the century; a book which also defended the whole "unfashionable" tradition to which Wolfit belonged, and made the unarguable point that from the early eighteenth-century to the late 1930s, the actor-manager was the English theatre. He played from one end of the country to the other, usually in dire physical conditions, and maintained an unshakeable belief in the theatre "as a cultural and educative force."

Mr Harwood has now renewed his campaign in a piece called The Dresser which arrives in the West End from Manchester's Royal Exchange Theatre. In spite of its title, this is a salute to the actor-managerial breed at large, rather than a reconstruction of the author's life with the boss.

The time is 1942 and the place some godforsaken Midlands touring date. Sir has collapsed in the street leaving his dresser, Tom Courtenay, standing old-maidishly on guard over his chief; sulking, cajoling, fighting off intruders, and keeping himself going with a half bottle of Scotch in the back pocket of his baggy wartime trousers.

It is also through Courtenay's performance that the play's last penny drops. Not only does the dresser suggest a fool; he is the Fool: one of the multiple references with which the events of Sir's farewell performance mirror those of King Lear. The air raid parallels the storm. Lear's depleted retinue is reflected in wartime casting ("I'm reduced to old men, cripples, and nancy boys"); and Sir goes through the night trying to discover who loves him best as a prelude to making an autobiographical partition of his kingdom.

Among other things, The Dresser is just the kind of melodramatic suspense story in which the old actors excelled. It also accommodates quantities of backstage lore, superstition, actors' jokes ("What — fifty of my followers with the clap?") and the routine tensions of getting a show on. It is here that Norman earns his title role — it being his job to rouse the inertly demoralised hulk in the makeup chair into a semblance of kingship, take him through his forgotten opening lines, and protect him from the discontended wife, irate stage manager, and seductive ingenue who besiege the No 1 dressing room door.

The role offers a superb springboard for the ugly-duckling tenacity of Tom Courtenay, standing old-maidishly on guard over his chief; sulking, cajoling, fighting off intruders, and keeping himself going with a half bottle of Scotch in the back pocket of his baggy wartime trousers.

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In Manchester, Michael Elliott's production was split between the hovel-dressing room and a scaffolded wing area (loud with timps and thundersheets). leading to an optic slice of the King Lear performance in the arena's outer perimeter. Courtenay is partnered by Freddie Jones, a specialist in old-actor mannerisms, who compasses the panic, exhaustion, booming authority, and bursts of charm and lechery without ever succumbing to the character's own rhetoric. A splendid piece of work.

If any further argument in favour of the old school were needed, the National Theatre supplies it in Peter Hall's production of Othello, played mercilessly neat and with no trace of a ruling idea aside from giving maximum prominence to Paul Scofield's Moor, whose yodelling line-delivery and detachment from direct emotion leave you pining for the modest naturalism of Wolfit and the rest of the old barnstorming gang.

However, post actor-managerial classicism has been magnificently upheld in a low-budget studio production of Marlow's Dr Faustus which has deservedly found a West End berth. The work of Christopher Fettes, this is an all-male, heavily doubled non-representative version, which amazingly succeeds in unifying the piece by preventing Faustus (James Aubrey) as a Wittenberg Wunderkind who is just the man to fall for all the trashy amusements that separate the play's sublime opening and closing scenes. "La jeunesse!" runs the show's Sartrean epigraph: "C'est une maladie bourgeoise."

Patrick Magee's Mephistophilis, a grave, inwardly tormented devil who squares his prey around like an indulgent tutor, while also making it clear that he is getting this soul on the cheap, further underscores the line of the production, which delivers its masterstroke with the apparition of Helen of Troy as a boy. At Simon Cutter's entrance, like Pygmalion's statue come to life, the cast shield their dazzled eyes. You can believe it.

Late of Tennessee

by Karl Levett

In a recent New York Times article Tennessee Williams made the statement: "I've gone through a period of eclipse in recent years, and maybe I am too old to write anymore, but you have to go on with it because — well, it's your life."

You cannot help but admire the persistence of the man; for a playwright and a poet he is remarkably dogged. This season in New York we have had the opportunity to witness two new works, one on Broadway, Clothes For A Summer Hotel, and one for an Off-Off Broadway...
The Off-Off Broadway company, The Jean Cocteau Repertory has featured two Tennessee Williams' plays in their current season, *In The Bar Of A Tokyo Hotel* and *Kirche, Kuchchen And Kinder*. *Kirche* etc has that suspicious title of "a work-in-progress" as well as carrying the subtitle "An outrage for the stage". All this excess baggage means is that Mr Williams is attempting to write an absurdist play. The only previous effort in this genre that I can recall was the 1960's *Slapstick Tragedy*, when Zoe Caldwell was wonderfully funny as a Southern gossip columnist.

*Kirche* is set in Manhattan's Soho where we meet your atypical American family: Father's a retired male hustler, Mother wields a hatchet, and the two children, having failed in school are sent uptown to seek their fortune literally on the streets of New York. Add to this a lecherous Lutheran minister and an old fraulein in grotesque drag. Her name is Fraulein Haussmitzenschlogger and that title is, unfortunately, characteristic of the whole piece.

This is a dumpling that is as heavy as lead and as totally indigestible. Two Absurdist essentials, lightness and logic, are nowhere to be seen and the whole style seems alien to Mr Williams. Furthermore, the production underlines what is already painfully obvious, making this work-in-progress one that has no place to go.

*Clothes For A Summer Hotel* is another matter. It is an ambitious attempt to examine the mysteries of two personalities that, down the years, continue to fascinate: Scott and Zelda Fitzgerald.

The curtain reveals Oliver Smith's evocative setting that immediately registers as some kind of waystation to Hell. There is a facade of an asylum that abruptly ends in a jagged line, to show us low, dark hills beyond. A blazing flamebush symbolically glows; the wind howls. Two nuns in fantastic wimples and trailing black gowns stand like guardian vultures at the door of the asylum. Scott Fitzgerald (Kenneth Haigh) paces outside, awaiting his wife. He is inappropriately dressed for the scene, in the white ducks and sports jacket of his Hollywood life — hence, the play's title. Zelda (Geraldine Page) rushes on in complete disarray; torn pink ballet dress, dancer's warm-up (Continued over page)
A promising beginning for what Mr Williams has called "A Ghost Play." From this windy hill in North Carolina, we dip back consistently to the past to the young Scott and Zelda and their friends, as the Fitzgeralds confront the ghosts of their youth. In presenting these personalities — Zelda's aviator lover, Hemingway, the Gerald Murphys, Mrs Patrick Campbell — Mr Williams is immediately placed in a straightjacket of retelling a tale thrice told.

Williams has called "A Ghost Play." From the past to the young Fitzgeralds confront the ghosts of their own to confront. Ms Page, with her eccentric delivery, is a vibrant if over-aged Zelda, but plays past and present on the same note. Kenneth Haigh's puffy and none-too-sympathetic Scott does better, but this is Zelda's play and Mrs Williams would do well to give a more consistent spotlight to his heroine. Clothes as it stands is a disappointment, an attempt at a major theme that fails. We have to remember Tennessee Williams' recent quote — "Work is the loveliest four-letter word there is" — and hope that he has the courage to tell the Fitzgeralds' story just one more time.

Given Mr Williams' persistence for rewriting, there is something valuable here just waiting to be worked again in a much more adventurous manner.

The play brings together Mr Williams, director Jose Quintero and Geraldine Page who all three worked together in 1952 on Summer And Smoke and probably each had ghosts of their own to confront. Ms Page, with her eccentric delivery, is a vibrant if over-aged Zelda, but plays past and present on the same note. Kenneth Haigh's puffy and none-too-sympathetic Scott does better, but this is Zelda's play and Mrs Williams would do well to give a more consistent spotlight to his heroine. Clothes as it stands is a disappointment, an attempt at a major theme that fails. We have to remember Tennessee Williams' recent quote — "Work is the loveliest four-letter word there is" — and hope that he has the courage to tell the Fitzgeralds' story just one more time.

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THIRD WORLD THEATRE

The ITI's South Korean centre will hold an international third world theatre festival in Seoul in March 1981. The ITI's Cyprus centre will hold a third world conference on the theme "Theatre and the defence of freedom" from October 20 to 26, 1980.

FIRST INTERNATIONAL FESTIVAL OF WOMEN ARTISTS

This will be held in Copenhagen, Denmark, July 14 to 30, 1980, coinciding with the World Conference of the UN Decade for Women. Readings, performances, panel discussions, and films will demonstrate the achievements of women in art. Women are invited to participate in the slide presentation, publications display, and international postcard exhibition. For information contact: Helen Lait Kluge, G1, Hareskovej 333, 3500 Værløse, Denmark.

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SIBMAS will hold its 14th International Congress from September 15 to 20 in Belgrade, Yugoslavia. The theme is "The Use of Theatrical and other Records for Artistic and Technical Purposes: Methodology." Workshops will cover: 1. Museums of the Performing Arts and Theatres, 2. Documentation and Theatre Criticism, 3. Lexicography of the Performing Arts. Contact the Secretary: Sinisa Janic, Musej Pozoriste Umetnosti SR SRBIJE, 19 Gospodar Jevremova, 11000 Beograd, Jugoslavija.
DANCE

BY WILLIAM SHOUBRIDGE

Berlin and Prague Ballets and Raymonda

On the strength of the dance companies from overseas brought to Australia for this year's Adelaide Arts Festival, I can only hope that Jim Sharman (if allowed to run his course as director) will give consideration to the suggestions of people in the dance scene in Australia as to what to bring out next time in the way of dance groups.

The Ballet of the Berlin Komische Oper and the Prague Chamber Ballet were a couple of the most flacid, inept and diffuse companies ever seen in this country. Neither of these imported groups could honestly pass muster in the way of originality of vision or uniqueness of content.

On the face of it, one can agree that musically speaking both of the imported ballet companies (along with the Mabou Mines group from New York) were of considerable interest. Prague Chamber Ballet had scores by Dvorak and various "avant guard" Chekoslovakian composers. The Berlin Ballet had the draw of Tchiakovsky's Swan Lake in its complete and original form as well as music by Debussy, Schubert and Stravinsky.

It is a shame for the Adelaide Festival that neither company had any real impact in terms of dance values.

Undoubtedly it was an expensive enterprise bringing out the Berlin Ballet to Australia, but in my opinion it was money wasted (apart from anything else the seasons in each capital city have hardly been sell outs). For the same amount of money we could have had at least two top notch groups from America, Paul Taylor's Company say, or Twyla Tharp and dancers. America is the scene for interesting and exciting dance now in the world, it no longer lies with these supranuated, third-class Iron Curtain groups, so please, let's see the next Festival's attractions demonstrate a bit of wit and knowledge on the subject.

PRAGUE CHAMBER BALLET

The Prague Chamber Ballet looked sadly lacking in group cohesion, verve and intelligent design in nearly everything it did. They probably thought it terribly daring to do some of the things they did back in Prague but those affected dramatic poses and etiolated eurythmics gave out trying to communicate anything very early on in the piece and stayed that way through everything they performed. Perhaps it was some sort of macabre joke of the Festival Trust's, in that they would put this company side by side with the Australian Dance Theatre so that our audiences would witness the home company's undoubted superiority and not be so parochial in future. Whatever the reason, the Prague Chamber Ballet was a major embarrassment to the Sydney Opera House Trust and the dance critics of all persuasions.

BERLIN BALLET

The Ballet of the Berlin Komische Oper on the other hand was at least interesting in that it allowed us to look at a complete ensemble company and to listen to the complete music to Swan Lake as its composer wrote it, but neither of those gifts, as it turned out, were sufficient to justify bringing it to this country. As a ballet company the Berlin Ballet is not of major importance and the choreographic content of Swan Lake, at least, was rarely above that of the commonplace.

The main reason why the Ur-Swan Lake of 1877 was a failure was that the choreography of Reisinger was dismal. The so-called charge that the music was "too symphonic" was merely a pretext trumped up by the dancers and Reisinger because it gave too few chances for the principals to have an extended sequence to themselves; as far as Tchaikovsky was concerned the drama was all important not the vanity of the primadonas.

It was due to all the amendments and changes brought about by the musical director of the 1895 revival, Riccardo Drigo, that the score is such a wild mess of Tchaikovsky as the latterday hack, not so much the wonderful and inspired choreography of Marius Petipa and Lev Ivanov. If only we could have had a present day
choreographer with as much inspiration and genius as these two to reset the original work as it was envisaged. Tom Schilling is far from approaching such ability.

Both in his Swan Lake and in the 2nd programme works, one was always conscious of a veritable encyclopedia of bits and pieces from modern classical choreographers. We have Bejartesque movements in the Act 2 Lake scene, cohorts of Grigorovich men in the court scenes, goosestepping their way along as if they had wandered out of the Bolshoi Spat makes and a weird concoction of Jiri Kylian, Balanchine, Cranko and God knows who else in the "ethnic" dances and so forth of Act 3.

But even this would have been endurable if the whole work had been tied together dramatically with the music and the idea behind Tchaikovsky’s original, but Schilling, in collaboration with his General Manager Bernd Kollinger, has managed to construct a thematic and schematic directorial concept on the whole ballet that robs it of any natural life, diversity or magic.

While the music may be a “revelation”, the storyline itself is singleminded in thumping home its ideas about political systems, corruption in high places and the dilemma of the individual conscience in a vile system. Time after time is this point hammered home at the expense of any growing, cumulative drama or characterisation or poetry, contrast or choreographic growth.

HAMLET TERRITORY

With a Siegfried glimpsed at the very opening of the ballet, lying prostrate on the ground, and looking very sickled o’er with the pale cast of thought we know we are very deep into Hamlet territory. Fine, point made, but we still get it when Siegfried dances a series of tangled, confused duets and trios with his mother (the Queen Gertrude) and the court adviser cum sorcerer (Rothbart/Clau dius). If these literary illusions weren’t enough we get a flash of Oedipus in Act 3 when the duets with the Queen get rather heated, and a smidgin of Othello with our hero wandering around with a white scarf, for no discernable reason.

All of these impressions have to come through the mind’s eye though, since there is precious little in the way of scenery or costume to give one any sense of time, place or social milieu.

