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TOWNDOWN

YOUTH PERFORMING ARTS IN AUSTRALIA



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TASMANIA

**"A READY-MADE
LABORATORY FOR
ALL SORTS OF THINGS"**

Tasmania is an extraordinary State.

As the southern-most tip of a country already so vast and comparatively under-populated that it is divided by distance; Tasmania is further cut off by its nature as an island. For its inhabitants, there is 'Tasmania' and 'the Mainland'; and for many others, there is 'Australia' and 'Tasmania'.

The State's geographical location makes it a scenic delight for tourists; an ecological curiosity and a target for conservationists; and an agriculturally productive land that has evoked its status as 'the Apple Isle'. Its history has marked it as the source of major atrocities by early European settlers — not only towards the Island's Aboriginal population, which was systematically annihilated; but also towards its convicts, for whom penal servitude in Van Diemen's Land was the least attractive, of very dim, prospects.

These are commonly known facts about Tasmania — along with an awareness that it is small. The State's population is approximately 450,000.

Because of its size, and easy access to both rural and city communities, Tasmania has been used many times as a laboratory and many innovations and initiatives have been developed in the State.

The more contentious schemes are known, of course — hydroelectric extensions, and the Casino — but, there have been many 'pilot projects' developed in Tasmania that have received less public discussion though they are no less noteworthy. For instance, in Governor Arthur's day, the first open-plan hospital for the mentally ill was opened; and despite, or perhaps because of, the State's penal history, new developments have been made in welfare treatment of prisoners in recent years.

Also in recent years, a large number of innovative arts projects have been piloted in Tasmania.

A high proportion of these activities have been in the area of youth arts. The recently formed Tasmanian Dance Company — a Dance-in-Education team — based in Launceston, is the first of its kind in Australia; the Salamanca Theatre Company is one of the oldest theatre-in-education companies in Australia; and, in its day, the Tasmanian Puppet Theatre initiated innovative and exciting developments in Australian puppetry, and its successor, Terrapin Puppet Company is supported and fostered by the State Government.

A unique position also exists in

Tasmania in that the only professional performing companies in the State are youth performing companies, and approximately one third of the State's arts funding is allocated to youth arts activities.

Lowdown recently visited Tasmania and spoke to practitioners and administrators in the field, and to Mr. Max Bingham, Q.C., M.H.A., Minister responsible for the Arts.

Mr. Bingham has only been in

office since May — the election of a Liberal Government in Tasmania having brought The Party into office in the State for the first time in 10 years — and he confirmed that the new Government has not yet formulated a policy in the Arts. He has not formed definite opinions about how the arts in Tasmania are likely to, or should, develop, but his interview with Lowdown indicates that he is likely to be committed to the Arts in the State. Extracts from this interview are published in the following pages . . .

"Communication . . . rarely occurs through formal channels"



Jon Fogarty — Director T.A.A.B. (right) at a Salamanca Arts Festival fundraiser.

Tasmania . . . Cont.

In recent years, youth performing arts activities have been in an unusually favoured position in Tasmania.

Policy of the Tasmanian Arts Advisory Board — the State arts funding authority — has been that theatre for young people creates audiences for adult theatre. This is an assumption to which Mr. Bingham is unwilling to commit himself at this stage. He is primarily concerned that arts activities for young people should be of high standards and quality.

This demand for 'excellence' is however, unlikely to conflict with policies that have been implemented in the past. 'Excellence' in arts activities has always been a funding guideline, as has employment creation.

Box office potential in Tasmania is low. There are only five major theatres in the State, and only three regions to which any performance can tour. It has been seen as important to foster the creation of a discerning audience. Small companies who are versatile enough to tour to school and community venues are the only ones whose existence can be viable on a full-time basis. Competition for audiences is seen to be non-productive unless it is 'high quality competition', and unless audiences have been educated by exposure to 'excellent' work.

The possibility of market saturation in such a small state is very real. The policy of the Board has been to foster the development of a certain number of appropriate companies. Practicality has demanded that unless a company can be funded adequately, it is not funded at all.

