

# Trust News

Issued by The Australian Elizabethan Theatre Trust to Members of the Trust.

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## WHY TRUST SEEKS COUNCIL FOR PERFORMING ARTS

**T**RUST proposals for an Australian Council for the Performing Arts, as recently submitted to the Commonwealth Government by the Trust Board, are directed towards improvement in the machinery for the distribution of public money to the theatre arts for the greater welfare of Australian theatre at large.

**N**EVERTHELESS, these proposals, themselves an expression of the Trust's dedication to the cause of greater Australian theatre, have touched off so much rancorous and vituperative criticism in sections of the Press that the creative merits of the proposals, based on the practical experience of 12 years of Australian theatre development, may have become clouded.

The unwillingness or inability of so many critics of the Trust to evaluate the proposals, without also distorting them to suit small personal obsessions with recrimination and abuse, allows them little scope for honest fact-finding. Nor does it allow their less perceptive readers to grasp that the proposals are designed to ensure that the greater achievements of the Trust in many areas of theatre can be matched by full and rich accomplishment in more areas of national importance, if not in all such areas.

The Trust is grateful that the Australian Press at large shares its own preoccupation with ways and means of ensuring the greatest possible creative use of the public funds available for Australian theatre development—and grateful, too, that the Press generally recognises the proposals for a Council for the

Performing Arts as being directed precisely to that end, to greater Australian theatre in all departments of theatre.

Over the years it has not been Trust policy, as a general rule, to hurry into print with corrections or contradictions of public criticism of its work, its principles and its functioning. One reason for this is that the Trust itself has often found well-reasoned public criticism to be valuable for its own planning. Another reason, and a much more practical one, is that the 24 hours of the Trust day are for service of the Australian theatre—and this is little enough time for the theatre tasks to be done without making it less by answering all who choose to throw anti-Trust stones.

However, as some Trust Members may have become confused by recent public discussion of the Trust's work, its past and its future, this present issue of "Trust News" is devoted largely to examination of these very subjects.

- *The Trust's future, in the light of the proposals for a Council for the Performing Arts, is discussed in the main article on page 2.*
- *The problems underlying the Trust's 12 years in the largely incompatible dual roles of theatre subsidy distributor and of theatre producer are outlined by the Trust's Executive Director, Stefan Haag, in the article on pages 3 and 6.*
- *A number of specific criticisms of the Trust, chosen at random, are quoted on page 8, and the criticisms are measured against the facts which would themselves seem to challenge the validity of the particular criticisms made and to expose the scruples of the commentators to question.*

### Australian Plays

The Trust's long record of assistance to Australian playwrights is extended by the current Sydney season of the U.T.R.C. production of Alan Hopgood's topical "Private Yuk Objects" and by the current series of four Australian play programmes at Sydney's Jane Street Theatre.

## TWO FACES OF BORIS



**A** MEDALLION portrait showing the real Tsar Boris Godounov of Russia who, like England's Richard III, was once thought to have won his throne by murdering a child who stood in closer succession.



**O**UTSTANDING Australian bass-baritone, Neil Warren Smith, who has sung in every season of Trust Opera since the company's all-Mozart debut in 1956, is magnificently costumed as Boris Godounov for the Trust Opera Company's current season.



# Trust News

Editor: Lindsey Browne

SPRING EDITION, 1966

## POINTERS TO TRUST'S FUTURE

Trust Members, as a result of the Trust's requests to the Commonwealth for changes in methods of theatre subsidisation, have been among the many Australians asking how such change will affect the Trust's work in general and the rights and privileges of Members in particular.

The precise ways in which a change, if any, will be implemented is not for the Trust itself to say, because its request to the Commonwealth includes the suggestion that new methods of theatre subsidisation could most appropriately be determined by an interim committee of inquiry set up at the Government's own discretion as to personnel and terms of reference.

However, it is appropriate to outline here for the guidance of Members some of the changes which the Trust regards as being a desirable outcome from any such inquiry and to emphasise the Trust's own belief that, with judicious changes in its functions and operations, the services at present rendered to Members will be enlarged both in range and in quality.

To enable Members to appraise this and other issues for themselves this editorial presents, in outline, four main groups of facts and opinions, as presented by the Chairman of the Trust, Dr. H. C. Coombs, at the last annual meeting of Trust Members. First, the present functions of the Trust are briefly outlined in 10 categories. Second, four main reasons are advanced as to why there are important pitfalls in this manner of operation. Third, the broad proposals made to the Government are stated. Fourth, there is an outline under six heads of the future functions which the Trust itself would propose as part of any major change in the methods of public subsidisation of the performing arts.

### Present Functions

- Advising Commonwealth, State and Municipal Governments on the financial needs of the theatrical groups for which it is responsible and allocating the funds available to them and to other bodies applying to the Trust.
- The mobilisation of financial support from individuals and from business enterprises.
- The establishment and development of theatrical-producing units either on a national or regional basis and making appropriate arrangements for their administration and the production and presentation of their work.
- Co-ordinating the work of these units, especially in respect of their claims on theatres, orchestras, etc., arising out of

interstate touring activities and, more specifically, for concerted presentations during Festivals, such as the Adelaide Festival, the Perth Festival, etc.

