



AUSTRALIAN  
SEASON  
of DRAMA

may  
june  
july  
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MELBOURNE UNIVERSITY  
UNION THEATRE DEPARTMENT  
in association with the  
COMMITTEE FOR UNIVERSITY DRAMA  
present

**AUSTRALIAN SEASON 1972**

— a season of eight productions of Australian theatre presented by the various theatre groups of Melbourne University.

1. 'THE CHAPEL PERILOUS'  
by Dorothy Hewett, directed by George Whaley, May 3-6. Union Theatre.
2. 'WOMEN!'  
an adaption by Jack Hibberd of Aristophanes' 'Ecclesiazusae', directed by James McCaughey. June 14-17. Union Theatre.
3. 'THE TIME IS NOT YET RIPE'  
by Louis Esson, directed by John Smythe, June 20-24. Union Theatre.
- \* 'THE CHAPEL PERILOUS'  
(Return Season) June 27 – July 1. Union Theatre.
4. 'CHIDLEY'S ANSWER'  
by Ormond/Women's, directed by Daryl Wilkinson. July 5-8. Union Theatre.
5. 'THE DUKE OF EDINBURGH ASSASSINATED'  
by Bob Ellis and Dick Hall, directed by Brian Hogan. July 12-15. Union Theatre.
6. 'AND COME OUT FIGHTING'  
by Harry Martin, directed by Peter Carmody, July 12-15. Prince Philip Theatre.
7. 'MODERN DANCE ENSEMBLE'  
directed by Margaret Lasica, July 19-22 and 26-29. Union Theatre.
8. 'CROW'  
written and directed by Nigel Triffitt, July 26-30 and August 2-6. Pram Factory.

**PRICES:** \$1.50 and \$1.00 for students. School parties of 20 or more, special concession of 75c on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday nights.

**ALL ENQUIRIES AND BOOKINGS** should be directed to the Union Theatre Office, C/o Union Building, Melbourne University. Telephone 347 4186.

**EDITORIAL:**

*Towards the end of 1970, a good deal of debate took place among members of some of the Melbourne University drama groups as to the place and function of student drama in the perspective of theatre as a whole. It was noted that student theatre was generally orientated towards catering for the interests of university audiences, and the conclusion was drawn that a more positive and valid contribution would be made by expanding the context of dramatic activity. Street theatre, the M.U.S.T. 6-week Summer Tour to country areas in Victoria and New South Wales, and performances for specialised audiences such as schools, hospitals and the like have been some of the results, the aim being to reach a wider audience and in many cases to make direct comment on various social and political issues. Such are indicative of a conception of theatre that sees it as having an integral role in society at large, perhaps as a mirror, perhaps as a part of the conscience mechanism. The so-called 'Alternative Theatre' groups are in the main, working in these directions; as a positive activity student theatre can make some small but valuable contribution to a change of emphasis that gradually seems to be taking shape in Australian Theatre.*

*A direct corollary of this viewpoint is the production of local material. Whilst not excluding the great universal writers, it would seem obvious that writers from within a society can represent and comment most accurately on those aspects of a society peculiar to itself. It was clear that the more established organisations were doing little to promote Australian Theatre and that the universities, lacking the rigid necessity of box-office success, were in an ideal position to foster experimentation and new work. It was in this light that three of the Melbourne University drama groups — M.U.S.T., Ormond and Newman/St. Mary's — staged the 1971 four play Australian Season, which in the main was extremely successful.*

*In recognition of the value not only to theatre in Australia as a whole, but in a more immediate respect to the participants — actors, writers and directors — for whom the season offered unique opportunities for co-operative effort, the majority of campus groups have joined the three of last year to stage a much larger season in 1972.*

*The groups work in co-operation in a body known as the Committee for University Drama (C.U.D.) under whose auspices the season was initiated. Each group is autonomously responsible for its own productions, and joint policy and combined advertising for the season are decided by C.U.D., in which all groups are represented.*

J.L. Duigan,  
Chairman, C.U.D.  
President, M.U.S.T.

1. **'THE CHAPEL PERILOUS'** by Dorothy Hewett, directed by George Whaley, presented by Melbourne University Student Theatre.

