

Trust News

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KEYS TO REJUVENATED THEATRE IN U.K.

by JOHN SUMNER

(Director of the U.T.R.C., Melbourne, who recently returned from a tour of Britain.)

AN immediate difference apparent on reaching England after an absence of seven years is the common use of £5 notes. In 1958 they were large and relatively scarce—and very distinguished in appearance—and they mainly needed the name and address of the possessor on the back before any transaction. To-day their ownership and use are practically as common as with £1 notes.

This reflects the whole economy of which the theatre is a part. In 1957-58 the U.K. Arts Council's subsidy to the arts was £735,952; in 1963-64 it was £2,202,532; although the figures for 1964-65 are not yet released it is known that at least an extra £600,000 will have been added to the previous year's total, partly through the efforts of Miss Jennie Lee, the Government's "Minister of Culture."

This quantity of money has had the effect of rejuvenating the professional drama scene throughout the country. The National Theatre is playing at the Old Vic, until mid-1970 brings the completion of two new theatres in a splendid £7,500,000 "Cultural Centre," partly built by the Government and the Greater London Council. The Royal Shakespeare Company is playing at Stratford-upon-Avon and at the Aldwych Theatre, London, the latter until their new £1,500,000 theatre is built by the City of London in the Barbican. Both companies are setting new standards for the British stage.

FOUR new plays specially obtained by the U.T.R.C., Melbourne, for a special festival at the Union Theatre from September 6 to November 27 are:

- "Tiny Alice" by Edward Albee (first presentation outside Broadway)—Sept. 6-25.
- "The Subject was Roses" by Frank Gilroy (Pulitzer Prize, N.Y. Critics' Award, 1964)—Sept. 27-Oct. 16.
- "Inadmissible Evidence" by John Osborne (U.K. Critics' Award)—Oct. 18-Nov. 6.
- "The Homecoming" by Harold Pinter (currently playing at the Aldwych, London)—Nov. 8-27.



A moment in the Golden Garter saloon of "West of the Black Stump", which author-producer Reginald Livermore subtitles "a child's game of cowboys for adults". This musical, scored by Sandra McKenzie, is the second of the presentations at Theatre 62, Adelaide, by the Trust's newly formed professional company, the South Australian Theatre Company, under the artistic direction of John Tasker. Mr. Tasker produced the company's inaugural production, "Andorra", with high success.

So great seems their advance under State patronage that some commercial managements are considering ways of claiming subsidies.

THE same is true of the provinces where, arising from the authority of local government to raise rates by up to 6d. per person for the arts, the repertory theatres are experiencing a great renaissance.

The City of Birmingham (pop. 1,150,000) is building a new theatre to supplant the long established but too small Sir Barry Jackson Repertory Theatre. The Bristol (pop. 450,000) City Council has encouraged its Old Vic Company to take over a second theatre in that city, and is underwriting the deficit. The Belgrade Theatre, Coventry (pop. 320,000), the first civic playhouse to be built since the war, is expanding with a further workshop theatre and additional workshop plans. Leicester (pop. 275,000) City Council has built an interim playhouse at a cost of £30,000 as a stop-gap until its new civic

enterprise is developed. Manchester (pop. 700,000) is planning a large community centre aiming to help keep talent and audiences in the Midlands rather than allowing them to move to London—a problem understood in Australia.

The £335,000 playhouse of Nottingham (pop. 315,000), for a long time a political football, has settled into being the most adventurous enterprise of its type. It is one which, by its exciting style of work and programming, is setting an example which many companies are trying to emulate.

The list of new playhouses in the provinces, where there are restaurants and bars to help people to make the theatre a part of their daily lives and not merely a place to be visited bleakly for 2½ hours in the evenings, is long, and, with civic and Arts Council backing, their planning into the future is assured.

WHAT is the result of all these activities, where nearly every one of the 23 provincial companies I visited

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Trust News

Editor: LINDSEY BROWNE

SEPTEMBER, 1965

ASIAN PAGEANT'S MEANING

Both in the broader national sense and in the narrower theatrical sense, the Pageant of Asia Spectacular devised for the Sydney Trade Fair in October can be acclaimed for the values it is expected to introduce into Australian life and into the relationships between Australia and our neighbouring countries.

Although on this first occasion the Pageant, featuring various cultural and activity groups from some dozen or more countries in massive display, will be staged at the Sydney Showground only, the importance of the occasion to all Australians and its significance as an introduction to cultural interchanges, whereby all Australian audiences may be gripped by the largely unknown theatre arts of the East, and the Eastern world by the arts of Australians, can scarcely be overestimated.

At the national level, the Pageant will give to Australians an unequalled opportunity to win fresher, wider and more generous understanding of the peoples of this world zone through the means of cultural expression that are displayed to us here, and at the same time the Pageant may well prove to be a channel through which Asia's interest in Australian cultural expression can be enriched. Again at the national level, the Pageant is expected to be—quite apart from its vivid immediate appeal as a "super-show"—a major demonstration of the increasing modern world evaluation of the arts as an instrument for the advancement of appreciation in international relationships.

It is believed that the Australian Government's own interest in this activity—in presenting the arts of Australians to Asians—will be intensified. It is also believed that the Trust may become a most important agency for the presentation of Australian art and artists in countries which, at Pageant time this year, are received so warmly as our guests.

At the theatre level, there is the clear prospect that the artists visiting Australia from Asia and the Pacific will expand the fund of imagination and of technique out of which Australians draw their art, whether they are actors, producers, designers, composers or technicians. Indeed, the Western World's readiness for absorption or adaptation of principles of Asian theatre artistry—a continuing process—is exemplified by the days of deliberation which Unesco's International Congress of Composers devoted to this very subject at its Hamburg sittings last year.

Commonwealth Arts Festival — 1965

THE first Commonwealth Arts Festival takes place between September 16 and October 2, with the United Kingdom acting as host to the other countries of the Commonwealth. The festival represents the many diverse arts and cultures which exist within the Commonwealth framework.

London, Cardiff, Glasgow and Liverpool are the major centres of the festival events.

Participating countries are Australia, Canada, Ceylon, Ghana, India, Jamaica, Kenya, Malaysia, Malta, New Zealand, Nigeria, Pakistan, Rhodesia, Sierra Leone, Tanzania, Trinidad, Tobago, Uganda, Antigua, Barbados, British Guiana, Dominica and Hong Kong.

