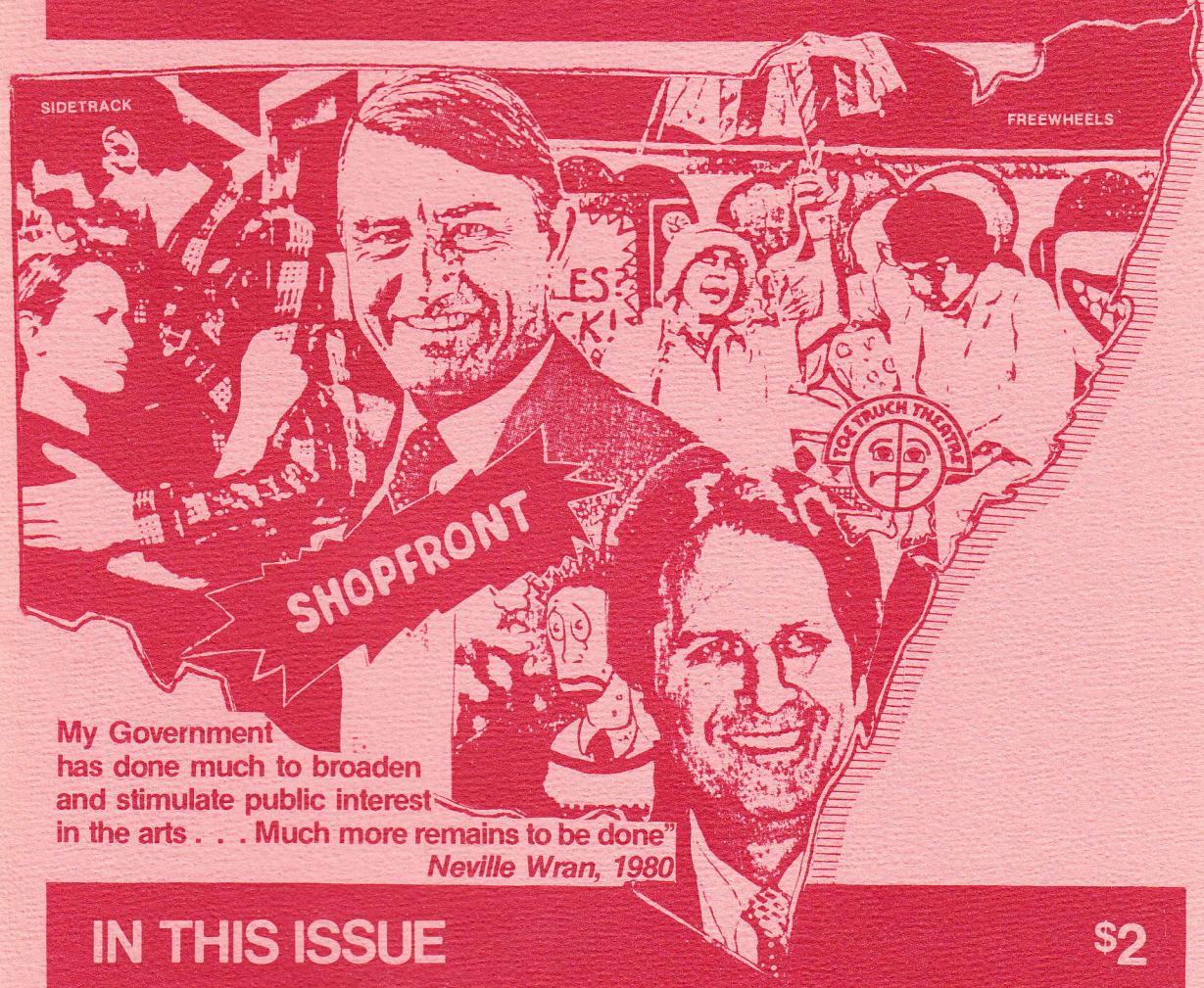


JULY 1982

Vol. 4 No. 3

LOWDOWN

YOUTH PERFORMING ARTS IN AUSTRALIA



My Government
has done much to broaden
and stimulate public interest
in the arts . . . Much more remains to be done"

Neville Wran, 1980

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ARTS POLICIES IN N.S.W.

THERE ARE MANY CINDERELLAS — and Youth Performing Arts is One of Them

The New South Wales Government has been criticised from within the state, and by outside observers, for its arts funding policies (or lack of them). Youth performing arts has always been a poorly funded area, and seems to suffer particularly in N.S.W.

The Minister responsible for the arts is Premier Neville Wran, who recently presented a paper entitled "Initiatives and Policy Objectives for the Arts". This paper mentioned youth performing arts only briefly, but noted a policy "to bring musical and theatrical experience to as many young people as possible, particularly young people in schools and elsewhere".

Mr. Wran was unable to see Lowdown to discuss how this policy is implemented and how he and his Ministry view the area of youth performing arts. However — we put some questions to the Director of the Division of Cultural Activities, Mr. Evan Williams, in the hope that he might be able to clarify the situation . . .

Lowdown: *Mr. Williams, can you tell me what the State Government's policy is in the area of youth performing arts?*

Evan Williams: It's an area where we're now developing policy. There hasn't been a very clear or specific policy in the past. I'd say this is because our priorities, the Government's priorities, have been directed towards redressing deficiencies and filling gaps in many other areas of arts policy and administration. Since the present Government came to office, there have been marked increases in funding in most areas of the arts. Youth performing arts and theatre-in-education are one of the areas we have yet to tackle in a concentrated fashion.

