

Trust News

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WAGNER, VERDI & PUCCINI SET FOR OPERA '68 LINE-UP?

VERDI'S "Don Carlos" and Wagner's "Tannhauser" are among the operas being discussed for presentation at the 1968 Adelaide Festival of Arts along with the "Tosca" which, as already announced, will feature two of Europe's supreme dramatic singers, soprano Marie Collier and baritone Tito Gobbi.

IF "Don Carlos" and "Tannhauser" are, in fact, brought into the Elizabethan Trust Opera Company's repertoire for the Festival, they will subsequently be toured through other capitals as part of the company's main tour for 1968. The main tour is expected to follow on immediately from the Adelaide season.

Firm and final announcement cannot yet be made regarding the company's full operatic bill for 1968, but it is known that operas such as Puccini's "Girl of the Golden West" and Menotti's "The Saint of Bleeker Street" are receiving ardent advocacy in influential quarters.

The last operatic appearances in Australia of Victoria-born Marie Collier, now acclaimed throughout the world as a dramatic singer of resource not excelled even by the all-conquering Maria Callas, were at the 1964 Adelaide Festival performances by the Trust Opera Company of Walton's "Troilus and Cressida".

Tito Gobbi, the Italian operatic baritone who is widely acknowledged to be



Tito Gobbi
as Scarpia



Marie Collier
as Tosca

without a peer in his own generation, will be making his first visit to Australia at Festival time.

The electrifying excitement which these two singers are able to generate in an audience at every performance is expected to make their joint appearance in "Tosca" at Adelaide "a milestone in the history of opera in Australia", as the Trust's Executive Director, Stefan Haag described it in announcing the Festival engagements for Collier and Gobbi.

Drama at the Adelaide Festival time will include a production by the South Australian Theatre Company. A production by Colin Ballantyne of Gogol's per-

ennially timely taunts at officialdom, "The Inspector-General", and a new play commissioned from Australian writer Patricia Hooker will also feature in the 1968 Festival's drama activity.

ALTHOUGH a tour of Asia during 1968 will preclude appearances by the Australian Ballet at Adelaide Festival time, executives of the Festival are continuing negotiations for the presentation of another notable ballet company.

The Australian Ballet, on completion of its Asian tour, is expected to undertake its main 1968 tour of Australian cities in the latter half of the year.

Festival opera is not only being undertaken by the Elizabethan Trust Opera Company. Also listed for Festival presentation are some of the Mozart operas as done by the world-famous Salzburg Marionette Theatre under the direction of Professor Aicher.

Among the large number of major musical events to be given during the Festival will be two performances, with a choir of several hundred singers, of Mahler's Symphony No. 8 ("The Symphony of a Thousand"), recitals by the tenor Ernst Haefliger and the pianist Annie Fischer, and chamber music by the Zagreb Soloists.

Arts Council likely within a year — Coombs

THE Chairman of the Australian Elizabethan Theatre Trust, Dr. H. C. Coombs, predicted at the annual meeting of Members in Melbourne that a national arts council would be formed within a year.

It was not yet known, he said, whether the council would be a Government advisory body for only the performing arts or whether it would cover all the arts.

An arts council had been suggested by

Dr. Coombs a year earlier as a way of solving problems confronting the Trust and other theatrical bodies with regard to the distribution of Government money to the arts in Australia.

Trust News

Editor: Lindsey Browne

Winter Edition, 1967

Rush on Opera

ALTHOUGH the Trust Opera's 1967 "sell-out" in all cities might appear to deny any particular local significance in the sensationallly rapid sell-out of the forthcoming Sydney season, observers will be in no doubt that this immense affirmation of the N.S.W. public's support for opera contains a large component of public protest against the exclusion of opera from the major auditorium of the Sydney Opera House.

No one who has enjoyed the work of the Sydney Symphony Orchestra on its greater occasions will begrudge it the magnificent opportunity to enjoy the privileges of performing in this auditorium, but few of the wider public which supports opera will agree that this privilege needed to have been given exclusively to the orchestra.

Trust proposals for an auditorium of dual purpose, symphony and opera/ballet, were rejected, and to this decision the Trust has bowed. However, by its vociferous support of the coming Tivoli season of the Trust Opera Company the public would appear to have other views.

BINDI'S HOMECOMING

TRIUMPHANTLY home again from his conquest of Asia, "Little Fella Bindi" is now fully geared up to play the conquistador in three States, beginning on August 22.

The Marionette Theatre of Australia, in which the Trust and the Arts Council are associated, will present Peter Scriven's "Bindi", as follows:

• Adelaide, Her Majesty's: Aug. 22-Sept. 9.

• S.A., 30 towns: Sept. 11-Oct. 14.
• Vic., 36 towns: Oct. 16-Dec. 15.
• Melbourne, Comedy: Dec. 27-Jan. 27.
• Queensland, 90 towns: Feb. 12-May 1.
• Brisbane, Her Majesty's: May 6-May 18.

VERDI — European Champion!

Just 20,631 performances of Verdi operas were given in the German-speaking area of Europe in the 10-year period 1955-65.

No other composer approaches this figure in the statistical survey of a decade's opera recently published by Dr. Martin Hurlimann of Zurich.

