

## Nunsense — a habit-forming, un-convent-ional musical comedy!



A scene from the New York production of NUNSENSE

NUNSENSE by Dan Goggin

Directed by Barry Creyton

Musical direction by Michael Tyack

Choreography by Dolores Dunbar

Designed by Peter Tyers

Lighting design by Donn Byrnes

Cast: Joan Sydney, Maggie King, Robyn Arthur, Geraldene Morrow, Georgie Parker

Footbridge Theatre

**P**ity the poor Little Sisters of Hoboken, they have a problem! Twenty-two of their members died of botulism when Sister Julia Child of God (the convent chef) cooked up a tureen of contaminated vichyssoise. "Miraculously" five of their members escaped the same fate as they were out playing bingo. The problem is that after burying eighteen of their number, the money ran out when the Mother Superior decided to buy a video cassette recorder; the remain-

ing four are languishing in the 'fridge! The Department of Health is about to descend on the convent, so in order to raise enough money for their burial, the Sisters decide to organise a talent show. They aim to bring in further funds by selling Sister Julia's book "Baking with The Blessed Virgin Mary" which, incidentally, contains the recipe for her vichyssoise.

The variety show is, in fact, the play: the set, incongruously, is the backdrop to GREASE which the nun's eighth graders are producing (the Sisters promised not to disturb the set!)

The five Sisters bounce through an hilarious, toe-tapping show. Sister Robert Anne does her impersonations (from Katherine Hepburn to Attila the Hun), Sister Mary Amnesia (her memory has failed) astounds with her ventriloquist act, Sister Mary Leo performs the ballet "The Dying Nun" and Sister Mary

Hubert and the Reverend Mother belt out "Just a Coupl'a Sisters". All nun-stop fun.

NUNSENSE has won four prestigious New York awards including Best Off Broadway Musical of 1986, Best Music and Best Book.

### BOOKING INFORMATION

Tue Jan 6 to Sun Feb 1

Tue to Thu at 8 p.m.

Fri at 6 p.m. and 9 p.m.

Sat at 2 p.m. and 8 p.m.

Sun at 5 p.m.

AETT \$22.50 (except Fri 9 p.m. and Sat 8 p.m.)

G.P. \$26.50 (Fri 9 p.m. and Sat 8 p.m.)

\$25.50 (Tue to Thu and mats)

Pens/Stud \$19.50 (except Fri 9 p.m. and Sat 8 p.m.)

Children \$15.50 (except Fri 9 p.m. and Sat 8 p.m.)

Two AETT tickets per member



## Tasmanian TOD Tour Musical at Q

**The Theatre of the Deaf** are certainly an energetic group. The day after **WAITING FOR GODOT** finishes at the Seymour Centre, they leave for a four-week tour of Tasmania.

The company will be performing its new play for infant schools **MOON BETWEEN TWO HOUSES** by Suzanne Lebeau, as well as **SILENT VIDEO** for schools and community groups all over Tasmania. The company will also conduct visual theatre workshops for the deaf community and will be performing in the Salamanca Festival in Hobart.



Steve Ripley and Catherine Gillard in **SILENT VIDEO**

## Old and New

**Students of the Aboriginal Islander Dance Theatre**, together with former students and teachers, will present a season of dance works this month at Belvoir Street. Traditional dances will include those from Mao Island in Torres Strait and, for the first time this year, from Bathurst Island. The students have recently spent two weeks on Bathurst Island learning about the lifestyle. In contrast to the traditional dances, modern works by choreographers such as Paul Saliba and Raymond Sawyer will also be included in the programme.

### BOOKING INFORMATION

Thu Nov 13 to Sun Nov 23  
Thu, Fri, Sat at 8 p.m.  
Sun at 5 p.m.  
AETT discount \$3.00  
Bookings on 699 3273

### TARANTARA TARANTARA! by

Ian Taylor

*Directed by Arthur Dicks*

*Musical direction by Allan McFadden*

*Designed by Leone Sharp*

*Cast: Barbara Morton, Julie Mullins, Rosalie Fletcher, Ric Burchall, Dennis Scott, Jonathan Biggins, Jack Youens, and Waldemar Gorecki*  
*Q Theatre, Penrith*

In traditional Q Theatre style, the final production of the year is a musical for the whole family. Set in the 1880s **TARANTARA TARANTARA!** is a pot-pourri of your favourite Gilbert and Sullivan songs woven around highlights in the careers of William Gilbert, Sir Arthur Sullivan and Richard D'Oyly Carte. It is almost ten years now since the musical was last given a professional production in Sydney. At the time Barry Lowe, writing in *The National Times*, said of the Marian Street Theatre production (which later transferred to the Theatre Royal) "*If you have forgotten what great entertainment is like, then you need look no further*".

### BOOKING INFORMATION

Q Theatre, Penrith  
Fri Nov 14 to Mon Dec 15  
Wed to Sat at 8 p.m.  
Wed at 11 a.m. Sat at 4 p.m.  
Sun at 4.30 p.m.  
AETT discount \$1.00  
Bookings on (047) 21 5735

## Xmas is Coming!

### NOTTA LOTTA SERIOUS BITS!

*Directed by Bob Hudson*

*Cast: Graeme Blundell, Vince Sorrenti, Penny Cook, Mike Bishop, Dave Gray, Su Cruikshank, Lyn Shakespeare*  
*Kinselas*

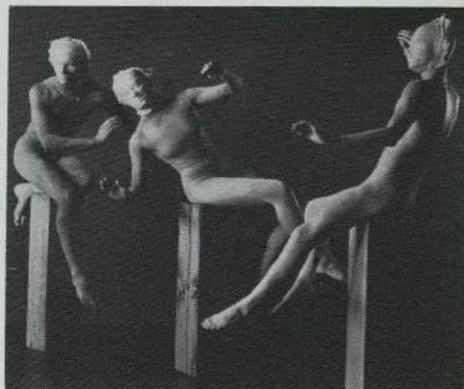
**K**inselas is staging a fun show to help celebrate the festive season. **NOTTA LOTTA SERIOUS BITS!** is a pot-pourri of skits, jokes, sketches, songs, parodies and satire (whew!). Described as "inspired lunacy and buffoonery", the show includes Penny Cook as the Virgin Mary, Graeme Blundell managing to play the entire N.S.W. legal profession, and a

farewell appearance by Nifty (you know who) as the ghost of Christmas past. You can see the show only, or make a night of it with dinner at Kinselas, the show and then dancing at the disco which follows. Seems like a good way to spread a little Christmas cheer.

