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Robert Page
Editor

Lucy Wagner
Editor

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CONTENTS

THEATRE

INFO 4
SHOWBUZZ/Norman Kessell 7
THE ELLIS COLUMN 8
TAKING MELBOURNE TO HEART/Rex Cramphorn talks to Kate Legge 10
FLOATING WORLD IN DOCK/Garrie Hutchinson 12
PLAYWRITING '82/John McCallum edits this year's feature on playwrights which includes THE BEST AUSTRALIAN PLAYS and SEWELL, NOWRA DICKINS 15

INTERNATIONAL/UK/Irving Wardle/USA/Karl Levet/ITI 23
REVIEWS/Nationwide reviews of the latest productions 26
GUIDE/to this month’s theatre 39
RESTAURANT SUPPER GUIDE/show-goers guide to eating out 42

MUSIC

INFO 43
WHO’S GOT IT...?/James Murdoch surveys the Arts Information scene 44

FILM

INFO 47
GUIDE/The movies to watch for this month 48
PICKING A WINNER/Elizabeth Riddell 49
REVIEWS/Snowy River/Starstruck/Mephisto etc 50

INTERNATIONAL/UK/Irving Wardle/USA/Karl Levet/ITI 23
REVIEWS/Nationwide reviews of the latest productions 26
GUIDE/to this month’s theatre 39
RESTAURANT SUPPER GUIDE/show-goers guide to eating out 42

OPERA

INFO 52
IAN CAMPBELL/Ken Healey talks to the man on his way to the Met 53
REVIEWS/Makropoulos Affair/Ken Healey 55

GUIDE/What’s on in opera 56

DANCE

INFO 58
GLEN TETLEY/talks to Jill Sykes 59

REVIEWS/SDC/ADT/Pina Bausch/Bill Shoubridge 61
GUIDE/This month’s dance events 64
THE STRUGGLE OF
THE NAGA TRIBE

by RENDRA

director Chris Johnson • designer Richard Roberts
with Robert Alexander • Brandon Burke • Annie Byron
Tom Considine • Cathy Downes • Bob Hornery
Suzanne Roylance • Carole Skinner • Tony Strachan

OPENS 19th MAY • NIMROD
This month we celebrate the tenth year of the Australian National Playwrights' Conference.

The original purpose of the Conference, fuelled by Whitlam largesse, was to develop fledgling talent and provide each year a new crop of writers that the theatres might harvest.

Ten years on the Boom has suffered an insidious seeping away — and the Conference become a place for known writers to have their works aired. Graeme Blundell's 1981 fortnight was flakked for this and George Whaley's present one, with names like Sandy McCutcheon, Michael Freundt, Craige Cronin, Bob Herbert and Len Radic, will not escape similar criticism.

Why are "established" writers turning to the ANPC?

Quite simply because they cannot get a hearing elsewhere. And it pays off. Alma de Groen's (and she's no greenhorn talent) Vocations from last year's Conference was taken up by the MTC and is to be made into a film.

The theatre companies say that local content has not proportionally sunk much below the level of 1974 (30%) — though it is hardly encouraging to know that in eight years it hasn't crept up. But increasingly it is the stalwart few whose works are produced and increasingly the local segment of the season is being consigned to second venues.

History proves that funding and indigenous growth go hand in hand. The Doll was a direct result of the funding of the Elizabethan Theatre Trust the first channel of Government subsidy, in 1954; the last new wave of iconoclastic writers and directors coincided with the establishment of the then named Australian Council for the Arts in 1968 and had its heyday in the Whitlam years 1972-5.

"I'm not a believer in quantity for its own sake, but it seems clear that the wider we cast the net (ie increase subsidy) the more likely it is that genuine creative talent will prosper and works of true value emerge."

Gough Whitlam.

Even with the phryric victory after the Stage Crisis Day and accolades to the new Council supremo Tim Pascoe, the squeeze is on. With the Challenge Grant Scheme theatre companies are sent as mendicants to the market place under a banner guaranteed to turn the public off: "Arts Against the Wall".

Certainly it is easy to lose faith in times of financial stricture and return to "oceans is best" — or at least safest — thinking (thank goodness we're over that with regard to our actors and directors). Many directors believe they "prove themselves" by tackling works of the overseas repertoire. In fact they are hardly at risk when the dramas they present are the pick of what has been successful in the theatre capitals of the Western world. This is unsubsidised Edgley thinking — who on his own admission is out to make a dollar.

QTC Director Alan Edwards represents one obviously widespread view when he says "The QTC has a policy of presenting the best of national and international writing for theatre of every period. Its current percentage of Australian plays is between 20 and 30% in the major house seasons and 100% in the alternative wing — QTC Tangent Productions. As our audience grows and more good Australian plays become available this is likely to increase, but I don't adhere to anything like a fixed percentage just for its own sake."

This could be termed the "passive" attitude to local drama — when something good turns up, produce it.

Jim Sharman takes the active line, however, believing that talent must be cultivated through production: "The economic conditions of the time tend to encourage more conservative notions of programming. While the quality of any script must be the priority, to avoid the responsibility of developing the writing talent in the country — a responsibility that is implicit in public subsidy — will have quite devastating long-term effects."

It is not that supply has dried up, but demand, a matter of great concern to the QTC. It turns to the ANPC just to get redress the balance.

No one is suggesting a xenophobic moratorium on imported plays. Of course the best from overseas should be seen here; it's a question of proportion and of indigenous development. Of course it is difficult to work up often raw local dramas into the effective stuff of theatre — but the input is essential to the development of our national theatre. In times of financial stringency the challenge is tougher. A heavy responsibility is in the hands of artistic directors. If they evade it, and the decline continues, they do a great disservice to our heritage, our cultural identity and our future.

In the meantime many of our top writers will continue to turn to the ANPC just to get a hearing. Playwrights are also taking matters into their own hands with present moves to create a Writers' Theatre to redress the balance.
JUST ANOTHER BRICK?

CAPPA has started its publicity campaign for the Challenge Grant Scheme, sending out a big folder of publicity material to eligible companies. The chosen slogan is “Arts Against the Wall” — not quite striking that positive, optimistic note that makes public and business alike feel they’re on to a good thing, backing a winner and all that. New Moon Theatre in North Queensland claim to be dragging in the crowds in Townsville, Rockhampton and Cairns by selling themselves as the hottest shows since Broadway.

NEW SKY

Nimrod Downstairs’ May offering — Judith Anderson’s New Sky — promises to be of particular interest. Anderson created the mime and mask show after training at the le Coq School and first presented it in (see article page 11), and indeed where most theatres’ programs are increasingly blurring the edges between the distinctions we used to make — like mainstream, classical, alternative etc. — Cramphorn has made a firm commitment to the distinct areas. In their mainstage, downstairs theatre the repertoire is all new Australian work: Anne Harvey’s Buena Vista, Gordon Dryland’s Seadrift and writer-in-residence Barry Dickins’ A Couple of Broken Hearts. Upstairs are the more experimental Peter Handke, David Mammet and Jilly Fraser. And in St Martins is a small classics season — Brittanicus and Long Day’s Journey.

WOMEN AND ARTS FESTIVAL

The Women and Arts Festival to take place in October this year, is well underway in planning. A tiny staff — including Sue Hill, ex-Nimrod Theatre Manager — is organising a film festival, Women Writers Week, music concerts community performances and other theatre, mural painting, pageants, day-long entertainments in Hyde Park and at the Opera House, lunch hour performances, songs and dance, exhibitions, playwrights festival...the list goes on and on. And not everything will be happening in Sydney — the regional co-ordinators have a multitude of plans as well.

SHOPFRONT TO CLOSE

The next theatre on the death list is Errol Bray’s youth theatre in St George’s, Shopfront. They lost their AAP funding in 1976, Theatre Board funding in 1980 and two months ago Shopfront CYSS was axed by the Federal Government with three days notice. They have a mere $15,000 to pay off on their $250,000 building, but unless they can raise the money by the end of May, they are due to close down.

CANBERRA FESTIVAL

Canberra Festival’s drama content was up considerably this year. Subsidies went to Theatre ACT’s On Our Selection and the Marionette Theatre to bring in General MacArthur and Smiles Away. A great innovation was the import of street theatre troupes for the Patriotic Show and the Wine and Food Frolic — outdoor, day-long, conglomerate events with performers appearing at add times and in odd places.

METCALFE AT THE NATIONAL

Edgar Metcalfe, appointed as interim Director of the National, Perth, has now been given the permanent position. As Artistic Director of the Hole In The Wall he took that company back to viability last year, proving that he knows what appeals to Perth’s theatregoers — an excellent qualifi-
dance program, forcing the two schools into a desperate situation and the closure of the interim Dance Course. Elcom's explanation over the phone after 12 months of waiting was "Rome wasn't built in a day you know."

Meanwhile the space remains empty collecting more water and no rent.

SUCCESSFUL CELEBRITY NIGHT

Lilian and Ken Horler shone on the dance floor of Paddo Town Hall; Katharine Brisbane and Dibbs Mather managed a nifty foxtrot; others were less spectacular as they filled the dance floor at the recent Playwrights' Conference Celebrity Ball. Graeme Blundell shouted over the crowd as he tried to explain what a celebrity was; Bob Ellis was forced to retire temporarily from speech-making (see his column p 8) and even Geraldine Turner and John O'May had difficulty making their songs heard.

Amidst the candlelight, flowers, champagne and balloons, people were too intent on enjoying themselves to want any other entertainment. But where, one asked, were the ballroom dancing experts of yesteryear — ex-ANPC Director, Richard Wherrett and Aubrey Mellor, to name but two. Those that did attend will be delighted to know that their partying on till the early hours produced a profit of well over $2,000 for the ANPC.

AS THEY LIKE HER

The MTC has thrown its bonnet over the windmill in a most uncharacteristic fashion. John Sumner gave the task of designing the costumes for As You Like It, one of its major productions of the season, to Judith Cobb, who turned 21 only in February and has come to the company straight from finishing her fashion design diploma course at RMIT. Not only this but, because the powers that be at MTC were so impressed with Judith's work and her potential, the recently formed MTC Society's cheque to the company has gone, in part, to provide a $6,000 scholarship for Judith so she can spend this year at least with them.

PERFORMANCE SPACE

Mike Mullins and his committee of the Performance Space, having been turned down for funding by the NSW Government are attempting to go it alone. A fund-raising drive is underway, though looking for donations from theatres as they are may be a little over-optimistic. The actual venue is also in question, the Cleveland Street owners are now asking for a higher rent than the committee is prepared to pay, but...
Mullins is convinced that a club for the theatre profession with cheap good food and wine will eventually be a goer.

**LIGHTS UP AT LIGHTHOUSE**

Inset on the cover is Gillian Jones as Jim Sharman’s Titania in *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* at Lighthouse — it’s Sharman’s first production as Artistic Director. The Dream is followed by Nowra’s latest work, *Spellbound*, his first full-length play set in contemporary Australia. He says his decision to write it was not a conscious one but one that naturally grew out of his other plays and his fascination with how important love is to us all and the fear of loneliness.

"*Spellbound* is a play about people who are spellbound by their fear of opening up to each other, of how unconsciously cruel they can be and of how desperate they can be for love or as one character puts it: ‘The sad thing is that everyone wants to be loved.’ No one really listens to the other person. Sylvia’s question ‘Don’t you hear the ringing in your ears?’ goes unanswered.”

Sylvia is played by Gillian Jones.

**ST MARTINS OPENS**

This month the new performance spaces open in the St Martins Youth Arts Centre. This major performing arts complex in South Yarra, dedicated to the work of young people, is unique in Australia — indeed anywhere outside the Soviet Union. St Martins involves young people by doing; there are no formal classes, but through intense involvement in show production anyone between 12 and 25 can take the opportunity to learn the craft in all areas of the performing arts. The two opening shows are *Brunswick — The Musical*, directed by Helmut Bakaitis and *Slive of the Service* by young writer Bill Marshall.
The Australian Elizabethan Theatre Trust is putting on a bold face about the halving of its Australia Council funding from $268,000 to $134,000 (February TA) and affecting to be cockahoop about an extra $80,000 earmarked for Australian content. It is obvious, however, that much entrepreneurial planning has gone down the drain. For example, those much talked about musicals. Instead, the Trust is constrained to spread that $80,000 thinly around. In effect, doing more or less exactly what the Council’s Theatre and Music Boards themselves are doing.

Projects currently being negotiated include financial involvement in the Queensland Ballet’s tour of Canberra, Albury, Melbourne and Geelong; Sydney seasons for Circus Oz and the revue, Squirts; the Marionette Theatre’s production of The Magic Pudding at the Commonwealth Games in Brisbane in September.

The Trust lost money on the visits by Piccolo Teatro di Milan and Pina Bausch’s Wuppertal Dance Theatre, as it quite rightly expected to do, because providing Australians with an opportunity to see companies of this stature is all part of its job. It is hoping to recoup some of these losses by doing sufficiently well with its other 1982 activities — the Sadler’s Wells Royal Ballet, Barnum and Sesame Street Live.

It is striving, so far without success, to raise special funding of $70,000 to send the Australian Aboriginal Theatre’s production of Robert Merritt’s play, The Cakeman, to the World Festival of Theatre in Denver, Colorado, in July — the first time this festival has invited participation by an Australian play.

On another tack, I find it shocking that a national institution like the Trust, apparently without protest, has been lumped with every other subsidised theatrical organisation as a possible claimant for a challenge grant. To qualify for an extra $20,000, it must raise, in competition with every other struggling organisation, $60,000 either from corporate sponsors or through social activities by and for its members. To me, this seems both humiliating and shameful.

To more positive matters, I hear entrepreneur Clifford Hocking plans to bring to Sydney early next year American actress Estelle Parsons and the one-woman show she staged at this year’s Perth Festival, Miss Margarida’s Way.

For a moment in time it appeared Sydney was about to be offered simultaneous productions of a new Neil Simon play, God’s Favorite — one professional, one amateur.

On a recent product-buying flying visit to New York and London, Artistic Director Peter Williams and Executive Producer Garry Penny secured the author’s own okay for a Peter Williams Productions presentation at Phillip St Theatre.

Not surprisingly, perhaps, they were unaware at the time that the Genesian Theatre had earlier listed the play as one of its six productions for 1982, even giving the opening date as July 31 and the director as Charles Zara.

It transpired, however, that the enterprising Genesians had been over-optimistic in thinking they could get the amateur rights. That they were unable to do so is understandable. Simon, I’m told, was most unwilling even to assign the professional rights.

Something to do with continuing dissatisfaction with the second act. Williams and Penny had to do some very persuasive talking to get the okay.

God’s Favorite is now being planned for a mid-June opening at Phillip St Theatre. Meanwhile, the Genesians are hoping to substitute another Simon play, The Star-Spangled Girl, which has already had at least two airings in Sydney, including Frank Hahn’s Opus Theatre Group production at the Independent Theatre in 1976.

The Q Theatre, which since it has been headquartered at Penrith (NSW) has had notable success with two original Australian musicals — St. Mary’s Kid in 1977 and Paradise Regained in 1980 — is launching another this month, Safety In Numbers, by Phillip Scott and Luke Hardy.

The cast of four is Mariette Rups, the original alternative lead to Jennifer Murphy in Evita; Robyn Arthur, who was also in Evita and recently in Busking With Brel at the Nimrod Downstairs; Frank Garfield, who was in the musical Cole at Marian St continued on page 13.
I am brought before you gormless and futile by wills stronger than my own, in my very first unrented tuxedo (waste, all criminal waste) and tastefully clashing brown suede shoes, as befits a tame eccentric in the company of the rich, and Amosan on my shrivelled gums, and Grecian 2000 on my pubic hairs and hope in my heart, in this last gasp of my fortieth year to heaven or... limbo, that some young person, lithe of limb and sweet of glance, from Brisbane perhaps, or further north, will not have heard the line before, long copyrighted by the great Guy Doleman since 1949: “And you must play the Maori princess” and still believe I yet have influence in a cocaine-fuelled and accountant-fardled film industry that has passed me by.

All around me are the members of our celluloid Masada, giving blissfully in to the Romans, and coming down off the Rock alive, ashamed and rich, saying Rome is the future, a wave we cannot resist, its values must be our values and its gods our gods, there is no Israel... and the temple is down.

So... meat pie westerns, slouch hat Butch Cassidy, vegemite Samurai, and Kirk Douglas’ joggling dimple twice over and the seven mutant bikies of the Saltbush Apocalypse drum through my nightmares in Dolby sound. Robert and Rupert, Adams and Packer, Gyngell and Stratton, Gulf and Western, Engulf and Devour... nose jobs and nork jobs and hand jobs and blow jobs and talk jobs and tax jobs... beyond all human imagining, cocktails at Mudgee with friends, five hundred thousand dollars, ye s, three hundred free nuns at that performance liked it so much they stayed over till the next.

Listen mate, why have six American actors playing the six American roles in your next Australian movie, when following the precedent of Kirk Douglas, those six American roles could be played by only three — which is known as creative accounting — and the still unending world-straddling miracle of Murdoch and Stigwood hype: see Gallipoli and die; you’ll be so glad you did.

Robert and Rupert broke up, I hear. These Adelaide Festival relationships are so transitory. Something to do with how Murdoch’s father made his journalistic reputation by telling the truth about Gallipoli, a mistake he would not have made last year, had he been, like most of England and Australia, in the employ of his son. The wind bloweth where it listeth however, and my wet finger as always is up, and I am writing a Gallipoli-style road movie myself, to be called Phuoc Thooy, in which the central teenage character is on the verge of being selected for the Australian test cricket side when he suddenly enlists to go to Vietnam, motoring north with a marihuana smoking draft-dodger via Byron Bay and Surfers Paradise to Canungra. They arrive in Vietnam and find to their amazement that killing is going on. Music is by Sherbert and Mozart. It should make a lot of money.

So too, I fear alas, in the wake of his triumph with The Man from Snowy River, should Cull Cullen’s forthcoming screen-play to be directed again by Mad Miller II, as Evan Williams has come to know him, and to co-star once more the great Jack Thompson, or Jack Clayton as his barman.
has come to know him, called Clancy of the Overdraft, and based on the life of Michael Edgely, in which five hundred battle-maddened tax accountants gallop over North Head in an act of mass kamikaze crying "If you can't trust Malcolm Fraser whom can you trust?" It ends with a glorious crimson sunset over Los Angeles and the mogul hero's silhouetted profile looking out, and in Burt Lancaster's moving voice-over, the valedictory words —

"Sometimes I rather fancy that I'd like to change with Clancy"

In my twilit helicopter with a starlet going down
And the tickertape a-chatter of the bums on seats that matter
In the conference rooms of Utah where they cry you little beautah
Another Aussie write-off in the best of Dolby sound.

Phil Noyce, I am pleased to say, has interrupted his career giving interviews, a mistake I think he will not make again; though rumours are about, there are always rumours in the film business, of a sequel he will do called Snowjob, subtitled Jitter's Price, a tale of squalid urban corruption in freezing Melbourne weather whetherin the once idealistic film critic of the Melbourne Age is bought off by a boisterous, conscienceless Pommy migrant producer and agent with telltale flaws in her Sussex accent and far too much to lose. The fatal words in the controversial review, "the best Australian film since Picnic at Hanging Rock," have alerted the usually moribund Jim McElroy to the possibility of reissuing the earlier film with a new expanded ending, as originally conceived by the towering genius of Peter Weir, in which the little girls in crinolines, aboard a flying saucer, float upwards, ever upwards to the music of a thousand flutes.

Peter Weir himself, now in the fourteenth month of the preliminary shoot of The Year of Living Expensively, based he assures me, on his own original novel, has this week fired his third consecutive film crew for interfering with his plans for world domination and yesterday blockaded himself on an island besieged by the troops of President Marcos, who in his emergency broadcast said the Phillipines could only have to be.

More than that, and the country's one true living auteur, John Lamo, who made Pacific Banana, in seeking with his next feature film to shift up market his presently somewhat bohemian image by making at long last an art film, has with his title hit the nail, I think, on the head. It's a soft porn allegory of the Australian content, so self-destructively obfuscous is he to the moneyed powers around and beneath him, when he didn't have to be.

But Australian content is more than that, and the country's one true living auteur, John Lamo, who made Pacific Banana, in seeking with his next feature film to shift up market his presently somewhat bohemian image by making at long last an art film, has with his title hit the nail, I think, on the head. It's a soft porn allegory of the Australian content, so self-destructively obfuscous is he to the moneyed powers around and beneath him, when he didn't have to be.

Elsewhere Tim Burstall, quickly adapting his approach as he always does to the needs of the last movie-going generation but one, is himself rewriting, to his intense delight, his thrice postponed feature film Kangaroo in the novel of which, when he finally got round to reading it last week, he was incensed to find no sexual content whatever, into a more populist version of the same story, called Carry On D H, and is hoping to interest Frankie Howerd in the role of the bawdy, farting, prattfalling novelist from the north, with Pam Ayres as his ribald, gawky, foreign-accented wife.

Still there are some glimmers of hope for the country. Peter Allen has won an actual Academy Award for a song written by three other people — to which I understand he contributed the A flat — and on receiving the award called out to the vast television world audience "Hello Australia" and nearly got the pronunciation right. Australian astronomers, after years of search, have found the furthest point in the universe — the one at which an Australian film goes into profit at Village Roadshow. And Nancy Reagan has shyly confessed that her very favourite actor of all is Bryan Brown, though I would have thought that her taste in men was already painfully obvious, in her choice for husband of the only unintelligent actor in the world. He has certainly given the profession a bad name. He knows his lines but not the sense of them. I quote from Private Eye.

President "Rockfist" Ragan today angrily hit out at his Defence Chief Caspar Hamburger over US plans to drop an H-Bomb on Europe as a demonstration of goodwill to the Soviet Union. "It has never been part of official US policy to make a first strike against our NATO allies," he said in a Toadthrush-style statement of clarification, "but that doesn't mean we wouldn't do it if we had to." Later, however, Secretary of State Earl Haig, 105, the veteran World War One commander, clarified the issue further by saying that "the bomb would only be dropped on Europe in a case of emergency — or a case of whisky, as the case may be." There is some confusion here tonight as to just whom the US is planning to go to war with. One thing is certain. The war process must go on.

That man from his attitude might count as Australian content, so self-destructively obfuscous is he to the moneyed powers around and beneath him, when he didn't have to be.
TAKING MELBOURNE TO HEART

By Kate Legge

For the past six months director REX CRAMPHORN has been whizzing from Melbourne to Sydney and back again winding up business in both states. Although he wore the strung out signs of travel-lag very well, now when he talks about the future he sounds sure of his direction. If “Home is where the heart is”, then Melbourne is where it’s all happening for him.

He is looking for rooms to rent close to the Playbox theatre, where he spends most of his time. Something has clicked — he has caught up with this city — its playwrights, performers, and its pace. Things don’t change overnight, but at least he can see his contribution to the Playbox’s 1982 program beginning to take shape. “When we got the brochures printed for the second half of the year it was great, because they expressed a bit of my input into the Playbox,” he said.

The inflexible downstairs proscenium stage has finally been tampered with at Rex’s discretion to create a different space. “By cutting off the ends of the upstairs balcony we can extend the stage right across to the wall. The feel of the theatre has changed.”

Management have welcomed this new initiative. It is one of many preparations for the theatre’s next major project — A Whip Round for Percy Grainger — nicely timed to coincide with celebrations to commemorate the composer’s centenary.

Since rehearsals began Rex and his cast of five have been cashing in on the excitement and activity centred around the Percy Grainger Museum, where the playwright Dr Therese Radic works.

Although the play was written to document Grainger’s life in dramatic form, Rex hopes that the production will leave audiences with an impression of the man, and not just an encyclopaedic picture of his life.

To start with, he has discarded the idea of having one actor play the part of Percy. “All five actors are presenting different aspects of Percy. He is a very complicated character. It is not enough to have him recreate events.” According to Rex, Dr Radic is happy with the way they are adapting her script to suit the style of an ensemble performance.

She fiddled with three drafts before passing on the final product. “Now she is busy with the centenary,” he said, “she wants us to play around with it.”

The people he has assembled readily warmed to this relaxed approach. There is a feeling about the project that inspires Rex to speak enthusiastically about its prospects. He has just returned from Sydney where he worked with Kate Fitzpatrick and Malcolm Robertson on a Restoration comedy called The Provok’d Wife. “It didn’t have the same atmosphere about
it. I usually love that kind of theatre but for some strange reason there was an uncomfortable feeling lurking that has not followed me back here.”

Partly this is because of the aura surrounding the subject of Grainger. “The whole thing is rapt in a sense of paranoia. Suddenly this mystery is being unravelled. It is as if a searchlight has swept through the Museum that has been bathed in obscurity for decades.”

As well as choosing to portray Percy as a five dimensional character, Rex’s aversion to theatrical biographies discouraged him from using a pianist to play Graingers’ music live. “It would be almost impossible to get anyone who could play like Percy, anyway. He was fantastically aggressive, even when he played conventional music like “Country Garden”. He took an assault course on the keys.” Instead the musician, Barry Cunningham has arranged tapes of original Grainer recordings, plus electronic processing to interpret Percy’s idea of free music.

Rex likens the sound to that of Brian Eno’s music. He believes the play will also challenge the cliche that Grainger was “an undiscovered genius”. “Many people think he has left a huge body of work waiting to be found. That is just not true.