The court dances in Acts 1 and 3 are uniformly dull, robotic and unidentifiable, there is a grim, nervous waltz to the Act 1 music that has not a glimmer of the sheen and glow of the music. The same again happens in Act 3 with the mazurka, surely a place where the stage and choreography should mirror the full Tsarist grandeur of the music, but no.

For all their much vaunted fidelity to Tchaikovsky’s original intentions (and let it be remembered, he was a musician and demonstrably did not know much about what worked on the stage, especially the ballet stage), Tom Schilling and his librettist have seen fit to disregard the impulse and demand of the music itself. They have also dispensed with any sense of tragedy and poetry in the Act 2 Lake scene (though in this production it could be the surface of the moon for all the “designs” tell us).

There is no reason for Siegfried to be there for a start. At least in the “old fashioned” version there was enough dramatic realism for him to be there, he was out hunting, but in this “stunning” version he just happens to appear there ... like a genie. And look what doesn’t happen when he gets there. No discovery, no passion, no poetry. Dramatically and choreographically speaking the Lake scene is nowhere. The Bride of Dracula swans are given movements as flat and insipid as those that characterised the court, so there’s not even a movement contrast.

It is here that the “old fashioned” version has it all over this modernistic proletarian mishmash. Lev Ivanov was a master craftsman and he knew how to pace and build his big scenes so that they made sense in dance terms as well as elucidating the dramatic thread. Even more important was his ability to translate the love and exhilaration of the first encounter in choreographic motifs throughout the famous White Swan pas de deux. Although sissones-en-avant and winged arabesques happen in hundreds of ballets, the images of struggle in bondage occur in Swan Lake alone. So too, those deep reverences of Siegfried partake of a meaning beyond mere balletic chivalry, portraying rather a wanderment and infatuation at the embodiment of an ideal. It is that, as much as romantic attraction, that springs Siegfried and Odette together.

Swan Lake in its old form created by Petipa and Ivanov is not a “fairytale about birds” as only the deliberately myopic would claim, it is a drama about freedom revealed in movement of dazzling variety and clarity. The finale is so exciting because that final escape from bondage is truly cathartic and has been prepared for throughout the duration of the work.

In Schilling’s version, there was no release because there was no cogent presentation of struggle, merely threats. When that huge sheet of silk came cascading down at the end of the ballet it meant nothing in relation to what had gone before and therefore meant nothing in its own terms.

The Berlin Komische Oper Ballet tried to dance Swan Lake not as the lyric tragedy it is but rather as a vast tone poem ... all in tones of grey. Let it be an abject example to those tempted to “politicise” a masterpiece of the Romantic tradition, especially when they can’t portray either the dialectic of politics or the manner of Romance on the stage convincingly.

PROGRAMME TWO

Things didn’t improve much in the ballets on the Second Programme. La Mer, Youth Symphonies and Evening Dances were all out of the same earnest Schilling mould.

Youth Symphonies was a compote of Petit and Balanchine and only revealed the fuzzy and lumpish Soviet trained technique of the dancers. If one is going to compose a ballet without plot (even if it has a theme like Youth), one must make sure that the line and design of those exposed bodies on stage is linear, clear and self explanatory as well as logical in ex position.

But Youth Symphonies was full of pauses, ruminations and unsettling swerves of choreographic progression. It was only made worse by the matter of fact performance. The woman seemed edgy and brittle while the men had nothing in the way of ballon, elevation or sufficient follow through in their port de bras and all of them direly need to clean up their footwork and placement so that they can be seen to phrase an enchainment properly rather than fall from one into another.

The same faults were well illustrated in Evening Dances although they didn’t spread quite so wide here simply because there were really only two main protagonists on the stage, that is after all those
fey Robbinsesque gatherings had been dispensed with.

It (the pas de deux) was another patchwork unfortunately but at least one could relax with the two excellent dancers Dieter Hulse and Jutta Deuschland. It was a wide, blossoming duet, the energy always arising from the attraction/repulsion theme, flowing out and upward only to contract back into a tight hold or adhesive lift. It was also much more musically keen than La Mer.

Masses and masses of pirouettes, runs, archings and unfurling extensions reminiscent of Bejart at his worst, don’t make up for a representation of Love, they merely show an overworked imagination and underdeveloped invention, no matter how much the audiences or the critics may revel in their own emotions.

Cranko’s acidic and nervy Jeu de Cartes didn’t get a good treatment at the hands of the East Germans either. No sparkle, no tongue in cheek zap and an unforgivably sloppy ensemble made me wonder if this was the same work as that I had seen by the Stuttgart Ballet.

Anyway, at least Australia can say it is the only country in the West that has seen the Berlin Ballet, and the Berlin people can say that they have a guage of how the West sees Dance. If this is what the dancers in East Germany have as a continual diet however, it’s a wonder that more of them didn’t defect.

AUSTRALIAN BALLET’S RAYMONDA

The important thing to remember about Raymonda is not to go to it looking for a story line; it hasn’t got one. It also hasn’t got very good music (Stravinsky called Glavunov a “Carl Phillip Emmanuel Rimsky Korsakov” which is hard if apt).

In the Australian Ballet’s version, the work is also nubbled by the interference of Nureyev’s bits and pieces as well as the hideous designs of Ralph Koltai (pray tell me what huge mirrors and Romanoff biccephalous eagles have to do with medieval Provence?).

When one scrubs all this away, what one does have is some of the finest Russian Maryinsky choreography of Marius Petipa. Raymonda is in fact three of the finest crafted “plotless” abstract ballets on the classical stage. The work as a whole and especially the central role is a technician’s part. The Australian Ballet is not up to the technical demands of the work, neither is the Opera Theatre stage big enough to contain the work.

Raymonda is a large, grand expansive work. It does not develop from cramped surroundings. The large corps de ballet moments need room to breathe; they didn’t have that room on the Opera Theatre stage and therefore looked fussy, clumsy and out of character. I don’t think that anyone on the artistic side of the Australian Ballet, likes or even has the remotest interest in Raymonda as a full length ballet, and I wouldn’t blame then because it just isn’t a ballet, especially in this ridiculous incarnation, but if it is going to have any life on stage, some one, at least the lead parts, must have some interest.

Michaela Kirkaldie and Kelvin Coe had a fair command of the technical necessities but no atmospheric aura about them; the second cast of Gary Norman and Lois Strike didn’t seem to give a damn and just walked their way through it; the third cast of Sheree da Costa and Dale Baker staggered their way through with tons of atmosphere, bravado and stage tricks, but no assurance of style.

The corps de ballet was woeful throughout; it just goes to show that when one gets down to the nitty gritty, the Australian Ballet has no awareness or interest in the rigours or mannerisms of a pure classical or Romantic style, it gets through these works purely by bluff and stage manner. The Australian audiences are seeing not a first rate internationally acclaimed company, but rather a provincial company, that, in pieces like this, is first rate at being third rate.

Kelvin Coe and Michaela Kirkaldie in the A B's Raymonda. Photo: Branco Gaica.
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THEATRE AUSTRALIA JUNE 1980 25
2 Threepenny Operas and Giovanni on film

Two well-known but problematical works — Mozart’s Don Giovanni and Brecht/Weill’s Threepenny Opera — dominated my opera-going during the month under review.

In quick succession, I saw live but highly contrasting productions of The Threepenny Opera in Brisbane and Canberra; and I had an opportunity to preview Joseph Losey’s film version of Don Giovanni which opens late this month (June) in Sydney and will be seen later in the year in other capital cities.

Meanwhile, as I mentioned last month, the Australian Opera was touring the provinces — playing The Magic Flute, La Traviata and Falstaff in Melbourne and Brisbane before reviving The Abduction from the Seraglio and its spectacularly successful John Cox production of Gilber and Sullivan’s Patience in Melbourne during May.

Treading water in a sea of revivals, as it were, before launching its demanding winter season at the Sydney Opera House early in June with a return season of its 1974 Tales of Hoffmann featuring Joan Carden as the four heroines followed, a mere two days later, by the premiere of a brand new production of Puccini’s Manon Lescaut featuring Leona Mitchell in the title role.

The only other live productions during the period under review were a very good excursion into the 17th-century repertory by the State Opera of South Australia, and a couple of minor Sydney seasons devoted to Gilbert and Sullivan, on the one hand, and a pastiche spanning no less than 300 years, on the other.

Both The Threepenny Opera and Don Giovanni are problem pieces for anyone who tackles them: the former, because it requires a team of actor-singers which is all but impossible to assemble; the latter for the fantastic nature of its plot, its incredible vocal demands and the near-impossibility of bringing off its denouement in purely theatrical terms.

The two recent Threepenny Operas, viewed together in retrospect, provide a near-perfect illustration of the problem of the piece. The first, put on by Brisbane’s T.N. Company, was by and large dramatically excellent but fell down in the singing voice department. The second, presented by Canberra Opera, was vocally much better but lacked dramatic punch. It was far from as simple as that, of course; but that generalisation will do for starters.

The problem of The Threepenny Opera, of course, is complicated by Brecht’s iconoclastic orientation: to play it to maximum effect, a team of performers must be possessed, preferably individually as well as collectively, by a gut-distrust of human nature not to mention the integrity of human institutions.

It requires the sort of raw anger and frustration at the status quo that seldom survive adolescence and very rarely indeed flowers anywhere in Ockerland, even in the ultra-conservative confines of Bjelke-Petersenland or the hothouse atmosphere of public service-oriented Canberra.

BRISBANE’S THREEPENNY OPERA

The recent Brisbane production had a lot going for it to start with, in terms of a production team highly experienced in exactly the right quarters. One could hardly fault the credentials either of John Milson, a thoroughly experienced opera director with a good deal of straight dramatic work to his credit as well; or those of his musical director, George Tinterow, who some years ago demonstrated his special affinity for the Brecht/Weill idiom when the Australian Opera presented The Rise and Fall of the City of Mahagonny at the Sydney Opera House in 1975.

Occasionally, Milson admittedly permitted the action to drift too far upstage for comfort; but by and large I found the set an admirable one for an opera peopled by as motley a collection of rogues, no-hopers and downright nasty types as has ever been assembled in the one stage situation.

It also seemed to make particularly good use of an awkward theatre and pit arrangement by placing some of the action on a catwalk between pit and audience. This was my first experience of Brisbane’s Twelfth Night Theatre, but even at a glance it is clear that the venue has considerable problems and this seemed an admirable way to get round at least some of them.

What was generally lacking among the performers in this Threepenny Opera was raw guts: not only in the singing, where just about nobody had enough sheer vocal power to project satisfyingly even half way up a moderate-sized theatre to where I was sitting, but also in the delivery of the spoken dialogue. It was all just a shade too genteel, whereas it all ought to be rough as guts.

It was just not in keeping with the quite marvellous sleaziness of the context into which the action was hurled. Most of the individual performances were quite good, in particular the Mac the Knife of Harry Scott and the Tiger Brown of Duncan Wass.

I was also quite impressed by the smarmy Peachum of Michael McCaffrey as well as the Mrs Peachum of Milson himself, standing in at the last moment for the lady who was scheduled to play the part. At no stage did he camp it up; and he came across very well indeed in the one of the work’s pivotal roles.

In fact, Milson sang as well as anybody in the cast — with one notable exception — and a good deal better than most, for there was an alarming paucity of vocal talent in the cast despite its considerable dramatic strengths.

Judith Anderson’s Polly looked absolutely marvellous, but failed to convince dramatically because it was woefully small of spoken voice and just about inaudible when required to sing.

The one outstanding vocal performance of the night was turned in by Sally McKenzie as Jenny Diver: here was a lady who could act with conviction, project her lines to me and beyond, and sing robustly yet pleasingly.

AND CANBERRA’S

The Canberra production, emanating as it did from the local opera company, was predictably stronger on the vocal front though not as satisfying as it ought to have been due to an unfortunate staging problem arising from James Ridewood’s set design.

In itself Ridewood’s set was quite intriguing visually, consisting as it did of a bare scaffolded centre stage to top of which the orchestra was positioned in full view of the audience. Thus the action ebbed and flowed under and around the orchestra, with some entrances and exits taking place over the top of the scaffolding.
and the performers occasionally strolling round behind it in full view of the audience.

But of course this meant that the conductor, Donald Hollier, was behind and above most of the performers most of the time, with the inevitable result there could be no visual communication between him and them. Such positioning would, of course, be disastrous for most operas, but admittedly is much less of a problem with a piece so innately rhythmical as The Threepenny Opera.

Even so, there were moments when things got marginally out of kilter, and there was nothing Hollier could do except rescue things by following the singers. No disasters resulted, but things were a good deal less precise than it would have been nice for them to be.

Dramatically, there was nothing to complain of in John Tasker's direction; but unfortunately there was quite a lot to complain of in the performances he was able to draw out of his principals. Everybody seemed just plain too nice, too civilised, to suit the work. The players didn't merely need to intensify their characterisation, as by and large had been the case in Brisbane; they actually seemed not to grasp the essence of the characters they were playing.

This even applied to Doug Williams' Mac, early in the piece; though he grew quite palpably as the evening wore on, and was quite pleasingly strong by the third act. The same could almost be said of Elizabeth Lord's Polly, though of course that is far less of a flaw in her role than in Macheath's.

And she coped quite magnificently with the instantaneous transformation required of her midway through Act II when Macheath hands the business over to her when he is forced to go into hiding; it was not hard at all to believe that she was now fierce and assertive enough to keep the band of crooks in their place.

Of the rest, I find myself thinking back over and over again to Mildred Travers' oddly effective Mrs Peachum — thin, frail, almost the essence of timidity at first glance, but gradually proving as the drama unfolds how tough and unfrowning the lady is under the surface. There was no doubt she knew what The Threepenny Opera was all about; had everyone else been as good, this would have been a marvellous realisation of a piece very often performed, but only very rarely performed with distinction.

DON GIOVANNI

Some quite extraordinary advance publicity from overseas about Joseph Losey's film version of Don Giovanni led me to approach a preview screening with a certain amount of wariness. Could it really be as good, I asked myself, as those reports claimed, or was it just that we were being fed a carefully filtered sampling of the actual reactions of the overseas critics by the Hoyts' publicity machine?

