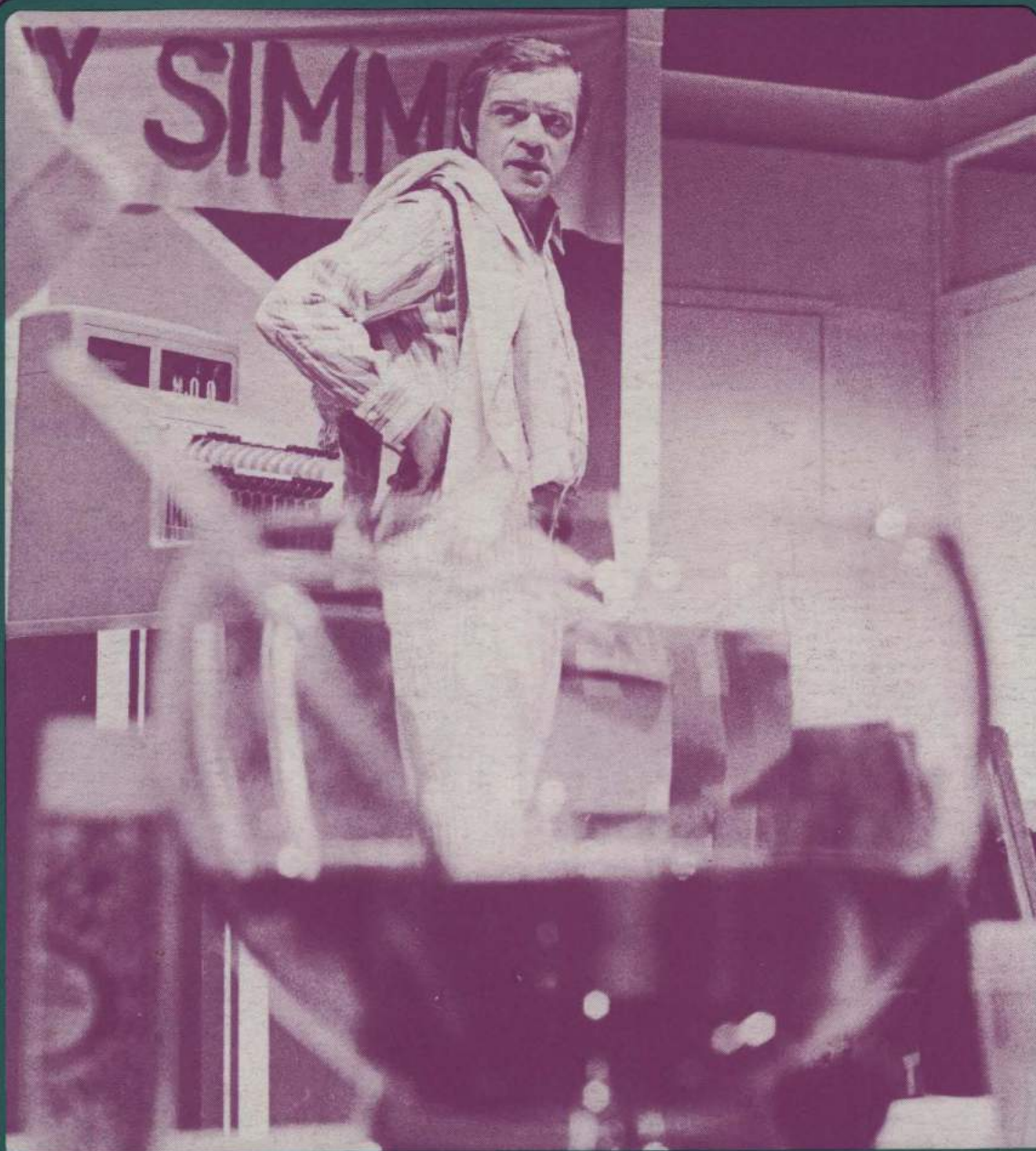


the elizabethan trust news

June 30, 1972

25 cents



Published quarterly
Registered for posting as a Periodical, CAT. B.

Number 3

the australian elizabethan theatre trust

PATRON:
HER MAJESTY THE QUEEN.

PRESIDENT:
Colonel Aubrey H. L. Gibson, E.D.

VICE-PRESIDENTS:
Sir James Darling, C.M.G., O.B.E., Sir Warwick Fairfax, Sir Robert Knox.

CHAIRMAN:
Sir Ian Potter.

DIRECTORS:
A.C.T.

Professor J. A. Passmore.
N.S.W.

Claude Alcorso, Mrs. P. W. E. Curtin, Miss Margaret Gillespie,
Sir Charles Moses, C.B.E., Maurice Parker, Dr. Lloyd Ross, O.B.E.
P. Sonnino, Maurice C. Timbs.

QLD.
L. W. H. Butts, C.B.E., Sir Reginald Groom.

S.A.
N. F. Hopkins, C. J. Legoe, Bruce Macklin, O.B.E.

TAS.
J. B. Piggott, C.B.E., Sir Peter Lloyd, Ald. C. G. Pryor, M.B.E.

VIC.
Hon. Vernon Christie, M.P., Mrs. F. Massy Burnside, Albert Monk, C.M.G.,
Sir George Paton, Miss M. E. Roper, N. R. Seddon, C.B.E.,
Sir Arthur Smithers, C.B.E.

W.A.
Emeritus Professor Frederick Alexander, C.B.E., T. A. S. James.

GENERAL MANAGER:
Jeffrey Joynton-Smith.

SECRETARY:
Colonel John McCaffrey.

ADMINISTRATOR OF ENTREPRENEURIAL ACTIVITIES:
Tony Gould.

DIRECTOR OF PUBLICITY:
Hugh McGowan.

PRODUCTION MANAGER:
Peter Smith.

MEMBERSHIP:
Linda Jacoby.

MANAGER OF SUBSCRIPTIONS:
Noel Laughton.

HEAD OFFICE:
153 Dowling Street, Potts Point, N.S.W. 2011.
Telephone: 357 1200.

VICTORIAN REPRESENTATIVE:
James Mills.

OFFICE:
163 Spring Street, Melbourne, Victoria 3000.
Telephone: 662 2911.

SOUTH AUSTRALIAN REPRESENTATIVE:
Miss Margaret Morris.

OFFICE:
1st Floor, Central Market Building, 45-51 Grote Street, Adelaide, S.A. 5000.
Telephone: 51 8444.

QUEENSLAND REPRESENTATIVE:
John Devitt, O.B.E.

OFFICE:
S.G.I.O. Theatre, Turbot Street, Brisbane, Qld. 4000.
Telephone: 21 9528.

A.C.T. REPRESENTATIVE:
Professor J. A. Passmore, C/- Australian National University, Canberra,
A.C.T. 2600.


WESTERN AUSTRALIAN REPRESENTATIVE:
Emeritus Professor F. Alexander, C.B.E., 77 Victoria Avenue,
Claremont, W.A. 6010.
Telephone: 86 3443.

TASMANIAN REPRESENTATIVE:
John Unicomb, Theatre Royal, 29 Campbell Street, Hobart 7000.
Telephone: 34 6266.

FOR THE HOLIDAY OF A LIFETIME

If you'd like to change your holiday routine, we'll make sure you get the holiday of your lifetime. No matter where you want to go, or what you want to do - on a package holiday - a personally escorted holiday - or a tailor-made holiday. See your Travel Agent, or any office of Ansett Airlines of Australia.



 **ANSETT**
AIRLINES OF AUSTRALIA
a million holiday ideas

FRONT COVER: Jack Murdock as Bentley in the Hartford (Conn., U.S.A.) Stage Company's production of Alex Buzo's *ROOTED*.

DESIGNED BY **hoys art**

PRINTED BY MASTERCRAFT PRINTING

The Elizabethan Trust News is published quarterly by The Australian Elizabethan Theatre Trust, 153 Dowling Street, Potts Point, N.S.W.

THREE PLAYWRIGHTS and their mark on our theatre

by Kevon Kemp*

The recent great revival in Australian theatre is now so evident and so accepted that it has no news value at all. Only theatre critics seem to get at all excited about it, about the fact that the four or five main subsidised drama companies now draw more paying audience than all the country's music concerts and recitals, more than opera, more than ballet—though these other arts have much greater subsidy than drama.

Critics, too, tend to be pleased at the way in which the theatre audiences in Australia have been growing younger in average age; with some leading companies more than half their audiences are 22 years of age or younger. Although these big audiences are coming to see, for the most part, a calculated blend of classics and outstanding contemporary plays, they are also seeing more and more new Australian plays. Amongst well-known names like Moliere and Brecht, a good handful of new and Australian identities are finding their plays sprinkled into the repertoire; authors such as John Romeril, Alex Buzo, David Williamson, Michael Boddy, Jack Hibberd, and Barry Oakley are finding that at least some success seems prepared to come their way quite quickly on their native country's stages. Of these writers, Buzo, Oakley and Williamson are distinctive and special samples; it is worth the playgoer's time to look at them in turn.

ALEX BUZO has already set some sort of a literary record for this country by having been, for some time, a purely professional playwright. A cordial, beautifully self-contained young married man, Buzo rather enjoys telling people of a lunchtime pub talk with a watersider, met casually, whose astonishment that anyone could actually earn a living from writing plays was complete.

This professionalism is important for Buzo; he feels it is imperative to be able to be free to write his plays, and to be able to earn enough from them for a reasonably secure life. He has been rewarded by several overseas productions of his plays—*THE FRONT ROOM BOYS* and *ROOTED* have had English and U.S. staging, and others are to come.

Until big commercial seasons are possible in Australia for his own and other local writers' plays, Buzo sees the best return for writers in overseas productions. The February production of *ROOTED* at the Hartford Stage Company, Connecticut, a modest season by Broadway standards, still was able to return him some hundreds of dollars a week.