### BOOKING INFORMATION

Mon Nov 10 to Sat Jan 3  
Dinner 7 p.m., show 8.30 p.m.  
AETT \$18.00 show only (Mon to Thu)  
\$30.00 dinner and show (Mon to Thu)  
\$33.00 dinner and show (Fri/Sat)  
G.P. \$20.00 show only (Mon to Thu)  
\$32.00 dinner and show (Mon to Thu)  
\$23.00 show only (Fri/Sat)  
\$35.00 dinner and show (Fri/Sat)  
Two AETT tickets per member

## Corporeal-Mime



Entr'acte Theatre in **TIMESCAPE**

**E**nr'acte Theatre will present two new works in their Performance Space season which continues until November 16. **ON ARCHEOLOGY** is conceived and created by Nick Tsoutas and **OSTRAKA** is conceived and created by Pierre Thibaudau. They are both based on the themes of memory, departure, return and repetition. Entr'acte was formed in 1979 by Pierre Thibaudau and Elisabeth Burke after their return from Canada where they had been performing with Omnibus. Both Pierre and Elisabeth studied corporeal-mime in Paris with Etienne Decroux and in Montreal with Jean Asselin. They have received continuing acclaim for their innovative style of theatre.

### BOOKING INFORMATION

Until Sun Nov 16  
Tue to Sun at 8 p.m.  
AETT discount \$1.00  
Bookings on 699 5091



## Harrison and Colbert

Following a season in Melbourne, Rex Harrison and Claudette Colbert will appear in Frederick Lonsdale's comedy *AREN'T WE ALL?* in Sydney in February. Full details will be in December T.N. but anyone wishing to make an early booking should ring the membership office in early November by which time we hope to have prices available.

## More Intimate Exchanges!

### A CRICKET MATCH

by Alan Ayckbourn

*Directed by Sandra Bates*

*Designed by Tom Bannerman*

*Cast: Gillian Axtell and Brian Young*  
*Ensemble Theatre*

Who needs a soap opera when Sydney has the continuing saga of Alan Ayckbourn's *INTIMATE EXCHANGES*? Four of the eight interlocking plays are being presented by the Ensemble and *A CRICKET MATCH* is the third in the series.

Gillian Axtell and Brian Young, who are the front runners in this dramatic marathon, play four characters each in the play. Boys' school headmaster, Toby, his stodgy school-tie-and-blazer friend, Miles, and the extraordinary groundsman, Lionel, are still there but they are joined by a new character, Reg Schooner, a hearty cricketing type.

On the feminine side, Gillian Axtell again plays the headmaster's wife, Celia and their maid Sylvie, but she also takes



Brian Young as Lionel in *INTIMATE EXCHANGES*

the role of Celia's mother, Josephine, and — wait for it! — Rowena, Miles' wife, who has not to date been seen but made her name off stage, as a too-briefly clad femme fatale in the mother's race sports day. As for the plot, we shouldn't give too much away but we can mention the "cricket widows" who find that affairs are second in importance to the cricket match.

### BOOKING INFORMATION

Thu Nov 27 to Sat Dec 27

Tue to Sat at 8 p.m.

Thu at 11 a.m. Sat and Sun at 5 p.m.

AETT \$14.00 (Tue to Fri), \$10.00 mats

G.P. \$16.00 (Tue to Thu), \$18.00 (Fri

and Sat evg), \$14.00 (Sat/Sun mat),

\$13.00 (Thu mat)

Pens/Stud \$12.00 (Tue to Fri)

\$11.00 (Sat/Sun mat), \$10.00 (Thu mat)

Two AETT tickets per member

## Williamson Premiere

*EMERALD CITY* by David Williamson

*Directed by Richard Wherrett*

*Settings by Laurence Eastwood*

*Starring John Bell, Ruth Cracknell, Max*

*Cullen, Robyn Nevin, Andrea Moor*

*Drama Theatre, S.O.H.*

A New Year's treat will be the January 1 opening of *EMERALD CITY*, a new play by David Williamson, Australia's most successful and prolific playwright. His last play, *SONS OF CAIN*, was taken to London by the AETT following its successful Australian season. In his new play, a Melbourne film and TV scriptwriter moves to Sydney, the "EMERALD CITY", brash and hedonistic after the "sodden rectitude" of Melbourne. How will it affect his work? There is much that is autobiographical in the plot; David Williamson was a Melbourne writer who moved to Sydney, and the play's hero, Colin, scripted the movies *GALLIPOLI* and *PHAR LAP*, as well as a TV series on Whitlam's downfall — as did Williamson.

### BOOKING INFORMATION

Thu Jan 1 to Sat Jan 31

Mon to Sat at 8 p.m.

Sat at 2 p.m.

AETT \$22.00 (Mon to Thu and mat)

G.P. \$25.00

Pens/Stud \$22.00 (Mon to Thu and mat)

Two AETT tickets per member

## Country Bound

*KING OF COUNTRY* by Tim Gooding

*Directed by Wayne Harrison*

*Designed by Michael Scott-Mitchell*

*Lighting by Nigel Levings*

*Dramaturgy by Louis Nowra*

*Choreography by Meryl Tankard*

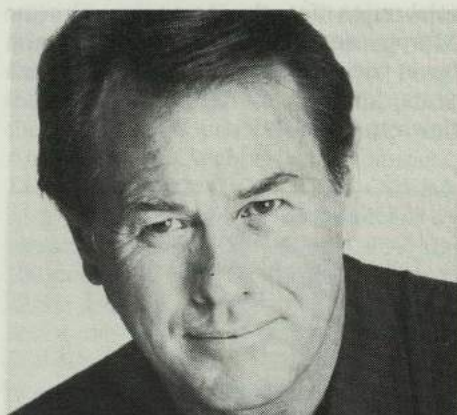
*Cast: Terry Donovan, Jodie Gillies,*

*Valerie Bader, Matthew Fargher, Les*

*Foxcroft, George Washingmachine, the*

*Three Chord Wonders*

*Wharf Theatre*



Terry Donovan

The STC premiere of Tim Gooding's *KING OF COUNTRY* opens at the Wharf Theatre on December 3. Set in Tamworth, the play is about a divorced Australian father who, regretting the move he made with his family to the city many years before, decides to return to Tamworth, back to the scene of his country music show-biz days and the girl he left behind. With him goes the rest of the family, including a grandfather who is still angry about the loss of his farm in the depression.