The festival has been organised by the Commonwealth Arts Festival Society with an advisory committee presided over by the Duke of Edinburgh. The Queen has consented to become patron of the festival.

The artists sent from various Commonwealth countries were decided by agreement between the Festival Society and the Governments or organisations concerned. The Society meets fees, living expenses and local transportation costs in Britain, and the participating organisations meet their travelling expenses to and from Britain. Australian Governments have made grants towards the cost of Australian participation.

Cardiff, Glasgow and Liverpool are arranging their own festivals with emphasis on particular aspects of the arts in each city.

Australian contributions to the Commonwealth Festival are:—

- The Sydney Symphony Orchestra:—With Dean Dixon, Joseph Post and John Hopkins as conductors and Sir Malcolm Sargent as guest conductor. The Sydney Symphony Orchestra gives concerts in London on September 16, 18 and 30, in Cardiff on September 19, in Liverpool on September 21 and in Glasgow on September 26. Programmes include such Australian works as violin concerto by Malcolm Williamson, "Sun Music for Orchestra" by Peter Sculthorpe, "Choral Prelude for Orchestra" by Felix Werder, "Homage to Garcia Lorca" by Richard Meale, and the "Corroboree" suite by John Antill. The orchestra also accompanies the festival performances by the Australian Ballet.

- The Austral String Quartet:—Donald Hazlewood, Ronald Ryder, Ronald Cragg and Gregory Elmaloglou (all members of the Sydney Symphony Orchestra) make recital appearances in Liverpool on September 23 and in London on September 28. Programmes include the Quartet No. 6 of Sculthorpe and the Quartet No. 6 of Werder.

- The Australian Ballet:—The company, with programmes including "The Display" and "Yugen" of Robert Helpmann and "Melbourne Cup" of Rex Reid, appears in Liverpool on Septem-

ber 23, 24 and 25, in Glasgow on September 27, 28 and 29, and at Covent Garden Opera House, London, on October 1 and 2.

- Poetry Conference:—Professor James McAuley of Hobart, Mr. Les Murray of Canberra, and Mr. Keith Harrison and Mr. Peter Porter, both of London, are Australian delegates to the conference which sits in Cardiff (September 20-24) to discuss the status, function and future of poetry.

- Music Conference:—Professor F. Callaway of the University of Western Australia is Australian delegate to the conference which sits in Liverpool (September 24-29) to consider "Music and Education in Commonwealth Countries".

- Art Exhibitions:—An exhibition in Liverpool of 57 aboriginal bark paintings arranged by the Australian Institute of Aboriginal Studies, Canberra. An exhibition in London of 37 paintings by William Dobell (made possible by generous assistance from Qantas). Exhibitions of textiles, ceramics, pottery, carvings.

- Films:—More than 60 Australian films, including independently made and experimental productions, as well as official films, are accepted for showing at film festivals in London, Liverpool, Cardiff and Glasgow. Australian films chosen for the opening of the London Film Festival on September 20 include Pacific Films' "Funny Things Happen Down Under", and the Australian Commonwealth Film Unit's "From the Tropics to the Snows" and "Concerto for Orchestra".

- Additional events:—In addition to the events directly organised by the Festival's Australian sub-committee, there are exhibitions in London of recent works by painters Russell Drysdale and Charles Blackman, in Glasgow of works by Arthur Boyd and in Cardiff of Australian aboriginal art from the private collections of David Attenborough, and Rex and Thora Rienits. Ray Lawler's "Piccadilly Bushman" is in production by the Liverpool Repertory Company. Australians Elsie Morison (soprano), Elizabeth Fretwell (soprano), John Cameron (baritone), the Seekers, and the Australian Jazz Players are featured in various musical events. Australian poets are represented in the anthology "Young Commonwealth Poets '65" (Heinemann) and figure in 15 programmes of "Verse and Voice" at the Royal Court Theatre, London.

Screening of Award Films

The splendid response given by Trust Members to special screenings of award-winning Australian films in Sydney and Melbourne recently is expected to be repeated in Brisbane and Canberra, when similar evenings for Members are presented there in the near future.

These Members' Evenings are among the most richly appealing events of this kind that the Trust has so far arranged.

The success of the screenings to date not only serves as a glowing compliment to the Australian film-makers who made the films available to the Trust, but also lays firm emphasis on the fact that Australian audiences now recognise the fully international status which the nation's best producers have achieved.

It is hoped that it will be possible for the Trust to present such screenings each year as the annual awards of the Australian Film Institute are announced.

How about around-the-world touring for Trusties?

THE question which is the heading of this article is included in a letter received by the editor of "Trust News" from a very excited Member.

We repeat it here because her excitement is of a kind which is very contagious indeed. This Member, as a subscriber also to Australia's Musica Viva Society, is not only agog about a round-the-world tour of musical centres by a group of 24 Musica Viva subscribers in 1964 but also insists that at least 20 Trust Members could be found to undertake a similarly exciting theatre odyssey at the remarkably economic group-travel rates available from leading international airlines.

The answer to the question is a matter for Trust Members to decide for themselves, but it is worth recording here that Musica Viva people are so pleased with the experience of the 1964 tour that they have already announced plans for a similar adventure from May to September, 1966, with visits (via Hong Kong and Bangkok) to the Prague and Vienna Festivals, then to Bath via London, then (after two months of freelance travel) to the Edinburgh Festival and home again via the Festival of Lucerne. All that on the basic "special affinity group travel economy class air fare", Sydney-London-Sydney, of about £A420—a saving of about £A180 on the ordinary economy-class fare. Other expenses—train

fares, accommodation, eating, entertainment tickets and so on—are, of course, additional.

The "special affinity group travel fares" for bona fide members of organisations are applicable to groups of 20 or more such members who are prepared to travel together on the same flights on both the forward and return journeys, while being free to travel when and how they wish between the arrival of the group in London and the eventual time of departure from London. All participants in any such affinity group travel scheme must have been financial members of their particular organisation for at least six months prior to whatever closing date is set for tour applications.

Because of the economic opportunities that affinity group travel could create for Australian theatre-lovers to see the drama, opera and/or ballet of such great cultural centres as Athens, Vienna, Milan, Paris, London and New York, the editor of "Trust News" will be glad to act as a liaison between all Trust Members who are interested in formulating an "affinity group travel" plan for, say, the May-September period of 1967. So, to repeat the correspondent's question: *How about it?*



Photograph by courtesy Hong Kong Tourist Association.

