

## Lennon – The Musical of the Legend



Left to Right: Rob Howe, Mark Jones and Pete Bishop in the Australian production of *LENNON*

### LENNON

Directed by Clare Venables

Designed by Michael Scott-Mitchell

Musical direction by Chris Monks

Lighting by Peter Heufeid

Cast: Pete Bishop, Bob Howe, Mark

Jones, Greg Parke, and Trevor White

Athenaeum Theatre

**E** "John (Lennon) had a unique capacity for taking on new ideas about how to live. He made colourful mistakes but he was extraordinary." Thus director Clare Venables shows her enthusiasm for the man and the era celebrated in the musical *LENNON*, which opens in Melbourne in February. She has taken leave of absence from her job as Director of the Crucible Theatre, Sheffield, Britain's largest regional theatre, to direct the Australian production of *LENNON*.

The play is a dramatisation of Len-

non's life expressed through the music that he and the Beatles made famous. Clare Venables likens the style to that of a documentary. "...it doesn't have any theatrical links really .... it's like a cross between a documentary, a cabaret, a straight play and a rock concert." The show contains more than forty hits including all the popular Beatles songs such as "Twist and Shout", "Love Me Do", and "All You Need Is Love". For two decades John Lennon dominated popular music both as a composer and a lyricist. He led what was in retrospect, a cultural revolution. *LENNON* tells his story from childhood; of the days in the Hamburg clubs where the Beatles struggled for survival and recognition, of the Beatles "discovery" in Liverpool by Brian Epstein, through the years when they became the most famous musical quartet in history, and finally to Lennon's tragic death at the hands of a crazed gunman.

Nine energetic and talented performers play the major parts plus more than thirty other cameo roles. Pete Bishop, who has been a musician since he was five, makes his first major stage appearance as the younger John Lennon. (Pete was playing his trumpet on a terrace balcony in Potts Point, adjacent to the Trust building, completely oblivious to the fact that *LENNON* auditions were taking place there. The company manager heard his playing, opened the window and invited him to come around for an audition ...)

#### BOOKING INFORMATION

From Sat Feb 14. Mon to Thu at 8pm

Fri and Sat at 5.30pm & 9pm

Sun at 5.30pm

AETT \$16.00 on Mon 16 Feb

and Tue 17 Feb only. \$21.00

G.P. \$25.00

Pens/Stud \$17.00 (except Sat eve)

Two AETT tickets per member  
except Feb 16 & 17



## HMS Pinafore Premiere

### HMS PINAFORE

by Gilbert & Sullivan

Directed by Martin Connor

Musical Director Gregory Flood

Choreography and Staging by Mavis Ascott

Costume Design by Hugh Colman

Set design by Henry Bardon

Cast includes Paul Eddington, Marina Prior, Philip Gould, Geraldine Turner and John O'May

State Theatre, Victorian Arts Centre

**P**aul Eddington, known to most Australians through his roles in the television series "The Good Life" and as the harrassed minister James Hacker in "Yes Minister" heads the cast of HMS PINAFORE as Sir Joseph Porter, The Ruler of the Queen's Nav-ee.

The two leading ladies will be versatile comedienne and musical star, Geraldine Turner as Buttercup and Marina Prior, who played Mabel in PIRATES OF PENZANCE, and more recently Grizzlebone in CATS as Josephine.

Philip Gould returns to Australia fresh from his success in London in 42ND STREET to play Ralph Rackstraw, and John O'May follows his recent roles in the MTC's A SERVANT OF TWO MASTERS and THE SHADOW OF A GUNMAN to take on a more nautical stance as Captain Corcoran.

Both the director and choreographer are coming from Britain to work on the Australian production of PINAFORE.



Paul Eddington

Original choreographer Mavis Pearson was one of the original dancers in the BBC's "Cool for Cats" television series and since then has choreographed countless films and stage shows including CHITTY CHITTY BANG BANG, OH WHAT A LOVELY WAR and the Dave Allen series for the BBC. Director, Martin Connor's most recent show was Bernstein's WONDERFUL TOWN starring Maureen Lipman, in London.

HMS PINAFORE premieres in Melbourne on 3 January and after a six week season will tour to Brisbane, Canberra, Perth, Adelaide and finish in Sydney next August.

The Trust has reserved a limited number of A Reserve seats at three evenings and two matinee performances only. The concession is available only through the membership office and will not be on the BASS system.