ROOTED is shortly to have an off-Broadway production in New York, and German theatres will be playing it as well as *THE FRONT ROOM BOYS*. Buzo is very happy with this internationalism; it is the way overseas playwrights work—living and writing in one country, but getting returns from productions all over the world.

His latest play, *MACQUARIE*, has just been produced by the Melbourne Theatre Company, where Buzo is spending a year as the company's resident playwright. *MACQUARIE* was a departure for Buzo, but he says "I wanted to do it. The Australia around us now is pretty fascinating, but so is the past Australia, and I found Macquarie a good example of the man with good intentions who goes wrong in their execution."

This play was worked over very thoroughly in a director and actor workshop, and I asked Buzo how he felt about this sort of notion, of having others pass their opinions on his work. I mentioned Eugene O'Neill's attitude, which by and large was one of complete refusal to alter a line of his plays to please a producer or actor. If the writing's rough, said O'Neill, then it's rough; the roughness is part of me as well as the smooth; and the great man would not be altered or cut or sandpapered. Buzo's reply reassured me: "You don't have to take any notice," he said. "I found it very valuable, because I could see in front of me how the play shaped, and I could see for myself where I felt things might be changed. Certainly, actors and directors make suggestions, sometimes many of them, but it's up to oneself to weigh them." Behind the thin silver rimmed spectacles that make a modish contrast to his ebullient hairstyle,

Buzo's eyes suddenly lit with recollected humour. "I don't think I acted on anyone's suggestions at the workshop."

Alex Buzo is often tagged as being occupied with Australian "mateship" but this is not the whole truth. Though mateship is an element of the Australian life, Buzo is, as *ROOTED* shows particularly, also very concerned with what lies behind the apparent features of our style.

There are ghosts littering the physical Australian landscape—the hundreds of thousands of Aborigines directly or indirectly killed by settlers as close to us as our grandfathers; the plunder and erosion of the soil; the brothels and brawls of the gold days, bawdiness most people seem still to wish kept hidden.

In the same manner, ghosts are littering the minds and personalities of contemporary Australians—racism, intolerance, insecurity, lack of charity to others. From his first success, the short play *NORM AND AHMED*, Alex Buzo has been worrying at these shadows in the Australian make-up. Not in any overtly moralistic or didactic way, but by holding a very bright mirror up to the people around us.

Buzo has, and this is a distinguishing feature of almost all the current group of younger playwrights, a remarkable ear for the rhythms and words of vernacular Australian.

Recently, in Melbourne, after seeing a production of *ROOTED* there, I was sitting in the bar at the airport and next to a table of young men. They discussed their girl friends, their cars, and their skis—and each topic was mainly expressed in figures. The dialogue was absolutely fascinating; when it wasn't pure Buzo it was equally pure Jack Hibberd.

In real life we are apt to overlook such people altogether; the importance of Buzo is that he puts them up before us, and shows us exactly where they fit into the Australian mosaic, and what their relative importance is to the pattern.

After *ROOTED* the people around one in an Australian city or suburb are no longer the same; the playwright has turned all the stereotypes around and shown us the seamy and sinister

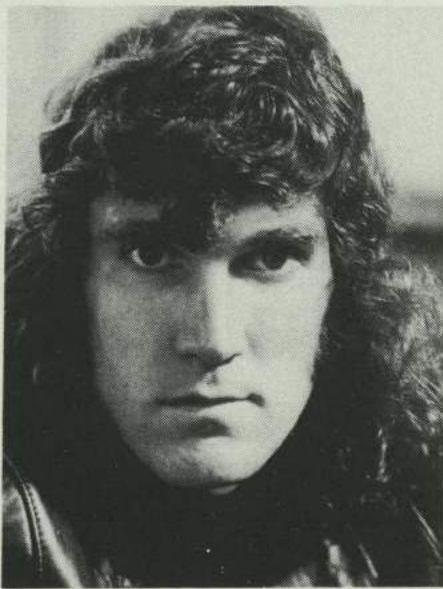
1. Alex Buzo



2. Barry Oakley



3. David Williamson



ter patchwork that lies behind the hail-fellow front.

Buzo has recently finished the first draft of his latest play, *TOM*, and with another distinguished Australian, Michael Blakemore, is working on a film script. He hopes that *ROOTED* may soon be filmed. He is, as he wants to be, a busy professional.

Without being conscious or self-conscious about it, Buzo has already had a strong and cleansing effect on our theatre and living. His assurance, his knowledge of his craft, and his penetrating habit with his fellow Australians, along with his produced works, mark him already as amongst our most important writers. My guess is that success will confirm Buzo in his specialised dissection work; I think he will emerge as the greatest revealer (i.e., "flayer") of our comfortable, head-in-the-fleece, hypocritical attitudes that we have yet seen.

BARRY OAKLEY, as neat and economical in his use of space as Buzo, is a decidedly different sort of man and writer. A father of six, with a calm, relaxed face set off by a shaped beard, Oakley moves and talks with much of the professional skill of the actor. He has successful novels behind him (notably the recent Penguin issue of *LET'S HEAR IT FOR PRENDERGAST!*) and his first major play, *THE FEET OF DANIEL MANNIX* produced last year by the Australian Performing Group in Melbourne, and latterly by Sydney's New Theatre, showed that a new leader was amongst us.

Oakley began, as have a remarkable group of modern Melbourne writers, with Betty Burstall's small but free-minded "La Mama" Theatre. He wrote some sketches which were produced there, and wrote a short piece, *WITZENHAUSEN, WHERE ARE YOU?* for a Melbourne Theatre Company schools series.

That such an assured and bravura play as *THE FEET OF DANIEL MANNIX* should have come so early from a beginning playwright is perhaps surprising, although it is at least a little explained by Oakley's being a professional writer, who has worked in advertising and public

relations, and presently is a writer for the Department of Trade.

Quietly radical in his views, Oakley supports and draws support from avant-garde, community-politics-oriented Australian Performing Group, who, in their once very crude Pram Factory Theatre in Carlton, Melbourne, are attempting to put together quite a new sort of theatre. Within the A.P.G. there is some opinion against professional theatre; an opinion not fully shared by Oakley.

Like fellow playwright David Williamson, he has some reservations about the weight given occasionally to actors' opinions by the Group. "Some of the A.P.G. actors are mighty aggressive," says Oakley. "It's often hard to ensure that your own ideas get through. In *MANNIX* the group persuaded me into quite a different end to the play than the one I'd written, though I still rather like my original notion."

DAVID WILLIAMSON, since I talked to him and Oakley together, should be introduced at this stage. Williamson is an intense, long (six foot five or so), dark-eyed, thickly dark-haired dynamo who is a lecturer in thermodynamics at the noted Swinburne College of Technology, Melbourne. Academics are well represented in the new wave of playwrights, for Jack Hibberd is a medical practitioner, and John Romeril, though he often drives a taxi from choice, is an English honours graduate.

Williamson chimed in, agreeing with Oakley. He had just finished writing a major part of the material for the A.P.G. revue, and admitted that he had had his arguments. "Some of the revue, now they've got at it, has finished up as pretty straight preaching, and some of my lines were really quarrelled with because some actors reckoned they degraded the proletariat. I was only after accuracy."

Yet both were solidly loyal to the A.P.G., mainly because it had given, in the face of immense difficulties, real opportunity for local drama to be staged. This loyalty has led both Oakley and Williamson to not expect much in the way of money return from the A.P.G. "I

think I got about sixty-five dollars for *Mannix*," said Oakley, "but I don't grudge that, I was very glad for them to do it."

Williamson, for a time, drew a salary from the A.P.G. and his plays *THE COMING OF STORK* (since made into the film, *STORK*) and *THE REMOVALISTS* were virtually given to the A.P.G. From the Sydney production of *THE REMOVALISTS*, at the Nimrod Street Theatre, Williamson thinks he received about \$360.00.

I looked at the couch where the two playwrights were sitting and said: "Two of our best recent plays, and they made perhaps \$430 between them."

They were not nearly so unhappy about this as I was. Oakley and Williamson both feel that in helping the A.P.G. establish they have gained enormously themselves, and that the new Australian theatre has to start somewhere.

As Williamson said, "It does bring some return—the Sydney production got me the commercial deal from Harry Miller to produce the play, and so in the long run I may make quite some money out of it." Harry Miller also began some negotiations for Oakley's play, but when they did not crystallise, Oakley allowed Sydney's New Theatre, a top amateur group, to do the play.

Both Williamson and Oakley want to see radicalness stay with their sort of theatre and writing; they are after a production situation in which viable theatre can relate to politics and thus have some reasonably direct effect on immediate life. But they are not, either of them, after a straight didactic approach. They are not, as we have seen, always happy with some of the preaching that emerges at the A.P.G.—but since it is such a toughly seminal group, determined to see indigenous plays flourish, they support the theatre strongly.

Williamson draws, he says, his plots directly from circumstance around him. "*THE REMOVALISTS*," he told us, "came straight from a pub yarn with a bloke who was a removalist. His story stuck with me, and the play sprang right out of what he told me. I think that's what I'm after: putting down what the life around me is. *DON'S PARTY*, a play of mine we did earlier at the A.P.G., was pretty much a documentary of a trendy university-style party I went to. It's going to be done at Jane Street in Sydney this year, so you'll see it yourself. A lot of people objected to some of the language, but that was how it came."

Oakley came in. "The language was spot on. I think David and Jack Hibberd get their language right all the time, and *DON'S PARTY* was dead on target."

Williamson said, "I think Hibberd's *WHITE WITH WIRE WHEELS* is our best play in the past ten years."

I remarked on what appeared to me the somewhat unusual friendliness amongst the playwrights working with Melbourne's A.P.G. Oakley laughed, "It's a mutual defence league against the actors."

But, in fact, the talk from Oakley and Williamson was notable for this element of real praise for others; their own work was modestly referred to, whilst plays by Buzo, Romeril and Hibberd were admired.