I could not help thinking back to the ecstatic advance publicity about the Bergman film version of The Magic Flute, which in the event impressed me only moderately; and to a fairly deep personal disinclination to accept without reservation that film is really an ideal medium for conveying opera.

Clearly, such an inherently expensive art form as grand opera must make use one way or another of the impersonal media if it is to survive; but I have always tended to prefer the frankness and honesty of recorded opera, which starts off by ditching altogether the visual element in favour of concentrating on the ravishing fullness of sound that can be achieved in the modern studio but seldom if ever seen in the actual theatre.

Film and television must obviously be persevered with, but the problems would seem to be almost insurmountable; unless you prerecord and mime, in itself a dangerous procedure, you are inclined to get less than the best sound; there is an ever-present danger of too many close-ups of vibrating tonsils; if a director becomes too innovative he risks doing severe disservice to the integrity of a work designed to communicate in the inevitably distanced context of the opera theatre, with the gulf — if not always the yawning abyss — of an orchestra pit always intervening between tonal and the nearest spectators. With TV, spectacle is all but impossible, at least in live opera production terms, because of the postage stamp dimensions of the medium itself.

But all they say about the Losey Don Giovanni proves the event to be true; for the first time, when observing a filmed opera, I at no stage winced or squirmed or felt moved even momentarily to drowse. And with Don Giovanni such a triumph is far more difficult to achieve in production than with most operas; for it is filled with potentially deadly static arias and places such emphasis on the supernatural and the fantastic that there is always a danger that any performance will end up degenerating into downright absurdity.

But there are very few tonsils in this film version, and it has a dramatic unity and credibility which is probably impossible to achieve in the live theatre — aided by the master stroke of filming it in the marvellously photogenic city of Vicenza, near Venice; a city possessed not only of exactly the sort of real-life architecture required as sets for Don Giovanni but also, apparently, laced by canals equipped with gondolas.

You see them both, those mystical elements of fire and water, even before the overture is finished: a dumb show takes place in which Don Giovanni shows many of the principals in the drama-about-to-unfold over his glassworks, where red-hot fired objects sizzle into open vats to produce marvellously scenic clouds of steam; then you are shown a gondola gliding toward a landing with the Don himself erect near the bow floating through space in the instant before the drama proper commences.

A veiled Kiri Te Kanawa (as Donna Elvira) pacing furiously about a green carpet of lawn, fulminating at her desertion by the Don. The marvellous close-up of her face when he approaches and she unvels and they recognise each other, she with fury, he with the specially acute embarrassment of the philanderer caught with his pants down, as it were.

The way a lackey produces the list of the Don's conquests for Leporello during the catalogue aria, folded and stacked like a mammoth computer print-out; and the way Leporello drags one end of it down a long flight of open-air steps as he sings, and the way Te Kanawa picks up a few feet of it and reads the odd name or two and registers her disgust.

Zerlina dragged into a corner by the hotblooded Don with rape in mind, the whole sordid near-seduction witnessed only by a huge dog lying just out of focus in the near background.

Leporello and Don Giovanni discussing the day's agenda over the nude body of the Don's latest conquest curled up on a bed. It all adds up to as good filmed opera as you're ever likely to see, and infinitely better than most. Lorin Maazel and the Orchestra and Chorus of the National Theatre of the Paris Opera turn in a fine reading of the score which is superbly recorded and reproduced at least at Hoyts Entertainment Centre, Sydney.

Ruggero Raimondi, in the title role, captures perfectly the mixture of bastard, rogue, lecher and nobleman that is the Don; Jose Van Dam is equally fine as Leporello.

Edda Moser is a marvellously doleful Donna Anna, Te Kanawa turns in the most convincing dramatic performance I have yet to see from her as Donna Elvira, and sings ravishingly as always.

Even if you hate opera, this Don Giovanni is well worth seeing as cinema. If you like opera, but hate filmed opera, you may be pleasantly surprised. Likewise if you like opera but find Don Giovanni a tough pill to digest.

The only people who will hate this film are those who detest both opera and The Film. They're excused; but nobody else.

*David Gyger is editor of Opera Australia.
BY ELIZABETH RIDDLE

**Breaker Morant: a triumph**

Bruce Beresford and his producer, Matt Carroll, have gone for broke with *Breaker Morant* — taken what is already a melodramatic story right up to the brink of bathos and sentimentality and backed off in time, and the result is a triumph. Even to take on this strange, old-fashioned quirky story of events that seemed at the time to be simple but have been demonstrated to be extremely complex was risk enough, especially when the film had to include a long courtroom scene, as much the bane of directors and actors as working with children and dogs is said to be.

There is also the fact that it is hard to make a hero of Morant, or of Peter Handcock or George Witton, or really of anybody concerned, either side of the political or military line. If anybody comes clean out of the Breaker Morant story, in the Beresford version, it is the defense counsel for the three men, the — in every sense — bush lawyer, Major J F Thomas, played by Jack Thompson. However, the perceptive, subtle script gives the audience a chance to be sorry for almost everyone, as it can be sorry for everyone in *Apocalypse Now*, difficult as it would be for some of the characters to see themselves as objects of pity.

It may be that the opening is a bit tentative, but the crash into recurring action is intensely exciting, not on the grand scale of engaged armies but in a man to man, gun to gun, horse to horse collision that is over and done with in a minute or two, leaving the squalor of death in a dried hostile country terribly apparent. In whatever orderly state the British troops may have lived while fighting conventionally against the Boers, Morant’s lot, the Bushveldt Carbineers, lived like stockmen driving cattle in a drought in search of pasture. The BVC were there for many reasons, but certainly not strongly actuated by love of the empire, except for George Witton, whose father had taught him to believe in it.

Morant, Handock and Witton were charged before a court martial with killing Boer prisoners and murdering a German missionary. The war was pattering out, the British wanted to keep on side with Germany, the “colonials” were seen to be irritating, undisciplined, and embarrassing. I wondered at times at the free use of the word “colonial” complete with sneer, by the officers of the British corps, but I have to assume that the film has been researched enough to make it valid. I also wondered if Major Thomas would have made such a performance of snapping salute and right-turning when he entered the court each time. I would have thought that was a sergeant-major’s kind of thing. But again, I have to believe the researcher and writers.

The courtroom scenes are beautifully presented. The room itself is a bleak place, with the judges at one end, prisoners and prosecuting officer facing each other, defense counsel hovering at the edge, and in the centre a kitchen chair for the witness.

Edmund Woodward as Breaker Morant.

The camera picks up the extreme discomfort of the proceedings, as the sound picks up the creak of leather belts, the rustle of papers and the pounding of army boots every time someone leaves or enters. A good rendition of military behaviour in its full rigidity is always impressive, and I have never been more impressed by it than in *Breaker*.

The cast is perfectly assembled for what it has to do: Edward Woodward is an actor who is able to convince an audience that he understands the pains and pleasures of real life; he can convey obsession, belief in his own righteousness, hardness, yet the whole is modified by a kind of melancholy induced by the knowledge that everything will end badly, as indeed it does.

Bryan Brown’s Lt Peter Handcock has a hard eye, a hard wit, and a hard way with women — there are plenty of him around in Australia and Brown plays him with dash. Lewis Fitz-Gerald’s George Witton, who believed in the rightness of the British cause, is an endearing figure, and the one to be most sorry for, the survivor.

Jack Thompson’s role as Major Thomas is a difficult one; it allows him to prove for the first time since *Caddie* and *The Chant Of Jimmy Blacksmith*, what a good actor he is. He has most of the big speeches. In fact, the address to the judges on behalf of his three clients should be cut by half, not because Thompson does not deliver it well, because he does, but because Beresford is telling us what the film, and especially the legal proceedings have already told us. This is a mistake often made by writers of stage and screen with reputations rather more inflated than Beresford’s.

Many other actors appearing nightly on television or in less attractive local films can be seen to their advantage in *Breaker* — John Waters as a disillusioned captain in Intelligence; Rod Mullinar as the prosecuting major from a British regiment, the Royal Field Artillery; Terence Donovan as Captain Hunt, whose mutilation after an encounter with the Boers was revenged by Morant; Charles Tingwell as a stuffy Lt Colonel, the presiding judge; Chris Haywood as a witness against Morant; Vincent Ball as Colonel Ian Hamilton, aide to Kitchener (and later, as General Sir Ian Hamilton, to command “colonials” in the Great War).

Thirty three people are mentioned in the credits, among them Don McAlpine, for the distinguished photography. It is a South Australian Film Commission motion picture made in association with the Australian Film Commission and the Seven Network.
Theatre / Act

Daring attempts

The Glad Hand
Strawberry Fields

by Kyle Wilson


Director. Warwick Baxter
( Amateur

Director. Designer. Ken Boucher

The new wave of British plays of political purpose arrived in Canberra thanks to the attractively distorted of a new generation of directors. Warwick Baxter and Ken Boucher are to be applauded for their daring attempts to raise the political awareness of Canberra’s staid audiences by varying their regimen of anaesthetising entertainment-theatre with the Australian premieres of Snoo Wilson’s bizarre satirico-political charade and Stephen Poliakoff’s sombre, violent vision of nascent British fascism.

Both plays are avowedly agitational propaganda and ultimately political diatribes, but Snoo Wilson’s is the more successful reconciliation of the opposed values of tendentiousness and artistic quality, largely because he eschews any attempt to mask his ideological position with a camouflage of traditional stage realism: indeed he buries his message in such a potpourri of ideas, characters, symbolism and allegory that we forget we are being propagandised. Poliakoff, on the other hand, seeks to convince us that his view of socio-political developments in Britain is reality, by expressing it in the form of slice-of-life documentary. This means that audiences will be acutely sensitive to any distortions or discrepancies between their perceptions and his, so when he schematises his characters and presents a one-sided argument we perceive a moralist behind his mask of narrative.

Wilson’s play is also flawed, for its propagandist core is so effectively concealed by absurdist devices and eccentric humour that few can understand what the playwright is expressing: the two perceptive academics sitting next to me were baffled by it. Nonetheless, they greatly enjoyed it, for its cryptic, dense texture lit by flashes of wit and spectacular theatricality.

As I understood it: on an oil-tanker somewhere in the Bermuda Triangle (the tanker symbolising the Ships of State), a generalised neofascist megalomaniac. Restaat, is engaged in an obsessive search and destroy mission. His quarry is the Antichrist, ie the bogeysman of capitalism, communism.

In Act II we watch a decoy action, the play-within-the-play, while Restaat grows increasingly tense, sensing the imminent appearance of his quarry. In a quirky and mystifying resolution the latter arrives in the person of Umberto, the ship’s Spanish cook, who rapes one of the Hooley women, shoots Lazarus and finally despatches Restaat, cutting short the latter’s crazed peroration on the nature of reality. I remained puzzled as to what statement was being made, but the whole was so intriguing and entertaining that it didn’t seem to matter.

Director Warwick Baxter obviously has a feel for political theatre and fully exploited the play’s absurdist humour and farcical action. He was aided by a series of arresting performances, in particular Geoff Edwards’ polished, canny and powerful interpretation of Restaat; bullish yet dynamic, obdurate yet taunted by demons.

However, an audience can only take so much obscuration and cryptic encoding: ultimately theatricality was not enough and Act II sagged. The director of this oddly remarkable play must somehow invest it with a greater logic and clarity than its author has achieved.

Poliakoff’s theme is also fascism, but his expression of it is unequivocal, even doctrinaire and far more conventional. He creates two negative characters, repositories of the ideas and attitudes he is condemning — these associated with the odious National Front — to whom he juxtaposes a positive character, the articulator of “our” sane, humanistic attitudes. He attempts to avoid schematisation by making the latter initially unattractive, but ultimately characterisation is coloured by ideology.

Charlotte, an ample, repressed and frustrated middle-class bigot, all starch and decorum, is travelling north from London with Kevin, an amiable, dim-witted, alienated and schizophrenic youth. They are distributing agitational pamphlets to various contacts in their semi-clandestine organisation. A disagreeable, cocksure young hitchhiker (Nick) attaches himself to them and by means of his probing we learn of their ultra-naturalistic xenophobia. Apparently morbidly fascinated, Nick remains with them until Charlotte murders a too-inquisitive policeman at which point he becomes their prisoner.

The revelation of Charlotte’s and Kevin’s attitudes is skilfully retarded, but we are unprepared for the murder. The fault may lie with the playwright, but one suspected that Trish Williams’ interpretation so assiduously avoided cliched fascist stigmata that her abrupt metamorphosis into murderess seemed arbitrary: we had perceived no suppressed propensity for violence. David Bennett’s bewildered youth did achieve this quality and indeed dominated the production.

Ken Boucher’s mise-en-scene was a most skilful use of the Theatre Three stage and his set revealed him as a designer of the first rank: three rampart like flats loomed over a bare platform, empty save for a few eloquent symbols of the urban wasteland. He failed to fully exploit the power latent in the two execution scenes, which should be really shattering in their brutality if the author’s demonology is to convince us. The play itself is marred by a subtle variety of distortion: the neo-fascist attitude is presented as the aberration of sick minds, and no counter arguments are offered. All we are given is Nick’s incredulity and moral outrage, hence the playwright’s tendentiousness seems overt. Nevertheless, it is a powerful and provocative piece intelligently realised, certainly the finest production of Theatre Three of the last few years.
The themes of this play, though, are maddeningly nebulous. Academic, an official interpreter and journalists on assignment, a committed American in Goya's Spain. And now Anthony King Steve Sewell was content to leave his placement, productions has been the fare at Nimrod since Neil Armfield made his professional debut with Upside Down at the Bottom of the World. Audiences have been treated to that classic version of rural settlement On Our Selection, moved by a compelling portrait of a twilight love affair Travelling North (at the Theatre Royal) and arrested by the extent of the black/white cultural rift of Bullie's House.