- The provision of services, such as administration, accounting, workshops, wardrobes, international representation, for these units and other organizations engaged in the presentation of theatre performances.
- The provision of specialised advertising and promotion facilities.
- Collaborating with other organizations, such as the Arts Council, Adult Education bodies, etc., in the promotion and support of presentation of theatre by touring companies in country districts and for schools.
- Development (in collaboration where practicable with established educational institutions) of schools for the professional training of theatre artists, administrators, etc.
- Acting as bearer of the residual financial risk for all producing organizations associated with it in so far as these arise from departures from estimating of expenditure and receipts (including box office) occurring after a project has been approved.
- Acting as entrepreneur for visits of overseas attractions touring Australia and projecting the Australian theatre image overseas by disseminating information, or on occasions arranging the visit of theatrical attractions overseas.

### Some Disadvantages

Of this range of functions, experience has shown that—

- Its magnitude and complexity have placed a great strain on our administrative machine which had to be built up over the life of the Trust—particularly as people with both knowledge of theatre and administrative capacity are rare in Australia.
- It has grown to a scale of operation which is placing an increasingly difficult responsibility for control and supervision on the part-time board.
- There is a danger that the degree of centralisation of artistic, executive and financial responsibility involved will militate against initiative, creativeness and enthusiasm in particular regions or performing groups.
- Fears have been expressed that the size and influence of the Trust may have militated against the chances of theatre groups, outside the ambit of the Trust, receiving fair consideration in relation to the distribution of public funds.

### Board Decisions

In the light of these experiences, the Trust Board has decided—

- To discuss with the Commonwealth Government whether the functions of advising the Commonwealth Government on the financial provision for the performing arts and of administering the

allocation of funds provided might not be entrusted to a Council for the Performing Arts. These discussions would need to cover the appropriate form, functions, and methods of operation of such a Council and the relationship it should have to governments, the Trust and other theatrical organizations. It would be necessary to explore the best method by which the residual financial responsibility for supported ventures can be carried without waste and extravagance while leaving the producing organizations with an incentive to efficiency.

- To develop further the policy of entrusting responsibility for production to affiliated but independent organizations with their own boards and administrative and professional staff; in particular to establish in collaboration with other interested organizations—

An Australian Opera Foundation to accept responsibility for developing a continuously employed opera company based in Sydney;

A theatre orchestra to reduce the burden at present falling on the A.B.C. symphony orchestras.

- To modify and develop the organization of the Trust so that its functions will be predominantly to service and co-ordinate the work of associated bodies and to organize tours both in Australia and abroad. A more complete statement of these functions is set out in the attachment.

### Future Functions

- To provide services for bodies in receipt of Government grants on an agreed basis; these services should include—
  - The conduct of workshops, wardrobes, etc.;
  - Accounting;
  - Overseas representation;
  - Recruitment and training of professional and administrative personnel;
  - Specialised advertising and promotion facilities.
- To co-ordinate the programmes of the affiliated enterprises and act for them in negotiations for use of orchestras, theatre space, etc., arising from touring and other joint ventures.
- To act as entrepreneur and organizer of—
  - Interstate tours and exchange visits, festivals involving a number of affiliated enterprises and similar projects;
  - Country and other intrastate tours conducted in association with other organizations such as the Arts Council;
  - Australian tours of overseas enterprises arranged by the Trust, either alone or in association with other managements;
  - Overseas tours of affiliated enterprises.
- To co-ordinate and, where desirable, organize appeals and fund-raising activities for its affiliated enterprises: the fact that donations to the Trust are allowable deductions for income tax purposes makes it advantageous that it should be the recipient of funds raised for use by its affiliated bodies. It is also important to avoid overlap and competitive approaches.
- To arrange in association with other interested bodies, proper facilities for the training of professional artists, both in established schools and institutes and also by special on-the-job training.
- To act as one (but not the exclusive) source of information and advice to the Council for the Performing Arts, if it is established, and to other bodies advising governments, especially in relation to the appropriate development of the theatre in Australia.



# UNDERLYING REASONS FOR TRUST'S APPROACH TO GOVERNMENT

by STEFAN HAAG  
Executive Director, A.E.T.T.

**RECOMMENDATIONS** by the Australian Elizabethan Theatre Trust to the Commonwealth Government that a Council for the Performing Arts should be established, and that the Trust itself should function in a different way than hitherto, all stem from the Trust's appreciation that the present methods of theatre subsidisation cannot be made to work adequately in relation to the nation's demonstrable theatrical needs.

**MUCH** has been achieved by the Trust in its 11 years, much is still being achieved, much will yet be done—but the experiences of these 11 years have shown us unequivocally that, where funds are modest and tasks are so multifarious, it is not within the capacities of a single organisation like the Trust to approach its many mutually competing duties without some measure of temporary expedient, uneasy compromise or occasional neglect of Peter for the welfare of Paul.

Doing without some things in order to afford others is as much the experience of the Australian Elizabethan Theatre Trust as it is the experience of almost every Australian family—and the Trust need make no more apologies than the average housewife need make that, in making every penny of income and every hour of effort perform the purchasing powers of double, the same penny has not stretched to threepence.

**OVER** recent months increasing press space has been allotted to the performing arts in general and to the Elizabethan Theatre Trust in particular, these commentaries having often been of a critical nature and of various degrees of responsibility.

Indeed, since the Trust Chairman's announcement of the Trust recommendations to the Government, hardly a day has passed by without some reference to this subject or some associated issue being made in one publication or another. And, as far too many of these comments have fastened to theatrical matters out of their proper context, or to some single aspect of theatre with "convenient" disregard for the other aspects, or to assertions and assumptions disprovable by fact, there has been undue clouding of the basic principles, purposes and necessity of the Trust's recommendations to the Commonwealth Government.