Like his recent predecessors, Mr. Bingham is also Minister for Education in the State. Possibly, this facilitated liaison between the departments, and funding for

youth arts activities is allocated from both the Education Department, and the T.A.A.B. As the Salamanca Theatre Company is funded by the Education Department, the T.A.A.B. is responsible for the Tasmanian Dance Company. Both also receive subsidy from the Theatre Board. The thrust is to provide the funds, rather than to categorise from whom it is most appropriate to make allocations.

Unlike any other State, Tasmania has a tight communication network in the arts. Communication and liaison is, of course, facilitated by the fact that the State is small — physically, communication is easier. This rarely occurs through formal channels, because people involved in the arts, in education, and in the community, overlap. The gossip of the grapevine is very fast. The unusual situation exists that if there's any accusation that can be made, it's that the staff of the T.A.A.B. may be too close to companies!

THE TASMANIAN ARTS ADVISORY BOARD

The Minister responsible for the Arts in Tasmania makes all grants, but under the Tasmanian Arts Advisory Board Act (1975), he can only make grants after receiving recommendations from the Board. This doesn't mean that recommendations are always fully implemented, but it does mean that funding can only be allocated if recommendations are made.

The Board, therefore, and particularly, its spokesman, the Chairman are mainly accountable for funding policies and distribution. Lowdown also spoke to Peter Byers, the current Board Chairman, and to Jon Fogarty — the Director of the T.A.A.B. However, the new Government in Tasmania, sensitive to its recent appointment, has ruled that neither Board members or staff may

release statements to the media. Both therefore, supplied background information to Lowdown, but were able to make little comment on Tasmania's funding position or attitude to youth arts development.

Membership of the Board is by Ministerial appointment — four positions being for Panel Chairman, three generalists in the arts, and the over all Chairman. Panels attached to the Board represent Visual Arts and Crafts; Music; Theatre; and Literature and Community Arts. At least, that's how it works at the moment. In 1980, a report submitted to the then Minister for the Arts, Mr. Holgate, recommended that this structure be implemented but so far it has not been ratified. Among its proposals was also the suggestion that eligibility for Board membership should be by public nomination. Mr. Bingham said that as he's not had time to consider the report's proposals yet, he's satisfied to maintain the current structure, and has recently reappointed Board members for a further 12 months.

Byers background is in financial management and administration, and he has been influential in determining arts policies under the Labour Government. He did explain, that in the past, Tasmania had a large number of professional companies that were "put on slow starvation" — they didn't receive enough funds, so their artistic performance dropped off and they went broke. He indicated that the 'pilot project' attitude to arts funding in the State is an attempt to redress this problem. "I think it's a matter of trying to do new things in the arts," he said, "and finding out where you can get the matching money. I mean if you can get \$2 for every \$1, then you're likely to try and do something — that's what the innovations program is about."

Continued on Page 9

STATE GOVERNMENT FUNDING (through T.A.A.B.) to YOUTH PERFORMING ARTS ORGANISATIONS (1982)

Apprentice Theatre — \$2,000
Terrapin Puppet Theatre — \$21,000
Music Contact 004 — \$2,000
Tasmanian Dance Company — \$100,000
Tasmanian Youth Orchestra Council — \$7,000
Gambit Theatre — \$5,734
Polygon Incorporated — approx. \$9,000
Burnie Musical Society — \$1,000
Tasmanian Arts Council — \$33,000
Australian Rosny Children's Choir — \$500
Eisteddfods and Youth Festivals — approx. \$5,000
Salamanca Theatre Company — approx. \$90,000 (through Education Dept).



INTERVIEW WITH MAX BINGHAM Q.C., M.H.A.

Tasmania's Deputy Premier; Attorney General; Minister for Education; Minister for Industrial Relations; Minister for Police and Emergency Services; Responsible for Libraries and Road Safety and Minister for Recreation and the Arts.

Bingham:

I'm extremely pleased to be Minister responsible for the Arts. It's one of the portfolios I wanted, because I'm particularly interested in the area.

Lowdown:

I understand that your Government hasn't yet formulated a policy in relation to the Arts, but I wonder if you can tell me how you're likely to consider the area of youth performing arts.