Most recently, though, the company has moved into the cosmopolitan realms, with many of our writers; David Allen brought Lawrence to the "bottom of the world", but Steve Sewell was content to leave his Traitors in mid-twentieth Russia and John Anthony King The House of the Deaf Man in Goya's Spain. And now Clouds, written by English journalist Michael Frayn, has drifted into the theatre. Perhaps it was chosen to leaven the season after two intense pieces and before we are plunged into the tragedy of the House of Atreus, but it does not seem to be of sufficient stature to be a "modern classic" (Penguin terminology) or to stand up to the local product, which two, along with the true classics, make up Nimrod policy so far as it discernibly has one. Its subject matter is fairly straightforward; a part of people, two journalists on assignment, a committed American academic, an official interpreter and a Spanish-speaking chauffeur, are followed through their brief tour of Cuba. The themes of this play, though, are maddeningly nebulous.

Just as the action is nowhere tied to a setting, but occurs in apparent mid-sky on a cross between a trampoline and cinema screen with endless cloud formations projected thereupon, so the issues of the play remain up in the air. Is the play to enlighten us along the way about post-revolutionary Cuba; Frayn has after all been there as a journalist on assignment? Not really, for early on his persona, Owen, tells us "they're all the same these places. Guided tour of collective farms and irrigation projects" (etc) and so it turns out to be. Do we get an insight into journalism? Well there is a pontificating diatribe, again by Owen, on the "meticulous skills" required, though when any of the characters puts fingertip to typewriter key the result is diaristic drivel, not hard copy. Place and profession add colour but are apparently not of the essence. What we are left with are the inter-relationships between the various characters. A full blooded affair between the two journalists Mara and Owen, they are after all of opposite sexes? Deep stirrings in the clash of lifestyle between sophisticated Europeans and the representatives of an emergent nation? Not quite, but at least shapes are emerging in the mist. For the play does plot the meanderings of the lady, actually a manic depressive novelist, through the attentions of the men. The flirtations with Owen culminate in a three-way punch-up at the height of a storm (don't be misled, this is not the heat and passion of Tennessee Williams) and subside into an implied consumation — at last — but with the chauffeur.

I can imagine that Frayn's urbanity and lightness of touch (the blurb describes him as a "purveyor of high comedy and sophisticated farce") may have appealed to the English sense of reserve, and at least risen to the level of the engaging with Tom Courtenay and Felicity Kendal in its West End airing; this production never moved beyond the merely wry. Jennifer Hagan did manage wonders, alternating melancholia with an infectious joie de vivre, her dark eyes like shafts into a rich mine of creative temperament. But Paul Bertram as the priggish yet susceptible Owen and Max Gillies as the enthusiastic American, seemed to have as much trouble getting a line on their adrift characters as I did with the play as a whole. With John McTernan as the Cuban interpreter struggling to look better than a take-off of Manuel from Faulty Towers, it took Bob Maza's near mute chauffeur to earn any marks in the men's department. Neil Armfield crisply realised the deployment of actors called for in the stage directions, but otherwise let the play float in its own rarified atmosphere. Fifth Century BC Greece, with its seers, furies and Olympian gods suddenly seems much closer to home.
Given depth by performers

NO NAMES... NO PACKDRILL

by Lucy Wagner

No Names... No Packdrill by Bob Herbert. Sydney Theatre Company, Drama Theatre, NSW. Opened April 15, 1980.

Director: George Ogilvie; Set Designer, Kristian Frederikson; Costume Designer, Anna French. Performers: Julie Hamilton; Al Thomas; Brandon Bourke; Det Sgt Browning, Ron Falk; Mrs Palmer; Janice Finn; Joyce, Al Thomas; Det Webb; Andrew Tighe.

Following the success of Close Of Play, No Names... No Packdrill is likely to be the second STC production, within the space of a few weeks, to transfer to a commercial season at the Theatre Royal. Richard Wherrett's season to date has been, apparently, on the pulse of the Sydney audience. While the productions have been fresh, tough and of a high standard, they have also done what must be expected of the premier state company and provided entertainment for a broad spectrum audience. In doing this Wherrett has managed to run a series of plays which make an excellent complement to the more innovatory and comparatively esoteric work of Nimrod: compare The Sunny South to On Our Selection; Close Of Play to Nimrod's Clouds; Getting My Act Together... to Burlesco and Clowneroonies; and No Names... No Packdrill to Bullie's House and Traitors.

The latter two plays were major new Australian works which explored theme and style in a way which No Names... No Packdrill makes no pretence at doing. While both Bullie's House and Traitors move back in time in their settings, they deal with subjects that are very much at issue today and tomorrow. The yesteryear of No Names... is little more than a nostalgic setting for a romantic story which could have been localised in any year or country. The return to Second World War Sydney, though, makes an evening of humorous memories for those who remember it, with the young American deserter from Guadalcanal providing an outsider's reaction to the period Australian customs and slang. George Ogilvie's production draws an evocative picture of a naive and provincial Australia in the early 40's, only beginning to be tainted with American commercialism.

Julie Hamilton's gawky Joycie, squired by middle-aged American soldier Bernie ("God, he's a dag") during his leave, is an appealingly appalling innocent being initiated into the ways of the world; and Ron Falk's Detective Sgt Browning has old fashioned values which will develop into the attitudes of today's police when the deserter escapes by betraying his kindly trust.

But the story of the three major characters is not one which requires the wartime setting, nor does it sound any reverberations of relationships or attitudes changed by the tensions of such a situation. Just as it is the minor characters who reflect the era, so the era is only peripheral to the main action.

A young widow living alone harbours a man on the run; they fall in love but inevitably must part, and she and her petty criminal acquaintance engineer his escape. The triteness of their drama is given depth only by the skill and sincerity of its players: Noni Hazlehurst, Mel Gibson and Brandon Bourke are all at the top of a new generation of Australian actors whose strength is a warm professionalism and a versatility inter and intra media. It is to be hoped that their work on the screen will afford them a deserved star-appeal for the theatre-going public.

If the first act drags somewhat, the thriller aspect takes hold in the second and third — will Rebel get away before the MP's find him; will Rebel and Kathy fall in love; will Tiger find a boat for Rebel? Noni Hazlehurst makes it impossible for Rebel, and the audience, not to "get fond of" Kathy, and Brandon Bourke plays the small-time, black-market operator straight down the fine line between send-up and self-send-up that the character requires. If the audience are left unsure whether or not to sympathise with Rebel’s philosophy of watching out for Number One, it is not the fault of Mel Gibson, but of the author who has written in some horrible cliches for family background in an apparent attempt to explain away the marine's cowardice. In the pacifiest 80's, however, such conduct hardly needs explanation and Rebel's plan to return to the States to wage a personal war on his repressive father only indicates a narrow rather than broadened outlook.

The audience's perspective on No Names... is a physically narrowed one, as Kristian Frederikson's tiny, living room set perches at an angle in the centre of the Drama Theatre stage, emphasising the fact that this play would be better suited to the television screen where such technicalities as the opening dream sequence, limited interior setting and close-up performances would no doubt come into their own. If the medium is the message, the slightness of this one would be appropriate to the small screen, whereas the theatre can demand drama which is more on a par with its life-size proportions.

Mel Gibson (Rebel) and Noni Hazlehurst (Kathy) in the STC's No Names... No Packdrill. Photo: Branco Gaica.
I've been trekking out to Bankstown and Penrith, catching up with the Q's latest activities. Their productions of Ayckbourn's Absent Friends and Shakespeare's Measure for Measure offer further proof of the enterprise and accomplishment of this remarkable company.

Absent Friends is the Q's third Ayckbourn — How the Other Half Loves and Absurd Person Singular were featured in previous seasons — and it was in the last leg of its Western tour, having already played Penrith and Orange, when I saw it in Bankstown. However, it still had the sparkle and elan which designer-director Arthur Dicks had infused originally into his production.

It's an hilariously funny show even though Absent Friends isn't Ayckbourn's funniest play. It doesn't play with theatrical conventions as do The Norman Conquests and Bedroom Farce. But Absent Friends shares with these other Ayckbourns his knack of exposing petty social rituals and the middle class's sense of duty, even if it is a reluctant one.

The occasion of the play is an afternoon tea at which a bunch of friends gather to cheer up an absent friend. This is Colin who had lost his fiance in a drowning accident; now he is ready to be brought back into the fold. There is little enthusiasm for the undertaking, however, except on the part of the hostess, Gae Anderson's enigmatic Diana, and Clare Woodward's professional sympathiser, Marge — the Jeannie Little of the North. They all vow not to mention death or drowning, which leads to the usual jokes including the rather novel one of a Colin who won't shut up about the subject. The biggest joke of all is that Colin is better off with his memories and snaps of Carol, whom he knew for only a year or so, than any of his present friends. They are all in the shabby twilight of their relationships, putting up with friendships, boredom, dull sex, neuroticism, and all those other benefits of the new society.

In a generally very good ensemble, Kevin Jackson and Malcolm Keith are outstanding. It was therefore very interesting to follow these actors, along with some others from Absent Friends, into the Shakespeare. In Measure for Measure, to my surprise, Richard Brooks had counter-cast Messrs Jackson and Keith. I would have thought Jackson's gaunt, eagle-intensity would have qualified him for Angelo, while Keith's labrador-puppy charm would have suited him to someone other than the icy deputy.

But this is no ordinary Measure for Measure. Brooks' "concept" production is very intelligent and should prove valuable to the largely school audiences it will attract.

The scene is still Vienna, where Shakespeare originally set his sombre comedy, but the year is 1900. This is nothing new. Robin Phillips used Franz Joseph's decaying empire to update the play some years ago at Stratford, Ontario. I thought that was a definitive production, a clever interpretation of an intractable play. The Q presents new and interesting facets of the play, having to accept sacrifices in text and theme to do so. But the losses are almost outweighed by the gains.

The metaphor is that of a high society...
masque-ball. The actors enter formally dressed, and they are introduced to us by name and role. This theatricalistic note is further sounded by the selection of hats and props from a large hamper which also serves as a prison when necessary. The setting in effect never changes; we stay in Arthur Dicks' grand ballroom — a major achievement in the cosy Q space at Penrith.

We soon learn that the play is being presented as a game, a charade in which everybody gets a part, and some, notably Angelo and Isabella, become more realistically involved in theirs than do the others.

One is never sure when the knowing smile should give way to serious apprehension. The fine line between witty pretense and harsh reality is delicately walked by the production, but I think much of the relationship between Angelo and Isabella is lost. Hedonism and low life provide a constant background to the piece, with Kevin Jackson's fine Lucio there as a Lord of Misrule. All in all, this is a very exciting production.

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**Good on television**

**HAPPY FAMILY**

by Michele Field

_Happy Family_ by Giles Cooper. Ensemble Theatre, Sydney, NSW. Opened April, 1980.

_Director_, Brian Young; _Designer_, Yoshi Tosa; _Lighting Designer_, Hayes Gordon; _Stage Manager_, Glenda Johnson.

Deborah Solstice, Jill Floyd; Mark Solstice, John Clayton; Susan Solstice, Hilary Larkum; Gregory Butler, Michael Ross.

(Professional)

The incessant perkiness of _Happy Family_ created a small brick of pain squarely above my eyes. Each line was snapped off, as though it were a fresh celery rib, and like good greengrocers the audience chuckled approvingly. I can take that kind of timing in a television comedy, say _Fawlty Towers_ or _The Goodies_, but not at arm's length. Because I left at interval, almost anyone else in the audience — an audience of thirty, maybe a quarter of the Ensemble's capacity — could explain more about the story than I will.

I wish I could explain why we were all there. Giles Cooper, the playwright, was a BBC TV writer, and perhaps in that fact lies the secret of his rapport with the Tuesday night audience, most of whom would have been home with ABC television if the BBC had been offering anything from the BBC that night. My own conviction is that theatre is not one of the "media" and it should not exist in order to give us "live" what is done more professionally on television and which we can watch more comfortably there.

The premise of _Happy Family_ is that siblings, in their relationships with one another, never grow up — a true enough premise as anyone with slow-maturing sibling relationships of his own knows. The three siblings have the surname Solstice, not a common English name so it became pregnant with suggestion. The solstice is the crisis, the turning point, and at the same time it is the point where things stand still. In _Happy Family_ it is the point when the two sisters and the brother meet again, in order to expunge or to absorb into the family a fourth would-be sibling — the young man who intends to marry the elder sister.

The interesting part of the reunion is the siblings own definition of their "closeness". "Closeness" consists in nicknames, in games of tickling and squealing and chasing, and especially in the ritual of Owl Eyes (foreheads pressed against together with eyes squeezed closed, then eyes widely opened). Each game provides a little dramatic sequence which rescues the writer from the responsibility of carrying along a bigger action. In fact, _Happy Family_ is a great deal like _Lord of the Flies_ without the bigger action.

The actors exert themselves to make these stupid games look fun. They try to be believably smarty-pants, petulant, silly and winsome — in short, they try to make childishness interesting. The trouble is that a child's range of expression, however far one stretches for adjectives, is limited. Unquestionably, emotionally limited characters are one type of characterisation, along with the Lears and the Cyranos, which playwrights should give us, but it is a type of characterisation that actors handle clumsily. I recently read an article which argued that the hardest task for small musical ensembles is the selection of the music they're to play: it's harder to select it wisely than to play it well. Any director of amateur actors who has tried to produce a Pinter play, for instance, will appreciate that a steady tone, lines spoken in level voices, is much harder to actors than 'histrionics'.

_Happy Family_ would have been a good play on television: the dirty jokes are just at that _Are You Being Served?_ level. It would have been a good play to play down, instead of playing it up as the Ensemble has done.
American dreams

**VANITIES**

by Veronica Kelly


Director, Bruce Parr; Designer, David Clendinning

Cast: Kathy, Elizabeth Falconer; Joanne, Jennifer Flowers; Mary, Kay Perry.

(Professional)

**ANGEL CITY**

by Sam Shepard. La Boîte Theatre, Brisbane Qld. Opened April 1980.

Director, Designer, David Bell; Lighting, Rodney Therkelsen; Stage Manager, Rowan Pryor.

Cast: Tympani, Stephen Prentiss; Lanx, Tony Phelan; Rabbit Brown, Patrick Reed; Miss Scoons, Rainee Skinner; Sax, Mark Ford; Wheeler, Michael McCaffrey.