Right: The famous Hong Kong dragon's head, as used in the world-famous Dragon Dance, is all ready for packing off to the Pageant of Asia Spectacular at the Sydney Trade Fair in October.

Above: A model of the Royal Barge of Thailand is held by Colombo Plan student, Prapaipimp Raengkhan. A replica of this magnificent craft is being constructed, partly in Thailand and partly in Australia, for inclusion in the massive displays of the Pageant of Asia.





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FOUR of the above five people will be touring Australia over the next six months in work that, three months ago, would never have crossed their minds. All of them are now puppeteers with the newly formed Marionette Theatre of Australia which is at present showing the original "Tintookies" show of Peter Scriven on a tour of all States.

The fifth member of the above ensemble is an original "Tintookies" man, Igor Hyczka, who was asked by Peter Scriven to train a new team of puppeteers for him, his original crew having mainly dispersed during the five years he had been away from Australia. The Marionette Theatre of Australia was jointly established by the Trust and the Arts Council.

The puppeteers pictured (reading upwards, left to right) are Peter Morris (25) of Brisbane, Sam Kummli (26) who came to Australia from Switzerland early this year, Penny Hall (23) of Sydney, Igor Hyczka and Graeme Mathieson (20) of Sydney.

"We find ourselves acting the whole play out on our working bridge," Peter Morris told me. "After working with these puppets for a while they virtually came alive for us all."

Penny Hall says: "When we travel I feel like an undertaker packing the puppets away in bags and crates. It's dreadfully like maltreating one's own children."

Graeme Mathieson shares Penny's concern: "After a few weeks with them you begin to think you should take them home, tuck them into bed and give them a cup of cocoa."

A career as a carpenter in Switzerland gives Sam Kummli a special interest in the more complicated puppets and props, including the Lord Mayor's vintage car, complete with built-in engine noises, musical horn and frequent backfiring, all operated by string.

School-holiday seasons in Brisbane and Sydney being completed, "The Tintookies" are now country touring N.S.W. and Queensland, with Canberra, Melbourne, Perth and Adelaide Festival seasons ahead.

—T.F.

THE Guest of Honour spot on the A.B.C. (by whose courtesy the talk is re-printed here) was recently distinguished by the following series of characteristically racy, ironic and deadly earnest remarks on

ANTIDOTES FOR STEAK-FED VACUITY

by

Sir Tyrone Guthrie

I have just been in Perth as guest of committees connected with the University of Western Australia, and the Festival of Perth; silly, rash, irresponsible wretches—or so I learned from important local sources, including the dramatic critic of "The West Australian," and those staunch guardians of public welfare, "Disgusted" and "Mother of Nine."

Do you know what? They are proposing, if you please, to spend £124,000 of the taxpayers' money for the purpose of . . . I hardly bring myself . . . they plan to build a theatre! Yes: did you ever!

That's only the beginning. Instead of sending for the borough engineer who put up that new public lavatory in Bumbleton, these people at the University are proposing to waste money on an architect, and to have their theatre, what they call "designed." They actually maintain that the erection of a well-designed, if very small and simply-equipped theatre can serve a practical purpose. This belief rests upon the more general belief that the theatre can be, and should be, something more than frivolity. It can be a uniquely stimulating and memorable way of evoking ideas, of stirring up, gratifying and sublimating desires, which in the normal course of events have to be repressed. The results of such repression we are now beginning to learn, are, at worst, a formidable danger to our spiritual health; at best, an impoverishment of lives which could be made richer and fuller than they are.

IT'S a fact that many—astonishingly many—of the greatest expressions of the human spirit are in dramatic form. To choose, almost at random, a few instances from the vast abundance: *Oedipus*, the King of Sophocles; *Prometheus Bound* of Aeschylus; Goethe's *Faust*; Ibsen's *Peer Gynt*; *Phedre*, by Racine; five or six comedies of Moliere; three or four of Ostrovsky and Chekov . . . all these are foreign plays, only accessible to us in translation. How many of such translations have been seen, how many of the plays are widely known even by name, in Western Australia? I am sure that three or four of them have been done—and possibly very well done—by amateur groups, but necessarily on shoe-string budgets, in unsuitable buildings and in the face of a public apathy almost total.

And how many of the English classics have been done on a handsome scale by professional performers of real power and skill? Right now *Macbeth* is being given in Perth. But a highly intelligent, thoughtful production has to fight against heavy odds. The budget is very low; too few actors, though five or six of them were excellent; a theatre de-

signed and equipped only for less-ambitious attempts; costumes which are well designed but too economically executed; a public which has for years habituated itself to the notion that anything good must be imported, and that before anyone does pronounce it good, it must have the previous endorsement of success elsewhere.

Well, the English language has been the vehicle for the greatest body of important drama in the history of the human race. English-speaking communities have this quite extraordinary heritage of wisdom, wit and humour. And how pitifully little use we make of it! We're like the owners of a great collection of paintings which includes several dozen masterpieces of stunning importance and value to those who are sufficiently educated and initiated to appreciate them.

BUT we allow most of the collection to lie, face to wall, in the attics and the cellars, despised and rejected; we—the present owners—no, the present trustees—are getting from them neither pleasure nor profit.

Why? Simply because most of us haven't been educated to recognise a masterpiece when we see or hear it; consequently, we go through life unaware of the pleasure and profit which we are missing; or, worse, sceptical that such pleasure and profit can really be available. They are thought to be no more than the vapourings of silly, long-haired drips, who would be far better employed raising cattle or sheep or moving tangible, useful objects from one place to another.

I'm not such a fool as to think that the intensely practical approach is not, in certain circumstances, the right one. I don't for an instant maintain that Art and Drama are necessities in the same category as bread and water. As existence ceases to be completely primitive, people very soon begin to regard as necessities all kinds of things which in their former, less affluent condition would have seemed the most extravagant luxuries.

Now, I certainly hope I don't imply the slightest contempt for a primitive life and primitive values. The men—and, maybe, even more the women—who've opened up, and are still opening up, this vast continent, and are gradually changing it from a wilderness to

a civilised, pleasant and sophisticated environment—these pioneers deserve our deepest admiration and respect. They are, in one sphere, what Copernicus, Galileo, Newton, Einstein, have been in another; or Leonardo da Vinci, Mozart, Beethoven, Picasso in a third; or Buddha Mahomet, Plato and Jesus Christ in a fourth. These are pioneers in intellectual, artistic and spiritual wildernesses, as well as in the wild places of the earth.

