

Nunsense – a habit-forming, unconventional musical comedy!



A scene from the Sydney production of *NUNSENSE*

NUNSENSE by Dan Goggin
Directed by Barry Creyton
Musical Direction by Michael Tyack
Choreography by Dolores Dunbar
Lighting Design by Donn Byrnes
Cast includes Joy Westmore, Myra de Groote, Chelsea Brown, Judith Roberts, and Kerryn Henderson
Comedy Theatre

Pity 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 remaining four are languishing in the 'fridge! The Depart-

ment 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 "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 *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.

The critics have been enthusiastic about *NUNSENSE*. A sample of the their comments are:

"Wickedly funny ... the audience laughed all night." Sunday Telegraph

"These nuns deserve a halo each ... for God's sake go and see it."

Andrew Urban, The Australian

BOOKING INFORMATION

Tue Apr 28 to Sat Jun 13

Mon to Sat at 8.15pm

Wed and Sat mat at 2pm

AETT \$19.50

G.P. \$23.50

Pens/Stud \$13.50

Two AETT tickets per member

VSO Celebrates First Decade

1987 is an exciting year for the Victoria State Opera as it marks the tenth anniversary of the Company's debut season. The very first production back in 1977 was Offenbach's *LA BELLE HÉLÈNE* and a new production of this operetta is a nostalgic inclusion in the program this year. The balance of the season is made up of three wonderful operas, none of which has been performed by the VSO previously; *TURANDOT*, *THE FLYING DUTCHMAN* and *THE MARRIAGE OF FIGARO*.

Those who would like to become subscribers to the coming season should ring the VSO for a brochure and subscription booking form on 4175061, as soon as possible.

Members who prefer to attend one or more operas on a single performance basis should fill in their grey booking coupon and return it to the Trust well before May 30, as that is the date over the counter bookings will open to the public.



Olivia Stapp as Turandot

TURANDOT

by Giacomo Puccini

Conducted by Richard Dival

Directed by Richard Wherrett

Set design by Brian Thompson

Costume design by Terry Ryan

Cast includes Olivia Stapp, Corneliu Murgu, Glenys Fowles and Noel Mangin
State Theatre

Set in ancient China, the beautiful but cruel Princess Turandot sends a succession of suitors to their deaths, when they fail to answer her riddles. Two visiting singers will appear in this opera.

Olivia Stapp, who is famous for her interpretation of Turandot will make her Australian debut in the role and Rumanian tenor, Corneliu Murgu will sing the leading male part, Calaf. *TURANDOT* is characterised by its strong choral sections, and it does have a happy ending! The production will be sung in Italian.

BOOKING INFORMATION

July 25, 28, 31, August 5, 13, 15, 17 at 7.30pm, August 8 at 1pm

AETT \$42 (A Res) \$31 (B Res)

G.P. \$46 (A Res) \$35 (B Res)

Pens/Stud \$35 (A Res) \$30 (B Res)

Two AETT tickets per member

THE MARRIAGE OF FIGARO

by Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart

Conducted by Nicholas Braithwaite

Brian Stacey

Directed by Jean Pierre Mignon

Set design by Henry Bardon

Costume design by Michael Stennett

Lighting design by Nigel Levings

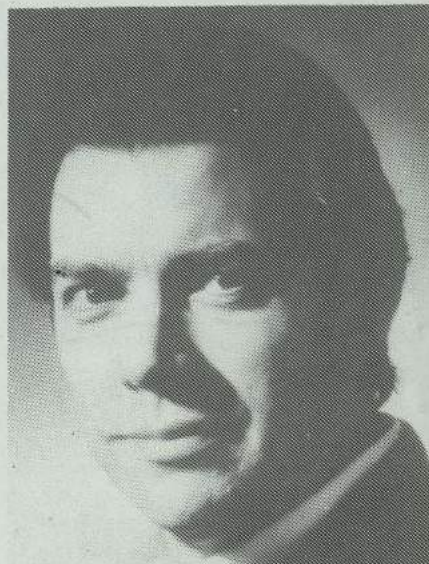
Cast includes Christine Douglas, Wendy Dixon, Jonathan Summers, Roger Howell, Miriam Gormley

State Theatre

The music from Mozart's comic opera *THE MARRIAGE OF FIGARO* will be familiar to most people although the complexity of the plot may require a quick "refresher" before you see the opera.