Following Verdi in frequency of performance were Mozart (18,064), Johann Strauss (15,555), Puccini (12,794), Lehar (12,486), Offenbach (10,327), Lortzing (8,715), Wagner (7,673), Richard Strauss (5,343), Donizetti (4,118), Smetana (2,715), Stravinsky (2,656), Handel (2,031), Carl Orff (1,983) and Gluck (1,713).

Other composers whose work was represented by over 1,000

stagings each were Prokofiev, Leoncavallo, Mascagni, Werner Egk and Janacek.

Individual operas receiving the greatest number of performances in the decade were: Johann Strauss's "Die Fledermaus" (4,467 performances), Mozart's "Magic Flute" (4,263) and "Marriage of Figaro" (3,813), Bizet's "Carmen" (3,275), Beethoven's "Fidelio" (3,112), Verdi's "Rigoletto" (2,950) and "La Traviata" (2,613) and Mozart's "Don Giovanni" (2,388).

Averaged out, these figures mean that "Fledermaus" was produced once every 19 hours during the 10 years, "Rigoletto" once every 29 hours, "Don Giovanni" once every 35 hours!

Farewell to Vivien Leigh (1914-1967)

THE abiding pleasure given to Australian theatregoers by the late Vivien Leigh on two tours of Australia, mostly notably with the historic Old Vic tour of 1948, is recalled here with these three studies of the roles played by her in 1948.



Sabina
"Skin of Our Teeth"



Lady Teazle
"School for Scandal"



Lady Anne
"Richard III"

Ballet's Australian Accent

AS their tour of South America continues to pile up an enormous volume of international applause for the dancers of the Australian Ballet, the choreographers responsible for the touring repertoire are also faring well — but with just a random question and the odd taunt here and there to suggest that the way is clear for our choreographers to do considerably better.

THE almost total rejection of the choreographic achievements of Robert Helpmann by the ballet critic of "The New York Times" will come as a shock not only to the Australian audiences who have applauded "The Display" from coast to coast, but also to those critics in four continents who have welcomed "The Display" into the company of the greater contemporary ballets even while, in many cases, there have been assorted reservations on the total merits of such Helpmann ballets as "Yugen" and "Elektra".

In Canada, critical acceptance of the Australian-accented ballets of the touring company was by no means unanimous, and one argument widely advanced over there was that, being in Canada under the sponsorship of the Australian Gov-

ernment, the company was obliged to feature works of Australian origin—not only the ballets already mentioned, but also "Melbourne Cup". The argument will sound extremely wrong-headed to all those Australian ballet supporters who have enjoyed the exciting refreshment that these Australian-accented works, specially commissioned for the company here, have brought into their ballet experience.

For these works have been commissioned in Australia by ballet's own ardent advocates in order to establish areas in which a peculiarly Australian tradition of ballet can develop, and the works created within this policy, far from being danced elsewhere merely to discharge obligations to Government patronage, are danced in pride, enthusiasm, artistic conviction and

the healthily aggressive belief that this ballet company owes its own admirable identity largely to these works specially created for it in the days of its "teething".

The steady enlargement of the Australian component in the company's repertoire has not been brought about in any spirit of mere chauvinism (such works as "Raymonda" and "Lady and the Fool" in the touring repertoire will leave no doubt about the company's healthy eclecticism). It is an enlargement based on the often-demonstrated truth that the greatest of dance companies thrive where their whole activity is drenched in the spirit of creativity in all ballet departments, choreography included.

Whether or not the new ballets created within such a policy turn out to be of long-term worth, however desirable such an achievement may be as an objective, is to some extent irrelevant to the purposes of such a creative policy and its implementation. The voices who reject this or that ballet—and even a few dissentients were heard in Australia at the time of "The Display's" first triumphal round of the capital cities—this is not of itself a rejection of the underlying creative policy which has given these new works opportunity for life.

What Ballet Critics said:

Clive Barnes, "New York Times"

THE Australian Ballet's progress in so short a time is amazing, for here is a major international ballet company, the first to be created since John Cranko's company in Stuttgart, Germany. In the company's two programmes it at once became apparent that, as with the majority of emergent ballet companies, the dancers were markedly superior to the repertory. The dancers are not only excellent, themselves a tribute to the artistic direction of Peggy Van Praagh and Robert Helpmann, but already possess a homogenous individual style as well.

"One of the most heartening aspects of these Australians is how Australian they are. They have the vigour of a young, still developing country and even something of the concomitant lack of sophistication . . . The company is particularly strong in male dancers, and dancers such as Garth Welch, Bryan Lawrence, Karl Welander, Warren de Maria, Alan Alder, Gerard Sibbritt and Robert Olup would be assets to any company. Among the girls, Marilyn Jones, Kathleen Geldard and Barbara Chambers seemed the most interesting. It is to be hoped that in the near future these Australians can visit New York. When they do, I suspect that not only will their dancing find favour, but also the quality of the stage designing.

"Elektra" is merely funny—so successful at the level of comedy that I wonder whether humour was not intended. 'Yugen'—a piece of japonaiserie based on a Noh play which, perhaps appropriately, adds up to no ballet. 'Melbourne Cup'—a rather feeble operetta-ballet. For all this, there are moments of theatricality which cannot be ignored . . ."