Like Buzo, Williamson is digging down to the underlying layers of the Australian personality. He is not satisfied with mateship. "Sociologically, Australia is the most interesting country in the world. The work done here by sociologists shows that we are cynical, paranoid. This is the real Australia I try to come to grips with. And I try to be painfully accurate about it, relating everything to my own experience. Hibberd's language is rough and raw, but it's Australia, and that's what I'm after, too."

Bill Crosby as Sgt. Don Simmonds in Nimrod Street's production of *THE REMOVALISTS*.



STAGEWORLD

If Oakley has a special aim it is a fascination with power, and the way it is and has been used in Australia. "Mannix was in a way a first try at this," said Oakley. "Though I don't think I have this thing about power as a big pre-occupation or anything, I will say it interests me. And trying to work it out theatrically, that's a job."

"I think most Australians still more or less want a SUMMER OF THE SEVENTEENTH DOLL sort of play tarted up a bit with BARBARELLA. I can't do that one, so I try for what I can."

Williamson and Oakley enjoy writing plays—Oakley finds them easier than novels—though Williamson has trouble arranging enough time. "I have to write them in the school holidays; I wrote THE REMOVALISTS and DON'S PARTY in the same two months of last year's long holidays, but since then I haven't been able to get anything else finished."

(The memory of Buzo, insisting that a playwright should be only a playwright came back to me; in ensuring that some of these remarkable new playwrights of ours have the chance to finish the work they want to get on stage lies quite a field for use of subsidies of, maybe, a specific, investment type.)

What lives with one from talking to these three playwrights, Buzo, Oakley, and Williamson, is the impression of permanence. These are playwrights with many plays in them. Not so long back we had a crop of one-play Australian writers—Beynon, Seymour (with all respect), Lawler, and others who seemed capable only of one viable play.

The new wave is different. With some of them, a mere two years has already put quite a solid body of work behind them and into production. Obviously our theatre has moved on to a new plateau of its development; we must all go out and meet our new writers: Williamson, Boddy, Oakley, Romeril, Buzo, Cooney, Reed, Hibberd . . . already there is quite an impressive roll call.

*Kevon Kemp is theatre critic for *The National Times*.

Bruce Spence and Max Gilles in *The Pram Factory's* production of *THE FEET OF DANIEL MANNIX*.



With the loss of yet another theatre—the Royal—Sydney's theatregoers are destined to miss out on much of the imported fare offered in other cities. However, it is exciting to see the present upsurge in the activities of Sydney's smaller theatres. Two years ago Amy McGrath began presenting reading of local plays in converted stables in her back garden. The airing of these plays proved to be so successful that, like La Mama in Melbourne, the Mews gained a reputation as an invaluable workshop where dramatists could find a public and theatres look for new material. Of the 13 plays performed since its establishment, all have gone into production or publication elsewhere. Encouraged by the Mews experiment, Mrs. McGrath and theatre critic Katherine Brisbane got together with the idea of establishing a theatre devoted solely to performing Australian plays. At the same time they were approached by young directors, Aarne Neeme and Rex Cramphorne who felt the need for additional venues in Sydney. Determined not to let the momentum of the current interest in and success of Australian drama dissipate through lack of focus, they founded the Australian Playwrights' Theatre Company specifically to encourage indigenous theatre. At the moment APT is negotiating for a theatre in the vicinity of the University of Sydney which will have a thrust stage (there isn't one in Sydney) and seat about 300.

Not less than four theatre companies in Sydney—New Theatre (which celebrates its fortieth birthday this year), The Ensemble, Nimrod St. and APT—are currently negotiating for larger premises. The Ensemble and Nimrod St. are hoping to combine a larger auditorium with experimental and rehearsal areas. Let's hope the Ensemble doesn't give up its present theatre entirely—apart from being Sydney's only theatre in the round, it would be a pity for audiences to have to miss out on coffee on the harbour. And, thinking of theatregoers—why don't some of our theatres give a thought to food? Britain's Old Vic is now offering patrons light meals. The moves here to serve drinks during performances can only be applauded, but wouldn't it be nice to avoid that frantic rush of trying to fit in a decent meal before the show as well?

Local playwrights are positively in vogue. Small experimental theatres in Sydney and Melbourne have earned a reputation for trying out new plays. Now the more established theatres are getting in on the act. Perth's National Theatre at the Playhouse is shortly to premiere Elizabeth Backhouse's *MIRAGE*—a play about the outback. The Queensland Theatre Company is premiering Peter Barnes' *THE RULING CLASS*, a baroque comedy thriller and, later in the year, a specially commissioned *Masque in Honour of the City of Brisbane* by Michael Boddy, who is also renowned to be working on an opera based on the Macquarie era for Sydney's Independent Theatre. Patrick Flynn of *SUPERSTAR* fame will write the score. *THE FEET OF DANIEL MANNIX* will be imported to New South Wales by the New Theatre. David Williamson has been commissioned to write a new play for the Nimrod Street; another of his plays, *DON'S PARTY*, will be performed at the Jane Street Theatre in July and his *JUGGLERS THREE* is soon to go into production by the Melbourne Theatre Company. The MTC have options on the next two plays written by resident playwright Alex Buzo, who has the unheard-of distinction of having three plays performed simultaneously in Sydney and Melbourne. Film producers are vying for the rights of *ROOTED* and rumour has it that they have been sold to an overseas company who will make the film in Australia. The MTC is also bringing famous local actress, Googie Withers, back for a short season. Nimrod St. is experimenting with Australian scripts for young people with a view to forming a Sydney Youth Centre. Their first production in this venture will have a week's run after the current production.

The second \$5,000 Edgley Award for Theatre Arts in Western Australia has been awarded to Jilanne McDonald who is at present attending a course in choreology in Benesh dance notation in London. There are very few trained choreologists in Australia and it is recognised within the international world of ballet that the presentation of ballets other than by personal contact can only take place by means of notation.

THE WATER BABIES, the Marionette Theatre of Australia's next major production, is currently in rehearsal under the direction of puppetry wizz, Jan Bussell. With a "cast" of 40 puppets and six manipulators who work from three rather than the usual single bridge, Jan Bussell is faced with more than the usual stage management headaches. While the three bridges, positioned to form an arc, will add realism and variety to the staging of the production, they will also increase the demand on the puppeteers who will have to be ready to take over a puppet in mid sentence as it changes its position on stage below and enters another area of control. Just to complicate matters further, at other times one puppeteer might follow the movement of his puppet—with a consequent reshuffle of the other five manipulators on the bridges! So the puppeteers will really be kept on the move—and what's more, will be visible to the audience throughout the production.

STAGEWORLD (cont.)

Before recording the soundtrack, the actors who "speak" for the puppets will spend a week in rehearsal with the company to familiarize themselves with the unique problems inherent in any puppet production.

Later this year the Trust will bring a German theatre company to Australia for a barnstorming tour to take in all capital cities. Representative of the best in modern German theatre, the company, appropriately called Die Brücke (the Bridge), is sponsored by the Goethe Institut to foster goodwill and introduce other nations to German culture. Die Brücke draws its actors from the major theatres throughout Germany and is making its third world tour. The group is bringing two plays to Australia—WOYZECK by Georg Büchner and DER FRIEDEN by Aristophanes, adapted by Peter Hacks. Although written last century, WOYZECK is decidedly modern. In the same genre as Ibsen, WOYZECK is about a man who becomes a victim—both physically and psychologically—of his society. Peter Hacks' adaptation of the delightfully robust comedy DER FRIEDEN is in the style of Brecht. If you are interested in good theatre, make a note of the date this sophisticated and accomplished company performs in your State.

And overseas

Australian Malcolm Williamson's Castle Opera has just been formed. Williamson's operas, THE GROWING CASTLE (first performed at Dynevor Castle from which the company takes its name), ENGLISH ECCENTRICS, THE HAPPY PRINCE, DUNSTAN AND THE DEVIL will form the basis of the company's repertoire. Works by other composers are also planned, with special emphasis on twentieth century British music. Workshops and opera involving children, both as spectators and participants, will be another important aspect of the company's activities.

Stop Press

Peter Hall named as new artistic chief of the National Theatre Company in Britain, succeeding Laurence Olivier. Olivier has headed company since it started in 1963, but is 65 now and has had two serious illnesses in recent years. However, Olivier will continue association with company as an actor and director, and will also be named as emeritus life president. Hall will work alongside Olivier until the National moves into its new playhouse, now under construction, on south bank of the Thames, early in 1974. Hall was originally director of the Royal Shakespeare Company when it took over the Aldwych Theatre in 1960, but was succeeded a few years ago by Trevor Nunn. Hall currently in Vienna directing a German language production of Harold Pinter's OLD TIMES which he originally staged in London and on Broadway. Olivier has started filming SLEUTH with Michael Caine and returns to National Theatre Company in mid-August to resume his role as James Tyrone in Eugene O'Neill's LONG DAY'S JOURNEY INTO NIGHT.

Also, Lord Harewood new managing director of Sadler's Wells Opera, succeeding the late Stephen Arlen.

Deborah Kerr to return to London stage for first time since 1943, when she appeared in Shaw's HEARTBREAK HOUSE. She is now to star in new Frank Harvey period play THE DAY AFTER THE FAIR based on a Thomas Hardy short story. To be directed and co-produced by Frith Banbury, in association with Julie Doherty. Starts rehearsal in August then tours English provinces before moving to a London West End theatre.

Joshua Logan "probably" to produce "comeback" of Mary Martin in new stage musical. They did SOUTH PACIFIC together on Broadway.

Franco Zeffirelli to stage Eduardo De Filippo's NA SANTARELLA at London's National Theatre next fall (our spring). Joan Plowright (Lady Olivier) has acquired rights to two other De Filippo plays, FILUMENA MATURANA and NAPOLI MILLIONAIRE.

Barrie Ingham set to visit Australia in September after completing one of the three major roles in Fred Zimmerman's film of Frederick North's best selling novel THE DAY OF THE JACKAL. Others in the cast include Edward Fox, Eric Porter and Alan Badel. An overseas entrepreneur now planning a local production of Patrick Garland's adaptation of Aubrey's BRIEF LIVES, a hit in both London and New York.