Geraldine Turner

#### BOOKING INFORMATION

From Sat Jan 3

Tue to Sat at 7.30pm

Tue, Wed and Sat mats at 2 pm

AETT \$24.90 on 7, 28 Jan and

11 Feb at 7.30pm; 7, 31 Jan at 2pm

G.P. \$38.90

Pens/Stud \$18.90

## Jackie Weaver becomes Playhouse Ghost

### BLITHE SPIRIT

by Noël Coward

Directed by John Sumner

Designed by Tony Tripp

Cast includes Jacki Weaver, Jennifer

Hagan, Monica Maughan, David

Downer, and John Murphy

The Playhouse, Victorian Arts Centre



Jackie Weaver as Elvira in BLITHE SPIRIT

**T**he first production of BLITHE SPIRIT ran in London for four years; a total of 1,997 performances. It remains a shining example of the style and wit of playwright Noël Coward who was known as The Master.

The MTC production of BLITHE SPIRIT is their Christmas offering for this year and runs until January 24. The plot concerns Charles Condomine (David Downer), a successful writer, who is enjoying a contented if unexciting existence with his second wife Ruth (Jennifer Hagan). His first wife Elvira, who was "fascinating but maddening," had died young after a romantic escapade with another man. In order to gather material for his next book, Charles organises a seance and enlists the services of eccentric local medium, Madame Arcato (Monica Maughan). Quite unexpectedly Mme Arcati conjures up the presence of the wayward Elvira (Jackie Weaver) who refuses to return and proves to be as fascinating and maddening as a ghost as she was in life.

#### BOOKING INFORMATION

Wed Dec 17 to Sat Jan 24

Mon to Fri at 8.15pm

Sat at 5 pm and 8.30pm

Wed mat at 2pm

AETT \$17.80

G.P. \$19.80

Pens/Stud \$14.80

Chn \$8.90

Two AETT tickets per member



## Sugar Babies – Just for Kicks

### SUGAR BABIES

conceived by Ralph G. Allen and Harry Rigby

*Directed and choreographed by Ernest Flatt*

*Music by Jimmy McHugh*

*Musical direction by Dale Ringland*

*Scenery and costumes by*

*Raoul Pene du Bois*

*Starring Eddie Bracken, Garry*

*McDonald, David Atkins and*

*Joan Brokenshire*

*Her Majesty's Theatre*

Since he appeared as the poor little rich boy in OUR GANG, Eddie Bracken has been loved by audiences around the world. On stage, radio and in dozens of movies his comic magic has stolen the show. As the "Top Banana" in the US tour of SUGAR BABIES Eddie received rave reviews such as "Eddie Bracken is unmistakably the star of SUGAR BABIES....He has timing, pop-eyed energy and sheer pizzazz that thrusts the show to greatness, whether eyeballing a luscious chorus girl or belting out a raspy "On the Sunny Side of the Street" he is completely winning."



Roslyn Howell and Amanda Hunt, two of the Australian Sugar Babies

SUGAR BABIES is currently delighting audiences in Sydney and will open here on January 31. It is a show that will

enable you to forget the country's economy, forget the world and all your problems as you enjoy the ultimate, razzle dazzle, pie-in-the-face stage musical.

Wednesday, February 4 will be Trust Members' night. You may have as many tickets as you wish for \$20.90 for that night only.

#### BOOKING INFORMATION

From Sat Jan 31

Mon to Sat at 8pm

Wed and Sat mat at 2pm

AETT \$20.90 (4 Feb only)

\$26.90 (except evening)

G.P. \$33.90

Stud/Pens \$20.90

Two AETT tickets per member

## Ray Cooney Farce for Melbourne

### RUN FOR YOUR WIFE

by Ray Cooney

*Directed by Ray Cooney and*

*David McCallum*

*Cast includes Jack Smethurst, Katie*

*Manning, Paul Mason, Bruce Kerr,*

*Penny Whitely and Roy Baldwin*

*Comedy Theatre*

A new production of the English farce **RUN FOR YOUR WIFE** will premiere at the Comedy Theatre on February 3.

This play has been on in London since 1983 and is still playing to capacity audiences at the Criterion Theatre in Piccadilly.

The plot concerns a London taxi driver who is married to two women at the same time. He has two identities linked to the time of day, taking on a different persona (and a different wife) after lunch each day. Problems and much hilarity result when he is involved in an accident and becomes confused as to the time of day.