Based on a play by Beaumarchais, it concerns Figaro and his forthcoming marriage to Susanna, Countess Almaviva's maid. Count Almaviva is pursuing Susanna with the intention of exercising his "droit du seigneur", which gave the lord of the manor the right to spend the wedding night with the brides of his servants. The Countess' page, Cherubino, plots to seduce her, and although he is caught in an apparently compromising situation with the Countess, he escapes with the help of Susanna and Figaro. Eventually Susanna and the Countess trick the Count into attempting to seduce his own wife. All is forgiven in the final scene. Although there are political undertones, the emphasis is on fun.

The cast is comprised of Melbourne's internationally successful baritone, Jonathan Summers as Count Almaviva, New Zealand soprano, Wendy Dixon as Countess Almaviva, Christine Douglas



Jonathan Summers

as Susanna and Roger Howell as Figaro.

The artistic Director of Australian Nouveau Theatre Company, Jean Pierre Mignon will direct the production. He is well known for his innovative work at Anthill and it will be interesting to see how he interprets *THE MARRIAGE OF FIGARO*.

BOOKING INFORMATION

August 1, 4, 6, 8, 10, 12, 14 at 7.30pm

AETT \$38 (A Res) \$28 (B Res)

G.P. \$42 (A Res) \$32 (B Res)

Pens/Stud \$32 (A Res) \$25 (B Res)

Two AETT tickets per member

THE FLYING DUTCHMAN

by Richard Wagner

Conducted by Richard Dival

Directed by Elke Neidhardt

Design by Ken Wilby and Mark Thompson

Lighting design by Nicholas Schlieper

Cast includes Marilyn Richardson, Alberto Remedios, Malcolm Donnelly
State Theatre

Based on the legend of a sea captain condemned to sail the oceans forever, unless he is redeemed by a woman's unselfish love, *THE FLYING DUTCHMAN* is Wagner in his most darkly romantic mood. Malcolm Donnelly, who has sung recently with the English National Opera, returns to feature as the Dutchman, Marilyn Richardson will sing Senta and Alberto Remedios, one of the world's foremost Wagnerian tenors, will appear as Eric. The production will be sung in German with surtitles.



Malcolm Donnelly as *The Dutchman* in the South Australian Opera Co. production.

BOOKING INFORMATION

November 9,12,14,17,20,23,25 at 7.30pm

AETT \$38 (A Res) \$28 (B Res)

G.P. \$42 (A Res) \$32 (B Res)

Pens/Stud \$32 (A Res) \$25 (B Res)

Two AETT tickets per member

LA BELLE HÉLÈNE

by Jacques Offenbach

Conducted by Richard Dival

Directed by Steven Pimlott

Designed by Kenneth Rowell

Lighting design by Nicholas Schlieper

Cast includes Geraldine Turner, John

O'May, Gregory Yurisich, Gregory

Dempsey, Barbara Sambell

State Theatre

Offenbach composed some of his finest music for his entertaining satire *LA BELLE HÉLÈNE*, which used the aristocracy of Greek antiquity to parody the French celebrities of his day. Gregory Yurisich, who played Pooh-Bah in the Australian Opera's production of *THE MIKADO* last year, will sing the role of Calchas, while Geraldine Turner and John O'May who are currently touring as Buttercup and Captain Corcoran in *HMS PINAFORE*, have been paired up again as the lovers, Helen and Paris. A new English translation has been commissioned for this special anniversary production.

BOOKING INFORMATION

December 2,3,4,5,7,8,9 at 7.30pm
December 5 at 1pm

AETT \$32 (A Res) \$25 (B Res)

G.P. \$36 (A Res) \$29 (B Res)

Pens/Stud \$29 (A Res) \$22 (B Res)

Two AETT tickets per member

Thought-provoking Play from N.Z.

FORESKIN'S LAMENT

by Greg McGee

Directed by Peter Tulloch

Designed by Iain Aitken

Cast includes Simon Westaway, Matt Kay, David Clisby, Robert Morgan, Anna McCrossin and Lynne Ruthven
Universal Theatre

New Zealand playwright, Greg McGee has written that "one of the theatre's most important functions is to act as a social catalyst". In his play *FORESKIN'S LAMENT*, which centres around a rugby football team, he examines not only the mores of football but many wider issues facing society today. It is a very funny play dealing with serious subjects such as apartheid, chauvinism, feminism, violence in sport and literary academia. The play's humour is described as "witty, dark and belly-shaking".



Simon Westaway, who will star as Foreskin.

It should be noted that in New Zealand the play touched many raw nerves and created negative reactions from "community standards" campaigners because of the coarse language and blatant nudity in the play. Most critics, however, have been enthusiastic in their praise. Since its premiere in Auckland in 1981, *FORESKIN'S LAMENT* has now had seventeen productions including a brief, sold-out season in Sydney a few years ago.