A Whip Round for Percy Grainger opens this month, when Rex is looking forward to a break before starting work on his next two projects. One is a Barry Dickins’ play called A Couple of Broken Hearts, which is about two hippies who get stuck in Yass. “It’s more like a horror film than a play.”

Later on in the year Rex will direct Britannicus for the second time. He wants another chance to work on the translation he completed for a production in Sydney. It will be staged in St Martin’s new experimental theatre as part of the Playbox’s exchange program.

“It’s been terrific joining the Playbox,” he said. “It has the unique advantage of being younger and fresher and more energetic than the larger organisations in town. There is a good feeling here.”

It seems to have caught on. Instead of rushing back to Sydney in between shows, Rex has definitely decided to stay. “Before whenever I’ve had a break I’ve gone back. But this time I want to stay and really get to know this place.”

John Romeril’s play The Floating World was first performed at the Pram Factory by the Australian Performing Group in August 1974. About 3,000 people attended the 39 performances, hardly any, but a goodish crowd by the standards of the day.

It was directed by Lindzee Smith, and had memorable performances from Bruce Spence as Les, on the Cherry Blossom nightmare to Japan and his own head, and from Peter Cummins as the deranged comic.

Peter Corrigan’s setting was one of the best, cleanest uses of the Pram Factory of that time, managing to contain both the actors and the audience inside an environment which was the cruise ship, a concentration camp and Les’s concentration-mind all at the same time.

Now, eight years later, The Floating World is being revived at Russell Street by the Melbourne Theatre Company — an unusual but welcome event in Melbourne’s theatrical life.

Australian plays are still not that frequently done — but a revival! It is an opportunity for a much larger
It is directed, in another uncharacteristic, but also very welcome move, by APG/Hoopla/Playbox person Graeme Blundell, and designed for the proscenium this time, by Peter Corrigan.

The casting reflects the compulsory changes that have occurred in the Melbourne theatre with the rapid decline in working opportunities. The schisms of old have become an absence of alternatives now. Perhaps that's a good thing, because Blundell has been able to overcome a problem in the original production — the leap of faith needed to appreciate a young actor playing old Les.

Now we have the more appropriately vintage Fred Parslow as Les, Marion Edward as Irene, Syd Conabere and Brian James, distinguished performers all, and in a nice expression of the new deal, former APG great Evelyn Krape, rocker and theatre musician Red Symons and magician Doug Tremlett from the burgeoning theatre restaurant talent school.

Blundell aims to develop the realistic side of the play as much as the expressionistic, emphasising its basis, Les's basis as a 'real' person, a 'real' Melbourne person. With Romeril, he wants to give it its chance as a kind of Australian Death of a Salesman, with Les as a characteristic kind of Australian man, perhaps better able to be understood in 1982, than he was in 1974, or than his precursor was in The One Day of the Year.

Romeril and Blundell view the play as a "clash between Japanese culture at its highest and Australian culture at its lowest", for possession of Les. Romeril like Shepard, Hare and other living writers, says that tragedy is possible in working class characters, that it means something, objectively, to a contemporary audience, and that it does not require the slavish acceptance of the debased "naturalistic" form.

We can see all this in a kaleidoscope of quick changes, a luna park on water, a side-show commented on visually by Peter Corrigan, in the performances of actors who can sing, dance and do magic as well as act.

It's to be hoped this production really works. If The Floating World sinks, then so do a raft of other modern Aussie classics.
...continued from page 7

Theatre and more recently in straight roles in The Dresser and Chinchilla and, making his musical debut, Simon Burke, of TV's Restless Years, the Nimrod's controversial The Choir and three movies, including The Devil's Playground.

Direction is by Arthur Dicks, who staged the company's highly successful Privates on Parade, and musical direction by composer Philip Scott who was musical director of The Rocky Horror Show and a long list of musical shows at Marian St and elsewhere.

During John Milson's brief spell as Artistic Director in succession to Alastair Duncan at Marian St Theatre, he promised introduction of a series of non-subscription "tangent" productions of new or unusual material aimed at catering for as wide a range of tastes as possible.

The board and Theatre Manager, John Frost are persevering with that idea, though not necessarily with the same type of material Milson had in mind. First experimental offering is a late night show from May 7 at 11 pm on Fridays and Saturdays with Myra de Groot and her Musical Director, Garey Campbell, in Noel and Cole, a one-hour pot-pourrie of the words and music of Noel Coward and Cole Porter.

As I write, the theatre is still seeking a new resident director, but in the meantime Alastair Duncan's predecessor as Artistic Director, Peter Collingwood, will stage Oscar Wilde's The Importance of Being Earnest, which Milson was to have directed. Opening June 11, it has Patricia Kennedy as Lady Bracknell and Barbara Wyndon as Miss Prism.

A new hazard seems to be facing upcoming members of acting fraternity. A youngish Sydney actor with a good track record told me he is having extreme difficulty getting registered with a reliable agent. At each to which he had so far applied he had been told their books were closed. Must be a lesson in that somehow.

Broadway's smash-hit revival of The Pirates of Penzance opens at London's Drury Lane Theatre May 26 with expatriate Aussie Pamela Stephenson joining Tim Curry, George Cole and Annie Ross in leading roles and Wilford Leach repeating his New York staging. A local version with Pamela starring looks a good bet for an entrepreneurial gamble. One thing it might do is eradicate the bad taste left in the mouth by last year's disastrous visit of the decaying D'Oyly Carte Opera. Incidentally, that company, though now defunct, has a stake in the new London production.

Canberra Festival
MARCH 12-21 1983

Expressions of interest are invited from Entertainers or Suppliers of goods/services who wish to be considered for inclusion as participants in the 1983 Festival, celebrating the National Capital's 70th Anniversary.

The Canberra Festival is developing from its original base of family/outdoor/community involvement events. While seeking to expand its success in these areas with emphasis on street performers, buskers etc., it is also looking to provide a broader range of performances and activities in all areas of the arts, theatre and music.

Applications are invited — preferably in writing — with as much information, promotional material etc. BY 30 MAY 1982 and should be directed to: Ellen Blunden, Production Manager Canberra Festival, PO Box 173 Civic Square ACT 2608 Phone (062) 49 1277

THEATRE AUSTRALIA MAY 1982
Why are so many people claiming to feel disappointment with Australian playwriting now? This magazine itself said last month that “the eerie calm Jack Hibberd noticed in 1979 has become a deepening depression”. On the face of it this claim seems absurd: we have a generation of mature, subtle playwrights who have been developing their craft over 15 years of theatrical ferment; we have older, well established writers, such as Patrick White and Ray Lawler, returning with new plays; and we have a wide group of new, younger writers exploring a range of subjects in a range of styles unheard of before. Only a year ago in the Australian Playwrights’ issue, we welcomed the establishment of a national dramatic culture which was “sudden, brilliant and permanent” and we listed over 30 good playwrights to prove it. So what’s the problem?

Part of it is that writers seem to have lost touch with their audiences. Many of them are pursuing strange, distant subjects in difficult new forms — exciting for enthusiasts and cognoscenti but bewildering for even the theatre-going public. Drama, supposedly the most communal of art forms, is becoming esoteric. As a backlash we are getting a string of entertaining, light nostalgia pieces — which at least can tap some sort of community memory. With the old feeling of social and community importance lost, audiences are fracturing into in-groups and claques of supporters — but without the general loyalty to the game which communal sports inspire.

David Hare said in Adelaide that the difference between English and Australian audiences’ reactions to plays was that the English are poor and unhappy and they turn to their playwrights to find out why, whereas Australians are relatively contented and they turn to their playwrights, if at all, for an entertaining night out with the office. (At least, that is more or less what he said.) Are Australian playwrights happy with this role? Do they mind that their audiences’ main reason for being there is that it is that building’s name on their subscription ticket? Can the writers do nothing about it? Is their choice really one between sentimental box-office pap and obscure in-group experimentation?

We don’t know. In this issue we devote our annual Australian Playwriting Issue to an attempt to discover a national repertoire of Best Plays. We look at playscript publishers, in an attempt to suggest where an enduring repertoire may be begun. And we look at some recent writing in an attempt to discover the value in it.
THE BEST AUSTRALIAN PLAYS

For over 10 years people have been asking why there is no national repertoire of Australian plays — "classics" which are regular parts of the main companies seasons. (The Sydney Theatre Company planned, but seems to have abandoned such a repertoire.) The answer lies largely, no doubt, in the obscure regions of theatrical programming politics, but in case the problem is that people are nervous about deciding which plays should be part of the repertoire we present our selections for the core of it. Some are included because they were popular, some because they won serious critical acclaim. They are arranged in chronological order.

ON OUR SELECTION
(1912) by Steele Rudd and Bert Bailey

The apotheosis of Australian melodrama, it manages to combine in one play the conventionality of melodramatic plot and characters, the rough sentimentality of the Australian bush legend, and the homely, small-family wisdom and comic gentleness of the original Steele Rudd stories. Partly because of the leading influence of Bert Bailey, part author and creator of the role of Dad, it played on and off for 17 years, before being taken up in a string of movies, radio serials and TV series. A new adaptation has been done by George Whaley.

DAD: For years I've faced and fought the fires, the floods and the droughts of this country, I came here and cut a hole in the bush, when I hadn't enough money to buy a billy can, without a shirt to put on my back, I worked hard and honestly, living on dry bread, harrowing me bit o' wheat in with the bramble, but I never lost heart for one single moment, Me cattle would perish and die before me very eyes and me roof go from over me head with the wind. But my spirit was never broken, and do you think you can break it now, by the Lord no. (rises). Take me bits of things, take me few head of cattle and get out. (Turns up C.)

CAREY: You talk about spirit, the drought has got your crops, I've got your stock, now what can you do?

DAD: (Coming C.) What the men of this country, with health, strength, and determination are always doing. I can start again.

THE DROVERS (1920) by Louis Esson

In the early 20th Century the land came to be seen as an alien enemy force, and for 30 years people wrote plays set in drab little huts with gloomy inhabitants fighting losing battles against droughts, floods and bushfires. The Drovers, in spite of some awkwardness in the dialogue, is the best of the genre — partly because it dares to move out of the huts and set its scene in the middle of the dry open plains. Briglow Bill is injured in a stampede, and must be left by his mates to die — the cattle have to move on.

BRIGLOW: It don't matter. It had to come sooner or later. I've lived my life, careless and free, looking after my work when I was at it, and splashing my cheque up like a good one when I struck civilisation. I've lived hard, droving and horse-breaking, station work, and over-lancing, the hard life of the bush, but there's nothing better, and death's come quick, before I'm played out — it's the...
BOSS: Maybe I'll finish like you, Briglow, out in a bush, I hope so anyway.
BRIGLOW: I've got no family to leave behind. Maybe the bush'll miss me a bit... the tracks I've travelled, and a star or two, and the old mulga.
BOSS: And I'll miss you. I've never travelled with a better man.

SUMMER OF THE 17TH DOLL (1955)
by Ray Lawler

The only Australian play many people have ever heard of. It took a bob each way on the bush legend: exploiting its sentimental power to the full and then sadly, but affectionately, revealing its hollowness. The cane-cutters, Roo and Barney, come south to Melbourne for the off-season, and discover that, by 1955, the new urban Australia has taken over. Only Olive holds out for the old dream. When the play first toured the outback people who had never seen a play swam flooded rivers and drove hundreds of miles to see it. Its emotional hold over Australian audiences is so complete that few people noticed that it never really raises the issues the characters keep fighting about. It is our classic drama of the inarticulate.

ROO: (grabbing her wrists and holding them tight) Olive, it's gone — can't you understand? Every last little scrap of it — gone!
(He throws her away from him, and she falls to the floor, grief-stricken, almost an animal in her sense of loss)
OLIVE: I won't let you. I'll kill you first!
ROO: (lashing at her, hurting himself at the same time) Kill me, then. But there's no more flyin' down out of the sun — no more eagles. (Going down on one knee beside her and striking the floor with his hand) This is the dust we're in and we're gunna walk through it like everyone else for the rest of our lives!

A CHEERY SOUL
(1963)
by Patrick White

The awful goodness and terrifying cheerfulness of Miss Docker in this play make her one of the most imposing characters in Australian drama. The play is important, too, because it allows its style to change to suit its developing subject. It begins fairly naturalistically, but as Miss Docker's cheeriness assumes first disease proportions, then cosmic significance, the style becomes increasingly expressionist, the whisperings of the chorus of old ladies and townspeople more insistent and the heightened language stronger.

THE LEGEND OF KING O'MALLEY
(1970)
by Michael Boddy and Bob Ellis

Included more for what it represents than for its great merit. It was the first popular play to take the crude larrikinism of the Australian music hall and apply it to a serious contemporary political issue (which said a lot about serious contemporary politics). It took a bigoted, self-interested, bible-bashing, American loudmouth and, by making him the hero, implied much about his earnest, home-grown, Australian colleagues. It draws
cynically on every cheap, romantic, melodramatic, comic trick in the book and wins through, like the traditional Aussie battler, on sheer high spirits alone.

"KING: Good-bye, Billy Hughes."

(HUGHES exit.)

"He's a fool — Australia's bigger than that —"

"ANGEL: Your Australia doesn't exist, O'Malley."

DON'S PARTY (1971)
by David Williamson

Even with a message like that ringing in our ears, the search for the Real Australia continued. Don's Party was an alarmingly prophetic play. Hilariously chronicling the tired disillusionment of the new professional classes who finally voted Whitlam into power, it also emotionally fore-shadowed the failure of spirit and nerve which led them to vote him out three years later. Its loosely naturalistic comic dialogue established David Williamson as a master of observation and of the theatrical craftsmanship needed to get it down and get it right.

"MAL: They were great days."

"DON: Great days."

"KATH: Oh... they were great days... great bloody days weren't they. Then why the hell did I have to put you on an invalid's diet because you had ulcers at the age of twenty-five because you couldn't fucking well cope with your job or anything else for that matter and why did I have to cook all your meals and wash all your clothes? Eh? Because your little mummy hadn't told you that there's a fucking great world full of people out there who don't give a stuff about little Donnie Henderson, boy wonder pre-


A STRETCH OF THE IMAGINATION (1972)
by Jack Hibberd

Critically rather than popularly acclaimed, this one. It is a philosophical, scatological, myth-making, comic monologue which establishes lonely Monk O'Neill of One Tree Hill, if not as a great Australian archetype, then at least as the most comprehensive mixture of great Australian stereotypes. The language is more clever than funny, but it is gloriously luxuriant in its mixture of the vulgar, the erudite and the poetic. The play is not so much Australian as about Australianness. It has the indomitable optimism of many plays about death, and the defiant irreverence so essential to the basic defensiveness of the Australian psyche.

"MONK: Reminds me of the time Les Darcy and I scaled Mount Kosciusko. Les was in training at the time for his first clash with the other fine exponent of the leather, Jess Smith. There we stood on the summit, gazing across our fair land... Australia... attired only in boxing trunks and slouch hats... our bare feet comingling with the soft thin snow. Young Les, somewhat overcome by the grandeur of the khaki expanse before him, intimated to me a vision of the future. Monk, he said, one day Australia, that great nation out there of soldiers and sports and athletes, cereals and wool, will one day rule the Pacific. I believe that England will one day lick the elastic of our boots. America will extend to us an equal hand. The Indon and Kanaka we

PLAYWRIGHTS' CONFERENCE 1982

LITERATURE BOARD

The Literature Board of the Australia Council is proud to help our playwrights by direct writing grants; by funding the publication of their plays; by subsidising the Australian Writers Guild; by regularly offering grants ($9,000 this year) to the Playwrights Conference; by sponsoring workshops and competitions for aspiring playwrights; by bringing overseas dramaturgs and playwrights on visits to Australia; and by supporting (with the Theatre Board) a playwrights-in-residence scheme.
will civilize. Out there, O'Neill, lies a germ... the germ of the future. With water and work it will breed and grow and spread into an empire of fair play and health and wealth and power, and wealth and literature.

He had tears in his eyes.

I took him by the southpaw.

Cut it out Les. You cannot extract sunbeams from cucumber. The lack of oxygen has sapped your intellect. Put up those dooks, and we'll go a round or two for a pound or two. it's cold as a cunt on concrete.

A HARD GOD (1973) by Peter Kenna
The only really good Australian three-hanky play. Rich, warm, comic, big-hearted, Irish. It is about the transience of human closeness and about loss. The portrait of Dan and Aggie Cassidy has more love in it than there is in any other Australian play, and that is what makes the loss so moving, when Aggie learns of Dan's cancer.

THE FLOATING WORLD (1974) by John Romeril
One of the most truly original of recent plays — throwing together a rich collection of carefully observed authentic material and mixing it with funny, savage theatricality. It tells the story of a typical Australian male's pilgrimage to the alien region which surrounds his country, but which he and most Australians have only known in war. The experience thoroughly breaks down his typicality, as he relives his time as a POW on the Burma-Thailand railway, with 18 different diseases at once.

HARRY: The 1974 Women's Weekly Cherry Blossom Cruise. (He continues the chant under LES's voice.)
LES: Knees the size of footballs to knees the size of knees. A new man. I was well again. A skeleton. Six stone seven. I can't tell you how good it felt. I was well again! A new man! I was well again. (We leave LES to his institutionalised future).

TRAVELLING NORTH (1979) by David Williamson
This and Makassar Reef reveal the new maturity of concern, mastery of craft and subtlety of effect which the "old guard" of the 70s have found. In the play the older generation flees north to the sun, sexual passion, old age and death; the younger stays south with the cold, bitterness, fecundity and a new generation. The play charts comically and movingly the ties that bind them and the forces that drive them apart.

THE MAN FROM MUKINUPIN (1979) by Dorothy Hewett
This has the one quality which the rest of the "old guard" have perhaps lost, but which first endeared them all to us — boldness. It is a splendid riotous celebration of a community in the wheatbelt of WA, and it manages to bring in both the nostalgic detail of the day to day lives of the characters and the grand issues of life and love and war and death which rule over them. It uses songs, verses, poetry and comic turns in a bewildering but entertaining profusion found nowhere else.

Clemmy: I wish I could go with them.
Zeeck: Where would you go?
Clemmy: Anywhere. They put me in a cage called Mukinupin, when I used to balance on a rope amongst the stars.
Zeeck: Sun, moon and stars, all sweet things.
Clemmy: But I fell, I fell. (she beats with her crutch on the stage.)
Zeeck: The stars are above, wherever we are. We walk the earth and gaze into eternity, we ride with Andromeda, see the holes in heaven...

A national repertoire cannot be built on 12 plays. Another list, or a larger one, might include The Sunny South, Brumby Innes, Ned Kelly, Rusty Bugles, Reedy River, The Chapel Perilous, Norm and Ahmed, Traitors, or others. Also the list above stops at 1979. Instinct suggests that The Precious Woman or Welcome the Bright World, and certainly Patrick White's new masterpiece Signal Driver, might be included in future lists.

But it was our attempt to be comprehensive last year, in the guide to Playwrights (May, 1981), which caused the most controversy. Everyone was scrambling to be included in the list of also-rans. Not being controversialists we will leave it at this.
John McCallum analyses the newest wave triple-bill

In the last two issues Theatre Australia has published interviews with four important Australian playwrights and an editorial entitled "A National Drama?". If, as the introduction above claims, dramatists have lost touch with their audiences, then it has come at a time when their articulacy and seriousness of purpose have never been greater. Instead of attempting to survey the whole range of new writing, we look at three in particular: Stephen Sewell, Louis Nowra and Barry Dickins.

The problem is summed up by the case of Stephen Sewell. He has said, "To me much Australian writing of the '70s was droll, caricature and satire. It strikes me that the theatre, the writers, are behind, not leading the audience. My intentions are to express as clearly as I can the kinds of contradictions operative in our society (and the individuals who are part of it) in the process of transforming it".

And yet the response to Welcome the Bright World, his most serious work so far, was controversy, not so much about the issues it raised as about whether it was too long or too intellectually ambitious. "Sewell is preaching to an effete Nimrod audience that they ought to care, yet the credibility gap between the world of the play and that of the audience is enormous". It seems impossible to get the society to listen to the ideas, let alone be transformed by them.

To compound the irony, one of the key issues in Welcome the Bright World is that of radical commitment versus liberal disengagement. No one would question the small-l liberal credentials of the Nimrod audiences, but you have only to listen to buzz of foyer-talk — all about chardonnay and home renovations and meaningful relationships — to be aware of the credibility gap. Max Lewin, one of the scientists in the play, is a man who has spent his life believing that you can involve yourself in your work, and work for compartmentalised causes, without considering the total social and political context of your actions. The play reveals the personal and moral catastrophe such an attitude can cause.

And yet the play is set in Germany not Australia — the Germany of modern political German films. Perhaps in Australia, so far, you can afford to pursue your own interests independently of their social context. And perhaps that is why Nimrod audiences do not feel too confronted.

The political construction which people put on the play depends on their own established political perspective. Many critics do not, in fact, seem to have seen it as "a clear expression of the kinds of contradictions operative in society", but as a propaganda piece, a bit more complicated, and longer, than usual. To me this is a naive response, but then my political viewpoint is closer to Sewell's than to his play's critics. Sewell may have to incorporate the reactions of his target audience more closely into his plays' arguments (as Patrick White tried, unsuccessfully perhaps, to do in Big Toys).

Louis Nowra is a writer of such fine theatrical sense and ability to excite, that it is astonishing that it is not perfectly clear what his plays are about.

He has shown, in Visions, a love of intriguing ambiguity, and in Inside the Island a refusal to pursue any metaphorical implications of his central violent action — an action of dislocation and social breakdown which in other hands might be used to say all kinds of things about society. Nowra has a great reticence about being specific, and yet his plays are full of grand, violent concrete action. His plays resonate theatrically without striking a clear note. This is, of course, quite deliberate, and a product of his concern with the ambiguities and contradictions of people attempting to exercise power over each other, but it
does not give audiences much to hang on to. Without a framework for understanding we are left passive victims of his theatrical craftmanship — like Ivan’s tongueless victims in Inner Voices or the soldiers in Inside the Island.

The Precious Woman is different. The characters’ statements and actions are still all confusingly relative to each other, but we are led gradually along a clear path to consider the relation between power and compassion. The play argues that it is easy to feel compassion for helpless victims but difficult to feel compassion for guilty victims. The horror of the events of the play makes compassion inevitable and a virtue. Su-Ling’s final act of compassion, for the callous tyrant Bao, her son, is therefore very confronting.

Sewell and Nowra have been acclaimed as our two great new serious dramatists, and yet in each there remains an austere distance from the society for which they write. Neither has written much about contemporary Australia (a fact in which each seems to take some pride) and so what specific personal or social relevance each has for audiences must be inferred with a lot of hard work. Hard work can be very rewarding for an audience, but the need for it may explain the present cliquishness of local drama.

Barry Dickins is a writer who has not yet been greatly acclaimed, but who many people seem to think is about to hit his straps. The reason for this may be precisely the huge difference between him and writers like Sewell and Nowra. Where they are intellectual and distant he is aggressively personal and emotional. Where they are theatrically disciplined and craftsman-like, he is wild and a larrikin. Where they write about distant places, times and events, he writes about the grubby streets and bush huts around him. Where they write complex, epic plays with lots of characters, he writes paranoid raves for one or two actors. His self-revelatory directness may be what some alienated audiences now want.

Most of Dickins’ plays seem at first to be drunken ramblings for his characters. The structure is precise: that of an alcoholic binge. He presents talkative, articulate characters, and then uses their drinking to dislocate their articulacy and reveal the sad, desperate, lonely outcasts underneath. As they reveal themselves they talk about their past and present experiences and try to make sense of it. In the attempt to make sense of it they reject it all, bit by bit. Minnie, in The Death of Minnie, says that sometimes she thinks the manic horror of the world is all her fault. She “gets rattled” by the suffering of the world. She takes cyanide, and suddenly all the blacked-out electrical appliances in her sad little room spring into action. Dickins provides a social context more specific than do Sewell or Nowra, but then rejects it, alienated individual.

Whether this is an approach more in touch with the contemporary malaise it is impossible to say. In the present theatrical malaise Nowra and Sewell are in a politically privileged position, but all three writers are in different ways concerned with one issue: the role of individual humanity in an increasingly chaotic and difficult political and social world. Perhaps, as David Hare, and Donald Horne before him, suggest, Australia is still too materially contented to be concerned with the problem. But the time is coming.

**Inside the Island and The Precious Woman**

Inside the Island:...
Playscripts and publishers

by John McCallum

When Currency Press began, 10 years ago, it was a little, specialist press producing Australian scripts to be sold by subscription to enthusiasts. Since then it has grown to become a large publisher, still specialising in drama, but with a more general market and a more varied list. There are now many good exciting plays which it simply cannot afford to publish.

It is exciting, then, to welcome the latest specialist publisher of playscripts: Yackanandah Press, which looks like a 1980s version of the early Currency. They describe themselves as a “small co-operative of Australian drama enthusiasts, who got tired of seldom being able to find script of plays we had seen or heard about.” If they get through even their current programme without going broke they will have provided an invaluable service.

The books are very cheaply produced with a computer typesetter which gives a sort of pointillist typeface — inelegant but perfectly readable. They sell for $2.00 (or $2.50 from the publisher, with p&p) which these days is ludicrously cheap. You don’t have to decide which ones to buy — get them all. Complete reading sets work out at $8 to $16 — the price of one book in the outside world.

