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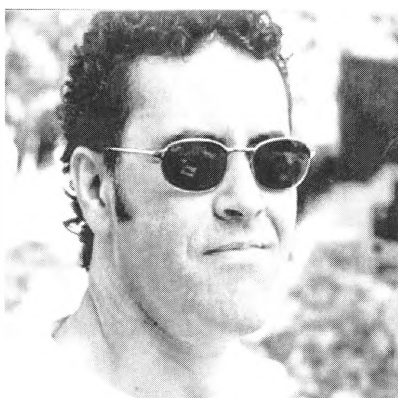
Abstract

In ways that had not occurred to me previously, I have discovered that having one's own will can be terrifying at times and yet at others can be totally liberating. Although not happening as quickly as they might have liked, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander performance arts practitioners of disciplines that range from light and sound through to design, directing and acting, are becoming involved in a movement within Indigenous performing arts communities that supports young Aboriginal people in the exercise of their own will. Indigenous artists are developing a 'voice' of their own.

ERNIE BLACKMORE

In Conservation with David Milroy: Australian National Playwrights' Conference, Australian National University, Canberra [April 28 2002]

In ways that had not occurred to me previously, I have discovered that having one's own will can be terrifying at times and yet at others can be totally liberating. Although not happening as quickly as they might have liked, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander performance arts practitioners of disciplines that range from light and sound through to design, directing and acting, are becoming involved in a movement within Indigenous performing arts communities that supports young Aboriginal people in the exercise of their



own will. Indigenous artists are developing a 'voice' of their own. This is a 'voice' that is free from the supposed performance constraints of earlier plays such as Jack Davis' *No Sugar* (1986)¹ and *The Dreamers* (1982)², and Kevin Gilbert's *Cherry Pickers* (1991)³, and certainly free from the infusion of non-Indigenous knowledge and dramaturgy of previous times (an infusion which still exists and will continue to exist until there are dramaturges from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander backgrounds). It could be argued that Davis and Gilbert and others, including the likes of Brian Syron, who having been overseas and returned to Australia with a vision of a 'Black Theatre', saw and believed that perhaps one way, if not the only way, forward in the re-telling of Aboriginal history at that time — from the late 1960s through to the mid 1990s — was to adopt European style theatre practices and have their work displayed in mainstream theatres. Their strategy was a success and they worked hard to see their theatre performed on stages both across the nation and the world. The work of Australia's earlier Indigenous playwrights, actors, directors and so forth, was, and still is, a success. The work of these artists was powerful in its own right and formed the basis for future work by Australia's contemporary Indigenous playwrights and other theatre arts practitioners. For Brian Syron, the formation

of what is now the Australian National Playwrights' Conference — styled on the successful US National Playwrights' Conference and which is held annually — was a dream fulfilled prior to his death in 1992.

Today there is a new breed of independent professionals in Indigenous theatre, including the likes of playwrights Jane Harrison, Jarod Thomas, and Deborah Mailman; and directors, Wesley Enoch and Nadine McDonald and David Milroy, who in concert with other theatre professionals, are working to help bridge the gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples everywhere. All of these people — indigenous artists in traditional and rural Australia as well as in the contemporary urban environment — have a huge stake in the betterment of Indigenous theatre, literature and film. They are forging ahead in the retelling of history and in the installation of contemporary plays in mainstream live theatre. Within the theatrical and cinematic environments, they are collaborating in a cross pollination of actors, writers and technicians who are working on storytelling processes and building a body of new work upon which Indigenous theatre and literature can grow.

As a result of this current work and the formation of the Alliance of Indigenous Theatre Arts Practitioners there is a forward movement in Indigenous theatre. There is an awareness of 'something' — a new 'front line' that will take 'Indigenous Theatre' to another level of understanding. One man pro-active in this work and who, although quietly spoken, is persuasive in his presentations within both Yirra Yaakin Noongar Theatre and the Indigenous performance arts community, is David Milroy.