BOOKING INFORMATION

From Wed Apr 22

Tue to Sat at 8.15pm

Sat and Sun mat at 5.15pm

AETT \$19

G.P. \$23

Pens/Stud \$15

Two AETT tickets per member

New Australian Play

SHIMADA by Jill Shearer

Directed by Simon Phillips

Designed by Shaun Gurton

Cast includes Elspeth Ballantyne
Russell Street Theatre

The theme of the play has a piquancy and sharp immediacy in these days of multi-national business expansion. Two Australian soldiers, Clive and Eric, having found a mateship that endured through World War II and years of imprisonment by the Japanese, then returned home to set up a bicycle company. This small venture, largely family-based, has had a successful past, but now Clive is dead, Eric has reached retiring age, and pressure from overseas trade is proving a burden. When a Japanese consortium wishes to buy the firm in its scheme for Australian representation, Clive's widow has no qualms in considering the bid. Eric, however, has reservations that grow to nightmarish proportions with the arrival of the Uchiyama representative. Aged, polite and bearing gifts, he still awakens echoes of a hated Japanese captor of the war years

This moving play will mark a Melbourne directorial debut for Simon Phillips, a rising young director who will be joining MTC for the forthcoming season.

BOOKING INFORMATION

Wed Apr 22 to Sat May 23

Mon to Fri at 8pm

Sat at 5pm and 8.15pm

AETT \$17.80

G.P. \$19.80

Pens \$16.30

Stud \$9.80

Two AETT tickets per member



A scene from the Sydney production of CATS (Marina Prior, centre)

Cats is Coming

In London, CATS, which combines Andrew Lloyd Webber's music with the poetry of T.S. Eliot, was awarded a "Best Musical" award and in New York it won seven Tony awards. In Sydney the show has broken records with its two year run and proved to be the musical success of the decade.

After constant speculation about whether or not it would be mounted in Melbourne following the Sydney season, the producers have decided to undertake the major task of remodelling the interior of Her Majesty's Theatre to accommodate the show. As each theatre needs individual alterations, no two productions in the world are ever quite the same. Work will begin in June and CATS will open on October 10.

A limited number of tickets will be available through the Trust for specified performances only at the concession price. We will continue to offer concession seats for various performances for the run of the show.

BOOKING INFORMATION

Her Majesty's Theatre
From Sat Oct 10
Mon to Sat at 8pm
Wed and Sat mat at 2pm
AETT \$37 on Oct 12-15, 19-22, Dec
7-12, at 8pm
Oct 17, 21, 24, Dec 9, 12 at 2pm
GP \$39
Two AETT tickets per member

Australian Premiere for Playbox

THE HOPE by Heather Nimmo
Directed by Andrew Ross
Designed by Robert Juniper
Music composed by Stuart Davies-Slate
The Studio, Victorian Arts Centre

It is 1987, Bet and Michael are newly married and their hearts are set on the Australian Dream – to own their own home. Like generations before them they have crossed the Nullarbor to seek their fortune, joining a rush spurred on by rising gold prices and the declining dollar.

"The Hope" is a corrugated-iron mining town where few fortunes are made and few marriages survive. Bet and Michael are innocents among "The Hope's" hardy inhabitants. Mrs G – fourth generation goldfields, Charlie – the topless barmaid, Boss – the enigmatic boss man and the eerie presence of generations of previous occupants. Finally innocence is gone and Bet and Michael are left stranded after the honeymoon staring confused and bereft into the approaching desert storm.

Heather Nimmo was born in Scotland and came to Australia with her family in 1963. She was educated at Penola and Adelaide and has a B.A. Hons (Psych) from Adelaide University. Heather has worked as a researcher and tin miner and now lives in Kalgoorlie where she writes part-time and teaches at Kalgoorlie College.

Andrew Ross has directed several new Western Australian plays including adaptations of *A FORTUNATE LIFE* by Albert Facey and *MIDNITE* by Randolph Stow and *KULLARK, THE DREAMERS* and *NO SUGAR* by Jack Davis. Andrew is Artistic Director of the Theatre Department at Melbourne University.

BOOKING INFORMATION

Mon Apr 27 to Sat May 16
Mon to Fri at 8pm
Sat at 5pm and 8.15pm
AETT \$10.00
G.P. \$16.50
Pens/Stud \$10.00
Two AETT tickets per member

New Production of Pyjama Game

PYJAMA GAME by Richard Adler and Jerry Ross (Music and Lyrics)
Book by George Abbott and Richard Bissell

Directed by Alan Burrows
Musical Direction Hugh McKelvey
Cast includes Jennie Kellaway, David Outtrim, Rob Constable and Donna Gabriel

Alexander Theatre, Monash University

Following their most successful version of *FOLLIES*, C.L.O.C. Musical Theatre will present a brand new production of the musical *THE PYJAMA GAME* at the Alexander Theatre in May.