Stephen Sondheim and Harold Prince to adapt Ingmar Bergman's SMILES OF A SUMMER NIGHT as a Broadway musical.

"There is a need for standards in the Australian theatre. If there are none there would be nothing for people to react against." John Sumner has been actively engaged in setting standards, and encouraging others to, since he came to Australia 19 years ago as Manager of the Union Theatre at the University of Melbourne. His remark was made without any trace of self-justification; he was merely explaining his policy.

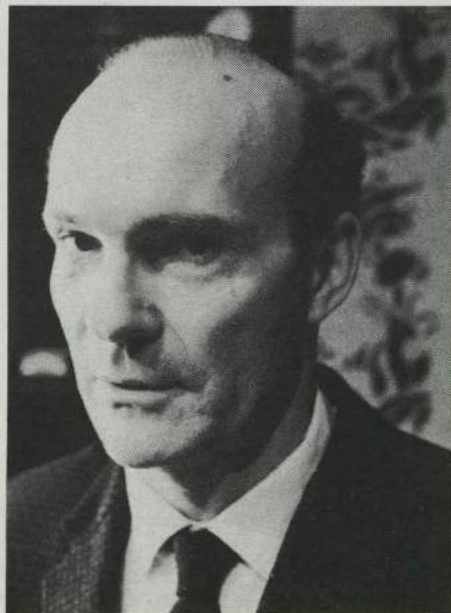
This is completely in character, because Sumner is neither a prophet with a private line to the Almighty nor a dilettante who likes playing with new ideas. Essentially he is a man of the theatre with a broad range of tastes and interests. Also a clear understanding of what is desirable and what is possible in the subsidised theatre. As Administrator of the Melbourne Theatre Company (and he is much more than that) I would have no hesitation in calling him a success.

Casting my mind back to the early 1950's when he arrived in Melbourne, I cannot resist a shudder. The commercials were enjoying a post-war boom which was attracting some distinguished visitors, but the local scene was amateur, and inevitably amateurish. Down at South Yarra, the Melbourne Little Theatre, now St. Martin's, had struggled to keep the flag flying; otherwise the local scene was depressing. The principle of public patronage had not yet been accepted except in token.

Sumner came to the Union on a year's leave of absence from H. M. Tennent's massive organization in London. He had been working for Olivier as stage manager and stage director and had done some play directions in the provinces. A cockney by birth, he had been a choir boy, and gained a taste for show business in secular engagements. (His choir toured America when he was 12 and 13 and he made his film debut on the steps of St. Paul's in Anna Neagle's SIXTY GLORIOUS YEARS.) He was already familiar with BBC procedures.

Late in the war he reached military age, served in the merchant marine, gained an in-

John Sumner.



terest in Australia from calling at Queensland ports, and developed an ambition to learn something about acting, and get into film work.

The union's closed shop policy debarred him from a film career, and he began his foreman connection with the stage as assistant stage manager in Dundee at £3 a week. He had gained his Second Mate's Certificate, and now—at 47—he might still be mistaken for a ship's officer until he talks. There the likeness ends.

Sizing up the situation at the Union Theatre he daringly recommended to the University authorities that they should establish a professional company to occupy the theatre for six months, while it was left vacant for student activity for the remaining six. The University just as daringly agreed.

"At first," Sumner says, "we were fighting for an audience. Funds were limited, and anyhow, I find no fun in playing to empty houses.

The first job of a theatre is to attract an audience, and I set out to find the taste of Melbourne's theatregoers and bring them in. Our charter instructed us to educate and entertain.

"We played two-week seasons (now the MTC plays five weeks), and we unashamedly looked for customers, not using the normal commercial fare but looking for good playwrights like John Whiting, who was years ahead of his time. We opened with Anouilh's *COLOMBE*, which was by no means a popular play, and we slipped in things like Fry's *THE LADY'S NOT FOR BURNING*."

Australia's first fully professional repertory company was in business when Sumner left two years later to become General Manager of the Elizabethan Theatre in Sydney for the newly formed Trust. He came back to Melbourne as Victorian Manager of the A.E.T.T., and from 1959 combined the job with administering the UTRC. He was getting back to the theatre again, and from 1962 he has been full-time Administrator of the Company.

In almost 20 years the Union Rep. has pre-

john sumner MAN AT THE HELM

by GEOFFREY HUTTON*

sented 276 productions in its mainstream theatres, the Youth Theatre and its experimental workshop. It has grown from a small shoestring company to a large, permanent group—the first in Australia to play all the year. It has moved from the Students' Club to the Russell Street Theatre in the heart of the city, and has remodelled and enlarged the auditorium and playing space. It is waiting patiently for a bigger theatre in the planned Arts Centre, and meantime it produces plays in the Princess, and will shortly begin a season of classics with Googie Withers at the Comedy. With 15 players under contract and about 30 available for engagement it can run two seasons at the same time. Since it has received a subsidy from the Melbourne City Council it has changed its name to the more realistic Melbourne Theatre Company, but it still maintains a nexus with its alma mater, the University.

Sumner strongly rejects suggestions that the MTC is interested only in proved successes and is not doing enough for Australian playwrights. Back in 1954, when Ray Lawler came to work for the UTRC, Sumner read the script of *SUMMER OF THE SEVENTEENTH DOLL* and, after discussion, suggested some alterations which Lawler made.

Sumner showed it to Hugh Hunt, then Artistic Director of the Trust, who agreed to back it and give it the widest possible circulation.

Since its try-out at the Union it has become the most successful play written by an Australian, with an Australian background.

After a long period abroad Lawler wants to be involved with the Company again; perhaps *THE ALBATROSS* sharpened his appetite. Alexander Buzo has already been engaged as resident playwright, working on adaptations and translations, and up-dating works for revival. Lawler is expected to join him. David Williamson, whose *STORK* was made into a highly successful film, has been commissioned to write a play. (Not overlooked, as one newspaper has stated.) The MTC workshop is assembling actors, young directors and playwrights and "letting them loose on each other" in an effort to expand everybody's talents. Buzo's new play *MACQUARIE* is a product of this laboratory.

In the Company's finished productions Sumner avoids extremes. He believes in trying to produce playwrights and trying to make audiences think without frightening them away.

(In its last season the Company's houses hit their lowest point at more than 70 per cent of occupied seats and often topped 90 per cent.) He does not see the MTC's role as a politically-aligned theatre, but one which has freedom to present all shades of thought.

"Should we be leading opinion? I don't think that is the theatre's job. It should bring to the public what is happening on the human, as well as the political level. Oddly enough, there is a certain comfort in seeing that today's problems have been shared by people through the ages." As administrator and producer he sees his function as creating a situation where others can do the creative work of directing, but he would still like somebody to do the same for him. In the pioneer days he directed most of the plays himself, and he still tries to keep his hand in by taking over when he has an opportunity. He prefers not to be thought of as an administrator. In all he has directed 50 plays for the Company and wants to direct more. This gives him his greatest satisfaction in the theatre, but he has a lot of other things on his hands.

In ways his exacting job makes him something of an ascetic. When he is not at his desk he is in rehearsal and not to be disturbed. At these I have seen him working with quiet and single-minded concentration, getting something right while most of the cast was having a quick lunch. As relaxation he likes a complete break, mustering cattle on a friend's property near Alice Springs with a horse and a sleeping-bag. This enables him to "wind down" and to come back refreshed for the next theatrical round. He is ready to look at the past with a certain degree of satisfaction. (Didn't Zoe Caldwell win her first acting award with the old UTRC?) But what he talks about with the most earnest enthusiasm is the future.

John Sumner, and Leo McKern reach agreement during rehearsal of THE MAN WHO SHOT THE ALBATROSS.

Frank Thring in Sumner's award winning production of Brecht's GALILEO.

**Geoffrey Hutton is theatre critic and feature writer for the Melbourne "Age."*



an austra

A highlight of the 1972 Festival of Perth was Nita Pannell's one-woman role in the Australian novelist-historian-playwright Mary Durack's *SWAN RIVER SAGA*, produced by Ronald Denson.

Booked out for its entire Festival season at Perth's Hole in the Wall Theatre in February, a sharpened and shortened presentation is now enjoying a six weeks' revival there and plans are under discussion for a tour of other—it is hoped, all—Australian capital cities and major country centres within the coming year.

This tragi-comic series of episodes in the 47 years of the early settler family of Captain William Shaw was reconstructed from the Letters and the Journals of his widow, Eliza.

SWAN RIVER SAGA was hailed by Perth critics in February as "an absorbing and entertaining documentary" which was for Mrs. Pannell "a tour de force" (Donna Sadka, *West Australian*) and "a fascinating stage documentary", revealing "an entirely convincing Eliza, living and breathing, with her strength and weaknesses, her great achievements and occasional failures" (Philip Scutt, *Sunday Times*). It also caught and held the attention of interstate visitors and critics.

Katherine Brisbane in *The Australian* found the *SAGA* "absorbing because in it Miss Durack and Mrs. Pannell have created a most complex, humorous and heroic figure . . . Eliza as created can hold her place on her own terms anywhere."

This Durack-Pannell presentation also confirms the potentialities of the much discussed but seldom realised practical co-operation of playwright, actor, director and (last but by no means least, perhaps) historian.

It had its origin in an invitation by Rex Reid, the well-known Australian choreographer, now Artistic Director of the West Australian Ballet Company. Reid asked Mary Durack to write a couple of sketches for performance at a fund-raising soiree for his company.

Miss Durack (Mrs. H. C. Miller in private life) is best known professionally perhaps as novelist—*KEEP HIM MY COUNTRY* (1955)—and documentary historian—*KINGS IN GRASS CASTLES* (1959)—and *THE ROCK AND THE SAND* (1969). She is also much respected for her libretto for the James Penberthy opera, *DALGERIE* (1958), and for the script for the narrative ballet, *WAY OF THE WHIRLWIND* (1970).