A play with music with text, music and lyrics by Tim Gooding, *KING OF COUNTRY* features Terry Donovan and Jodie Gillies, last seen in the STC's *SONDHEIM* and the Three Chord Wonders, rated in Tamworth as "the hottest outfit around". As December performances are heavily booked, Members are advised to book during January.

### BOOKING INFORMATION

Wed Dec 3 to Sat Jan 31

Mon to Sat at 8 p.m.

Sat at 2 p.m.

AETT \$18.00 (Mon to Thu and mat)

G.P. \$20.00

Pens/Stud \$15.00 (Mon to Thu and mat)

Two AETT tickets per member



# Opening Soon

## Shining

Purists will be delighted by Graeme Murphy's return to abstract dance in his new three-act ballet, *SHINING*, after many ventures into more theatrical ballet.

Murphy describes *SHINING* as "*a celebration in dance of dance*". Very much influenced by the music of Polish composer Karol Szymanowski over the last year, Murphy has again used several of his works as the music for *SHINING*. Its Sydney season coincides with a time of celebration for the company. Graeme Murphy and his assistant Janet Vernon have been with the company for ten years, and they are all moving premises down to the wonderful Wharf.

### BOOKING INFORMATION

Opera Theatre, S.O.H.  
Thu Nov 6 to Sat Nov 22  
Mon to Sat at 7.30 p.m.  
Sat at 4 p.m.  
AETT \$21.50  
G.P. \$24.50  
Stud/Pens \$19.50  
Two AETT tickets per member



## All's Well That Ends Well

Final presentation in the Nimrod's in repertoire season is the lesser-known Shakespearean play *ALL'S WELL THAT ENDS WELL*, in which Ruth Cracknell stars as The Countess. It's about a woman who battles class prejudice and sexual discrimination to win the man she loves, a surprisingly modern character for Shakespeare's time. Also in the cast are Walter Brown, Simon Burke, Celia de Burgh, Ron Graham and Edwin Hodgeman. The play is directed by Richard Cottrell.

### BOOKING INFORMATION

Seymour Centre  
Mon to Sat at 8 p.m. Sat mat at 2 p.m.  
Nov 4, 5, 6, 7, 8 (mat),  
10, 11, 12, 14, 15 (mat and evg), 18, 20,  
21, 22 (mat and evg), 24, 25, 26, 27  
and 29  
AETT \$19.00 (Tue to Fri)  
G.P. \$21.00 (Tue to Sat)  
\$18.00 (Mon and Sat mat)  
Pens/Stud \$15.00 (Tue to Fri)  
\$12.00 (Mon and Sat mat)  
Two AETT tickets per member

# Dialogue

by Carole Long, Membership Manager

The things we do for love . . . in this case of the theatre. Annie Mangan, a deaf actress with the Theatre of the Deaf, is afraid of heights. So guess what she's doing in the Theatre of the Deaf's current production of *WAITING FOR GODOT*? Climbing up and down rope ladders. Her entrance and exit is via a rope ladder hung from the lighting grid of the Seymour Centre Downstairs. As I'm writing this (prior to the show's opening) Annie is spending an hour a day in the Trust's basement practising. Good luck, Annie, we'll be cheering you on.

Members of the Elizabethan Sydney Orchestra have just had an interesting break from their usual role playing for the Australian Opera and Ballet. The 7 Network is producing a series on the life of Nellie Melba (scheduled for screening next year) and members of the ESO were invited to provide accompaniment. Yvonne Kenny, Robert

Allman, Don Shanks, Richard Greager and Anson Austin sang extracts from eight operas. The musical production team had nothing but praise for the skill of the musicians who moved from opera to opera with consummate ease. It's nice to hear the oft neglected musicians receiving the praise they deserve.

It would be marvellous to see our membership administration moving into the twentieth century and becoming fully computerised. But at the moment it's all pipe dreams and we have to manage with a fairly antiquated system. Although our membership list is on a computer it's not in house so that there is necessarily some delay in updating our lists to record renewals. In fact updates are processed on the first of each month which means if your cheque arrives shortly after that you could be waiting nearly a month for the next update to produce your new card. I know it looks inefficient and that is annoying when we're doing

the best we can with an inadequate system. So please bear with us. You can help by returning your renewal cheques as soon as possible. They're normally sent out six weeks prior to the due date to give time to return your card in time. But remember, if there is a delay, your membership number doesn't change and your card is valid for use for up to three months after the expiry date.

We know our Members are interested to know about Trust productions and it's not easy to see at a glance in *Trust News* which shows are presented by the Trust and which aren't. So with this edition we're identifying each Trust show with a red Trust logo. Presented like that it's clear just how busy our production departments are.

Carole Long



Two new plays which will undoubtedly feature in the end of year theatrical prize giving have recently opened in London to strong critical approval. Brian Clark's new play, *WHO'S LIFE IS IT ANYWAY?* started life in London at the National Theatre in an excellent production by Peter Hall. John Mills and Rosemary Harris play the elderly couple discovering frustrations and qualities about each other that many previous years of marriage have concealed. It is an absorbing and moving drama which touches on many personal and social issues, including the case for and against nuclear disarmament, with both players giving compelling performances as the balance of strength and dependence shifts between them with each new revelation. It has now transferred to the Wyndham's Theatre.

Alan Ayckbourn's new comedy/drama, *WOMAN IN MIND*, has Julia McKenzie in the central role of Susan, whose attempts to escape from her mundane existence into a fantasy life results in chaos when the two world's collide. The Sunday Times considers the play (Ayckbourn's 32nd!) to be one of his best — "*his characterisation is both ruthless and beguiling and the three central performances by Julia McKenzie, Peter Blythe and Martin Jarvis, have a controlled, virtuoso brilliance*". Directed by Ayckbourn, *WOMAN IN MIND* opened at the Vaudeville Theatre in September and is drawing large audiences.