David Milroy has worked in theatre for many years as a director, musician and songwriter for various companies on a number of productions including *Sister Girl* and *Deadheat* (Black Swan); *Wild Cat Falling* (Perth Theatre Company); *No Shame* (Mainstream Theatre). Currently he is Artistic Director of Yirra Yaakin Noongar Theatre, in Perth where he has produced a series of works including *Solid⁴*, *Aliwa⁵*, *Alice⁶*, *King Hit* (finalist in the 2001 Premier's Literature Awards, W.A.) and *Runamuk*. His plays for young people include *Booyi Koora Koora* and *Djildjit*. In 1999 David directed my play *Buckley's Hope* at both the Australian National Playwrights' Conference, [ANPC] in Canberra and then later in the same year as part of the US National Playwrights' Conference at the Eugene O'Neill Theater Complex in Waterford, Connecticut (an ANPC initiative). David is currently working on two new plays, *Own Worst Enemy* and *Barking Gecko* and developing a number of new works by other Aboriginal writers. I interviewed David at the Australian National Playwrights Conference in Canberra in April 2002.

EB *So David, as you are heading up what is arguably one of the most successful Indigenous theatre companies in Australia today and there is a lot you have already contributed to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people's theatre and performance art right across Australia, I want to place on the*

public record some of your insights and dreams for both Yirra Yaakin Noongar Theatre and the national push in Indigenous performing arts, an industry in which you enjoy almost legendary status.

DM I hope that I can live up to those expectations.

EB *I reckon you will and in the case of the future I'd like to hear from you and about your vision for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander theatre arts, the playwrights, the actors and other practitioners and their work in contemporary Australia.*

DM You don't want much.

EB *Well let's take it in small bites. I'd prefer to simply open this up to you, more in discussion rather than go through a long list of prepared questions.*

DM I don't have a problem with that.

EB *I have spoken to you before about the lack of Australian Indigenous performance companies and opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander performance artists and, by way of contrast, the way in which Yirra Yaakin Noongar Theatre Company seems to be building a history of its own. Can we start with some background information, a short history of the company or, if you prefer, just your involvement with the company.*

DM Well, the basic history of Yirra Yaakin? I'll have to think about this for a moment.

EB *And before I forget, you have been talking about what seems to be an interesting concept and new initiative in a project working with some of the younger people in the Yirra Yaakin Theatre community.*

DM Let's talk to that commitment first then and how I see things at the moment. It seems to me that every Indigenous theatre company operating today — and there are basically only three, Ilbjerri in Melbourne, Kooemba Jdarra in Brisbane, and ourselves — is enmeshed in what I call catch up theatre. It's as if we're writing history, all the time, we're regurgitating stories. That's not to say they aren't important stories because they are, very important. However, it's like we're writing and then re-writing Aboriginal history.... No! It's as if we're trying to replace one history with another. A history from the Indigenous people's point of view. One that hasn't been taught. And, I believe it's an important role that theatre plays in doing that, although there are a lot of the young people coming up through the company that don't get the opportunity to speak out. It's almost like they're shackled by their Aboriginality at times. They step into theatre and they think or believe they have to fit into these roles that we've created with this catch up theatre or historical theatre that we do. I believe we've got to

move beyond that with a lot of these young fellas coming through, allow them to be artists as well. If they want to write about their history that's good, but I'm interested in developing a project where we get three or four, young and talented Aboriginal theatre artists and let them produce their own work. They need a space where they can develop their own play without any shackles of, 'it has to be this' or 'because we're an Aboriginal theatre company it has to be about blackfellas'. It doesn't have to be you know.

EB *Do you see this as applying only to urban Aboriginal artists or are all Indigenous artists doing this as well?*

DM Well both really. I'd like to think the Company has set the stage with a freedom, a total freedom, to just create without being caught up in the already established kind of theatre such as the historical plays or plays that deal with Aboriginal issues and stuff like that. So, I was pretty pleased when we got funding to do that. I know the kids are very happy. I mean it may be that they come around and actually do plays that are about Aboriginal issues but I just wanted to give them that opportunity. It doesn't have to be anything, they can do whatever they want.