#### BOOKING INFORMATION

From Tue Feb 3

Mon to Sat at 8.15pm

Wed and Sat at 2.15pm

AETT \$19.00

G.P. \$23.00

Pens/Stud \$18.90

(\$13.00 on Wed mats only)

Two AETT tickets per member

## Terry Bader to Star as Norman

### THE NORMAN CONQUESTS

by Alan Ayckbourn

*Directed by Simon Hopkinson*

*Designed by Shaun Gurton*

*Cast includes Terry Bader, Robin*

*Bowering, Kirsty Child and Christine*

*Mahoney*

*Russell Street Theatre*

The plum role of Norman, the Earnest, inept lover of the title in Alan Ayckbourn's trilogy, **THE NORMAN CONQUESTS** has been landed by an actor who, like Norman, lives life in the fast lane, Terry Bader. Terry has had experience at being bumbling and inept, but with bravado and humour, in his role as Bruce, the private detective in ABC-TV's series **THE FAST LANE**.



Terry Bader

The three plays of **THE NORMAN CONQUESTS** trilogy – **TABLE MANNERS**, **LIVING TOGETHER** and **ROUND AND ROUND THE GARDEN** – take place over a family weekend. Although they are linked by continuity, each is a separate entity and may be enjoyed individually. On the last two Saturdays of the season all three plays will be performed on the one day.

#### BOOKING INFORMATION

Wed Dec 24 to Sat Mar 7

Mon to Fri at 8.15pm

Sat at 5 pm and 8.30pm

Wed mat at 2pm

AETT \$15.80

G.P. \$17.80

Pens/Stud \$13.00

Chn \$8.00

Two AETT tickets per member



## Christmas Cocktail Party

The second annual Festival of Christmas Trees will be opened in the Foyers of the Melbourne Concert Hall at a special function for the viewing of "Friends" organisations at 6pm on Monday, 15 December, 1986. The occasion will take the form of a cocktail party, with refreshments and entertainment, concluding at approximately 8pm. All areas adjacent to the Concert Hall foyers will be open for inspection including the new Sound House.

The focus, of course, will be the Christmas trees themselves. Last year they were decorated to reflect the traditions of various countries around the world, but this year each organisation has been asked to decorate a tree choosing their own theme. Trust Member-

ship's theme will be SUGAR BABIES, inspired by the Trust show of the same name which will open in Melbourne in January. Tickets are priced at \$10.00 and members are welcome to bring friends or family.

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.



## Show For The Children

Ideal entertainment for the children during the school holidays will be THE MAGIC WISHING CHAIR at the Alexander Theatre. The show is based on the popular adventure books of the same name by Enid Blyton. As yet the cast is not finalised but it will be presented by the same team that produced THE MAGIC FARAWAY TREE.

### BOOKING INFORMATION

Mon Jan 5 to Sat Jan 31  
Mon to Sat at 10.30am and 2pm  
AETT Adults \$8.90  
AETT Chn \$6.90  
G.P. Adults \$9.90  
G.P. Chn \$7.90

## Christmas Gift Suggestions

### AUSTRALIAN ART DIARY

The Australian Art Diary is a quality production which will grace any desk be it at home or in the office. Measuring 17.5 cm x 24.5 cm it has a hard cover and 18 colour and 22 black and white illustrations. Contemporary and traditional artists are represented including John Perceval, Margaret Morgan, Colin Lancely, E. Phillips Fox and Stewart Merrett. The Diary features a week to an opening, lists all school, state, public and Jewish holidays and has 1987 and 1988 calendars on both end papers. The Diary is offered to Trust Members at \$14.00 (a saving of \$4.95 on the recommended retail price). It can either be collected from the Trust or mailed (please add \$3.50 for postage and packing).

### ST MARK'S GOSPEL

One of the highlights of this year's Festival of Sydney was the superb rendition of St Mark's Gospel by Malcolm Robertson. Far from a mere recitation, St Mark's Gospel became an

intense experience, a tale full of hints, clues and portents about the disaster to follow. Now this remarkable performance has been recorded and is available on a ninety-minute tape. It is offered to Members at \$11.00 (including postage) which is a \$4.00 discount on the r.r.p.

### OPERA GUIDE

John Cargher whose name is synonymous with opera and fine music has written a book in which he aims to prove that it is absolutely unnecessary to know anything whatever about opera called "How to Enjoy Opera Without Really Trying". In an easy-to-read format it provides the hows, whys and wherefores of enjoying opera. Some indication of the approach Cargher uses can be gained from the chapter headings - "The Opera Ain't Over till the Fat Lady Sings!", "Thrillers and Chillers and Boring Operas". It makes for ideal reading for all those people who'd like to understand opera but don't know where to start. The

hard back book with full colour illustrations is offered to Members at \$19.50, a \$3.00 saving on the r.r.p. It can either be collected from the Trust or mailed. (Please add \$3.50 for postage and packing.)