Zelda Heller, "Montreal Gazette"

THE outstanding work was 'The Display', a most interesting choreography by Robert Helpmann . . . A curious work and an interesting one. It leaves a strange after-taste of the prosaic mixed with horror . . ."

Sydney Johnson, "Montreal Star"

"YUGEN—a very satisfying kaleidoscope of colourful movement that includes a great variety of dancing styles, all interesting and charming, the whole effect suggesting a delicately tinted Japanese print . . . Cranko's 'Lady and the Fool'—the style and feeling were beautifully communicated by Marilyn Jones, Garth Welch and Ray Powell in the leading roles."

Robert Sunter, "The Sun"—Vancouver

THE Australian Ballet has done something in its four years of existence that Canada's National Ballet has failed to do in 16 years. It has developed a distinctive style of its own, a blending of classical technique with the robust strength of a naturally athletic people . . . Few, if any, members of the audience were prepared for 'The Display'. This was an authentically Australian Ballet choreographed by Helpmann with extraordinary dramatic impact. Its raw-edged emotions and erotic menace mounted to a climax of hair-raising shock."

Birds Blasted

THE influence of the life and mystical significance of birds on ballet, so recently demonstrated in Australia by Helpmann's "The Display", is continuing just now in Stuttgart where John Cranko, another choreographer for whom Australians have enormous affection ("Lady and the Fool", etc.), is presenting his "Oiseaux Exotiques" to a musical score by Olivier Messiaen.

"Swan Lake", "Firebird", "Le Coq d'Or"—the string of ballets that have some association with bird-lore is immense. At least 50 ballets with more or less major bird allusions are listed in the index of Cyril Beaumont's "Complete Book of Ballets". Birds, it appears, are sure-fire sources of inspiration for choreographers. But are they? American criticism of Helpmann's "The Display" and now some German rejection of Cranko's "Oiseaux Exotiques" suggest that bird ballets can just as easily lay an egg.

The ballet critic of the "Stuttgarter Zeitung", for instance, rejects "Oiseaux Exotiques" with tart firmness.

"Messiaen's sounds," says this critic, were originally inspired by the songs of

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Albee, Pinter, Hopgood in S.A.T.C's Line-up

FROM August 16 into mid-October the South Australian Theatre Company will present a season of modern popular plays in the Adelaide Teachers' College Theatre—Edward Albee's "A Delicate Balance", Alan Hopgood's "The Golden Legion of Cleaning Women", and Harold Pinter's "The Homecoming".

"A Delicate Balance" (to play from August 16 to September 2), Edward Albee's latest play, was world premiered last year in New York.

Harold Clurman, in the American "Nation", wrote:—"('A Delicate Balance') is a further step in the author's progress and is superior to 'Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?'."

John Chapman of the New York "Daily News" wrote:—"Edward Albee's 'A Delicate Balance' is a beautiful play . . . easily his best and most mature . . . filled with humour and compassion and touched with poetry."

In May this year "A Delicate Balance" was awarded the Pulitzer Prize as the best American drama of 1966. Tobias and Agnes lead a quiet, well-ordered life but the unexpected descent of Harry and Edna, fleeing from a nameless terror, and their daughter Julia, on the rebound from her disastrous fourth marriage, all threaten to destroy the delicate balance of their lives.

"The Golden Legion of Cleaning Women" (September 6-September 23) is by Australian Alan Hopgood, author of the hilarious "look" at Australian Rules football, "And the Big Men Fly", which enjoyed a successful South Australian season three years ago. Set in an Adelaide office block, the cleaning women, faced with the sack, decide to band together. Their attempted rise to world power forms the basis of this laugh-packed farce. "The Golden Legion of Cleaning Women" has had one of the longest Melbourne runs ever enjoyed by any Australian play.

"The Homecoming" (September 27-October 14), Harold Pinter's play, has shocked and yet delighted audiences all over the world. His racy dialogue and superb sense of theatre rise to new heights in a play which was chosen by New York critics as the best play of 1966. When Teddy, a professor in an American university, brings his wife, Ruth, to visit his old home in London, he finds his family still living in the house—Max his father, Sam his uncle, and his brothers Lenny and Joey. From this develops a series of encounters with different members of the family with Ruth as the centre of the action. Harold Pinter has been called "the most original, interesting and arresting talent in theatrical London" and any of Pinter's plays is an event.

The South Australian Theatre Company is continuing the popular season ticket plan which was extremely well accepted last year. This plan makes available tickets for each of the three

plays at reduced prices.

The company for the season will include popular interstate personalities Patricia Kennedy, Rob Inglis, Betty Lucas, Chris Johnson and Martin Redpath, as well as Adelaide's Meta McCaffrey, Don Barker, Hedley Cullen, Pat Woods, Judith Dick, Daphne Grey, Harry Lawrence, Gordon McDougall, Barbara West, Diane O'Loughlin, June Hefferan and Morna Jones.