EB *I'm sure it will be interesting to see what eventuates from this initiative. It may be that in three to five years we'll be reaping the benefits of new and exciting ways of doing theatre from the Blackman's perspective. However, about some of the history of Yirra Yaakin Noongar Theatre?*

DM It started out in the early '90s. What happened was, although I wasn't around Yirra Yaakin at the time when they did a play called *Land Lovers*⁷ — I think it might have been written by Jack Davis, I'm not sure — they got Paul Macleay, who had been in youth theatre at Canecutters (a youth theatre in Queensland's cane fields) to run the project. It had young Aboriginal actors in it and stuff, and out of it came a pretty good play. The company had had to organise that by doing workshops down in Perth's outer southern suburb of Kwinana and so on. It was a fairly difficult project with the involvement of Indigenous issues and actors. In the process they decided that they didn't have the ability to be working with Aboriginal kids and that they didn't have the sort of skills or cultural knowledge to go about it and felt it should be Aboriginal people teaching those kids. So, under their wings, they set up a sort of Aboriginal structure — not a theatre company at that stage — that tried to teach skills to young Aboriginal people. These workshops formed into a small youth theatre company which was called Yirra Yaakin Youth Theatre.

EB *What exactly has been your involvement in the theatre?*



Final scene from Buckley's *Hope* by Ernie Blackmore, as performed at the US National Playwrights' Conference, Eugene O'Neill Theater Center, Waterford, Connecticut. From left to right: Uncle (Kelton Pell), Annie (Trish Morton-Thomas), Maree (Kylie Belling), and Lydia (Ursula Yovich).

DM At the time I was doing musical workshops for them, then someone left and Yirra Yaakin brought me on board as a workshop trainee. I continued with the musical workshops, all the time learning. Then I started directing a few workshops and later, in about 1995–96, I became artistic director. I decided we needed to move. I felt we needed a complete change in direction. So we broke with the other company, amicably. Everyone was happy with the break. We needed to be on our own and they needed to go their own way as well. We set up camp in East Perth because they were redeveloping the area so you could always get a cheap place. But, we kept getting moved on all the time. It was getting too much. We had to keep changing our letterheads, get new phone numbers, and all those intrusive administration problems that go with under funded groups. Eventually, in frustration, I said we want to do professional theatre not just youth work. You know my whole thing about Aboriginal theatre was that it was not being controlled or written or even produced by Aboriginal peoples. Just stolen from us. My aim was totally to bring it back, make it an issue that other people shouldn't be writing our stuff, you know, it should be written by Aboriginal people. So from that point we came in pretty hard; pretty hard to government; pretty hard to funding bodies; and pretty hard to anyone else we had to deal with on this issue of Indigenous theatre. Slowly we started building up. We started to get and develop our writers, our own writers.

EB *Did you work within the communities or through newspapers like the Koori Mail⁸? Or the radio network.*

DM Within the community mainly. Word of mouth. The fastest form of communication is over the fire with a mug of tea. [laughs] You know how it goes. And I knew a lot of people anyway, just from being in the Arts, and I'd been working here prior to Yirra Yaakin anyway.... So, that's basically how we started up and we haven't looked back really. With every production and every show we do we're getting smarter.

Initially, and to be honest with you, we didn't really know what we were doing. But now it was us making the mistakes, not white fellas, you know? That was the difference. We did some shows that weren't that good but it was us doing it and that was the big difference, and then the opportunities came. We came to the Playwrights' Conferences and so on. I did some pretty 'in your face' things; like I remember going into the office of Western Australia's Minister for the Arts, Mr Foss, and telling him I wanted triennial funding. I'd been told by the W.A. Arts Director that there was no way I was going to get funding but that I could go and see him anyway. The Minister wanted to know why I wanted the funding and I said, 'We want to be a theatre company.' He burst out laughing and said and I quote; 'Oh look, I'll fund you to do your community work as an Aboriginal community organisation and if you want to do theatre that's okay but I think you should just stick to the community work.'

