

Trust News

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

DECEMBER, 1966. Price 10c

BALLET TO TOUR LATIN AMERICA IN 1967

THE Australian Ballet will tour Latin American cities as far as Santiago in Chile during 1967, following its appearances in Montreal during May as Australia's major cultural representatives at "EXPO '67".

With Caracas, Sao Paulo, Rio de Janeiro, Mexico City and Lima among the cities to be visited, the company will virtually be making its own "Royal Hunt of the Sun". No company of Australians has ever visited these cities before and, unlike the ill-fated party of Australian emigrants who sought to establish the Utopian settlement of "New Australia" in Paraguay some 70 years ago, the Australian dancers are expected to go from success to success, all to the greater enhancement of their own artistry, to Australia's diplomatic image abroad and to the future enjoyment of audiences in Australia.

Negotiations are already proceeding for visits by the company to Japan in 1968, and a tour of other Asian countries in the same period.

More going to Montreal in May, 1967, the company will tour New Zealand, where the cities to be played include Christchurch, Auckland and Wellington, and then to Honolulu.

The repertoire for the overseas tour will include the classics "Raymonda" and "Giselle", the contemporary works "Elektra" and "The Lady and the Fool" and three of the original works pioneered in Australia by this company—"The Display", "Yugen" and "Melbourne Cup". "Pineapple Poll" and "Jazz Suite" will be added to this reper-



FORTUNATE PERTH

How Perth's New Fortune Theatre will look to the performers during the stage performances there for the 1967 Perth Festival. Designed as an authentic Elizabethan Playhouse the New Fortune will house the John Tasker production of Peter Shaffer's "Royal Hunt of the Sun" during January-February. Other features of the 1967 Perth Festival are discussed on Page 2 of this edition.

toire for the N.Z. segment of the tour.

It is expected that the Australian Ballet will mount a new series of programmes for its 1967 tour of Australian cities following the completion of its Latin American engagements in June and July.

For this second overseas tour (the first having been to the Commonwealth

Arts Festival in Britain in 1965), the company will consist of 60 persons—46 dancers and 14 staff members, including those responsible for production, promotion, wardrobe, electrics and technical requirements.

Mildura's Theatre

GIVING a lead to many other Australian cities, the citizens of Mildura recently opened a splendid new theatre of modern facilities for almost all kinds of theatrical presentation.

Charmingly designed for its environment, the new theatre attracted excellent audiences at its inaugural festival in November—a season to which the Trust contributed performances by the Australian Ballet and the U.T.R.C. presentation of the much-discussed Hopgood drama of Australia's commitment in Vietnam, "Private Yuk Objects".

*Heartiest Season's Greetings
to All Members*

Trust News

Editor: Lindsey Browne

DECEMBER, 1966

PRIGS AND "POPS"

From time to time sectional complaints are published concerning the Trust's participation in entertainments which, being of a frankly popular kind as the commercial theatre understands the term, are said by the complainants to be ventures of a kind which are not part of the Trust's "function" as an organisation committed to the development of durable theatre artistry on a long-term national scale.

While it is largely true—and reference to the Trust's memorandum and articles of association will confirm this—that the Trust was brought into existence to help fill the areas in Australian theatre experience which had for many years been outside the scope of commercial theatre operation, it is also true—and reference to the memorandum and articles will confirm this, too—that the Trust at no time intended to turn its back on popular theatre entertainment. Indeed, it will be recalled that in its first year of active theatre presentation the Trust staged not only the Robinson Jeffers "Medea", but also the graceful and cajoling English musical show, "The Boy Friend".

Popular theatre is not any the less respectable for being popular, direct, simple and perhaps superficial in its appeal. It is as capable of giving rich values of enjoyment, if not a profound enjoyment, as many of the more recondite kinds of theatre art give to their own supporters. In Australian conditions, it is essential that popular theatre should be a segment of the Trust's commitment. It can help to extend the reach of the public moneys which are a large fraction of the Trust's operating funds. It can help Australian opera singers to year-round employment where opera itself, purely and simply, is not yet capable of year-round operation in Australia. What is more, while the perennial squeeze on the Trust's available funds continues to be so intense, the occasional successful popular show can by its profit help to maintain other theatre enterprises which, by their very nature, cannot be financially self-sustaining.

Attempts to draw some sort of caste line between "art theatre" and "popular theatre" are often the expression of a kind of narrow priggery which could benefit from a reading of Sydney University Press's "Aspects of Drama", as reviewed elsewhere in this issue—most notably the final chapter in which Dr. Peter Davison shows how vital the rough-and-tumble principles of "pop theatre"—pantomime, music hall, etc.—are to the art of John Osborne, Albee, Harold Pinter, Beckett, O'Casey, not to mention Shakespeare himself.

"Tosca" Among Top Events for Perth Festival

FIRST opera to be presented in 1967 by the Elizabethan Trust Opera Company will be "Tosca" which, following the February performances at His Majesty's, Perth, as part of the Perth Festival, will probably become the centrepiece of the Company's repertoire for its main 1967 season in other capitals later in the year.

Singers of the leading roles in the Perth production will be Melbourne "Sun" Aria winner, Maureen Howard, in the title role, Reginald Byers in the passionate tenor role of Cavaradossi, and Alexander Major (fresh from an outstanding personal success as the Count di Luna in this year's "Trovatore") as the Barone Scarpia.