Of particular interest to Adelaide theatregoers is the appearance of Melbourne's Patricia Kennedy, not seen in Adelaide since her role in "The Chalk Garden" opposite Sybil Thorndike. Rob Inglis recently performed his one-man "Canterbury Tales" in Adelaide. Chris Johnson of Perth scored a great personal success in the lead of "The Owl and the Pussycat" two months ago in Adelaide. The return of former Adelaide actress Betty Lucas (well known in Sydney) and Sydney's Martin Redpath (who recently played the role of Geoffrey in the Lon-

"Hedda Gabler"

FOURTH 1967 play to be staged by Sydney's Old Tote Theatre will be Ibsen's "Hedda Gabler".

This play of domestic intrigue, position hunting and emotional blackmail in a complacent middle-class environment is regarded as one of the greater pegs upon which Ibsen's immense reputation as a reforming dramatist rests.

The title role is itself accounted one of the supreme challenges to an actress in dramatic literature.

Set to open in Sydney at the end of September, "Hedda Gabler" will be Professor Robert Quentin's first Old Tote production since his unforgettable presentation of Chekhov's "The Three Sisters" in mid-1966.

don revival of "A Taste of Honey") is also eagerly awaited.

Key roles of "A Delicate Balance", opening on August 16, will be played by Patricia Kennedy, Rob Inglis, Daphne Grey, Betty Lucas, Barbara West and Gordon McDougall.

Subscription tickets and over-the-counter bookings are available at Allan's, Adelaide.

OPERA WITH PUPPETS

THE possibility of arranging seasons of puppet opera for schoolchildren, each season's repertoire to cue young imaginations to the current work and repertoire of the Elizabethan Trust Opera Company, is being examined by the Marionette Theatre of Australia.

Also being investigated, in fulfilment of one of the major aims which the Marionette Theatre set for itself on its formation, is the establishment of a school of puppetry under the direction of Igor Hychka, the Polish-born puppet technician who has been associated with major puppetry in Australia since Peter Scriven's first "Tintookies" season of 10 years ago.

Pictured below is a scene of puppet opera—Mozart's "Don Giovanni"—as presented by the Salzburg Marionettes, a company which will make its first visit to Australia for the 1968 Adelaide Festival.



U.T.R.C's "Theatre by Computer"

AUDIENCES of the U.T.R.C., soon to be re-named the Melbourne Theatre Company, have had the decisive say as to what five plays they will see in the second half of the U.T.R.C's 1967 season. They have had their say by means of a questionnaire and survey, nicknamed "Theatre by Computer", which asked them to tell which of the 138 plays so far staged by the U.T.R.C. they would most like to see again.

THE five plays given the audience accolade by means of this questionnaire will be staged again in sequence from August 15, and the season will have the banner title of "Top Five Plays of the U.T.R.C. (1953-1967)".

The chosen plays and the dates for their re-presentation are:—

- "Moby Dick Rehearsed", by Orson Welles, August 15 to September 9 (based on Herman Melville's novel).
- "The Heiress", by Ruth and Augustus Goetz, September 12 to October 7 (based on Henry James's novel "Washington Square").

- "Rhinoceros", by Eugene Ionesco, October 10 to November 4.

- "Death of a Salesman", by Arthur Miller, November 7 to December 2.

- "A Flea in Her Ear", by Georges Feydeau, December 4 to December 23.

In 1968, following this season, the U.T.R.C. will become the Melbourne Theatre Company in response to a suggestion from the Melbourne City Council.

ALL five of the plays to be presented between now and Christmas received high critical acclaim when they were previously presented, and the aim of the U.T.R.C. is to give them all even more vitality and excellence of staging than before. The directors will be John Sumner, George Ogilvie and George Whaley.

Once more it is possible for members to see the productions on a most reasonable basis of \$8.00 for all five plays, or \$5.00 for three of the plays. The first half of 1967 has proved again the popularity of the subscription system, the number of U.T.R.C. members again having increased considerably.

From early July, while the company's Russell Street Theatre headquarters are dark for six weeks, and while the new season is in preparation, much-needed alterations are being made at Russell Street. The backstage area, with its unattractive dressing rooms, is being newly carpeted and decorated, and showers and new general plumbing are being installed.

Alterations to the front-of-house area and the auditorium will not begin till late December, but a new grid and new wings are being added in the July period.

During the six-week break the company of 19 artists flies to Canberra at the invitation of the Canberra Theatre Trust to present two of the highly successful productions from the U.T.R.C.'s last "Festival of Overseas Play Successes". They are M. Bradley-Dyne's "The Right Honourable Gentleman" and Feydeau's "A Flea in Her Ear".

In the first half of 1967, a large number of actors were placed under U.T.R.C. contract so that many of them were able to appear in at least four plays. The enormous advantage of this became apparent because the degree of ensemble playing resultantly achieved excited artists and audiences alike.

George Ogilvie's work with the company in mime and movement and Jennifer Janson's influence as a voice coach continue to promote this feeling of ensemble.

THE U.T.R.C. has the continuing hope that as many as 80% of its actors can be put under contract. Such top Melbourne actors as Helmut Bakaitis, Elspeth Ballantyne, Jennifer Claire, Elaine Cusick, Michael Duffield, John Gregg, Monica Maughan, Maggie Millar, George Ogilvie, Dennis Olsen, John Paton, Robin Ramsay, Lyndell Rowe, Frank Thring, David Turnbull, Martin Vaughan, Raymond Westwell and George Whaley are in the company.