Martin Jarvis and Julia McKenzie in *WOMAN IN MIND*

At the Lyric Hammersmith Glenda Jackson, Patricia Hayes and Joan Plowright are three of the trapped women in Lorca's last play, *THE HOUSE OF BERNARDA ALBA*, given a tense, robust production by the Spanish actress, Nuria Espert. The sense of impending disaster and ultimate explosion in this poetic social drama and the superb performances, make it a stunning evening of theatre.

A recent pleasure was to see Jack Lemmon as James Tyrone in Eugene O'Neill's classic American drama about a doomed family, *LONG DAY'S JOURNEY INTO NIGHT* at the Theatre Royal, Haymarket. With an all-

American cast, directed by Jonathan Miller, the production was totally absorbing, with Lemmon dominating the stage and his stage family, ensuring the build-up of tension was sustained to the inevitable and intensely moving final scene. I was also lucky to be in the audience for an informal interview between Jack Lemmon and Jonathan Miller at the National Film Theatre during which Lemmon discussed his films and stage roles, and told entertaining anecdotes about his friend and colleague, Walter Matthau.

Looking ahead in this season, London will soon have Vanessa Redgrave in Ibsen's *GHOSTS* at the Young Vic; Derek Jacobi in a new play by Hugh Whitmore *BREAKING THE CODE* at the Theatre Royal, Haymarket; and Andrew Lloyd Webber's new musical, *THE PHANTOM OF THE OPERA* with Michael Crawford and directed by Harold Prince at Her Majesty's. At the National will be Anthony Hopkins' *KING LEAR*, directed by David Hare, and a new play by Stephen Poliakoff, *COMING IN TO LAND*, to be directed by Peter Hall, with the wonderful Maggie Smith as a "spiky" Polish woman arriving in London and intent on staying. The RSC's forthcoming Barbican season will include a revival of John Whiting's *A PENNY FOR A SONG* and Arthur Miller's 1984 play, *THE ARCHBISHOP'S CEILING*.

Margaret Leask is a former editor of *Trust News* now living in London where she is an artists' agent.

## Making the most of your Trust Membership

### FILM DISCOUNTS

In most editions of *Trust News* we have a Focus on Films column which covers highlights of the new film releases that month. We cover films which we believe will be of interest to Members. It is important to realise, however, that film discounts are available for *all* Hoyts, Greater Union and Village cinemas as well as films being screened at the Dendy Cinema, Martin Place, and the Academy Twin, Paddington.

If you wish to see a film at the Dendy or Academy Twin simply take along your membership card to the box office and you will receive a \$2.50 discount on *one* ticket.

The system for obtaining discounts to Hoyts, Greater Union and Village cinemas is different. Concessional vouchers can be purchased from the Trust and exchanged at any Hoyts, Village or Greater Union cinema for tickets (some Saturday and Public Holiday restrictions apply). As the vouchers can be purchased for \$5.50 this effectively means a \$2.00 saving on the general public price of \$7.50. The vouchers are open dated and are valid for periods of between three and six months. They can be used for any film presented by the particular chain. They are not therefore a guarantee of admission to any particular screening. You can purchase as many

vouchers as you wish so regular film goers can keep supplies of vouchers on hand. Vouchers can be obtained on the Trust Member Booking Coupon (no handling fee applies) or in person from the Trust during normal office hours. Please specify which cinema chain you require when ordering.

### CHANGING ADDRESS?

Please let us know so that we can alter our records and make sure your copies of *Trust News* are not delayed. If you're moving interstate we can transfer your membership to any mainland State. We have offices in Melbourne, Adelaide, Perth and Brisbane



## David Williamson — portraying a generation's emotional and professional insecurities

by Brian Kiernan

*Coinciding with the world premiere of David Williamson's new play EMERALD CITY (see Williamson premiere p. 3), T.N. invited Brian Kiernan to review David Williamson's career and to comment on his latest work.*

The opening of a new play by David Williamson is by now an established cultural event, and the critics will be on their mettle as they prepare to review the latest work of the most successful Australian playwright ever. Will this be another box-office record-breaker, with overseas productions, and perhaps a film to follow? What will this new play suggest, not only about the playwright's development, but also about the current state of the Australian theatre?

This second question will be at least in the back of reviewers' minds because David Williamson and the modern Australian theatre emerged together.

Born in Melbourne in 1942, a mechanical engineering student at Melbourne and Monash Universities during the Vietnam years, David Williamson's first successful plays were produced in Melbourne's alternative theatre in the early 1970s.

These were the years of anti-war protest and calls for liberation of all kinds, national, cultural, political, sexual. A new generation, both impatient with Australia's colonial cultural cringe and responsive to counter-cultural influences from the USA and the UK, was establishing its own alternative means of communication and expression: newspapers and magazines, radio, film and theatre.

Melbourne's Cafe La Mama, out of which the Australian Performing group emerged, provided aspiring playwrights with the opportunity to have their work performed before keen, if small, audiences. Williamson's *THE COMING OF STORK* was first produced at La Mama in 1970. The next year saw *THE REMOVALISTS* (with the playwright as the Removalist with \$10,000 worth of machinery "ticking over" outside) at La



*Peter Carroll and Robyn Nevin in the Sydney Theatre Company production of THE PERFECTIONIST*

Mama, and *DON'S PARTY* playing almost simultaneously at the APG's nearby Pram Factory. Both plays have become classics of the alternative theatre movement of those vital, if volatile, years, and both, with *STORK*, were made into films which contributed importantly to the developing local cinema.

Also in 1971, as well as *THE REMOVALISTS* going on to an acclaimed production at Sydney's Nimrod, the Melbourne Theatre Company commissioned *JUGGLERS THREE*, which became part of its 1972 season.

In 1973, *WHAT IF YOU DIED TOMORROW* was commissioned by the Old Tote for the opening of the Sydney Opera House, and for the 1974 Adelaide Festival the South Australian Theatre Company commissioned *THE DEPARTMENT*.

The success of *THE REMOVALISTS* was followed by swift recognition, and David Williamson was soon an established (but not establishment) figure able to devote himself to writing full-time. The 1971 Nimrod production of *THE REMOVALISTS* brought him the British George Deyne award, the first time this had gone to a writer outside England,

and in 1973 the *Evening Standard* voted him the most promising playwright of the year after the London Production of *THE REMOVALISTS*.