Conductor in Perth will be Gerald Krug, already firmly established as one of the most craftsmanlike young opera conductors that Australia has produced. Designs for "Tosca" will be by Tim Walton whose vision and artistry helped producer Stefan Haag, on two previous occasions, to make "Tosca" one of the supremely beautiful operatic stagings seen by this or any earlier Australian generation.

By courtesy of the Australian Broadcasting Commission, the Western Australia Symphony Orchestra will play for the Trust Opera Company's season from February 11 to February 25.

Among other events scheduled for the 1967 Perth Festival are:

- "Royal Hunt of the Sun", by Peter Shaffer, at the New Fortune Theatre from January 28 to February 11—production by John Tasker, artistic director of the Trust's South Australian Theatre Company, whose production of "Royal Hunt" was regarded as one of the outstanding events of the 1966 Adelaide Festival.
- "Oh What a Lovely War", a musical entertainment of the First World War, at the Playhouse from February 22 to March 4—direction by Edgar Metcalfe whose artistry in the direction of "Altona" during the Trust's all-States Interstate Theatre Season of 1966 won wide recognition.
- The Perth Regional Ballet Company, under the artistic direction of Robert Pomie, in a programme of "Les Sylphides", "Entre Deux Rondes", "Suite Classique", "Unicorn" and "La Vie Moderne" at the Sunken Garden from February 22 to March 4.
- "Sound and Image"—a unique combination of moving images on screens with directional sounds of many types, the presentation conceived, designed and produced by J. S. Ostojak-Kotkowski and J. Dalwitz. Items in this programme include "The Computer's First Christmas Card" and other poems composed by computers, electronic music by Professor Henk Badings, and complex magnetic tape recordings. A version of Ionesco's "The Mire", narrated by Alexander Hay, and illustrated by electronic music completes this presentation. "Sound and Image" was successfully presented at the 1966 Adelaide Festival and was enthusiastically applauded at that time by critics from all States.

- Aboriginal Theatre Group, consisting of 30 full-blood aborigines from Yirrkala and Bathurst Island in the Northern Territory, in an outdoor presentation of tribal music and dancing at the Centre Court, King's Park Tennis Club, from February 3 to February 13. The wide appeal of aboriginal artistry, as shown in the Trust's unprecedented 1964 presentations of The Aboriginal Theatre in Melbourne and Sydney, is expected to win even wider recognition in these Perth performances with running commentary by Ted Evans, Chief Welfare Officer of the Northern Territory Administration.

- "Festino", a little-known "Madrigal opera" by the 17th century Italian composer Banchieri, will be given by the Madrigal Society as part of a special dinner celebration on Shrove Tuesday. The performance will reproduce as closely as possible the conditions under which the work was originally performed. "Festino", in which masks are extensively used, includes numerous references to the forthcoming dinner, and there is a final section in which the different voices toast each other.

Among other events scheduled for the 1967 Perth Festival are orchestral concerts, organ recitals, 13 art exhibitions, a Playhouse season of Bernard Hesling's autobiographical stage entertainment, "My Life with an Interval for Asperin", a choral concert and some 20 different programmes of specially selected festival films from Hungary, Sweden, Argentina, Italy, France and Russia, as well as from the U.K. and U.S.A.

Book Offers

THE following outstanding theatre books, acquired for distribution to Trust Members at much-below-retail prices, are available in limited quantities, and will be posted on a first-come-first-served basis to applicants sending the appropriate remittance, payable to the A.E.T.T., to the Editor of "Trust News" at 153 Dowling Street, Potts Point, N.S.W.:

- The Dancer's World, \$5.70 (retail price \$7.00)
- Baron at the Ballet, \$4.85 (retail price \$6.60)
- Baron Encore, \$4.85 (retail price \$6.60)
- Days With Ulanova, \$5.00 (retail price \$7.50)

All of the above prices include postage. The books named each have particular attractiveness as gift volumes.

AUSTRALIAN BALLET'S NON-STOP YEAR OF RECORDS

AS it prepares for its second overseas tour in 1967, the Australian Ballet looks back on 1966 as a year of record achievement—and its most ardent fans might well be claiming that, if practice makes perfect, this company is making the pace a cracker for all other companies in ballet.

Since last March 15, in Australia, the Australian Ballet has given a total of 288 performances—an all-time record for a ballet company in this country, and many more than the usual number of performances given by any European company in any one year.

On the 1967 overseas tour the company will be under the artistic direction of Peggy van Praagh whose co-director, Robert Helpmann, at present in London for performances in the Royal Ballet's "Cinderella", will rejoin the Australian Ballet in Montreal in May, and stay with it throughout its EXPO '67 appearances and the subsequent tour of Central and South America.

Throughout the tour the principal roles will be danced by members of the company without the addition of overseas guest artists.

Kathleen Gorham, who has been appearing as guest artist with the company during its November-December season in Melbourne, returns to the company for the 1967 overseas tour, and she and Marilyn Jones will be the touring company's prima ballerinas.

Premier danseur Garth Welch, who left Australia in October to study choreography in New York under the terms of a Harkness Foundation Award made to him early in 1966, will rejoin the Australian Ballet in Montreal.

KATHLEEN GORHAM will dance three roles she created under Robert



Helpmann's direction in Australia—"The Display", "Yugen" and "Elektra". Marilyn Jones will dance overseas in three of the roles which have helped to establish her reputation for outstanding artistry in which emotional factors and technique are superbly balanced—"Raymonda", "Giselle" and "The Lady and the Fool".

As the world's leading ballet and opera companies have been invited to perform in the Grande Salle at Montreal

during EXPO '67, the Australian Ballet's appearances will be of international importance to the company.