Among the other work of the U.T.R.C., new records have been set by the Young Elizabethan Players who, so far in 1967, have played to more than 50,000 students

in metropolitan and country areas. The artistic standards of the Y.E.P.'s have been higher, largely because of an entirely new concept in sets, with the use of ramps, and because of simplified costumes aiming at unity of style.

The Youth Theatre will continue its operations in August with the cast of the Young Elizabethan Players. This again will mean continuous work for seven young actors for 12 months of the year. The last set of one-act plays presented by the Youth Theatre were for third and fourth forms, but the new plays are designed for the younger audiences of first and second forms.

The Youth Theatre season, beginning twice-daily presentations on July 27, will include:—

- "THE PIE AND THE TART", by Hugh Chesterman.

- "THE MAN WITH THE HEART IN THE HIGHLANDS", by William Saroyan.

- "A SLICE OF BIRTHDAY CAKE", by Laurence Collinson.

- "QUEER STREET", by John Donald Kelly.

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Zoe Caldwell's genius

CLOSELY identified with Trust drama from the earliest years of the Trust's work, Australian actress, Zoe Caldwell, last seen in Australian cities as Shaw's "Saint Joan" in 1962, is now being ranked in America as one of the greater stage artists of the world.

In demand for the major drama presentations of the Stratford (Ontario) Festival and also for the renowned Guthrie Theatre in Minneapolis, Zoe Caldwell recently made international headlines for the praise she excited by her performance at Stratford in "The Merry Wives of Windsor".

The theatre critic of the "Washington Post", Richard Coe, remarked that "it is downright absurd that so rare a player has done so comparatively little, but it is encouraging to think that this summer she is doing three major roles in Canada's splendid theatre."

"To thus expatiate on Miss Caldwell, whose colleagues must be aware that she was born a genius, is not to denigrate them by comparison", Coe continued.

The chief joy of the production of "The Merry Wives of Windsor", he declared, was "the wildly brilliant" Caldwell performance as Mistress Page.

"Stiff-legged beneath billowy skirts which adapt to her ramrod step, Mistress Page sniffs as she begins to read Falstaff's letter of passionate avowal. Her face tells us that she is affronted. Nay, she is outraged."

"Yet, she is also tenderly affected. It is, after all, a compliment—and this Mistress Page knows her worth. She knows her husband's worth and whom her daughter should marry. Yet, she cannot help understanding Falstaff's unexpected infatuation, but, of course, that oaf is outrageously insulting. And he shall be punished."

"All this Miss Caldwell's sorcery conveys without a word from her precisely conceived Mistress Page."

"She simply reads Falstaff's fatuous letter. As she reads it, she tells us by physical stance, facial expression, vocal intonation, exactly what she thinks and intonation, exactly what he thinks and precisely what will follow."

"Yes, Australia's Miss Caldwell is one of today's great actresses."

BOOK REVIEWS

ROYAL PRINCE OR IMPOSTOR?

DIMITRY—TSAR AND GREAT PRINCE OF ALL RUSSIA, 1605-1606, by Philip Barbour. 387 pp., 24 illustrations. Macmillan, London and Melbourne, 1967. \$6.40.

DEPENDING on the particular time in history when history is written, a noble character may easily be black-guarded because the smear suits the politics of some subsequent regime or a villain might be whitewashed for similar reasons.

Many a present-day historian holds the view that Shakespeare's picture of Richard III as a loathesome Machiavelian and snide butcher of princelings is merely a reflection of the kind of propaganda that the intrusive Tudors, fairly recently enthroned, found to be convenient with regard to their immediate predecessors. The legend of Richard III as a snake continues into the present day; the Tudor influences have done their dirty work for all time, it seems.

Perhaps parallels are to be found in the manner in which Russian history was written at or about the time of the Tsar Boris Godounov, whose personal story is seen from only one fairly favourable point of view in the superb Moussorkgsky opera, staged by the Elizabethan Trust Opera Company during 1966. In this opera, Boris (himself reputedly a murderer of princelings) is shown as a man of most pitiable sorrows and misfortunes, whereas the Dimitry who overthrew him with forces from Poland is viewed largely as an opportunist pretender with very highly developed con-man principles.

This Dimitry, one of the supremely fascinating mystery-men of European history, may in fact, have been all he claimed to be as he set out with Polish help to overthrow Boris. One line of Russian history alleges that Boris had arranged the murder in childhood of Dimitry, son of the earlier Tsar, Ivan the Terrible. Dimitry's claim, and he was able to substantiate it with witnesses (who may or may not have been suborned), was that the wrong child had been murdered by Boris's agents and that he, Dimitry, the true heir of Ivan the Terrible, escaped.

Whether he was genuinely, by blood, a successor of Ivan or whether he was merely some sort of Russian Perkin Warbeck or Lambert Simnel, both of whom annoyed England's Henry VII by claiming to be a prince who survived alleged "murder" by Richard III, is a question which history has not yet been able to answer with certainty. True it is though, that Dimitry became Tsar for just one short year, at the end of which he, too, was murdered. His corpse was burned and the ashes mixed with gunpowder fired from a cannon, so that his spirit could not return to haunt the scene of his short glory as, indeed, he had haunted Tsar Boris Godounov.