### VICTORIAN ARTS CENTRE MAGAZINE SUBSCRIPTION

This is an excellent time to subscribe to the Victorian Arts Centre Magazine as some lucky new subscriber will win a bundle of prizes (see insert for full details). Don't forget that Trust members may subscribe for the special price of \$18, a saving of \$3 on the usual yearly rate.

### TRUST MEMBERSHIP

AETT membership is always an ideal gift for theatre-going friends or relatives. See page 11 for further details and gift membership application form.



## Macbeth

Continuing its tradition of a thorough and refreshing approach to the classics, the Anthill Theatre is currently performing Shakespeare's *MACBETH*, directed by the company's Artistic Director, Jean-Pierre Mignon. In the same spirit that led them to select St Joseph's Orphanage for the staging of *DON JUAN* last year, *MACBETH* will be performed in an equally prodigious location, a deserted workshop at 29 Queensbridge Street South Melbourne. Of all Shakespeare's plays, *MACBETH* is the one most obsessively concerned with evil. Macbeth and Lady Macbeth's ambition and gift for bloodshed are given full rein. The cast includes Julie Forsyth, Robert Menzies (recently seen in the Paul Cox film, *CACTUS*), Greg Saunders, Jo Kennedy and Michael Veitch. The play continues through December.

### BOOKING INFORMATION

AETT \$11.00  
G.P. \$13.00  
Pens/Stud \$7.00  
Bookings on 699 3253

## Smalls – Return Season for Handspan Hit

### SMALLS

devised by Michele Spooner and Peter Wilson

Lighting Design by Philip Lethlean

Original Music by Gavan Dunn

Puppeteers include Michele Spooner, Peter Wilson, Andrew Hansen and Avril McQueen

*SMALLS* is Handspan's most recent success and was a highlight of this year's Adelaide Festival Fringe and the Sydney Festival. It also had a very successful season at Anthill Theatre this year. *SMALLS* is a series of five visual vignettes which provide a variety of moods and a stimulating evening's entertainment. For the return season a new piece, *MOMENTS*, has been developed. It consists of five brief "moments" which encapsulate the pinnacles in a woman's life.



Peter Wilson, Michele Spooner and puppets in *SMALLS*

Handspan use a fine blend of the technique of puppetry, mime, dance and black theatre to present audiences with theatre that is moving, absorbing, and which appeals to the imagination. "*SMALLS* is enchanting ... sheer magic ... give yourself a treat and see it." The Sydney Sun.

### BOOKING INFORMATION

Wed Dec 2 to Mon Dec 21  
Tue to Sun at 8.30pm  
Sat at 2pm and 5pm  
Sun at 5pm  
AETT \$14.90  
G.P. \$15.90  
Pens/Stud \$10.90  
Two AETT tickets per member

## Play by Late Starter

**T**he *SHADOW OF A GUNMAN* was Sean O'Casey's first play to be produced by the Abbey Theatre. At that time O'Casey was forty-three years old and working as a day labourer. Despite the play's success and the fact that the "House Full" sign had to be put out for the first time in the Abbey's twenty-year history, the playwright did not dare leave his pick and shovel job. *THE SHADOW OF A GUNMAN* demonstrates the Irish genius for transforming something unusual into the fantastic. When you see the play remember that this wryly ironic and profound drama was written by a labourer who was half blind following a childhood illness, who had little formal

education and who learned about humanity from his life in a Dublin slum. It continues at the Playhouse until December 13.



Denis Moore as Seumas Shields

### BOOKING INFORMATION

AETT \$17.80  
G.P. \$19.80  
Bookings on 654 4000

## Christmas Show

**A**t the Athenaeum Theatre Max Gillies, Shane Bourne and Mark Little and his Combo, among others, are presenting *STAND UP FOR CHRISTMAS*. The show continues until December 20.

### BOOKING INFORMATION

AETT \$16.90  
G.P. \$17.90  
Pens/Stud \$14.90  
Bookings on 63 3831



## Musical Theatre — Fifty Years of Pure Escapism

by Noel Ferrier

It all began about forty-six years ago when Stoll decided to buy IM WEISSEN ROSSL, an Austrian-based musical, which was doing very well on the Continent and decided to anglicise it for a West End presentation. And so IM WEISSEN ROSSL became WHITE HORSE INN and another couple of numbers were added to the Benatzky score. One, "Goodbye", became probably the most famous musical comedy hit of all time, and was sung and recorded by just about everyone making records in the 'thirties. WHITE HORSE INN was the first and certainly the most successful of a new breed of musical entertainment in the theatre.