The list itself is also very impressive. It includes some new plays, such as Angela Fewster’s Black Chrysanthemums and Harry Reade's The Naked Gun, both of which aroused some comment at last year’s Playwrights’ Conference. But it also includes plays which ought to have been published long ago, such as Jack Hibberd’s Peggy Sue and John Romeril’s Bastardy. In the first series there is also Doreen Clarke’s recent play, Farewell Brisbane Ladies.

Planned yet to come is a similarly wide range of plays, including Dorothy Hewett’s Joan; John Romeril’s Samizdat, Mrs Thaly F and Goodbye Ted; Barry Dickins’ Lonely Lenny Lower; Jack Hibberd’s Captain Midnight VC and Phil Motherwell’s Dreamers of the Absolute. I will comment further on the plays themselves next month but for now let us welcome and wish well a publisher who has done what theatre-lovers have wanted for a long time: to pick up all those plays people keep saying are such a central part of our drama (and particularly many of the Carlton plays) and get them out to people. It is absurd to have a successful new wave of Australian plays, most of which few people have ever seen or read. Yackanandah, under the general editorship of Jeffrey Fiddes, is helping change that.

The other small playscript publisher is Queensland’s Play Lab Press, who have been plodding away producing scripts for the amateur and schools market for several years. The latest is Phillip Mann’s How Sleep The Brave, which was part of the 1979 Ensemble Sydney Playwrights Season. It is another exercise in what is rapidly becoming a distinctive Australian genre: the all-male closed community drama of violence and lust. The blurb rather enthusiastically proclaims the play’s subject to be “human nature, sexuality, authority, religion, acts of violence and distorted love” — which unlike the play itself, says it all.

From Currency, the benevolent maiden aunt of Australian play publishing, Louis Nowra’s Inside the Island and The Precious Woman in one volume (rrp $9.95) and Jack Hibberd’s The Overcoat and Sin in another (rrp $6.95). The Nowra is commented on elsewhere in this issue. The Overcoat and Sin are music theatre pieces, published in large format with a modified score by Martin Friedel. Sin an opera parody written for the Victoria State Opera, is very difficult to read, although it does contain a superb parody of the “domestic drama, extolling the felicities of middle Australia” which the Composer and Librettist in the play meant to write. I have not heard the music. The Overcoat, a fascinatingly theatrical adaptation of Gogol’s great story, is a masterpiece which inexplicably seems never to have been produced after its original APG production. It was first published in Theatre Australia in 1977.
Important Organisations

The Australian Writers' Guild. The playwrights' registered trade union. In these militant times all professional stage, screen and TV writers should belong. Writers who have never had a professional production may join as Associate Members, and receive many of the benefits. Write to: Angela Wales, AWG, Suite 505, 83 York Street, Sydney, 2000.

The Australian National Playwrights Conference. Helps new and established writers, mainly by workshopping and reading new scripts at an annual conference in Canberra in May. Write for details to: The Administrator, ANPC, 12 William Lane, Woolloomooloo, NSW 2011.

The Australia Council. The Literature Board administers a range of grants to writers, chiefly, now, by subsidizing Writers-in-Residence. Write to: The Secretary, Literature Board, Australia Council, PO Box 302, North Sydney, 2060.

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FAREWELL BRISBANE LADIES
by Doreen Clarke
BLACK CHRYSANTHEMUMS
by Angela Fewster
PEGGY SUE
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PLAYWRIGHTS and scriptwriters...

- Do you feel capable of protecting your own interests with management and producers without support?
- Did you know that the Australian Writers Guild has negotiated a Minimum Basic Agreement to cover non-commissioned original work in the theatre; and is working on agreements for commissioned work for adaptations and translations?
- Do you have much contact or involvement with your fellow writers?
- Do you feel in touch with what is happening on the writing scene?
- Do you know where to go for professional help and advice?
- Do you know where you can obtain such perks as discount typing paper and photocopying, writer handbooks, theatre and cinema concessions?
- Did you know that the Guild publishes a Directory of Writers?

If the answer to any one of the above questions is no, then you should join the Australian Writers Guild. Most of the country's major playwrights and scriptwriters are already members. Associate membership also available. Write or phone for information brochure and application form.

Australian Writers Guild,
Suite 505, 83 York Street,
SYDNEY 2000
Telephone: (02) 29 1402
Triumphs of casting and comedy
by Irving Wardle

As superannuated spies continue to emerge through the cracked panels of the British establishment, Julian Mitchell has searchingly lit up this long-running scandal in a 1930's piece tracing the careers of our Civil Service moles back to the public school playing fields where the KGB won its first battle.

*Another Country* (Queen's) examines the self-governing hierarchy from prefects to fags which famously marks its survivors for life. Apart from a visiting uncle, its cast consists entirely of boys, exuding sophisticated inexperience and representing every shade of response from militaristic acceptance of the rules to structured ideological defiance. Plenty of room for everyone to make his own terms with the silly old place, were it not for the first scene suicide of a boy due to be expelled for homosexuality.

This generates a plot that explores the desires and hatreds of a miscellaneous collection of people who are receiving their basic training in the art of personal concealment. The instant effect of the death is to provoke a purge during which the liberal head prefect cracks, leaving the way open for an unspeakable baby-faced tyrant to succeed him; a move finally frustrated at the expense of the two characters you most want to assume control.

So far, the piece resembles many another public school memoir, such as Evelyn Waugh's lately unearthed *Charles Ryder's Schooldays* (published in the *Times Literary Supplement* of March 5). Mr Mitchell's particular contribution is to link the Comintern to the Homintern through a relationship embodying the two dominant forms of rebellion against the public school ethic.

The boys in question are Bennett, a serious and unashamed homosexual, and Judd, an inflammable Marxist, maddened by the incessant interruptions that prevent him from getting on with his chosen line of research. Very cunningly, the play first presents them as if they are merely going through an adolescent phase. As the action develops, so they become increasingly formidable.

Judd may be a Stalinist, but you cannot fault his incorruptible resistance to joining the officer class. Bennett occupies an even stronger position. To be a communist in a school for the rich may be a joke. But homosexuality is no joke; and when he escapes a thrashing by threatening to reveal a full list of his sex partners, you see how vulnerable that furtive little society is to anyone who is prepared to spill the beans.

The two boys are not friends; but the effect of the events is to bring Bennett over to Judd's side as an enemy of the system, which has already equipped him with the techniques of secrecy and betrayal. Result: a spy is born.

Stuart Burge's production offers two marvellous lead performances from Rupert Everett (Bennett) and Kenneth Branagh (Judd) who has leapt from drama school to instant stardom; and the show as a whole marks a triumph in juvenile casting.

Michael Frayn's *Noises Off* (Lyric, Hammersmith) presents a meticulously...
The Hollywood invasion
by Karl Levett

Though East is East and West is West, the twain seems definitely to be meeting these days on the stages of Broadway and off-Broadway. Film makers, movie stars and household names from Televisionland have all suddenly decided to come East and go "legitimate". Broadway has become the latest Hollywood discovery. Already come and gone:
Film director William Friedkin (The French Connection, The Exorcist) and his version of the London hit, Tom Kempinski's Duet For One with Anne Bancroft and Max von Sydow; Suzanne Pleshette and Richard Mulligan in Bernard Slade's comedy Mulligan in Bernard Slade's comedy

Company relationships have much deteriorated since the rehearsal, and there is some question of whether the pensioners will get their show: Dotty having barricaded herself into her dressing room, and the leading man having sworn vengeance on his rival to her affections. Amidst this crisis and the secret return of the director (a sublime lapse Paul Eddington), to pacify the ingenuity unturned to the pregnant ASM, Dotty is finally coaxed into facing the public. But the audible comedy from the unseen stage is widely exceeded by the mute drama round the back. It is a calamitous ballet of entrances through wrong doors, mixed-up props, attempted murder, successful sabotage (the leading man makes one flying entrance with his shoe-laces knotted together), and altogether, Michael Blakemore's production raises it into the most deliriously funny exercise in organised chaos I have seen for many a day.

Special Occasions — it opened and closed the same evening: Fay Dunaway in a virtuoso vehicle, The Curse of an Aching Heart written for her by playwright William Alfred. Both Ms Pleshette and Ms Dunaway received favourable comment and were encouraged to return in more substantial pageants.

Al Pacino is back again off-Broadway in David Mamet's American Buffalo. Movie director Robert Altman (M*A*S*H, Nashville) is making his Broadway debut with Come Back to the Five and Dime, Jimmy Dean, Jimmy Dean with Cher, Karen Black and Sandy Dennis. Off-Broadway film director Louis Malle (Pretty Baby, Atlantic City) tackles his first stage assignment, John Guare's Lydie Breeze, with English star Ben Cross (Chariots of Fire) making his American stage debut. Two other John Guare plays Gardenia and Women and Water (a double-bill that with Lydie Breeze is part of a planned quartet) are being directed by Karel Reisz (The French Lieutenant's Woman), yet another movie man making his theatrical entrance.

And as if this were not enough, Paramount Pictures is getting into the act. The film company has set up a new division, Paramount Theater Productions, with a budget "approaching eight figures". Paramount states that it is not the goal of the theatre division to provide software for Paramount's many electronic entertainment outlets. It's just coincidental that Paramount has first refusal on all media rights — cable, feature film, video cassette — for all its stage productions. Still in these times of tight money an angel is an angel, with or without electronic outlets. One of the company's first ventures will be John Pielmeir's drama Agnes of God starring Elizabeth Ashley and Geraldine Page.

Robert Altman, hailed as one of America's most original moviemakers, received nothing but encouragement when he first tried his hand at stage direction off-Broadway last season, with Frank South's Two by South. On Broadway, with Come Back to the Five and Dime, Jimmy Dean, Jimmy Dean, handling a cast of 11 on a large stage, Mr Altman's inexperience is sadly obvious. Apart from choosing an inferior play, he has allowed it to be badly designed and to let each actor go her own direction — not his. It's all very sloppy.

But then, of course, so is Ed Graczyk's play. In a rural Texan town in 1975 members of a James Dean fan club are holding a reunion at their old meeting place, the local Woolworth's store. The action of the play alternates between the fan club's halcyon days in 1955 when James Dean was making Giant nearby and the reunion twenty years on. Although there's supposed to be a drought going on, the corn surrounding this Woolworth's store is as high as a cowboy's eye. Each fan member has come back with A Secret and the evening is a series of melodramatic revelations — self-delusion, paternity, sterility, mastectomy and transsexual transformation. This dime store dispenses an awful lot of detergent. A veritable tide of rich, thick suds.

It is in fact an updating of the old B-grade movie, the kind of film Mr Altman would probably rather die than make. With a stronger hand, this could have been one of those juicy B-graders which are so bad they're good — but we are even denied that dubious pleasure. The set is so designed that a serving counter divides the stage, with all the fifties scene played upstage behind it. The result is we see only the top part of the actors above stage level. But this is Altman's show — along with the style of a director who is one of the few with the acting technique of draughtsmanship to think up the plots for the modern stage.
nicely summed up the New York Times of the past. A counter-reformation is definitely needed.

At the play's opening Frank Rich of the New York Times nicely summed up the town's curiosity, "The truly momentous question of the month is: Can Cher act?" A bit hard to judge in these limited surroundings, but certainly she is a spirited presence with an intuitive show-biz sense to kick the show along whenever she can. Sandy Dennis has the pivotal role in the play and her non-performance robs the soap opera of any juice it might have. Ms Dennis' mannerisms have by now rendered her vocally and physically inept — she really needs to be seen and heard, not to be believed.

Off-Broadway, Louis Malle's directorial debut with John Guare's Lydie Breeze deserves nothing but applause. This is one of those all-too-rare occasions when there is a coming together of director, cast and play — but it is the play that is the star. John Guare, who has always been noted for oddball comedy (his House of Blue Leaves, I reckon is one of the best American comedies of the last twenty years) now takes One Giant Step into drama with Lydie Breeze.

What an odd, demanding, ambitious, haunting play it is! Set on Nantucket Island at the turn of the century, this would seem to be John Guare's giddy vision of America entering a new age. The plot is hopelessly melodramatic, and if I gave you details it would totally misinform you as to what kind of a play it is. It includes murder, revenge, a double suicide and hereditary syphilis. But the play is puritanically austere.

It is a paradoxical work that consistently contradicts itself. It is spare and plain spoken, but brimming with themes, symbols and metaphors; it is small, but ambitious; it is about despair, but has a convincing optimistic ending. It is also a ghost play and along with the characters the shades of Ibsen and O'Neill are lurking everywhere.

Guare is reaching for the moon this time. Such ambitions usually have accompanying pretensions but these are diminished by Guare's vision where he sees everything through a deflecting prism of comic strangeness. One is kept uncomfortably off-balance all evening.

All the performances are effective and some more than that. Joseph Sommer is splendid as the haunted father (he walks a tightrope of comedy, cynicism and pathos); Ben Cross, as avenging angel of an actor, gives a bold, theatrical performance; Roberta Maxwell as a dotty Irish servant has a fine line in madness. Louis Malle seems sensitive to John Guare's hundred nuances and just as in the film Atlantic City it's clear that on stage they make a great team.

A final mention of another West Coast visitor, television's Donny Osmond. The ever-smiling Mr Osmond will star as a jockey in a revival of George M Cohan's musical Little Johnny Jones. Whether or not Mr Osmond proves to be on a winner, to be sure the ghost of the great George M will give this latest Hollywood refugee a spirited Broadway welcome.

Joseph Sommer and Ben Cross in Lydie Breeze. Photo: Gerry Goodstein.
A.C.T.

Words and images

EINSTEIN

ORIGINAL SIN

by Marguerite Wells

Perhaps one day reasonable men will be free to treat reasonable women as equals, not from a burning sense of the necessity to redress centuries of wrongs, but simply because it never occurred to them to treat us any other way. The way we're going now, we may reach that happy state in my lifetime, but probably not. At any rate, I shall certainly be too old to care, having fought all the necessary battles in youth and middle-age. And those battles will have been fought against my own heightened generation, not against the happier generation of our grandchildren, who, with any luck, will be free of the sense of guilt, and will raise a quizzical eyebrow at history and wonder what all the fuss was about.

Either of these plays would tell them. Einstein, on his death-bed, debates the mistakes of his life — his guilt — with two younger selves. His neglect of his family, the schizophrenia of his younger son, his recommendation to the American President that atomic energy be developed for warlike purposes, and his divorce from his first wife, a physicist, to marry a little woman who ministered uncomplainingly to his needs for the rest of her life. His first wife had had intelligence beyond the requirements of her gender. It is a mistake for an intelligent woman to marry a brilliant man. It's better for the woman to have no brain at all. A man cannot work if he has to be prepared to go home to an intellectual jousting match.

It is a play with some rather large staging difficulties. Two of the characters, the younger Einstein and the middle-aged one, never communicate directly with each other, but only through the old Einstein, a large and demanding role. None of the three was what you would call a man of action and the action of the play is indoors, behind desks and the most exciting things that you saw happen were the young Einstein rocking a cradle and the middle-aged one emptying a suitcase of nice green apples onto his desk. Yet the production never flagged. It was

carefully moved and carefully lit, with good accent work and fine make up, and perhaps the greatest triumph, a unity of style that has been very hard to achieve in Canberra, in professional productions as well as amateur. The dialogue is so full of ideas that one sometimes got lost in following an interesting train of thought that it propeted, but was jerked back to the play by a chuckle from the audience. George Whaley gave a fine, warm performance which, supported by well calculated direction, knit the production together. It was warming to watch a brilliant and sensitive man settling accounts with himself in preparation for a peaceful death; to think that there are perhaps some people who ask more of themselves than morality actually demands; that the unresolved problems of his life were in fact pretty much out of his control, and that he need feel no guilt.

Images from the Background is a series of four theatre pieces looking at the cultural myths that define men and women. Standard Operating Procedure treated violence against women; It Bleeds, It Sleeps (reviewed in TA under its original title, Sleeping Beauty), examined attitudes perpetuated by fairy stories and the morality of Christianity.

The play is what it claims to be — a series of images, with development, but no plot; an enactment of rituals, not the telling of a story. What remains with the audience is not the words (in Einstein it is very much the words that remain), but firstly the visual images and secondly the sounds. Within the prison of the festive streamers is the carousel of socialised sex, the dreams of romance and prettiness, of the warmth and fulfilment of womanhood; the night club, the dance hall, the thinly disguised institutions that serve the search for sexual partners; the brothel and the pornshop. Outside the carousel, and often encroaching, but always encircling it are the forces of religion; the church itself; the frustrated and neurotic celibacy of the priest and the nun; the flagellant mortifying the flesh; the projection onto woman of the guilt of the fall of man, and the poison it brings into relationships between men and women.

Words are not the strength of the play, nor of the company. Speeches often tended to diminish the power of the physical. It puts a highly individual and contestible view of the relationship between religion and social psychology, treating a problem that we all hope is in its dying agony. But it puts it brilliantly and beautifully, weaving images of light and shadow, tinkling prettiness and raucous ugliness, crystallising an aspect of our society that has certainly existed and does exist, although it may not be as pervasive as the play implies.

Einstein by Ron Elsha. Theatre ACT (Fortune), Arts Centre, Canberra. Opened 20 March, 1982. Director, Michael Boddy; Production Design, Janet Dawson; Costumes, Libby Smith; Lighting, Chris Pigott; Stage Manager, Jean Kock; Assistant, Bill Mccluskey; Dramaturg, Michael Boddy. Cast: Albert (the young Einstein), Damien Connor; Einstein (in middle age), John Derum; Professor Albert Einstein, 1955, George Whaley. (Professional).

Original Sin devised by the company. Third play in the series Images from the Background. Foosb Gallery Theatre Company, Childers Street Hall, Canberra. Opened 2 April, 1982. Director, Carol Woodrow; Production Manager, Tony Cox. Cast: The Woman, Ewa Czajor; The Nun, Marianne Doyle; The Whore, Josephine Lollicato; The Man, Tony McGregor; The Priest, Robbie McInnes; The Clerk, Peter Murphy. (Professional).

John Derum and George Whaley in Theatre ACT's Einstein.
Social and sexual injustice

THE SUICIDE

PEOPLE ARE LIVING THERE

FUNNY IDEAS

THE PROVOK'D WIFE

by Michael Le Moignan

Sydney's theatre companies seem fascinated by stories of suicide and self-destruction. Three of the plays reviewed this month deal with such themes, through the eyes of playwrights who are, respectively, Russian, South African and Scottish/Australian. There is some common ground, in that in each case the fatal choice appears to lie with the individual, while it is really the victim's immediate society that is to blame.

The outstanding play of the month is The Suicide, a 50-year-old Russian work that was banned in rehearsal by Stalin and has still never been performed in the USSR. This is a real find, an international classic which deserves to be more widely seen. Aubrey Mellor's translation and arrangement of the text and his sensitive pacing and direction add much to enchant and absorb the audience.

There is an initial resistance to be overcome: in recommending the play to friends I have found a strong distrust of the title and a reluctance to risk being depressed by an unknown Russian playwright. Nobody wants to go any closer to the edge. But The Suicide is not depressing: it goes on a comic and roundabout way to affirm the value of life. It re-discovers a reason and a potential to go on living and it strikes a common, contemporary chord.

Tragedy is out of fashion, among writers as well as audiences, but the tragic element in drama is a very fundamental one, and it has a curious way of welling up in plays, whether or not the writers are on nodding terms with Melpomene. Erdman's play is a tragi-comedy, uncompromising in its attack on dehumanising bureaucracy and hypocrisy, but idealistic in the hope it holds out for the future.

Briefly, an unemployed man, Semyon Semyonovich (Peter Carroll) has become so disillusioned with his lot in life that he decides to kill himself. At least, he goes as far as announcing his intention to do so — and is immediately besieged by representatives of various factions, interests and cliques, all wanting him to gain publicity to their particular cause by committing suicide on their behalf. As a potential corpse, Semyon has a value which far exceeds his value as a living social victim.

The flattery and kind treatment to which he is subjected re-kindle in Semyon Semyonovich his sense of self-love, and therefore his love of life, and he becomes reluctant to go through with his planned suicide. He re-discovers his individuality.

The play's political arguments are made with great force and wit: one can see Stalin's point. It chronicles the particular failure of the Bolshevik Revolution to meet the legitimate needs and aspirations of the Russian proletariat. But apart from its historical interest, Erdman's play is deeply humanitarian and involving on an emotional as well as an intellectual level. Rather than play a supporting role in one of Stalin's purges, Erdman gave up writing for the theatre after this, and succeeded in living to a ripe old age. His contribution is nevertheless a lasting one, and Aubrey Mellor deserves our gratitude for this spectacular revival.

Peter Carroll's Semyon Semyonovich is a performance of consummate artistry. At first an unappetising, self-pitying no-hoper, he gains our sympathy almost stealthily, gradually taking us into his confidence and showing us the predicament from his point of view. By the final act, he has become in a sense Everyman, and he has the audience totally on his side.

The company worked with great fluency and precision to achieve some dazzling visual effects and brilliantly executed scene changes. Richard Roberts, Nimrod's new Resident Designer, provided an ingenious and highly adaptable set, rather reminiscent of a drawing by Escher, in which the doors of opportunity opened on air and the corridors of possibility were endless and led nowhere.

Like The Suicide, Athol Fugard's People Are Living There, presented by Studio Sydney at the Wayside Theatre, is a "something is rotten in the state" play. Its denunciation of social injustice is couched in sterner terms, with less humour to sweeten the pill.

The setting is a rundown Johannesburg boarding-house. It is Milly the landlady's fiftieth birthday, and her lover (whom we never see) has just left her, explaining unkindly that she is no longer a woman. Her birthday party, with crisps, slab cake and lemonade, is a ghastly parody of attempted gaiety. Leila Blake's Milly is a heart-rending character: her social ambitions run little higher than beer and sausages on a Saturday night, but even in this she is doomed to frustration. There is a deep pathos about the character, almost that of a tragic heroine.

The other residents of Milly's guest-house are little better off than herself. Shorty (Richard Evans) is an illiterate postman; Sissy (Daina Austin) married Shorty to escape and now wants to marry someone else to escape from Shorty; Don (Robert Dallas) is unemployed and probably unemployable, a cynic who sees too clearly for his own good or happiness. This last was the part originally played by Fugard himself.

The supreme irony of People Are Living There is that in almost any country other than South Africa, these crippled characters...
would be even worse off than they are. The colour of their skin conveys tangible privileges, but they are still headed for the scrap heap. The atmosphere is one of creeping desperation, as each character in turn faces his or her limitations. Graham Corry’s direction maintains a tight control over the play’s emotional content, to focus the audience’s attention unremittingly on the social problem. It is not a pleasant experience, but a highly effective piece of drama.

_Funny Ideas_ is the group title for three bizarre one-act plays written and directed by Mil Perrin for the Griffin Theatre Company at the Stables’ Theatre. They take a view of their characters that is at once black and whimsical: they explore the territory between reality and fantasy. In particular, they poke fun at the way in which we incorporate that most readily available fantasy, television, into our own lives.

In the first play, for example, a character starts by hearing her own obituary on the news and is gradually persuaded that she could easily have won them over. I would like to see a full-length play from Mil Perrin’s hand.

Leila Blake in Studio Sydney’s People Are Living There. _Photo: Lucio Nigro._

*affection or dislike to maintain the play’s moral balance. The danger for the inexperienced is caricature: it is tempting to exaggerate some idiosyncrasy for the sake of a laugh, but this is often counter-productive because it undermines the character’s essential realism. If we don’t believe in the character, at some level, we can’t care about them. Unlike farce, restoration comedy depends on an emotional impact.*

The theme of Vanbrugh’s play is marital infidelity, and to judge by the audience’s enthusiastic reception, his waggish treatment of it struck many a sympathetic chord. The central figure, Sir John Brute, is clearly a direct descendant of Falstaff, a bon vivant of prodigious appetite. But he lives by a double standard: he likes to take his pleasures in taverns and whores’ houses, but he does not like his wife, Lady Brute, to take any pleasures at all, save occasionally from himself. He would like to have his cake and eat it; she would like a slice of the action.

Kate Fitzpatrick and Malcolm Robertson were splendid Brutes, she all wayward looks and wicked eyes, and he crusty and cranky but not unlovable. They were essentially Beauty and the Beast. In the foppish, affected Lady Fancypuff, Maggie Dence has a part that is dangerously well-suited to her unique comic talents. On the opening night she was quite restrained and well-behaved, but I suspect by the end of the run she may be stealing the show. Barbara Stephens and George Spartels also brought a special warmth and humanity to Bellinda and Heartfree, two fairly stock romantic characters.

It was all above all an intelligent production: the actors made perfect sense of some very difficult, stylised speeches, and the cut and thrust of debate was fascinating to follow. Melody Cooper’s set was admirably uncluttered and helped to focus close attention on the dialogue. Vanbrugh’s characters are neither virtuous nor villainous, but somewhere in between, struggling with temptation or about to yield to it, but very real, very human, very believable.
Performance of a lifetime

AMADEUS

NIGHT AND DAY

by Michael Le Moignan

Sydney's theatre truly has an embarrassment of riches at the moment, with the unfortunate result that some good shows are not getting the audiences they deserve. It is impossible to see everything, and this month three productions of which I had heard good reports have had to be omitted — American Dreams at the Bondi Pavilion, The Anniversary at the Philip Street Theatre and Leftovers by Cacophony at the Stables (late night). Our apologies.

Two more have just opened as Theatre Australia goes to press — the Sydney Theatre Company's Amadeus at the Theatre Royal and Night and Day by Tom Stoppard at the Marian Street Theatre, Killara. Both productions are well worth seeing.