(Prof/Am)

Brisbane audiences have recently been presented with two American plays dealing with national identity, one treating its material as formula comedy and one as poetic myth. BAC’s production of Jack Heifner’s 1976 Off-Broadway hit *Vanities* is, whichever way you take it, a thoroughly professional endeavour. The play is a three-hander for women doubtless programmed for a vigorous stage life as a showcase for so frequently under-used female acting talent. Sadly, *Vanities* is a women’s play only in the sense that Bette Davis vehicles are dubbed “women’s movies”; indeed, the play could as easily have been written in 1936 as in 1976. The plot follows the careers of three co-ed cheerleaders in the ten years from 1963, charting their progress from high school, through college towards whatever personal future their past has prepared for them as they apprehensively approach the ultimate annihilation of turning thirty.

Middle-American assumptions about group conformity, competition and the esprit of the elite overgovern the characters seemingly moulding them beyond hope of individual self-development. As such, *Vanities* incidentally displays the price of the American dream of success; image projection, physical and mental narcissism and self-admiring exclusiveness make these women as empty and fragile as dolls assumptions of the past hollow and irrecoverable, theatrical assumptions included. *Vanities* (“a comedy of manicured lives”) relies on some very old formulae, not about women but about “women”, the Eternal Eve variety in the crushed blossom variation, repackaged at a competitive price.

BAC’s *Vanities* combines an occasion for irritation with Heifner’s cop-out commercial handling of the material with the fascination of being given a chance to see where the dream projection industry is now heading. Providing one can overcome the irritation, the production provides many theatrical treats; crisp, stylishly visualised, and played with comic flair and precision. The cast holds to a fine line between sympathy and comic distancing, avoiding the invitation to render the former by soapie-weepie hysterics and the latter by pat Broadway formula comedy. The balanced, nuanced performances are a triumph for the cast, notably in the work of the wonderfully gifted Jennifer Flowers, whose interpretation of the life-fearing Joanne shows a Shirley Temple character given the respect due to a great naturalistic...
heroine.

Sam Shepard's Angel City at La Boite is also distinguished by impressive visual stylishness, appropriate to a play dealing with the Hollywood head office of the American dream factory. But instead of being a play patched up from theatrical scraps, Angel City goes straight out for theatre poetry and achieves stunning results. A bare black playing area is backed by a vast blank screen of ever-changing colours, seen through a blue neon picture window or movie screen border; the screen is the visual metaphor of the collective national dream, a projective area for the character's fantasies, needs and mythic conflicts. The cast mutate through a series of surreally linked personae, evolving through the logic of humour, satire, self-projection and mythic compulsion. The consciousness of all the characters is attuned to the historical past of the City of the Angels and obliquely connected within its poisoned, smog-laden present; national and Hollywood-derived strata of myth-association surface again for various reasons, which a community may understand and consider prejudicing anyone's chances of life into familiar material with subtly inventive directors and have breathed fresh life into familiar material with subtly innovative productions. Rodger and John Milson are both

David Bell's production lucidly points Shepard's evocative language through music, clean movement and dream-evoking light and colour values, such that the action acquires the surreal blend of lights on the glittering surface, there's always Vanities. Which will be showing first at your local theatre!

business of life and the minutiae of comedy abound. Food is cooked, straw flutters whispering from the loft, Christy sits triumphantly naked in an iron hip bath and Shaun Keogh stands despondently at the window, his feet in the midden. Through this world bustles Vivien Davies' small, busy Pegeen, the potential for self-realisation swamped by the daily round; and as her final cry of despair hits the rafters, it is answered by laughter of the menfolk as they relive their adventure — even as the events are fading into myth, so Pegeen's fate is sharpening painfully into focus.

In this beautifully rendered composition individual performances are perfectly pitched and evoke memorable images; Judith Anderson's Widow Quin for example, a smouldering enigma, shrouded in pipe smoke. Errol O'Neill's Old Mahon, wincing with painful injunction as his hat is clamped for the fifth time onto his bleeding pate and Geoff Cartwright as Christy, swaggering confidently in a quite ridiculous "Sunday Best" outfit pressed on him by Keogh. Rarely has Synges's English, somewhat intractable comedy been given the lift it gets here.

The Importance of Being Earnest is anything but intractable. It is an audience's play; their familiarity tends to be displayed in the form of knowing, sometimes pre-emptive, guffaws which greet each aphorism, each revelation. More than any other comic character, Lady Bracknell has suffered from appropriation by audiences, one is grateful to Milson and the technically brilliant Kaye Stevenson for a subtle but quite unmistakable re-reading. Her face bleached and cadaverous as a deaths head, her nasal intonation as chiling as a scalpel, this Lady B is a true harpy. And how cleverly the hurdle of the handbag is negotiated; the infamous line is never actually uttered, but is mouthed in a silent retch of disgust. It has been done before, I hope it was as effective.

Harry Scott and Duncan Wass, as the pair of Jacks, strike sparks off each other in a smooth double act. The pace of the production is very much their responsibility and it rarely falters.

Above all, this Earnest is the first I have encountered that acknowledges the play's origins in 1890's Decadence and thus suggests a hinterland of allusions more poignant and daring than the "high comedy" tag betokens. Beverly Hill's beautiful art nouveau design works well in the first act, though the effect disintegrates with the move to scenes of rustic gentility. Algernon languishes among cushions and swans around in silken gown, for once the sybaritic dandy rather than the jovial man about town. The end of Bunburying, the forsaken "secret life" and the submission to conformity at last make sense.
Relevance and fruitfulness

THE ONE DAY OF THE YEAR

BODIES

By Michael Morley

The One Day of the Year by Alan Seymour, State Theatre Company of SA, Adelaide. Opened April 1980.

Director. Kevin Palmer.

Cast: Dot, Maggie Kirkpatrick; Alf, Peter Cummins; Hughie, Tom Burlinson; Wacka, Bill Austin.

(Professional)

Bodies by James Saunders, Stage Company, Adelaide, SA.

Director. Brian Debnam.

Cast: Mervyn, Wayne Bell; David, John Noble; Anne, Barbara West; Helen, Pam Western.

(Professional)

"Take the saving lie from the average man and you take away his happiness" says Relling in The Wild Duck: and for all their obvious differences of setting, character and style, both The One Day of the Year and Bodies are convincing demonstrations of the enduring relevance and fruitfulness of that theme that Ibsen can fairly be said to have bequeathed to European drama. Alan Seymour's play shows us the younger, 1960's generation struggling to convince its elders (and betters?) of the hollowness of the Anzac myth, and with it, the clinging to past attitudes considered (rightly?) to be no longer appropriate. James Saunders' drawing-room comedy is both a satirical demolition of the genre as well as a presentation of two couples in search of a character - or rather, one couple trying to dismantle the other's newly acquired and superficially unassailable identity. Past and present, youth and middle age, nostalgia for lost experience, the insistence on "acting in the living present" - both plays are explorations of these areas as well as of the less definable middle ground.

Although The One Day of The Year can be seen as a period piece, Kevin Palmer's production does not seek to enshrine it in the past, nor does he strive to make it emphatically "meaningful" or "relatable" for his audience. What he does is completely appropriate to the play: to call it a period piece is not to patronise or neutralise it, but to accept it - to understand that, like The Doll, it has a place in Australian theatrical tradition for reasons both intrinsic and extrinsic. The latter have to do with the social context to which it referred at the time and which it has accurately reflected in its language and view of character: the former are the play's real and obvious strengths, which certainly receive due weight in this production - closely observed characters, the author's accurate ear for speech, his sense of the family battlefield.

If this production is an indication of the directions to be taken after Colin George's departure, then there are promising signs for the company - not least in the casting. There is no doubt in my mind that the major reason for the play's vitality and sense of reality is the presence of new (if not unfamiliar) faces on the stage. Maggie Kirkpatrick's Dot in particular is a splendid characterisation - the best performance from an actress on this stage since Patricia Kennedy's memorable role in All My Sons. Right from the moment she splays her legs and presents an unflattering behind to the audience as she bends to pick something up, we know that this character is firmly rooted in observation, understanding and a refusal to flatter either herself or the audience. Instead of the caricature she could so easily have opted for, she gives us a woman who may be half-dead within, but who also half-realises that, with what's left, she has held this family together and will go on doing so. She stands apart from the other males - or, rather, acts as a surrogate male when the occasion demands: a disturbing and even sad fate, but never, in her own eyes, either pathetic or bathetic.

Similar strengths distinguish Peter Cummins' Alf, together with a relishing of Seymour's idiomatic writing and his gift for viewing characters through, and in, what they say. If Cummins' portrayal seems to miss out on the sense of loss and the struggle to maintain dignity that the character should display, this may be partly due to Seymour's depiction of character, and partly due to a director's (or actor's) decision. I frequently had the impression that both writing and performance reinforced Alf's role in the family...
as a grandfather, rather than father: if Alf was a boy in the Depression, he could hardly be more than mid-forties (if that) at the time of the play. Yet Cummins’ physical and vocal mannerisms were more those of a man well into his fifties; and this surely tends to lessen the tension between those of a man well into his fifties; and this confrontation, as well as edging the physical and vocal mannerisms were more sound niggling in the face of a performance and life than most actors in this company which, in five minutes, had more energy and breath of fresh air: adolescence finding from somewhere else (Coward, Maugham, Rattigan?) Unrewarding the part may be, but to try for “actorly” gestures (hand to throat, eyes averted) instead of simple appearance, Ms Cole has a lot going for her a better part may provide a fairer opportunity to assess her qualities.

If there was one overall criticism to be made of the production, it would be that the actors seemed somewhat compartmentalised: rather as if they were giving their set pieces when called on, and otherwise not really reacting to each other. The play demands finely tuned ensemble playing: and this was certainly provided in Brian Debnam’s production of Bodies. This was ensemble playing of the highest calibre, carefully and imaginatively directed, beautifully gauged, cracking with wit and tension, and underneath it all, real emotions rising and falling.

Superlatives can sound awfully tedious, especially if they’re unreliedly positive. So the envious, the cynical or the unlikely-to-be-convinced can stop here. But if there is anyone else out there — spend the rest of the year regretting you missed four performance. Centre piece is anyone else out there — spent the rest of the year regretting you missed four remarkable performances. Centre piece was undoubtedly Wayne Bell’s voluble, sparkling and aggressive Mervyn, a role which, in lesser hands, would have seemed merely blustering and over the top; this was a fascinating display of sustained energy and technical skill. Saunders gives the character speeches that recall Stoppard’s prestidigitations in their sweep and linguistic complexity — yet without the self-indulgent and patronising intellectualisations. The play is just as much about words as is Jumpers or Travesties: but in its central situation — that of two couples individually and together retelling the account of a past menage a quatre (Act One) and confronting each other again after a lapse of eight years (Act Two), it offers more emotions and compassion than does Stoppard.

On the face of it, it’s an unpromising subject: the Bob and Carol and Ted and Alice scene was boring enough in the sixties. And, after all, can Saunders give us much more than Pinter does in Betrayal? The answer is an emphatic yes. By the end of the evening you feel these four people are worth knowing, that their struggles and defenses are real, that we have learnt about them and ourselves. Admittedly, Saunders’ monologues and his distribution of them are beautifully managed: but the performers do them full justice.

I’ve already mentioned Wayne Bell’s towering performance as Mervyn: even at his most aggressive and overpowering he still suggests the hurt and uncertainty at the character’s centre, without ever sliding into sentimentality. John Noble’s David offers a splendid foil with his low-pitched line in benevolent reasonableness, the sense that he has only to look at a problem for it to smile apologetically for having bothered him and go off for a likelier target. Barbara West’s Anne manages to steer the fine dividing line between neurosis and impatience, while displaying all the character’s dissatisfaction with both herself and Mervyn. At the same time, she, like all the others, shows that Anne cannot be reduced to a simple set of label definitions: she may be edgy, argumentative, tired of Mervyn’s performances, but she is also alive and intends to go on kicking — even (or especially) if anyone gets in the way.

And Pam Western’s Helen is equally persuasive: she too, like David, has had “the therapy” that enables her to view the world with an apparent bland placidity that is not simply unconcern but a hard-won sense of selecting priorities. The part could so easily be faceless, one dimensional: the quiet wife, as opposed to the noisy Anne. Yet Ms. Western makes her both touching and strong: and in the first act she has two splendid monologues, in one of which she conveys the character’s recalled sensuality with sudden radiance, while in the second, she describes with real pain an uncontrollable fit of crying. Saunders’ writing at this point is marvellously vivid yet restrained: the picture of Helen confronted by an insensitive American matron, so soon after the falling apart of the various relationships within the group, and breaking down, is moving and disturbing and matched by the actress’s delivery.

Brian Debnam’s direction of the piece allows the characters space to relate to each other and to the audience: and his pacing of the monologues as well as the overall rhythm is precise and absolutely right. Allowing for a slightly misjudged opening on the night I saw it, this production showed that there are performers in Adelaide who can take a play and shake it and the audience to life. If this sort of ensemble playing can be coaxed from the Stage Company for their Uncle Vanya, then we’re in for a treat indeed.
THE COMEDIANS

by Suzanne Spunner

The Comedians by Trevor Griffiths, Hoopla Downstairs at the Playbox. Opened April 10, 1980.

Director, Malcolm Robertson; Designer, Sandra Matlock; Lighting Design, Peter Harvey; and Yvonne Hockey; Stage Manager, Brian Gibbons.

Cast: Caretaker, Cliff Ellen; Gethin Price, William Zappa, Phil Murray; Stephen Clark; George McBrain; Shane Bourne; Sammy Samuels; Rob Harrison; Mick Connor; Ron Challinor; Ged Murray; John Wood; Eddie Waters; Charles Tingwell; Mr Patel; Sean Myers; Bert Challenlor; Carl Carmichael; Club Secretary, John Heywood; Pianist, Ian Mawson.

(Provisional)

Trevor Griffiths' The Comedians was written in 1975 and it is his first work to have been performed in Australia. Griffiths' standpoint as a writer is expressly Marxist; he is committed to theatre as a vehicle for, and agent of, social change — "I don't want to live better than other people. I want everybody to live well". In The Comedians his approach is to pose moral questions in a dialectical way about the purpose of comedy and the role and responsibility of a comedian. These issues are explored within a thoroughly naturalistic framework, right down to the clock on the wall showing the passing of the real time of the play.