That wasn't that long back, and that funding has now come through. In 2001 we had three shows touring the East Coast and there's more on the way. Do you know what, everyone's busting a gut to get hold of our product so there you go ... [laughs] ...

EB *Which of the plays you've sent to the East Coast are you most excited about?*

DM All of them really although Dallas Widmar's *Aliwa* (2002) has taken on a life of its own and has now toured overseas as well as nationally.

EB *I have personally followed that piece since Dallas and I were at the Playwrights' Conference together in 1999.*

DM It was very much under development at that stage.

EB *And what else?*

DM We had the one hander *Alice*, (2001) in the Melbourne Festival. *Solid* with Ningali Lawford and Kelton Pell (2000) following the International Arts festival went on to tour nationally through Alice Springs, then a small show at Brisbane which was followed by New South Wales and Victoria.

As for *Aliwa*, it had a season at the Belvoir Street Theatre in Sydney, directed by Neil Armfield, then toured overseas.

They're all good shows in their own right. Different and exciting. Dallas's play had taken three years to develop and is now at a stage where it is not only exciting, historical and humorous, it is just plain, good, theatre. So three of our shows on National tour in one year was more than any other company in Western Australia has ever done and we're only a 'pisspot' company. We get funded, but we get funded at half of the lowest funded arts agency in Western Australia. So whatever the lowest funded theatre company gets we get half of that and yet we do twice the output, plus all the community work.

EB *Do you get funding through the Australia Council as well?*

DM Yeah we get funding from them. They've been good actually, the Australia Council.

EB *And you've got this latest work by Mitch Torres?*

DM Yes, *One Day in '67*.⁹ We'll see how the piece develops. But after its successes locally and in Perth I believe it will tour. Mitch Torres is a great artist. She's into film as well as theatre and she's a full time mum as well. I have no idea where she gets her energy.

It's a lot of luck sometimes, and a lot of hard work and we need the writers. We haven't always got the writers.

EB *No?*

DM No! Sometimes it's just tough. At present we may be just going through a lucky streak but I think 'certainty' will eventually happen. Just now some people are a bit sceptical about it. This happens at first but then they realise we're doing good work and attracting talent and we're here to stay. People want to bring their plays to us, they want to work with us and that's been a major shift over the last year or two. It's an encouragement to realise that people are trusting us with their stories and stuff.

EB *What's your footprint like in Western Australia? Like how much of the state do you cover?*

DM When we tour, we tour the whole state at different times. It's a huge ask but this is just a part of my soul and being. It's all encompassing in some ways. I've been the only artistic director they've had so far that from the outset I said I don't want to discriminate. I think Aboriginal people have enough discrimination without us discriminating against one another and that — even though we're called a Noongar Theatre Company — we should have our minds open to do plays by any Aboriginal people in Australia and not just Western Australia. And to that end we've done plays that do

not discriminate against gender or sexuality or anything like that you know. Or age.

EB: *Or age*

DM Yeah ... [laughs] ... well all of those things I've felt it was really important from the outset that the company have a really clear objective on the type of theatre we are open to. There's always been this sort of idea around that because we are Noongars¹⁰ we're not going to do your play. Well, we've proven them wrong. I mean, we've done plays by Kooris, like yourself, we've done Mitch Torres from the Kimberley, and we've done Noongar work of our own. And we feel that we've now got a partnership with Magabala Books in the Kimberley, and after Mitch's play tours we hope that it will be published by Magabala Books.

EB *That's a step forward. There's no money in publishing plays, at least not those which haven't been subject to mainstream performance.*

DM That's true and it will always be a battle.

EB *So, is that the story of Yirra Yaakin?*

DM I guess that's about where the Company's gone.