Bingham:

Well, I must say that I think the major thrust of our policies up to date have been almost deliberately geared towards employment creation towards the general concept of fostering the arts. Now, that's pretty woolly, isn't it, and I'm conscious of that — I'm really going to find it easier to answer your question in six months time, I should think, than now. We've got, for instance, the Dance Company — which is about as youthful as you'll get . . . Obviously, it's going to need a good deal of support, and it deserves a good deal of support. You see, the thing that really troubles me about your question is that I sense an implication that if we get young people exposed to art forms of one kind or another, we are automatically producing an adult theatre audience for performing groups. I don't think that's quite so and I need a bit more time to think about the relationship between the youth side and the open market, as it were. I'd like to think there was a fairly direct relationship, but I think that may be an oversimplification. Somebody said that it's not that 'practice makes perfect', but that 'perfect practice makes perfect'. If the arts is about excellence, then I think that it's very important that the emphasis should be in the right place — on the development of excellence. In other words, I don't think that youth performances, just because they are youth performances, necessarily serve any particular purpose other than entertainment for those concerned. I'm a little uneasy about this, because I'm not quite sure.

Lowdown:

How do you judge excellence, what are the criteria?

Bingham:

In youth performing arts — well in performing arts, I suppose. I would have thought there were enough critics around to suggest that there's a body of standard criteria around that are applicable to artistic performances of any kind. I wonder if I can give you an analogy. About ten years ago, I opened an exhibition of pottery — it was about the time when the craft side of our business was just beginning to emerge from a sort of cocoon, and I made the point that it was fine to have Tasmanian crafts on display — that these were much better than Hong Kong-made souvenirs — but only if they were *better than* Hong Kong-made souvenirs. In other words, you don't get any special marks I think because either you're Tasmanian, or because you're young. If you're talking about excellence, it's got to be on as nearly an objective basis as you can get. So, I would be looking for — I suppose the role of youth arts may be to create a certain acquaintance with "works of art" (if I can use that term in this context), but I think young people need to be exposed to really good performances in order to measure their own. I don't think it's enough to be young and enthusiastic — you've got to be disciplined and trained and skilled. Those are the sorts of things that I'd be looking for.

Lowdown:

So, presumably, these criteria will be apparent in your funding policies . . .

Bingham:

I hope so, I hope we put our money in the right place.

Lowdown:

Do you anticipate policies of deliberately selecting certain groups and funding them to survive . . .

Bingham:

Yeap. I see a sort of 'controlled nepotism', if you like. For that reason, I accept very much the premise that's been taken in the past by my predecessor and his advisors — that I think if you go about fostering a group that's got potential, you can probably achieve excellence in the end. If you just spray money around, willy-nilly, everybody has a good time, but it isn't really fulfilling what I see as the major objective.

Lowdown:

As you're also Minister for Education, do you see yourself formulating policies closely between arts and education?

Bingham:

Not really, I see that sort of 'arts-in-schools' kind of thing as a fairly limited field, frankly. I'd see it as — sure, it's interesting and valuable — but it isn't necessarily related directly, at least I don't think it is, to the pursuit of excellence.

Lowdown:

What about in Dance-in-Education and Theatre-in-Education?

Bingham:

Yeah, I would hope there will be some development. Some natural development and some natural progression. I don't see it as being necessarily automatic — you see, again I'm back on this problem about not being quite

sure — my problem is about 'perfect practice making perfect'. It's one thing to generate enthusiasm in kids — where they might as well be participating in a dance performance as well as kicking a football about but it doesn't necessarily follow that they're going to be really good at either of them unless you're selective and careful about how you handle the situation. And the Dance-in-Education and Theatre-in-Education kind of thing is, I think, no more than introductory.

Lowdown:

Have you had contact with companies who perform for youth in Tasmania?

Bingham:

Not as much as I ought to have had. I've had something to do with the Dance Company over the last couple of years and something to do also with the Salamanca Theatre Company, but as a spectator rather than in any other sense.

Lowdown:

In developing policies, do you intend to liaise with companies?