Jennie Kellaway, who has the lead role of Babe in the *PYJAMA GAME*.

Set in the Sleep Tite Pyjama Factory, the plot involves a confrontation between the management and the workers over a demand for seven-and-a-half cents an hour increase in wages. Union representative and emerging feminist, Babe, (Jennie Kellaway) is at the centre of all the action.

The score of THE PYJAMA GAME contains a string of hits including, "Hey There", "Steam Heat", "Once-A-Year Day", "Hernando's Hideaway", and "I'm Not At All In Love".

Book through the Trust or directly on 288 8438.

BOOKING INFORMATION

Fri May 1 to Sat May 16
May 1,2,6-9,12-16 at 8pm
Sat mat on May 16 at 2pm
AETT \$9.50 (except Fri and Sat evenings)
G.P. \$11.50
Pens/Stud \$8.00 (except Fri and Sat evenings)
Child \$6.00 (except Fri and Sat evenings)
Two AETT tickets per member

Norman Conquests Trilogy

TABLE MANNERS, LIVING TOGETHER and ROUND AND ROUND THE GARDEN by Alan Ayckbourn

Directed by Simon Hopkinson

Designed by Shaun Gurton

Cast includes Terry Bader, Kirsty Child, Robin Bowering, Christine Mahoney and John McTernan

Athenæum Theatre

After a successful season for the A.M.T.C. late last year, the NORMAN CONQUESTS have been remounted at the Athenæum Theatre this month running through until 30 May.

The three plays which make up the trilogy take place over a family weekend.



Robin Bowering as Reg and Terry Bader as Norman.

They follow the amorous adventures of irrepressible Norman, (played by Terry Bader) which succeed in playing havoc in the household.

Alan Ayckbourn is acknowledged as a contemporary master of comedy. His other plays include SEASON'S GREETINGS, and A CHORUS OF DISAPPROVAL – the latter to be produced by the M.T.C. later this year.

BOOKING INFORMATION

TABLE MANNERS Apr 8,13-16, May 4-8.
LIVING TOGETHER Apr 9, 20-24, May 11-15
ROUND AND ROUND THE GARDEN Apr 10, Apr 27-May 1, May 18-22
Mon to Fri at 8.15pm
Trilogy of plays each Saturday from 2pm (5pm and 8.30pm)
AETT \$18.50
G.P. \$22.50
AETT Pens/Stud \$15.00
Pens/Stud \$16.90
Trilogy of Plays (Sats only)
AETT \$57.00
G.P. \$57.00
Pens/Stud \$47.00

Shakespeare at the Church

THE COMEDY OF ERRORS

by William Shakespeare

Designed by Shaun Gurton

Music composed by Richard Vella

The Church Theatre

The Church Theatre will present a fresh, contemporary adaptation of Shakespeare's COMEDY OF ERRORS. The themes of thwarted love, reconciliation and mistaken identity, which appear in this play and in Shakespearean comedies, such as THE TAMING OF THE SHREW and A MID-SUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM, provide the basis of hilarious, witty and often bawdy entertainment.

BOOKING INFORMATION

Fri May 1 to Sat May 30
Mon to Sat at 8pm
AETT \$6.00
G.P. \$10.00
Pens/Stud \$6.00
Two AETT tickets per member

Helen Morse Stars as Blanche DuBois

A STREETCAR NAMED DESIRE

by Tennessee Williams

Directed by Roger Hodgman

Designed by Tony Tripp

Cast includes Helen Morse, Sandy Harbutt, Betty Bobbitt, Paul English and Kurt Geyer

The Playhouse, Victorian Arts Centre

"They told me to take a streetcar named Desire..."

Blanche DuBois' famous first line has been mistaken sometimes as a flight of poetic fancy, but in fact there was a streetcar with the destination of Desire in the days of Tennessee Williams' early residence in New Orleans. The young playwright took this powerful image of a journey towards the ultimate in human passion and created one of the great dramas of our time.

Blanche and Stella are sisters, the last remaining members of a once prominent Southern plantation family. Stella has fled this decaying heritage to find strength and fulfilment in her marriage to the lusty redneck, Stanley Kowalski. Blanche, on the other hand, is a victim of both her family past and a tragic marriage, and her life is haunted by the brutal aspects of desire "...that rattletrap streetcar that bangs through the Quarter, up one old narrow street and down another..."