Some of the comments have reminded me rather of Doctor Johnson's cuttlefish which, by blackening all the water about it, expects to conceal itself from sight.

It therefore seems pertinent that I should attempt to sketch here the relevant background to the Trust's 11 years in Australian theatre, and to indicate some of the basic problems of these 11 years along with the achievements. For it is this pattern of success and failure which underlies the Trust's recommendations to the Commonwealth.

**EARLY** in its history the Trust made the decision, possibly momentous in present-day debate, that it would enter the producing field. Consternation was

immediately aroused among most of the producing organisations then in existence, their hopes of subsidy-rescue from years of struggle being set back by this. There can be no doubt that in this decision, necessary as it appeared to many, the foundation was laid for much of the continual and increasing ill-will towards the Trust.

Rightly or wrongly, this Trust decision sprang from a belief that standards of peak professionalism should be sought in theatre and that no existing body in theatre production had the capacity for achievement at this topmost level of artistry. The fact that the Trust was a public company, with directors quite free to arrive at such a decision after weighing all factors, did not alleviate the disappointment.

Initially, the Trust formed drama companies which toured the nation. These touring ventures included famous Australians brought back from overseas and the touring companies were scheduled to play in large commercial theatres. Shortly after, the Elizabethan Trust Opera Company was formed to

present annual seasons in all State capitals.

**A**LL of this, with the initial public excitement ballooned by "new ventures" and "brighter future" talk, drowned the protesting cries of indignation and hurt. The protestations were further submerged with the growing success of "The Summer of the 17th Doll", not only because of its artistic meaning in terms of national pride, but also because of its successful export to London and later, less successfully, to New York.

Soon after came the establishment of the Trust Players, a truly professional repertory venture with permanent employment for actors in productions of sizeable scale. In addition to opera, these early years of the Trust helped to bring into being "The Tintookies", now a presentation by the Marionette Theatre of Australia, but then, as now, of unequalled standard. This Trust period also saw the beginnings of the Young Elizabethan Players, a most laudable enterprise planned to develop the love of Shakespeare in our schools.

*Continued on page 6*

## Globetrot for Members

**A**USTRALIANS joining the Trust as Members by October 26, 1966, will become eligible with existing Members to participate in the round-the-world tour for Members which, on present proposals, will take place from about April 26, 1967, to August 26, 1967.

It is a requirement of the affinity group travel rules of the international airlines that the benefits of such travel, with round-world fare savings of about \$360 per person, can only be extended to persons who have been Members of their organization for at least six months prior to date of departure or to persons who belong to the Member's usual household.

From the various pertinent opinions expressed by interested Members, a travel schedule is now recommended as follows:—

- Sydney (depart by Qantas late April), Tahiti (two days), Acapulco (one day), Mexico City (four days), New York (10 days—in the spring weather of early May), London (seven weeks).
- London (depart mid-July), Paris (four days), Heidelberg-Mannheim (four days), Stuttgart-Munich (four days), Vienna (eight days), Verona-Florence (five days), Rome (five days), Athens (three days), Hong Kong (four days), Sydney (return about August 25).

Members are reminded that, to be eligible for the cheap group-travel fares, it is obligatory that all travellers in the party shall travel as a group on the basic flights to London and from London. Members are free to arrange side excursions from any of the ports of call in the stop-over periods determined for each port, any such side excursions being at the Member's expense.

Many inquiries have been made as to what accommodation arrangements will be made. Members may make their own accommodation bookings through travel agents of their own choice, or the Trust on request will, through the travel agent engaged for detailed arrangements in connection with this tour, assist intending travellers to make accommodation bookings at or about the level of cost and/or quality envisaged in each individual Member's travel budget. Payment for accommodation, meals and domestic service is entirely the responsibility of the intending traveller.

The overall cost of the tour will vary with individuals, but it is estimated that travellers could enjoy the tour with pleasant and comfortable accommodation and ample sightseeing and entertainment for an overall cost of about \$2,000 per person, including the basic round-world group-travel air fare of about \$880.



# "TINTOOKIES" AS AMBA

**P**ROPOSALS for the "Tintookies" company of puppets to visit a number now being implemented by officers of the Marionette Theatre of Australia and Mr. Peter Scriven are associated.

The tour which will include India, Ceylon, Pakistan, Burma, Laos, Cambodia, the Philippines, Malaysia, Singapore, Thailand and Indonesia is beginning

The shows being planned for the tour include "Little Fella Bindi", which was first presented to enormous audiences throughout Australia in 1958, and a new full-length musical puppet-play in which two pup-puppets (a very pukka poodle and a bitzer Irish terrier) set out in Burke and Wills transcontinental style to explore Australia.

With music based on early Australian folk-songs, accompanied by an orchestra including tea-chest bass and gumleaf, the two pup-puppet explorers pass through an enormous variety of Australian landscape and contend with all kinds of indigenous animals and all kinds of indigenous disaster from drought to flood.

Special techniques have been worked out by the Marionette Theatre of Australia to enable the two touring shows to be presented in the languages of the countries to be visited and to ensure the famous "Tintookie" synchronisation of action and dialogue, even where the puppet manipulators themselves do not know the language of the particular presentation.

These new techniques are thought to be another world "first" for the go-ahead "Tintookies" organisation, whose record of ingenious innovation is already impressively long.

The title of the new production is "The Explorers — a Musical Journey".