The Reid invitation reminded Miss Durack of certain discussions she had had with the Western Australian character actress, Nita Pannell. Mrs. Pannell has had the distinction of creating leading roles in the world premieres of plays by two foremost Australian writers—Alan Seymour's *ONE DAY OF THE YEAR*, which she performed with success in London, also two plays by Patrick White—*A CHEERY SOUL*, which he wrote especially for her, and the Adelaide Festival production of *NIGHT ON BALD MOUNTAIN*. Among forty-odd character roles, she remembers most fondly Mamma Bianchi in Richard Beynon's *THE SHIFTING HEART* in which she toured Australia for the Trust and the New South Wales Arts Council.

The two ladies planned to collaborate in sketches from the lives of outstanding pioneering women in the West.

Fired by the promise of Mrs. Pannell's active co-operation, Miss Durack went to the Battye Library of West Australian History in Perth in search of original material. There she met with a specific suggestion from the then Librarian and State Archivist, Miss Mollie Lukis, whose active collaboration has for many years won recognition from historical researchers and other writers resident outside as well as inside Western Australia.

"Why don't you do something with Eliza Shaw?" said Miss Lukis. "As wife and widow of the 1830 settler on the Swan, Captain William Shaw, she's a figure worthy of your skill and Nita's."

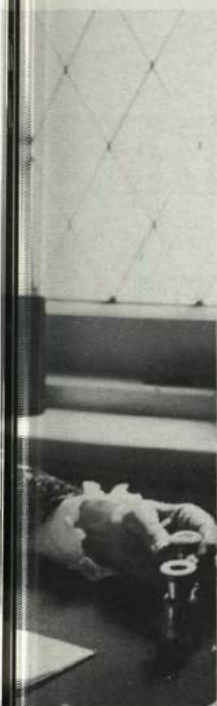
Except for an article by Lady Bassett of *THE HENTYS* fame, little or no use had been made of the Eliza Shaw letters which had been in the Battye Library for many years, or of microfilm copies held there of other originals in the Mitchell Library in Sydney, or of additional material subsequently acquired from England.

The result was two Eliza Shaw sketches for the soiree actually held in the W.A. Art Gallery on 22 November, 1970: *LIFE ON THE BEACH* and *THE GOVERNOR'S BALL*. In the first of these Nita Pannell describes in a soft Irish brogue the scene following the 1830 arrival near the mouth of the Swan, their fights with blowflies and other features of the original settlers' camp life. In the second she gives a vivid account of Eliza's impressions as guest of Sir James and Lady Stirling at the ball held in a marquee adjoining "Government House" in 1831.



Alian saga

by FRED ALEXANDER



Before the Art Gallery presentation took place, however, SWAN RIVER SAGA had advanced a stage further, with active encouragement and collaboration by a professional historian and an internationally famous director.

The third visit to Australia by the late Sir Tyrone Guthrie, in the second half of 1970, is memorable chiefly for his two productions, OEDIPUS in Sydney and ALL'S WELL THAT ENDS WELL in Melbourne. As, however, his second visit, in 1965, had been to advise the University of Western Australia on the design of what became the Octagon Theatre on its Crawley campus, some weeks were squeezed out of his 1970 itinerary for a short stay in Perth on the homeward journey. This made possible three evenings of "Readings" directed by Guthrie in St. George's Cathedral and at the Octagon.

Responsibility for the last-named presentations fell to the present writer's successor as Professor of Modern History, Professor G. C. Bolton, who was also at the time chairman of the University's theatre management committee. Anxious to base one evening of the Readings on events and characters in the history of the Western State, Professor Bolton sought Mrs. Pannell's assistance.

By this time the Durack-Pannell collaboration had added a third to the two earlier Eliza Shaw sketches—an intensely moving account of the death by drowning of two of Eliza's sons. Its inclusion increased the range of the scripts and gave added opportunity for Mrs. Pannell's histrionic ability.

All three sketches had been tried out in various formal or informal presentations to clubs and societies, after constant collaboration between script-writer and actress. There they were further tested by audience reaction, as observed by Miss Durack from the front of the house as well as sensed by Mrs. Pannell on stage. These three sketches were proposed for the Octagon.

Unfortunately, they exceeded the time-slot available and so Tyrone Guthrie helped in cutting the scripts and in some aspects of their dramatic form. He also strongly recommended that, if there was more original matter of comparable quality on which to draw, the three sketches should later be expanded to make

a full evening's programme.

Opportunity to follow Sir Tyrone's advice came from three sources. The publicity which attended the Octagon and W.A. Art Gallery presentations and other smaller experimental renditions attracted more material. Miss Durack was offered the hitherto unavailable last Journal of Eliza Shaw with its poignant and intimate details of Eliza's struggles to maintain the property at Belvoir, some 20 miles from Perth, after her husband's death.

The executive officer of the Festival of Perth, Mr. John Birman, then suggested the inclusion of a full programme in the 1972 Festival which was also to include other intimate presentations, in some ways comparable, by overseas artists Siobhan McKenna and the husband and wife team, John Turner and Barbara Jefford.

Joint sponsorship by Festival Committee and Hole in the Wall Theatre was aided by the readiness of the latter's director, Ronald Denson, to act as producer. A feature of the Denson production was the screening of illustrative slides based largely on authentic sketches of the locations, including those of the old Belvoir homestead.

Once again success made for further success. The publicity which attended the Festival season produced offers of additional contemporary illustrations and of yet more original documents, some of which have been worked into the current Perth revival.

If a personal postscript is permissible the writer might claim some small share in the venture from support given for the original Hole in the Wall season in his capacity as chairman of the Festival drama committee, from personal encouragement of playwright, actress and producer to regard that season as an experimental base on which an Australian tour might be built, and in urging his fellow directors of The Australian Elizabethan Theatre Trust to sponsor this as part of the Trust's 1973 entrepreneurial programme.

For, though SWAN RIVER SAGA is a dramatisation of historic figures and actual incidents in the first fifty years of the Swan River settlement, both characters and incidents might have had as their setting any of the Australian colonies in their pioneer days. And the SAGA should not only have an Australia-wide appeal; its one-woman presentation should ensure both artistic and financial success in any city or country intimate theatre.

Eliza at her journal.

Eliza on her way home from the Governor's Ball.

It's the first night of the Australian Ballet. Or maybe it's the Opera. Which night? Any night. It doesn't matter. The orchestra plays the overture. The curtain goes up. A gasp runs around the audience, spontaneous, without benefit of claque. One half, perhaps, starts applauding the stage just for the scenery or the costumes before a single singer has opened his mouth or a single dancer risen on her points, while the other half hisses at them to be quiet so that the show can begin. How often have you witnessed just this sort of thing? But how many of those applauders and hisses realise just what has gone into the making of that scenery or the props or the costumes or the lighting that sets it all off? At most, as they turn the page, their eye might fall on a modest statement in the programme: "Made in the Production Division of The Australian Elizabethan Theatre Trust." Then they never give it another thought. Unfair? Of course.

What is this Production Division? Where is it? It's a fascinating realm of its own that specialises in make-believe and turns dreams into reality. It has a population of never less than 40 dedicated top-notch experts all the year round, 60 or more during the heaviest part of the season and about 7 trainees. It's located on several floors of Sydney's Elizabethan Trust Dowling Street headquarters, a workshop at Glebe and anywhere else it might be wanted. It's a strange surrealistic world that deals in sleight of hand and doing the impossible in double-quick time—though orders for a 3-foot door for a 6-foot-6 actor to go through might take a little longer! This netherland is ruled over by the Production Manager Peter Smith, the calm, personable, level-headed magician-in-chief who operates a small trim office near the transport section on the ground floor.

As every child knows both opera and ballet companies are expensive. Both the Australian Opera and the Australian Ballet are—indeed must be—heavily subsidised by public money in the form of a Government grant. And so, of course, is the Trust itself. But NOT the Trust's Production Division. It pays for itself. It doesn't eat money, it actually earns it. Its turnover is about half a million dollars a year, in fact. This makes it absolutely unique. The Opera and the Ballet companies—and they have first priority—pay the Trust from their own subsidies for the work it does for them. And so, for example, does Harry M. Miller at the Capitol where the Trust was called in to help out with SUPERSTAR ("And hell it was too," says Peter Smith) or the Princess Theatre in Melbourne, or perhaps some small visiting or regional group.

The upper floor houses a weird and frankly eerie domain—a costume morgue under official keeper Noel Jenkyn. In the dim half-light, tightly packed rack upon rack, old clothes often from long-forgotten productions hang in vast rows from floor

to ceiling, tinsel tarnishing, dust gathering, colour fading. Was this a bit of TANN-HAUSER? And this HENRY V? You stumble between the racks and there's a stout headless model in a vaguely familiar gown of white silk—TRAVIATA perhaps?—thrusting herself forward between the hangers. And there's a complete suit of armour staring at you through its eyeless visor. Wandering between the forest of clothes, knee-breeches and velvet cloaks, dandy's brocades and vast crinolines, you meet another model in mod gear. But no. It moves. It's a young baritone looking for something to wear in a student performance of DON GIOVANNI at the N.S.W. Conservatorium of Music. For all these discarded costumes are now available for public hire. And sometimes they go out very cheaply indeed to worthy educational and amateur bodies. The costumes still in use by the Australian Opera are housed in a completely different warehouse at Alexandria so there can be no confusion—or borrowing! When a production has finally finished its run, perhaps many years after it started, the costumes are returned here to finish their days where they began.

Down below there's a prop morgue, too, where you can hire three-tiered blue-iced cakes (if you happen to fancy one) or a luscious chocolate confection, or a rubbery fish or just the fishbones with a head (for before and after?) or dazzling gilt dishes piled high with artificial fruit, or stage mirrors in all shapes and sizes silvered with paper or melanex, or lanterns or candlesticks, or an armoury bristling with halberds and shields, swords and daggers, or rows of angelic gold lyres, or scrolls or money-bags or treasure-chests. Or if you need large green grapes or small red apples or assorted green trails or a thousand and one other things, they are all there in cardboard boxes, neatly labelled.