Amadeus is a rather grand play by Peter Shaffer, based on the death-bed claim by a rival composer, Salieri, that he was instrumental in Mozart's premature death, to the point of murdering him. It is directed by Richard Wherrett in splendidly operatic style, to suit both the subject matter and the play's prevailing mood of gothic fantasy.

From start to finish it is John Gaden's play. In Salieri, he gives us perhaps the performance of a lifetime, a character pitched somewhere between Faustus and Iago, who ruthlessly lays bare his own heart and soul and finds them black. On stage and in the spotlight for most of the play, Gaden's control of the audience and sheer craftmanship are hypnotic.

It is the last night of his life, he tells us. He is a little, wizened old man, wrapped in a warm dressing-gown and a wooly hat against the cold. He wishes to confess his sins to us, the audience, the "ghosts of the future" he believes he has conjured up. The dressing-gown falls away, the wooly hat is replaced by an eighteenth century powdered wig and he is instantly the sprightly young court composer of forty years earlier. An Italian at the Viennese court, his intrigues are distinctly Machiavellian.

Salieri wanted desperately to write the new music, the great music of the eighteenth century. His gifts were considerable and his success enormous (he became the best known musician in Europe) but his work is now considered second rate and is rarely performed. His tragedy was that in the young Mozart, Fate delivered into his hands the genius he would like to have been. He was perhaps the only man of his time fully to appreciate Mozart's greatness, and he did everything possible to thwart the composer's hopes and drive him to penury, drink and despair.

In short, Shafer's Salieri is as black a villain as you could paint — but we do not hate him. John Gaden brings out such a pitiable humanity in the old man, such a searching honesty, that we can almost forgive the vicious selfishness of his youth. This is masterly acting and the result is a subtle, complex and penetrating portrayal that will live long in the imagination.

Like Richard Wherrett's earlier Cyrano and Chicago for the STC, Amadeus is a production which manages to be honestly spectacular without compromising its more intimate moments. Nigel Leving's lighting was quite superb and contributed significantly to the enjoyment of the production. Drew Forsythe as the juvenile, whinnying Mozart and Linda Cropper as his wife both gave excellent performances but they were unavoidably overshadowed.

The program shows a bust of Mozart knocked from its pedestal, and from what one can judge, this is an accurate appraisal of Shaffer's attitude to the composer. It is a curiously cruel play, for all its qualities, and I think the venom mars it. Shaffer offers us no positive to go with his negative. He seems to support Salieri's dictum that "Goodness is nothing in the cauldron of art." It's not exactly an uplifting play, but a very good one.

Tom Stoppard's Night and Day, directed by Terence Clarke, is the best production to be seen at the Marian Street Theatre for some time.

There is much to delight — good performances from Tom Oliver and John Frawley and from two relative newcomers, Paul Williams and Monroe Reimers, a generous helping of Stoppard's witty and elegant verbal gymnastics, an intriguing and adaptable revolving set by David Spode and one clever stage illusion, which completely tricked the opening night audience.

One reservation about the production concerns the central character, Ruth Carson, played with great charm by Carol Raye. The charm was the problem: it did not seem in keeping with the acid of her asides to the audience. This breaking of the illusion to insert verbal "thinks" bubbles is an interesting device, but in practice a bit tricksy and intrusive: Stoppard over-uses it without having polished it to perfection.

The other regret was that Leslie Dayman with almost any characters. He employs plot, comedy and characterisation as diversionary tactics, to soften up his audience to the point where he can slip a perplexing, pure intellectual challenge. He is a master of theatrical effect; he tickles an audience's fancy as if stroking a cat: he gets it rubbing its back on the floor with its paws up asking for more, and then he tells it to sit up and think about something.

It is a Zen belief that laughter can trip the

THEATRE AUSTRALIA MAY 1982
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Qld.

A rare spell

LONG DAY'S JOURNEY INTO NIGHT

by Jeremy Ridgman

There can be few final scenes more potent than that of Long Day's Journey into Night. It is gone midnight: James Tyrone and his two sons sit in varying stages of drunken stupor, numbed by the accusations of the past twenty hours, a day that has seen the confirmation of Edmund's suspected consumption, Jamie's confession of his suppressed hatred towards his brother, whose birth he sees as responsible for their mother's morphine addiction, and the dawning realisation that that addiction still holds Mary in thrall. As the insidious fog closes in once more around the house, Mary makes her final appearance, ethereal, frail and high on morphine, a somnambulist in another world, to recall her "sad dream" of lost innocence and brief happiness with James.

If this is O'Neill's masterpiece, it is because his pretensions to classical grandeur of purpose and poetic respectability are here subsumed by the sheer dramatic poignancy of the raw experience he conveys, made all the more acute by the obvious, if distorted autobiographical content. We are participating here in a painful excrcism as Tyrann once remarked, "We go expecting to hear a playwright and we meet a man."

The QTC's rigorous production builds purposefully towards a committed playing of this final scene, prepared for by Duncan Wuss's superb handling of Jamie's confession and an aggressive physicalisation of the last spasms of the family's Walpurgisnacht that leaves him prone at the feet of his brother and father. All four performances meet the titanic challenge of the play head-on: Ron Graham's commanding Tyrone plays down the theatrical con-man, but allows us to see through the noble brogue to the broken spirit beneath, and Elaine Cusick captures the right quality of almost musical nervous intensity, only occasionally upsetting the balance with an overstated sense of presence. Mark Lee handles the problematic role of Edmund (partly O'Neill himself and therefore without motivating guilt) with assurance.

It is a shame that with a cast as strong as this and a production as incisive, the play was cut back to what audiences seem to regard as an acceptable length. A spell was woven here such as is rarely found.


Director, Alan Edwards; Designer, James Ridewood; Stage Manager, Kristin Reuter; Lighting, James Henson.

Cast: Ron Graham, Elaine Cusick, Duncan Wuss, Mark Lee, Karen Crone. (Professional).

Refreshing commitment

HELL AND HAY

WE CAN'T PAY? WE WON'T PAY!

by Veronica Kelly

A group of victims and outcasts, for political reasons rejected by the British Government, is sent as prisoners under heavy guard on a nightmare sea voyage to Australia. There they are placed in confinement in a landscape of unimaginable vastness, where the cultural baggage brought from Europe — by now their only possession — is no longer adequate to interpret the alien realities of the oldest continent. For some the shock of displacement is too great and they return at the first opportunity to Europe, or, ironically, to colonise another country. Others remain, are acted upon by the environment even as they endeavour to make their mark on it, and find eventually that they too have become Australians; migrants and exiles being in fact no exception but the basic raw material of a population where everybody — Aboriginals sadly included — is, or was, a bit of a displaced person, convict or exile.

Hell and Hay is a tough-minded and thoughtful new play about archetypal patterns of Australian identity, built around an interlocking series of ironic paradoxes. The specific group whose displacement the play uses as its taking-off point is the "Dunera" internes. These were German and Austrian political and racial refugees from the Nazi regime who were at the outbreak of war rounded up by the British as potential enemies and brutally dispatched in 1940 to Australia and there interned again, this time at Hay on the Murrumbidgee.

It is in the encounters with the resident Australians, the camp guards, that the play develops what is perhaps its major paradoxical theme in the clash of the high and popular cultures; the bourgeois and the
vernacular, the imported and the native. The Australians, it seems, move to a different music, and which sounds suspiciously like Chad Morgan's. For their part, history has not tuned their cultural or religious perceptions to concert pitch to be used as the ultimate focus of self-respect and self-definition. It never occurs to the warily tolerant captors that "culture" could be regarded as the pre-eminent civilising factor standing between a people and political and metaphysical terror — Dad and Dave will do for them. And indeed, Beethoven certainly didn't civilise the Nazis.

While presenting no facile reconciliations of irreconcilable attitudes, the play overall is conciliatory in tone — as befits the land where some nightmares end — and celebratory of the courage of those who survived the passage from the old to the new. The highly theatricalised form is the major device for presenting the paradoxes of the material and of suggesting resolutions not overtly spelt out in the text. The apparent cultural opposition of high and vernacular are resolved when the full cast swing into a production number of "You meet the nicest people in your dreams." Past and present merge in the ironic consciousness of Paul Unger, the presenter figure who projects the interwoven patterns of experience and fantasy; of the past and of what the mind makes of it to call its 'history'. Art and history make mutual comment in the song numbers, comedy routines and magic tricks. Governing all is the Grimm-like Wicked Queen (brilliant Alex Black) who persecutes the refugee Dwarfs, a potent folklore embodiment of the subliminal terrors distilled from a civilisation nurtured amongst dark forests, where atavistic presentiments of nightmare malevolence can come to tragic life in historical realities. There are, in fact, worse places than Hay or even Booligal — Dachau for one — not to mention the interlocked hells of history and of tortured memories.

From its beginnings two years ago as a basically one-act play scripted for students, *Hell and Hay* has grown into an ambitious piece of considerable stature to match the fascination of its documentary material and the complexity of its themes. La Boite's production does justice to some facets of its potential while leaving others yet unexplored. The song and dance style, which the theatre has made a house speciality, here receives uneven if dedicated treatment, while the reflective passages are sensitively rendered. The mixed gender cast does however enforce the point that the play is not primarily about loveably rounded "historical" characters, but about an essential pattern of national experience, dealing in the dramatic language of mythic types and ideas. The reverse assumption, of naturalistic verisimilitude, is the risk run when the play is given an all-male cast, as in the ANPC reading last year.

The TN Company appears imbued with a renewal of energy, which will be put to good use in the ambitious prepared for repertory and community touring it has planned for this year. Emblematic of this energy is Dario Fo's *We Can't Pay! We Won't Pay!* directed by the new Artistic Director Rod Wissler; a furious explosion of political farce which, even when produced fairly faithfully from the English-localised script, makes its local relevance forcefully felt. Inflation, paranoid cops, institutionalisation of reformist parties and unions — how could it not? And what splendid female roles. Individual passages of ensemble comedy rise to inspired levels; the giving "birth" to nicked groceries, and the earnest cod-explanations of multiple baby transplants and pope-infested dreams.

As the man of many parts, Sean Mee worked on opening night to a farce level a sight more agile than the rest of the cast, giving a series of cop impersonations keyed up to what one imagines to be the ideal crazed pitch of loony obsession. As *We Can't Pay* settles to its run in repertory, it should bring to new audiences a vernacular and sharply politicised piece of theatre with performance values in abundance and a refreshing commitment to challenging stock responses to the last days of capitalism.


Among the throngs of visitors to this year’s Adelaide Festival were two of Britain’s top theatre critics: Michael Billington of The Guardian and Michael Coveney of the Financial Times. These are their impressions of the two-week experience that is rapidly becoming known as Sharman’s Festival.

MICHAEL BILLINGTON

When I arrived in Adelaide for this year’s Festival I was surprised to encounter a good deal of low-key poor-mouthing of the event: no stars, no glamour, no pizzazz was the general theme. By the end of the Festival, however, there was widespread agreement that Jim Sharman had put on what could well be the best Adelaide Festival ever: not some incoherent assembly of cultural goodies but something that reflected both his own predilections and recurrent human dilemmas. If I had to characterise the 1982 Festival, I would say it was one that swung between a fascination with sexual angst, solitude, rootlessness and a raucous celebration of popular performing arts: it went, in fact, from the cry of the cornered human soul in The Makropoulos Affair to the exultation of the liberated human body (one of which defied gravity by walking on the ceiling) in Circus Oz.

For me this mixture of angst and joy was seen at its best in the work of Pina Bausch’s Wuppertaler Tanztheater which presented us with a quite astonishing triptych. Kontakthof, played in the Thebarton Town Hall, was a demonstration of the demons that lurk under our polite social exteriors and a sinuous, snake-like dances through the auditorium. It also had that peculiar German ability (which I last encountered in Peter Stein’s Summerfolk) to present us with a large number of things happening simultaneously.

The Wuppertaler Tanztheater was great theatre because it offered us a strong personal vision working through an abstraction of all the performing arts. David Hare’s A Map of the Word, presented by Sydney Theatre Company, was for me the other great Adelaide event because it showed the antithesis of ironic detachment and political commitment achieving a kind of emotional synthesis. My feeling was that Hare had set out to write a play about the agonising Western indifference to the burning issues of the Third World; but, although that was still there, the play had also become an attempt to resolve Hare’s own personal conflict between a Wildean gift for language and a political Utopianism. Hare increasingly reminds me of the late, great Kenneth Tynan: a radical in love with style. The difference is that he works out his internal dilemmas in drama rather than criticism; and what made his Festival play so moving was that you could sense what it cost him to write it. That was even more impressive than what it must have cost Adelaide and Sydney to stage it.

Not all the theatrical events at Adelaide reached this exalted level. Patrick White’s Signal Driver, though very well acted by John Wood and Melissa Jaffer as a warring married couple clanging perilously together down the ages, seemed too fragile a structure to support its intended portrayal of Australian moral decay over a 60-year time-span. And Melbourne Playbox Theatre’s productions of Sam Shepard’s Buried Child and Curse of the Starving Class, though again well acted by Gary Files and Michelle Stayner, were somewhat handicapped by Peter Corrigan’s oppressive architectural design: in both plays Shepard’s preoccupation with dislocated family life should spring out of a Norman Rockwell-like ordinariness.

But these were mild blemishes on a dazzling festival that bore Sharman’s unmistakable imprimatur, that contained some genuinely uplifting experiences (not least the climactic concert performance of Berlioz’s The Damnation of Faust given by the Australian Youth Orchestra) and that also reached out to embrace the Adelaide public. Watching kids clamber through the multi-coloured inflatable sausage on the banks of the River Torrens as their parents enjoyed a free open-air concert of ethnic folk-dancing, it was hard not to conclude this was the least elitist festival I had ever attended: one that combined genuine populism with a remorseless fascination with the Eliot-esque trinity of birth, copulation and death.

MICHAEL COVENEY

Like all first time visitors to Adelaide, I had Percy Grainger’s graveyard proudly pointed out to me as I drove in from the airport. Much more alarming was my first serious social encounter in the hotel lobby: “This is Patrick White” said Michael Billington before disappearing in search of a bottle of vodka for the author. It was Sunday. The silence was deafening. I mumbled that I had just read White’s autobiography in London. Mistake number one. I commented on the warmth of the reception accorded his new play Signal Driver. Even worse. The great man looked down at me with pitying, watery-eyed indifference and fixed his gaze on nothing in particular just above my head.

In fact, as I later discovered, the reception of Signal Driver, while warm, was too respectful. After his previous Adelaide Festival disaster, it was if the critics were guiltily reclaming a favourite son. At least in Dublin they had the good grace to wait for James Joyce to die.

A line in Signal Driver haunts me. As the old couple wait in vain for the last bus to nowhere, the Bourke connection, Ivy declares she wants to rub the red dust on her face and find out what she’s been living for in this country. Coming to terms with one’s landscape was a theme of Jim Sharman’s exciting festival and, as he admitted in the final Forum of a series I chaired in Elder Park each lunchtime, this quest was the motivation for his own return to Australia. It emerged most powerfully elsewhere in the Edward Hopper exhibition and the Sam Shepard plays presented by the Playbox Theatre Company of Melbourne.

David Hare’s A Map of the World stretched the idea to discuss how pampered liberalism copes with the vast problems of the Third World. At a particularly well-attended Writers’ Week conference, Hare illustrated the power of art with an anecdote. After seeing one of his plays, a man had written to him saying he had decided to leave his job. This pleased the playwright, but not nearly as much as a letter received shortly afterwards in which another man said he had seen the same play and decided to leave his wife.

I leave with a myriad memories of this exceptionally stimulating and brilliantly run festival. The blank, insouciant gorgeousness of the Pina Bausch Wuppertaler Tanztheater; the acting of Elisabeth Soderstrom in The Makropoulos Affair and...
her comment on the Forum platform that when she first saw Brian Thomson's monolithically scaled high-tech design she felt like opening her debut Down Under with a rousing chorus of "Don't Cry For Me, Australasia"! Ekkehard Schall ripping into the "Bilbao Song" in one of his two recital programs with the rigid fury of a demented puppet; his wife, Barbara Brecht-Schall (daughter of BB), turning green at my suggestion that one day of enlivening the Berliner Ensemble would be to invite either Peter Stein or Pina Bausch to work there; a pleasant afternoon up at Carclew with Roger Chapman, Director of the Youth Performing Arts Council, chatting about the British theatre he is unsorry to have left behind; and a frantic, hilarious day with jazz singer George Melly as we zoomed round the Hopper, and Brian Thomson's Tee-Vee Show where old television programs were placed in a double historical context of interior decor and a photographic slide-show of world events.

At the Forum on Public Art, a bemused gentleman recounted how he had taken an old stove up to the Wingfield Dump only to visit the Festival Centre and find it painted up and sitting in the middle of an open air exhibition. Was this what we meant by Art, he wanted to know?

Although it now has a 20 year-old history, the Adelaide Festival strikes me, at least under Sharman, as a spontaneous, unstuffy affair. The style was set by Sharman himself gliding coolly between each event, ready with five minutes for anyone and skidding effectively around the periphery of parties, discussions and official functions. He has brought one of the world's leading companies, the Pina Bausch, to Australia; he has created a challenging yet generally accessible programme; and perhaps most importantly of all, he now begins his three-year contract as artistic director of the Lighthouse company based in the Festival Centre.

You get the feeling that things might jump a little even when the circus has left town.

Being and becoming

**SIGNAL DRIVER**

by Gus Worby

Signal Driver. Is it an order, a plea, an instruction, a request? Is there a Driver? Someone in control, something which sees or ignores the gestures made by travellers—those who are to be transported.

Is it programmed to stop — this juggernaut?

How do you catch the guiding eye? If you do, is not the transaction complete? Is not the bargain made? Are you not already there?

Amid change we hunger for a sign, an icon, a mandala — something at least, that does not change. In birth, at work, through marriage, in faith, in death we hunger for a sign of love which means more than the mere fact of its presence. We, the "volk", the Vokes: Theo, the doubter, his mother's offering to God; and Ivy, the believer, fashioned to hold hard, burning in a cold fever of betrayal. We, in the street, who walk into the path of progress, prosper for a moment by this or that means, only to drop a beat, lose time, miss a connexion, and squat without shelter for the rest of our lives, waving — too far out, or under, to be noticed. Believing that things ought to connect. Invested. Sub-divided. Condemned. Together.

In *Signal Driver* there is no heavy commitment to story, or laboured cause, effect and consequence. It involves the playing out, for a known audience, of three "stages" in a typical married relationship. The action occurs in a transport shelter, by a road, in a landscape, in a theatre. Each stage is set at a different point in the life-experience of the Vokes — after the First World War, during the prospering 1950's, in the frantic eighties. The substance of their engagements in the shelter is always the same: variations on themes of salvation, survival, escape.

The issues are at once acutely personal and of vast import. White accommodates both in this piece for four players and a public. First he creates two "super deros" and gives them the status of "Beings". They are the purely theatrical creations of the unconscious. They exist in the constant present but are permitted to know everything, in and out of time — especially what will be. They are not, however, permitted to tell. They hint. They have compassion and wisdom, and, in their knowledge of certain and perpetual judgement they are whole.

Then come Theo and Ivy. They are "characters" — less real than the Beings, though drawn from life as we see it. Theo and Ivy are in the process of becoming. Theo is a carpenter, and a thwarted artist. One who slowly settles for a diminished status, who converts his vision of a great love into a partnership secure enough to keep out the cold. Ivy, in early life, is practical and businesslike. Fooled by religion, lapsed, manacled by the idea of marriage, she storms through the dangerous menopause to an old age of fire and anger, straining to move beyond a life which will not release her.

These characters are linked with the audience, whose awareness of reality is most in question. They walk to their on-stage shelter from among us, and reach for us, the penultimate stage of development. Through them we are exposed to chance and humanity. But we are different from Ivy and Theo in that we can see and hear the Beings. We are in the theatre not of it, not yet on stage but away at least from our habitat. We can therefore be shown, in the by-play, that to flirt with annihilation is a game best left to characters. We must choose wisely, in all things, before the manic race on a road to nowhere severs us from shelter, Being and Becoming.

The production makes this statement. As the couple shuffle away from the stage into the darkness of the auditorium, turning their backs on the false dawn of the Aurora Australis, the set animates. Amid fog and light the great swath of gauze with which Stephen Curtis has formed the surrounding and encroaching landscape, lifts and is drawn up and over the audience. It covers, engulfs, swallows, buries, inculpates, possess, reclaims, unifies. It also hangs over the shelter like the fission cloud — a final solution.

In this first production Neil Armfield and cast have genuinely tested the weight and substance of the work. At its first matine it rolled inexorably towards the culminating gesture — was to some extent dominated by it. As a consequence there was a sacrifice of surprise and the sharpness of those flaws and fragments of quicksilver vision was somehow dulled. Yet even at this early stage, the production as a whole had clearly mastered the subtle shifts within relationships which are the heart of the work.

There were magnificent moments between John Wood and Melissa Jaffer, in the first and particularly in the third act. Their concentration of energies, the right-
ness of tone, the blend of innocence and experience are exceptional. There is, however, in the “dangerous” middle, a brittleness which comes close to miscalculation, as they tangle with the “flickers” of the unconscious.

In the treatment of the Beings there is some loss of energy and potential. They are scored to come in under the Vokes, to stay aside and play apart. One craves more of the satirical snap which marks the successful parody of media sociology in Act One. Both Peter Cummins and Kerry Walker, armed with the quirks and moods of Carl Vine’s music, have power to spare. Their Mo and po-faced creations deserve the licence to rip into the underbelly of seriousness and challenge the Vokes and the audience to reach for greater heights of awareness.

For this surely is the purpose of the play. If it needed to be written, there is no time for wasted effort. We are long past the point of “waiting” and there never was much joy in Lucky’s dance.


Director, Neil Armfield; Designer, Stephen Curtis; Lighting, Nigel Levings; Music, Carl Vine; Stage Manager, Terry Martin.

Cast: Theo Vokes, John Wood; Ivy Vokes, Melissa Jaffer; 1st Being, Peter Cummins; 2nd Being, Kerry Walker.


Right subjects, wrong plays

A MAP OF THE WORLD

PERCY AND ROSE

by Michael Morley

Although David Hare’s Map of the World purports to consider the wider social issues of the time — third world poverty, the appropriateness of personal and political convictions, the roles of the intellectual and the artist in society — it is essentially a duet for two voices. Robert Grubb’s journalist begins as the more admirable, if slightly strident voice, while Roshan Seth’s expatriate Indian writer expresses his own particular brand of languid tolerance and disillusionment in the cultured and somewhat patronising tones of one who has seen it all and expects not so much to make the

best of a bad job, but further to modify his own low expectations to suit the world’s mediocrity.

Of course, there is the stuff of dialogue and debate here, and David Hare’s sharp, balanced writing often rises to the challenge, most notably in the contest scene where the two protagonists duel in words for the prize of Hare’s version of a night with Maude (or, in this case, Peggy). The implausibility of this strand in the plot was only accentuated by having the prize dumped limply on stage during the progress of the debate trying to work out where to look. Hare’s strength in the past has frequently been his women characters: the women in Licking Hitler and Dreams of Leaving seem initially to be dramatic versions of male sexist fantasies but turn out, on closer examination, to be much more complicated and ambiguous. The women in Map of the World seem to be struggling in the first scenes to get in from the periphery of the action — to no avail. Well before the end they have lost both our and the author’s interest.

By now it must be fairly clear that I do not
go along with the general critical enthusiasm for the play. I would like to think that the work, in giving theatrical shape to concerns which clearly derive from Hare’s own views of himself as writer and social commentator, actually allows the characters identity, room to breathe in, and, yes, reality. But the play looks like nothing so much as a 1980’s attempt to update the old expressionist mono — and station — drama, where the figures are simply reflections of aspects of the author’s own ego confronting themselves, rather than us or their society. In fact, the ending of the play, with Mehta frozen in centre stage, arms outstretched in a beam of light (new man? new dawn? brotherhood of man etc?) stands as an embarrassing indication of how-not-to-end-a-play-even-if-you-don’t-know-how-to-end-it. No-one expects a writer to provide neat or, indeed, any answers to questions he raises in his work. But he should at least respect the audience’s readiness to take the questions seriously and not fob them off with a tired piece of theatrical sleight of hand.

The sleight of hand is in fact typical of the
play's structure. The device of the film-within-a-play, of suddenly revolving the set of what we (gosh!) mistakenly took to be a real hotel to reveal suddenly the camera and lights of a film studio, is lame, and too obvious a correlative for the play's talk of relative values and modified attitudes. Irony and ambivalence are one thing: but "you think I say what I mean and then find I am only artistically suggesting I mean what I say" is not a game I am particularly fond of. A Pirandellilan treatment of notions such as commitment, the role of ideology, scepticism, action and reflection, political art or detached writing that holds with liberal values, doesn't seem altogether apt when set against this radically sketched Indian background.

None of the above reservations apply to the two central performances which are honest, thoughtful and intelligent. Robert Grubb, rather more low-keyed than usual, still provides us in his portrayal of Steven with a characterisation that deserves to be ranked with his other notable performances over the last years. And Roshan Seth's controlled yet open characterisation of Mehta gains in depth as the play progresses. Nor would I wish to deny the play's wit and intelligence or to query Hare's seriousness of purpose. And no critic should expect a writer to go on pursuing well-trodden paths which he no longer finds interesting. That there is a serious and important play to be written about the concerns of Map of the World, I have no doubt: that Hare can write it I am convinced. But that this play, in its present form, is that work I have yet to be persuaded.