Bingham:

Oh yes. All that's holding me back at the moment is that I haven't had enough time to talk to enough people yet. This is obviously the way to go about it. I don't necessarily agree with what everybody says to me, but I do need to have the opportunity — to give people the opportunity — of feeding stuff into the computer.

Lowdown:

From what you've experienced so far in the arts in the youth area, do you think there's any area that's neglected in Tasmania?

Bingham:

I'm not in a position to make a judgement about that. We do make substantial investments in the field one way and another. Whether they're appropriate or not, I think I can't answer until I've got the position straighter.

Lowdown:

I've heard Tasmania described as "the pilot project State". Is your Government likely to be interested in pursuing new initiatives or simply to maintain funding to ongoing projects?

Bingham:

I think one of the great things we've got going for us is that we're small. We're a ready-made laboratory for all sorts of things — *all* sorts of things. We've had some interesting new developments in penology for instance. We've had interesting developments in education and we're going to have some more; and there's no reason why the arts should be different. We are just ready-made for experimentation and the creation of pilot studies and programs. That's the sort of thing we'll be trying to do, alongside the established programs of fostering excellence in various art forms.

Lowdown:

Are there disadvantages in being a small, isolated state?

Bingham:

I think there are. I think the pursuit of excellence is so much more difficult when you don't have the opportunity to demonstrate excellence continuously. We get the odd company from the mainland. We've got an orchestra that's not bad by any standards, but in terms of theatre and ballet — opportunity to expose the Tasmanian people to excellence in all spheres I think it's very limited. So, that does make it that much more difficult and that's why I think we've got to rely on an influx of people — both individuals and performing companies to try and foster that precondition that just because you're Tasmanian doesn't necessarily mean you're world class. I think it does work both ways, but it's a fact, that if you've got a large number and a bigger community, then it's likely to produce tougher competition and the cream produced is likely to be of a higher quality. But, we can do it in a different way, as long as our objectives are right and as long as we're not just content to stay amateurs.

Lowdown:

How does Tasmania's small population, and therefore, presumably low box office potential affect funding policies?

Bingham:

Oh, I think it's a fact of life, that companies in Tasmania need high subsidy.

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The total State Arts Budget is approximately ½ million dollars.

The four Panels of the T.A.A.B. make recommendations to the Board after looking at all grant submissions with about 80% of the Board's funding being available to them. The remaining 20% is retained by the Board and allocated by them. There is no formula for the distribution of this 20%, but there is an attempt to maintain a balance of funding across art forms. Again, the size of the State means that Board members and staff of the T.A.A.B. are aware of most of the arts activity in the State.

"It's so small, that people get hurt if you're not there," explained Bernice Watson, the State's Community Arts Officer, and consultant to the Board.

The role of the Board's staff is to help prospective clients prepare applications for T.A.A.B. funding. In many ways, they act as "devil's advocates" for arts organisations — processing and advising on applications before they are submitted to the Board. Staff members attend arts functions throughout the State — performances, previews, book launchings, exhibition openings — as part of their operation.

The fact that the Board itself is, or has been, so influential in arts policy decisions was explained by Byers. "If you want a direct quote," he said, "in a small state, where you've got a limited amount of resources in the secretariat, you work out a combination of responsibilities within the framework where you can put everybody to their best use. If resources changed, then it wouldn't be at all unusual to find a change in responsibilities. If you had a different Chairman, and a different Director, then they might have different roles."

THE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT

"The arts exist, because enjoyment of them is an essential part of the human condition. Involvement in them is highly emotional, and it is this emotional element which so heightens their importance for growth."

This statement, from "A Review for the Education Department by the Committee on Primary Education" (Hobart, March, 1980) is one with which few educators would disagree. However, the Education Department in Tasmania, through its Speech and Drama Department, actively seeks to promote this involvement.

The Director-General of Education, Mr. Bernard Mitchell, is both interested in, and knowledgeable about the arts. Within the Department, there is a Services Division, which includes a supervisor of different areas of the curriculum.