Dr. H. C. Coombs, chairman of the Australian Elizabethan Theatre Trust and a director of the Australian Ballet Foundation, in a comment on the planned 1967 tour overseas, said: "The Australian Ballet's appearance at the Commonwealth Arts Festival in the United Kingdom last year, followed by performances in Europe and the United States, have given overseas audiences a glimpse of a company which we believe has already achieved international standards and, increasingly, is developing its own Australian style and character.

"We are grateful to the Government which has made it possible for the company to represent Australia at EXPO '67 in Montreal and to tour in the United States and South America.

"We are proud of our performers and know that they will enhance Australia's reputation in the world of the theatre arts."

At the conclusion of its current Melbourne season on December 17, the company is taking its annual holidays. It will go into intensive rehearsal at its Melbourne headquarters during January and depart for New Zealand early in February.



An early incident in the torrid triangle story which, in "The Display" (also to be danced on the overseas tour), is soon to transform a high-spirited bush picnic into an eerily savage tragedy.



A moment from "Melbourne Cup" as it will be danced by the Australian Ballet on its 1967 overseas tour. Danced to Meyerbeer music, the racecourse manners in this episode are markedly different from the Ascot scenes of "My Fair Lady".

TINTOOKIE CONQUEST OF INDIA

THE Tintookies' 13-nation tour of Asia began with resounding success in Madras in October, with comparable impact in Delhi, Calcutta and Bombay during November, so that the company is in very high spirits for its Ceylon engagements throughout December and for the audiences of the other countries it will visit in the New Year.

Typical of the reaction of Indian audiences generally was the tremendous box-office rush reported from the two opening performances in Calcutta. The 2,200 seats available for these two performances were completely sold out within eight hours of the opening of the box plans. Calcutta theatre people say

that, apart from performances by the Soviet Ballet in a smaller theatre, the Tintookies' headlong sell-out was a theatre record for Calcutta. Tickets (at 10 rupees) were selling for 35 dollars from the scalpers.

Calcutta's enthusiasm was matched by Delhi's where the Tintookies company

represented Australia in the East West Theatre Festival, in which such organisations as the Bratislava Pantomime Theatre from Czechoslovakia, the Jogjakarta Ramayana Ballet from Indonesia and the Nomura Kyogen Dancers from Japan were also featured.

Reporting from Delhi the company manager for the Tintookies, Tony Gould, noted the excellent reaction of school children—"for the evening performance it was necessary to obtain extra chairs to place in the aisles to accommodate the overwhelming number of people requiring tickets.

"It seems that news of the high standard of presentation, and also the immense popularity in other Indian cities, has spread throughout India," Mr. Gould reported from Calcutta, "and it appears certain now that, wherever we perform, we will play to capacity."

At one of the performances in Bombay, a large group of Indian puppeteers went backstage to meet the puppeteers from Australia. One member of this group told the members of the Australian company that he considered them to be "the most impressive" his group had ever seen.

ENTHUSIASM of this degree is reflected by press notices from Indian critics in the various cities.

- "The Marionette Theatre from Australia is a marvel of technical accomplishment and a considerable delight—full of pranks to delight children of all ages" ("The Times of India", Delhi, October 31).

- "A show in the best traditions of marionette art . . . At the same time there is something new, something fresh that puts this show in a class by itself" ("Indian Express", Bombay, November 10).

- "Peter Scriven's puppets are fabulous. In magnificent stage settings of incomparable artistry they come vibrantly alive" ("The Times of India", Bombay, November 13).

Performances in Ceylon during December will be followed, subject to possible alterations in some areas, by performances in Thailand and Burma during January, in Indonesia, Singapore and Malaysia during February, in Cambodia, the Philippines and Hong Kong during March, and in Korea and Japan during April.

Centrepieces of the touring company's repertoire are "Little Fella Bindi", already known by an earlier generation of Australian children who have now grown up, and "The Explorers—a Musical Journey" which was specially written for this tour. It is expected that, on its return to Australia in May, the company will embark on an all-States tour.

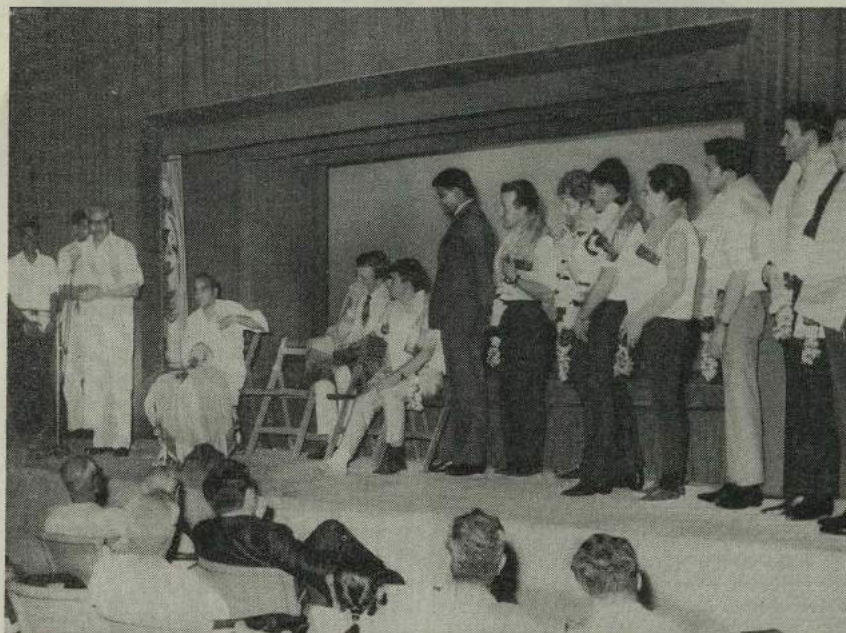


Photo by Eastern News Photo Service, Madras.