My response to Rob George's Percy and Rose is much the same. Mercifully the play's title at least avoids the trite and cheap double-entendres of Therese Radic's A Whip Round for Percy Grainger, though George is disturbingly candid about his interests in the sensationalist aspects of the Grainger story.

It may be that when Australia finally gets around to recognising Grainger for the important composer he was, and shifts him out of the comfortable "Country Gardens" and "Shepherd's Hey" drawers, someone with a slightly less primitive (or even openly vulgar or vaudevillian) approach will write the fine play that demands to be written on the subject. Not that Percy and Rose seems to be quite as bad as some have made it out to be. Of course it shows the hand of the TV serial writer, of course the dialogue is banal in places, and the last twenty minutes are a complete miscalculation.

But there are merits in the writing, — the use of the Kipling stories at the start to establish Grainger's imaginative world where sadism and fantasy hold hands, some of Grainger's monologues and the scenes between him and his fiancée, Margot. For continued on page 64

**VIC.**

**Terrific performances and clear ideas**

**CURSE OF THE STARVING CLASS**

by Garrie Hutchinson

Writers like Sam Shepard have no trouble getting up a lot of people's noses. Maybe it's not through anything deliberate on his part, but through the way information about him is received, his publicity, he's annoying. And it gets in the way of his work.

Consider his legendary handsomeness. "Extraordinary handsomeness . . . what

the camera overlooks in favour of the chiseled fineness he shares with Robert Redford, is the asymmetry of his features, the several flaws that give his face a rugged quality. From one perspective, he is the embodiment of innocence, an angel; from another a sneering cowboy. His face takes on a certain owl-like roundness from the front; his pale blue eyes peer out, reticent, slightly askew. His profile on the other hand is distinctly patrician." (Figure 2/80)

Is this a serious writer or a prankster? Then there's his reclusiveness, his mysterioso, having to leave messages for

him at the SF Magic Theatre, which Sam may or may not bother to return.

He played drums in that weird band the Holy Modal Rounders, had his script for Zabriskie Point knocked back by Antonioni, had one affair with rock poet person, Patti Smith, hung around with Bob Dylan, and won the Pulitzer Prize for his play Buried Child.

He said of that: "If I was gonna write a play that would win the Pulitzer Prize, I think it would have been that play, you know. It's sort of a typical Pulitzer Prize-winning play. It wasn't written for that purpose; it was a kind of test. I wanted to write a play about a family."

Shepard's written dozens, hundreds of plays since he arrived in New York in 1963 from California, Southern California. He's forgotten some of them, and so has everyone else, though they do leave some sort of lasting after image.

His attitude to theatre writing being a touch ephemeral, a way of writing for the moment, is not far away from the more overtly political stance of John Romeril. (And the best of both are in a similarly ambiguous relationship with their culture, critical and celebratory.)

Shepard's neither one of the boys, nor a "serious" writer — he's a maverick who uses all kinds of materials to make his plays.

In the past — before Curse of the Starving Class written 1976, and Angel City produced 1976, Shepard's use of arbitrary bits of action, extraordinarily extravagant props and settings, arcane dialects and languages, hermetic imagery, and a private mythology of rock, science fiction, the wild wild west, dope fitted his publicity as a rogue writer, a rock writer in the theatre. But with his last three plays, Curse of the Starving Class, Buried Child and True West, he has confused the matter, seemingly giving up extravagance of, say, The Tooth of Crime (his prior "masterpiece") for an austere, seemingly naturalistic, yet weird preoccupation with the territory of O'Neill, Miller, Williams — the grand tradition of American playwriting.

Of course, Shepard is stranger than those guys. Would they have a live sheep on stage, a fascination with toasters, artichokes, and the artefacts of American Life? Maybe they would nowadays.

Certainly these new plays have created interest and controversy. What we want to know is, are they any good, or are they just another product of the Shepard PR machine, texts that have fooled American critics and publicists, because they have wanted, needed a new writer who deals somehow with classic American subject maker in a seemingly orthodox way. Flashy but recognisable, is what they want.

On the other hand, foreigners, not being

**Buried Child**

**Peter Hosking as Wesley in Curse of the Starving Class at Playbox. Photo: Grant Hancock.**

TTheteatre Australia May 1982 35
privy to all things American, might find the plays a bit flat — even boring.

There is something very old fashioned about the subject matter of Buried Child and Curse of the Starving Class. The idea of there being such a thing as an obligation in your blood was not unknown to the Greeks, — or to O'Neill who tried to make it American, too.

Shepard's quest for identity, for what it is that makes an American, him an American, his obsession now with roots and rootlessness, obligations and walking out, place and homelessness, in a paradise of plenty. That is, the "real" America is bountiful — but there is, the "real" America is bountiful — but the plays are set in poverty, both of spirit and food.

Whatever the form Shepard chooses to work through (they are as related to television drama as Greek drama, or Strindberg) there's still the element of verbal/vocal improvisation, of spontaneity in the way his characters talk in their frequent monologues. And there's also the extravagant imagery present, except in these naturalistic plays; they are to do with the land, soil, blood, death, not with rock, drugs or science fiction.

For example, there's the live sheep on stage in Starving Class, dead at the end, and the field of plenty out back of the house in Buried Child.

This field, from where Tilden obtains an abundance of corn, carrots and where the dead child is buried, is a Field of Plenty, a good example of the forceful but not complet image, but a kind of soup of rhythms and concerns, a knowledge of English or European sensibility, they are a Gothic Americana, owing as much to rhythms and concer as American cultural discoveries like jazz and rock, TV and movies, plenty and poverty as God or psychopathology.

Roger Pulvers' productions are marked by terrific performances and a clear idea of how to present the texts. Pulvers lets all the rhythms flow, gives space for the monologues, plays the comedy where it exists, and doesn't shrink from making the most of the extravagances, the over-the-top moments with sheep, blood, broken bottles, explosions.

Best of all he has obtained from the actors, all of them, single minded performances, where despite occasional accent troubles, each character has a single face and stays with it for the whole production.

I especially admired the work of Gary Files, Maggie Millar and Peter Hosking.

A word on the design. These plays offer the designer a choice between Norman Rockwell and Edward Hopper. You can fill the stage with a prop collectors dream of appropriate tat, or you can allow the words and actors to operate as real, yet emblematic, evocative voices, concentrating visually on the singular images Shepard has put in there, like the sheep live and dead, corn, shaven heads and the like. Corrigan and Pulvers have rightly put these big ideas in a throne-like temple of scrims that do not obtrude, yet set the scene in the featureless America between the Rockies and the Mississippi.


Director, Roger Pulvers; Designer, Peter Corrigan: Stage Manager, Robert Gebert.

Cast: Peter Hosking, Maggie Millar, Michele Stanyan, David Slingsby, Gary Files, Bevan Wilson, Howard Stanley.

(Professional)

After Bausch and Berkoff

AS WE ARE

AS YOU LIKE IT

RAMONA

DEATH IN THE FAMILY

TRAM SHOW

by Suzanne Spinner

Audiences and some theatre companies in Melbourne still seem to be reeling from the combined assault of Steven Berkoff and Pina Bausch.

First the frenetic Londoner arrived and told us all that he was terribly put out to find that Australian theatre hadn't learnt anything since his last visit five years ago, and in The Fall of the House Of Usher showed us that he hadn't either; but at least he was still angry, unlike other English playwrights he could mention and did... Then Pina Bausch hit us, and she had the gall to call it 1980 and we thought it was 1982, and maybe Berkoff was right and in Australia it's still 1977, and anyway, wasn't she obsessive and boring?

And in between the papers were full of the Adelaide Festival and how David Hare would show us what political theatre was all about, and even if it wasn't very theatrical it was socially "engaged" and it had cost a fortune so we'd better take it seriously. ... and Pinder was telling us that the Comic Strip had revolutionised comedy, so we'd better laugh... and Patrick White had written a new play and nobody seemed sure whether it was significant or merely interesting, but it was certainly mythic.

Meanwhile we all forgot what we knew, that it was 1982 and that the Mill Theatre Company, the Dance Exchange, Los Trios Ringbarkus, Circus Oz, Stephen Sewell, John Romeril et al had been, and were still, around even if we can't quite claim their work yet, after all they're only local and god forbid might be parochial, never mind Soho and Wuppertal.

Back on the farm things are looking a bit grim: now that there are effective only three companies operating — MTC, Playbox and Anthill and a plethora of one-offs, the competition is hardly vigorous.

MTC limps along with a re-run of Beverley Dunne's affectionate and unpretentious one-woman show. She shows us that the best of American history and literature, pleasant and solid, full of heart but lacking theatrical imagination let alone invention; and Bruce Myles' production of As You Like It is guaranteed to turn droves of students off theatre let alone Shakespeare.

No doubt if Berkoff returns in 1985 that generation will drag itself away from the latest rock/performance art gig to see him, because anything would have to be better than the parody happening at the Athenaeum. Never have so many minds and hands worked so hard to realise so few ideas — the sheer ugliness of the set and the vulgarity of the music make the Simon Gallagher Show look artistic and sensitive.

Amidst such twitttery tiresness Anne Scott-Pendlebury's Celia and Edwin Hodgeman's Jaques shone with intelligence and life, but the fact that they seemed to know what they were doing may have had something to do with the fact that those characters expressly comment on and debunk the main text of the play, which was sorely in need of doing, but hardly in the way
Shakespeare intended.

Given that Anthill is hell bent on an exploration of Wagnerian Euroscommunism, and the words or the acting aren’t really the issue because it’s all about “extraordinary visual images”, which is after all as much as the natives could be expected to understand — colour and movement; the way is all too clear for the Playbox to easily romp home with artistic direction intact on a combined ticket of new Australian work and intelligent readings of overseas work.

La Mama is again proving its value as a try-out place for committed theatre artists — be they writers, directors or actors — the quality is erratic but each new show is so different that invariably there is a sense of discovery and exploration on some front. Lisa Dombroski’s production of Ramona and the White Slaves by Canadian writer, George F Walker showcased a young director and a writer unknown in Australia. The production was characterised by a clear and sharply realised directorial vision, and excellent performances from that increasingly large corps of fringe actors who are either unwilling or unwanted in the downtown theatres. It was exciting to see actors as inventive and polished as Jillian Murray and Ian Scott being challenged by a play that demanded the complete fusion of visual and performance style, and which Dombroski achieved.

By contrast Edwin Batt’s production of Colin Ryan’s A Death in the Family — a naturalistic, modern melodrama of mother and inflect the acerbic wit of Ryan’s writing despite good performances by Jillian Murray and Simon Hughes. Batt’s direction lacked style and a sense of particular purpose and relied on easily achieved moments of tension and humour. The tackiness of the design looked even worse compared to Dombroski’s meticulous aesthetic and gave the lie to the excuse of poor, low budget theatre.

Outside of the CBD — community theatre is going ahead, with the Murray River Performing Group’s production of Liquid Amber — Jack Hibberd’s sequel to Dimboola; an audience participation play set at a Golden Wedding Anniversary party. In the Eastern Suburbs Theatre Works’ contribution to Public Transport Theatre; Storming Mont Albert By Tram, originally planned to run during the Moomba fortnight, is now into its second extended season.

Like the Comedy Cafe’s long-running Bus show, Storming Mont Albert By Tram takes place outside a theatre; on the No 42 tram running from Mont Albert to the city and back. Both shows not only take theatre out to people; they make theatre out of the everyday environment. Writer Paul Davies and director Mark Shirrefs have created a complete event that is more than just being on a tram with a group of actors.

The event they have created, like real-life, has a multiplicity of focus and the script is only a part of it; what really is at issue and of interest is the subversion of the boundaries between theatre and life. Was that a “real” commuter who got on at that last stop or was it an actor? How do you tell? Is that plain clothes policeman really trying to stop the show — and do I really have to show my ticket to that maniac who says he’s the inspector? The Bus and Tram shows have done more for the public transport lobby than Travelcard ever could, and en route created original, genuinely popular theatre.

**W.A.**

A master class in acting

**HOUSE GUEST**

**VIRGINIA WOOLF**

**G & S SPECIAL**

by Margot Luke

Perth audiences had a choice of plays about guests, each with a visiting celebrity from tellyland. And there the similarity ended. Francis Durbridge’s “smash hit thriller” as the program called it, starred Patrick Macnee, of the late lamented Avengers series, whilst Virginia Woolf gave us yet another chance to marvel at the fact that Warren Mitchell is an astonishingly good actor, who happened to be identified with a character called Alf Garnett for some years.

House Guest is exactly like every other Durbridge thriller of the past forty odd years: into the lives of a modestly famous or moderately rich couple comes some sort of menace, usually in the shape of blackmail or kidnapping or both. There is much telephoning, and off-stage there is always a cottage in the country where something vital and mysterious is happening. People invariably masquerade as someone they are not, at least one character is bumped off on stage, and there are lots of totally unmotivated surprises. The whole thing is held together by dialogue that flickers with amusing lines which never quite amount to wit.

The setting for these privileged victims has to be ultra-glossy, and here Gene Banducci’s set of bland colours and restrained status symbols hits the nail right on the head. The women wear elegant and expensive-looking clothes.

With the kind of one-dimensional characters who people a Durbridge thriller the skill called on is Performance rather than Acting. Macnee is at his best when he is sending up the debonair man-of-the-world type we have come to associate with him. He is somewhat heavier than one remembers him, but his voice has an impressive resonance that my television set certainly never allowed to emerge.

Rosemary Barr shines as his glamorous actress wife, managing to inject some genuine warmth into the scenes of maternal concern and grief, whilst both Polly Low and Sher Guhl valiantly struggle with the task of being red herrings, albeit very decorative ones. Raymond Duparc and Harry Davidson do a nice double-act as an

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**Beverley Dunn in MTC’s As We Are, Edwin Hodgment (Jaques) and Gary**


**Director, Bruce Myles; Settings, Richard Prins; Costumes, Judith Cobb; Lighting, Jamie Lewis.**

**Cast:** Gary Day, Norman Kaye, Brian Young, James Wright, Ross Williams, Anne Scott Pendlebury, Sandy Gore, David Ravenswood, Peter Kowitz, William Gluth, Ross Skiffington, Michael Edgar, Philip Page, Peter Croxley, James Wright, Robert Essex, Edwin Hodgment, Rhonda Cressey, Genevieve Picot.

(Professional)

**Ramona and the White Slaves** by George F Walker. La Mama Theatre, Melbourne. Opened Feb 18, 1982.

**Director, Lisa Dombroski; Set Design, David Mayes; Lighting, Cliff Kelsal.**

**Cast:** Ramona, Jillian Murray; Cook/Mr Sebastian/Miguel, Ian Scott; Gloria, Joy Dunstan; Leslie, Ann Fiume; Friedrick, Tony Richards.

(Alternative)

**A Death in the Family** by Colin Ryan, La Mama. Opened March 17, 1982.

**Director/Designer, Edwin Batt; Lighting, Robert Hall; Stage Manager, Elizabeth Capp.**

**Cast:** Clarissa, Catherine Milne; Mr Browne, Jillian Murray; Mr Slitheroe, Simon Hughes; Young Taylor, Mark Williams.

(Alternative)
Inspector and his over-educated Sergeant, who turn into a couple of altogether different characters, and Margaret Ford is a visiting cousin, joyfully bumbling in where angels fear to tread. Leslie Wright, alas, disappears much too early from the proceedings — he makes such a good villain.

There are plenty of arguments that this sort of thing is done better and more forcefully on television — and yet, the large audience was clearly enjoying things, which proves that live theatre doesn’t have to be the sole preserve of the “elite”.

The general reaction to the announcement that the Playhouse was offering Albee’s Who’s Afraid of Virginia Woolf, was an unenthusiastic “what — again?” How often has one seen it? And of course there was that film. . . So, more than ever, the interest centred on the cast. Under Rodney Fisher’s direction the four players revitalised the play, so that one seemed to be seeing it for the first time.

Robyn Nevin as Martha, the frustrated academic wife, is quite simply stunning. Her bitchiness glitters, her vulgarities are funny and pardonable, and her maudlin alcoholic scenes suggest vulnerability to a heartbreaking degree. After this, one really won’t want to see the play again done in any other way.

As George, Warren Mitchell plays muted cello to her violin. It is a subtle and restrained underplaying of the part, full of energies just below the surface. His caustic irony is all the more cutting, and in his great scenes — the anecdote of the boy who killed his parents, or the announcement of the fateful telegram — he creates dramatic tensions almost surreptitiously. The scenes of the marital war-games between the two have the vigour and precision of Wim­bledon tennis. It’s a master class in acting.

The “other couple” have a lot to live up to. Dennis Schulz, too often seen in minor roles, plays the whiz-kid biology lecturer — he grows from the socially embarrassed young newcomer to the patronising younger man with a future, to drunken giggles and truculence with all the stages in between. As the chunderous Honey, his cutie-pie wife, Pauline Hood probably starts being appalling too early, not leaving herself room to grow, but her agonised outburst, when she suddenly understands that her husband has betrayed intimate secrets, carries genuine force.

In the twenty years since the play first appeared we live become familiar with “the games people play”, and it is now almost unbelievable that the critics of the time found the relationships, particularly the make-believe son, unacceptable. The play remains surprisingly fresh and vigorous, even though it has now moved from the outer limits of the “experimental” to an almost comfortable middle of the road.

More overt middle-of-the-road entertainment was offered by the Hole-in-the-Wall with the Gilbert and Sullivan Special, devised by John Milson and directed by Barry Screaigh. Loosely strung together with a commentary delivered by the singers, it tells the story of G and S partnership with an emphasis on the songs rather than on the personalities.

The production has verve and charm. There is no attempt to present the songs in the context of the specific opera, but rather to re-stage them as entertaining numbers in their own right. Thus the lowly sailor of HMS Pinafore is consolled by three cheeky chappies in boaters, who are incidentally the male contingent of an excellent musical consort called Voyces (three men, two women) who in addition to the Savoy Operas have a repertoire of Victorian songs and madrigals.

Leading lady of the show is Terry Johnson, whose range encompasses opera and musicals, but who has achieved a special place in the G and S scene. She sings with passion (“A Simple Sailor”) and with flirtatious charm in the love duets with James Malcolm. Malcolm himself is most moving in “I have a song to sing O”, and very funny in the patter songs from Trial by Fury and Pirates of Penzance.

The idea of backing two leading singers with a versatile and tuneful group who are equally at ease in well-choreographed clowning seems quite inspired, and the total effect is that of a much “larger” show — in retrospect it seems almost surprising that the musical accompaniment is provided by a single piano, played by Lea Hayward who seems indefatigable.

(Professional).

(Professional).
THEATRE GUIDE

ACT

ANU ARTS CENTRE (494787)
Australian National Playwrights Conference; Artistic Director, George Whaley. Annual workshop of new Australian plays and only national Theatre Forum. May 2-16.

FOOLS GALLERY THEATRE COMPANY (498092)
Original Sin devised by the company; director, Carol Woodrow. Third play in the series Images from the Background. To May 1. Original show by Jo Fleming and Tony Cox. May 5-15.

JIGSAW THEATRE COMPANY (470781)
Hum by the company. Touring preschools. Slaughter by the company. Touring primary schools. Throughout May.

PLAYHOUSE (496488)
Blue Folk Community Arts present Fred's Shed. A school holiday production in association with the Canberra Theatre Trust. May 8-12.

THEATRE 3 (474222)
Canberra Repertory Society present A Flea in Her Ear by Georges Feydeau; director, Allen Harvey. Starts May 19. For entries contact Marguerite Wells on 889463

NSW

THE ALMOST MANAGING COMPANY (307211)
Bondi Pavilion Theatre: Lonely Lenny Lower by Barry Dickens; director, Rex Cramporn. Throughout May.

CAPITOL THEATRE (2123455)
The Tommy Steele Show. To May 8.

ENSEMBLE THEATRE (9298677)
Old World by Aleksei Arbuzov; director, Hayes Gordon; designer, Yoshi Tosa, with Diana Greentree and Don Reid. To May 15.

GRiffin Theatre Company (333817)
Stables Theatre: The Cinderella Syndrome by Craig Cronin; director, Peter Carmody; designer, Kerry McArthur. Australian premiere season about the inner workings of the Secret Service. Throughout May.

HUNTER VALLEY THEATRE COMPANY (049/262526)

KIRRILLI P U B THEATRE (921415)
The Buccaneer Show by Ken Matthews and Steve Johnson; music by Adrian Morgan; producer, Bill Young; with Zoe Bertram, Allan Chapple, Margie McCrae and Tony Martin. Throughout May.

HER MAJESTY'S THEATRE (2123411)
They're Playing Our Song by Neil Simon; director, Phil Cusack; with Jacki Weaver and John Waters. Throughout May.

MARIAN STREET THEATRE (4983166)
Night and Day by Tom Stoppard; director, Terence Clarke; with Carole Raye. To May 15.

MARIONETTE THEATRE OF AUSTRALIA (20588)

MUSIC LOFT THEATRE (9776585)
Loftomania devised, written and directed by Peggy Mortimer; with Enzo Toppano and Peggy Mortimer. Throughout May.

NIDA (6633615)
Parade Theatre: Camino Real by Tennessee Williams; director, Richard Cottrell. Starts May 12.

NIMROD THEATRE (6995003)


PHILIP STREET THEATRE (2328570)
The Anniversary by Bril McIlwraith; director, Peter Williams; with June Salter, Alan Wilson, Zoe Bertram, John Hamblin, Malcolm Thompson and Belinda Giblin. Into May. God's Favourite by Neil Simon; director, Peter Williams. Starts end May.

Q THEATRE (047/265253)
Safety in Numbers by Philip Scott and Luke Hardy; director and designer,
Arthur Dicks. Starts May 19.
REGENT THEATRE (2647988)
Barnum by Cy Coleman, Michael Stewart and Mark Bramble; director and choreographer, Baayork Lee, musical director, Noel Smith; with Reg Livermore. Throughout May.
SHOPFRONT THEATRE FOR YOUNG PEOPLE (5883948)
Weekend workshops include playbuilding, mime, dance, puppetry, design, radio and video. Youth Theatre Showcase: Romeo and Juliet adapted by Errol Bray; director, Kingston Anderson. May 1, 7, and 8.
STUDIO SYDNEY (7713333)
People Are Living There by Athol Fugard; director, Graham Correy; with Leila Blake. To May 9. Seascapes by Edward Albee; director, Graham Correy; with Leila Blake and Ann Roy. Starts May 27.
SYDNEY THEATRE COMPANY (3584399)
Drama Theatre, SOH: A Map of the World by David Hare; director, David Hare; designers, Eamon D’Arcy and Hayden Griffin; with Roshan Seth, Robert Grubb, Sheila Scott-Wilkinson, Penny Downie, Peter Whitford and Tim Robertson. To May 8. Theatre Royal: Amadeus by Peter Shaffer; director, Richard Wherrett; designers, John Stoddart and Anne Fraser; with John Gaden, Drew Forsythe, Linda Cropper, Robert Hughes, Terry Bader, Ric Hutton, Rhys McConnichie and Ron Hackett. To May 29.
THEATRE SOUTH (042/282923)

QLD
ARTS THEATRE (362344)
HER MAJESTY’S THEATRE (2212777)
House Guest by Francis Durbridge; director, Val May; with Patrick McNee and Rosemary Barr. To May 22.
LA BOITE THEATRE (361622)
The Venetian Twins by Nick Enright and Terry Clarke; director, Malcolm Blaylock. To May 15.

Running Late For Nothing by David Pyle and Tony Longland; director, Des James. To May 27.
NEW MOON THEATRE COMPANY (077/721913)
QUEENSLAND THEATRE COMPANY (2215777)
The Warhorse by John Upton; director, Gregory Gesch. Comedy of local party politics.
TN COMPANY (3525133)
Antigone by Sophocles; director, Rod Wissler. Group devised production, based on the classical Greek tragedy. To May 15. For entries contact Jeremy Ridgeman on 3772519.

SA
LIGHTHOUSE (515151)
Playhouse, Festival Centre: A Midsummer Night’s Dream by William Shakespeare; director, Jim Sharman; designer, Sue Blane; lighting designer, Nigel Levings; composer, Sarah de Jong; with Geoffrey Rush and Gillian Jones. A magical celebration of the power of love. May 7-15.
Q THEATRE (2235651)
When we are Married by J.B. Priestley; director, Jean Marshall. April 16-May 8.
SACW PHOENIX YOUTH THEATRE (2723036)
THE STAGE COMPANY (2236283)
The Space Theatre: A Night in the

Arms of Raelleen by Clem Gorman; director, John Noble; with Sue Jones, Don Barker, David Hursthouse, John Heywood and Rob George. A bodgie gang of the 50’s gets together again in the 80’s. May 13-29.
TROUPE (2717552)
Troupe Theatre, Old Unley Town Hall: Death Orange by Ron Hoening and Jon Firman; director, Richard Collins. The Vietnam tragedy ten years on. May 27-June 19. For entries contact the Association of Community Theatres on 267 5988.