And, perhaps, just because for the last 150 years or so Australia has had to depend predominantly upon pioneers in the physical field, and upon practical and energetic rather than upon intellectual and imaginative people, it has become habitual to admire practical rather than intellectual or imaginative achievement. And it may be time to try to change this habit.

Well, over 50 per cent of Australians don't live as pioneers or in primitive conditions. They live in five predominantly scarlet, bungalowoid cities, in conditions whose affluence is unsurpassed except in South Africa and North America. But is material affluence matched by spiritual?

At the University of Western Australia they think it isn't. They think that life in Perth is very sunny and comfortable, but compared to life in Athens, say, in the fourth century, B.C., or to life in London under the first Elizabeth, or to life in Paris in the middle of the sixteen-hundreds, life in Perth now seems a wee bit boring—and a wee bit too materialistic. This theatre, about the design of which we have been consulting, is one of many ways in which many people all over Australia are trying to prevent a life, which is no longer hard and primitive, from sinking into a quicksand of sun-drenched, steak-fed vacuity.

MIND you, I'm not saying it is vacuous—only that some people who strike me as sensible people with no selfish axe to grind think that it may rather easily become so. Also, everybody who thinks at all must be aware that we are entering—have, indeed, already entered—an era not just of greater abundance, but of greater leisure than has ever been enjoyed by the great mass of any community. Hitherto great leisure has been the privilege of a fortunate and very

(Continued on page 10)

THE AUSTRALIAN BALLET—COMPANY & STAFF



FRONT ROW (seated, left to right): Robert Rosen (*Musical Director*), Peggy Van Praagh (*joint Artistic Director*), Karl Welander, Marilyn Jones, Garth Welch, Kathleen Gorham, Bryan Lawrence (behind), Elaine Fifield, Geoffrey Ingram (*Administrator*).

THIRD ROW (standing, left to right): Rhyl Kennell (*Assistant Ballet Mistress*), Jessie Clarke (*Rehearsal Pianist*), Helen Magner, Carolyn Rappell, Elphine Allen, Helen Beinke, Ann Fraser, Ramona Ratas, Marilyn Rowe, Rhonda Russell, Jillian Collinson, Carmel Nolan, Joan Boler, Jan Melvin.

FF FOR FIRST INTERNATIONAL TOUR, 1965



SECOND ROW (standing, left to right): Ray Powell (*Ballet Master*), Doina Rosen (*librarian-chaperone*), Leon Kellaway (*Professor of the Dance*), Wally Bourke, Kathleen Geldard, Barry Kitcher, Barbara Chambers, Beverley Dean, Alan Alder, Janet Karin, Heather Macrae, Robert Olup, Robyn Croft, Douglas Gilchrist, William Miles (*Wardrobe Master*), Enid Player (*Company Secretary*), William Cronshaw (*Business Manager*), William Akers (*Production Director*), John Moulton (*Stage Manager*), Frances Towers (*Wardrobe Mistress*), Noel Pelly (*Promotion*).

BACK ROW (left to right): Robert Okell, Frank Croese, Andris Toppe, Colin Peasely, Kelvin Coe, Peter Condon, Roger Myers, Gary Hill. Absent: Norman Parker (*Head Machinist*).

NEW THEATRE DESIGNED FOR LAE

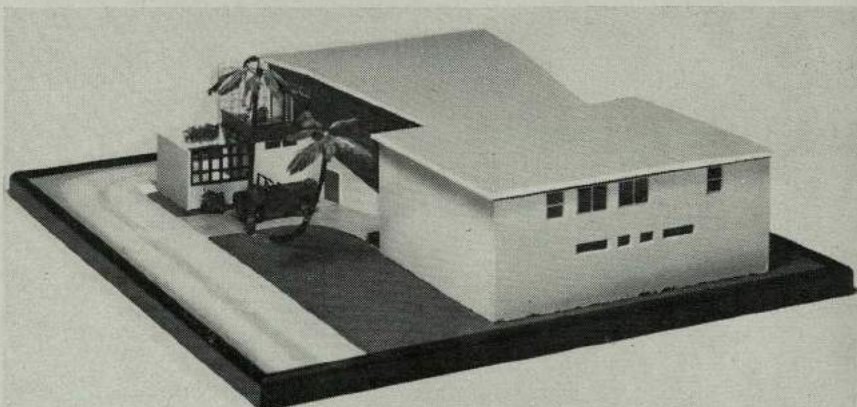
MENTION the Trust's Production Division to the "woman next door" and you will probably have her vaguely visualising a batch of paint-spattered people at work on opera sets, on pretty fripperies of bric-a-brac, or a batch of seamstresses toiling over sewing machines, and so on.

The vision is all right as far as it goes, but it might surprise the passer-by to also see the Trust's experts contemplating abstruse electronic circuits and oscillographs, engineering drawings, architects' specifications, and theatre lay-outs.

The truth is that almost every Australian with a theatrical problem sooner or later winds up in the Trust's offices. If the problem is a physical one, or one of physical planning, the odds are that the person with the problem will find his solution through Kenneth Southgate, the Trust's Production Manager, or Ronald Sinclair, the Trust's Supervisor of Design and Staging.

From them he can count on first-class advice on such questions as how to do the ghosts for "Macbeth" or how to make a revolving stage or how to ensure that a stage William Tell will split the apple on the small boy's head without in the slightest endangering the youngster's Adam's apple . . .

While it is the usual practice for architects and engineers to discuss their theatre plans with officers of the Production Division, it is less widely known that the Division is an important sub-contractor in the planning, manufacture and installation of theatre equipment.



In this field the Division's work ranges from the simple making and rigging of theatre hangings to the design and installation of such major items as rising and revolving stages and electronic light control units.

The Trust has much more than a straightforward commercial interest in these projects. As part of its function

as a national theatrical body, the Trust feels bound to exercise its influence upon theatre planning in Australia so that its trend will be in the best directions. It is not often, however, that the Production Division has the opportunity "to go it alone" in the over-all planning of a theatre.

Recently, a theatre group in Lae, New Guinea, decided that potential theatre activity in the area justified the building of a theatre. Their problems were thrashed out in consultation with the Production Division. The outcome, after study of the special requirements, was a special design by Ronald Sinclair, and a scale model (pictured) to show the Lae theatre-lovers what they might expect for their money. It is a simple, low-cost theatre to seat 247 people on a single, ramped floor.