Madras gives a ceremonial welcome to members of the Marionette Theatre of Australia (Peter Scriven, seated at centre, and others standing at right) on the first leg of the company's 14-nations tour of Asia. The representative of the Madras State Government, Mr. Partisiere, is partly obscured by the speaker, the Hon. R. Venkatraman.

Letter to the Trust

SATISFIED MEMBERS

Sir,—In enclosing my annual membership subscription to the Trust I would like to say how much I appreciate the work of the Trust in recent years. I hope that the executives of the Trust are not unduly worried about what I consider irresponsible and unfair criticism of Trust activities by what appears to be a very small minority mainly consisting, apparently, of newspaper critics and theatrical people with unpractical views.

I particularly appreciate the way we have been able to see a very large number of first class theatrical attractions as a result of the Trust's sponsoring and financially backing the managements which put them on. Without the Trust's financial backing, we would never have seen such excellent shows as "Porgy and Bess", "The Black Theatre of Prague", the Williamson-Sutherland Opera Season, many of the shows under the Carroll management, so say nothing of our magnificent Australian Ballet. In fact,

without the Trust, theatre in Australia would have been threatened with extinction, especially in view of the difficult times live shows have experienced since the advent of television.

I am sure the vast majority of Trust Members are fully appreciative of what the Trust has been doing for them and for the theatre generally in Australia, but, of course, most people do not write letters about this or to the papers. I cannot help thinking that a very small minority of noisily vocal critics may in certain quarters be giving an incorrect impression of Members' feelings in this matter.

I hope that this letter will in some small measure counteract any effect these people may have had. I have not heard these criticisms from any Members of the Trust with whom I am friendly, and with whom I have discussed the matter. All appear satisfied with what has been done.

Yours,
K. CARGILL RANKIN,
Equity Chambers, Melbourne.

Albee, Feydeau, Bradley-Dyne, Shaffer and Miller

by JOHN SUMNER

TWO distinctive play seasons, each consisting of five plays and each running for 20 weeks, will be presented by Melbourne's U.T.R.C. at the Russell Street Theatre during 1967.

Both seasons will consist of significant contemporary plays from overseas with a blending of notable plays from earlier periods.

The repertoire for the first five-play season in 1967, to run from February 13 to July 1, will be:

- Edward Albee's "A delicate Balance"
- "A Flea in Her Ear" (Georges Feydeau)
- "The Right Honorable Gentleman" by M. Bradley-Dyne
- "Black Comedy" (Peter Shaffer)
- "Incident at Vichy" (Arthur Miller)

The repertoire for the second five-play season, beginning about mid-August, will be announced later. The break of six weeks between the two seasons will either be used for making alterations to the theatre itself or, possibly, for the presentation of another production.

THE company for each of the two 20-week seasons will, as far as possible, be engaged over the whole period. In some cases, members of the company will be engaged for the whole year.

It is hoped that it will be practicable for some of the artists to be "off" for a production or two while under contract, since this could well help to relieve the considerable pressure that could bear on some performers, but this will depend, more than anything, upon available finances.

George Ogilvie, whose work as Associate Director of the U.T.R.C. has con-

tributed so much to its standards, will consolidate this work in 1967. Jennifer Janson will continue to work closely with Mr. Ogilvie and the U.T.R.C.'s Actors' Studio, as well as being voice coach.

The "Youth Theatre" ventures of the U.T.R.C. will keep this branch extremely busy during 1967. More than 100,000 schoolchildren were entertained during 1967 through the U.T.R.C.'s "Youth Theatre" activities, such as the Young Elizabethan Players, the two seasons of one-act plays for junior schools, four theatre workshops and a country tour. Malcolm Robertson's capable leadership will develop this work even further during 1967, and there will be an extension into Saturday morning Youth Workshop Sessions at the Russell Street Theatre.

In all, then, it can be seen that 1967 will not be an easy year for the U.T.R.C. To present a permanent company in a repertoire of worthwhile plays with appropriate promotion is expensive, the costs being much higher than can be covered by seat admission prices. Subsidy is necessary for theatre of quality all over the world, and Australia's small population and the fact that the public is predominantly not theatre-minded do not allow subsidies to be plentiful nor often to come willingly.

From the U.T.R.C.'s viewpoint, the Russell Street Theatre is a welcome single theatre in which to play all year round, but the theatre's facilities are inadequate either for audiences or for artists.

NEVERTHELESS, no one in the U.T.R.C. can seriously envisage any solution for difficulties by lowering of standards or aims. Any such reduction of our objectives because, for the time being, there may not be physical and creative resources sufficient to match the higher aims would be tantamount to an admission that live drama has no future.

The facts of current world theatre developments cannot permit any such negative thinking about the drama's future here. The healthy resurgence of the live drama in all other English-speaking countries today is an expression of a widespread social need which Australians share—and share quite sufficiently for similar live drama resurgence here to be confidently foreseen.

This continuing aim for better standards characterises the U.T.R.C.'s planning for 1967 and it is with the certain knowledge of drama's continually expanding importance to the community that we plan beyond 1967 even now.

Hurry!