It was originally a German farce which was adapted to the musical form by Benatzky and presented at Berlin in 1930. Sir Oswald Stoll heard of it, saw it and bought it and so made the jump from the operetta musical comedy form. To say that WHITE HORSE INN was a revolutionary show would, of course, be nonsense. It was a traditionally based entertainment full of easy catchy melodies of the old Viennese kind; its story was a foundation for spectacle rather than high drama; its intellectual level was the lowest possible. Yet, coming in 1930, WHITE HORSE INN was just in time to assert that that sort of Viennese operetta vein would survive (though some writers gloomily saw it as sounding the death-knell of true operetta), and to assert, with its very impressive performance figures, that the big family show was going to fulfil a need.

WHITE HORSE INN was a pioneer work in the spectacular musical field, full of romance mingled with humour, full of easy tunes. It was the ancestor of such shows as SOUTH PACIFIC, THE KING AND I and THE SOUND OF MUSIC, all excellent pieces that combined realism with romance in a pleasingly melodic way. The intellectual writer on the theatre could describe it as "a Weimar Republic musical comedy — a morbid growth, which combined nostalgia with affected sophistication", dealing "Viennese operetta its most crippling blow", but this did not affect the fact that this was the kind of entertainment that most people wanted.



Julie Anthony played the lead role in the AETT's production of THE SOUND OF MUSIC

At about this time Flo Ziegfeld was engaging Oscar Hammerstein and Jerome Kern to adapt Edna Ferber's best seller SHOW BOAT into a stage musical. Of course the original Edna Ferber book does not have a happy ending; Magnolia is not reunited with Ravenal at the end — Ravenal, being the gambling cur he really is, is tossed aside (reluctantly) and at the end the Show Boat goes off up stream minus Ravenal. But Ziegfeld wanted a happy ending and so Magnolia and the swine Ravenal are happily reunited and all ends well — well, for the moment anyway. In any event the musical comedy as we know it today was born on both sides of the Atlantic at almost the same moment — WHITE HORSE INN in Europe and SHOW BOAT in America. Both concepts set the style for the musical form of the future.

It is interesting to know that many of the great composers that followed credit either one or both these musicals as their creative yardstick. SHOW BOAT is the one generally recognised as being the "first" musical play but in actual fact I think WHITE HORSE INN probably

won by a short head. Certainly it does not have the strong story line which is much of the strength of SHOW BOAT, but, nevertheless, it was still the first really commercially successful musical comedy, breaking as it did right away from the strict operetta format. Here was a show with a real (well, almost) situation featuring real (well, almost) people, lots of toe-tapping songs, beautiful girls, a couple of comics, some pageantry, and all set against the Austrian Alps. How could you miss? Well, as Sir Oswald soon found out, you couldn't and he had a hit on his hands. The musical comedy had arrived and London and New York were full of them — in London Novello and Coward — in America Kern, Porter and Hammerstein, Berlin.

America took up the "musical" and, despite the efforts of some brilliant Englishmen, the musical became synonymous with Broadway. Between 1930 and 1940 Broadway was home to something like 700 new musicals. The musical bred a new style of star, Ethel Merman, Mary Martin; it required new production techniques and design — we



even created a few ourselves which were quite successful (COLLETT'S INN was one of our first). The pre-World War II musical was generally in the form of a musical comedy, with emphasis on girls, girls, girls, laughs, laughs and laughs and lots and lots of toe-tapping songs, many of which are remembered and performed today — the musical from where they originated having been completely forgotten.

But the order of the day from the great impresarios was to turn out shows with plenty of laughs and catchy songs along with girls, girls, girls — and that is exactly what the composers and librettists did. It was post depression and the world wanted escapism and fantasy. World War II arrived and post-war affluence. Along came some of the all-time great musical comedy giants starting with Rodgers and Hammerstein, Irving Berlin, Lerner and Loewe and a totally new form of musical play. First was a show based on a book called "Green Grow the Lilacs" which Rodgers and Hammerstein turned into OKLAHOMA. This was a far cry from WHITE HORSE INN but not all that far removed from SHOW BOAT. The great American take-over of the musical stage had begun in earnest and was to hold sway for forty years in quantity and quality. The English were coming up with the odd one but never reached the heights of or the output of their American cousins — until today — a period when Broadway is in the musical doldrums with the Brits about to take over.