Helen Morse, indisputably one of Australia's finest actresses, will star as Blanche; and the play will be directed by Roger Hodgman, described by Tennessee Williams as 'the best man with a script I ever worked with'.

BOOKING INFORMATION

May 6 to Sat June 13
Mon to Fri at 8pm
Sat at 5pm and 8.15pm
Wed mat on May 13
AETT \$19.80
G.P. \$21.80
Pens \$16.30
Stud \$9.80
Two AETT tickets per member

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

by Brian Kiernan

Coinciding with the recent premiere of David Williamson's new play EMERALD CITY, Trust News 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 Devine 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.

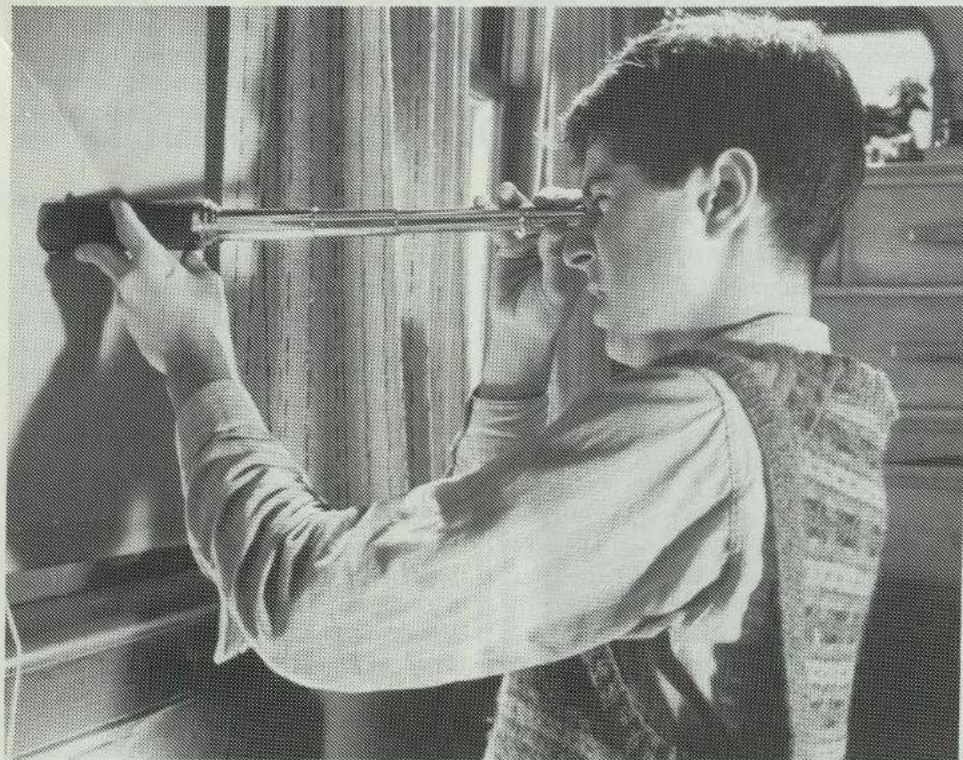
But the world being what it is, and people being what David Williamson mordantly observes them as, and with affection accepts them as, there can be no final resolution of these contradictions. In the spirit of comedy we must grin and bear them.



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



Eugene with his specially designed viewing device in *BRIGHTON BEACH MEMOIRS*.

BRIGHTON BEACH MEMOIRS

directed by Gene Saks

Screenplay by Neil Simon from his play of the same name

Produced by David Chasman

Starring Blythe Danner, Bob Dishy, Brian Drilling, Stacey Glick, Judith Ivey, Lisa Waltz and Jonathan Silverman
Opening early May at Russell Cinemas

Largely based on Neil Simon's own boyhood, *BRIGHTON BEACH MEMOIRS* is set in the rather cosy environment of Brooklyn. Fifteen-year-old Eugene is the second son of a Jewish family. As well as his parents and older brother, the house is bulging at the seams with the addition of a recently widowed aunt and her two daughters, the youngest of whom is a remarkably priggish and unpleasant little girl.

Torn between becoming a baseball star or a writer, Eugene keeps a diary "so that if I grow up warped or crazy the world will know why". Every time something interesting happens in the house (and there is plenty going on with such a crowd), Eugene's mother despatches him to the local store on a trumped-up shopping expedition. Eugene sees himself as frustrated at every turn in his attempts to discover life's mysteries.

Neil Simon's play won the Drama Critics Award for Best Play in 1983, as well as a Tony for best director and best featured actor early last year. The Australian production was performed in Melbourne at the Comedy last year.