**May 3 – 6, Union Theatre.**

'The Chapel Perilous', subtitled 'The Perilous Adventures of Sally Thunder' is by leading West Australian writer Dorothy Hewett. This particularly demanding and brilliant play had its premiere in Perth in 1971 where it was recognised as a significant stylistic advance in modern Australian playwriting. The script will be published by Currency Press.

Sally Thunder is a finely drawn character, a radically independent individual growing up in a provincial town and searching for creative causes and relationships within the limitations of her society.

The large M.U.S.T. cast is directed by George Whaley, Director of University Theatre, who has just returned from an overseas study tour sponsored by the Australian Council for the Arts.

2. **'WOMEN!'** an adaptation by Jack Hibberd of Aristophanes' 'Ecclesiazusae', directed by James McCaughey, presented by Newman/St. Mary's.

**June 14 – 17, Union Theatre.**

In fifth century (B.C.) Athens the role of women was on the boil and the pot was being continually stirred by professional free thinkers and irresponsible playwrights. In 'Women!' the inevitable happens, and the women begin to exercise their power.

Jack Hibberd is an Australian playwright of great renown. Two of his plays: 'White With Wire Wheels' and 'Who' have been published by Penguin and his most recent work 'A Stretch of The Imagination' at the Pram Factory in March this year was widely acclaimed by the critics.

Aristophanes (445 – 380 B.C.) wrote many of his plays in an Athenian setting mingling acute satire and broad humour. The work of Jack Hibberd demonstrates a similar bent and style of humour. Each excels in the transformation of colloquial speech into dialogue of great vigour and fundamental beauty. In Aristophanes we have a comic playwright whose work has retained its supremacy and timeliness for many centuries.

James McCaughey is a member of the Classics Department, Melbourne University. He is vitally interested in the Challenge which Greek Theatre presents to new Australian drama. Last year he founded the Greek Theatre Project which presented the 'Bacchae' at the Pram Factory and more recently 'The Hippolytus Project', Prince Phillip Theatre in April this year.

3. **'THE TIME IS NOT YET RIPE'** by Louis Esson, directed by John Smythe, presented by Trinity/J.C.H.

**June 20 – 24, Union Theatre.**

'The Time Is Not Yet Ripe' by Louis Esson is one of the relatively unknown classics of Australian theatre. It was written in 1908 as part of an attempt to establish an indigenous, socialist-oriented theatre.

The play is a political comedy written in the Shavian style. It remains amazingly fresh, partly because of its immediate topicality in an election year, and partly because it jibes at issues of current topicality – American ownership of Australian interests, the woman's role in society, and the basic apathy of the Australian electorate. This production will provide an excellent contrast to the more contemporary plays of the rest of the Australian Season, and should help to revive an interest in traditional Australian theatre.

John Smythe, writer, director and actor, has worked with many professional companies including the Australian Performing Group and a position as resident dramatist with the Melbourne Theatre Company. His work with student groups last year resulted in the premiere of Leonard Radic's 'Sideshow' proclaimed as the best production of the 1971 Australian Season. Earlier this year John Smythe directed and co-wrote with David Williamson, the resoundingly successful 'Alfred The Incredible Sheepboy' for the M.U.S.T. Summer Tour.

- \***'THE CHAPEL PERILOUS'** (Return Season)

**June 27 – July 1, Union Theatre.**

4. **'CHIDLEY'S ANSWER'** by Ormond/Women's, directed by Daryl Wilkinson, presented by Ormond/Women's.

**July 6 – 8, Union Theatre.**

Three years ago Ormond/Women's diverged from the general stream of University theatre by establishing a community approach to theatre. This 'community' or 'group' approach means that the theatre presented is directly relevant to both actors and audience and a wide range of people of varying ability and commitment are able to participate in the production.

This year the group has created the play, 'Chidley's Answer' rather than using an already existent script. The group has researched the life of Chidley, an eccentric who moved about Sydney and Melbourne around 1910; his life has been used as the basis for the project. The final play has evolved through the research, improvisation and workshop activity of the group, resulting in a coherent play, created and performed by the same people.