So what makes people go to musicals more than any other theatre attraction? For this writer there is still nothing more exciting, when I take my seat in a theatre, whether it is Sydney, Melbourne, New York or London, than listening for the first sounds of one of the orchestra tuning up to the performance, then seeing the lights dim and the creation of so many differing talents — writer, composer, librettist, director, designer, musical director, lighting and sound engineers, stage managers — coming together; and then the talent on stage and in the pit — working on their own, performing the musical as written and directed. The audience for the "musical" has still the biggest audience going to the theatre — far outnumbering the opera, ballet or drama buffs. But still in this country there is no Musical Theatre Company — a company dedicated to performing the great classics of the musical



June Bronhill, John Woods and Marina Prior in the original PIRATES OF PENZANCE

theatre stage from Romberg, Frimml, Coward, Kalmann through to Porter, Kern, Rodgers and Hammerstein and Lerner and Loewe up to Sondheim.

In Australia we now have a wealth of brilliant musical theatre talent — from writing to direction and design through to performers. It is time for us to establish an Australian Musical Theatre Company; to provide a continuous repertory of all that is best in musical theatre for the audience, which is quite obviously there, but also to provide a platform for our own young writers, directors, designers and performers to perform Australian musicals, written, created and performed by Australians. We have managed to make the world sit up and take notice in the areas of film, TV, drama, ballet and opera; now it is time for us to crash through the international musical theatre barrier and present our astonishing young talent in this field to the world.

We can only do this by providing the means and wherewithal for these talents to have their works produced. Already our creators of opera and ballet have outlets for their work through the Australian Opera or the Victoria State Opera and through the Australian Ballet and the Sydney Dance Company. Our drama writers have any number of outlets for their works, but where do the budding Rodgers and Hammerstein go to have their work assessed and possibly work-shopped?

An Australian Musical Theatre Company performing the standard musical classics in repertory (much as an opera company operates) could provide that

much-needed platform and it is something that Australian Elizabethan Theatre Trust is now moving towards. In other words a company operating on a purely commercial and profitable basis would provide the financial backing for the creation of and workshopping of Australian musicals. In a sort of a way the great musicals of the past would provide and become the angels of the new Australian Musical Theatre. The Trust has in the pipeline two totally new Australian musicals and much of the finance for their development will be provided by the Trust's two new musical productions, LENNON and SUGAR BABIES. LENNON is the wonderfully entertaining and absorbing story of the life of John Lennon and the Beatles, while SUGAR BABIES is a celebration of the long-gone world of burlesque and variety (see story page 1). With the exception of one performer, both musicals will star Australian casts, featuring some of the truly great names in Australian show business. Nineteen eighty-seven will be the year of the Australian Musical — BE THERE!

Noel Ferrier is executive producer of the Musical Theatre Division of the Australian Elizabethan Theatre Trust. In that capacity he co-produced THE SOUND OF MUSIC with Julie Anthony and the box office hit THE PIRATES OF PENZANCE. He is also an actor and author; his biography "There Goes Whatsisname" was published last year. He is the executive producer of LENNON and SUGAR BABIES.



# Focus on Films



Robert de Niro and two children in a scene from *THE MISSION*

## THE MISSION

directed by Roland Joffe

Screenplay by Robert Bolt

Produced by Fernando Ghia and David Puttnam

Starring Jeremy Irons, Robert de Niro, Ray McAnally, Ronald Pickup, Daniel Berrigan and Liam Neeson

Opening December 4 at the Village Centre and Rivoli

Set in South America in the mid-seventeenth century, *THE MISSION*'s background is the convoluted power-play in the Catholic Church at that time, with the Spanish and Portuguese kingdoms attempting to weaken the power of the Jesuits in South America and so damage their influence in Europe. Among the dangerous Indian tribes up-river, the lives of two very different men become closely linked; Father Gabriel (Jeremy Irons) is searching for the crucifiers of a Jesuit missionary; the mercenary Mendoza (Robert de Niro) is buying slaves. Back in the city of Asuncion, Mendoza kills the younger brother he loves in a brawl over a woman. Desolate, he is visited by Father Gabriel and to expiate his guilt, he makes an arduous journey to the up-

river mission. There he helps run the mission with Father Gabriel and becomes a priest. The Church agrees to close the missions, and the two men are faced with an agonising choice; to obey their superiors or to save the local tribes from slave traders.

## AN AMERICAN TAIL

Directed by Don Bluth

Created by David Kirschner

Screenplay by Tony Geiss and Judy Freudberg

Produced by Steven Spielberg, David Kirschner, Kathleen Kennedy and Frank Marshall

Music by James Horner

Opening December 26 at the Russell Cinemas

One for the young and young-at-heart. Steven Spielberg's first venture into animated movies, *AN AMERICAN TAIL* is the story of a family migrating to America late last century, but with a difference. It is a family of mice. Our hero, Feivel Mousekewitz's arrival in New York is unorthodox, he is swept overboard en route and is washed up in a bottle on the shores of his new home.