The facts of Dimitry's career add up to a narrative that excels many a novel of picaresque fiction, and Philip

Barbour's examination here of all the pros and cons of the Dimitry story has quite exceptional fascination. And this not only because of all that remains enigmatic in Dimitry's life (Dvorak also wrote an opera around him), but also because of the pace and directness of Mr. Barbour's style and, from time to time, a refreshingly dry sense of humour. —L.B.

"Masque"

COMMUNICATION is basic to the theatre, and the need for high quality theatre magazines to fulfil this function has impelled an enthusiastic group of theatre-lovers to launch a new publication, "Masque", to be published bi-monthly, commencing September 1.

"Masque" will provide a means of communication between those engaged in the theatre, as well as between theatres and their audiences.

To do this, we have secured the services of some of the most vocal people in Australian theatre. They will provide the basis for a coverage of Australian theatre today from which general trends and directions may emerge.

In addition, contributions have been sought in associated fields. Ranging from David Goddard writing on television in Australia to Ray Price on criticism to Andrew Reimer on film, "Masque" will seek to cover the wide field of performing arts in Australia.

One specific aim of "Masque" will be to seek out material on early Australian theatre which may not otherwise be available in published form. An early article by Dr. Helen Oppenheim on scenic design in the first half of the nineteenth century will introduce this policy.

"Masque" will have a high pictorial content, and a wide coverage of current theatre news and personalities to interest the general reader. It is hoped that the magazine will provide a platform where writers from diverse sources may produce a real contribution to a national theatre in this country. It will be edited by me in association with Susan Roux. Correspondents have been appointed in all major States as well as overseas.

"Masque" is happy to offer a 10% discount to Trust members, which may be obtained by inscribing the "Masque" subscription voucher on the back with the words "Trust Member" and your signature. For a yearly contribution of \$2.70, a Trust member will receive six issues of "Masque"

—John Allen,
Editor, "Masque".

Permanent Theatre Home

THE Community Theatre, a professional company based at Killara on Sydney's North Shore, plans to open a nine-month season of plays in March, 1968.

Under the artistic leadership of Alexander Archdale, the company's three years of planning have been solidified by successful completion of negotiations to lease the Killara Soldiers' Memorial Hall from the Kuring-gai Municipal Council.

Plans for renovations and conversion of the hall into a theatre have been approved by the Council's architects and engineers.

The Community Theatre's lease of Killara Memorial Hall is for five years from January 1, 1968, with the option of renewal.

"To fulfil the conditions of the lease and carry out the necessary renovations and conversion," Mr. Archdale told

"Trust News", "the company will need a considerable amount of money. We have some \$1,500 donated by members and firms, and have negotiated a loan of up to \$13,000 from the bank of New South Wales. The bank loan is to be secured by guarantee in the form of a covenant signed by 80 persons. Guarantors are not required to provide cash; their individual liability is limited to \$200 solely in the event of the failure of the company and its inability to repay any part of the loan."

Because of the work involved in preparing for next year's regular programme of plays, the Community Theatre's projected production for September, 1967, has been cancelled. A play for children—Nicholas Stuart Gray's "Beauty and the Beast"—will be staged twice daily at the newly acquired theatre from December 11 to 30.

PUDDING or SIXPENCES?

It is obvious to any opera-lover, who has listened through the hundreds of aria performances in the preliminary rounds of any big cistteddfod, that most competitors sing their chosen numbers as isolated songs of graceful tunes and showy passions without much sense of how the whole dramatic and character conflict of the relevant operas gives explicit point and meaningfulness to those very tunes and passions.

The fact that so many striving young singers are themselves unable to comprehend the deeper dramatic importance of aria singing, so that their arias remain merely two-dimensional facades of tone, reflects a widespread public attitude that opera is no more than a string of padded-out highspots. It is rather the attitude of the small boy who labours through the solids of Christmas pudding for the intermittent excitement of the sixpences that turn up to reward his doggedness.

Now it is quite true that more than a few of the people who go to opera think along these lines—but they do go! They go, even with this somewhat limited attitude, because of the concentrated joy that these so-called highspots can give to them.

I feel I can safely say that many an opera patron is like this because I recall quite vividly that, when I was first going to opera back in the valiant Fuller season of the early 1930s, I was like that myself—impatient with the way opera seemed to be so often marking time, and eager for it to hurry along to the vividly exciting bits of free, open and passionate tune.

Opera, as Debussy once said in another connection, had for me some glorious moments, but also some pretty dreary quarters-of-an-hour. Now, after some 35 years of opera-going which has (I hope) allowed some maturing, I find that all of opera's moments are intensely rewarding because of the way in which experience allows an immense diversity of emotional and intellectual play on and around the events on stage and in the orchestra pit.

These thoughts come to mind on reading the excellent letter from Miss Celia Winter-Irving, as published on the back page of this edition of "Trust News". The tone of her letter is one of regret that so many people cannot get beyond the sixpence hunting stage in opera-going experience, and that a campaign of skilful lecturing could help them to break through their "sound barrier" into richer and deeper enjoyment. Her tone is also not one of reproach—not a reproach that people whom these deeper pleasures elude are a bunch of no-hopers. It is always a little saddening rather than exasperating when one finds that some tremendously positive joy or enthusiasm in an artistic experience is a completely closed book to somebody else.