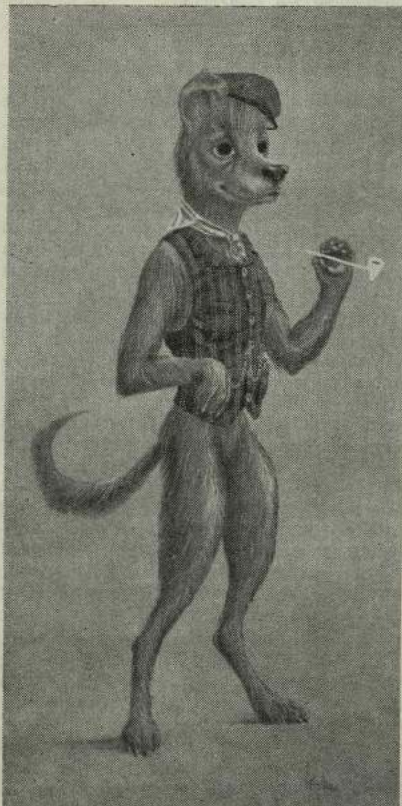


**Wilfred Asplin**  
designer of puppets

The illustrations on this page show some of the characters who appear in "The Explorers".



**Admiral Cat**



**Irish Explorer**



**Members of the Royal Society for Exploration**



# ASADORS

Australia's neighbour countries are in which the Trust, the Arts Council

lia, Hong Kong, South Korea, Japan, October, 1966.



**Max Hurley**  
designer of costumes

It is understood that the Marionette Theatre will begin an all-States tour on its return from overseas in 1967.



**Governor Barker**

## AUSTRALIAN BALLET TOURING COUNTRY

**EXTENSIVE** tours of Australian country areas are now being completed by two units of the Australian Ballet following the company's main capital-city tour for 1966.

Paris to Pirie, Berlin to Bega, Copenhagen to Cairns—this has been the mission of this dynamic non-stop company of dancers over the last 12 months, a mission which is to display to all Australians the fresh and buoyant artistry which experience in the international arena has given to it so bountifully.

The two touring groups of the Australian Ballet, one known as the northern group and one known as the southern group, are visiting the following centres:

**Northern Tour:** Newcastle, Wyong, Bowral, Wollongong, Bega, Nowra, Goulburn, Wagga, Griffith, Orange, Gulgandra, Tamworth, Grafton, Lismore, Toowoomba, Warwick, Biloela, Rockhampton, Proserpine, Townsville, Ingham, Cairns, Innisfail, Ayr, Mackay, Gladstone, Maryborough and Nambour.

**Southern Tour:** Launceston, Hobart, Mt. Gambier, Bordertown, Binaroo, Berri, Waikerie, Elizabeth, Port Lincoln, Cowell, Whyalla, Port Augusta, Woomera, Port Pirie, York Town, Clare, Kadina, Potabah, Broken Hill, Mildura, Benalla, Albury, Wangaratta, Sheppar-

ton, Bendigo, Horsham, Hamilton, Warrnambool, Ballarat and Geelong.

Headed by Marilyn Jones, Kathleen Geldard, Warren de Maria, Robyn Croft, Kelvin Coe, Gerard Sibbritt and Carolyn Rappel, the northern tourists are drawing their repertoire from "Raymonda" (Act III), "Jazz Spectrum", "The Lady and the Fool" and diversissements.

The southern group has done a television production of Robert Helpmann's "The Display" in Melbourne between September 26 and October 8. The northern group prepared a programme of ballet highlights for television when in Melbourne from October 10 to October 22. The television productions are under the personal supervision of Robert Helpmann.

**Following completion of the country tours on October 22, the Australian Ballet goes into rehearsal for return seasons in Adelaide and Melbourne during the November-December period.**

## MEMBERS MAY SEE FILM OF STAGE IMMORTALS

**SARAH BERNHARDT, Ellen Terry, Eleanora Duse, Matheson Lang, Forbes-Robertson, Frank Benson, Herbert Tree**—these and other all-time "greats" of the stage appear in a film especially compiled in Britain by the National Film Archive in association with the Royal Shakespeare Theatre.

The Trust is hopeful, following preliminary negotiations with the film's owners, of obtaining this unique film document for screening at special Trust Members' Evenings during 1967. The film has an introduction by the outstanding English actor Paul Rogers, who toured Australia for the Trust in "Hamlet" and "The Relapse" in the later nineteen-fifties.

Members' Evenings have, as always, proved to be a particularly popular aspect of the Trust's activities in the current year.

In **Victoria**, two performances of "The Hollow Crown" were specially staged for Members during August. These presentations were under the supervision of the Trust's Victorian Manager, Mr. James Mills.

In **Sydney**, Members have been entertained at three special evenings thus far in 1966: the Opera-in-a-Nutshell stage presentation of "The Barber of Seville" at Anzac House Auditorium in May, the famous Powell-Pressburger film of "The Tales of Hoffmann" at the Sydney University Union Theatre in June, and the Bolshoi-supported film of Tchaikovsky's "Queen of Spades" at the Ucho Theatre in early August when Trust Opera conductor Denis Vaughan was guest speaker.

In **Canberra**, during May, an early-evening party was arranged at the Canberra Theatre Centre for A.C.T. Members to meet the dancers of the Australian Ballet.

In **Brisbane**, during July, a similar party for Members, for dancers of the Australian Ballet and for the casts of the plays in the Interstate Theatre Season, was given in the foyer of Her Majesty's Theatre by courtesy of the theatre manager, Mr. George Pullen.