Determined to find his family, he faces the perils, opportunities and adventures of a new world. But, like all good heroes, he finally makes good.

The film uses classical animation and meticulous accuracy in its details and sets, plus state-of-the-art techniques. There are some delightful characters; Tiger, a bad cat with a heart of gold and the voice of Dom Deluise; Gussie Mausheimer, the richest mouse in New York (voice of Madeline Kahn), Papa Mousekewitz who promises that America is a land "where there are no cats" and "the streets are paved with cheese" (soon to be disproved); Henri the French pigeon (Christopher Plummer), and the fast-talking con Warrent T. Rat, and Digit, a calculating cockroach. Tony Geiss and Judy Freudberg who wrote the screenplay were the Emmy Award-winning writers for "Sesame Street".

## THE ASSAM GARDEN

Directed by Mary McMurray

Screenplay by Elisabeth Bond

Starring Deborah Kerr, Madhur Jaffrey, Alec McCowen and Zia Mohyeddin

Opening December 19 at the Brighton Bay Twin



Deborah Kerr in *THE ASSAM GARDEN*

The role of the former Indian memsahib seems to belong by right to Deborah Kerr. Who could forget her magnificent performance in the tele-movie "Staying On", about the couple who chose to remain in an Indian hill settlement after independence. In *THE ASSAM GARDEN*, Helen and her husband Arthur have returned to England where Arthur has spent his retirement creating an Assam jungle garden, a rarity in England (as the film-makers found); a nostalgic hangover from the



days of the British Raj. Helen blames Arthur's death, as the film opens, on his work in the garden, but when it is suggested that the garden may be included in a book of famous English gardens, she takes on the gigantic task of putting it in order for inspection. Unexpected help comes from a homesick Indian woman, whose family has no desire to return to India. The garden is one of the stars of the film, with its constant demands and its effect on those who care for it.

## Film Nouveau

A festival of contemporary French films will be held at the Longford Cinema from 12 to 21 December. The program features current films from some of France's best-known directors; Jacques Doillon's *LA PURITAINE*,



Nicolas Giraudi and Catherine Deneuve in *LE LIEU DU CRIME* by Andre Techine

which explores a disturbing relationship between a father and a daughter; Andre Techine's *LE LIEU DU CRIME*, starring Catherine Deneuve and Gerard

Krawczyk's spoof of 1940s Hollywood, *JE HAIS LES ACTEURS*.

While some of the films will be having their world premiere in Australia and are yet to be released in Europe, others have already won major awards there. Claude Miller's *L'EFFRONTEE* (Grand Prix du Cinema and Cesar for Best Young Actress, 1985) examines the difficulties of adolescence, and *POLICE*, directed by Maurice Pialat, stars Gerard Depardieu, who won Best Actor at Venice in 1985. It is a gritty genre thriller that switches midstream to an intense love story.

Gold Pass tickets for fourteen films will be available for \$65, but Longford vouchers may be used for individual films and they are available through the Trust for \$6, a saving of \$1.50. All films will be the original language versions with English subtitles.

## Dialogue

by Carol Ormerod

As you are wandering through David Jones stores this Christmas, take time to stop and admire the white teddy bears on display in the Toy Department. The Trust's Costume Hire Division in Sydney made the costumes for them – all 774 of them. The toy bears are dressed in circus costumes all designed by Trust staff. There's a strong man, a ring master, trapeze artists, a stilt clown and a polka dot clown. It took eight people six weeks to complete the job; just one of the intriguing contracts regularly undertaken by Costume Division's made to order service.

We know that Members are interested in Trust productions and it's not easy to see at a glance in Trust News which are our shows and which aren't, so starting with this edition, AETT presentations will be identified with a red Trust logo.

Of particular interest this month is Irvin Bauer's New York column. Melbourne's own Los Trios Ringbarkus have recently been seen there for the first time with great success. At the suggestion of Liz Baillie, Hocking and Woods' publicist, we sent a message to Mr Bauer,

suggesting that he contact Greg Hocking, who was managing the Los Trios tour in New York, and see the show – which he did! Los Trios Ringbarkus will be staging a "triumphant return" to Melbourne at the Athenaeum in late January.

It would be marvellous to see our membership administration moving into the twentieth century and becoming fully computerised, but at the moment we have to cope with fairly antiquated technology. Although our membership list is on a computer it's not in house and there is always some delay in updating our list to record renewals, changes of address, etc. Updates are sent to Sydney on the last day of each month and processed shortly thereafter. If your cheque arrives early in the month you could be waiting around six weeks for the next update to produce your new card. I know it looks inefficient, particularly if you receive a reminder when you've already sent in your cheque, but we are doing our best with our inadequate system and hope that you will bear with us. You can help by returning your renewal as early as possible. They're normally sent out six weeks prior to the due date to allow time for your new card to be sent out before the

old one expires. But remember, if there is a delay, your membership number doesn't change and your card is still valid for use up to three months after the expiry date.