In Australia, he won two Awgies for the play, the first of the now numerous local awards for his plays and filmscripts that have followed.

Looking at Williamson's body of work, we do not find any formula nor typical Williamson play. Though he has consistently preferred realist conventions, out of a continuing commitment to drama's social relevance, he has continually surprised expectations by varying the mood, as well as the characters and situations, of each new play.

Although most frequently referred to as a naturalist, he has by now written a range of comedies, comic "slices of life", each of which finds its own appropriate form and dominant tone. He has not doggedly pursued (nor offered answers to) social problems, nor weighed the competing claims of heredity and environment as determinates of behaviour, as "naturalism" used with historical accuracy would suggest.

But although there is no typical Williamson play, there is a characteristic Williamson style. Smartly paced, closely interactive, unerringly accurate in idiom,



the dialogue keeps characters and situations in simultaneous revelation, blending humour with serious concern. Or, in other words, a lot is happening at any moment, and, although a particular moment may give the impression of life being observed in all its banality, there is usually a point underlying it that emerges in the wider pattern of the play.

As the playwright has matured, along with the audiences who have been following him and the rest of society, the young graduates of *THE COMING OF STORK* or the young marrieds of *DON'S PARTY* have given way to more middle-aged and securely middle-class characters, to the anxieties of an older generation and a later decade. This has suggested that Williamson is the chronicler, even the personal diarist of the emotional and professional insecurities of his own generation, and *WHAT IF YOU DIED TOMORROW* (1973), *A HANDFUL OF FRIENDS* (1976), and *THE PERFECTIONIST* (1982) have been appreciated as such, as imaginative exposures of contemporary socio-psycho-preoccupations.

Other plays, however, have emphasised the social and the institutional more than the personal: *THE DEPARTMENT*, *THE CLUB* (1977), and *SONS OF CAIN* (1985). These do not form a distinct group or phase in his writing but a varying emphasis in his continuing concerns with the personal and the social, the sexual and the political. Generalisation is further complicated by the tonal variety from play to play, some being more broadly comic, others more satiric.

*EMERALD CITY* is one of Williamson's more personal rather than more social plays. Like his plays of the 1970s dealing with personal issues, especially *WHAT IF YOU DIED TOMORROW* with its central figure of Andrew, the doctor turned novelist, this latest play problematises success. Has Colin, the former Melbourne teacher, now a top writer of scripts for film and television, sold out by moving to Sydney? Will he succumb to commercialism, and forsake stories he feels should involve Australian audiences, or can he retain his integrity and still hope to afford a Harbour view?

Williamson's own well-known success in scripting films, and his move from the "sodden rectitude" of Melbourne to (as it seems by comparison) the brash opportunism and hedonism of Sydney, invite us to see strong similarities between Colin and his creator. Both have scripted

movies titled *GALLIPOLI* and *PHARLAP*, and a television series of the fall of the Whitlam government. Yet rather than seeming autobiographical in tone, or indulgently preoccupied with Colin, *EMERALD CITY* is a very formal, ironic comedy.

In style and scale this new play is closest to *THE PERFECTIONIST* with its comedy of contemporary manners and rivalries between professionals — and the sexes. The demoralising role reversals that Colin experiences with both Mike and Kate might remind us of the ideals of Stuart, the perfectionist, in that play. If, though, Colin in some explicit respects is a portrait of the artist as an early middle-aged celebrity, it is an ironically detached, self-deprecating portrait with some prominent warts, or shopping-lists pinned on his jumper. We are invited to laugh at Colin's insecurities and inconsistencies, to recognise that he has more of Mike, the "Port Jackson huckster", in his make-up than he would care to admit.

With each new Williamson play we expect to be shown an aspect of how we live now, and also to laugh. These expectations which he established from the beginning of his career he has continued to fulfil, even though the subject might be, as it was in *SONS OF CAIN*, drug-related corruption extending to the highest levels of a state. In *EMERALD*

*CITY* he takes us inside our much-publicised film industry. Balancing (as always) sharp, topical satire with a comic acceptance of folly, he presents the kinds of personalities and pettiness that prevail in a multi-million dollar, but still primitive, local industry.

Whether Australian movies, and now television series, need "go international" to succeed commercially, and, if they do so, whether they will lose the distinctiveness that has constituted their appeal for both local and overseas audiences, are questions that go back to the 1920s. For Colin it is the choice between writing what he feels should matter to Australian audiences, and doing what will sell best — which also matters, with school fees to be paid. But such considerations extend beyond the particular industry (there is the parallel case of publishing for Kate), or even the difference in ethos between Sydney and Melbourne. The wider issue raised by the play is that of reconciling personal and artistic integrity with the ways of the world.

Versions of this conflict between how one ought to act and what is possible, or opportune, underlie the local and topical settings of all Williamson's plays. Behind the satire and the comedy — for they are never directly realistic "slices of life" — is a moralist's perception, though not a moralist's easy solution. Australian writers ought to be able to give their audiences the stories they feel should matter to Australians, without having to double-guess the ratings or overseas sales, or being accused of being strident nationalists. Just as Ministers of the Crown ought to observe the law (*SONS OF CAIN*), or an intelligent couple ought to be able to arrange their marriage more rationally (*THE PERFECTIONIST*), or a life-long humanitarian ought to be able to get along a little better with those closest to him (*TRAVELLING NORTH*) . . . and so on back through the by now classic Williamson repertoire.

But the world being what it is, and people being what David Williamson mordantly observes them as, and with affection accepts them as, there can be no final resolution of these contradictions. In the spirit of comedy we must grin and bear them.



David Williamson directs Max Cullen and John Gregg in the Sydney Theatre Company production of *SONS OF CAIN*

Brian Kiernan is Senior Lecturer in English at Sydney University and is writing a critical biography on David Williamson.



# Focus on Films

**THE FRINGEDWELLERS** directed by Bruce Beresford

*Produced by Sue Milliken*

*From the novel by Nene Gare*

*Starring Kristina Nehm, Justine Saunders, Bob Maza and Ernie Dingo*

*Now showing at Village Cinema City and Double Bay*

**B**ruce Beresford first came across Nene Gare's **THE FRINGEDWELLERS** seven years ago on a second-hand bookstall in London and determined to make it into a movie when he had "enough clout". He had been told by friends "Nobody wants to watch a film about a bunch of Aborigines". To Beresford, however, a family's relationships, struggles and aspirations are the central theme of **THE FRINGEDWELLERS**, not colour and racialism.