84 CHARING CROSS ROAD

directed by David Jones

Screenplay by Hugh Whitemore from the book by Helene Hanff

Produced by Geoffrey Helman

Starring Anne Bancroft, Anthony Hopkins, Judi Dench, Maurice Denham
Opening April 30 at Hoyts

84 Charing Cross Road, for the enlightenment of those who have not known and loved the book for years, is the address of a former London bookshop in the theatre district.

In 1949, Helene Hanff, a young and poor New York writer, read and answered an advertisement for out-of-print books placed in an American literary review by Marks & Co, Antiquarian Booksellers.

That began a twenty year correspondence with Frank Doel, manager of Marks & Co, and a warm trans-Atlantic

pen-pal relationship with Doel and the staff. When Helene Hanff sent food parcels to the bookshop during postwar rationing, the correspondence grew to include letters from all the workers at Marks & Co and became a portrayal of the similarities and differences between English and American life. Helene Hanff planned to visit London and the shop several times but it wasn't until 1969 that her dream finally came true, only to find that Frank Doel had died and that the shop had closed. *84 Charing Cross Road* is a love story with a difference; it is Helene Hanff's love affair with literature and London.



Anne Bancroft as New York writer Helene Hanff.

DEATH OF A SALESMAN

directed by Volker Schlöndorff

Adapted from the play by Arthur Miller

Produced by Robert F. Colesberry

Starring Dustin Hoffman, Kate Reid, John Malkovich

Now at Hoyts and Brighton Bay Twin

Since its 1949 Broadway stage premiere, Arthur Miller's *DEATH OF A SALESMAN* has become a classic of the American theatre; it has been claimed that not a night passes without it being performed somewhere in the world.

Dustin Hoffman had wanted to play Willy Loman since he began acting in 1959. In 1984 he appeared in Michael Rudman's Broadway production which was described by *Time* critic Richard Schickel as "not... a reinterpretation of the play, but a virtual reinvention of it".



Dustin Hoffman as Willy Loman.

Willy Loman is the mediocre salesman who portrays himself to his family as a master of his trade, finally destroying both his family and himself. Hoffman played Loman as "a scrappy, snappy little bantam" according to Schickel. Now his characterisation has been transferred to the screen, with Kate Reid as the patient wife, and John Malkovich and Stephen Lang as the sons who try to model themselves on the father they believe to be so successful.

The 36th Melbourne Film Festival

Preparations are well under way for this year's Melbourne Film Festival which will be held from June 5th to 14th 1987 at Hoyts Mid City Centre, 200 Bourke Street. The works of seven new directors and seven women directors will feature amongst the more than 40 full-length and 100-plus short films to be shown.

\$12,000 of the \$60,000 budget (funded by the AFC and Film Victoria) goes in prize money to the short film award winners.

Amongst the invited and entered features received are: "SHAKE: OTIS AT MONTEREY" - Otis Redding, and "JIMI PLAYS MONTEREY" tracing the early Hendrix career ... "DIRECTED BY WILLIAM WYLER", a portrait of the lauded American director, illuminated by interviews with the screen greats who quailed under his demanding hand - Bette Davis and John Huston for two. ... "ROUTINE PLEASURES": the eagerly awaited second solo feature by Jean Pierre Gorin, which centres on a group of model train buffs. ... "THE NIGHT OF THE PENCILS", Hector (Funny Little, Dirty Little War) Olivera's recounting of the tragic outcome of student demos in Argentina. ... "BRITISH ROCK - THE FIRST WAVE", an American view of the world-wide impact of the U.K.'s '60s music explosion. ... "D.U.I." brings us a



A still from *LA MESSA E FINITA* (*The Mass is Ended*) directed by Italian Nanni Moretti.



Alfred Hitchcock in Francesco Bortolini and Claudio Masenza's film, *THE THRILL OF GENIUS*.

slice of radical music from the States. ... "NO PICNIC" - one of the representatives of New York's 'Independents', is a quirky tale of one guy's lousy summer. ... "TAMPOPO", a Japanese comedy of noodles, is Juzo (The Funeral) Itami's well received second movie.

That's just a few. There's also "FATHERLAND", Ken (Kes, Poor Cow, Family Life) Loach ... "MY LIFE FOR ZARAH LEANDER" from Christian (Under The Volcano) Blackwood. Taiwan's Hou Hsiao Hsien's raved-about "A TIME TO LIVE AND A TIME TO DIE". "SHOAH", Claude Lanzmann's harrowing 9½-hour acclaimed investigation of the Holocaust. "SAXOPHONE COLOSSUS", Robert Mugge's tribute to Sonny Rollins ... and many more.