Comedians opens in a seedy evening class for aspiring comedians in the heart of Manchester. In the second act we follow the class to their first try-out at a local club before an out-of-town talent spotter; and in the final act we return to the classroom where their performances that evening are assessed by the agent and their teacher.

The London agent, Bert Challenlor personifies Griffiths' thesis. Challenlor is the company man, the professional whose approbation could be the passport to success. In his view a "good comic" gives audiences what they want — escape; "a comic is not a missionary but rather a supplier of laughter". Opposing Challenlor is the teacher, Eddie Waters, who believes that entertainers generally, and comedians in particular, have a moral responsibility to their audiences and themselves. For Waters a real comedian, "dares to see what his audiences shy away from, fear to express", and therefore a real joke has a liberating power and can change the situation it describes. In the middle of these two men is the class — a motley collection of working class lads on the make, for whom the chance of making it as a professional comic represents their best, if not their only, possible means of escaping their mundane jobs.

Faced with the task of performing before Challenlor, each man chooses the cost of his own success and in Challenlor's terms fixes his own price. Waters has offered them a criteria for integrity but his own life as a has-been comic does not offer the possibility of a recipe for success. Rather they must make their own resolution of form and content and of the six aspirants only one, Gethin Price, achieves this synthesis. He does so in a spectacular tour de force performance in which he totally expresses himself — his personal pain, his rage and his class hatred — with such mastery of art that Challenlor cannot afford to overlook him and Waters cannot reproach him.

Around him the other five fall in varying degrees for the traps set by Challenlor and Waters. Some are destined to remain like Waters unsuccessful good men, while others are chosen by Challenlor and will quite possibly become as successful as he, but according to Griffiths either horn will impale them and prevent them expressing themselves. Only Price has discovered his power of self expression; what he will ultimately do with it is an open question at the end of the play.

Just as Price's performance is compelling and confronting and only incidentally funny, a similar inversion of expectation works in the play as a whole. I know of no play which retains as many jokes as Comedians and yet the overwhelming feeling you are left with is one of sombre and relentless probing of the underbelly of humour. It is rare to see a play as intellectually demanding as Comedians let alone one so engrossing to watch. Like Gethin Price's performance it is almost seductively disturbing. It demanded exceptionally agile performances from its cast in order for the argument to remain taut and in control — through the play the audience must be driven to laughter and pulled back from it with great rapidity. It is imperative that the argument is punched home as hard as the jokes. Malcolm Robertson's direction held this balance overall, but within individual performances control varied. William Zappa as Gethin Price and Charles Tingwell as Eddie Waters gave sustained performances which were frequently startling in the density of feelings they drew upon.
Psychopathology and guilt

MANSON
THE BANANA BENDER

by Catherine Peake

Manson - The Defence Testimony, by Garry McKecknie and Ian Campbell. Back Theatre Pram Factory. Opened April 1, 1980. Directed and performed by Garry McKecknie and Ian Campbell. Presented by the Backstreets Theatre Co. *Professional*


*Professional*

Manson - The Defence Testimony makes for intriguing theatre. At the Back Theatre of the Pram Factory, it is presented with programme notes urging us to see the testimony as a "document of modern life" — as able to shed some light on the deep alienation and the manipulative power of the twentieth century "charismatic" leader and prophet.

At that level it struggles very hard for credibility. The prevailing image of Manson as monster, and the indelible popular memory of his barbarous crimes constantly threaten to tip his carefully worded case over into the pathological, the paranoid and the Gothic.

In general, their production is one which tried to reinforce the refrain echoing through the testimony... "I'm just a reflection of every one of you"... "I am whoever you make me"... "You want a sadistic fiend, because that's what you are", and so on. It is only partly successful.

Co-authors and co-directors Garry McKecknie and Ian Campbell — who perform the main parts on alternate nights — assembled their text from the transcript of the trial, plus additional material from other sources. The result is a spare and lucid text, delivered as a low-key monologue and encumbered by only the most minimal stage business in the form of debating-style glasses of water, and a taped version of 60's rock.

They bathe the entire theatre in bright light, strengthening Manson's own claim that his audience, too, is under interrogation. But, most strikingly, they present Manson as victim rather than criminal, and their "testimony" details the life of a man forcibly removed from the normal bonds and obligations of society.

Manson, we learn, spent much of his youth in prisons and reformatories. His extreme convictions about the "family", about "cosmic love", and the uses of violence have been elaborated during years of solitary confinement. His facility with the art of persuasion and manipulation is, I suspect, supposed to be seen as the reaction of an articulate and "idealistic" man to a world that has rejected him. The exercise of his personal power has become his compensation.

So far so good. But too much of the context for the original testimony is left out, and one is constantly forced to rely on hazy ten year old memories for any sense of the magnitude of the crimes.

Though the mirror-image of Manson's dilemma does supply McKecknie and Campbell with a subtle dramatic device, and, no doubt, finds a sympathetic ear among audiences well versed in Laingian theory; it is never adequate as an explanation for his role in those events. In the end, the ambitious intentions for this production tend to fizzle and we are left with a document of psychopathology.

The twin themes of Barry Dickins' new play The Banana Bender are God and bananas. Launched by the playwright as "the ultimate Easter play", the work is set among icons, crucifixes, banana skins and pictures of exquisite religious suffering. One of these latter has an intravenous transfusion set neatly plugged into a painted vein, the other end terminating in a boot, and some Tweed Head Banana Co-Op boxes are scattered here and there.

Backstage, a large bust is illuminated by a flashing light and bears on its base the message "Guilt is love".

In the confines of La Mama, all this left room for a tiny two-deck stage and placed a high premium on the agility of the cast. But then, so did the script.

Lenny, brilliantly played by Rod Williams, is a banana bender who also sees himself as the Messiah of the Northern NSW coast. In type he belongs to that growing band of Dickins' characters whose lives are conducted along the lines of a fast-talking experimental farce. He is working class, he is eloquent, isolated and prey to the most extravagant hallucinations.

Lenny lives in a deserted hut with his communist mother Kath (played by Julien McDonald — who later doubles as the Tart from Tweed Heads) and the thematies of the piece see-saw between his twin preoccupations with religion and sex.

Unlike those other plays by Dickins which also tap the "absurd" pretensions and dreams stimulated by poverty, the main axis of The Banana Bender is welded to the terror, guilt and confusion which spring from Lenny's religious mania.

If the play loses some tension in the second half when the Tweed Head Tart leaves, and mother returns, it is almost a relief, for the whole script tends to be played as a kind of window dressing for the performance.

Rod Williams' portrayal of Lenny is exhausting to watch, but it is also a prodigious feat of timing and concentration. On opening night he hardly seemed to miss a cue.

Julien McDonald's work is more uneven. She is rather better at the sluttish Tart than as mother, and in the opening scenes she seemed to have some trouble finding the energy and the resilience which are buried in the character of the older woman.

In the end, The Banana Bender is florid, entertaining and colourful theatre. If at one level it is also a serious examination of the mainsprings of religious guilt, it is also messy, charming and deliberately funny. But direction by its author is probably not a good idea. It could benefit from a more disciplined hand, for it is a play where the sub-text is easily lost in the glittering surface of gags and absurdities.
Magpie
State Theatre-In-Education Company of S.A.

There Goes Magpie on Tour.
Worthwhile revivals

THE TAMING OF THE SHREW
RATTLE OF A SIMPLE MAN
by Colin O'Brien

The Taming Of The Shrew by William Shakespeare.

National-Theatre Co. Playhouse, Perth WA. Opened April 17, 1980.

Director: Jenny McNae. Designer: Tony Tripp.
Costumes: Sue Russell. Lighting: Duncan Ord. Stage Manager: Christine Randall.

Cast: Minola: Gerald Hitchcock; National Theatre Co. Playhouse, Perth WA. Opened May 1, 1980.

THEATRE/WA.


Screaigh: Barry Screaigh. 

Cast: Percy: Trevor Bannister; Cyrenne: Rowena Wallace; Richard: Michael Loney.

I suppose even the most fervent Bardophile and I account myself one — has at least one play he wishes Will had passed on to Michael Drayton or one of the other hacks. For Coleridge it was Measure For Measure, which he described as "painful"; Alexander Pope banished the situation comedy into a riot of comic invention.

Here the choice of characters have been inventive indeed: Katherine (Judy Nunn) a Calamity Jane, Petruchio (Edgar Metcalfe) a Dasy Crockett. Biondello (Gerald Hitchcock) a come-to-life cigarstore Indian. Grumio (Glenn Hitchcock) an un-shaven Mexican, to name but a few. The cast works well together, and in such an ensemble effort it would be invidious to pin medals on anyone.

Full marks to Jenny McNae's inventive direction, Tony Tripp's workable setting and the cast's enthusiastic playing. I can pay no better tribute to the company than to say my mind went back to an equally enjoyable romp by one of the world's leading companies: the Royal Shakespeare Company's Greek tourist island version of The Comedies of Errors, which likewise turned potentially boring doublet and hose situation comedy into a riot of comic invention.

I was sorry to see the Regal theatre go dark at the end of the Spike Milligan show in February. As the main commercial house in recent years the Regal has both subsidized theatres, and is of benefit both to "the business" and the public at large. My minor criticism would be that there might be just a shade too much Frank Spenceerish fumbling, but this is a slight blemish on an otherwise excellent performance. Rowena Wallace also performs very creditably, but I suspect that her playing as yet lacks the variable rhythm and variation between humour and pathos which will come increasingly as the play is "run in". Michael Loney's Richard is a little stiff and lacking in assurance and the full degree of menace called for, but it too will mature with time.

Trevor Bannister comes to Perth from a four-month tour playing Percy in England. His is an assured and skilful performance, leaning neither to the oversentimental nor the easy laugh. My minor criticism would be that there might be just a shade too much Frank Spenceerish fumbling, but this is a slight blemish on an otherwise excellent performance. Rowena Wallace also performs very creditably, but I suspect that her playing as yet lacks the variable rhythm and variation between humour and pathos which will come increasingly as the play is "run in". Michael Loney's Richard is a little stiff and lacking in assurance and the full degree of menace called for, but it too will mature with time.

John Manford's directing is assured and authoritative. He takes seriously the playwright's instruction that Cyrenne should not be played as either "a Lamplight Lil or a golden-hearted tart"; he also eschews the temptation to caricature Percy as a stock Northerncountry Englishman eating black pudding and slurping his soup still wearing his cloth cap. The play is well worth reviving, and it is to the management's credit that they are touring it to a number of country centres, so that a good performance of a show of wide interest is not confined to city dwellers.
Restraint and extravagance

GLASS MENAGERIE MINSTREL SHOW
by Bruce Cornelius

The Glass Menagerie by Tennessee Williams. Polygon Theatre Company, University of Tasmania (Hobart), later touring to Launceston, Burnie and Devonport. Opened April 9, 1980. Director, Designer, Don Gay; Stage Manager, Nancy Giblin; Tom Wingfield, Christopher Harvey; Amanda Wingfield, Hazel Alger; Laura Wingfield, Rosemary Mazengarb; Jim O'Connor, Don Gay.

The Black and White Minstrel Show. Theatre Royal Light Opera Company, Theatre Royal, Hobart. Opened April 11, 1980. Director, Sonny Jose; Musical Director, Gwynneth Dixon; Designer, Dorothy Sherry; Stage Director, Mapple Bootman.

Reinterpretations of "classics" have constituted Hobart's theatrical fare for April, with the opening of Polygon's touring production of The Glass Menagerie, and TRLOC's Black and White Minstrel Show at the Theatre Royal.

Over the past few years Polygon has established a solid reputation in Tasmania, and is now the only company in the state staging legitimate theatre on a regular professional basis. Their most recent production is evidence of the standards the company is achieving, and has elicited an enthusiastic response from audiences.

In his stage directions to The Glass Menagerie, Tennessee Williams demands a (very heavy-handed) succession of sound effects, projections and other visual effects (such as transparent walls which allow instantaneous transformation from interior to exterior scenes and from room to room); all calculated within the conventions of a large, proscenium-arch theatre. Polygon's director Don Gay has opted instead for an effectively-simply directly-honest approach to the play. To some extent this decision must be dictated by the fact that after its Hobart season this production will be transported to Launceston, Devonport and Burnie, where it will be playing in a variety of acting spaces. Thus sets are minimal, lighting portable, and emphasis placed squarely on the play's human content.

In employing a small acting platform (with the audience in Hobart between three and thirty feet from the action) this production naturally omits large-scale effects. One result of this enforced intimacy is a diminution of the stylised, non-naturalistic concept of "memory-play" discussed in the play's prologue, which gives way instead to a very vivid domestic drama of considerable naturalistic intensity.

Amanda Wingfield is conventionally considered to be one of the 'meaty' roles in modern theatre, but (like the other roles in the play) requires more than observation of the letter of the script to pull off. On paper she is merely irrational, querulous, garrulous; Laura is spineless and vapid; Tom petulant and intolerant (strangely considering the wisdom and understanding of his latter-day persona who introduces the play); Jim a crass braggard.

To translate them from this abnormal freakishness into sympathetic characters requires reading and building beyond the limitations of the script. Ultimately this does not happen in the present production, and except for the final minutes of the play this odd family does not really engage the audience's response at a fully human level.

This is not to deny the honesty and skill of individual performances. Hazel Alger consistently — and finally, very movingly — depicts the instinctive maternal love which is at the basis of Amanda's irrationality. If the sheer strength of the character is rather swamped by the agitations and neuroses, the tender nobility established in the play's last moments does much to redress the balance.

Rosemary Mazengarb plays Laura with a sense of urgency and genuine bewilderment: although the performance is on a very muted level until the climactic confrontation with the "gentleman caller", where the strength behind her delicacy is revealed in strong contrast to the descending brashness of Don Gay's Jim.

As Tom, Christopher Harvey is engaging and honest, sympathetic even in his most self-righteous. More than the other actors, he has to cope with Williams' transition from the poetry of prologue and epilogue to the biting dialogue of the drama proper.

Restraint of performance is matched by discrete musical reinforcement and a visual picture of muted colourings and evocative lighting.