Beth Parsons is Speech and Drama supervisor — "I have a State responsibility," she explained. "I think size has something to do with the fact that, communications, I would expect, are much easier than they are perhaps in N.S.W. where you've got so many different regions. Here, we have three main regions, and I'm in the other regions almost as much as I'm here in the office. As I'm moving most of the time, I have a communication with all the regional groups, and that opens up all sorts of knowledge and opportunities for talking with people, passing on information, and combining things."

Liaison with companies working in schools appears to be good. Previews of programs are held, and teachers, Education Department staff, and company members meet and discuss work that is being taken to schools. There is no formal policy of 'review' but, Beth Parsons said, "there is fairly easy access

both in and out. If we had reservations, I guess we'd talk them over with people, but it doesn't happen very often with our own State companies. We offer suggestions, but not in a formalistic way . . . If we have an inservice course on dance, movement or drama, and I think it's appropriate time for a school to be considering having a performing group in, I ask if they've thought about it and so try to encourage schools to have one — in fact, it's one of the inputs that we recommend in terms of the total program in drama and arts, just as we would advise them to take opportunities to go out and see things that are going on in the community in the way of festivals or exhibitions."

Within the Education system, arts activities are supported, not just by the central administration — from the Director-General — but also by regional superintendents, organisations and resources. There is an underlying belief in the philosophy of the arts and the role they play in personal development.

A.S.E.A. — the Australian Society for Education through the Arts — is particularly active in Tasmania. People who are involved in the organisation tend to be involved in several areas. "One might belong to four different associations, have a special art form, be involved in education . . ." claimed Beth Parsons. So, the edges become very blurred, and things work at a number of different levels.

"I'm not saying we haven't room to go," concluded Beth, "but I feel the arts are in a very healthy situation."

ARTISTS-IN-SCHOOLS

Tasmania has eight artists-in-schools this year. Three are supported by the Australia Council, and five are supported by the State Education Department.

The A.I.S. scheme is an area of arts activity where Tasmania finds its

small population may be a disadvantage. In some art forms, it is difficult to find artists within the State, and there are areas where artists need to be invited from other States, both as an input, and as a refreshment for the whole arts scene in schools.

"News" in the July edition of *Lowdown* mentioned that two dancers have been employed as artists in Tasmanian schools this year. This is a new area for the program, and it's part of the growing interest in dance since the formation of the Tasmanian Dance Company.

COMPANIES

Though the Education Department itself is supportive of arts activities, according to Barbara Manning, Executive Director of the Salamanca Theatre Company, this doesn't necessarily mean that all parents see the arts as an important part of their children's education.

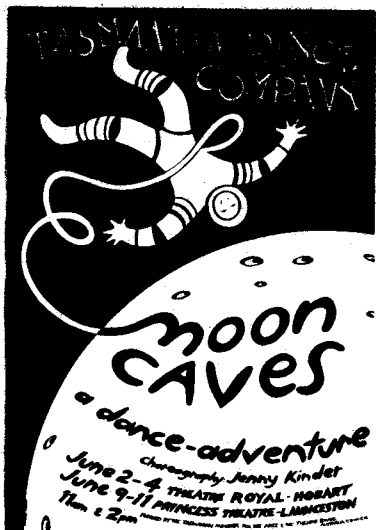
"With times getting economically harder," she said, "parents are concerned with their children getting jobs, and they don't see the arts having anything to do with the economy and employment. In a way, we have to go back to the way it was 15 or 20 years ago, and make people understand that a knowledge and experience of the arts is important in getting a job. I see the arts being *more* important now, both for comfort and pleasure, and to frame and understand experience — to come to terms with our existence."

Salamanca Theatre Company is funded to play free performances in schools, and the Dance Company runs five-day residencies in each school, charging only for Friday afternoon performances. This means that both these companies can afford to tour State-wide, even to small rural communities, and parents are not required to dig into their pockets for 'excursion' money.

It is more difficult for companies who receive less substantial funding to survive. Terrapin Puppet Company charges schools, but cannot afford to maintain a company for a full year; and Polygon is only able to be a semi-professional organisation.