EB *And David Milroy? Where do you see yourself going in the next five years?*

DM Well. I think as an artist, and as an Artistic Director, there are many things I'd like to do, at least I think I do. Actually there's so much to do. As I have said before, many times, I think Aboriginal theatre was really stolen from the communities. I believe as we get stronger we get more in a position to take it back more; to pull it back. So, I have issues with what I identify as three types of theatre:

One, I call 'Puppet Theatre'. The problem I have with this 'Puppet Theatre' is that of 'whitefellas' writing our plays and directing them and calling it Aboriginal theatre. That is a big issue. I'd love to see that change because right now it's the 'whitefella' is pulling the strings with the 'blackfellas' on stage being jerked around.

Two, there's the other theatre which I call 'catch up' theatre which is what I think we're producing now. I'd like to get to a point where we can still do these things but we can also do other work, other theatre. I want to do things like I was doing with the young kids. They're our future and our responsibility. And I want to do stuff that's not always tied to our Aboriginality and our history. Art for art's sake I guess you'd call it.

And three, this is what I call *Kuta Kuta* — theatre which is sort of make up or fun theatre that I would like to produce. It's made up of theatre stuff, just solely for an Aboriginal audience. It might only be 20 minutes,

30 minutes, or so of slapstick comedy, done and performed in community to people who would normally never go to the theatre. And that's the first part of taking theatre back into the community, and claiming it and developing a new style because that's never been allowed to happen I don't think. I think it's just been 'oh this is interesting' and white companies have grabbed it and they put it up on the stage, nothing goes back into the community.

Community doesn't even go to the theatre or see the stuff and this is mainly because they don't feel like they own it. So, the other thing I'd like to do in five years is do plays that are about and for kids and that are about cultural maintenance.

EB *Are there any grander schemes trying to find a way through the complex personality of David Milroy? Do you have big ambitions?*

DM As an artist in my own right, I am not that keen to take a big production to London, like the West End, or tour Europe or any of that stuff, although it would be very exciting to do that. As Artistic Director of Yirra Yaakin, I'm more interested in making contact with other Indigenous groups that use theatre as a political and/or cultural group and meeting them and seeing whether — how do you say this without sounding as if we're up ourselves, 'cause we ain't — if they're not so good at it we could get in and help. Help and show them how we do it. Or, if they're great at doing what they're doing then we'd like for them to tell us what it is they're doing and how they're doing it. In this way, in this sharing of knowledge and culture and respect, it's like a cultural exchange I guess. That's what I'm really keen to do more than anything. You know, to engage other cultures.

I really think there has been a fire burning in my belly for a very long time. There have to be opportunities for our kids. They're our responsibility and if we don't do something for them, who will? It's as if it has always been that way. I think it goes back to being a kid watching an alcoholic father operate and seeing how my mother or gran and other people were treated. From a very young age I didn't like seeing anyone being hurt or picked on or teased because I'd seen it in my own family. I believe that really instilled in me the instinct to fight, to bounce back and so when I get down and jaded I tend to focus on bigger issues and it helps me get over the real little things. You know, if someone's having a go at you or something didn't turn out right or didn't get funding or ... anyway, I always believe that it's important to surround yourself with good people. Because if you don't you've got no one to catch you when you fall. And believe me there are times when you fall and if you haven't got the people there you'll hit the floor. You'll hit the ground and you won't get up but you know, there's been times in our company when I've been down — right off out there with the fairies and I know people have been right all around me picking up

the pieces and patching it up until I'm strong enough to come back.

It's the same with the company manager too. We've got a really good partnership. There was a time when he was in the same position. He'd just sort of lost his sense of who he was as a person and he was really down and depressed. The company just hung in there and covered for him and he took time off and when he came back he was back with a fury. There was a time when we were both actually ready to give it up and we said no. No way we're giving up. And we decided to reinvent ourselves. We felt like we'd achieved a lot in such a short space of time so what we did was we tried to look at the things we hadn't done. I said we haven't toured the East Coast so we put our minds to it and that was only a year and a half ago.

EB *And now you've done it. You've had three shows touring.*

DM That has revitalised us as artists and managers and it has revitalised the company. I believe that we've all got to do some kind of personal inventory every now and then.