Many Members in the three Eastern States and Canberra have inquired why there has not been, during 1966, a special Members' Evening devoted to screening the Australian award-winning films of 1965.

The Australian Film Institute which adjudicates these annual awards for Australian-made films has this year set back the adjudication period from Easter to September and, once the awards are announced, the Trust will negotiate with the successful producers for the pleasure of being able to screen the "Oscar" films to Members as in 1965.

The supper and catering arrangements at all Trust Members' evening have been first-class, and opportunity is taken here to record the Trust's appreciation of the services extended.



## APPROACH TO GOVERNMENT

*Continued from page 3*

But, at the very brink of breaking new territory with the all-Australian musical, "Lola Montez", the first signs of big pitfalls emerged for the Trust.

Four years had passed—four years of "going from strength to strength"—four years of growth and of proving in terms of the Trust's announced aim of bringing new standards of theatre to the nation. All this progress and then, in 1959, a bombshell! A scheduled season of opera had to be cancelled because of lack of funds.

**I**F the Trust's financial resources could have been extended to meet growth at that time, much of the subsequent Trust course may have been different. However, the Trust's board of directors, consisting of citizens acutely aware of their responsibility in the handling of public money, determined that to merit the continuing confidence of Governments, it was mandatory that the Trust should live within its means. Governments had variously agreed to make sums available annually to the Trust for maximum development in the theatre arts, but when at this point growth had overtaken resources the board's decision was to curtail commitments and to stay within the limits of revenue.

With the cancellation of the 1959 opera season, the first whispers of failure were heard and it was not long before "failure" was being proclaimed from other quarters as the Trust Players in Sydney absorbed the major portion of the Trust's budgeted funds for drama, cries of dissatisfaction from some other States became increasingly audible. To meet the expectations of these States the Trust sent the Trust Players on interstate tours. These tours, being of a fairly large nature, proved extremely costly. This cost, along with the conviction that other States had a right to professional repertory theatre, led to the disbandment of this most worthy company.

**H**OW the nation's drama needs were to be effectively served had to be drastically re-appraised. Initially, there were subsidies in 1959 to the U.T.R.C. in Melbourne and, subsequently, to the Playhouse in Perth. Additionally, national tours of such plays as "Saint Joan" and "A Man for All Seasons" were undertaken. But, in 1963, the Trust committed itself to a clear-cut regional policy in drama which was directed to permanent professional operation in each capital city. This was a policy within which resources were scaled to operations which, if outwardly "small-scale", had chances of throwing sound roots into the various communities, and of forming a cadre for eventual growth either in size or in number, according to the measurable needs of the various communities.

While this policy has distinct virtues and advantages both artistically and financially, it has also been the case of increasing criticism of the Trust's performance in drama. This criticism, of course, stems largely from the fact that each community is usually only aware of the drama expression in its own immediate surrounds, which means that a "small-scale" drama operation, in the case of a city like Sydney, will be felt to compare unfavourably with such large-scale operations as those of the Trust Players.

The present policy for drama ensures the all important element of continuity of performance in drama without loss of standard in performance. Perhaps there is loss of

scale which is, at all event, merely a relative venture. In addition, this policy extracts more theatrical value from the dollar than had ever been found possible in any touring company exercise. The subsidy required for each member of the audience in regional theatres is about 23 cents, as against 63 cents subsidy per patron found to be necessary for such a touring production as, say, the "A Man for All Seasons" unit. Moreover, these drama ventures have offered more work to the Australian acting profession than for very many years.

Over the years countless attempts have been made to find the elusive phenomenon, "the great Australia playwright", or at least a successor to Ray Lawler's "The Doll". Some plays since "The Doll" have come close perhaps, but these might be counted on the fingers of a sawmiller's hand. The plays of Patrick White, for instance, may well be found in the long run to have considerably more durable values than even those of "The Doll". But, by and large, the non-emergence of estimable Australian plays has been buckpassed to the Trust by many a person slow-witted enough to grasp the obvious—that nobody can switch on creative excellence to order. From the moment that Trust growth had to be curtailed to keep within the resources at its disposal, fuel for criticism became more plentiful, the more so as the needs of the theatre arts themselves became continuously greater.

**T**HE Trust's basic problems became even more complex in 1960 with the death of Edouard Borovansky and with the decision of J. C. Williamson Theatres Ltd., in the face of increasing losses on the Borovansky Company, to withdraw from its role of custodian of classical ballet in Australia. These factors resulted in the Trust's accepting responsibility also for ballet development in Australia with consequent additional drains on its resources.

Any delay in the decision to enter the ballet field by the Trust could have seriously jeopardised the achievements attained by Borovansky over the years.

Although Government grants were increased, largely because of these new ballet commitments, these increases were both too late and too small. They came into effective operation 12 months after the establishment of The Australian Ballet and, because they barely covered the costs of this additional responsibility, neither the drama nor the opera areas could be husbanded for noticeable growth.

As the Trust continued to confine itself to small-environment activity in drama, various semi-professional and amateur organisations, working on a comparable scale, felt renewed justification in their claims for subsidies from the Trust and an intensified sense of grievance when these claims could not be satisfied. Concurrently with these eventualities in ballet and drama, opera was basically confined to spasmodic operation, which prevented it from capturing a solid and faithful audience and, indeed, brought some fading of the widely held hope that Australian opera had a big future.

**B**ALETT is a kind of artistic expression which cannot be adequately exercised without continuity and The Australian Ballet, once started, has been courageously maintained by the Trust in the full knowledge that such full support for ballet could cause increasing dissatisfaction in the other theatre arts, but also in the full belief that by maintaining the company a standard of performance could be attained which would itself justify the support.