A Trust concession will be available. For further information phone 663 1395 or the Trust office on 690 8384.

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. Con-

cessional 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 \$6.50 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), by phone, or in person from the Trust during normal office hours. Please specify which cinema chain you require when ordering.

What's On in New York...

by Irvin Bauer

As the 1986-7 theatre season limps along, comedy, once a great staple, now too often a pallid imitation of a TV sit-com, is again insignificantly represented. **SWEET SUE**, by over-rated A.R. Gurney, Jr, stars major talents Mary Tyler Moore and Lynn Redgrave as a double version of Sweet Sue. The double vision is blurred, I'm afraid, and is a conceit that never really works. A shame. Two major performers wasted.

Coming off a bit better is **SOCIAL SECURITY** by Andrew Bergman. Again a small cast, six characters and a modest single setting . . . the prescription for Broadway straight plays; who can afford anything else? It is slight, moves effortlessly, ever so quickly, and at moments is very funny. Especially good is Caroline Aaron, as the tough, long-suffering sister from suburbia. She seems the epitome of the middle-class malcontent American housewife.

Moving off Broadway to a musical, **THE RISE OF DAVID LEVINSKY**, book and lyrics by Isaiah Sheffer and music by Bobby Paul, is yet another "coming to America" musical. It seems ethnic is "in" but why must it all be so literal and straight forward . . . ? We know the story, now give us an insight . . . some imaginative twist . . . a fanciful curl, or is that too much to ask in a theatre that

seems increasingly dull and pedestrian. The new theatre it played in, the 300-seat John Houseman, was comfortable, with a terrific stage area and state-of-the-art lighting facilities that can accommodate the most ambitious of theatre projects. It is a wonderful new asset to the N.Y. theatre scene.

Also Off Broadway we have **THE CONCEPT**, conceived and directed by Lawrence Sacharow, text by Casey Kurti in collaboration with the Company of Daytop Village, which runs a very successful drug rehabilitation programme, have improvised and arranged their own stories for dramatic purposes and to illustrate the horrors of drug use. The presentation, a sort of "theatre as public service", is effective, compelling, insightful, chilling and at moments, very touching. It is the kind of dramatic presentation that could be toured to schools, youth groups and parents' associations with rewarding results.

It seems that we have just ventured through the festival of **DIE FLEDERMAUS** by Johann Straus. This perennial favourite seemed to be everywhere one looked. First there was the now much heralded production at the Metropolitan Opera starring Kiri Te Kanawa and directed by Otto Schenk. Ms Te Kanawa, a singer much talked about these days, played it like a bored housewife from Rose

Bay and sang the role without great distinction I'm sorry to say. If you were lucky enough to miss the production, it turned up on television. A number of times . . . and for some reason if you wanted yet another taste . . . there was yet another version from London's Covent Garden on another channel. This one also featured Ms Te Kanawa and wasn't much better. You may understand why I had great reservations about going to a small 100-seat opera house to see yet another production.

The Amato Opera Company has its own theatre on the Bowery, that fabled street of shabbiness and lost men, a very unlikely place for opera to flourish, but under the direction of Tony Amato it does remarkable things. His **Fledermaus** was truly inspired and wonderful. It was light, effervescent, as sparkling as champagne. It was sung well, if not brilliantly, and it boasted the best performance, singing and acting of Prince Orlofsky that I have ever seen. A charming singer named Vima La Vaidya is sure to make her mark on the opera world very soon.

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.

Dialogue

by Carol Ormerod

I thought you may be interested in a recent report from our Membership Manager in Sydney, Carole Long, on membership growth during the past year. During 1986, we enrolled just under 500 new members here in Victoria, and the total of old and new members in all states had reached 9,607 at the end of the year. This represents a growth of 18 per cent, which is a very healthy situation. As Carole Long pointed out, we have you, our existing members, to thank for a substantial part of this growth. Nearly 16 per cent of our new members resulted from "word of mouth" members and as a result of gift memberships. It all adds up to a very encouraging picture for the growth of our theatre audiences - and audience development is the prime objective of our membership program. Another positive feature of an increased membership base is the reduc-

tion in "per member costs", which means we can extend the scope of our membership services and increase our capability to negotiate better deals for our members.