All Aboard for The World

PLANNING for the world tour by Trust Members during 1967 is now entering its final stage, but there are still several vacancies for this April-to-August tour at air-fare savings of \$360 each—so hurry with your application if you don't want to miss this travel chance of a lifetime.

Applications should be sent to the Editor, "Trust News", 153 Dowling Street, Potts Point, N.S.W.—but promptitude it of the greatest importance.

The tour, as scheduled, will begin on April 26 from Sydney with Tahiti, Acapulco, Mexico City and New York as the stop-over points on the way to London. After a stay in Britain of seven weeks, the homeward journey will be by way of stop-overs at Paris, Heidelberg, Munich, Vienna, Verona-Florence, Rome, Athens, Bangkok and Hong Kong, with arrival in Sydney about August 25.

Travelling Members are reminded that to be eligible for the cheap group-travel fare (about \$880 each) it is obligatory that they shall all travel as a group on the basic flights to London and from London. However, travelling Members are free to arrange side excursions from any of the ports of call in the stop-over periods determined for each port.

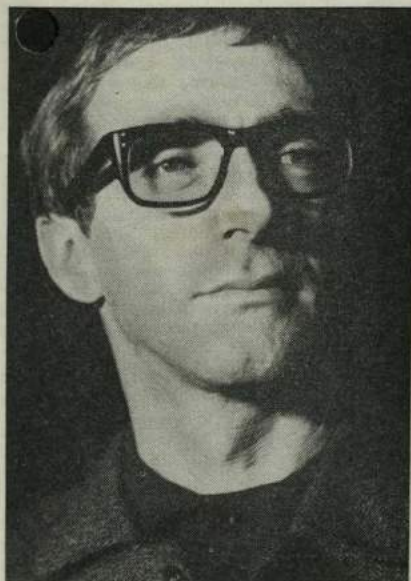
For instance, two of the intending travellers plan to use part of the London stop-over period to make side excursions to Scandinavia and the U.S.S.R.

Please hurry with your application—time is now running short!

"Poetry, Australia"

THE publishers of "Poetry, Australia", an eminently shelf-worthy magazine which is published every two months, are renewing for 1967 the special concession-price offer which they made to Trust Members 12 months ago.

Trust Members are invited to subscribe to the 1967 issues of "Poetry, Australia" at the special concession rate of \$2.70—a 10% reduction on the ordinary public rate. Forms for this purpose are currently being posted to all Members on behalf of the Editor, "Poetry, Australia", South Head Press, Lyons Road, Five Dock, N.S.W.



George Ogilvie

BOOK REVIEWS

ROBINSON LECTURES

ASPECTS OF DRAMA AND THE THEATRE, Five Kathleen Robinson lectures delivered in the University of Sydney, 1961-63. 198 pp. Sydney University Press, 1965. 75 cents.

TWO exceptionally pleasant points need to be made about this valuable paperback before arriving at the also pleasant job of noting the contents.

First of all it is one of the earliest publications from the recently established Sydney University Press, and a handsome token of the seriously service-minded principles which animate its announced publishing policy.

Second, it gives a much-needed permanent form, following the Cheshire publication of three Hugh Hunt Lectures given in 1959, to the remarkable series of annual lectures on theatre and drama which have been given at Sydney University since 1958 under the terms of an endowment by Miss Kathleen Robinson, whose disablement in a serious accident in 1950 prevented her continuance as an "angel" of live theatre production.

The selection of five lectures printed in this volume, with a foreword by Professor A. K. Stout, includes:

- *Eugene Ionesco: The Meaning of Un-Meaning*, by Richard N. Coe, Reader in French, University of Melbourne (lecture delivered 1962).
- *Sartre's Theatre and the Morality of Being*, by R. F. Jackson, Professor of French, University of Melbourne (1961).
- *Bertolt Brecht: a Marxist Dramatist?*, by Lawrence Ryan, Senior Lecturer in German, University of Sydney (1962).
- *Antonin Artaud and the Contemporary French Theatre*, by L. R. Chambers, Senior Lecturer in French, University of N.S.W. (1961).
- *Contemporary Drama and Popular Dramatic Forms*, by P. H. Davison, sometime Lecturer in English, University of Sydney, now of the Shakespeare Institute, Birmingham (1963).

The first three lectures are concerned with the "meaning" of modern drama, so often rejected by John Citizen as being "meaningless", and the political and philosophical preoccupations of Ionesco, Brecht and Sartre are disquisitively searched. The fourth lecture is about Artaud, who made a way for the so-called "theatre of the absurd" before it came into meaningful vogue—and who, by the way, couldn't have stood a bar of Brecht or Sartre.

Perhaps the most profoundly interesting lecture of the collection, as noted in the editorial in this issue, is the last one wherein Dr. Peter Davison mounts an irresistible argument as to the important influence on "contemporary legitimate drama" of the "illegitimate drama"—especially music hall, pantomime, radio

and television. It has a salutary message for all who would have an "ivory tower" approach to the arts of modern theatre.—L.B.

OPERA ANGELS AND HARPIES

"THE MAPLESON MEMOIRS—the Career of an Operatic Impresario, 1858-88", edited and annotated by Harold Rosenthal. Putnam, London. 346 pp. 35 illustrations. 50s. Stg.

IT may be true that present-day Australian opera-singers are short of the kind of volcanic personal temperament needed for an art of immense emotional exaggeration, but, for what this can mean in backstage peace of mind, Australian operatic managers like the Trust Opera's John Young, ought to be counting their lucky stars.