As the only fully professional drama company in the State, **Salamanca Theatre Company** is unique, in that it is strictly a theatre-





in-education company, and presents only rare seasons of adult performances. The Salamanca team believes that theatre-in-education works towards 'understanding man in society', rather than using theatre to teach Maths/History/English/etc. Although funded by the Education Department, the company has retained its autonomy and this enables their work to present a different point of view to kids in schools, at the same time, they feel it's important that companies have a good relationship with the Department so that their work can be valuable and influential within the system.

The **Tasmanian Dance Company** was established in May 1981, under the artistic direction of Jenny Kinder. Four of the seven company members are teachers as well as dancers and this is seen to enhance the company's effectiveness during in-school residencies. Dance-in-education is the primary concern of the company, and they believe that "every child learns how to play football, from the basic skills to the complex decisions associated with the rules and structures of the game; similar exposure to Dance, to the basic movement skills, improvisation skills and the decision making processes involved in composition, can lead to understanding and appreciation of Dance as an art form, and sustained interest and involvement as a practitioner or as an audience member". This company is the first of its kind in Australia, and is regarded as a "highlight" in the Tasmanian arts scene.

The Tasmanian Dance Company

arose out of the ashes of the Tasmanian Ballet Company — an organisation that could not be maintained in a State with five theatre venues and school halls with concrete floors. Similarly, **Terrapin Puppet Company** was created after the closure of the Tasmanian Puppet Theatre. Terrapin has been set up to tour puppet productions to primary schools, and to run workshops in puppetry for school-age children. Jenny Davidson, its artistic director is an experienced designer for puppet theatre. She said that though there are rarely problems with getting bookings in schools, as school performances are the Company's main source of income, they are unable to spend as much time on workshops and training as she would like.

Polygon — a drama company — is funded to present one program each year for High School students and tour all regions of the State. Often, its productions are of set syllabus texts.

Apprentice Theatre in Hobart, and **Gambit**, based near Launceston are both strongly supported Youth Theatre companies.

Music companies in Tasmania also tour to schools. The **Petra String Quartet**, in residence at the University of Tasmania, and the **Tasmanian Symphony Orchestra** both go to schools; and, because the music community in Hobart is small, members of the **Tasmanian Youth Orchestra** are often given the opportunity to play with the T.S.O.

Music has been an arts area where new initiatives have been explored. **Music Contact 004** is based in the North-West region and runs instrumental seminars and concerts in the region by and for music students; and recently, the **Bumie Musical Society** has been formed. This is a community/youth theatre that has evolved from the local C.Y.S.S. organisation and Fusion, a Christian group. The **Australian Rosny Children's Choir** is also based in Tasmania. Their aim is to train children in singing, and their success in the past made them Australia's first cultural package to China.

Until this year, the Tasmanian Arts Council toured 98% of its programs to schools, with audience ratios being approxi-mately 30,000 children and 2,000 adults.

Tasmania may be 'ready-made' to undertake innovative arts projects, but it does have disadvantages.

Although the whole State has the population and communication network of a large country town, it is still, a "State". And, it is poor, almost bankrupt.

Large scale arts activities cannot be undertaken by the State, and imports from the mainland cost twice as much as they might in other States, largely because of freight — everything and everybody has to cross Bass Strait.

There is no major performing arts centre on the Island, and in order to 'get bums on seats', companies have to tour for 95% of their performance time whereas in larger mainland cities, touring is generally an extension of a company's activities.

Because the State is small, it has often been accused of parochialism in its arts activities. Policies have, however, been designed to meet the particular needs of the State, and to draw on the particular abilities of local artists. The influence of initiatives undertaken in Tasmania, particularly in youth performing arts, has, in many ways, been Australia-wide.

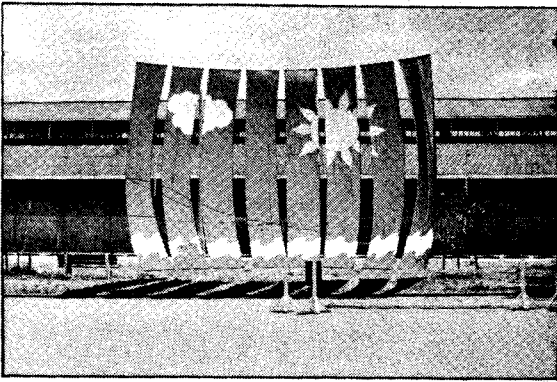
It would be premature to try to assess how the new Government's policies may affect youth arts activities in Tasmania. At a meeting in Hobart early this year, members of the arts community complained that too much of the State arts budget was being allocated to youth activities! This is a unique situation in Australia, but we'll have to wait and to see if it continues.