Trilby Comeaway (Kristina Nehm) and her family live in a shanty town on the outskirts of a prosperous country town. Trilby is an attractive part-Aboriginal, ambitious to escape poverty and live like a white, and to get a job in the city when she leaves school. She convinces her reluctant family to move to a housing estate. There they face the problems of black-white integration, the "patronage" of white neighbours, the invasion of a host of uninvited relations and nostalgia for the companionship of the shanty town.

One of Australia's best known Aboriginal actors, Justine Saunders, plays Trilby's sister, Mollie, and Ernie Dingo is Phil, the handsome drover who also wants to make something of his life and becomes emotionally involved with Trilby.



Kristina Nehm in **FRINGEDWELLERS**



Marta Zoffoli and Tom Conti in **SAVING GRACE**

**SAVING GRACE** directed by Robert M. Young

*Produced by Herbert F. Solow*

*Screenplay adapted by Richard Kramer and David S. Ward from the novel by Celia Gittelson*

*Starring Tom Conti, Fernando Rey, Erland Josephson, Donald Hewlett, Giancarlo Giannini, Edward James Olmos and Patricia Mauceri*

*Opening November 6 at the Roma*

**T**he release of **SAVING GRACE** has been timed to tie in with the visit of Pope John Paul II to Australia. It is a modern fable of an "Orphan Pope" who was a reluctant candidate for the job and who feels he is a prisoner of his position and remote from his people and his God.

Tom Conti, fresh from his success in **REUBEN REUBEN**, stars as Leo XIV, who is accidentally locked out of the Vatican and becomes a penniless young workman. In his wanderings, he comes to a rural village in southern Italy where the aqueduct supplying water for the fields has been destroyed by an earthquake leaving the villagers to live by picking rags in a neighbouring dump and stealing from strangers. Only a deaf and dumb child and a drunken ex-priest recognise the Pope; the child cannot tell and the priest chooses not to. The newcomer insists that the aqueduct can be rebuilt although some think him a madman,

others a troublemaker. Tom Conti was intrigued by the character of Leo XIV, who personified to him "the innate goodness of man".

**TENUE DE SOIREE (EVENING DRESS)** written and directed by Bertrand Blier

*Produced by Philippe Dussart*

*Starring Gerard Depardieu, Michel Blanc, Miou-Miou, Bruno Cremer, Jean-Pierre Marielle, Caroline Sihol*

*Now playing at the Academy Twin, Paddington*

**B**ernard Blier's last two films, **MY BEST FRIEND'S GIRL** and **OUR STORY**, were not successes, but in **TENUE DE SOIREE** he presents a combined dollop of black comedy, shock and some interesting variations on the romantic triangle — a recipe that should produce an exotic dish.

"There's nothing like a good shot of insolence . . . a breathless 81 minutes," commented Variety.

One of the shocks is finding rugged star, Depardieu, preferring his pal to the pal's girl. He developed a change of taste while in prison on burglary charges and when he lures a down-and-out couple into a life of crime things get even blacker. It would spoil the story to tell more but if you like black comedy and fondly remember **ENTERTAINING MR SLOANE** then this is your film.

## BOOKING INFORMATION

Concessional vouchers can be purchased from the AETT for \$5.50 (\$2.00 saving) and exchanged at Hoyts, Greater Union and Village cinemas for tickets. The vouchers are open dated but some Saturday/Public Holiday restrictions apply to their use. See vouchers for details.

No handling fee applies to film vouchers and

members may purchase as many as they wish. Please specify which cinema chain you require.

Discounts are also offered at the Dendy Cinema, Martin Place (\$2.50), and the Academy Twin, Paddington (\$2.50), at all performances except after midday Saturday. Members should present their membership card at the box office. Discount available on one ticket per member.



**Q** If **SUGAR BABIES** has a message, it's "have a good time". For this is a zany, spirited nonsense, done with style, slapstick, and stand-up comedy. It is a nostalgic slice of Americana musically revived with a bevy of beautiful girls and comics a'plenty. Eddie Bracken, who starred in the production in the US, plays the first comic, Garry McDonald plays another. Also among the great cast are David Atkins (of **CATS** fame) and Joan Brokenshire. It's presented by the AETT throughout November at Her Majesty's. AETT discount \$7.00  
Bookings on 212 1066

**S**preading a little festive cheer at the **Northside Theatre Company** is **ABSURD PERSON SINGULAR** by Alan Ayckbourn. Set on Christmas Eve over three successive years, it is a funny behind-the-scenes look at Christmas party disasters. Directed by John Tasker, it continues throughout November. AETT discount \$3.00 (except Sat evg until Nov 8) \$1.00 (other performances except Sat evg)  
Bookings on 498 3166

**Y**et another Alan Ayckbourn play, **A GARDEN FETE**, is at the **Ensemble Theatre**. It is one of a series of eight plays which all start at the same point, but which move in different directions. The plot is theatrical scrabble, the final decision is yours . . . Until November 22. AETT discount \$2.00 (Tue to Fri and mats) Bookings on 929 8877

**Q** An exciting new musical by an outstanding creative team continues at the Stables Theatre until early November. **THE LAST WAKE AT SHE-OAK CREEK** by Bob Herbert is a bush comedy with songs; it is the story of twenty-four hours in the life of She-Oak Creek, and is full of delightful earthy country characters. There are publicans who fight over who should have the footy cup, young lovers from warring families, and spinsters spying on the village's activities. The production is presented in conjunction with the Australian Content Department of the Australian Elizabethan Theatre Trust, and is directed by Aarne Neeme. AETT discount \$2.00  
Bookings on 33 3817