If Polygon's Glass Menagerie tends toward understatement, the same could not possibly be said of TRLOC's 1980 production, a variety show based on the black and white minstrel format. Lasting five minutes short of three hours at the second performance (cut from 3½ hours on opening night), The Black and White Minstrel Show features a (seemingly) endless array of songs and dances, of brightly (often garishly) coloured costumes and leatherweight but rather tedious comedy sketches.

Submerged in this abundance of material some excellent performances pass almost unremembered. The superb dancing of Angela Westbury and the presence of some of Hobart's most experienced musical-comediennes such as Jean Bartlett, Sonia Johnson and Judith Shaw tend to be swamped in retrospect by memories of the determined efforts of the troupe of baton twirlers (looking rather bemused by the whole thing) or the formation dancers who swirl around the stage at regular intervals in a frenzy of retina-burstingly-acidic frills and glitter. At its most extravagant, Latin-Americanesque moments the show verges on becoming a high-camp parody of itself but never quite gets there.

This may suggest a totally negative reaction to the show, but this is far from being the case. I suspect that I'm still smarting from the effect of three hours of variety show which could have been pared to a maximum of two without anyone feeling cheated. By this process we may have been spared the tedium of the same group of singers dancers swinging into the twentieth number in a bracket, or more serious charge — the embarrassing results of letting everyone in the company have a solo spot, whatever their limitation or ability.

If TRLOC is intending to retain the variety format for future productions, it is to be hoped that brevity and selectivity will be added to the company's present strengths. Talented and experienced entertainers they have in abundance, and in Sonny Jose a choreographer able to direct the group into an efficient ensemble.
Canadian plays — expression of a country

It has long been a credo in Australian drama that plays, in an important way, express a country — they are a means of self-analysis and self-identification. So when a, to me, largely unknown country like Canada sends over a batch of more than thirty of what are presumably its best plays it is an exciting opportunity. With few preconceptions of what Canada is like, it is a great chance to see what drama can say. One day I suppose I will discover whether the impressions of Canada got from the plays are accurate, but certainly they are vivid.

Two strong impressions are the influence of the landscape, and the importance, to the playwrights, of social and political forces rather than individual human ones. They've got a hell of a lot of nature over there. Not only the famous snow and ice (two of the plays contain a central image of hell which is not of fire but of bitter cold) but also wild prairies, great forests, rugged mountains and rough stormy seas. George Ryan's Ploughmen of the Glacier (1976) is a strong wild play about an old prospector and an old newspaperman who confront each other in a pioneer mountain society ("examining the myth of the men who made the West"). They rant and argue about their dreams, their struggling and their dying while the mountains they live and work on stands waiting to destroy them. Michael Cook's Jacob's Wake (1975) might be a conventional "strong" domestic drama were it not for the powerfully atmospheric use of the hostile seas off the Newfoundland coast. The storm which builds throughout the play, and which sinks the house as if it were a ship, becomes an elemental force of metaphysical power. Herschel Hardin's Esker Mike and his Wife Agilak (1969) in fact seems to use the snow and ice of the North as an image for the way southern society treats the Eskimos. Deceptively gentle and comic in tone at first, it builds to a chilling combination as it shows the horrific ends to which the characters are driven by the social and natural harshness of their lives.

The social interest begins as an interest in the past, and particularly in the social history of the great Indian Nations of the prairies by military and commercial callousness and self interest. There is nothing in our drama about our aborigines to equal the epic scope, the passion and the clear Brechtian narrative of Hardin's The Great Wave of Civilization (1962), which shows the splendid irony of its title as the whisky traders destroy the Blackfoot Nation. Sharon Pollack's Walsh (1973) is a conventional but very well executed documentary about the betrayal of the Sioux Nation, led into exile by Sitting Bull, when they took refuge in Canada from the American Army. At the centre of the play is the dignity and sad lost strength of Sitting Bull himself. George Woodcock's Six Dry Cakes For The Hunted (in Two Plays) (1977) shows the unsuccessful rebellion and subsequent destruction of the Metis National by central government indifference to the activities of rapacious frontier opportunists — a breed with which we are familiar in this country. In this play the rather overblown rhetorical style sometimes stands in the way, but it is still a fine subject. In a different vein Rick Salutin and Ken Dryden's Les Canadiens (1977) uses the world's greatest ice hockey team as a symbol for the nationalist aspirations of Quebec. It is given particular relevance now by the referendum on separation, held on May 20, the results of which will be known by the time this is read. Salutin shows the Canadiens becoming "just a hockey team" when the Parti Quebecois won power on November 15, 1976 — the people had at last transferred their nationalism from sport to political action.

The interest in social pressures also manifests itself in a number of more conventional family dramas of the sort with which we are familiar here. Ann Henry's Lulu Street (1967) shows life in Winnipeg during a General Strike in 1919. Tom Hendrey's Fifteen Miles Of Broken Glass (1966), apart from the strength of the title image, deals in a fairly ordinary way with a young man about to leave his adolescence behind and embark on life in post-World War II Canada. James Reaney's Listen to the Wind (1966) reads like an excuse to recount the plot of Rider Haggard's Dawn — a steamy dark melodrama — but the play-within-the-play, and the strong use of simple theatrical gesture, in the style of Peking Opera, may make it a strong theatrical statement about living creatively and "dreaming it out".

Marie-Claire Blais' The Execution (1968) is much stronger stuff, a nasty and sensationalist story of schoolboy murder made powerful by the integrity with which the action becomes an image for nastiness, and, indeed, evil in the world outside the walls of a boys' boarding school. Christian Breyere's Walls (1978) is a fictionalised documentary of a prison riot in 1975, and undoubtedly the best prison play I've encountered. Brilliantly structured, committed but analytical, complex but with a fast clear central action, it gives a profoundly disturbing view of how society copes with prisoners. It is the most convincing argument in any form for prison reform I have read or seen.

The social analysis becomes political in the 70s. George Ryga attempts to explore the human side of political conflicts in The Captives of the Faceless Drummer (1972) and Seven Hours to Sundown (1976). The first shows the conflict between a revolutionary and his hostage in an imaginary Canadian near-future. The collision between them is worked out partly in terms of their different attitudes to women; which makes for "effective" theatre but odd political drama. Seven Hours to Sundown explores small town politics and again explains it largely in terms of the personal relationships between the antagonists. Another play by Ryga, Sunrise on Sarah presents a poetic, dream-like confrontation between Sarah and an unplaced (Continued over page)
Man, with various characters from her life seen through her eyes becoming vehicles for anxiety. All these plays are political in their original viewpoint but their action centres on personalities and on the characters’ own crises of conscience and attitudes to political process and political commitment.

David Fennario is a writer with very strong roots in a working class district of Montreal, Point Saint Charles, and his work demonstrates what strength and energy such roots can bring to the theatre. On The Job (1975) and Nothing To Lose (1976) are robust, energetic, ballys pictures of working class culture in Montreal, with an outstanding fresh use of idiom and a great punk shout of anger and disgust at the society which wastes the talents and potential of so many of its members. On The Job deals with an impromptu strike by three young punks and an old worker who work in the stock room of a dress factory. It is Christmas Eve and their anger and violence stem as much from whisky as from any ideologically based, conscious revolutionary spirit.

A different sort of subculture is examined in a Country and Western musical, based on Othello, called Cruel Tears (1975), by Ken Mitchell with songs and music by a group called Humphrey and the Dumptrucks. The characters are all young truckies and their bosses, molls and wives. The Othello story, particularly the business with the handkerchief, sits a little oddly in such a setting, and without the music an enormous part of the appeal of the play must be lost, but it is certainly fresh and lively.

Rod Langley’s Bethune (1974) is a straightforward and effective account of the astonishing career of Dr Norman Bethune — following him from Detroit, to a tuberculosis sanitorium, to the Spanish Civil War and ending in China where he seems single-handedly to have organised the medical services for the revolutionaries during the war with Japan. It is a stirring tale, well told, and with a very strong central part.

Betty Lambert’s Sérieux-de-Dieu (1975), (the title is a meaningless but pleasantly suggestive bit of franglais) is a sharp-edged racy domestic comedy of modern suburban trendy manners. It is very funny, the action is clever and surprising, and utterly innocuous. There is some satire and a lot of farcical romping.

David Freeman also explores suburban family life, albeit of a very different kind, in Battering Ram (1972) and You’re Gonna Be Alright, Jamie Boy (1974). The first is a rather prurient, loveless play about a mother and daughter who bring home a young good-looking paraplegic. They are all supposedly “looking for love and finding something less”. The effect is very nasty, no doubt deliberately. At least for an Australian reader, the play does not quite have the strength to resonate as social allegory or an image for lovelessness in the world. You’re Gonna Be Alright, Jamie Boy, although much funnier and showing a much surer touch in guiding the domestic squabbling interestingly, must also rely on Canadian recognition to transcend what come across as a rather pointless string of revelations.

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THEATRE

ANU ARTS CENTRE (49.4787)
CANBERRA THEATRE CENTRE
The Playhouse (49.6488): Festival of Australian Drama. June 8-22.
CANBERRA REPERTORY SOCIETY

DANCE

CANBERRA THEATRE (49.7600)
The Australian Ballet presents The Dancers. To June 7.

OPERA

CANBERRA THEATRE (49.7600)
For entries contact Kyle Wilson on 49.5111.

NSW THEATRE

THE ACTION THEATRE COMPANY (357 1200)
Cell Block Theatre
The Threepenny Opera by Brecht and Weill adapted by Ian Watson; directed by Ian Watson. June 5-8 and 12-15.
ARTS COUNCIL OF NEW SOUTH WALES (357 6611)
School Tours: Blinky Bill, a children's play for infants and primary, North Coast from June 2.
Pinocchio, drama for infants and primary; metropolitan areas from June 2.
Book, Book Theatre Company, drama for infants, primary and secondary; North West and Hunter from June 2.
The Bandels, world of music for infants and primary; Central West from June 2.
The Bushranger, Australian folklore for primary and secondary, Riverina from June 2.
Adult Tours: Riverina Trucking Company

production of The Pariah-Dog by Mick Rodgers, directed by Peter Barclay.
Riverina and Central West until June 14.
AXIS THEATRE PRODUCTIONS (969 8202)
Court House Hotel, Taylor Square
The Billie Bicans Show by Tony Harvey and Malcolm Frawley. Directed by Malcolm Frawley; music by Sandy Ridgewell. Into June. New show commences late June.
Bondi Pavilion Theatre
Mother's Club written and directed by Malcolm Frawley. Commences June 4.
ENSEMBLE THEATRE (929 8877)
New production starting in June.
FIRST STAGE THEATRE COMPANY (82 1603)
The History of Theatre in Dramatic Form by Gary Baxter, directed by Chris Lewis; with Angela Benne, Anthony Martin and Gary Baxter. Touring to schools throughout June.
FRANK STRAIN'S BULL N' BUSH THEATRE RESTAURANT (357 4627)
That's Rich a musical review from the turn of the century to today; with Noel Brophy, Barbara Wyndon, Garth Meade, Neil Bryant and Helen Lorain; directed by George Carden. Throughout June.
HER MAJESTY'S THEATRE (212 3411)
Son of Betty; directed by Peter Bates; with Reg Livermore and the Wellington Bevts Band. Throughout June.
HUNTER VALLEY THEATRE COMPANY Newcastle (26 2526)
Playhouse: Travelling North by David Williamson; director Aarne Neeme, with Carol Ray and Vic Rooney. To June 14.
University Drama Theatre: Henry IV Part I by Shakespeare; director Aarne Neeme; in association with University Drama Dept. June 19-July 12.
KIRRIBILLI PUB THEATRE (92 1415)
Kurrubilli Hotel, Milson's Point
The Robin Hood Show by Perry Quinton and Paul Chubb; directed by Perry Quinton.
LES CURRIE PRESENTATIONS (358 5676)
Colours, a programme of folk songs and sketches describing colonial Australia devised and performed by Colin Douglas and Tony Sutor; for infants, primary and secondary; NSW country throughout May.
Mike Jackson, traditional bush music; Sydney metropolitan areas throughout June.
Agnes Warrington Shapes and Styles (costumes through the centuries) and A History of Theatre; secondary schools in Sydney metropolitan and Hunter. Until June 13.
Alexandra Moreno, Spanish dancer for infants and primary; Riverina and South Coast until June 6.

Billbar Puppet Theatre production of The Frog Prince for infants and primary; North West from June 23.
MARIAN STREET THEATRE (498 3166)
Rum for your Money, a new Australian musical based on the book by David Nettheim and music by John Kingsmill and John McKellar; directed by Alistair Duncan; with Peter Whitford, Ray du Parc, Rod Dunbar, Stephen Thomas, Sally Baden and Carman Tanti. Until June 21.
Shock by Brian Clemens; directed by alistair Duncan; with Olive Bodill. Commences June 27.
MUSIC HALL THEATRE RESTAURANT (909 8222)
East Lynne by Mrs Henry Wood; directed by Alton Harvey; Bernadette Houghsen, Mal Carmont and Christine Cameron. Throughout June.
MUSIC LOFT THEATRE (977 6585)
At the Loft, a new musical review with The Toppino family and Lorrae Desmond. Throughout June.
NEW THEATRE (519 3403)
Oh, What a Lovely War, Mate; Joan Littlewood's musical entertainment composed with her fellow artists in Theatre Workshop, London; directed by Frank Barnes. Until June 14.
We Can't Pay? We Won't Pay! by Dario Fo; directed by John Armstrong. Opens late June.
NIMROD THEATRE (699 5003)
The Oresteia of Aeschylus, translated by Frederic Raphael and Kenneth McLeish; directed by John Bell; with Carol Burns, Ralph Cottrill, Colin Friel, Arianthe Galani, Kris McQuade and Anna Volksa. Commences June 18.
Downstairs: The Case of Katherine Mansfield, one woman show composed, edited and played by Cathy Downes. Throughout June.
NSW THEATRE OF THE DEAF (357 1200)
The "Shhh" Journey for primary schools and The Unheard World of Jasper Lawson for secondary schools; both directed by Ian Watson; with Nola Colefax, David London, Colin Allen, Bryan Jones and Rosemary Lenzo. Metropolitan area throughout June.
Q THEATRE (047) 21 5735
Measure for Measure by William Shakespeare; Orange June 3-7, Bankstown June 11-14.
Travelling North by David Williamson; commences June 20 at Penrith.
RIVERINA TRUCKING COMPANY (069) 25 2052
The Pariah-Dog by Mick Rodger, on regional tour until June 15.
Lute by Joe Orton; directed by Peter Barclay. Commences June 20.
SEYMOUR CENTRE (692 0555)
York Theatre

THEATRE AUSTRALIA JUNE 1980 45

An Evening with Hinge and Bracket commences June 25.