Further problems, intensifying as Trust activities increased over the years, were posed by the question of the availability of commercial theatres for the major presentations of the Trust. In opera, particularly, this problem was never less than formidable because commitments as to opera seasons had to be made at least a year ahead, mainly in order to ensure the use in opera of the A.B.C. orchestras. But such commitments, so far ahead of events, would have imposed too rigid a schedule on the commercial managements from whom theatres might be rented. Understandably enough, these commercial managements felt that fluidity in the planning and promotion of their own ventures could be jeopardised if they were to accept such theatre bookings from the Trust. So it transpired that, while the Trust enjoyed a degree of independence in Sydney, because of its lease of the Elizabethan Theatre, Newtown, it was often a desperate house-hunt in other cities, Melbourne proving particularly difficult.

**T**O a degree this problem was ameliorated by the willingness of the Garnet Carroll organisation to commit itself to Trust bookings of the Princess Theatre a long time ahead on the understanding that the Trust would share the responsibility of gaps in theatre bookings thus created. Many of the singers employed in the intermittent Trust opera seasons found employment in the Garnet Carroll musicals in between whiles, but the Trust's association with the Carroll organisation was continually criticised. Even though the Trust participation was not always obligatory in these attractions the net cost to the Trust of all associated ventures has averaged less than \$8,000 per annum. The problem of theatre availability will not be solved absolutely until State theatres are built in the major cities of the nation, but the problem is greatly reduced by an agreement now reached, with the help of the Victorian and N.S.W. Governments, between the Trust and J. C. Williamson Theatres Ltd. which guarantees the availability of the Williamson theatres for Trust attractions.

One of the important lessons learnt from the Trust experiences of the past 11 years is that the dual character it has had, as a grant-giving and producing body, will inevitably give rise to discontent. This duality of function has always carried with it the grave risk that the performance of one of the functions to any level of adequate effectiveness will penalise the performance of the other. It is the case of the Irishman who cuts a piece off the bottom of his blanket in order to lengthen it at the top.

Another lesson is that, being responsible for development of all theatre arts for the whole of Australia, the Trust tended to be viewed as a monopoly and lost much goodwill accordingly. Moreover, the vastness of its responsibilities also meant that, as recipient of State and civic moneys as well as Commonwealth funds, many of its decisions were and would be obligatory rather than by choice.

**G**IVEN capable artistic direction, it is only by assured permanency of operation that a producing body can have an opportunity to achieve excellence, and the Trust has given more than a little proof that new standards of theatre, comparable with overseas achievement, can be attained where adequate resources are available. Certainly, also, the Trust has brought to Australians at large and to the government and civic leaders a greater awareness of the part which the theatre arts can and should play in our community.

Recognition by the Trust of the need for a revision of the processes of subsidisation



of these theatre arts has been crystallising over the last three or four years. Hence this recent request for Commonwealth Government consideration of proposals for a Council for the Performing Arts. The proposal is that such a council should take the responsibility for allocating grants to autonomous theatrical producing bodies throughout Australia.

It has been further recommended that the operational scope of the Elizabethan Theatre Trust should be modified so that, primarily, the Trust's responsibilities will be those which are best carried by a federal body. This is in contrast to the producing bodies which, as recommended, would all be deemed to be State bodies, although some, such as The Australian Ballet and the Opera Company, might initially at least have to exercise a federal function.

These recommendations to the Government, as outlined, will readily be recognised as an attempt to retain all the positive results won for Australian theatre by the Trust over the years and, at the same time, to eliminate or to minimise all such problems as stem from the present manner of Trust functioning.

I must admit to some disappointment with much of the published critical reaction to the Trust's recommendations, especially as many of the proposals have themselves been the core of published criticism of the Trust in the past. Indeed, there seems to be some scope for asking whether some of those who have criticised vehemently in the past did so merely for the sake of criticising, and not at all from any genuine desire to win a more favourable climate for the theatre arts. Bitterness appears to have run so wild in some recent criticisms that the writers have blinded themselves, and have allowed the simple and reputable facts of the Trust's recommendations to vanish from sight.

A case is being made out by one widely publicised critic against the proposed Council for the Performing Arts in that he strongly recommends there should be a full Arts Council established as it exists in Great Britain. Frankly, this baffles me for a number of reasons. Firstly, does this critic suggest that our recommendations for the performing arts are automatically no good because they are not part of a more comprehensive council, in which case I fail to see validity in this argument.

It is certainly acceptable that he should argue that there should be a full Arts Council in Australia, but isn't it indefensible when he argues that, because no full Arts Council is recommended, the Trust recommendation for a Council for the Performing Arts is automatically bad? As to the pros and cons of an Arts Council for the Arts versus a Council for the Performing Arts only, my own views will be held over for some other occasion, but I would like reasons why some critics recommend an Arts Council on the lines of the Arts Council of Great Britain particularly. There are many forms of theatre subsidisation in the world. Why pick this particular one?

Why—for that matter—belittle recommendations which arise from specific experience of the unique circumstances in which Australian theatre makes its way? Australia is a country of large geographical size. It is inhabited by a small population administered by a system of State and Federal Governments. It has the peculiarity of two large major cities equal in status, with the national capital on a very different scale. Anything less like Great Britain I cannot imagine, and yet we hear the arbitrary argument that Great Britain has all the Australian answers! Surely it is not beyond Australians to evolve methods of theatre subsidisation which will be viable within the unique conditions prevailing in this country.