**Q** Once a year, the AETT's **Theatre of the Deaf**, one of our leading theatre-in-education companies, mounts a production for adult audiences. This year they have chosen **WAITING FOR GODOT** by Samuel Beckett. This classic 20th century drama is the story of two people, Vladimir and Estragon, who amuse themselves with conversation, alternating between hope and despair, while waiting for a person called Godot. Those who have not seen a performance by this company should realise that it is neither a mime show nor a theatre for the deaf. Hearing members of the cast provide the vocal communication, the deaf actors provide the wonderful moving pictures and symbols of sign language. At the Seymour Centre, Downstairs, until November 8. AETT discount \$2.00  
Bookings on 692 0555

**Q** Bob Eaton wrote the musical **LENNON** as a tribute to John Lennon, and it played to standing ovations in London. It is the warts and all biography of the most famous Beatle and traces his life from childhood, through the early days in Hamburg with the Beatles group, to his tragic death in New York city. The show demonstrates the incredible depth and breadth of the man who was both creative and destructive. It is also a tribute to his marvellous music. Clare Venables, who directed the London production, is the director. It's presented by the AETT at the Enmore Theatre throughout the month. AETT discount \$4.00  
Bookings on 212 1066



A scene from **LENNON**

**I**n classy Westchester County, New York, live two very different ladies — one, Maude, a no-nonsense housewife devoting her life to good causes and cookie baking; the other, Hanna-Mae, a hedonistic Texan addicted to company, talking and coffee. Their common bond is philandering husbands. Their growing friendship is the subject of **A COUPLA WHITE CHICKS**, which continues at the Footbridge until November 30. AETT discount \$6.00 (Tue to Thu and mats) Bookings on 692 9955

**S**et among Philadelphia's high society, **THE PHILADELPHIA STORY** concerns the romances of one Tracy Lord. Divorced from one husband, she is about to embark on another, when the first one re-appears! All good fun, while providing a moving commentary on human nature. The **Sydney Theatre Company** production continues at the Drama Theatre, S.O.H., until November 29. AETT discount \$3.00 (except Fri and Sat evg) Bookings on 250 1777

**A**ND **A NIGHTINGALE SANG** is a cheerful yet sentimental play by C. P. Taylor about the resilience and spirit of an eccentric British family during World War II. Anne Tenney plays the lead role of Helen, club-footed and, in her opinion, unattractive. She has an eccentric father, a mother pre-occupied with the church, and a sister with a wandering eye! At the Playhouse, S.O.H., until November 29. AETT discount \$3.00 (except Fri/Sat evg) Bookings on 2 0525

**C**ontinuing throughout November at the York Theatre, Seymour Centre, are **Nimrod's** productions of **SHE STOOPS TO CONQUER** and **THE MERCHANT OF VENICE**. They are joined by the final play in this series, Shakespeare's **ALL'S WELL THAT ENDS WELL** (see Opening Soon p. 4). AETT discount \$2.00 (Tue to Fri) Bookings on 692 0555

**A** hit of the 1984 Edinburgh Festival, **ABIGAIL'S PARTY** is currently enjoying its second London season. The plot? A small get-together of neighbours down the street from a teenagers' party. The ensuing developments perhaps prove that never the twain *should* meet! At the Wharf Theatre until November 16. AETT discount \$2.00 (except Fri and Sat at 9 pm) Bookings on 250 1777



# Member Activities

## SUGAR BABIES DINNER

Tuesday, November 4

If you're already got tickets to the November 4 performance of SUGAR BABIES why not make a night of it and join us for our Melbourne Cup dinner beforehand at Cyren's seafood restaurant. Dinner tickets are \$23.00 each. As time is short please call the membership office.

## CHRISTMAS REVEL

Friday, November 14

Our final social event of the year will be the Christmas Revel at Paddington Town Hall. Tickets are \$35.00 each which includes dinner and wines and dancing to the Osbops. Dress is either fancy dress or black tie and there'll be prizes for the best

costumes. (If you're short on ideas for a costume come and take a look at the huge selection in our Costume Hires). Members of the cast of SUGAR BABIES and LENNON will attend after the evening performances. Table or individual bookings welcomed!

## THE MAGIC OF THEATRE LECTURES

Joan Long — Monday, November 24  
Rocks Theatre (formerly Sailors' Home)  
6 p.m. to 7.30 p.m.

The second in our series of four lectures on the magic of theatre features Joan Long, one of the most distinguished figures in the Australian film industry today. She will talk freely about her experiences as an independent producer. Tickets are \$8.00 each and include

tea/coffee/sandwiches from 5.30 p.m. and wine afterwards.

## PICNIC IN THE PARK

Monday, January 5 at 6 p.m.

One of our most successful functions this year was a Picnic in the Botanical Gardens prior to the Elizabethan Sydney Orchestra's concert in the Mostly Mozart series. It's a delightful way to start off what is always a lighthearted evening for this popular Festival of Sydney event. Tickets are \$25 which includes both the concert ticket and the picnic dinner.

Member Activities should be sent in on the same grey booking coupon as your theatre bookings. The handling fee does not apply to Member Activities.

# What's On Out-of-Town

Starting in Canberra in the first week of November and then touring to NSW country towns before a Sydney season is Chris Willems' multi-character solo performance, **SON OF ROMEO**. This mimed working of R & J includes, among other joys, a sportscar-driving Paris and a memorable encounter between Romeo and a very silly dog.

The **Great China Spectacular** will spend four days from November 3 to 6 at the Canberra Theatre. It comprises 45 of China's best performers from The Peking Opera, Nanjing Acrobatic Troupe and Kung-fu Troupe of Jiangsu. The Canberra season follows performances at the Newcastle Civic Theatre on October 30/November 1.

The **Demon Barber of Fleet Street**, **SWEENEY TODD**, will be presented at the Canberra Theatre for four nights from November 21. It is a joint production by two Canberra companies, **Tempo Theatre** and **Opera ACT**. Stephen Sondheim's musical thriller will be directed by John Milson with musical director Leonard Dommett and designer James Ridewood. Ronald Maconaghie will star in the title role supported by Bev Shean as Mrs Lovett and Shell and Sun Aria finalist, Karen Sourry, as Joanna.

The artistic director of the Vancouver

Playhouse, Walter Learning, will be special guest director of the Canadian thriller, **I'LL BE BACK BEFORE MID-NIGHT** by Peter Colley, to be presented by **Canberra Rep** at Theatre 3 from November 6 to 29. It is the Australian premiere of the play. Walter Learning was a member of Canberra Rep during the early 'sixties when he was at the ANU on a scholarship.