Both in its simplicity and choice of materials, the design defers to the tropical setting. The structural system and the general finish do not leave much room for those "touches" which might be supposed to reflect the nostalgia of New Guineans for mainland suburbia rather than the tropical environment in which the theatre is to have its own life.

STRUCTURALLY, the building is simple in order to remain within the possible limits in the skill of those who build it. The materials specified are economically available in the Territory and they are treated in such a way that, even if the finish does not exceed the rough workmanship of the usual furniture factory, the aptness of the design will still ensure aesthetically satisfying results. Emphasis is laid on the use of simply worked heavy timbers with a natural finish.

It is felt by the designers that, interpreted with understanding, this theatre will be an unexpectedly sophisticated building having more intrinsic architectural worth than might generally be expected in so remote a locale.



Photograph by courtesy of "The Australian."

AUSTRALIAN composer **PETER SCULTHORPE** who, through the Trust's commissioning fund, is composing an opera to an Australian libretto by Alan Moorehead and Roger Covell, with artist Sidney Nolan as the design consultant. This commission to Mr. Sculthorpe, whose work is winning increasing recognition in symphonic and chamber music programmes, is the first undertaken through the Trust's commissioning fund which consists of moneys received for its special purposes from donors, by bequests and by endowments.

BOOK REVIEWS

FATHER OF OUR THEATRE

COPPIN THE GREAT, by Alec Bagot. 356 pp. 18 illustrations. Melbourne University Press.

FOR teeming vitality of colour and illustrative detail, not only in its inexhaustible thoroughness as a portrait of a great-hearted adventurer in Australian theatre but also in its feeling for the smell, bustle, humbug and heartiness of the raw society in which Coppin made his way and his name, Alec Bagot's biography would be hard to beat.

The subject matter, as Bagot details it without obtruding either the sentiment or the irony which subtly infiltrates his scholarship, is rich enough to busy the hand of a Dickens—the same Dickens with whom Coppin, in his later years as a Victorian parliamentarian, ironed out revision of copyright law for Australia. Yes, it is something of a Dickens plot and panorama projected with something of an up-dated Thackeray urbanity.

It is the supreme work of Australian theatre history thus far written, and the tyranny it will exert on the researches of future annalists of Australian theatre achievement may well be absolute—but, mercifully, benevolent.

GEORGE SELTH COPPIN (1819-1906) began life in a theatrical company, his parents being attached to a regional troupe which eked out a precarious existence by touring the halls and barns of East Anglia and neighbourhood counties.

"With my sister Emma I was put on top of the props and, at the tender age of one year, I was carried on stage in the character of Cora's baby by my mother," Coppin himself once noted.

Coppin's earliest recollection of himself was "at the age of six, perched on the top of a table, playing a cuckoo solo on his little kit," which explains how, in 1826, he could already appear on a playbill: "Violins—G. Coppin." In the same year he and his sister were billed, she for a dance and he for a comic recitation and song.

When the father's company broke up and the family dispersed, young George could say, "I was capable of doing everything connected with a theatre, including its fitting up in each town, cleaning the lamps, delivering of bills, prompt, stage manager, lead the orchestra and play low comedy parts."

In Dublin where he met Charles Kean and Ellen Tree, he married an American actress named Maria Burroughs whom he persuaded, on the toss of a halfpenny, to come to Australia with him.

From the time when the Coppins stepped ashore in Australia, through five years when Coppin travelled Maria and his company to Hobart, Launceston, Melbourne and Adelaide, the actor-manager had his wife as his star. At

the time of her death in Adelaide, he was making a fortune—not only in theatre, but also in mining speculations, baths, a ship, racehorses, a railway and hotel ownership. Bankruptcy struck when the rush to the gold diggings left Adelaide something of a ghost town. Coppin himself walked to the Bendigo diggings.

Coppin was to re-establish his fortunes—and pay off former creditors—by bringing out to Australia the Shakespearean tragedian G. V. Brooke, and then by importing Charles Kean and Ellen Tree (Mrs. Kean) whom he eventually took on tour across the United States also. Brooke's Melbourne season was one of jam-packed crowds. One newspaper stated: "We have arranged for our reporter the exclusive privilege of a private seat in the chandelier." When Coppin took the Keans to Ballarat, they were all showered with nuggets.

AS an actor, Coppin's strength was "low comedy." The younger prince in *Richard III*, Osric and Polonius

in *Hamlet*, Sir Peter in *School for Scandal* and Bob Acres in *The Rivals* were among the classical parts. Indeed, Bob Acres was one of Coppin's "old-established characters" included in the 12 final performances of "most positively the last appearance he will ever make on the Melbourne stage." This was in 1881. Coppin had begun giving what were "absolutely his last" appearances 38 years earlier! But Coppin's most popular roles were Crack in *The Turnpike Gate*, Jem Bags *The Wandering Minstrel*, and Billy Barlow.

Billy Barlow was for more than 40 years Coppin's greatest crowd-pleasing showpiece. It is said that Coppin was only 10 years old when, staying with an aunt whose husband was governor of an East Anglian mental hospital, he got the idea of "a simpleton, an apparently daft but shrewd commentator upon the idiosyncrasies of the sane." Billy Barlow first took the stage at the Abbey Street Theatre in Dublin in 1841; at the end of the century, after the last of his "positively final retirements," the Hon. George Coppin, M.P., would still sometimes oblige friends with performances of it on social occasions.

It was the forerunner of modern topical satire, a one-man show depending entirely on an actor-singer who composed his own doggerel verses and accompanied himself on his "trusty old fiddle." Critics from time to time roasted him for scurrilities "unbefitting the company of the gentle sex."

COPPIN built six theatres in Australia—the first, in Adelaide, was a converted billiard saloon. The four he built in Melbourne included a pre-fabricated building imported from England to win the nickname of "The Iron Pot." Another in Melbourne was the Theatre Royal which survived into the 1930s.

(Continued on page 10)

Wanted: The Ideal House

ACTOR AND ARCHITECT edited by Stephen Joseph. Manchester University Press. 118 pp. 8 plans and drawings. 10 plates.

IT is the general assumption of the mass of the people, who may sometimes want to go to the theatre, that it is the picture-frame stage which constitutes a proper theatre. It is increasingly the view of artists of the theatre that a major reason why that same mass of the population so rarely wants to go to the theatre is the picture-frame stage.