My Austrian friends used to be terribly sorry for me in my earlier concert-going days because I could not find the key to unlock the treasure of such composers as Mahler and Bruckner—and Bartok. It was no use remonstrating with me; I simply couldn't get the message. It was just a matter, for them, of having a great delight which I seemed incapable of sharing, and of therefore

being sorry because all delight is worth sharing. After a few more years of growing up and sifting both my experiences and my hungers, Mahler and Bruckner and Bartok came right into the centre place of my own most cherished pleasure. Now it is my turn to be very sorry for all those people who, like myself of old, have yet to penetrate these splendid places of the spirit.

What I am trying to say, apropos of Miss Winter-Irving's letter, is that a ripening of taste and understanding in opera (or any other art, for that matter) is perhaps not so much a matter of forced-feeding and crash-coursing as of growing up from and through the simplest of youthful enthusiasms to the meaning that the arts have, not only as an occasional decoration of life, but as a guide, counsellor and explicator in the challenges of life itself.

How quickly or slowly any individual can evolve to this depends on the particular constitution of the individual and his circumstances, but it can safely be said that many of those young people who now think of opera only in terms of its highspots will generate within themselves the needs and means whereby their opera pleasure may go deeper.

—Lindsey Browne.

U.T.R.C.—from page 5.

In September, the Youth Theatre will begin a six-weeks' tour of country areas.

Director Malcolm Robertson, as well as directing the Youth Theatre's plays, will also conduct the U.T.R.C.'s Saturday Morning Club, as well as the Theatre Workshops which are held at school holiday time. In addition to this, a workshop for teachers will be conducted in September.

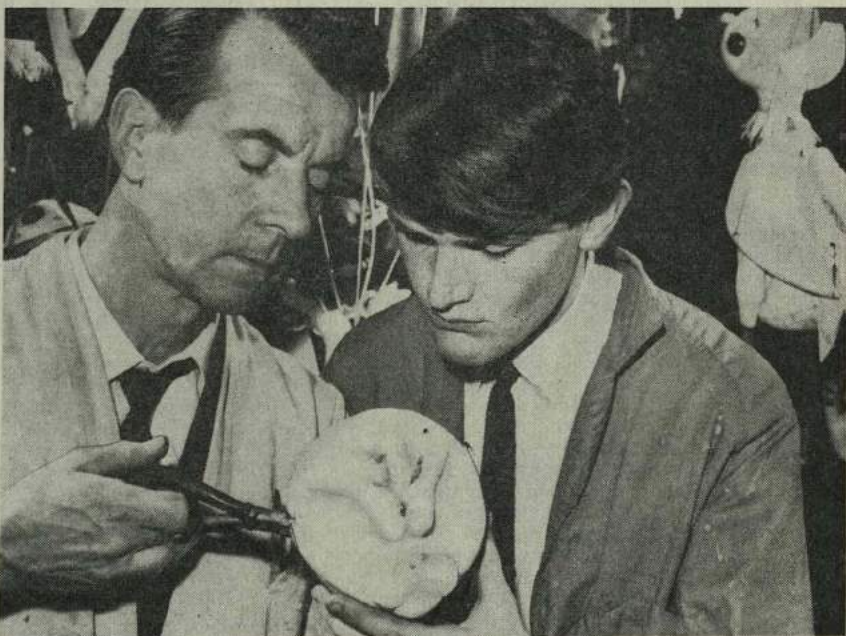
THESE peripheral activities of the U.T.R.C. are attracting to theatre an increasing number of young students who are eager to learn every aspect of theatre from stage management and acting to scenic design and production.

These many and various aspects of the U.T.R.C.'s work show the tremendous growth of this company in every direction. The U.T.R.C. season recently completed affirms that, in Melbourne, there is a refreshing interest in theatre. Melbourne people are realising that theatre can become an integral and essential part of their lives.

In the next six months the U.T.R.C. hopes to strengthen this widening belief. Grants of the scale of \$5,000 a year for the next three years from the Melbourne City Council will help artistic fulfilment of this endeavour.

Theatrical integrity and creativity is the U.T.R.C.'s unswerving aim and we hope that the "Top Five Plays of the U.T.R.C. (1953-1967)" will again win recognition of this from our audiences.

—Judith Varga.



Polish-born puppet technician, Igor Hychka (left), demonstrates a technical trick to a young puppeteer of the "Little Fella Bindi" company.

Initiation into Opera

A PROPOSAL by Sydney Trust Member, Miss Celia Winter-Irving, that the Trust should initiate a series of opera lecture-demonstrations before each opera season in order to win wider public allegiance for opera, is reprinted here in full as a basis for comment from Members, who are invited to write to "Trust News" on the points raised.

Whether the proposition is true that instructive well-informed talking about opera can overcome or modify the resistance of unconvinced people is itself worth closer examination, and this is attempted by the Editor in an article elsewhere in this edition. So, too, is the possibility that deepening awareness of opera is not so much a matter of timely instruction as part of every individual temperament's natural evolution as life experience itself enlarges horizons.

DEAR SIR—A season of seven operas to be seen in Sydney during August and September is indeed a pleasant prospect. It will be happily anticipated by those of us who "think opera at least a quarter of our waking hours" (Mr. Robin May, in a recent book) and who are proud possessors of other attitudes symptomatic of a condition described by Mr. May in the title of that book—"Opera Mania".