Singers with temperaments like TNT, ready to blow up at the first spark from any trivial friction, may indeed have a gift which means something extra in passionate performance from the stage, and yet the operatic manager can often be at his wit's end in trying to coax, bluff, trick, bribe or wheedle these explosive people on to the stage at all when their backstage tantrum-throwing is in full cry.

This was certainly the lifelong experience of one of England's most colourful operatic impresarios of the last century, Colonel James Henry Mapleson (1830-1901), whose career among immortals like Adelina Patti, Emma Albani, Etelka Gerster, Minnie Hauk and Therese Tietjens was an interminable headache through which he found himself playing the backstage role of diplomat, tyrant, con-man, Barnum, doctor, Svengali, nanny, veterinarian, father confessor, lawyer, policeman, banker, marriage-broker, psychoanalyst, and Lord-High-Everything-Else.

Had he been anything less than all of those assorted characters, Colonel Mapleson could not have survived in the opera business for more than a fraction of the 30 operatic years which were to catapult some of his singers into immense personal fortunes and himself into ultimate financial ruin.

"The Mapleson Memoirs," first published in 1888 and now issued again with expert editing and annotations by historian Harold Rosenthal, are as candid and colourful a record of backstage and offstage misbehaviour as any that has ever seen print. And probably the thing which makes this record such merrily entertaining reading is

Mapleson's own urbane irony which almost invariably rescues him from any danger of poison-pen rancour.

It was (of course?) an Italian tenor who finally ruined Mapleson, the man whose many seasons at Covent Garden and Drury Lane and across America had given him rather the kind of stature that Diaghileff was later to have in ballet. Tenors were always a threat to Mapleson's stability. One tenor named Ravelli was once so furious on stage in "Carmen" when the embrace of the heroine burst the buttons off his costume that he launched into a long tirade about his damaged waistcoat, as he called it, and threatened to murder the lady, right there and then on stage in front of the audience.

The audience, bless its innocence, thought this very convincing show of towering rage was part of the plot—and applauded thunderously. But the lady, thereafter fearing for her personal safety, sought the protection of the local courts. Ravelli was fired from the company, but the co-reaction brought by him against Mapleson in San Francisco delayed the company of 140 for so long in California that it missed all its scheduled playing dates in other American cities and ran out of funds. In one city, unable to meet hotel costs, the company set up overnight camp outside the theatre. The ragged, straggling return across America to Britain could well have excused Mapleson for comparing himself to Napoleon on the retreat from Moscow.

The tenor Ravelli had ruined the boss. But he probably couldn't see the drama of it, because, according to Mapleson, Ravelli couldn't see the drama of anything. In one opera which required the leading tenor to be killed in a duel with the leading baritone, Ravelli refused to go on unless the plot was changed to enable him to do the killing—and it was not until Mapleson promised the tenor a magnificent funeral scene with splendid coffin and dozens of coffin-bearers and mourners that he finally relented to allow the drama to be played as scripted.

Another tenor named Giuglini was one of Mapleson's stars in one London season, but Giuglini had a habit of tripping out of town without notice with one or other of the ladies of the chorus. Rather than cancel the performances in which Giuglini was

SCRIVENING

THE TINTOOKIES and LITTLE FELLA BINDI, by Peter Scriven. 28 pp. with 28 paintings, in colour, by Genevieve Melrose. Lansdowne Press, Melbourne. \$1.95.

THOSE charmers of Australian puppet theatre, Little Fella Bindi and the Tintookies, here make their entry into children's storyland and because of the colourful beauty of the publication (printed in Hong Kong), as well as the story content which outsnuiggles Cuddlepie, we recommend it heartily for the kiddies' Christmas stockings.

scheduled to sing, Mapleson's final trick was to let the understudy go on and to arrange with some newspaper friend for the understudy to be warmly commended. Wherever he was, Giuglini would see this praise for somebody else and come back running.

"Giuglini was in many things a child," says Mapleson. "So, indeed, are most members of the artistic tribe, and it is only by treating them and humouring them as children that one can get them to work at all. The one thing the operatic artist cannot endure is life under regular conditions. Exciting incidents of some kind he must have in order to keep his nerves in a due state of tension, his blood in full circulation. It annoys him even to have his salary paid regularly at the appointed time. He would rather have an extra sum one day and nothing at all on another. The gratuity will give him unexpected pleasure, while the non-payment of money justly due to him will give him something to quarrel over."

A sudden unexplained disappearance of another tenor on the day of a performance once had Mapleson at the point of cancelling the night's show—the Flotow opera "Martha". In fact, he was on his way by cab to tell his leading soprano that she could have a night off when the cab skidded an unwary pedestrian who turned out to be a smoke-concert tenor who didn't know the opera "Martha" but knew the tune of its most famous tenor aria, "M'Appari".

This fellow agreed to take the stage that night, had a quick rehearsal on the pavement, and made his first operatic appearance in a work whose only words he knew were "M'Appari"—and all he could sing, every time he opened his mouth, was "M'Appari," "M'Appari," "M'Appari." The audience, again bless it, detected no monotony in this, and the press gave warm commendation. The absentee tenor came back to work at speed.

That was not the only time that Mapleson recruited his opera performers off the London streets. Once, when his orchestra refused to play, he remembered having heard a near-beggarly Italian street band playing somewhere in Soho. Searchers were sent out to engage this band for the evening performance of "Traviata". Unluckily, the searchers each brought an Italian street-band to the theatre and, livid with indignation and jealousy, the two bands brawled on stage. Stiletti were drawn before Mapleson was able to talk the warring factions into uneasy truce.