EB *All right. And just finally, can we talk about the future of Indigenous theatre? There has been some talk of an alliance, how do you see that? Is there any hope of seeing this get up and do you think an alliance of performance artists, writers, directors, technicians and whoever will make a change?*

DM I think.... Oh, I don't know how to say this.

EB *You can have this off the record....*

DM No, not at all. There's no reason to hide. I think the alliance is something that should have happened two or three years ago. That was when we first started to talk about it and there was such a desire to do it, but unfortunately because of politics with the Aboriginal Playwrights' Conference, the alliance was destroyed along with the conference really. And by saying that I'm not trying to stir up ill feelings. What was done was done and it's finished.

EB *So it's taken this amount of time to bounce back?*

DM Yeah. But I think those issues that I've talked about, earlier, about the three types of theatre, I think they are the very issues that can be discussed at the alliance. For instance let's look at who is in control of Aboriginal theatre. Then there is the notion of who we're performing for. Are we encouraging groups to take the theatre back into communities? And the alliance can tackle things about how we get young people into the industry and doing their own material and learning the skills they need to succeed.

EB *And about protocols and applying those protocols instead of going to*

consultants who know nothing about the communities. We need the recognition of all Aboriginal people, we need to respect one another and this land we perform on and all those sorts of things. We need to come to understand one another and to have respect for the protocols as they apply to communities.

DM Yeah. Most definitely. I also think theatre or performing arts or music or whatever, is the one device that seems to cut through the bullshit in either community politics or any sort of politics. It's the one thing that really can engage a community and bring it together. You wouldn't think it the way artists fight sometimes but I think, and you know because you've seen it at work with your own play, both here and in the United States, I've seen it work many times, that it can be the glue.

EB *Sure we fight and I think we always will because we enjoy it, but in the context of how we're all competing against one another for a share of the pie. We know this and we acknowledge it and we still keep competing, but that doesn't stop us from respecting one another or understanding, and I think that's the nub of trying to maintain those relationships.*

DM Let's talk about funding. If we got no funding from whoever in the last round I wouldn't have been angry. I would have been disappointed because we would have had to find the money somewhere else, and that's not easy. We don't try and beat ourselves up asking, 'why did so and so get it and I didn't'. It's just good that someone's getting funded and they're doing good with it, that's great.

EB *Do you think an Indigenous Playwrights' Conference could be put in place that would convene say every three years? Or, even every two years?*

DM Mm. I think an alliance is the answer to that question. If we're smart about it, and if we don't try and soak up funds for an alliance and try and set up some sort of infrastructure that is supported by the existing Aboriginal theatre companies by providing the day to day tasks. If we can avoid setting up an office we don't need that eats up scarce funds, I believe we can achieve a great deal. For instance, if we could keep the fire burning in our bellies and face up to the problems that are in the industry and we talk about those things at a national level say twice a year, then the alliance can become a very powerful thing. It's the way in which we can deal and make sense of issues as they come up — issues that are of a national concern for Aboriginal theatre. If we've got an alliance, say, the Aboriginal Theatre Alliance, who can respond as a group that's not in government but that's outside of government — you know, something from which we only need to get one or two comments in *The Australian* each year, it's

amazing just how much clout and power you can have.

EB *How do you see this alliance working?*

DM First and foremost for the benefit of the overall Aboriginal community. I think we ought to have a representative from each state, even if they don't have a theatre, for instance Tasmania and South Australia, it doesn't matter. All they need is someone who's a writer or someone who's a storyteller or whatever. Just so long as they are prepared to represent their state and get them on the alliance.

EB *It would be good to have an Aboriginal community theatre in Sydney but we don't have one at present and we've survived a long time without one*

DM I don't know if it will survive forever without it but I think the next port of call is Adelaide. When they can get over all the internal community stuff, it will definitely be the next place where it's bloom and grow ... and I've heard this talk about Darwin. But we're getting ahead of ourselves. The alliance needs to become a reality and then grow slowly. And if we can base a playwrights' conference this will support the uptake of an Indigenous theatre out there competing with mainstream theatre.