## 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 \$7 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

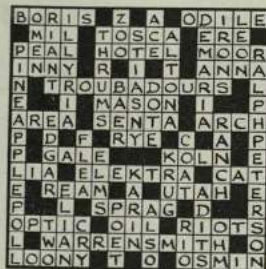
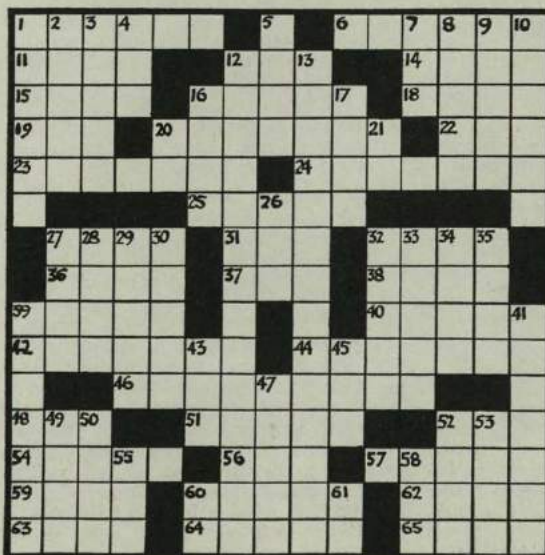
1. Choreographer.
6. Romantic quarter of Algiers.
11. Angle between leaf and stem.
12. Barney's mate in "The Doll".
14. Timber.
15. Lose vitality.
16. Whose mate is the title role of Dame Ethel Smyth's opera?
18. Insects.
19. Nothing is the Shakespearean reason for much.
20. Famous Napoleonic novel.
22. Said in French.
23. Puccini opera (two words).
24. Tenor hero of "Trovatore".
25. Tone poem by Rimsky-Korsakov.
27. Applaud!
31. Beard of the corn.
32. Disloyal unionist.
36. Miss Doolittle?
37. "Le ??? d'Ys", opera by Lalo.
38. Eagle.
39. Influential organisation in Asia.
40. Expelled.
42. Malevolent Rhine-maiden?
44. Show business's most famous escapist.
46. Designer of the Trust's "Boris Godounov".
48. Pistol by his side quite often.

51. Overhead.
52. Old production which wouldn't hold water.
54. Performing.
56. Soprano character in "Mastersingers".
57. A Tsar.
59. Middle of the kernel.
60. Elaborate operatic aria.
62. She's left in Berlioz's "The Trojans".
63. Donna.
64. Town in Burma.
65. Opening scene of "Man and Superman".

### DOWN

1. How a deadly femme may be overweight with drink.
2. Rust, for instance.
3. Famous Leningrad ballet.
4. French island.
5. The last of Mozart's Da Ponte operas.
7. Health resort.
8. Little fellow set to tour Asian cities.
9. Caper like Aldous Huxley's Hay.
10. American film-star recently here for poetry readings.
12. Australian mezzo-soprano singing Marina in "Boris" (two words).
13. Williamson opera (four words).
16. First name of composer of "Bluebeard's Castle".
17. Close.
20. Dorothy Lamour's monogram in 550.

21. Printing measure lost by Rico Caruso.
26. Brace.
27. Tony fell for her in Shakespeare.
28. Baron Munchausen was one.
29. Cultural influence in some of the Folklórico tableaux.
30. Mate for Francesca.
32. Asian capital probably to be visited by the "Tintookies".
33. Unrefined.
34. Against.
35. To be in past form.
39. Fat chance you have of seeing him in Verdi's "Falstaff" though.
41. Leading Australian stage designer, as in "Royal Hunt of the Sun".
43. Girl's name.
45. Royal honour held by Helpmann and Hammond.
47. One of the U.K.'s greatest musicologists.
49. Times gone by.
50. Excavation.
52. Dry.
53. The Valkies can.
55. Kelly.
58. Poem.
60. State what remains when Sparta doesn't take its part.
61. Monogram of the composer of "Devil Take Her" may be worth its salt.



### SEPTEMBER WINNERS

Mrs. R. S. WILKINSON, Broadview, S.A.  
Miss J. TOMKINSON, Box 2270, G.P.O., Sydney.  
Mr. J. M. HONNOR, Bentleigh, Vic.  
Mrs. T. KENNARD, Mosman, N.S.W.  
Miss B. YOUNG, Newport, Vic.  
Mrs. B. SHARP, Double Bay, N.S.W.

Trust public relations staff will contact the above to arrange dates and delivery of prizes.



# ANTI-TRUST SNIPING

**A** NUMBER of random comments on the Trust, all of them critical either in open terms or by innuendo, and all of them astray, are reprinted here to exemplify the waywardness with which some public critics of the Trust choose to ignore or to distort facts, or even to switch their own ground for the sake of piling up abuse.

The fact that the abuse is usually dressed up spuriously in the guise of "reasoned argument", and bids to be accepted as such, is merely evidence of irrational rancour of a kind that could hardly be contended by any critic with genuine concern for discovering ways and means of ensuring a fuller theatrical life for all Australians.

The erratic comments which are printed below, all of them apparently from critics more concerned with giving evidence of heat rather than light, indicate an increasingly pernicious "yellow-press" tendency to denounce the Trust's work on mere hearsay, whisper, grudge, clique loyalty or supposition. This is not good enough for a cause as vitally important to the nation as subsidised theatre.