First production for Canberra's new **Fortune Theatre** (formerly Theatre ACT) will be **MANICHINO**, which will be presented at the New Childers Street Theatre from November 15 to 20. Directed by Don Mamouny, it has been devised by Don and the cast of 10 and studies the condition of modernity and its influences.

Lunch-time and after work performances by two lighthearted plays will be presented by **ETP Canberra** at the Canberra Theatre Centre Rehearsal Room during November. Chekhov's **THE BEAR**, a lighthearted look at the battle of the sexes, will be seen until November 14 and from November 19 to December 5 **THE MARGARINE CONSPIRACY**, a comedy in a heatwave setting by Lissa Benyon. They will be directed by Carol Woodrow.

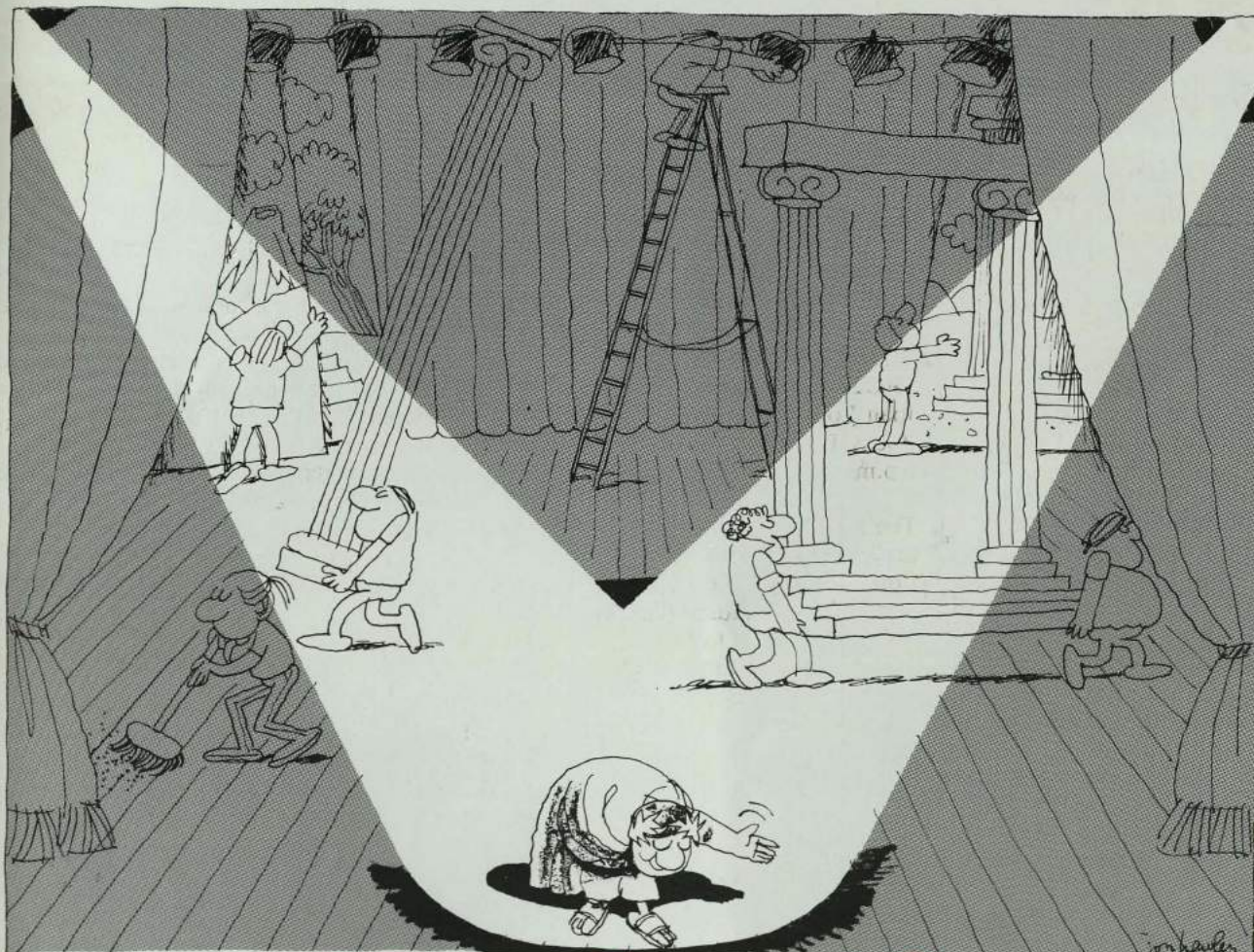
Four school-age playwrights from Adelaide will have their plays presented at the **Canberra Youth Theatre's** Young Playwright's Season from November 25 to December 1, at Gorman House. The ages of the writers range from 10 to 14 and they were four of the seven finalists in a competition run by Troupe Theatre in Adelaide last year.

The **Orange Civic Theatre** has a busy month ahead. On November 14, 15 and 16, Jennifer Leslie is directing a cabaret, **AN ORANGE BLITZ**, presented by the Glenroy Arts Project. Michael Barkl has written some of the music for the show and it is funded by the Community Arts Board of the Australia Council. From November 27 to December 6, the Orange Theatre Company's production of **ANNIE** will be directed by Lou Rochelli. On November 30 and December 1, The Bombshells from Sydney will present their cabaret **THE NOT TOO LATE SHOW**.

The **Riverina Theatre Company** will have a new artistic director in 1987. Scott Alderdice, who grew up in the Riverina and who has been working as a freelance director in Melbourne, will succeed Margaret Davis, whose final production for the company was **CUT AND RUNNING** in October.







# Give the gift of year round theatre.

Any friend, relative or business associate will appreciate your unique gift of Trust membership. It's a gift which keeps on giving throughout the year. The Trust will send the new member a distinctive card with your name and gift message or if you prefer, we will send you the card for personal presentation.

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# Trust News

is a publication of the Australian Elizabethan Theatre Trust which is produced exclusively for its 9,000 members throughout Australia.

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(incorporated in the A.C.T.)

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The Australian Elizabethan Theatre Trust receives financial assistance for its activities from:

The Music, Theatre, Literature and Aboriginal Arts boards of The Australia Council a statutory body of the Commonwealth Government.

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