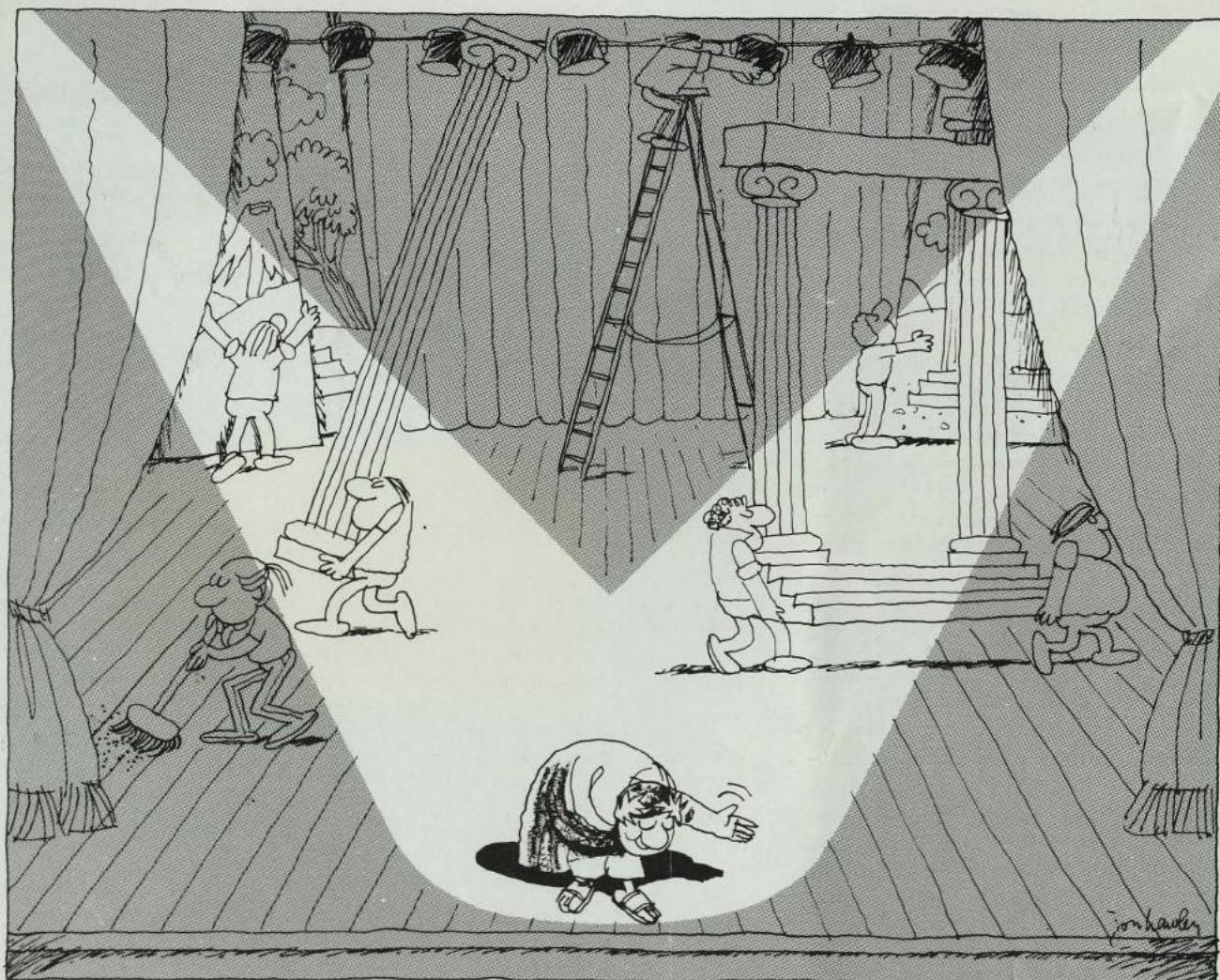
While on the subject of memberships, don't forget Trust membership when you're thinking of a gift for Auntie Joan or for that colleague at work who's always talking about how he'd like to go to the theatre more often but somehow never manages to get there. Just complete the gift membership form on page 11, or ring the office with the details, and leave the rest to us. Your gift buying couldn't be easier! If you have a friend or relative who'd like to know more about our services, please let us know so we can send them further details or just give them a new member application form which you'll find attached to your grey

theatre guide/booking coupon in each issue of Trust News.

SUGAR BABIES is still attracting good audiences at Her Majesty's Theatre, and as the season ends on Saturday 25 April, you had better hurry if you haven't seen it yet. After Melbourne, the show moves back to Sydney, playing at Her Majesty's there until late May, and then it packs up again for a season in Brisbane.

The Trust's Theatre of the Deaf will be presenting its new play **MOON BETWEEN TWO HOUSES** (a play for children) at the Come Out Festival, Adelaide's annual theatre festival for young people this month. The Theatre of the Deaf is one of this country's leading theatre-in-education teams, working mainly in NSW schools.

Carol Ormerod



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