Artists of the theatre present a forceful case to support their views in this collection of talks given on the general subject of theatre architecture, on the merits of open staging in either the "arena" or the "horseshoe" style, at a Theatre Week conducted at the University of Manchester in 1962.

The contributions by Tyrone Guthrie, Hugh Hunt, Richard Southern, Sean Kenny, John English and Christopher Stevens are much more concerned—and most entertainingly—with investigating general principles for theatre

architecture (where the aesthetic values can be as greatly enriched as the economic hazards can be minimised) than with engineers' technicalities and the drawing-board. Guthrie's remarks are particularly cogent.

The contributions are introduced by the editor, Stephen Joseph, with a survey of the history of the picture-frame stage from its virtually accidental beginnings to a point where many drama-lovers will share the opinion that "the picture-frame stage is now an incubus which is suffocating live entertainment."

The main part of the book is an excellent preliminary survey of modern thought on the relationship between theatre's housing, theatre's function and theatre's survival. The 25-page transcript from the discussions of a "Brains Trust" type of panel, printed as an appendix, is loose and random stuff of the kind usually to be expected of off-the-cuff commentators.

Antidotes for Steak-fed Vacuity

(Continued from page 5)

and a great deal of the routine work and a great deal of calculating, too, will be done by machinery.

This will set us many new problems. One of the most important will be how to train people who hitherto have had very little leisure and whose circumstances have offered them very little choice of occupation—may learn to choose wise occupations and studies, for their steadily increasing leisure time; and sensible outlets for the energy which has hitherto been needed for work but must now be transferred to what we have been accustomed to think of as play. Put another way—we must all learn that play is at least as important as work; and that to learn to play intelligently and creatively is about to be one of the major responsibilities which all of us must undertake.

All over the world governments are becoming increasingly aware of this. It has been a pleasing feature of my visit here that it has coincided with the opening of the new government-sponsored Theatre Centre at Canberra. It's significant that it could be opened by the Australian Ballet—a company which has grown on the foundations which Borovansky laid, and whose expansion has been made possible by the Elizabethan Theatre Trust.

ALL this means that in Australia, as in Canada and, indeed, as in Great Britain, the principle has been accepted that government must give a lead, financial and moral, in the direction of serious and intelligent use of leisure.

And now—to the Sydney Opera House. I'm aware that in Australia it has become a kind of stock joke. When they are absolutely stuck for something to say in the Mavis Bramston Show, reference to the Opera is good for a nice giggle. But the rest of the world isn't giggling. We see photographs and plans of this startling, thrilling object, so dramatically placed on this marvellous harbour, which otherwise seems to be trying to conceal the wonders which Nature has wrought—strange, tropical wonders; and instead of a city which seems to express a character uniquely Australian, which seems to be an expression of a particular and new kind of outlook, we have a nostalgic, crimson imitation of British suburbia. But now this building seems to proclaim a new spirit; seems to say we don't want to be just Croydon or Giffnock or Didsbury; we want to be ourselves, and we want the world to know that we have finally emerged from the pioneer stage; and the symbol of this is not just a factory which produces more automobiles, or detergents, or canned meat, or breakfast food—it's a temple, dedicated to the production of ideas and noises and sights which you can't eat or wear, which don't transport you and Myrtle and the kids to the beach or up to Nana's—the transport is solely in the mind and the imagination—a transport of joy. But this joy is not immediately

or easily available. You have to learn to listen to music or to look at plays. It's no easier than learning to drive a car or to bake a cake. On the contrary, it's harder. But once the lesson is learned, the reward is comparatively richer; but does mean learning.

And that's why, way out here in Perth, it seems to me that they are taking a wise step in building a place better designed and equipped than any of the makeshifts now in existence here, where teaching and learning may take place in the neglected but not unimportant field of drama. It's a pioneer step towards making the new, affluent, suburban Australia a worthy monument to the courage and resource, the gaiety and slightly crazy individualism, of the old Australia.

Of course, there are more practical and sensible ways of spending £124,000. But the practical, sensible way is by no means always the wise way. The wise way is to invest it in something which you believe to be valuable, even if you have to wait—even a generation—before the dividend is paid. Well, poor people can't make such long-term investments. They have to have a quick return. But Australia isn't poor. A flamboyant, spectacular opera house would be a crazy investment for, say, Guatemala City or St. Johns, Newfoundland. In Sydney, however, it is a proclamation that one chapter of the continent's history has ended. And the new one is being inaugurated with no loss of the old spirit of do-or-die. What we may not live to enjoy we bequeath to our children and their children—and with pride.

COPPIN THE GREAT

(Continued from page 9)

In his years as a legislator he was motivated by his own principle that "a man who is able to do so should serve his country as a legislator—and he should do so without payment."

Among other benefits brought by Coppin to Victorians was the introduction, on South Australia's example, of the Torrens Title for real estate. It was a notable parallel that the great Barnum, whose life-span and advancement in a jostling society were so much like Coppin's own, also found his way into parliamentary duty in his later years—in Connecticut.

Few books on theatre anywhere can rival *Coppin the Great* for its twin achievement of being first-class scholarship and first-class bedtime reading. As a gift or reward book, also, it will be rushed by all schools and organisations with annual awards soon to be planned.—L.B.

Rejuvenated U.K. Theatre

(Continued from page 1)

small minority. Now, we may expect that most of the hardest physical work receives a far greater subsidy than is available as a guarantee against loss to the Union Theatre Repertory Company in Melbourne (pop. 2,000,000)?

One outcome is a raising of artistic standard. Competition for positions in these better financed companies is keen, and most artists must have a good grounding from one of the various drama schools before applying for a job. Their preparedness for the profession is obvious from the moment they walk on the stage. Work on constantly good plays, under imaginative directors, is stimulating to everyone. The choice of repertoire is wide and, as well as Shakespeare, other classics and modern classics are performed. As the classics have survived because of what they have to offer universally, this leads to exciting theatre.

Finally, experiments in programming are bringing to life a Continental trend of presenting plays in repertoire as opposed to repertory—the nightly change of programme, as opposed to the two, three or four weekly run. The arguments on both sides concerning repertoire and repertory are various; briefly, although the former eats up the money, it raises the standard and often reawakens lethargic and diminishing audiences.

Those are a few of the more obvious developments in the growing and refreshing live drama scene in the United Kingdom today. Money is being spent with the object of raising the standard and meaning of what is being shown on the stage; theatres are ranked as public necessities, much as art galleries and libraries are. Actors are treated as members of a profession and that they need to eat and live by their profession is not disputed.