TAS
POLYGON THEATRE COMPANY (348018)
SALAMANCA THEATRE COMPANY (235259)
Annie’s Coming Out devised by Richard Davey, Jude McHenry, Mary McMenamin and Fiona Stewart; director, Richard Davey. Woodsong devised and directed by Les Winspear. Forests by David Allen; director, Margaret Davis. Touring schools throughout May.
TERRAPIN PUPPET THEATRE (346086)
Tanglefoot by Sandy McCutcheon; director, Sandy McCutcheon; designer, Jennifer Davidson. A play written especially to celebrate the Year Of The Tree. The story of a group of trees’ struggle to avoid being chopped down. Touring schools on the north-west coast throughout May. For entries contact Jon Fogarty on 30 802.

VIC
AUSTRALIAN NOUVEAU THEATRE (699 3253)
Boots 'n All continues tour of secondary schools. Blackwater devised by the company and directed by Andy Lemon. Suitable for Year 3.

Wolfboy devised and directed by Peter Charlton, touring schools all over Victoria. Suitable for Years 4, 5, 6.

THE COMEDY CAFE BYO THEATRE RESTAURANT (4192869)
SKIDS — a high speed night on the town with Robyn Giles, Mike Bishop and Rob Meadows. All through May.

BANANA LOUNGE (upstairs) New Bus show with Rod Quantock.

THE COMEDY THEATRE (6623233)
One Mo' Time written and directed by Vernel Bagneris. Great New Orleans musical based on the black vaudeville lyric theatre of New Orleans (1926).

LA MAMA (3476085)
Includes works by Samuel Beckett, Tess Lyiostys, Stella Tarrant and Maude Clarke.

LAST LAUGH THEATRE RESTAURANT (4196225)
International Comedy Festival: The Brass Band, just returned from America. April 19-May 1.

MELBOURNE THEATRE COMPANY (6999122)
As You Like It by Shakespeare, directed by Bruce Myles; with Sandy Gore. March 31-May 2.

Russell St: The Floating World by John Romerill, directed by Graeme Blundell and designed by Peter Corrigan; with Frederick Parslow. April 21-June 19.

WA

HOLE IN THE WALL (3812403)
I Ought to be in Pictures by Neil Simon; director, Peter Morris; designer, Jake Newby; with Sally Sander, Maurie Ogden and Pippa Williamson. Starts April 28.

OCTAGON THEATRE (3802440)
Mason Miller present As You Like It and King Lear by William Shakespeare; designed and directed by Ray Omodei; lighting, Jake Newby; with Andy King, Pippa Williamson, Rod Hall and Glen Hitchcock. To may 15.

PLAYHOUSE (3753500)
National Theatre Company present Uncle Vanya by Anton Chekhov; director, Prunella Scales; with Timothy West. To May 22.

Uncle Vanya

PRINCESS MAY THEATRE, Fremantle (3355125)
Winter Theatre present Backyard by Jan Balodis; director, Ross Coll. To May 12.

REGAL (3811557)
Interstar and Paul Elliott present Pyjama Tops by Mawby Green and Ed Feibert; director, Bill Robertson; with John Inman and Reg Gillam. To May 22.

NATIONAL THEATRE COMPANY (3753500)
TIE: Washing Away by David Young. Annie's Coming Out adapted by Rosemary Crossley. Year Nine are Animals by Richard Tulloch. Touring secondary schools in metropolitan, Kalgoorlie and Esperance districts. Throughout May. For entries contact Margaret Schwan on 341 4422.
NSW

SUMMIT (279777)

Supper specials include hot or cold platters with a variety of seafood, bocals, paes etc.

BEPPI’S (3574558)
Cnr Stanley and Yurong Sts, East Sydney. Lunch Mon-Fri, dinner and supper Mon-Sat. Licensed. Credit cards accepted. Average $22. Long established as one of Sydney’s top Italian restaurants with a superb wine list. Kitchen open till 11.30 for supper when you can discuss the evening’s performance till 1am.

NIEUW AMSTERDAM (432991)
418 Pacific Highway, Crows Nest. Dinner and supper Tues-Sat 8pm — 1am. Unlicensed. Credit cards accepted. Average $12.

WALNUT TREE (3284409)

FANNY’S (96633017)
243 Lonsdale St, Melbourne. Lunch Mon-Sat. Licensed. Credit cards accepted. Average $30.

If you would like your restaurant listed in the TA RESTAURANT SUPPER GUIDE, please ring Jaki Gothard with details on 440 8778/356 3060.

VIC

GALLERY RESTAURANT (4193311)
Hilton Hotel, cnr Wellington Pde and Clarendon St, East Melbourne. Licensed. Open 7 days from 7am-11.30pm for casual dining at a popular price. Apart from the house price. Apart from the house specialities they offer both hot and cold suppers for those seeking an after-show venue and even have a weight-watchers section on the menu.

WALNUT TREE (3284409)
458 William Street, Melbourne. Lunch Mon-Fri, dinner Mon-Sat. Licensed. All credit cards. Average $30.

FANNY’S (96633017)
243 Lonsdale St, Melbourne. Lunch Mon-Sat. Licensed. All credit cards. Average $30.

If you love good food and mixing with Melbourne’s social set this restaurant is a must.
Patrick White has been discussing with Carl Vine the possibility of collaborating on a new opera with a contemporary theme. White was impressed with Vine's contribution to Signal Driver for the Adelaide Festival, as well as with Vine's other works for the theatre. Various proposals have been presented to Patrick White in the past, but have come to nothing. Perhaps with White himself taking the initiative, this time it will happen. White has taken a consistent interest in the contemporary music scene (would that some of our senior composers might do the same) and actually goes to concerts of new music.

**NEW PATRICK WHITE OPERA**

Carl Vine have come to nothing. Perhaps with White himself taking the initiative, this time it will happen. White has taken a consistent interest in the contemporary music scene (would that some of our senior composers might do the same) and actually goes to concerts of new music.

**CHOOREOGRAPHERS GIVE THE LIFT TO AUS MUSIC**

Further collaborations in theatre are promoting Australian music in the strongest way. In July, a major music theatre triple-bill presented by the Seymour Group includes a repeat performance of the Hartley Newnham staged version of Pierrot Lunaire, a new production of Stravinsky's Renard, produced and directed by Barry Moreland, and a new work, The Serpent Rainbow, choreographed by Barry Moreland with Kelvin Coe, and other key dancers from the Sydney Dance Company. Brian Howard, whose opera Inner Voices (based on Louis Nowra's play) was such a success, is composing a score for The Rainbow Serpent.

The Sydney Dance Company continues its unmatched interest in Australian music. For the Commonwealth Games in Brisbane in September, Graeme Murphy is preparing a new work to two recent and major scores: Barry Conyngham's Mirage and Graeme Koehne's The Rainbow Forest, his award winning composition from the Adelaide Festival. On the same program will be a major new work by Barry Moreland with a new score by Carl Vine. The work, as yet untitled, is based on the life and works of Daisy Bates. For this work, Moreland has lured the painter Charles Blackman into the theatre at last, the Blackman has already done some remarkable designs. As an image-maker Blackman is unsurpassed in Australia. Such collaborations could herald a new era of energy and achievement in Australian theatre.

**FILM MUSIC WORKSHOPS**

Storry Walton's Film and Television School is planning to introduce the first of a rolling series of seminars and workshops on Film Music later this year. He feels that with the growth in the numbers and stature of Australian composers, and the developing film and television industry, a realistic workshop continuing over a period of 24 months, must result in a new vitality. Although "albums of the film" are appearing - sometimes with a workable "theme song" - Australia still has not produced a major film score. The last such an attempt at a conference (which lapsed into the inevitable gripe and bitch session) occurred in the late 'sixties. Could be that a top-flight film composer from Europe or the States could head up the project.

**EUROPEAN DREAMTIME**

The famous collaboration of top choreographer Jiri Kylian and three major composers Arne Nordheim, Toru Takemitsu and Luciano Berio has been postponed. It is of some interest to Australia as the full-length work is to be based on the world of myths of the Australian Aborigine. The Holland Festival commissioned the work. All participants except Berio (who was here in 1975 for Music Rostrum and collared my second best didjeridu) had quietly slipped into Northern Australia in 1980 to absorb the local atmosphere. Berio, as usual, over-committed himself and has not finished his section, although he says now that it will be ready for next June. I must say it sounds like a strange pot of message.

**AUSTRALIAN FOR GREEK FILM**

Gail Holst (ex-Nation Review music writer) is in Greece to make the film of her book The Road To Rembetika, now published in English, German and Greek. Since then she has published the major book on Theodorakis, who not only made available to her previously suppressed materials but gave the finished work his blessing at the big launch in Athens. Her book deals in some depth with Theodorakis' early "serious" compositions as well as the unique social and political implications of his popular music.

The Road To Rembetika film should be a great success with Chanell 0/28.

**1983 NATIONAL MUSIC CAMP**

The next National Music Camp will take place in January, again at King's College, Parramatta, NSW. This venue was most successful for the 1981 camp. Its Director will be the permanent conductor of the Israel Philharmonic, Shalom Rouly Riklis. It is expected that there will be public concerts in Sydney by the AYO. The orchestra is now considering offers of European engagements later in the year, and its fame is spreading rapidly. Its 1980 Adelaide Festival Director, Erich Schmidt has been a ceaseless ambassador for the young orchestra.

**HEARING IN DISBELIEF**

Last month's article on The New Composers (establishment), referred to the "performance art" composers (non-establishment). For a balanced view, the Biennale of Sydney is presenting a major survey of performance art and sound, devised by William Furlong. Spread over much of the period of the Biennale, the main audio performances will be at the NSW Conservatorium of Music from 3-14 May. This Biennale is the first time an international exhibition of contemporary art has formally included a section concerned with sound. John Cage declined to participate ("I am in principle opposed to performances of recorded music") but Furlong still has hopes. Furlong edits the famous Audio Arts cassette catalogue which includes Anti-Music a cassette sampler of music and performance groups who work and live in Australia.
James Murdoch surveys the state of Arts Information

It has been touted for years that Information is the new currency. It is bought and sold. It is coveted and feared.

In the 'seventies, Australia experienced a rapid computer invasion. There was a feeling of getting into the bigtime. There was only minimal grumbling about displaced jobs. Computerisation was chic and neat.

The arts were hardly touched by computerisation. Only the major performing arts companies could afford it, usually for accounting purposes. Then along came Computicket and Bass and everyone became familiar with the new computer type-face. Research and documentation were sporadic and un-co-ordinated activities, and a data base of basic information always seemed very low on the list of priorities.

Lots of organisations and persons have wads of information. For instance, the archives of the NSW Conservatorium of Music, the ABC, Musica Viva, the AETT, all have banks of information about their history (which is also our history), but little of it is accessible. And that is a very important and crucial word, accessible. If it is not accessible, it is of no use to you and to me. In many instances it is of no use to the holders of that information either, because it is not documented in a form which they can get at easily. When it is in a form retrievable, it is jealously guarded and not available. Try asking the ABC for information. Even its poor archive department has to chase its tail for what it has.

It is time to take stock of our activities, and of our needs, in order to sustain and develop them. As the Music Board itself says: “As the artistic activities of a nation grow, accurate documentation and recording become essential.”

The newly released Annual Report of the Australia Council (1980-1981) devotes more than half its reporting on its own Council Programs to Arts Information and Research. Coincidentally, the Council has released a report of the Steering Committee on Arts Information in Australia: The Role of the Australia Council.

It is extraordinary that in its own report, the Australia Council doesn’t seem to acknowledge the huge bank of information it possesses. Each Board maintains its own filing system, related to applications. These files contain reports, facts, figures, opinions, assessments. The problem with many of the Council’s staff is that if it is not on file it doesn’t exist.

The Council’s library is a superb resource, accessible to the public, but under-used. If the Council mobilised its own documentation, immediately the major arts information centre in Australia would be in operation.

The Annual Report noted that the demand for information about the arts grew and goes on to detail various informational activities within the Council:

* Arts Information Program
* Artforce bi-monthly news digest (6,000 recipients) related to Council grants alone and with special supplements.
* OZARTS a guide to arts organisations in Australia.
* Ethnic Arts Director
* Regional Arts Column
* Photographic Archive
* Films about the arts and artists

It also notes two useful research reports: a national study of Australia’s attitudes to the arts (commissioned in time to substantiate the Council’s expenditure on opera), and an analysis of the economic impact of a regional arts centre (Mildura). But it also notes that “...no general policy exists on the collection and dissemination of arts information throughout Australia.”

There is clearly a bias in the thinking of the Council towards information on the arts as statistical data which would be of most interest to arts administrators involved in policy making. This emphasis was also evident in a paper presented by Dr Jean Battersby at the Second Conference of Commonwealth Arts Councils, held in Brisbane a year ago, on the subject of the establishment of an international centre for studies on the arts, and of an international arts
information service.

As one who is vitally concerned with arts information and its transfer (as World President of the Music Information Centres of UNESCO), I think this emphasis is most dangerous, without the balancing data bases of real information (as against information about Information).

It is too easy for administrators to believe that if they have the information about Information, then they automatically have information which hopefully makes them omnipotent.

Without the access of the artist and his audience to a diverse information resource, the whole scene becomes stultified, incestuous and debilitating, as indeed it was until the early seventies.

The same limited points of reference continually are recycled. This means in music, that we hear the same sixty pieces of 20th century music, know nothing of the intellectual and artistic life of other countries, are suspicious of, and resist, “the new”, and the arts become duller and duller.

Let’s take a look at some of the arts information outside the Australia Council.

MUSIC

Of all the arts, music is better provided with accessible information and indeed Australia leads the world in some aspects, through the work of the Australian Music Centre. Its Australian Directory of Music Research was a trail-blazer and is now computerised in New York. The famous three “R”’s of music are:

* RILM Repertoire International de Littérature Musicales
* RISM Repertoire International des Sources Musicales (1600-1800)
* RIDIM Repertoire International d’Iconographie Musicales

RILM is the best organised and is available through its publications or more directly and up-to-date, through MIDAS, the service provided through OTC. MIDAS (Multi-Mode International Data Acquisitions Service) was introduced to Australia in 1979, in time to astonish the delegates and the President of the International Music Council of UNESCO. With great showmanship, OTC linked up MIDAS to a giant screen. The delegates were invited to request any information from RILM by satellite. One of the distinguished scholars was nominated and instantly details of his life’s work appeared on the screen. He was visibly shaken. His peers were green with envy. The exercise was a great success.

It is now possible to achieve the same result from your fireside television set through the home telephone.

The other informational resources on music are the publications of the Australia Music Centre (now going again after a year off) and include what one would expect: Catalogues of Australian Compositions, Directory of Music Organisations, bibliography of Australian materials and recordings. In addition the Centre has files on composers, performers, press cuttings, posters etc etc.

All of the above come under the general umbrella of the International Association of Music Libraries.

Elisabeth Silsbury published a Directory of Tertiary Music Institutions in 1978. Late in 1981, the first edition of the Australian Music Directory appeared. Edited by Peter Beilby and Michael Roberts, it is hoped to be an annual publication, and so will expand and fill in some gaps. It has brought together a mass of useful information and is clearly aimed at the industry and commercial music.

The Music Board of the Australia Council has just turned down an application from Theatre Australia to publish a monthly national music magazine, with the limp excuse that it does not believe there exists a market for such an object. There has not existed a national music magazine for some fourteen years, and it is patently impossible to offer a central organ and platform for the dispersal of information which reaches none of the media, and for the serious discussion of major issues, not dealt with by our Mickey Mouse press.

If 10% of the combined subscribers of the ABC, Musica Viva, the AETT, the Australian Opera and the state opera companies, the Australian Ballet, and the members of the 3500 organisations listed in the AMC’s Directory, as well as the 100,000 members of the World Record Club, could not support a monthly music magazine, then we should all give up. But a new magazine needs help to get started.

THEATRE

The recognised information centre for theatre is the International Theatre Institute (ITI) branch in Australia and located at the Australian Elizabethan Theatre Trust (AETT) in Sydney. It is not large, but contains theatre periodicals, a collection of Australian (and non-Australian) plays without being comprehensive. There is no register of Australian playwrights, such as the Playwright’s Conference has attempted to establish.

The Playwright’s Conference produced a Catalogue of plays submitted to it over the previous two year period.

CAPP, now located in Sydney, undoubtedly will assemble a substantial performing arts information base, but cannot contribute anything yet. Each drama company receives plays submitted for possible performance but to my knowledge there is not one company which has consistently documented these. Thank God for Currency Press (which has been publishing incidental music to the plays at the back). Amazingly, there still does not exist a single recording of an Australian play, but it is even more incredible that there is no single office which has a repository of all the Australian plays. The University of Queensland plans to precis all published and unpublished Australian plays and to computerise the result. Let’s hope the plays aren’t thrown away afterwards, and that a Readers Digest mentality prevails once again.

And finally, Theatre Australia itself, since August 1976, is a most accessible and well-documented source of performing arts information, and more detailed than the Performing Arts Year Book of Australia (b 1976) which has steadily grown in stature and now includes 25 categories of documentation.

DANCE

Dance has increased its documentation greatly over the last year, and much of it may still be generally unknown. There are five basic areas:

1. The two books by Edward Pask on Ballet in Australia, which are mostly a recital of events interspersed with hagiography and fatuousness, but include most useful Chronology, Bibliography, Index of Stage Works and General Index. To this add Frank Salter’s superb book on Borovansky, for the flavour of the period as well as a different index. John Cargher’s book Opera and Ballet in Australia also has a
useful index although the homespun text is a hazard.

2. The Dramatic Music Catalogue of Australian Compositions, which lists the bulk of the dance works which have used Australian music.

3. Company programmes, which have not been systematically deposited anywhere. The AMC established dance files in 1975 and these include comprehensive press cuttings. The Dennis Wolanski Library and Archives of the Performing Arts has substantial documentation, and probably today is the major documentation centre for the performing arts in Australia. The archival centre at the Victorian Arts Centre, is impressive already for what it has achieved but the Wolanski library at the Sydney Opera House has a ten year lead and munificent patronage. The Performing Arts Collection of South Australia, formed in 1979, also has ambitious plans for documenting the activities of South Australia.

4. The most comprehensive document on Dance in Australia is the recently published *Theatre Board: Support for Professional Dance* as an Occasional Paper by the Australia Council. Its indices will stand for some time as the definitive documentation.

5. The Australian Archives of the Dance, which belong to the Australian Ballet, and which were created by Edward Pask.

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**LITERATURE**

The Australia Council has published a *Bibliography of Australian Books* which is useful. It was prepared by Prof Leonie Kramer as a representative selection of Australian literature currently (1979) available, and was intended mainly for overseas use. It also has a select list of Australian Children's Literature, prepared by Margaret Ingham. Then there are the various author's associations: Australian Society of Authors, with nearly 2,000 members; the Fellowship of Australian Authors, with 3-4,000, and the most exclusive and professional Australian Writers' Guild, with some 4-500 members. By shopping around these organisations might be able to supply detailed information.

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**FILM**

One of the first countries off the mark to establish a film industry was Australia. Fortunately, its renaissance over the last decade has been accompanied by supportive resource and documentation centres.

The Film Library at the Australian National Library is the major single source. Every two years it issues *Australian Film*, a listing of all films made in Australia. Film Australia has a catalogue as well, and the Australia Council film division (run by Peter Campbell) keeps track of arts films and operates an archival program.

Each of the states has a resource centre (and a catalogue) which usually includes a State Film Library (sensibly all these are to be brought together in Victoria and will be called Film Victoria — surely all the other states will have to follow suit). Victoria also has the George Lugg Archive.

Each state Education Department has film in its resource centre. Other basic publications are the *Film and TV Year Book, Cinema Papers*, AFI's *Film News*, and the AMC's Catalogue of Australian Film Music.

Between them, the National Library, State Film Libraries, AFC, AFI, Film and TV School should have the game sown up for information on Australian film. Enquire at your local.

The Australia Council's report on Arts Information specifies that 576 collections were surveyed, 133 major and 343 general collections. Finally, the report was confined to the results of the survey of 133 major respondents.

It is clear that many of these hold information which is not available, or not available for sharing and the next crucial step is for the Australia Council to fund the co-ordination of information sharing networks. Without this step, so much of the work will be unnecessarily duplicated.

Although the above run-down may seem impressive compared to what was available only ten to fifteen years ago, it is not good enough when one considers the arts in terms of practitioners and consumers, and in terms of money invested in the arts industry, conservatively estimated at $1213 million in 1977 by the Report of the Study Group for Private Support for the Arts, convened by the Myer Foundation.

No commercial industry would dare proceed with so little research, documentation and information.

Where is the initiative to come from? While the Australia Council may fund, it is unlikely to initiate. The options are few:

* Australian National Library
* AETT
* CAPPA
* A consortium of existing national and international organisations.

If those working in the arts want information, then they must demand it, collect it, share it, and budget for it.

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**Sydney Philharmonia Society**

**PRESENTS**

**MOSTLY MOZART**

with Romola Costantino (piano); Glenys Fowles (soprano); Patricia Price (mezzo-soprano); Anson Austin (tenor);* 
Michael Lewis (baritone)*

**SYDNEY PHILHARMONIA MOTET CHOIR**

**AUSTRALIAN CHAMBER ORCHESTRA**

conducted by Peter Seymour

Programme: *Mozart* Solemn Vespers of a Confessor K339

* Bach Piano Concerto in A Major K488

* C.P.E. Bach Magnificat

**Concert Hall, Sydney Opera House, Saturday, May 29, 8 p.m.**

Tickets: A Res. $13.80, B Res. $11.30, C Res. $8.30 from Sydney Opera House Box Office (phone 2 0588) and agencies, or from Sydney Philharmonia Society, cnr. York and Jamison Sts., City (phone 29 4470).

* courtesy of The Australian Opera.
Not everything went terribly well for the cast and crew of The Year of Living Dangerously in the Philippines and their stay was curtailed. James McElroy is the producer, Peter Weir the director, Russell Boyd the cinematographer and Mel Gibson, Sigourney Weaver and Michael Murphy the stars of Christopher Koch's story, which is fully financed, and will be marketed worldwide, by MGM. The Philippines, as other productions have found, are a bit tricky as location sites. Less adventurously, John Duigan's Far East location shots were done in Macao, where everyone is terribly helpful.

Big names keep appearing in the official, or government, or bureaucratic sections of the film industry. Sir James Cruthers, whose interests are newspapers and television in Western Australia, is a new part-time commissioner. Another part-timer is Mr Ray Beattie whose interests are in technology and marketing.

The Australian Film Commission responded to pleas for more money to be allocated to its Creative Development Branch by stating that it loved the CDB and would do anything to support it, that it couldn’t help cutting the funding because Government cash wasn’t available, and it has asked for more money in 1982/83 specifically for CDB. Which is about where everybody came in.

It was Australian film month in Washington from mid-March to mid-April with 15 films shown at the American Film Institute Theatre in the Kennedy Centre. Among the films, Don's Party, The Odd Angry Shot, The Chant of Jimmy Blacksmith, The Picture Show Man and Caddie (two nights each) Mouth to Mouth and Mad Max in a double bill because, says the Institute's Director, these are “cult movies”, and The Winter of Our Dreams which is expected to be the cultural highlight. Meanwhile Breaker Morant is still showing commercially in Washington, as well as London.

Anne Brooksbank's Archer and William Nagle's Leonski got $6000 and $10,000 respectively for third draft funding from the AFC, and Adams Packer Pty Ltd the sum of $123,000 to develop a package of six projects, in line with its reputation as the company that never sleeps. I guess Leonski from Nagle, whose novel of the same name was made into a film called The Odd Angry Shot, will be about that legendary American serviceman called Leonski in Melbourne during World War II who killed Melburnians as well as Japanese. He was also noted for pouring tomato sauce on his ice cream.

ABSENCE OF MALICE expresses America's worry about its very free press. Sally Field plays a singularly inept, though attractive and ambitious, reporter who fits a man into her story to suit her theories, and damages him. No Australian editor would let her story into the pages of his newspaper. Disregarding this, the film is well-made, interesting and has Paul Newman as the victim.

REDS does not have a lot to do with the Bolshevik revolution or Jack Reed's book, Ten Days That Shook the World, about his participation but it is interesting to watch Warren Beatty producing, directing, and playing Reed. Diane Keaton should go back to Woody Allen, who prevails on her not to screech.

In one of the best scenes in the film Jack Nicholson acts everybody else off the screen.

WHOSE LIFE IS IT ANYWAY? is the film of the controversial, and very moving, play about the sculptor paralysed from the neck down in a car accident who does not want to rot in hospital when he could just slip off the life support machine and go wherever it is people go. The film is not a plea for euthanasia, just for the individual's right not to live. The victim is well but, perhaps too smartly played, by Richard Dreyfuss, with John Cassavetes as a doctor-boss of the hospital. Packed with good lines and a remarkable small performance from Kenneth McMillan as a just judge.

HEATWAVE, of course. It's a very Sydney kind of film, with an inimitable performance by Judy Davis, closely followed by Carole Skinner as the lady who got in the way of the developer.

TRUE CONFESSIONS (I'm getting this list together before the Oscars but surely this one will pick up a clutch of awards? If not, there's no justice) is one of the most fascinating, professional films from the US in the past five years, with a brilliant script, direction and acting not only from Robert de Niro and Robert Duvall but from the entire cast. A model movie.
Every now and again a reviewer likes to publicly pick a winner, and this is just what I feel like doing in the case of Sigrid Thornton, who at the age of 23 plays Jessica Harrison in The Man From Snowy River. As soon as she had done her duty by the producers for the premiere, Sigrid took off for three months in Europe, let the offers of work fall where they might. It is her first real break in ten years of small and middle roles in television and films in which she was hardly noticed. The Man gave her a chance to be seen for the natural beauty she is, in competition with the changing moods of the High Country, to show childish sweetness and uncertainty, flashes of sunny humour and brooding fear of rejection, all of which she gave to the role.