Everest Theatre: Flexitime by Roger Hall; directed by Don Mackay; with Terry McDermott and Anne Phelan. Commences June 23.

SHOPFRONT THEATRE FOR YOUNG PEOPLE (588 3948)
Free drama workshops on weekend; includes playbuilding, mime, dance, puppetry, design, radio and video. Shopfront Caravan touring country towns and schools with The Tempest by William Shakespeare and Children of the Sun by Richard III. A Midsummer Night's Dream by Shakespear; director, Frank Gargro. June 14 - July 12.

THEATRE ROYAL (231 6111)
No Names... No Pack Drill by Bob Herbert; directed by George Ogilvie with Mel Gibbon and Noni Hazelhurst. June 6-29.

THEATRE ROYAL (231 6111)
Diversions and Delights (from the works of Oscar Wilde) with Vincent Price. Commences June 30.

DANCE

SYDNEY DANCE COMPANY (2 0588)
Drama Theatre, SOH. Programme I — Daphnis and Chloe by Graeme Murphy to Ravel; Viridian by Graeme Murphy to Richard Meale; and Sheherazade by Graeme Murphy. Programme II Rumours by Graeme Murphy. Programme III Dialogues by Barry Moreland; Interiors by Paul Saliba and Animos by Joseph Scoglio. In repertory throughout June.

OPERA

THE AUSTRALIAN OPERA (2 0588)
Opera Theatre, SOH. Manon Lescaut by Puccini; conducted by Carlo Felice Cillario and produced by John Copley. From June 9. The Tales of Hoffmann by Offenbach; conducted by William Reid and produced by Tito Capobianco. From June 16.

For entries contact Carole Long on 909 3010/357 1200.

QLD THEATRE

ARTS THEATRE (36 2344)

Belongalonga by Rome Warren; director, Irma Vandenbergh. Saturdays, 2pm.

LA BOITE (36 1622)
The Man From Mackupuin by Dorothy Hewett; director, Graeme Johnstone. To June 21.


POPULAR THEATRE TROUPE
Ring 36 1745 for current programme.

QUEENSLAND ARTS COUNCIL (221 5900)
On tour: QTC Secondary Drama Co: Accommodations by Nick Hall; director, Lloyd Nickson.

Jack Glatzer (violinist) and The Devil.

Toni and Royce The Dream Time.
Wayne Roland Browne Sounds Terrific.

QUEENSLAND THEATRE COMPANY (221 3861)
SGIO Theatre: Richard III by Shakespeare; director, Alan Edwards; designer, Graham McLean; with John Krummel. To June 14.

TN COMPANY (52 5880)
Cement Box Theatre: Summit Conference by Robert David MacDonald; director, John Milson; designer, Stephen Amos; with Judith Anderson. To June 7.

Waiting For G'dor by Samuel Beckett; director, Rick Billingham; designer, Stephen Amos; with Geoff Cartwright and Duncan Wass. June 11 - July 5.

DANCE

AUSTRALIAN YOUTH BALLET (38 5059)
On tour: Grande Tarantelle, La Paris and The Rehearsal.

HER MAJESTY'S (221 2777)

QUEENSLAND BALLET COMPANY (229 3355)
On tour with Qld Arts Council. Carmen, choreography, Harold Collins; design, Mike Bridges, Jennifer Carseldine.

QUEENSLAND MODERN AND CONTEMPORARY DANCE COMPANY (38 5059).

On tour: Programme of modern and contemporary works by Bev Nevin.

For entries contact Don Batchelor on 356 9311.

SA THEATRE

ASSOCIATION OF COMMUNITY THEATRE (223 8610)
Community Theatre Weekend. The Parks Community Centre at Angle Park. June 14, 15, 16 all day.

FESTIVAL THEATRE (51 0121)
Evita by Rice and Lloyd Webber; with Jennifer Murphy, Peter Carroll, John O'Day. Until June 14.

STATE THEATRE COMPANY (51 5151)
Playhouse: The Three Sisters by Anton Chekhov; director, Colin George; designer, Hugh Coleman. To June 7.

The Float by Alan Seymour (world premiere); director, Kevin Palmer; designer, Vicki Feitscher. Sat, June 13-28.

Q THEATRE (223 5651)
89 Halifax Street.

The Murder Game by Constance Cox; director, Frank Gargro. June 14 - July 12 Wed-Sat.

SPACE THEATRE (51 0121)
Festival Centre: DDS Holdings presents Rattle of a Simple Man by Charles Dyer. June 4-21. Saturday at 1.30 pm.

THEATRE GUILD (23 3433)

Unley Town Hall Theatre: The Absurdist (short Pinter pieces) 2 pm and 8 pm June 17-19, 24-26. July 1-3.

OPERA

STATE OPERA (352 3788)

For entries contact Edwin Reif on 223 8610.

TAS THEATRE

QUEENSLAND MODERN AND CONTEMPORARY DANCE COMPANY (38 5059).

On tour: Programme of modern and contemporary works by Bev Nevin.

For entries contact Don Batchelor on 356 9311.
ILLUSION CIRCUS THEATRE
COMPANY (003 63.5178)
The Truce, (a Warsaw play).
John Carroll Theatre, Devonport, June 7-14.
Launceston TCAE, June 20
Burnie Civic Theatre, June 28
Rosny College, Hobart, July 3,4,5.
POLYGON THEATRE (34 8018)
Rehearsal throughout June for Rosen­
crantz and GuildenstERN Are Dead by
Tom Stoppard.
SALAMANCA (23 5259)
Company in rehearsal with playwright
in residence John Lonie and guest
director Richard Davey, working on
museum programmes for Scores and
Community.
THEATRE ROYAL (34 6226)
Gibert and Sullivan Society: Pirates
of Penzance June 18-21.
For entries contact Anne Campbell on
(049) 67 4470.

VIC
THEATRE

ALEXANDER THEATRE (543 2828)
Coward on Coward by the Monash
Musical Theatre Company. 8pm June 3,8,
11-14. Saturday Club — different series of
plays suitable for school children.
ARENA THEATRE (24 9667)
Schools Programme: Where To Turelu?;
The Whale — The Biggest Thing That Ever
Died — suitable for Upper Primary and
Lower Secondary students. Extensive
Community access drama classes.
ARTS COUNCIL OF VICTORIA
(529 4355)
Flextime by Roger Hall; directed by Don
Mackay. Touring Brisbane (Twelfth Night
Theatre) through June.
Carbony by John Romeril; with Bruce
Spence.
Australian Dance Theatre.
As We Are by Beverley Dunn. On tour through
June.
Modern Mime Theatre, Michael Freeland.
On tour through June to primary and
secondary schools.
Franz by Alan Hopgood.
AUSTRALIAN PERFORMING
GROUP (347 7133)
Back Theatre: The Governor’s Pleasure
Theatre Group under the direction of Ray
Mooney are presenting three short plays in
June.
Front Theatre: APG Ensemble use (not
programmed).
COMEDY CAFE
With Rod Quantock and Company.
COMEDY THEATRE (663 4993)
Shut Your Ears And Think Of England, 8
pm nightly through June.
CREATIVE ARTS THEATRE
Touring Schools programme.
FLYING TRAPEZE CAFE (413 727)
Some seven shows are planned for June
but programme as yet unannounced.
HOOPLE THEATRE FOUNDATION
(634 888)
Playbox Upstairs: Hovannah by Canadian
playwright Michel Tremblay. Director
Murray Copeland; with Robert Essex and
Vernon Wells. Tues-Sat 8.15pm, June 5-
28.
Playbox Downstairs: Outside Edge by
Richard Harris, Director Carillo Gantner,
with Kirsty Child. Julia Blake and John
Wood. Mon-Sat 8.30pm through June.
HER MAJESTYS THEATRE (663 3211)
Pyjama Tops with John Inman. 8.30pm
nightly through June.
LAST LAUGH THEATRE
RESTAURANT (419 6226)
Bent Brass from America with Jane
Clifton as compere.
LA MAMA (350 4593) (380 9646)
Pieges: by Michael Heath; directed by
Colin McColl. May 22-June 8.
The Door by David Porter; directed by
Jean-Pierre Mignon; with Bruce Keller.
June 12-29. Thursday-Sunday 8.30pm.
MELBOURNE THEATRE COMPANY
(654 4000)
Russell Street Theatre: Bent by Martin
Sherman; directed by Bruce Myles June 4-
August 2.
Athenaeum Theatre: Rosencrantz and
Guildenstern Are Dead and Hamlet in
reperatory June 2-7 (Ros), June 9-14
(Ham), June 16-21 (Ros), June 23-28
(Ham) and on June 14. 18. Hamlet 2pm
followed by Rosencrantz... 8.30pm.
Athenaeum 2: Bremen Coffee and The
Sadist, two new German plays by Rainer
Werner Fassbinder, May 5-June 28.
Schools Days: June 4, 11, 18 — Hamlet
(Anotherme), June 26 — Poetics Reading of
Poetry of World War One (Russell Street).
PILGRIM PUPPET THEATRE
(818 6650)
Circus Strings and Things by Bert Cooper.
THE MILL COMMUNITY THEATRE:
(052) 22 2318
Race Across The Desert - a version of
Brecht’s Exception and The Rule; directed
by James Rutter — available for tour to
schools etc in June.
Coming in August - The Clyde Company
Papers: an historical documentary theatre
play about Geelong.
Mill Nights - community theatre activities
every Thursday Night (7.30-10pm) at The
Mill, Pakington Street, Newtown,
Geelong.
For entries contact Suzanne Spooner on
387 2651.

WA
THEATRE

HAYMAN THEATRE (350 7026)
A Doll’s House by Ibsen; director, Denise
Young. A Theatre-Go-Round production.
June 17-28.
THE WHOLE IN THE WALL (381 2403)
Mirandolina by Carlo Goldini; director,
The Misanthrope by Molieres; director,
The MAGIC MIRROR THEATRE
COMPANY
Rubbedy Dub. Pub show directed by
John Atten. On tour North West and
PLAYHOUSE (325 3500)
National Theatre Company: Piaf by Pam
Gems; director. Stephen Barry; with Judy
Davis and Joan Sydney. May 29-June 21.
Under Milk Wood by Dylan Thomas;
For lower primary.
Middleton Market by Richard Tulloch.
For upper primary.

DANCE

HIS MAJESTYS THEATRE (335 6188)
WA Ballet Company at Gala opening of
theatre. Four ballets: Spirits by Barry
Moreland. We Are Together by Don
Asher. The Visitor by Garth Welch,
Concerto Grosso by Charles Czarni;
artistic director, Garth Welch with the
Arensky Quartet and the Wigmore
Ensemble.
WA ARTS COUNCIL (322 6766)
WA Ballet Company North West tour.
June 16-28.
WA BALLET COMPANY
Workshop Wanneroo in residence. June
9-14.

OPERA

WA OPERA COMPANY
His Majesty’s Theatre (328 4512)
La Traviata by Verdi: musical director,
Gerald Krug; designer, Graham McLean;
producer, Giuseppe Bertinazoo; with
Margaret Haggart, Gino Zancarolo and
For entries contact Joan Ambrose on
299 6639.
FORTUNE THEATRE, DUNEDIN

Director

The Fortune Theatre Trust Board invites early applications for the post of Director for its small professional company.

The Fortune, under its original Director, has made steady progress in its first six years, is now solidly based in its own 240 seat theatre and receives excellent community support. The position offers unrivalled, but challenging, creative and administrative opportunities. Initial salary depends on experience, future salary on results.

Responsibility is to the Board for all aspects - budgets, programmes, productions, tours, schools, administration etc.

Applicants should have New Zealand experience in all these - particularly working within limited budgets and should preferably be available to work with the outgoing Director by June, 1980. Later availability will not disqualify.

Further details from and applications to:
The Chairman,
Fortune Theatre Trust,
P.O. Box 6001,
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(New Zealand)

• Dance Theatre of Harlem
• Graeme Blundell on Melbourne to Sydney
• Freddie Gibson & the Theatre Royal

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Across:
1. Purest stem somehow found in a forest (4,6)
6. Employed the volatile Duse (4)
9. You'll get flowers if you knock 'er china (10)
10. Legal locals? (4)
13. Relation of I down's leaving the prostitute (7)
15. Circular the lad sent round the pitch (6)
16. Dissenter can give one a right royal fever (6)

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17. By the by. Father frenziedly left the child's top behind (15)
18. Large, returned wager will land you on the gallows (6)
20. "But this eternal... must not be 'To ears of flesh and blood" (Hamlet) (6)
21. Push along, led astray by peculiar runt (7)
22. See him in one roistering with a fiddle (4)
25. 'Is match (sic) is strangely divisive (10)
26. Fifty abandon their sin in a church (4)
27. Racine? Corneille? Certainly not Griffiths' funny men (10)

Down:
1. Rosy instrument, by the sound of it (4)
2. Consumes a headless poet (4)
3. Drink that brings the timid round to sin (6)
4. Failing to grasp international understanding (15)
5. Old flame of 22? (6)
7. Feel around the round, golden girl, and enjoy voluptuously (10)
8. Putting down the crazed, stringy doe (10)
11. Advertisement for a prim fowl, we hear (10)
12. Petrels attack females (5,5)
13. The Germans drink, and the French have little value... (7)
14. ... so cou the French with this stream (7)
19. He follows the path of a mad president (6)
20. Accused the uproar in bedlam (6)
21. Bring down before the volcano (4)
24. Performs deeds (4)

The first correct entry drawn on June 25 will receive one year's free subscription to Theatre Australia.

Last month's answers.