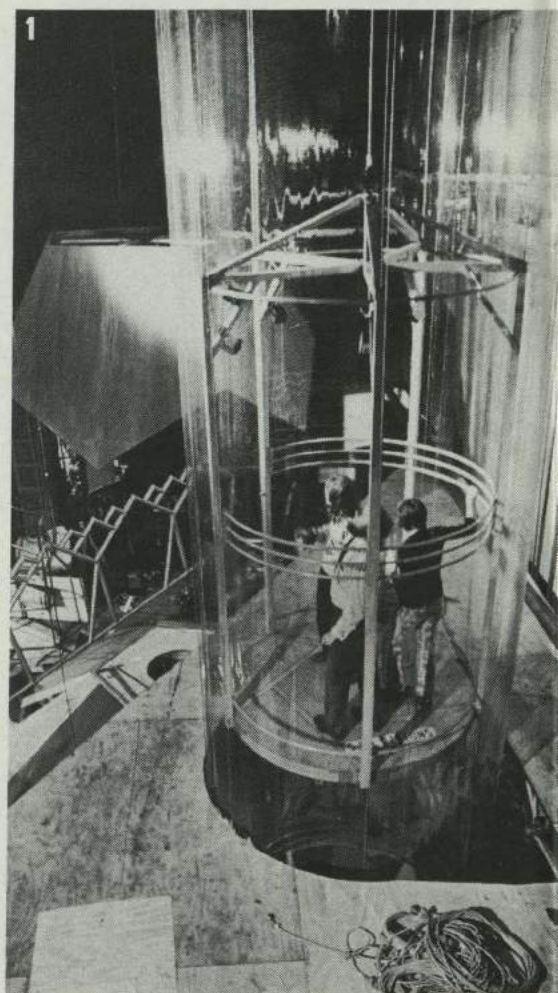
Not far from the costume morgue is the labour ward where the wardrobe department daily gives birth to a glamorous array of brand new creations. Here the light streams in through grimy windows on to long tables piled high with luxurious fabrics, silks, satins, velvets and lames.

Just about every outfit the Australian Opera or Ballet wears is made right here by a devoted band of cutters, fitters and machinists under the benevolent despotism of a softly spoken dark-haired and horn-rimmed-spectacled Canadian called Webb Catherwood. (CINDERELLA was one exception. It was made by the Melbourne Theatre Company.) Webb stands before a sea of designs, gorgeously painted, extravagantly decorated. It's his job to decide how to turn these sometimes airy-fairy brain-children into practical reality.

You can't buy material with a pattern like that for the FIREBIRD! (If you could, whizz kid buyer Peter Robins would have tracked it down.) O.K. So you take a plain bit of velvet and handpaint it, or applique

turning into

by Maria Prerauer*



dreams reality

it. Meanwhile Webb, who is a refugee from the ghost town of Hollywood where he worked on films like GIGI, SOLOMON AND SHEBA and ROUND THE WORLD IN 80 DAYS, begins slicing paper patterns for the basic design. Just behind him a large painted notice pleads, "No hanging here please."

Nearby is quietly competent Eileen King, her fair head bent over a finicky bit of exterior decorating—carefully tinting white embroidery red. She's made many of the big hit clothes this season—the leading ladies of the opera ROSEN-KAVALLER, the fabulous Marschallin costumes with their lavishly lace-trimmed nighties and fur-edged lilac peignoirs. All around, the room is alive with whirring sewing machines, ironing boards and tailor's dummies and coloured reels of thread climbing up the walls on spikes like exotic creepers. Someone is fitting a big brown felt costume base—the costume itself goes on to that. It's a revolutionary idea that was discovered in England and used a lot in Stratford. It helps to take the weight of the actual clothes off the singers' or dancers' bodies. Looking good is not enough. You have to be able to perform well, to move and breathe in what you are wearing, too.

Along in the terrifying masks department

you find Merran Kingsford Smith (a relation, of course) busy moulding the masks for the monsters that live in the FIREBIRD'S magic garden. Like something out of a Bosch nightmare they stand about like severed heads, furry, eyeless, mouths open to gobble you up. Here, too, oddly enough, they also make the jewellery—a king's ransom if it were real.

Larger than life as all stage gems must be, there are empresses' necklets and queens' crowns, chandelier earrings, diamond-studded belts and amulets all flaring and flashing ruby red and sapphire blue, emerald and gold in the afternoon light.

Further down the corridor is a large, almost empty room. The once white-washed walls are spectacularly splashed with rainbow splotches. Here English-born Pat Fackrell is deftly painting a backdrop.

The white canvas is stretched out over the entire floor. She walks on it in stockinged feet, measuring it up, sketching it in, filling it with colour from long-handled brushes dipped in brimming plastic garbage-bins of paint. It's a back-breaking job doing backdrops like this. Ideally they should be hung on the wall with 30-foot ladders and movable platforms to work from. But there's just nowhere big enough here to put them and no suitable equipment either.



1 *Preparing for SUPERSTAR—the stage of the Capitol 2 weeks before opening night.*

2 *"Is it feasible?" Peter Smith (left) and Joe White ponder some drawings.*

3 *All heads down in Wardrobe.*

4 *Webb Catherwood adds the final touches to a costume for the forthcoming DON QUIXOTE film.*



But both Pat and young helper Dennis Law are used to managing under great difficulties. They did the ornate sets of ROSENKAVALIER out at the Alexandria warehouse in semi-darkness with fusing lights at breakneck speed. Pat smiles now as you enter, apologises for not being able to stop, consults a lilliput design she is turning into a giant size blow-up and daubs blue paint on the sky.

Over the way in a large rehearsal room—empty for once—a lot of three-foot manikins are lined up. These huge puppets gently swaying in the breeze as they hang from long strings in the ceiling are from the Marionette Theatre's next major production, THE WATER BABIES. And there's the Baby himself, a naked doll curled cosily inside his transparent womb-like plastic bag. Near him is another replica of himself, and another. Dressed this time. You go along the line. A malevolent eye seems to fix you. Now that's a villain! You move away quickly.

Down below you come to the props and the carpenters and the electricians. The basement smells of glue and fresh sawdust, and the decor features white enamel

chamber pots full of dyes and pastes and brushes. There's a motto painted on one wall: "All the weld's a stage and each must ply." But today almost every man is off plying at the Capitol Theatre, battling with white ants and rusty grids and yellow cables so that SUPERSTAR can open on time. Harry M. couldn't get the lease until March and it's been a mad rush. So the room at the Trust is unusually bare. And so is Joe White's office. This old theatre hare, who was head technician for J. C. Williamsons for 40 years, has been spending from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. seven days a week at the Capitol. (The Trust, of course, also did up the Elizabethan Theatre at Newtown.)

But you spot one man at a bench measuring up mini-dolls-house scenery for the puppets. It's head prop maker Julian Savieri looking at a chimney as big as his thumb. And just around the corner is young Peter Webb cuddling an enormous white egg, then cracking it open, and unlike Humpty Dumpty quickly putting it together again. It's all done with magnets.

Peter breaks the shell and lets you look. But all has not gone quite smoothly.

There's a casualty—a larger specimen lying discarded on the floor. The Ballet sent it back. Too big. This egg, as anyone who has seen the FIREBIRD will know, holds the soul of the wicked magician Kostchei. When it's smashed on stage his spells are all broken.

Away in another hideout, surrounded by 150 yards of wine velvet, Joyce Bowman, dark hair scraped back off her face, is making curtains. She's made all kinds—the house curtains for the Melbourne Metro, the drapes for MASKED BALL, the butterfly tabs for ROSENKAVALIER, the front gauze for SUPERSTAR.

It's not an easy job pinning down dreams—just think of the Sydney Opera House. It's the designers' job to have their heads in the clouds, the Production Division's to keep their feet on the ground and their eye on the finance. If you have \$15,000 to spend on the FIREBIRD costumes, for example, it's no use finding you've spent \$16,000. If you plan to spend \$100,000 on a production of ROSENKAVALIER, it's no use spending a hundred thousand and one. Mr. Micawber had something to say about that sort of thing.

And then there's all that planning ahead. Peter Smith's voice sounds a little resigned as he says with a sigh, "Well, the Opera should be telling us now what we should be doing for them next year." He opens his mouth again and then closes it. He looks bleak. You already seem to see hours of round-the-clock work stretching ahead as some last-minute 1973 O-day dawns. But for the dedicated theatre-happy experts that populate his realms there won't be anything unusual in that.

So next time the curtain goes up on your favourite show—ballet, opera or what you will—and when the ribbon is finally cut at Bennelong Point and the big night arrives, or when you see that modest credit line in the programme, spare a little thought for all the nameless, faceless, behind-the-scenes workers at the Elizabethan Theatre Trust Production Department. Without them the show quite literally could not go on.

A dramatic reduction in scale for head painter Pat Fackrell and property maker Igor Hychka in making miniature props for THE WATER BABIES.



**Maria Prerauer is music critic and feature writer for the Sunday Australian.*

showguide

A guide to concessions and preferential bookings for members of the Australian Elizabethan Theatre Trust.