WHAT lessons might we learn from Great Britain which has now accepted the principle of spending public money on the arts and, in this particular case, on drama?

- Money to the arts is assured through Government grants and is centrally administered by one independent organisation, the Arts Council of Great Britain. This avoids duplication and encourages forward planning. (The parallel in this country could be drawn with the moneys made available by the Commonwealth Government.) Additional moneys are then made available by local government and city councils for projects relating to their particular environments. (The parallel here is given by State Governments and civic authorities.)
- Public money only goes to subsidise quality.
- Public money is mainly spent with the idea of building one particular

(Continued on page 11)

THEATRE CROSSWORD

THIS puzzle is printed for your amusement, but for a spice of competitive interest send in your completed diagram. If you do not wish to cut the page, your own freehand copy of the diagram will serve as well.

A fortnight after this issue of "Trust News" is distributed the mail will be opened and the first six correct entries opened will earn each successful entrant a pair of seats to the value of not more than £3 at a Trust show in their State capital city in the near future.

Entries must be in ink, without alterations, and the Editor's decision will be final. Endorse your envelope "Crossword", and send it to:

"Trust News", 153 Dowling Street, Potts Point, N.S.W.

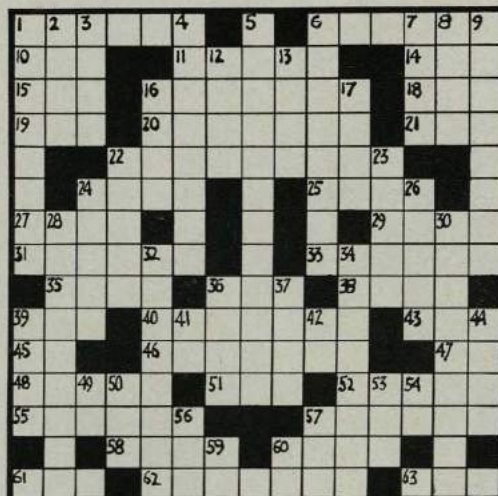
ACROSS

1. How's la Donna?
6. Who sets work for the Trust's artistic director of the South Australian Theatre Company?
10. What's missing from "Lincoln in Illinois" as a play title?
11. Berlin responsible for this sure-fire entertainer.
14. Inquiry as to the existence of a mount of mine.
15. What can you do with a conning tower?
16. Naxos was her address.
18. Example of the latest minstrelsy.
19. A mate of Joe Byrne in Douglas Stewart's verse drama.
20. A dance form much used by Schubert.
21. Stomach this as an alternative to sing when you don't know the words.
22. Ten days was as long as Boccaccio needed to tell these hundred tales.
24. Who discovered the TB bacillus in some of the Cranko choreography?
25. Sarastro sings of this goddess, along with Osiris.
27. Colline gives it up to raise money to help the dying Mimi.
29. Requirement.
31. What you want when you head for the exit.
33. Beethoven's 'hird symphony.
35. Plate.
36. Spanish he., subject of an opera by Massenet.
38. Italian boy's name in the N.Z. opera.
39. Britten.
40. Musical direction for loving affection in performance gives a parent reason for biliousness.
43. S.A. and V.A. don't set their watches by this type of wine.
45. Being performed.
46. Loan's better half character who needs entertaining on the stage. (2 words.)
47. State name for Salvation Army sex appeal.
48. Basic flavouring in absinthe.
51. Galahad's strength was as the strength of how many?
52. But a festive premiere isn't for this bird.
55. A famous fighting service in the middle of a water bottle.
57. A kind of flower.
58. Rather brusque in the U.T.R.C.
60. American infantryman doubled a Lerner-Loewe show.

61. Aunt Sally.
62. Massine.
63. Burgundy is thus a description which would make 19-across plonk.

DOWN

1. American poet-dramatist.
2. Instrumentalist who has a busy time in the prelude to the last act of Verdi's "Otello".
3. Stoop.
4. Painful complaints as a cheer from the disorderly.
5. How's Osborne's evidence?
6. Canary city entree, if arranged in it.
7. Appropriate item of attire for a kinsman of Lucey of Lammermoor.
8. Jacob stole his birthright.
9. Ballet (re-produced by Nureyev) being danced in Europe by the Australian Ballet.
12. Musical show staged by Garnet H. Carroll.
13. Unemployed.
16. Guinness.
17. Cupid is aggrieved if upset.
22. Reposes excessive fondness upon another.
23. Mme. Vallin, famous French singer.
24. Janet, one of the Australian Ballet's principals.
26. Grab 16 in France.
28. Humorous American poet. (Two words.)
30. 7-down might be appropriate for this dance—a form used by Chopin.
32. Very, very reprehensibly shocking to give me a flush.
34. Again take on.
36. The people playing in a show arranged by the S.A.T.C.
37. Boucicault.
39. Famous international airline.
41. Margaret Rutherford's monogram suggests no way to address her.
42. The French in postal Louisiana.
44. A hat raised by the South African weaverbird.
49. It needs 45-across to become a metal abbreviation for iridium.
50. Pouch.
53. Baba.
54. But it's really one more than 54.
56. Before.
57. Painter Nolan to his friends.
59. Preposition.
60. Private half of 60-across.



CROSSWORD WINNERS

WINNERS of the crossword contest in the June, 1965, issue of "Trust News" are:

Mr. J. M. Honnor, 21 Molden Street, Bentleigh East, S.E. 15, Victoria.

Mr. M. W. Brown, 45 Northcote Terrace, Medindie, S.A.

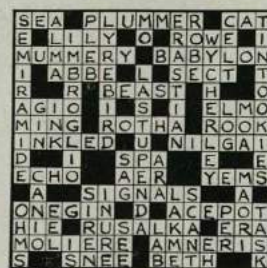
Miss E. A. Jones, 60 Kimpton Street, Rockdale, N.S.W.

Mr. B. Woodruff, 100 Collins Street, Melbourne, Vic.

Mr. Roger Harris, 349 Bay Street, Brighton-le-Sands, N.S.W.

Miss J. Bierwirth, 522 Little Collins Street, Melbourne, Vic.

The above winners, by their success, became entitled to two seats (of a value not exceeding 30/- each) for a Trust presentation in their State capital cities.



REJUVENATED THEATRE

(Continued from page 10)

company in one particular community, rather than weakening the end result by "a little to a lot."