Daryl Wilkinson is a drama lecturer at Secondary Teachers' College, Melbourne. He has had considerable experience in projects of this kind, including 'Carriage 17' performed at the Pram Factory and 'Birthrite' performed at the Victorian Arts Centre during the Melbourne Moomba Festival.

5. 'THE DUKE OF EDINBURGH ASSASSINATED' *by Bob Ellis and Dick Hall, directed by Brian Hogan, presented by Tin Alley Players.*

**July 12 – 15. Union Theatre.**

'The Duke of Edinburgh Assassinated' or 'The Vindication of Henry Parkes', a riotous, rorty, song and dance piece of theatre received its premiere at Sydney's Nimrod St. Theatre last year. Dick Hall and Bob Ellis are two Sydney playwrights, Bob Ellis being best known as co-writer with Michael Boddy of 'The Legend Of King O'Malley'.

The play delves into the politics, bigotry and manipulation of 19th century Australia with its Orange Lodges, Tykes and Henry Parkes emerging the enigmatic figure that he was. The playwrights have researched the era carefully and have spared no effort in outlining the links of the era with the present. The play represents a gigantic vote-wooing political rally, with a bridge to the past, present and future.

Brian Hogan, lecturer in drama, Secondary Teachers' College, Melbourne, besides having written much on drama, has directed many productions for the S.T.C. and other groups, his work reflecting an invariably fresh and provocative approach to theatre.

6. 'AND COME OUT FIGHTING' *by Harry Martin, directed by Peter Carmody, presented by Queens/St. Hilda's.*

**July 12 – 15. Prince Philip Theatre.**

Few sports can compare with boxing for cynical exploitation of talent. For the up-and-coming fighter there is the adulation of fickle fight fans and the quick rake off from media that can put money in his pocket and spread his name throughout the land. Its a tough sport, for winners only in a sport where Australian middle weight champion Al Dawson is especially acclaimed and especially suspect . . . he is an aboriginal. Win, lose or draw, but at whose terms? This is the question that Dawson has to work out for himself in a way that is as coarse and brutal as the fight game itself.

Harry Martin, a free-lance journalist has a very colourful background which includes a fitful involvement with theatre. Previous productions of his work include 'The Gents' (Q Theatre, Sydney, 1966) and 'Onward Christian Soldiers' (M.T.C.'s 'Evening of Stimulation', 1967).

Peter Carmody has a considerable reputation both in and outside the university as an actor, writer and director of both films and plays.

7. 'THE MODERN DANCE ENSEMBLE' *directed by Margaret Lasica.*

**July 19 – 22 and 26 – 29. Union Theatre.**

The Modern Dance Ensemble, directed by Margaret Lasica, was established eight years ago. Margaret Lasica is a well known teacher and choreographer in Melbourne where she teaches extensively and also in Sydney and at the University of New England, Armadale, where she has conducted a series of movement workshops.

The Ensemble's work in recent years has included regular seasons at the Union Theatre, Melbourne, appearances at various Art's Festivals, including the Aquarius Festivals in Melbourne and Canberra, experimental seasons at their Melbourne studio and most recently an exciting evening performance at St. Paul's Cathedral.

The Ensemble is a cohesive group of dedicated dancers, choreographers, designers and technicians. The work presented is essentially a group effort which successfully combines creative workshop techniques with strict demands and respect for physical discipline.

The 'Winter Season 72' will feature several exciting new works by choreographers from within the group, as well as works from the Ensemble's repertoire reflecting the Ensemble's highly significant contribution to the Australian Dance Scene today.

8. 'CROW' *written and directed by Nigel Triffitt, presented by Melbourne University Student Theatre.*

**July 26 – 30 and August 2 – 6. Pram Factory.**

Nigel Triffitt, a leading director with St. Martin's Theatre, Melbourne, has worked in a large and diverse number of theatrical contexts. While primarily engaged in directing the material of other writers, perhaps his chief interest lies in the production of his own work, which has resulted in some extraordinary and colourful 'events' staged in Sydney, Hobart and elsewhere.

The skeleton of 'Crow' has been developing in Nigel Triffitt's mind for some years now, and will be built up further through work with the cast. It promises to be a unique production and will be in marked contrast to any other material as yet undertaken by M.U.S.T.