The day I met Sigrid she was wearing a bright blue jumpsuit and nervously smoking too much. “It’s because I’m going away,” she said. “I’m so excited. I’ve been working since I was 13. In fact when I was seven and we were living in London — my father and mother are university lecturers — I joined the Unicorn Theatre Club, a children’s group that was supposed to get kids interested in the theatre. With me, it worked.

“I’ve played in every kind of television series — Matlock Police, Homicide, Division Four, Father Dear Father and in three films where I don’t think I was noticed — The Getting of Wisdom, FJ Holden, and Snapshot, a thriller Simon Wincer made.

“I spent six years with the Twelfth Night Theatre Company in Brisbane, but all the time also working with Crawford when I had time from school. I matriculated and was going to do arts. I think it’s important for an actress to know something besides acting. In the end I did a year of German and of drama at Queensland University until I decided to go for broke, and just act. I’ve just finished playing Frances, one of the Sydney girls, in Roger Macdonald’s 1915 which the ABC has made into a series. It was a great experience, lots of rehearsal and great care and enthusiasm from everyone at the ABC.”

Frances is one of the principal characters. The others are Walter, Billy and Diana played respectively by Scott McGregor, Scott Burgess and Jackie Woodbourne.

“Making a film is hard, but also tremendous fun,” Sigrid says, “and the atmosphere is very good and friendly. I hope it stays that way, with cast and crew getting on together. And wasn’t I lucky to get Tom Burlinson to work with? And Kirk Douglas? He was generous with his time and knowledge and experience. He didn’t give advice. It wasn’t an authoritarian atmosphere at all, just very free and friendly.”
Starstruck — a triumph for all

Starstruck — what a marvellously apt title for this exuberant, fast, fresh, funny and unselfconscious film using a formidable aggregation of young talent. You would have to go back to the beginning to allot the credits for Starstruck: it was a gleam in Stephen Maclean’s eye for several years, until everything came together — idea, producers David Ellick and Richard Brennan, the director Gillian Armstrong, Mark Moffatt’s musical direction, half a dozen good songs, beautiful and lively cinematography under the direction of Russell Boyd, costume and production design by Luciana Arrighi, Terry Ryan and Brian Thomson, choreography by David Atkins, editing by Nicholas Beauman.

And two new young starstruck people — Jo Kennedy as Jackie and Ross O’Donovan as Angus — and several mature ones, especially Margo Lee as Pearl, Pat Evison as Nana, Max Cullen as Reg, Dennis Miller as Lou and Melissa Jaffer as Mrs Booth.

All these people occupy, more or less, a Sydney waterfront pub not taking in enough money to please the brewery from which it is leased. They are also more or less related, and stand in loco parentis to a cockatoo named Wally and several confident cats. The pub and the people are models of how corny elements may be treated in a non-corny way.

While the elders go about their business Jackie and Angus, cousins, one an inefficient barmaid and the other a schoolboy, live in a fantasy world of their own. She wants to be a singer with a rock band, he wants to be a manager with occasional appearances on stage in a sequinned dinner jacket. These modest ambitions are thwarted by logistics — where does Jackie find a band and a place to sing, how does Angus break through the elaborate bureaucracy of establishment show business?

The film is full of difficult stunts that look as if they occurred so easily as to be almost accidental. Jackie walks a tightrope slung between two city buildings, wearing a nude body-stocking and massive artificial breasts and falls into a safety net while Angus, using several of his hundred or so different voices, alerts the media; a water ballet of beach lifesavers (actually water polo players trained by Donelle Burridge) complete with zinc ointment on their noses swims in a hotel pool with Jackie and a troop of plastic sharks; Jackie, wearing the tulle dress her mother wore for ballroom dancing contests is skewered on the machinery of the Opera House outdoor stage on New Year’s Eve before descending not too gracefully, to the plaudits of the crowd.

Interior and exterior crowd scenes are wonderfully manipulated, and David Atkins’ choreography using non-dancers in one spectacular scene after another, is scintillating. The great merit of Starstruck is that it has no dull patches and no overburdened scenes, though it does have some quiet ones, and some quiet songs for Jo Kennedy as well as the firecracker numbers like “Temper, Temper”, “Tough” and “Monkey In Me”.

Starstruck is a triumph for all concerned in it, and should do as well overseas, with the right kind of publicity handling, as it will surely do in Australia. As well as presenting the newcomers Jo Kennedy and Ross O’Donovan, Gillian Armstrong has brilliantly used two actresses often condemned to be stereotypes — Pat Evison and Margo Lee. Pat Evison has died tragically too often on our screens. This time, as Nana, she gambols about the pub, fat and feckless, a believable gran. Margo Lee gives an exquisite performance as a genteel tart, wearing gloves to count the money in the till so that her hands will not be soiled.

Starstruck is a Palm Beach Picture, financed from the Australian Film Commission and private sources.
Man From Snowy River — excitement but not suspense

The Man from Snowy River is the third western, after Mad Dog Morgan and The Irishman, in the local industry’s born-again period. It comes at a time when the Americans, having progressed through the simple western to the psycho western (the first of these was The Fiend That Walked The West, starring Robert Evans who later became a Paramount executive) and the guilt western, such as The Wild Bunch, have moved into science fiction blockbusters, and this in fact may be the right time for Michael Edgley International.

It cost a lot to make, $4 million, with an initial promotion budget of $100,000. The producer does not have the advantage of the giant press and television complex which Rupert Murdoch, a partner in R&R Associates, was able to marshal behind Gallipoli at what might work out at only a book debt. Whether valid or not, these considerations must occupy the mind of the reviewer, as they once occupied the minds of reviewers confronted with Cecil B de Mille’s The Ten Commandments. “It must be good, look what it cost” is not a statement, coming from either an editor or an advertising canvasser, to be dismissed lightly.

And you can see where the money has been spent. And, conversely, where it has been saved, or misspent. The action is marvellous action, marvellously photographed. And I daresay Kirk Douglas cost a bundle, especially seeing he plays two roles; the cantankerous old stony-hearted Harrison and the cantankerous old golden-hearted Spur, estranged brothers, cattleman and gold fossicker. The rest of the cast and most of the crew are Australian and come cheaper, although salaries and wages at all levels in Australian film making are rising, and some would say not before time.

As everybody who has not been living in a cave without a radio must know by now, the film is based in Banjo Paterson’s splendid ringing ballad of the same name about the pedigree colt that broke from the home paddock and went off with the wild horses led by the photogenic stallion and was recovered by a mountain man when everybody else failed, including Clancy, played on this occasion by jolly Jack Thompson, who if he is not careful will be forever cast as a nice uncle, like Lionel Barrymore. He badly needs a gutsy character role.

The sinewy verses have been fitted up with a story by Fred Cul Cullen and John Dixon which is predictable and stuffed with clichés in scenes and dialogue; and the direction of George Miller (not the Miller of Mad Max I and II, and it would lessen confusion if one of them would change his name) does nothing to correct these faults. It is stilted, suffers several hiatuses in which nothing happens beyond meaningful glances and there are lapses of judgement — scenes early on when the stallion makes two stagey appearances pawing the air; another early scene when Jim the hero and his father cut down a tree while gazing sentimentally at each other; Jessica the heroine perched on a rock while a storm rages over her; and worst of all, the crass mishandling of Paterson’s climax, when Jim goes over the mountain wall at the brumbies’ heels and is not seen effectively again until he turns up at the homestead to say “I told you so.”

Along with the brumbies Edgley has rounded up a stockyardful of familiar players, including Chris Heywood (again in his role of stirrer — it seems to me that casting directors don’t think of him any other way) — Lorraine Bayly, Tony Bonner, Terry Donovan, Gus Mercurio. They all do their best, playing stereotypes, with fairly excruciating lines.

Kirk Douglas, who obviously had troubles with makeup and costume in both his roles, is of course the star, but if anything except the horses and the glorious landscape is going for the film it is the romantic twosome of Tom Burlinson as Jim and Sigrid Thornton as Harrison’s daughter Jessica, as attractively naive a couple as ever came out of Hollywood’s silent days. It seems possible that the first scenes were shot first, because Burlinson grows into his role, and he has real style. Sigrid Thornton is an unorthodox beauty, and when she learns to use stillness to go with gamine charm she could be a genuine star.

The film has great excitement most of the time, but not suspense. The only suspense occurs when one of the cast has to slip in a phrase from the poem, and hesitates, and you wonder if they are going to make it.

I was accompanied to the cinema by two boys aged 11 and eight, and their mother. The younger was preoccupied with worry
Breakfast in Paris, RIP

I hope Rod Mullinar picked up a lot of money for making Breakfast in Paris (producing company John Lamond Motion Picture Enterprises, producer John Lamond, director John Lamond, distributor Roadshow) because it will do his reputation no good, nor indeed the reputation of the local industry. Mullinar plays opposite a mature American, Barbara Parkins, who was in the celebrated television soapie Peyton Place 20 years ago and may also be remembered for her film role in The Valley of the Dolls. She appears in Breakfast as a Melbourne dress designer taking in the Paris scene from a double bed at the Crillon. The other head on the pillow is Rod’s. He is cast as a LIFE-type photographer who loves to photograph people, though by some crack in the continuity the only pictures pinned on his walls are of the Eiffel Tower and the Sacre Coeur. The film is so inept and silly it is impossible to place the blame for its failures on any one element. John Lamond in his various roles no doubt is prepared to accept responsibility.

Mephisto — of hypnotic interest

A dramatic revival in the status of “foreign” films, that is, films not made originally in the English language, has occurred in recent months, partly due to the establishment of Channel 0/28 and partly to the enterprise of a small, loosely connected chain of art cinemas in capital cities. Other support comes from the Travelling Film Festival which has just closed a season of six films chosen from the 1981 Sydney Film Festival.

One of the most influential of the cinemas showing foreign films (and some films from Britain and the US which would not be screened by the big commercial cinema chains) is the Dendy in Sydney’s up-market MLC complex at Martin Place. Last year and in the first months of 1982 the Dendy has screened films from East and West Germany, Poland, Spain, Japan, El Salvador and Switzerland.

The latest is Mephisto, from Hungary, about events and people in Germany in the thirties and after the rise of Adolf Hitler. It is a film of almost hypnotic interest, made by Istvan Szabos and starring the astonishing, exciting Klaus Brandauer from the Viennese theatre as Hendrick Hofgen, the actor who pursued his own ambition by becoming the spirit and symbol of the new German (Aryan) drama under the patronage of the Prime Minister, who is also a general and bears a distinct resemblance to Hermann Goering — this is also a remarkable performance, from an East German actor named Rolf Hoppe.

The script is based on a novel published almost 50 years ago, written by Klaus Mann, son of the writer Thomas (Death in Venice, Buddenbrooks, The Magic Mountain) Mann. The book scarcely disguised the truth of the relationship between Klaus Mann, Gustav (called Hofgen in Mephisto) Erika Mann (who married Grundgens but left him to his career and later married the poet W H Auden to gain British citizenship) and Paula Wedekind, daughter of the playwright.

The film shows Grundgens-Hofgen trying to compromise with the Nazis but also aiding his Jewish colleagues until discovered, later lapsing into despair and becoming no more than a servant of the Prime Minister. In real life he does not seem to have paid so highly for his collaboration for his career in the German theatre continued until he died in 1963.

The film sustains wonderfully in its recreation of the moral as well as the physical atmosphere of the period and is continuously exciting as the actor goes about building his career while at the same time taking deadly risks with it.

In Melbourne the Brighton Bay Twin Cinema has Mephisto and it is also going to Perth and Brisbane. It opened in London and New York simultaneously with the Australian showings.

It won the International Critics Prize for Best Film and Best Screenplay at Cannes in 1981 and is nominated for Best Foreign Film in the Academy Awards.

Maria Brandauer as the actor Hofgen (playing Mephisto) in Mephisto.
OPERA CONFERENCE DISSOLVES

After five-and-a-bit years of, sometimes turbulent, operation the Opera Conference of Australia and New Zealand decided at its meeting in Adelaide on March 15 to voluntarily dissolve its association.

This move had been foreshadowed as early as July last year when some of its seven member companies argued that it would be more appropriate for them to join CAPPA and join forces with other performing arts bodies than remain an exclusive opera club. The Conference and CAPPA had from the very beginning of the latter's life maintained close and friendly relations and their "amalgamation" was, in fact, only a matter of time. Victoria State Opera was the last of the companies to make the formal decision to join the wider body.

Margaret Whitlam, Chairman of the Opera Conference, said after the decision had been taken that she personally considered the action "appropriate at this time" adding that while she felt the Conference had done much valuable work, it was now of more value for all the arts to cement links through those things which they had in common rather than to be emphasising any short-term differences of style or opinion.

MILNES FOR MACBETH

American baritone Sherrill Milnes, a favourite star of the Metropolitan Opera, Covent Garden, La Scala and other major opera houses will make his Australian debut in the title role of Macbeth for the 1982 Melbourne season of the Australian Opera.

Acclaimed by audiences and critics for both his musical and dramatic achievements, Sherrill Milnes is joined by famous British soprano Rita Hunter in the challenging roles of the Thane of Cawdor and his ambitious wife.

The genius of Verdi is combined with the genius of Shakespeare and the result is a gripping theatrical explosion of witchcraft, madness and death.

The production to be conducted by Carlo Felice Cillario will also star Donald Shanks as Banquo and Reginald Byers as Macduff.

VSO NEW FACES

The Chairman, Mr Jeffrey Sher, QC recently announced two new appointments to the Victoria State Opera:

Mr Jack Kennedy OBE is appointed as Honorary Treasurer and Mr Wilfred Thornton is appointed as Chairman of the Victoria State Opera Foundation. The Foundation was established in 1981 to raise funds for the Opera.

Mr Kennedy is a partner of Deloitte, Haskins and Sells. He was the President of the Victorian Society for Crippled Children from 1964 to 1973, and President of Yooralla Society in 1978. He is also a Director of the Tapestry Workshop.

Mr Wilfred Thornton has been Managing Director of Associated Pulp and Paper Mills Limited since 1974. For the last three years he has been an executive committee member of the Sydney International Piano competition.

In announcing the appointments, Mr Sher said “I am delighted to have men of such experience and stature working on behalf of the VSO. Both Mr Kennedy and Mr Thornton have a keen interest in Opera and in its development here in Victoria.”

A SMALL TESTIMONIAL

General Managers and other members of the upper echelons of companies frequently receive accolades for good work done and when they move on elsewhere their passing is noted by some testimonial. All too often, however, people like production managers whose hard work and determination are at least as crucial in getting the product onto the stage, pass through publicly unacknowledged.

The (sometime prodigious) efforts of Canberra Opera to keep the flag flying have been created by an extremely small band of staff and supporters, one of whom has recently moved on. Ellen Blunden, Canberra's Production Manager has resigned to go to a similar position with the recently awakened Canberra Festival. Her contribution to the opera company there has been incalculable as all who were associated with her would recognise. This column wishes her well in her new endeavours and feels sure the Festival will soon show the results of her presence.
Ian Campbell’s elevation to the post of Assistant Artistic Administrator at the Met was announced in the March issue of Theatre Australia. His exciting prospects together with the successful season of The Makropulos Affair should have meant a relaxed Adelaide Festival for the General Manager of State Opera, South Australia. Instead I found him involved in an endless round of meetings with colleagues who had descended upon Adelaide for the Festival. From one of these he emerged, prompt and cheerful, for the following interview.

KH: My first memory of you is as the old king in the AO’s production of Turandot in the late ‘60s. But your involvement in opera surely goes back beyond that.

IC: Not by very much. My family left Townsville for Sydney when I was 13, and I did a BA at Sydney Uni, with the intention of completing a Law degree after that. As a gag, I auditioned for what was then the Trust Opera in 1966, and was amazed to be offered parts in the chorus. The Law studies petered out after a couple of years, by which time I was singing character roles with the company.

KH: When did you leave the AO?

IC: At the end of the first Opera House season, in April ‘74. Ken MacKenzie-Forbes, now General Manager of Victoria State Opera, was leaving his administrative job at the Music Board of the (then) Australian Council for the Arts. I was offered a temporary job there; it lasted for two years.

KH: Did your time at the Australia Council influence your career?

IC: Yes. There was vigorous contact with all the state opera companies at that time. My predecessor here, Justin Macdonnell, was ready to move on to the Sydney Con. He rang me, and I started in Adelaide as General Manager in April, 1976. Myer Fredman was the company’s musical director.

KH: What have you done in Adelaide besides being chief executive of the company?

IC: Last year I directed Boheme, and in September this year, I’ll work under my successor as a guest director on The Tales of Hoffman. I arrive in New York to start at the Met on October 4, working directly to Joan Ingpen, who is head of the Met’s artistic division.

KH: Wasn’t she once prominent in London?

IC: Ingpen to me is one of the geniuses of the operatic world. She used to be an artists’ agent in London, then became
At the Met's technical man.

Patrick Veitch, and Michael Bronson, Tito Capobianco, and others.

I gave the matter of renewal. I gave the matter for my annual trip to the Opera.

Patrick acted as a broker with Bliss.

What precisely does the job entail?

Patrick had some experience of working on our marketing. The friend­ship developed from there.

General Manager's job at the AO.

When I returned to Adelaide three weeks later, the contract was in my letter box.

What do you mean by that?

I'm 36, and I've been involved professionally in opera since I was 21,

But Mr. Bliss, we have not discussed terms, nor precisely what the job entails”. He was reassuring: “Don’t worry. No one ever rejects the Met.”

In the end, Bliss thought that I had something up.

TH: How did you come to get the job at the Met?

When I left Adelaide late last year for my annual trip to the Opera America Conference, which met in San Francisco, I knew that on my return early in ’82 I had to face my board on the matter of renewal. I gave the matter lots of thought, and realised while I was in San Diego giving some lectures that I should not renew. I advised a few close friends at the Opera Conference that I was interested in moving on.

They included Tito Capobianco, Patrick Veitch, and Michael Bronson, the Met’s technical man.

And the Australian Opera?

They took an immediate interest in him, and brought him back twice. To give paid service, I’m glad to say. So Patrick had some experience of Australia when he applied for the General Manager’s job at the AO.

How smooth will the changeover be here in Adelaide?

Candidates are being interviewed today. The Festival’s a good time to get people here. I’ve planned eight operas as cost centres or units for next year. The new man will be invited to play with those as building blocks. He will select the five operas for production next year, but I will have done the thought it was bad, and why. He agreed. That night Anthony Bliss said, “Let’s celebrate your joining the Met.”

“Mr. Bliss, we have not discussed terms, nor precisely what the job entails”. He was reassuring: “Don’t worry. No one ever rejects the Met.”

When I returned to Adelaide three weeks later, the contract was in my letter box.

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Makropoulos and Elixir — strong after-images

by Ken Healey

In March, while the Australian Opera was in Brisbane with The Bartered Bride and Madam Butterfly, the so-called regional companies showed two vastly different new productions farther South. State Opera, South Australia and Canberra Opera share the name “regional”, but are otherwise unalike in most respects. What united them on this occasion was that Canberra hired Adelaide’s sets and costumes for a new production by John Milson of The Elixir of Love, and presented it within days of State Opera’s Adelaide Festival production of Janacek’s The Makropulos Affair.

Featuring Swedish star Elisabeth Soderstrom, who has made the role of Emilia Marty her own, The Makropulos Affair must have cost at least ten times as much as Canberra’s modest Donizetti. Both productions were of a standard to justify their respective outlays. And there the comparisons really should stop.

Elijah Moshinsky, who has been named Artistic Director of the next Adelaide Festival, returned to his native Australia from Covent Garden to produce Janacek’s fascinating, but flawed piece of music theatre, which tells the story of a woman over 300 years old. Having drunk a secret brew of emotions (one is tempted to call it an elixir, but one must resist), she retains her youth. Not to mention sex-appeal accumulated by means of a beautiful body and more than half a dozen lifetimes of practice.

If I sound a little less than reverent in retelling the story, it may be because this piece of melodrama, adapted from a play which its author, Carel Capek, rightly insisted was unworthy of Janacek, is better suited to the talents of, let us say, Menotti, than to the man who wrote Jenufa and Katya Kabanova. At least Menotti, a highly competent librettist, would have made a better adaptation. The first act is vitiated by excessive narrative to the exclusion of much dramatic content. High emotion is generated in Act 2 when, immediately after Emilia Marty has sung the role of Aida, she is confronted by a number of lovers, past, present, and would-be. Unfortunately, in the face of her own imminent death in Act 3, Marty is made to revert to narrative just when the opera calls for a veritable witch’s brew of emotions.

It is indeed high praise to say that despite the opera’s inherent faults, this production had dignity, handsomeness, a good deal of fine sound, and the mystery of Soderstrom who manages to project at once the allure of a desirable woman and the archness of a prima donna. She has been at the peak of her profession for 30 years.

As though hampered by the imperfect libretto, Janacek did not write his most lyrical vocal lines for this opera. Yet the orchestral texture in brass and woodwind is often bold and complex. The Adelaide Symphony Orchestra under Denis Vaughan lacked rhythmic tautness at times, and was guilty of sloppy entries far too often. But the balance between pit and stage, unsatisfactory by all accounts at earlier performances, was re-established for the matinee which I attended. In an audible cast singing in English, Thomas Edmonds and Roger Howell, both in minor roles, deserve special praise for clarity of word and tone.

Sharing the plaudits with Soderstrom and with Moshinsky’s intelligent production was Brian Thomson’s imposing design, predominantly in black. Its tones, set inside giant arches, actually made the concert hall at the Festival Centre look like a true theatre; they blended with the auditorium walls as surely as the false proscenium arches complemented the span of the ceiling. On stage, who will forget the bold louvres backed by Marty’s giant portrait, or the huge Sphinx eyeing inscrutably the amorous games of the woman who had just been its Aida?

Apart from Soderstrom, the most impressive performance came from James Christiansen as Prus, the man who forces the truth from Marty after a night of love. Only Gregory Dempsey, insufficiently beautiful of voice, feature, and figure to succeed as Albert Gregor, was not well cast. There is not a tenor in the country who would be ideal both musically and physically for the role, but Thomas Edmonds may have come a good deal nearer.

The scale of the enterprise was suitably contracted for Canberra’s thoroughly professional re-working of the tale of Little Nobody buying love potion from a quack named Sweet-and-Sour so that he could best his rival, Sergeant Beautiful Heart. Canberra Opera sang Donizetti’s sparkling comedy in English, but wisely left the names (Nemorino, Dulcamara, and Belcore) in the original Italian. Come to think of it, the translation did have early troubles when the chorus sang of an elixer. As it turned out they had to rhyme it with “mixer”; the aberration ceased with the need for the awful rhyme.

Just as Brian Thomson’s design casts the strongest after-image from Adelaide, so the beautiful sound of Glenn Winslade’s lyric tenor remains in the mind’s ear after Canberra. Still at the beginning of his career, Winslade never forces his ample
leading state companies in Adelaide and one blanches at the thought of compromises the subsidies for state opera companies. Yet least affected by the total régionalisation of wrought sounds he has achieved in with Canberra's scratch team the finely in the quality of presentations from the Melbourne with Victoria's State Opera. more musical authority if he is to repeat believe that young conductor Andrew Greene had been given insufficient staccato passages accompanying Dulcamara's entry were slack. Stage and pit did not always at one, which led me to believe that young conductor Andrew Greene had been given insufficient preparation with his ad hoc forces. He needs more musical authority if he is to repeat with Canberra's scratch team the finely wrought sounds he has achieved in Melbourne with Victoria's State Opera.

The chorus was underpowered in the testing acoustic of the Canberra Theatre, neither did it nor the orchestra provide the rhythmic bite that the score so often demands. For instance, the chorus's staccato passages accompanying Dulcamara's entry were slack. Stage and pit were not always at one, which led me to believe that young conductor Andrew Greene had been given insufficient preparation with his ad hoc forces. He needs more musical authority if he is to repeat with Canberra's scratch team the finely wrought sounds he has achieved in Melbourne with Victoria's State Opera.

On the positive side, it was good to hear, so many of the usual cuts in the score opened up. Passages that used to sound repetitive when Donizetti's comedies were so many of the usual cuts in the score when the voice was under pressure.

Hugh Colman's Edwardian costumes were fine, and his simple set, making use of the effects of varying light against a slatted background, helped one to forget at times the austerity of the budget.

Ironically, Canberra Opera, which has not received a sustaining grant from the Australia Council's Music Board, will be least affected by the total regionalisation of the subsidies for state opera companies. Yet one blanches at the thought of compromises in the quality of presentations from the leading state companies in Adelaide and

Fran Bosley, Glenn Winslade and John Wood in Canberra Opera's Elixir of Love

Melbourne. The extraordinary achievement represented by The Makropulos Affair at this year's Adelaide Festival, and by Death In Venice two years earlier could not have come without a comparably high level of activity month in and month out. And that requires government subsidy, both federal and state.

**ACT**

**CANBERRA OPERA**

Canberra Theatre (497600): Peter Grimes by Benjamin Britten; conductor, Donald Hollier; producer, John Tasker; designer, Fiona Reilly; with Robert Gard, Anne Brabin-Smith, Neil Easton, Grahame McFarlane, Margaret Sim. May 28, 29.