● Good plays (and well done) give the key to programming. When well done, it is amazing how many good plays there are from the past; the example of the English National Theatre's success is proof of this.

Although in Australia there is a limited assistance to drama through subsidy, reasons often unrelated to the arts de-

termine its distribution. A number of converted church halls and warehouses take the place of one centrally positioned and well equipped playhouse. People, talents and moneys are scattered, with not enough being available at one point to ensure the maintenance of at least one first-class drama company in every State. This tends to encourage amateurism, compromise and mediocrity, whereas a pooling of resources would offer a dynamic service to the community.

HOW is Australia to stand a chance of experiencing what people in other countries find so superb in the theatre,

built on acceptance of the principle of subsidy as part of civilisation and as a contribution to everyday living?

Local government and civil authorities must become more aware that the future for which they are planning must include theatres in centres of entertainment for young as well as old during their increasingly long hours of leisure. These civically subsidized cultural centres are good not only for the well-being of the communities they serve, but, with appropriate design, they can also attract interstate visitors and overseas tourists.

BOOK OFFERS FOR MEMBERS

SEVERAL overseas publishing houses, noted for their publications on aspects of theatre, have shown a lively interest in the low-price book-offer plan introduced to Trust Members in the March and June (1965) issues of "Trust News".

It is expected, in view of this widespread interest, that further offers of outstanding books on the theatre arts (at prices very much lower than the prevailing retail rates) will become possible during 1966, and that many Trust Members will find "Trust News" an avenue through which they may make a number of handsome additions to their personal libraries at moderate cost.

Since publication of the March and June editions of "Trust News", enough Trust Members have shown interest in our first low-price book-offer plan for our negotiations to be completed with the respective publishers. Ninety-six Members have applied to "Trust News" for copies of "The Complete Opera Book" (Kobbe) and seventy-five have applied for copies of "The Dancers' World" (Peto and Bland).

For these numbers (which are very considerably fewer than the figures upon which the original estimates of cost were based), the cost of "The Complete Opera Book" will be 59/6 per copy, plus postage and packing (compared with the Australian retail price of 85/-) and the cost of "The Dancers' World" will be 53/6 per copy, plus postage and packing (compared with the Australian retail price of 75/-).

The prices arranged exceed the prices originally proposed in the March issue of "Trust News" by several shillings—"The Complete Opera Book" is at 59/6 as against the price of 50/- originally suggested as a basis for negotiation; "The Dancers' World" is at 53/6 as against the price of 45/- mentioned in the March issue as a rough guide to intending purchasers.

Trust Members who, having previously applied to the Editor of "Trust News" for these books, now feel that the higher prices are not attractive enough for their purposes are requested to inform the Editor promptly of their wish to cancel. It will be assumed that all Members who do not record their cancellation in this way will wish their orders to stand at the higher prices.

The publishers expect to be able to deliver the required supplies of the books to the Trust about Christmas (for "The Dancers' World") and in February (for "The Complete Opera Book"). Interested Members will be notified by mail when the supplies are in Trust hands for distribution to them.

Members who have not already placed orders with the Editor are advised that only a very limited number of new orders can now be accepted at this stage.

£1,000 LURE ON THE SHANKS TRAIL

TRUST Opera bass Donald Shanks, who reached the last audition finals for the Metropolitan Opera in New York, blazed the trail which this year will carry some Australian singer to a £1,000 prize as well as the possibility of a career at the headquarters of American opera.

The new prize—£800 more than was offered last year, the first time that these auditions had been conducted in Australia and other Pacific areas—was announced last month by the chairman of the Australian Auditions Council for the Metropolitan Opera, Sir Bernard Heinze. Second prize will be £100, and third £50.

The Australian Auditions Council was organised in 1964 to encourage outstanding vocal talent in Australia and to present an opportunity for its development.

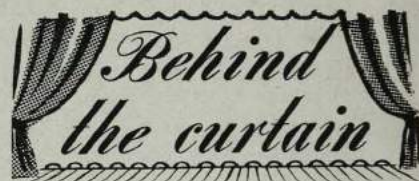
Contestants eligible for the Federal auditions in December, 1965, will be chosen from the winners of State audi-

tions scheduled for each capital city in November. Prizes for each State section will be £100, £50 and £25.

Candidates will be selected from the Federal place-getters to compete in regional auditions in Honolulu next February.

The winning singers from the Honolulu auditions would then receive a trip to New York to compete with representatives from 15 other regions throughout the United States for awards totalling £16,000 and a possible contract with the Metropolitan.

Application forms are available through Conservatoriums and the State offices of the A.B.C.

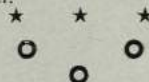


A Taste of Blindness. A recent performance of school drama came happily to its curtain at the Elizabethan Theatre and, close to sunset, the audience went home and the staff locked up. Soon after, an urgent telephone call to the Trust offices three miles away reported that a young school mistress was locked inside with the theatre rapidly sinking into pitch blackness. Detailed instructions were given by phone to the young lady to help her grope her way to a point where her imprisonment could be ended.

"It was as bad as being as blind as Milton—no paradise either," she reported later.

Sardonic comment from theatre manager Lionel Preston was:

"All my life my problem has been to get people into the theatre . . . not to get them out!"

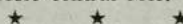


WELL, John Osborne's play may be about bankruptcy (of the spiritual and material kinds), and it is certainly accumulating a lot of interest, but surely nobody should be calling "Inadmissible Evidence" a pawnbroker's play on the grounds that it offers us

O for Osborne

O for Old Tote, where it is to play in Sydney

O for O'Shaughnessy (Peter), who is taking the immensely virtuosic central role.



OPERA critics please note. "Rigoletto" is the weakest work of Verdi. It lacks melody. This opera has hardly any chance to be kept in the repertoire."—(Gazette Musicale de Paris, 1853)



WITH a huge chandelier from stock, and huge red velvet drapes, Trust technicians recently converted a corner of their workaday workshop in Sydney into an aristocratic chamber of about the size of a squash court. But squash was not to be thought of. This specially improvised "throne-room" was for the inaugural meeting of the Trust Staff Social Club—a wine-tasting.



OPPORTUNISM affects municipal councils as much as any other group of people, but it is appropriate to state here that there is no truth in the rumour that one of Sydney's southern suburban councils is planning a series of musical events at the Sutherland Shire Hall under the come-on title of "Sutherland Opera".