The season will be, at least, anticipated by many whose introduction to opera has been recent. Those to whom opera is a newly discovered art-form are sometimes unable to rid themselves of a slight sense of the ridiculous about the continuously sung word; except when the sheer beauty of an isolated moment enables them to become emotionally involved in the music, completely out of dramatic context. Such moments are rewarding enough for these people to continue their opera-going with the express purpose of having further experiences at this level. But it is possible that they will remain unaware of the deep pleasure that total involvement in an opera at both the musical and dramatic levels can give.

And, sadly, the coming season will not be anticipated at all by many persons of intelligence and discernment (and often of vast musical knowledge and understanding in other directions) who cannot see beyond the ostensible incongruity of the expression of everyday conversation and deep feeling through singing.

One must acknowledge that the librettists of Verdi, Rossini and Puccini, in the main, were not endowed with the literary merits and the heightened sense of theatre possessed by Hofmannsthal, Da Ponte or Wagner. However, the freedom given to, and the importance attached to, the operatic producer today means that even a "bel canto" opera can effect a total involvement for audiences at both the musical and dramatic levels. Thus it is possible for "Turandot", "Don Pasquale", "Rigoletto" and "Trovatore" to provide the experience-in-depth that every opera-lover has at some time enjoyed, and hopes above all to enjoy again.

But the latter person knows just how important is background knowledge of the opera, of the composer and of the plot, plus familiarity with the music, in contributing to such an experience. He knows how "homework" can transform the enjoyment of isolated moments for themselves alone into simultaneous pleasure in many other enjoyments—enjoyment of their beauty in itself, enjoyment of expressions of feeling from characters one understands with sympathy, enjoyment of opera's expressions of universal emotions not bounded by time or place. For example, the "presentation of the rose" in "Rosenkavalier" can certainly be loved for the beauty of the music alone regardless of the dramatic context. But how much more rewarding is the experience if this episode is also loved because it is the expression of feeling between two persons with whom one feels a sympathetic involvement, and, at the same time, because it is the perfect expression of the first glimmerings of a deep mutual attraction between two persons.

This is how opera should be enjoyed, but, unless people are taught this, it is possible that they will go through their operatic life like those who will "at least anticipate" the forthcoming season. Therefore, I would like to suggest a way that many people, who could acquire this larger attitude, might do so.

This could be done by the Trust organising a series of lectures for ticket-buyers and interested persons. The first three or four could be devoted to the right way to enjoy opera and to approach it, this incorporating some history of the art form. The ensuing lectures could deal with each particular opera in depth, with illustration by records. This kind of thing has been done successfully by Elsie Mayer-Lindemann with the operas scheduled for presentation at Glyndebourne in Sussex, and these lectures have been extremely well attended by Glyndebourne audiences. Covent Garden, prior to its production of Schoenberg's "Moses and Aaron", did the same thing. Such lectures, I feel sure, would be well attended, particularly by those under 26 whose operatic appetites have been whetted, and who find it well within financial possibility to attend the Trust Opera's Monday Youth Night performances. *Completed in next column.*

BIRDS BLASTED—from page 3.

birds in India, China, Malaya and North and South America which he rendered by means of a highly-differentiated rhythmic system. If these sounds are evocative of a strangely glimmering fairy-tale world, a bird kingdom of a thousand-and-one nights with a finely developed exotic charm of its own, then Cranko's choreography of the encounter between a girl and the three birds brings to mind more immediate and palpable bird associations somewhere between Aristophanes and Hitchcock.

"The girl's experiences with the birds are of a none too felicitous kind. It soon transpires that birds have some very human preoccupations whose consequences they are unable to escape. Having found this out, the girl, disconsolate and just a little hurt, decides that she would be better off in a protective cage . . . This is certainly a choreography that reveals once again the stupendous range of Cranko's ideas. Its constructions are even more daring and acrobatic than anything he has ever done before, and he has already accustomed us to quite a lot in this direction. However, here again he has not been able to avoid indulging his fatal penchant for some very unappetising lapses of good taste.

"For all its odd eccentricities and its shrewdly reasoned show of sexiness, this choreography lacks poetic lustre. It also fails to capture the calculated touch of the mysterious in Messiaen's score. Ballet's best ornithological discovery remains the web-footed birds of 'Swan Lake'."

FOOTNOTE: It seems remarkably coincidental that while Helpmann's "The Display", with its implications of sexual engagement between woman and bird, was satirically dismissed in Montreal by amused critics from New York, Cranko's birds of similar predilections were being similarly roasted in Germany.

Persons giving such lectures must, above all, be successful and effective "evangelists" with an ability to communicate their love of the art form and their knowledge of it, and must also be able successfully to encourage people to do their "homework". Lecturers should guard against making their talk too "specialistic" in nature, and they must be able to convince people that a technical knowledge of music is not necessary for such total enjoyment of a work as I have endeavoured to describe.

I feel that this is something which could greatly enhance many people's enjoyment and understanding of opera, and introduce many others to what is, for me, the most satisfying and wonderful art form—Yours, etc.

—Celia Winter-Irving.