**VIC**

**THE AUSTRALIAN OPERA**

Princes Theatre (6622911): Madama Butterfly by Puccini (in Italian); conductor, William Reid; producer, John Copley; designers, Henry Bardon (sets) and Michael Stennett (costumes); with Rhonda Bruce or Lynne Cantlon, Kathleen Moore, Anson Austin or Lamberto Furian, Gregory Yurisich or Raymond Myers. May 1, 4, 5, 14, 18. La Boheme by Puccini (in Italian); conductors, Carlo Felice Cillario and William Reid; producer, Andrew Sinclair; designer, Tom Lingwood; with Lorraine Nawa Jones or Glens Fowles, Jennifer McGregor or Rhonda Bruce, Richard Greager or Anson Austin. May 3, 6, 8. Puccini's Tristia; conductor, Carlo Felice Cillario; producer, Moffat Oxenbould; designer, Desmond Digby. Il Trabario; with Etela Piha, John Sydoney, John Shaw. Suor Angelica; with Marie Landis, Lauris Elms. Gianni Scicchi; with Angela Denning, Anne Maree Mcdonald, Jennifer Bermingham, Judith Saibba, Rosina Raisbeck, Paul Ferris, Graeme Ewer, Ronald MacConaghi, Robert Eddie, Alan Light, Donald Soloman. May 13, 15, 19, 21, 24, 26.

**VICTORIA STATE OPERA**


**WA**

**WA OPERA COMPANY**

His Majesty's Theatre (3216288): Rigoletto by Verdi, musical director, Gerald Krug; Producer, Michael Beauchamp; choreographer, Lindy Hume; with John Wood, Anthony Benfell, Geoffrey Harris, Merlyn Quaife. Judith Henley and the WA Arts Orchestra. To May 15.

56 THEATRE AUSTRALIA MAY 1982
"Poor little blighter, I should never have had him."

That's what Barry's alcoholic mother said when asked about her son.

But, have him she did. And couldn't look after him.

So, Barnardo's had to look after him instead. It's never easy of course. In Barry's case he was totally uncontrollable at first, always running away, and seemingly bent on suicide. More than once our staff rescued him from the Auburn railway line seconds before the train arrived.

Barry was one of 650 children and families in need that Barnardo's took care of last year, through 11 different welfare programmes in N.S.W. and the A.C.T.

This year Barnardo's desperately need to raise a further one million dollars to continue these vital programmes.

Please send whatever you can afford to Barnardo's using the coupon below.

That way we'll be able to help a lot more children like Barry from going off the rails.

To: Barnardo's, G.P.O. Box 1,000,000 Sydney, NSW 2001
I enclose cheque/money order for $10 □ $20 □ $50 □ or (please fill in amount)
$ __ OR Please charge to my Bankcard No. ______ Expiry Date __________ Signature

Name ___________________________ Address ___________________________ Postcode ___________

Donations of $2 or more are fully tax deductible.

Barnardo's.

THEATRE AUSTRALIA MAY 1982
Far-reaching changes to the running of the Australian Ballet have been recommended in the management's consultants' review commissioned by the company's board of directors.

Its 51 pages of recommendations and observations form a blueprint for the company's future - an optimistic one if a high level of communication between management and performers can be achieved and maintained.

The main thrust of the review is the reinstatement of the artistic management as the company's prime motivator: "We have no doubt that, in a ballet company, the position of artistic director should have predominant focus. It is the position from which the company's artistic inspiration, vision and drive is drawn."

The review does not address itself specifically to the position of Peter Bahen, the Australian Ballet Administrator, whose sacking was called for by the dancers when they went on strike last year. But its recommendations include changes that would narrow the power base of the company's administrator considerably from that which Mr Bahen has enjoyed for nearly a decade.

A chart showing the recommended organisation structure not only divides the responsibility of artistic and administrative staff, but indicates separate reporting lines for the artistic director and the administrator, each of them going direct to the board through an executive committee. Currently, the administrator has full responsibility for the company's operations.

Another recommendation is that the position of company secretary should not be held by the chief executive of the company, as it is presently by Mr Bahen. Strengthening and reinforcing of the current appointment as that dual role, preference was given for the two positions to be divided: "The company secretary is the chief administrative officer of a company, and reports to the board. He must act, if need be, independently of the chief executive officer to protect the board in the discharge of its statutory obligations."

The tone of the report is positive. Criticism of the recent past is made more by implication than in so many words. The strongest statement appears to be: "We must emphasise that improvements are overdue and changes are necessary." Beyond that, the sheer numbers of recommended changes speak for themselves.

Patience and commitment from dancers, management and board are asked for: "We are convinced that, unless there is an early renewal of team effort and a return to the realisation that the Australian Ballet's standards are not achievable by one group alone, no real improvement is in sight."

Members of the board, who have been under a great deal of public criticism, were not given harsh judgement by the report. Some discussion is given to the need for clarification of the role of the board and the aims for future membership. These include the need for people who have "an interest in and commitment to the industry they are directing... (and) wide experience in the arts or theatre or business", providing a spread of age groups, geographic locations and ethnic backgrounds. Dancer representation on the board was achieved as a result of last year's strike.

Other recommendations include the provision of one person as artistic director - important in light of continuing rumours that two might share this onerous job, meetings once a month or more between dancers, administrative artistic staff, constant reviews of the required number of performers, and the possibility of committees being set up within the board structure.

At the time of writing, the review was being discussed by the AB board, management and staff. But its effects were already being noticed. Members of the press were circulated with the review on its release (more readily than members of the company, which was unfortunate), and dance reviewers were flown in by the company from around the country to comment on the program of new works which opened the company's 1982 Sydney subscription season. The printed program for this omitted the administrator's introduction, a controversial item for a long while, and carried pages of information about the artistic side of the company's operation.

Whether the changes are merely cosmetic remains to be seen.

BRIEFLY...

Talented young Tristan Borrer, just turned 17, is taking up his $4,000 Peter Stuyvesant Scholarship at the Royal Ballet School in London on the advice of his teachers, Joan and Monica Halliday, of Sydney.

Meanwhile in Melbourne, 17-year-old Josephine Smoulders elected to use her $1,000 Royal Academy of Dancing scholarship to continue her studies at the Victorian College of the Arts, where the School of Dance is run by Anne Woolliams. Permission to do this was given by the RAD after assessing the college's standards; in the past, winners of its student scholarship have had to take up studies in London.

Danilo Radojevic and Chrisa Keramidas, former Australian Ballet members, now doing outstandingly well with American Ballet Theatre, made a flying trip home in March to see their families in Melbourne and Sydney in the fortnight's break following an ABT tour that concluded in Los Angeles. Let's hope we have them back to dance some time...

The Australian Dance Theatre is taking nine works overseas for a season at London's Sadlers Wells Theatre between June 15 and 26, followed by performances at festivals in Cologne, Athens and Dubrovnik.

Peter Brinson, dance writer and evangelist, will leave his post as Director of the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation's UK branch in October after more than a decade. He will become principal lecturer in the sociology of dance, and head of the Department of Research and Community Development at the Laban Centre for Movement and Dance in South London.
GLEN TETLEY

talks to Jill Sykes

Glen Tetley, the choreographer, doesn't forget the advice that Sir Frederick Ashton once gave him: "Well, my dear, there is an old saying that you can't be both whore and madame."

The allusion was to all the years that Tetley spent trying to perform and choreograph, and then, between 1974 and 1976, combining choreography with directing the Stuttgart Ballet. "It is all I can handle just to try to be a good choreographer," he said cheerfully in Sydney recently.

He has every reason to be cheerful as he continues to be in demand around the world, both to create new works and revive old ones. He was back in Australia after nearly a decade to put the finishing touches to Bronwen Curry's staging of his Rite of Spring for the Australian Ballet. It was one of the works which opened the company's 1982 subscription season in Sydney, and will be seen later this year in Brisbane and Melbourne.

Tetley has not long completed a new Firebird for the Royal Danish Ballet, which also has his Voluntaries, Greening and Rite of Spring in its repertoire. His Dances of Albion for the Royal Ballet made him the first non-British recipient of the Elizabeth II Coronation Award. The Tempest, which he choreographed in 1978, will open the Scandinavian ballet season in New York next October. When he left Australia, it was to stage Voluntaries for the Paris Opera Ballet.

His Rite of Spring, which he choreographed in the mid-seventies, doesn't follow the tradition begun by Nijinsky of offering a female sacrifice. His Chosen One is a muscular male,
and the work’s mingling of mystic and religious symbolism has the sophisticated academic tone that follows of Tetley’s work have come to expect.

“I am not interested in seeing a virgin dancing herself to death,” he said. “I wanted my Rite to be a dance of regeneration. In the original Russian, the reference is only to the Chosen One. It doesn’t specify a female virgin.

“I have always been interested in comparative religion and archaeology, and in so many of the primitive religions — one could even include Christianity — the god of spring, the sacrifice, is male. Sometimes it is combined: the male takes on a female identity, as in Aztec rites.”

Another of his inspirations for this work came from the T S Eliot poem, Gerontion. He quoted from it: “‘In the juvenescence of the year came Christ the tiger...’ I thought Wow! That’s a lot of images coming together there.”

Tetley is one of those rare choreographers who like to bring more than visual and dramatic content to their work. Having been lucky enough to be dance reviewing in London as he helped chart the Ballet Rambert through its new growth phase in the late sixties, I son learned to look deeper than the action for the possibilities of meaning behind it. Peter Brinson and Clement Crisp describe that potential perfectly in the Pan Book of Ballet and Dance:

“In many Tetley works we have been aware of the layers of meaning which invest his choreography; symbols, relationships, which provide an undercurrent of correspondences that we can accept or reject as we choose, but which are self-generating from Tetley’s own wide-ranging sensibilities.”

The breadth of Tetley’s stylistic and thematic range may have something to do with the fact that he was 20 and a medical student before he decided to train as a dancer. “I came in late and thought, ‘I am going to get the best of everything I can grab’”, he recalled in Sydney. And he certainly chose some outstanding teachers. Antony Tudor and Margaret Craske instructed him in classical technique, while Martha Graham and Hanya Holm inspired him with the possibilities of modern dance: “The biggest push to me creatively came from my classes with Hanya.”

Because he did a lot of work with the Martha Graham Company, some people pigeon-holed him into modern dance. But he also appeared as a principal dancer for American Ballet Theatre, partnering such famous dancers as Maria Tallchief, Lupe Serrano and Toni Lander.

The confusion about his background may have arisen because his early choreography indicated such an individual selection of movement influences, and for a long time, he didn’t devise any point work for his dancers.

“I think the movement sources I was feeling were in a more contemporary direction,” he said. “When you work with any dancer, you have to get inside their bodies to feel how they are going to move, and I didn’t want to use the classical vocabulary until it came naturally. As I began to be asked to choreograph for classical companies, I grew to feel more experienced and confident about working in that style. I love the added stretch to line that point gives. There is a very special thing that it does.

“At first I thought, ‘I am only going to use point if an audience doesn’t realise the dancer is on point.’ It started gradually. Then, when I took over Stuttgart and worked with Marcia Haydee, whose best line is on point, I used it more often. I felt I was developing a contemporary classical style — to me it’s the one language.”

Gemini, which Tetley created for the Australian Ballet in 1973, was one of the earliest works in which he put his female dancers on point. He has a great affection for that great ballet, and feels that it still belongs to Australia and its national company, despite the performances of its given overseas by such outstanding companies as Stuttgart and American Ballet Theatre since then.

During our conversation, I couldn’t resist asking after Tetley’s wirehaired dachshunds, Fratello and Tartufo, who became almost as well-known in the dance world as their master. Alas, they died at a canine old age which only humans in undisturbed villages at dizzy altitudes manage to achieve.

Tetley has a rich and affectionate collection of stories about them and their commuting lives between his homes in New York and Italy. He and a friend would travel separately in economy and first class, each with the one dog allowed in that section of the cabin on the flight.

For example, there was the time an air hostess approached him and asked if he knew the gentleman travelling in a car, surveying the Atlantic.

All of this may seem to have nothing to do with dance — except that in the process of recounting a few anecdotes, Tetley mentioned that he had learned so much about movement from his dogs. Fratello, he said, inspired his choreography for the calculating, wordly-wise Brighella in one of his earliest and most memorable works, Pierrot Lunaire. Now you don’t get information like that in scholarly reference books...
Pina Bausch, ADT and SDC

by Bill Shoubridge

For my money, the Wuppertal Dance Theatre was the highlight of the 1982 Adelaide Festival, and for many others too, judging by opinions canvassed. Be that as it may, they threw quite a few people for a loop, the balletomane as well as the "straight" theatre crowd.

They were terse, especially the drama critics, as they attempted to grapple with the work's logistics, bleating about the length, slowness and repetitiveness, especially in Kontakthof. Mind you, sitting in a theatre something akin to a combustion stove, one could sympathise.

But if one could take the time to think out the raison d'être of the Wuppertal company, all of the "faults" could be seen to be of deliberate design. For all its adventurous enquiry into dance and theatre, it is one of the most disciplined of groups, with its works scaled and bevelled into strict formalistic structures.

In Kontakthof, it was Pina Bausch's intention to take the audience out of the scheme of a "theatre" presentation and she achieves this in two ways.

Firstly by placing the performance in a setting conducive and "real" to the terms of the work. Kontakthof is initially about the rituals and mannerisms inherent in a public meeting place, in this case a dance hall, and that is why the work went on at the Thebarton Town Hall, an erstwhile dance hall.

Secondly she wants to break down the "them and us" barriers inherent in a production. To start with, audiences, over-entertained as they are, tend to see things "big"; theatre intensifying life and all that.

What she wanted to do was scale down the audience's field and depth of vision, hence the slowness and the repetitions. There were times when one could say to oneself, "if they do that gesture once more I'll scream". One searched intently for a change and when that (small) change came one's attention was rivetted on it. It was a gesture that normally one could see anywhere, but put into this sort of time-stretch, it became a revelation.

Having achieved this microscope-slide field of vision Pina Bausch could continue — and she did — the gestures of love that turn to gestures of detestation, fear, near, against each other, snapping out "head, shoulder, knee, leg" was not so much a mechanical horse, and so on. The point was, as much to make the audience appreciate what was going on around the repetition, as to make it aware of the formalistic device, in fact some aspects of Kontakthof are as formal as a classical divertissement.
"dancing" going on at the Festival, in the guise of the Australian Dance Theatre's performance of While We Watched, Jonathan Taylor's latest full length work.

One thing is certain, Taylor is a man of the theatre; he creates his impacts, his dissonances and his discussions for all the theatrical effect that can be drawn from them. While We Watched is a work of pure dance without any overt "dramatic" or narrative tacking, but with a covert sense of drama always pervading it. It is a ballet built on that great standby of the theatre, tension and conflict.

Never have I seen the ADT dancers so powerfully extended and theatrically exposed, but exposed by virtue of the expressiveness of their dancing and the contrasts of what they are given to dance.

While We Watched is in some ways an elaboration on Taylor's previous Transfigured Night. Ray Cook's cauldron of quotations that make up his big orchestral score is a fine backdrop to the sweeping lifts, edgy partnering, bounding ensembles and soaring solos that pepper this ballet.

However, while it is perfect in its place, giving that same sense of neurotic tumult as does the 3rd movement of Berio's Sinfonia, it wears itself out dramatically and musically for the same reasons that Taylor's choreography wears itself out.

The contrasts are always too big.

While there are some finely crafted ensembles in the work, especially in Part 1, it relies too much at times on the dramatic impact inherent in extreme dynamics. Small, complex pas de deux and solos nervous or lyrical by turns are repeatedly swept up and away by great bounding group pieces that have the sweep and grandeur of waves from the seas. These group moments are, more often than not, grandeur of waves from the seas. These group pieces that have the sweep and the virtuoso of the dancers to make them so effective and fluid.

It gives an exhilaration to start with, but after a while, these sweeps become wearisome. Or at least they would if it weren't for the serene, calm and statuary finish to the ballet, with the dancers in a circle, peeling off into the (exposed) wings while the simple white silk hangings disappear into the flies to reveal a bare stage, all set to a peaceful Russian Orthodox chant.

ADT has always been an ensemble company to me, more so than the SDC, and it was so good to see the occasional spotlight given to certain single dancers within the company, especially the two boys in the male pas de deux in Part 1 and the couple in Part 2 in the lovely extended pas de deux (what I would call the Repulsion Waltz). I would like to see more of this underlining in ADT works and a little less facelessness from the company as a whole.

Space precludes a long analysis of the SDC's New Additions 2, which is a pity because it has in Barry Moreland's Mansions a lovely neoclassic ballet of craftsmanlike construction and in Murphy's Hate a vibrant, powerful piece of theatre. In Graham Watson's Lm514, though, a ballet about a robot rebelling against her controllers and trying to have good time, I'm not sure what it has, but it isn't very interesting. Perhaps Mr Watson has been choreographing too many commercials, because it has in Barry Moreland's Barry Moreland, on the other hand, has remained in his genre country of Bach and lightly flavoured abstract dance and it is a welcome tonic after the heavy stuff of the Adelaide Festival. To call it craftsmanlike is to give it high praise. Moreland leads the interest through a close-packed weave of ensemble and pas de deux work and he has, like Balanchine, illuminated his music by virtue of the clarity of his design. It is a work however that will need repeated viewings to reveal its detail.

I don't think however I could bear too many viewings of Murphy's Hate. While there is a hard, gnashing edge to his choreography, it is at times too messy, repetitive and over reminiscent of Murphy stuff we've seen before. He has also fallen into the same trap that a lot of choreographers fall into when trying to create a strong physical emotion on stage, they mimic it literally instead of trying to illuminate it in an allegoric way.

Thus in a ballet about hate we have lots of frantic running about, sharp jagging angles in the duet work and a morass of flailing arms and legs, finishing with paint being thrown at the audience (stopped only by the clear plastic curtain). Trouble is it looks a little empty and artsy, reminiscent at times of the bad days of the Ballets Russes when they tried to bring in outside talent (Picasso, Braque, Satie) to create in design and sound what was lacking in choreographic invention.

Be that as it may, there is plenty of good stuff to salvage from this work and when one considers the masterpiece of New Additions 1, Homelands, Graeme Murphy has served his company, dancers and audiences extremely well this time around.

The Australian Ballet's opening programs for 1982 at the Sydney Opera House will be reviewed in the next issue.

WA Ballet at the Maj
by Miranda Sadka

Skill, stamina and versatility are the ingredients that made up the WA Ballet Company's first 1982 season at His Majesty's Theatre in Perth.

It was a sophisticated evening of dance that ranged from the complex moods of...
Garth Welch’s *Images* to the exaggerated romanticism of his one-act *Raymonda*, but despite this imaginative offering, Perth audiences stayed away in droves.

Has ballet in Perth reached the stage where it is seen only as pre-Christmas pantomime-style entertainment? The success of past productions of the ilk of *Peter Pan* and *Cinderella* would lead one to this unhappy conclusion.

Yet from the viewpoint of sheer artistic merit, the recent season deserved support. It showed the company as one of professional standing on the national scene. Judicial casting made the most of the differing moods of each of the five one-act ballets presented.

Barry Moreland’s *Spirals*, which opened the program, is a work of great lyric beauty demanding control and precision dancing from the performers. Choreographed for the company, it takes advantage of the dancers’ powerful blend of vitality and grace.

A touch of oriental mysticism came with Walter Bourke’s *Paradise Garden*, a sensuous ballet set to Ravi Shankar’s sitar music. Joanne Munday captured the quicksilver lightness of the bird of paradise, (although some of her pirouettes needed greater definition), and Stephen Rowe supported her strongly as the earthbound hunter.

The third ballet, Ray Powell’s *One in Five* is a whimsical piece of innocent mischief set to Strauss. Four male clowns vie for the attention of their coquetish female colleague and beguile the audience with their antics. Although the mood is light-hearted and allows the dancers to indulge in a certain amount of drollery, the ballet is technically demanding and the footwork of the male dancers was at times not up to scratch.

The fourth curtain opened to a hypnotic contemporary ballet by the company’s Artistic Director, Garth Welch. *Images* is a compelling piece of choreography which explores the moods and rhythms of the Rachmaninov music as its strange angular patterns melt into sinuous movement. Some outstanding solo and pas de deux work came from Michele Ryan who combined a rock hard technique with an almost boneless fluidity of the torso and upper limbs. Tony Tamburri was an excellent foil with the clean lines of his dancing and fine port de bras.

The evening’s finale came with Mr Welch’s one-act version of the Russian classic, *Raymonda*. In its original three-act format, the ballet is an unashamedly illogical fairytale in the true nineteenth century tradition. Mr Welch has eliminated much of the usual padding of processions, dream sequences and the like, to give a well-integrated series of solo and ensemble sequences that move smoothly to the happy-ever-after conclusion.

However, along with the tinselled trappings, a little of the magic has also died. Despite William Dowd’s extravagant costumes in their rich autumn colours, the wide His Majesty’s stage looks bare without the bands of courtiers and visiting potentates that normally swell the ranks of such a ballet. Such defects can only be overcome by a big company with a strong corps of dancers on which to call and the WA company managed to give a refreshing performance with the skeletal cast at its command.

Maggie Lorraine was a delicate and sure-footed Raymonda, the brittle fragility of her performance contrasting with the studied movements of the courtiers and the leashed passion of the Saracen entourage. She was strongly partnered by Timothy Storey as the medieval knight who returns from the Crusades to claim her as his bride.

For those who were lured to His Majesty’s during the season, it was a challenging and satisfying evening of dance, but the disastrous attendance figures do not auger well for the future of ballet in this state.

Unless Perth audiences realise that dance is more than tutus and toe-shoes and a fairy-tale plot, we will be reduced to amateur productions that lack either the courage or the imagination to venture outside the boundaries of nostalgia.
all the soap opera cosiness of some of the exchanges there were still enough moments to persuade me that a slightly bolder (not sensational) dramatic treatment might pay dividends.

Much of the play's success was attributable to the performances, with Dennis Olsen managing to combine manic energy and sombre reflectiveness in his characterisation while also suggesting Grainger's extravert rumbustiousness without turning it into a mid-century anticipation of boorish ockerism. Contrary to what one might think, playing a character constantly on the move and full of untiring exuberance, can often be more enervating for the audience than the performer. This was never the case in Olsen's confident yet never indulgent performance. (However, fine pianist that he is, he tends to take some of his solos too fast for comfort: very few concert pianists can play Grainger's apparently straightforward pieces at the speed he took them!).

Daphne Grey's Rose was equally convincing, though more hampered by the writing's occasional lapses into triteness. Yet she too resisted the temptation to play up the part and, especially in her later scenes, convincingly caught the pathetic dignity of Rose at the end of her life — for all her lapses into hysteria and mania.

Debbie Little and Patrick Frost were the other members of a strong quartet: the former confident and in particular presenting Grainger's first fiancee, Margot, with due attention to her attractiveness, sensitivity and ultimate confusion over what Grainger expected of her. The Adelaide theatre scene will be much the poorer for her absence as, over the past two years, she has offered some vivid performances.

John Noble's direction was precise, allowing the characters room for development while keeping a brisk pace. The set however, seemed over-naturalistic: a few props and changes in lighting would have been both more effective and less comfortably domestic.

**A Map of the World** by David Hare. Sydney Theatre Company, Adelaide Festival. Opened March 6, 1982. Director, David Hare; Designers, Eamon D'Arcy and Hayden Griffin; Lighting, Rory Dempster; Music, Mick Bicat; Stage Manager, Julie Warn. Cast: Roshan Seth, Robert Grubb, Penny Downie, Sheila Scott-Wilkinson, Peter Whitford, Tim Robertson, Desire Vincent, Hugo Weaving, Michael O'Neill, Alex Pinder, Andrea Moor, Ramesh Ayyar, Dan Mitchell, Bill Summers, David Grant, Prina Bloch, Nicholas Lidstone. (Professional).


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**THEATRE AUSTRALIA MAY 1982**

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**THESPIA'S PRIZE CROSSWORD NO. 41**

Name ........................................
Address ........................................ P/code ............

Last month's winner was S Kingham, Nelson's Bay NSW. The first correct entry to be drawn on May 31 will win a free subscription to TA.

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**ACROSS**

8. Repeater scrambled in the wood (4,4)
9. You see endless fat of the throat, we hear (6)
10. Wrapped round model plied with alcohol (6)
11. Categorised boy hanging around the beauty (8)
12. Leave out point of rigid argument (4)
13. Trick church with nothing laid out in shape (10)
15. Type of book writer noted for classy at home (7)
16. Maybe these villains won't burn well! (3,4)
18. Digger to go in with damaged tool (10)
19. Take nothing from egg-shaped poet (4)
20. It adjoins the worker round me with one objection (8)
22. Dance to quieten me with two grand. Why? (6)
23. Uproar because you are involved in warning, apparently (6)
24. German noblemen choose alternatives

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**DOWN**

1. Communist writer meets redhead in "The Ensign" (3,5,3,4)
2. There's a change — training's at four (15)
3. Prophesy before the Word? (10)
4. Payment to Heather out of sentiment (7)
5. Separating measure from weight makes one speechless (4)
6. Investment venue constructing high life (8,7)
7. Cunningly I lodge and marry Emma, a lady of letters (4,4,7)
14. Eruptions brought on by temperature and right combustion remains (4,6)
17. Idle talk about milliner (7)
19. Fair model leaves the do (4)