This is the last edition of Trust News for 1986. We'll be back in print with our first edition for 1987 at the end of January. The membership office will be closed from 23 December over the Christmas/New Year period. I will be back in the office on Monday, 5 January. In the meantime, I'd like to thank our many members for their continuing support throughout the year and to wish you all a very happy Christmas and prosperous New Year.



Carol Ormerod



# What's On in New York...

by Irvin Bauer

As you may have noticed, Broadway is not being deluged with new amazing pieces du entertainment. But ... if you venture a bit up town to Lincoln Center you can enjoy the best musicals seen anywhere in a long time ... Beverley Sills, amazing lady that she is, has made the New York City Opera a consistent delight and audiences throng nightly to each new inspiration. I saw a splendid production of *THE NEW MOON* with music by Sigmund Romberg. The book and lyrics, originally by Oscar Hammerstein II, were revised for this production by Robert Johanson, who did a wonderful job of directing and choreographing as well. It has colourful swashbuckling adventure, high romance and complicated plot and is played for all it's worth. But what really makes it memorable is the Romberg score: "Stouthearted Men", "One Kiss", "Wanting You", "Lover Come Back To Me", "Softly, As in a Morning Sunrise", all in the same show. It was splendid. A happy audience for a change ... applauding ... cheering ... smiling ... nice. Shortly after I went back to see *MEFISTOFOLE* with music and libretto by Arrigo Boito. Directed imaginatively by Tito Capobianco, it is a



Los Trios Ringbarkus

remarkable work; impressive, bold, theatrically and musically superb. A very exciting evening in the theatre. John Cheek sang and acted the title role, a tour de force, with great verve and abandon. Terrific stuff.

Now the most imaginative work I've seen lately in the theatre ... *LOS TRIOS RINGBARKUS*, playing at odd times, late in the evening at the American Place Theatre in the heart of Broadway's theatre district. I had heard a great deal about them, word of mouth ... so I went. I must say I wasn't prepared. The whole show is comprised of a cast of two ...

Neill Gladwin and Stephen Kearney, and they come from Melbourne. They are simply terrific. Neill, a Stan Laurel personification, straight sad face with a great glint in his eye, and the rubbery legged Stephen Kearney, who doesn't seem to have a joint in his body, are very very funny. They are also original, which in itself is a novelty. They involve the audience to a great, a chaotic degree ... juggling rolls which find their way into the audience and then back again in rapid fire, missiles propelled every which way with hilarious results. Messy, a junk-strewn stage, but oh so funny. I have no idea what the title or name means but with two such funny fellows who cares, I wish them every success ... and am sure I'll see more of them if we are lucky enough to keep them here. It's one time when your loss is our gain. I hope we can send you something equally amusing in return.

Irvin S. Bauer is a Playwright-Producer based in New York where he heads *THE DEVELOPMENT STAGE*, a place where the Writer is encouraged to fulfil the potential of his work.

## 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 Longford Cinema in South Yarra. 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). Hoyts and Village vouchers can be purchased for \$5.00, while Greater Union and Longford vouchers are \$6.00 each. This effectively means a \$1.50 to \$2.50 saving on the average general public admission price of \$7.50.

The vouchers are open dated and are valid for periods of between three and twelve 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.

### THEATRE TICKETS

If you wish to book seats for another Trust member please quote their membership number alongside yours on the booking coupon so that you can obtain the extra tickets at the Trust member price. Although you are restricted to two tickets at T.M. price, there is normally no restriction on the number of tickets you may purchase at the general public or pens/stud price, so

you can order tickets for friends who wish to be seated next to you.

You should mail your ticket requests at least two weeks before the performance date to allow for the time involved in processing and delivery. Should you need additional supplies of the booking coupon please ring the membership office on 690 8384.

Before travelling interstate, call us for the local edition of *Trust News* so you know what's on at the theatre. Our interstate representatives will be pleased to arrange theatre tickets for you.

### 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.



# 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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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 Australian Council a statutory body of the Commonwealth Government.

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The Queensland Government Directorate of Cultural Activities.

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Membership enquiries should be directed to the A.E.T.T. on 690 8384, 117 Sturt Street, South Melbourne. Postal address: G.P.O. Box 438C, Melbourne, Vic. 3001.

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