EB *That's good; call a National Black Playwrights' Conference in Adelaide every second year. When you look at the geographical placement of South Australia, it's as if no one has to travel too far, unlike as if it was placed in Sydney or Melbourne.*

DM And I believe there is a depth of talent there. Look at Jarod Thomas, he's just a young man with a future. You said you were going to interview Robert Crompton. I think Robert's such a talent: he can act, he can sing and he's a great songwriter. I said to Rob, you don't always have to see yourself as an actor. He could direct which could lead into being an artistic director of a company on that side of things. That's what we need, those people, there's plenty of actors and we need to see younger people who've got the experience as actors moving into maybe other areas. You know what it's like. Once an actor and you've been bitten by a bug and I think there's a lot of actors that would make good directors or dramaturges and god knows we need dramaturges. There are all sorts of things to do.

EB *Yeah.*

DM So, that's what I'd like to see happen, you know the more skilled people we have in those positions that are Aboriginal the more we gain back control of our industry. It's amazing how much we can do. There are doctors now that are going through where previously there had hardly been any Aboriginal doctors. There's quite a few who are lawyers and all that sort of

stuff, the problem is that it hasn't happened in theatre really. We haven't seen as many kids coming through that have those directing skills and stage management skills that we need. It's easy to get Aboriginal people involved in the artistic side but when it comes to technical...

EB *Is it a lot harder?*

DM Sure. Tech's stuff is hard, stage management and lighting and sound, they're all hard, but not impossible. It's about getting the vision. A good lighting person is as valuable as any other person in the theatre. And sometimes even more. The bottom line is we need to remember as we try and work together that we are important to ourselves, to our colleagues and to the communities we represent.

EB *I need to wrap this up and I'd like to thank you for your time and your candour. It has been good catching up with you.*

NOTES

- ¹ Jack Davis, *No Sugar*, Currency Press Sydney, 1986.
- ² Jack Davis, *The Dreamers*, Currency Press, Sydney, 1982
- ³ Kevin Gilbert, *The Cherry Pickers*, Currency Press 1991.
- ⁴ Ningali Lawford and Kelton Pell, *Solid*, Yirra Yaakin Theatre production, directed by Phil Thompson with Ningali Lawford and Kelton Pell, International Arts Festival, Perth, 2000, with Energex Brisbane Festival, Brisbane, 2000, Albany Art Festival, Albany, WA, 2000 and national tour, Albury-Wodonga NSW, Alice Springs and Canberra, 2001.
- ⁵ Dallas Widmar, *Aliwa*, Currency Mini Series, Currency Press, Sydney, 2001. Originally performed as a Yirra Yarkin Noongar Theatre Production, directed by Lynette Narkle, design by Tish Oldham, with Rachel Maza and Irma Woods, Perth International Arts Festival, 2000; followed by Belvoir Street Theatre production, directed by Neil Armfield with Deborah Mailman, Kylie Belling and Ningali Lawford, 2001. Toured Europe, UK and USA, 2001.
- ⁶ Alice Haines, *Alice*, Yirra Yaakin Noongar Theatre, directed Sally Richardson, musical direction David Milroy, with Alice Haines as herself, Perth, 2001, and International Arts Festival, Melbourne, 2001.
- ⁷ *Land Lovers* was not a Jack Davis play and at the time of publication the playwright is still unidentified.
- ⁸ *The Koori Mail* is a national Indigenous fortnightly newspaper published in Lismore.
- ⁹ Mitch Torres, *One Day in '67*, Yirra Yaakin Theatre production, directed by David Milroy, with Ningali Lawford, Ali Torres and Irma Woods, World Premiere, International Arts Festival, Perth, 2002.
- ¹⁰ Noongar is one of the generic terms given to a geographically bound number of Aboriginal nations in Western Australia, (WA) which is the same as the term Koori representing the southeast parts of Australia and Murri loosely covering northern NSW and Queensland.