NEW SOUTH WALES

ELIZABETHAN THEATRE —Newtown

THE AUSTRALIAN OPERA
July 8-October 18
"Der Rosenkavalier"
"Rigoletto"
"Cavalleria Rusticana/Pagliacci"
"Fidelio"
"The Force of Destiny"
"The Marriage of Figaro"

INDEPENDENT THEATRE

"There's One in Every Marriage" (Feydeau)
June 7-July 15

THE MARIONETTE THEATRE OF AUSTRALIA
Premiere—"The Water Babies"
August 28-September 16

KILLARA COMMUNITY THEATRE

"Mrs. Warren's Profession" (Shaw)
June 21-July 22

PARADE THEATRE—University of N.S.W.—Kensington

"Uncle Vanya" (Chekov)
June 30-July 29
"Julius Caesar" (Shakespeare)
June 28-July 22
"Forget-Me-Not Lane" (Nichol)
August 4-September 2 (concessions available Monday to Thursday only)

RICHBROOKE THEATRE

"Godspell"

CONSERVATORIUM

Die Brucke—September 2
"Woyzeck"

JANE ST. THEATRE—Randwick

"An Awful Rose" (Keneally)
June 1-24 (Friday & Saturday nights)
"Don's Party" (Williamson)
June 29-July 22 (Thursday, Friday & Saturday nights)

CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH—Pitt Street

"Man of Sorrows"

CLASSIC CINEMA—Mosman

VICTORIA

PRINCESS THEATRE

THE AUSTRALIAN BALLET
August 10-October 7
"Cinderella"
"Giselle"
"The Firebird"
"Yugen"
"Threshold"
"The Display"
"Facade"

RUSSELL ST. THEATRE

MELBOURNE THEATRE COMPANY
Theatre-in-Education—July 3-8
"Crazy World of Advertising"
"Jailed!"
"If This Account is not Paid..."
Directed by Simon Hopkinson
"Massacre at Paris"—Youth Theatre—July 10-15
"Jugglers Three" (David Williamson)
July 17-August 5
"The Chocolate Frog" with "The Old Familiar Juice" (Jim McNeil)
August 7-27
"Father Dear Come Over Here" (Ron Harrison)
August 28-September 16

COMEDY THEATRE

MELBOURNE THEATRE COMPANY

"The Cherry Orchard" (Anton Chekov) with Special Guest Star Google Withers—July 12-August 12
"An Ideal Husband" (Oscar Wilde)—Special Guest Star Google Withers—August 16-September 16

ST. MARTIN'S THEATRE

"Twelve Angry Women" (Rose)
June 28-July 22
"Salad Days" (Reynolds & Slade)
June 26-August 26

SATURDAY MORNING CHILDREN'S THEATRE—

June 3-24 & July 15-29
"The Clown Who Lost His Laugh" (Bartlett)
Special Engagement July 1-8 Daily
Richard Bradshaw and his Shadow Puppets
(Concessions available Monday-Friday only)

PLAYBOX THEATRE

"Godspell"

ALEXANDER THEATRE

Die Brucke—August 25-26
"Woyzeck"
"Der Frieden"

BALLET VICTORIA—Country Tour

June 5-27
"Sigrid"; "Cloth of Gold"
"The Glade"
"Premises 7"
"Casse-Noisette"

TRAK CINEMA

QUEENSLAND

HER MAJESTY'S THEATRE

THE AUSTRALIAN OPERA
—June 13-July 1
"Rigoletto"
"The Marriage of Figaro"
"Cavalleria Rusticana/Pagliacci"

S.G.I.O. THEATRE

QUEENSLAND THEATRE COMPANY
"The Schoolmistress" (Pinero)
June 16-July 8
"Twelfth Night" (Shakespeare)
July 14-August 5
"The Ruling Class" (Barnes)
August 11-September 2
A Masque in Honour of The City of Brisbane

TWELFTH NIGHT THEATRE,

"London Assurance" (Boucault)
June 28-July 22
"The Two of Us"
July 26-August 12
"Hostile Witness"

TWELFTH NIGHT THEATRE

Die Brucke
"Woyzeck"—August 30

HER MAJESTY'S THEATRE

BALLET VICTORIA—
July 5-8
Queensland Country Tour—
July 3-15
"Sigrid"
"Cloth of Gold"
"The Glade"
"Premises 7"
"Casse-Noisette"

QUEENSLAND BALLET COMPANY
Country Tour—June 12-August 12

SCHONELL THEATRE—University of Queensland

ARTS COUNCIL OF AUSTRALIA

SOUTH AUSTRALIA

HER MAJESTY'S THEATRE

THE AUSTRALIAN BALLET
—June 27-July 15
"Yugen"
"Highlights" (Beethoven Dances)
"Esmeralda"
"Pas de Deux"
"Spring Waters"
"The Firebird"
"Images"
"Sebastian"
"Mam'zelle Angot"

THE WEST AUSTRALIAN BALLET

—July 18-22
"The Glade"
"Flower Festival of Genzano"
"Pineapple Poll"
"The Woman of Andros"
"Facade"
Country Tour—July 7-16

SOUTH AUSTRALIAN THEATRE COMPANY

ARTS THEATRE

Die Brucke
"Woyzeck"
"Der Frieden"

THEATRE 62

THE MARIONETTE THEATRE OF AUSTRALIA

S.A. Tour of Black Theatre
—September 18-October 6
"Peter and the Wolf" (Prokofiev) and "The Young Person's Guide to the Orchestra" (Britten)

OZONE CINEMAS—Marryatville and Glenelg
Concessions Monday to Friday

A.C.T.

CANBERRA THEATRE
Die Brucke—September 4
"Woyzeck"

WESTERN AUSTRALIA

HER MAJESTY'S THEATRE

THE AUSTRALIAN BALLET
—July 18-August 5
"Cinderella"
"Yugen"
"Threshold"
"Mam'zelle Angot"

SCOTCH COLLEGE THEATRE

—August 18-19
Die Brucke
"Woyzeck"
"Der Frieden"

THE NATIONAL THEATRE AT THE PLAYHOUSE

"Mirage" (Backhouse)
June 24-July 3
"Forget-Me-Not Lane" (Nichol)
Commencing June 7
"Guys & Dolls"
Commencing July 12
"Tonight at 8.30" (Coward)
Commencing August 12
"The Lady From The Sea" (Ibsen)
"Bon-Bons and Roses for Dolly" (Hewett)
"Lulu" (Barnes), an adaptation of Wedekind's "Pandora's Box" and "Earth Spirit"
"The Wind in the Sassafras Trees" (Obaldia)

OCTAGON THEATRE

August 14-25

THE WEST AUSTRALIAN BALLET COMPANY
"Flower Festival of Genzano"
"Facade"
"Pineapple Poll"
Country Tour—September 4-23

TASMANIA

THEATRE ROYAL—HOBART

THEATRE ROYAL LIGHT OPERA COMPANY—July 14-22
"Beggar's Opera"
"Riven"—Hypnotist—August 2-19
Die Brucke—August 28
"Woyzeck"

TASMANIAN OPERA COMPANY
"Carmen"

LAUNCESTON

TASMANIAN THEATRE COMPANY—July 5-8
"The Girl in the Freudian Slip" (Brown)

Please Check Local Press for Further Details.

Trust Members receive concessions for all productions listed above. If Members are not mailed details as usual, concessions are available at the theatre on presentation of membership cards.

THE AUSTRALIAN OPERA AND THE AUSTRALIAN BALLET

- (1) When a season is not sold on subscription, Trust Members receive preferential and concession price bookings.
- (2) When a season is sold on subscription, Trust Members have a preferential booking period in relation to taking out new subscriptions, but usually do not receive a concession price. They do, however, receive 50c concession on seats purchased on a single performance basis during a subscription season.

ballet on the move

by Pamela Ruskin

Early in June, the regional ballet company of Victoria, Ballet Victoria, better known perhaps to many by its old name, the Ballet Guild, moved out of Melbourne to begin its five-week 1972 Victorian and interstate tour. Opening on June 5th in Sale, the company did that part of its work which is the basis of its franchise as the Victorian regional ballet company. It will dance in 20 Victorian towns and then move interstate to give two N.S.W. performances in Albury and Tamworth, and then, in early July, continue on into Queensland to play in seven towns and cities there, opening on July 3rd at Stanthorpe and concluding the tour at Pinalba on July 15th.

This tour is sponsored by the Victorian Ballet Guild, the Australian Elizabethan Theatre Trust and the Arts Council of Australia (Victorian, N.S.W. and Queensland Divisions), in association with the Australian Ballet Foundation. The business of moving a company across our vast distances is a most expensive one and it is a case of many helping hands making the lights work—and the curtain go up. Artistic Director of Ballet Victoria, Miss Laurel Martyn, has chosen a programme that is both colourful and varied, so that it should prove popular with audiences that have a considerable appreciation of ballet but have had fewer chances to see it.

This programme has been devised with something more in mind than popularity. Both choreographically and musically, it is designed to show a variety of dance styles from the purely classical to modern ballet, with music that ranges from Tchaikovsky to the work of modern Australian composer, Peter Sculthorpe.

The first ballet on the programme is *SIGRID*, choreographed by Laurel Martyn to the music of Grieg, with costumes by Hugh Stevenson.

The role of Sigrid will be danced alternately by Sherril Smith and Margaret Wilson, and that of the Guardian Spirit by John Nunn, alternating with David Pearce. The story is based on a Norwegian legend of Sigrid who returns to earth attended by her Guardian Spirit. The village maidens try to persuade her to dance with them so they will be lucky in love and escape her fate. This ballet was produced in London in 1935, revived for the Borovansky Ballet and presented again in Melbourne and Sydney by Laurel Martyn for an Elizabethan Trust Ballet Company under the direction of an American, Eleanor Treiber, before the formation of the Australian Ballet.

The Sugar Plum Fairy pas de deux from Tchaikovsky's *NUTCRACKER SUITE* will follow.

This will be danced by Guest Artists Elaine Fifield and Rex McNeill. Then will come Rex Reid's short ballet, *THE GLADE*, to the music of Rosenthal, based on the famous Japanese tale, *RASHOMON*, which many of you will have seen as a brilliant film. Set in time, some

1,000 years ago, it tells the story of a young husband who is murdered and of the search, not only for the murderer but also for the motive.

Each witness called claims to have committed the crime. This ballet is a contemporary approach to an ancient classical theme. Costumes and sets have been designed by Gerrard Sibbritt. The role of the bandit will be danced by John Nunn, that of the wife by Diane Parrington and the husband by David Pearce.