Backstage jealousy was an endless problem, but Mapleson was often able to use it to serve his own plans. Indeed, of one of his own few stage appearances as an opera tenor (at Verona) Mapleson has this to say of his own stand-in appearance for a sick star: "I made a sufficiently good impression at Verona to cause Signor Bettini, who on my arrival was seriously ill, to get perfectly well after I had made but two appearances."

The Hungarian soprano Etelka Gerster, one of the supreme stars of her era and one of Mapleson's most priceless crowd-pleasers, was indignant to see her name in smaller type than Adelina Patti's on the opera posters in Montreal. Although scheduled to sing the next night, Gerster immediately caught a train going south to the U.S. In a desperate attempt to get her back to Montreal for the scheduled performance, Mapleson arranged with the railroad company to delay a northbound train in some obscure siding down towards New York. By coaxing telegrams, he hoped to persuade Gerster to change her mind and

to change trains. Unluckily, as it turned out, Adelina Patti was on the northbound train and, when she found out the reason for the delay, she was furious and herself refused to go to Montreal.

Patti and Gerster were always in deadly rivalry. In fact, Patti had a superstition that Gerster's "evil eye" was responsible for whatever mishap ever befell her. When Mapleson's company was shaken up by a San Francisco earthquake in the 1880's, Patti's one and only cry of explanation for this terrifying experience was: "Gerster!"

Gerster was herself very terse on the occasion when the Governor of Missouri scandalised Americans by publicly kissing Adelina Patti. Said Gerster: "There's nothing wrong in a man kissing a woman old enough to be his mother."

Singing stars of this magnitude always had it written into their contracts that they need not attend rehearsals. It sometimes happened then that singers unacquainted with each other would meet for the first time on stage in front of the audience.

"On one occasion when 'Il Trovatore' was being performed," says Mapleson, "I remember the baritone soliciting the honour of an introduction to Mme. Patti at the very moment when he was singing in the trio of the first act. The tenor hero of the evening was exceedingly polite, and managed, without scandalising the audience, to effect the introduction by singing it as if it were a portion of his role."

One reason for singers being unacquainted with each other arose from the peculiar tricks that the singers would practise regarding courtesy calls at each other's hotels. They would watch each other's movements like lynxes from observation posts behind their curtained windows. As soon as one singer went out, the other would call and leave her card. That done, the singer now being obliged to return the

call would wait until the same sort of temporary absence could enable her to drop a card!

Often in the most desperate financial straits, Mapleson was a past-master at keeping a plutocratic front—and he learnt this art in a hard school. He tells of a business associate, E. T. Smith, who found it worth his while to hire daily, at the rate of £1 per day, a thousand-pound note, which was obligingly entrusted to him by a money-lender. Smith was an adept at all kinds of buying and selling transactions, and on buying articles for immediate resale at a profit he would tender the thousand-pound note as payment. Because it could never be changed there and then, he was usually allowed the purchase on credit and would then re-sell quickly at a profit. Smith always took fine care to deal only with those auctioneers who would not be able to change the note!

But Mapleson, clever as he was in maintaining a facade of wealth and credit, could not beat the game at the end of his 30 years as an impresario, a period which began with a small loss in the first season. Following this loss, as he says, "I resolved to carry on the opera again in a larger locale in the next year in order that I might get straight; vowing, as the Monte Carlo gambler constantly does, that as soon as I got quite straight I would stop, and never play again. I have been endeavouring during the last 30 years to get straight, and still hope to do so . . ."

No wonder that Mapleson felt nettled when Adelina Patti's parrot cried "Cash, cash" at him whenever he entered her rooms. He made and lost several fortunes—and his record of how it all happened is a goldmine of anecdote and reminiscence to keep any reader chuckling for hours on end.—L.B.

UNWAGNIFIED SPLENDOR

THE NIBELUNGENLIED, a new translation by A. T. Hatto.
404 pp. Penguin Books, London, \$1.20.

THE attitude of mind with which the non-scholastic reviewer comes upon this book may well be one of dread—dread that it will be an immensely unventilated excursion through Wagner-type murk and mystery without the advantages of Wagner-type musical dressing.

That was certainly the approach of the present reviewer, and it may be partly from this negativity of original approach that one is exposed to experience the astonishing brilliance, pageantry, freshness and thriller tension of (to use the translator's words) "a heroic epic surpassed only by the Iliad of Homer".

Three-quarters of this volume is made up of a prose translation of the poem which, written by an unknown poet about 1200 A.D. derives the contents of its immense tale of romance, chivalry, treachery and revenge from a number of earlier writings which have not themselves survived. The other quarter of this volume consists of extended discussions by the translator of various aspects of the poem and its origins.

"Modern poets and poetasters have often returned to its subject," says the translator in his foreword, "prominent among them being Richard Wagner with

his gigantic music drama 'Der Ring der Nibelungen' with which (as with his 'Parisfal' and his 'Tristan' whatever their merits as modern works of art) he has unfortunately harmed the cause of medieval German poetry by intruding reckless distortions between us and an ancient masterpiece. Thus, those who come to the 'Nibelungenlied' from Wagner will be much surprised by what they read in it."

Surprised is hardly the word. One can be quite delightedly dumbfounded by the mesmerising thriller quality of the narrative which at the moments of highest dramatic tension (as the translator says) would come through powerfully to the reader even in pidgin-English and would positively thrive on the prose of, say, Damon Runyon.