In some instances, even some of the more responsible critics have caught a touch of this blight—as when they affect an air of patronising astonishment when confronted by any one of the Trust's major successes. Even success is used as fuel for the retrospective sneer and the slight, it being a notorious fact of Australian theatre criticism in general that the critics are fearfully nervous of enthusiasm or praise, this signalling the prevalently immature attitude that to praise with wholeheartedness and affection is somehow immature and juvenile and that to blame is grown-up and worldly-wise. This kind of attitude, fully extended in the direction in which it points, would virtually destroy the very arts out of which the professional critic finds his own livelihood! Is he so lazy and apathetic regarding his true responsibilities as to align himself with this kind of slow suicide?

**T**HE carelessness with fact in the examples quoted in italics hereunder would tend to suggest that too many of the Trust's critics, private or professional, don't give a tinker's damn for the true cause of Australian theatre or for the Trust's unremitting services to that cause. It is quite certain that great Australian theatre will be made only by citizens who care very deeply about the subject, and, if newspaper editors themselves care about it, it is time that they scrutinised very carefully the people to whom they offer their columns as a public forum.

Now for some random samples of variously misguided comment:

*"At least 62% of the money (granted to the Trust) is used for administrative purposes . . . The Australian Ballet has an administrative organisation that would exceed in numbers the performers."*

—Harold White in the Melbourne "Herald", June 29.

What blatant nonsense this is! Administrative costs of the Trust in 1965 were \$214,000, representing approximately 11% of gross expenditure of \$1,946,000 in the year. The percentage of administrative cost to total expenditure is much lower at the Trust than in almost any Australian business of comparable size. The Trust's administration cost in 1965 represented approximately 30% of grants totalling \$700,500.

The Australian Ballet has 40 dancers and a staff of 15, including the Artistic Directors, the musical staff, the administration and the technical staff.

*"The Government would be well advised not to accept the proposals of the Trust. They amount to no more than an admission of failure by a million-dollar Trust enterprise—operating primarily on taxpayers' money."*

—Francis Evers, drama critic, in "The Australian", June 21.

More nonsense! The alleged "admission of failure" is in fact a straightforward affirmation, against a considerable if not complete background of success within the Trust's resources, that more complete success may be won by other means of subsidy distribution. As to the "million-dollar Trust enterprise—operating primarily on taxpayers' money", the figures already given above (1965 expenditure of \$1,900,000 and 1965 subsidies of \$700,500) will show that by far the lion's share of the Trust's operation is financed by box-office.

*"The inquiry conducted by Tyrone Guthrie . . . virtually suggested that the Trust should close up shop."*

—Michael Carr in "The Australian", July 14.

Tyrone Guthrie suggested nothing of the kind, for the simple reason that he investigated the question of an Australian National Theatre for the Chifley Government in 1948 (and advised against it) whereas the Trust was not formed until six years later — 1954.

*"More than \$60,000 was spent on costumes alone for the ballet 'Raymonda'."*

—Francis Evers, drama critic, in "The Australian", June 11.

This is part of this critic's clumsy attempts to prove wanton extravagance on the Trust's part. Costume costs of this magnitude are by no means unusual in presentations at international levels of quality and prestige. In any case, the costumes for "Raymonda" cost less than half of the amount stated. The great public support for this full-length ballet, entirely new to Australians, indicated that its cost was an excellent investment. If the box-office is held to have the final decisive opinion about the ultimate merits of a theatrical presentation, it is obvious that the alleged waste on "Ray-

monda" was anything else but! In fairness, it should be mentioned that the same critic, writing in another context, has applauded the fruitfulness of Trust expenditure on The Australian Ballet.

*"It is time theatregoers demanded financial support for drama instead of allowing all available funds to be poured into the bottomless pits of opera and ballet (in which almost all Elizabethan money has been tossed)."*

—Robert W. Comsell in "The Australian", July 14.

The Trust spent \$492,000 on drama in 1964 and \$361,000 in 1965. In 1964, 1,069 drama performances were given as against 154 ballet performances and 339 opera performances. In 1965, 1,382 drama performances were given as against 146 ballet performances and (this being the year of the Sutherland-Williamson Opera season) 113 opera performances. Does this really suggest that "all available funds" are being poured into opera and ballet? Of course not! Does it suggest that drama is without financial support from the Trust? Same comment.

*"Was the recent tour of the so-called Athens Drama Company well advised? This scratch company, including raw students, was ballyhooed by the Trust as if it were the Greek National Theatre itself."*

—Francis Evers in "The Australian", June 27.

The "so-called" drama critic, reviewing the presentations of this same company at the opening of its Australian tour in Perth, said: "Well-produced by Costis Michaelides", "... his masterly work with the chorus", "... highly effective choreography", "... a convincing performance from Gregorias Vafias", "Miranda Murat . . . a formidable actress, as commanding . . . as she was tender . . . beautifully played". There's nothing in any of this sumptuous applause to suggest "a scratch company" or "raw students". What, then, occasioned the "so-called" drama critic's subsequent change of attitude? Was it just the same old game of expediency in hunting for sticks to club the Trust with?

It would be possible to continue in this vein for page after page, but surely the point is already made — that there is a clear tendency among a section of Trust critics to let their obsession with mere abusiveness run away with the truth. This, it is repeated, is not good enough for so vital an Australian cause as subsidised theatre nor for all of those Australians, whether Trust personnel or not, who are dedicated to finding the best possible procedures whereby public money may create maximum theatre value for all.