Helen Rickards



Salamanca theatre company phone 002-235259

SALAMANCA ARTS FESTIVAL



In November this year Hobart will experience the second Salamanca Arts Festival and from all accounts its going to be an apt follow up to last year's Festival.

Centred around historic Salamanca Place and the Salamanca Centre which houses the Community Arts Project, artists and crafts workshops, galleries, performing arts groups and studios, the Festival aims to promote the work of Tasmanian artists and provide opportunities for all sectors of the community to participate in a wide range of arts activities.

The original idea for an Arts Festival was conceived by several people representing different art forms, who were concerned at the lack of opportunity for artists and community to come together in a celebration. And so a celebration was planned for the 28th November-6th December with a minimal budget, maximum enthusiasm and optimism.

The 1981 Salamanca Arts Festival involved 51 arts organisations and groups, 36 individual artists, 30 schools and an estimated 30 volunteers who provided cleaning, catering, typing, carting, front-of-house and information services during the eight days.

Certainly not a threat to Adelaide, but with combined grants of \$5,400.00 from State and Commonwealth Funding Authorities, it was not expected to be.

For a first, the organisers were satisfied that their efforts and persistence were worthwhile.

There were several reasons for choosing the end of November as Festival time, one being the weather but another strong influence was the desire to involve as many students as possible and the best way to do this was through the schools. A major component of the Festival was a multi-arts program designed for students and adults. This section was thematic, "**On the Waterfront**" and involved the design and construction of a large-eight sided, appliqued tent by eight high school groups, an ariel playground, the creation of a large inflatable octopus and sail sculpture by Tineke Adolphus, one of our guest Festival artists from Adelaide, and banner and flagmaking.

Over the five school days of the Festival, more than 600 students participated in and around these environmental pieces, in poetry readings, song writing, musical instrument making as well as music making, dance, mime, puppetry and mural painting. Several hundred more young people provided lunch time concerts and dance performances.

The Festival this year will be held from the 20th-28th November and already the organisers have been overwhelmed by the response from schools. A similar multi-arts program is planned this year, the theme is "**Flights of Fantasy**".

Work has commenced on some of the environmental pieces which again will be used in performance and workshop spaces. The main piece is a 400 sq metre fabric canopy which will cover a large courtyard area at the rear of the Salamanca Centre. School and community groups are designing and sewing individual panels which will be suspended over the courtyard, creating a "stained glass window" effect. The preliminary designs indicate that "**Flights of Fantasy**" has been an excellent choice for this year's theme.

The courtyard and nearby Kelly's Garden areas will also be the focus for some of the sound environments being constructed for the Festival. Under the direction of Melbourne musician Les Gilbert, Festival participants will be able to experience some new concepts in sound. Plans include a percussive sound sculpture, environmental sounds from hidden speakers on a time delay mechanism will be placed in stairways and gardens and radio network involving musicians and mobile radio station. Les will also work with local musicians and music students on some performance pieces.

One other visiting artist, Melbourne based mime magician Sam Angelico, will be performing for students and adults throughout the week. Sam has only recently returned to his mime magician role after working in Europe and America with the Busby Berkleys.

The rest of the program which is already extensive, and covers performances, workshops, exhibitions and films, will be provided by Tasmanian artists.

Programs are expected to be finalised by the end of September and printed by the end of October. Anyone interested in receiving further details may contact: The Co-ordinator, Salamanca Arts Festival, 77 Salamanca Place, Hobart 7000. Ph. (002) 34 8749. If you have been thinking of visiting the Holiday Isle sometime, November 20-28th this year would be a good time to do it.

Bernice Gerrand



Photos by Stever Carter, Salamanca Arts Festival 1981.