Whether the translator might have done better by attempting versification to approximate the medieval German metres and rhythms of the original is a question for scholars to argue. The translator himself gives persuasive reasons why this could not be plausibly done. In any event, the English prose of his translation opens the casements upon one of the great adventure vistas in all literature.

\$7.50 Ballet Book — Free!

The superlative gift volume on the life and art of Russia's greatest living ballerina, "Days with Ulanova", will be presented free to any Trust member who is instrumental in signing up two new adult members for the Trust.

Additional copies of this handsome book, one of the classics of ballet publishing in recent years, have been made available to the Trust for use as an incentive in membership expansion.

"Days with Ulanova", which has a retail value of \$7.50, is beautifully bound and is printed on luxury paper. The text is in English, and it is profusely illustrated with photographs of the great ballerina at many different points of her career.

"Days with Ulanova" will be sent by return mail to any mem-

ber who sends to the Editor of "Trust News", 153 Dowling St., Potts Point, N.S.W., applications for two new members, accompanied by a remittance of \$20.00 to cover the annual membership fees for the two newcomers.

The book is of such outstanding quality and distinction as a gift volume that many members may wish to make Christmas gifts of two memberships in order to acquire, absolutely without charge, this \$7.50 classic, itself a further answer to gift problems.

Why Not Hear a Trust Speaker At Your Club?

MORE than 40 speech-making engagements about the Trust's objectives and its work have been filled by the Trust's panel of public speakers during 1966.

Programme secretaries of clubs wishing to arrange for speakers at their club functions during 1967 are invited to contact Mr. Lindsey Browne, Co-ordinator of Promotion, Australian Elizabethan Theatre Trust, 153 Dowling Street, Potts Point, N.S.W., or Mr. Cavendish Guthrie, Australian Elizabethan Theatre Trust, 125 Collins Street, Melbourne.

Season's greetings are extended to all of the following organisations which, with many others, offered hospitality and a keenly interested hearing to Trust speakers during the year:—

Rotary Clubs: Guildford, Riverwood.
Chambers of Commerce: Regents Park.

Apex Clubs: Drummoyne, Parramatta, Caringbah, Engadine, Hornsby, Mosman, Manly, Killara, Lane Cove, Liverpool, Lakemba, French's Forest.

Jaycees: Ryde, Parramatta, Manly.

Lions Clubs: North Sydney.
All Nations Club (Sydney).
Queen Victoria Club.

Programme secretaries of all such organisations as these are advised that Trust speakers can be made available to them, without fee, where sufficient notice is given to expedite convenient forward planning of dates.

More Huge Dividends for \$10.00

CONCESSIONS allowed to Trust Members on theatre ticket prices have already enabled them, during 1966, to make savings greatly in excess of the annual \$10.00 Trust Membership fee which makes them eligible for these advantages.

South Australian Members, in particular, have been enjoying an outstanding year of money-saving. Whereas in 1965, \$20.80 was saved by every S.A. Trust Member who went with a companion at Members' concession prices to 13 different attractions, the comparable 1966 figure is already up to \$28.30 for 17 different attractions. S.A. looks like being renamed S.A.

A.C.T. Members have also saved more heavily during 1966 than in 1965.

The savings made by N.S.W. Mem-

bers thus far in 1966 total \$39.40 in respect of 34 different attractions. The 1966 saving for Victorian Members is also about \$40.00 at the time of going to press.

Queensland Members during 1966 have been able to make savings totalling \$22.00 in respect of 11 different attractions for which Members' concessions were available.

A full listing of 1966 price-concession shows and total savings will be published in the New Year.

YEMS under new Leadership

THE Elizabethan Theatre Trust Younger Set in N.S.W., to which all Associate Members of the Trust belong, recently elected the following executive and committee for 1967:

President: Damien Stapleton, 30 Willee Street, Enfield (Phone: 74-3980).

Vice-Presidents: Muriel Dibley, 7/51 Kirribilli Avenue, Kirribilli (Phone: 69-6721); Richard Nies, 8/65 Alfred Street, Ramsgate (Phones: 529-9350 or 25-1364).

Secretary: Rosemary Monk, Nurses' Home, Royal North Shore Hospital, St. Leonards.

Treasurer: Michael Davey, 13 George Street, Avalon (Phone: 51-8931).

Committee: Margot Richardson, 63 Latimer Street, Bellevue Hill (Phone: 36-2688); Robert Bracht, 7 Wayman Place, Merrylands (Phone: 637-4264); Jill Stewart, 15 Strickland Street, Rose Bay (Phones: 37-9548 or 29-3108); Frank Bush, 7 Cable Street, Wollstonecraft (Phones: 43-4624 or 25-6721).

SPRING CROSSWORD WINNERS

Miss O. A. DAVIS, 39 Countess Street, Mosman, N.S.W.

Mrs. H. J. SOUTHCOTT, 13 Jasper Street, Hyde Park, S.A.

Miss I. M. ALLPASS, Paloma, Glenmorgan, Qld.

Mr. J. M. HONNOR, 21 Molden Street, Benthleigh East, SE.15, Vic.

Mrs. L. WALKER, 1 Euston Road, Hurststone Park, N.S.W.

Miss J. BYRON, 52 Elmhurst Road, Blackburn, Vic.



Trust public relations staff will contact the above winners to arrange dates on which they prefer to use two complimentary seats for a current or forthcoming Trust presentation. Alternatively, the winners may write to the Editor, Trust News, 153 Dowling Street, Potts Point, N.S.W., and receive "Days with Ulanova" or "Baron at the Ballet" or "Baron Encore" as prize.