Another pas de deux by Elaine Fifield and Rex McNeill will follow, choreographed by Laurel Martyn. It is *CLOTH OF GOLD*, to the music of Harold Badger's String Quartet with costumes by Geoffrey Monk.

Finally, there will be an abstract ballet, *PREMISES 7*, choreographed by Arthur Turnbull, newly returned from an extensive overseas study tour. This will be danced to the music of Peter Sculthorpe. Briefly, the ballet is intended to evoke an understanding of dance as having its own continuity, independent of the music or the theme, so that movement, sound and ideas co-exist but are not wholly dependent on each other. Logically this is the climax to a programme that displays a progression from the story ballet to the abstract.

The presence of Guest Artist Elaine Fifield will strengthen the company considerably, but more important than this is the encouragement and support they will give to the younger dancers in the company. Sydney-born Miss Fifield is a dancer of international reputation. She won a Royal Academy Dancing Scholarship when she was 14 and went to England to study at the Sadler's Wells Ballet School. Within a few years she was made a Prima Ballerina with the Sadler's Wells Theatre Ballet and later toured Canada and the U.S.A. for six months, under the direction of the present Artistic Director of

the Australian Ballet, Dame Peggy van Praagh.

During this tour, she married John Lanchbery, Musical Director of the company, the same man who is responsible for the music of the Royal Ballet's current masterpiece, *THE TALES OF BEATRIX POTTER*, and who visited Australia recently as Musical Director for Sir Frederick Ashton's production of *CINDERELLA* for the Australian Ballet. Elaine Fifield then transferred to the Royal Ballet and danced with it for five years during which time many ballets were created especially for her as Prima Ballerina.

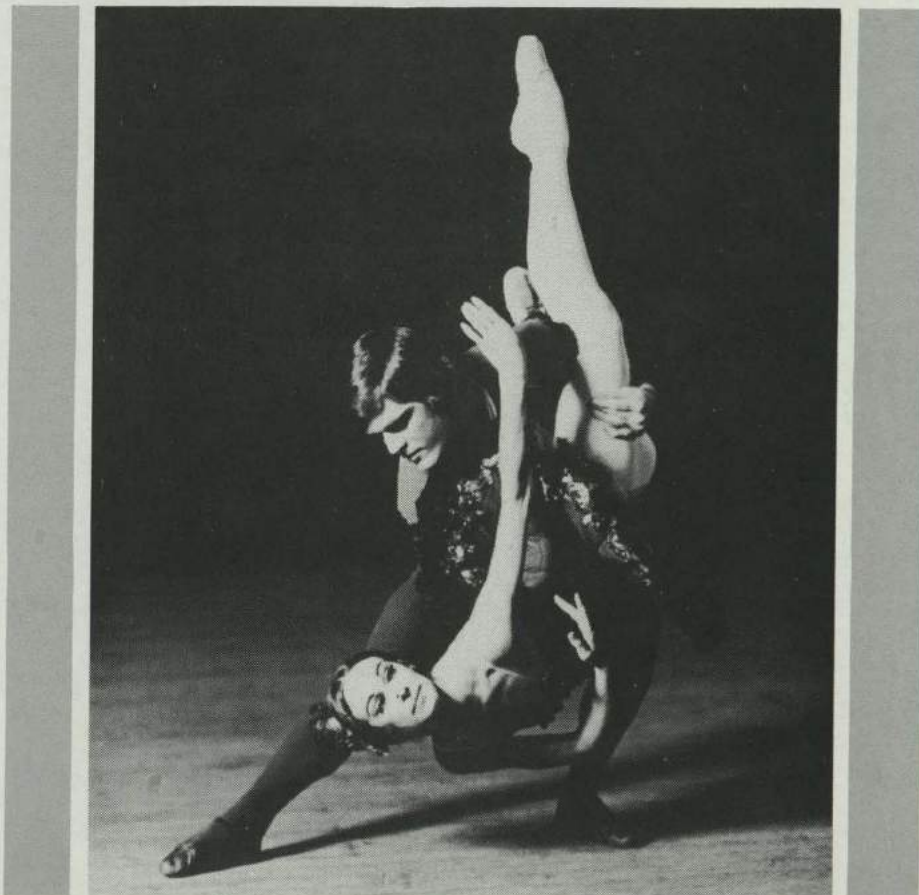
She came out to Australia for 18 months as Guest Artist with the Borovansky Ballet and at the end of this time remarried and went to live in Papua, disappearing from the ballet scene for several years. Then, in 1964, she decided to make a comeback and joined the Australian Ballet later that year. She has danced leading roles with them ever since.

Rex McNeill, a graduate of the Australian Ballet School, joined the Australian Ballet in 1967, touring South-East Asia and the U.S.A. He danced many solo parts with the Australian Ballet and, in 1969, created the original role in Antony Tudor's *THE DIVINE HORSEMAN*, a ballet created for the Australian Ballet by Mr. Tudor for their 1969 season.

The story of Ballet Victoria is almost literally the story of its Artistic Director, Laurel Martyn, who has built the company into an artistic ensemble over many years, surmounting difficulties of every kind, financial and otherwise, with infinite patience, determination and dedication.

Born in Toowoomba, Queensland, Laurel Martyn studied dancing in Australia until 1932, when she went to England studying there and in Paris with such eminent teachers as Anton Dolin, Nicholas Legat and Matilda Kshensins-

Dianne Parrington and John Nunn in *CLASSICAL PAS DE DEUX*.



kaya. She became the first Australian woman to join the Sadler's Wells Ballet (now the Royal Ballet) and danced with the company from 1935-38, becoming a soloist with the company.

In 1935, she was awarded a choreographic scholarship by the Royal Academy of Dancing and was later runner-up in the Pavlova Casket competition for young choreographers. She appeared in films and did a considerable amount of choreographic work in the field of concert and theatre. In 1938, she returned to Australia, teaching with Miss Jennie Brennan, and she also worked as a dancer and choreographer.

In 1940, the Borovansky Ballet was formed and Edouard Borovansky invited Laurel to become its first Principal Ballerina and Choreographer. The company gave its first performance in Melbourne at the Comedy Theatre in 1940.

Miss Martyn created several original ballets for the company, the best known of which are EN SAGA and SIGRID, and she danced in classical ballets such as SWAN LAKE, LES SYLPHIDES and CARNAVAL.

In 1946, a group of ballet lovers formed the Victorian Ballet Guild and invited Laurel Martyn to become the Artistic Director with the aim of fostering the love of ballet in Victoria through teaching and performance. Since its beginnings, the Ballet Guild, now Ballet Victoria, has taught ballet and has presented seasons of ballet each year, with professional soloists to augment their own dancers. Australian choreographers have created ballets for the company and designers have worked to create original sets and costumes. Among those who have created ballets for the Guild are Walter Gore, Margaret Scott, Garth Welch, Rex Reid and Vassili Trunoff. Designers include Len Annois, Charles Bush, Leonard French, John Truscott and Barry Kaye. No other company is believed to have

used the talents of so many Australian choreographers and designers as Ballet Victoria.

The Ballet Guild ceased to exist as a permanent company between 1949 and 1966 but Laurel Martyn's companies presented regular ballet seasons in that time. She has taught many students who have later danced with the Australian Ballet, the Festival Ballet, the Royal Winnipeg and other companies. Her pupils include Janet Karin, Ian Spink, Andris Toppe and Graham Smith.

In 1966, she created a special ballet programme, MAKING A BALLET, for school children all over Victoria and interstate. In 1971 alone, 135,000 children saw MAKING A BALLET, which created a record for children's entertainment in Australia.

Laurel Martyn was responsible for the idea of forming a Victorian Ballet Council and this led to ballet being recognised as an approved school activity, which, in 1971, was accepted as a subject for the School Leaving Certificate.

Teacher, choreographer, adjudicator and administrator, Laurel Martyn has done much to keep the love of ballet alive in Australia especially during those difficult years when no official support was given to it and when only overseas dancers and companies were drawing audiences.

She has played a very large part in ballet education—not merely in the education of dancers but in the education of audiences, too. The 1972 tour of Ballet Victoria is a reflection of her achievement and of all those who have worked with her to promote ballet in Australia.

A dramatic moment from THE GLADE with Dianne Parrington and John Nunn.



application for senior and/or associate trust membership

HAVE YOU
ANY
FRIENDS
WHO WISH
TO
BECOME
TRUST
MEMBERS?

To: The Secretary, A.E.T.T.,
153 Dowling Street, Potts Point, N.S.W. 2011
Telephone: 357 1200

Date.....

.....(Please state Mr., Mrs. or Miss—block type)

Address.....State.....

Postcode.....Phone No.....(Work).....(Home)

Date of Birth.....(Applies to application for Associate Trust Membership

only) wish to become a member of The Australian Elizabethan Theatre Trust. I enclose my

remittance for \$10.00 (Senior).....\$2.00 (Associate).....payable to the
A.E.T.T. in payment of my membership subscription for the period to June 30, 197

NOTE: Subscriptions fall due on July 1 of each year. Associate Membership applies only to those
persons who are under the age of 26 years.

I hereby agree, if admitted by the Board of Directors, to be bound by the Memorandum and
Articles of Association for the time being of the A.E.T.T.

USUAL SIGNATURE.....

FOR OFFICE USE ONLY

RECD.

RC

AP

WL



The Qantas 747B a better way to fly.

Qantas gives you the big, smooth, quiet and beautiful 747B. This is the plane with the biggest First Class Lounge in the skies. The one with movies and stereo*, with wide, wide aisles and wide custombuilt seats. The Qantas 747B has 15 washrooms. Separate Shaver Bars. And it's a quieter plane from nose to tail. Even the main galley is below, so you're really away from any noise. You can fly the Qantas 747B between Australia, Singapore, Europe and London, and between Australia and San Francisco.

QANTAS
747B

The service is as big as the plane.

*IATA regulations require us to make a charge of US\$2.50 for headsets.

LB1.1227