Lowdown: *Is there any commitment to doing this?*

Evan Williams: There is. The Premier has already asked the Advisory Council to review its policy in this area and to consider applications for grants for youth performing arts in the context of its new policy in 1982/83. I'm not in a position to give any specific undertakings about particular grants. I can assure you that the whole area is under review. Grants have in fact already increased for certain companies — Shopfront, and more particularly, Toe Truck, are now getting considerably more than they once did. I'm not suggesting they're getting enough — that has to be decided.

Lowdown: *How will this policy be formulated?*

Evan Williams: The Cultural Grants Advisory Council — which makes recommendations on all grants, to the Government — is considering these policy questions, and will be looking at them over the next few weeks. I hope that when it comes to review the allocations of our 1982/83 budget, it will have a much clearer appreciation of the needs and priorities of this area.

Lowdown: *Is there someone on this Council who represents youth performing arts?*

Evan Williams: Not youth performing arts particularly, but there are many areas of the arts that are not represented particularly. There are people with broad experience and knowledge of theatre and performing arts. One of our members is Elizabeth Butcher, the Chairman of the Theatre Board; another is Aarne Neeme the Director of the Hunter Valley Theatre Company; and the Chairman is Ken Tribe — former Chairman of the Music Board and Chairman now of Musica Viva. Now all these people would have a clear understanding of overall arts priorities, but we can always call on expert outside advice when we need to, and the Council frequently does co-opt members who speak to it and advise it on particular issues.

Lowdown: *Is there anyone in the Cultural Activities Division — that is, on the Ministerial staff who has a specific brief to attend to the area of youth performing arts?*

Evan Williams: We have a performing arts project officer — Mr. Goodwin — and that is certainly one of his areas of responsibility.

Lowdown: *So there's no position similar to say that of Youth Project Officer in the Australia Council.*

Evan Williams: Well, not at this stage. As I say, we're not short of experience or information. We don't for example have a specific project officer concerned with pottery or glassware, but these are the Crafts would have to consider. I'm not saying we wouldn't benefit from another officer on our establishment, but we have to be realistic about staff ceilings.

Cont.

INTERVIEW

**Mr. Evan Williams —
Director, Division of
Cultural Activities (N.S.W.)**

Lowdown: In Mr. Wran's paper, "Initiatives and Policy Objectives for the Arts" \$4.7m is cited as the amount the N.S.W. Labor Government gave to support arts organisations in the community. What proportion of this was allocated to youth arts activities?

Evan Williams: I can give you a breakdown of the grants. (see boxed — Ed.) but, as I say, the whole area is under review. Now any information you might glean from previous years is not necessarily relevant to what will happen in the future.

Lowdown: Something that is apparent from the 1982 figures is that there is a wide spread of small grants to several youth and community theatre organisations. Can you explain how you see this kind of funding assisting the development of these companies?

Evan Williams: As you say, there are a lot of permutations and we try to apportion our funds as fairly as we can on the basis of needs as they are perceived. It's obvious that many companies would not receive as much as they would like. This is something that depends on the availability of budget resources.

Lowdown: I have heard this widespread apportioning of relatively low funds described as 'tokenism' . . .

Evan Williams: I would be reluctant to describe any modest grant as a 'token'. We normally would not make a grant at all unless we felt it would be put to good use. Again, I say that the area is under review. I think that there would probably be great merit in consolidating our assistance in certain particular directions rather than trying to spread the funds too thinly, but again, I insist that the Advisory Council must make recommendations on these questions. It's not entirely for me to decide, although I have a voice in the matter.

Lowdown: Is the amount of money involved in any particular area a reflection of the Division of Cultural Activities commitment to that area?

Evan Williams: It's not necessarily a reflection of all that the Division would like to do or see done. It is a reflection of the funding constraints that we have to accept like every other government department or instrumentality. The question is — how do you divide up the cake? This is something for the Advisory Council to determine.

Lowdown: Are you, yourself, interested in youth performing arts?

Evan Williams: Yes, I am interested in all forms of performing arts — I have a professional responsibility for them.

Lowdown: And, outside your professional responsibility. . . .

Evan Williams: Well, I think it's . . . not really relevant where my own personal interests lie. I think I have a broad appreciation and understanding amongst all the areas of the arts. Naturally I have certain preferences about what I might want to watch or listen to in my spare time. I don't have young children, but I can assure you I take deep interest in the youth performing arts area.

Lowdown: Do you ever go and see performances of youth performing companies?

POLICY GUIDELINES — A DIVISION OF CULTURE ACTIVITIES — 1983

Theatre in education — The Advisory Council will consider applications from theatre organisations for assistance towards performances in schools.

Applicants will be required to show that school authorities can attest to the educational value of the proposed activities.

In addition, organisations seeking such assistance will be expected to demonstrate—

- A sound financial and administrative base and professional artistic standards;
- A consistent level and continuity of activity and a reasonable number of performances each year;
- Financial support from other sources commensurate with the support sought from the Advisory Council.

In certain cases some intending applicants may need to consolidate or restructure their activities, in co-operation with similar organisations, in order to comply with these guidelines.

ARTS ACTIVITIES IN N.S.W. (Cont.)

Evan Williams: Well, there have been some discussions with them, but we don't look to them to give major support in these areas. I wish they would, but how they spend their money is their business. You'd have to ask them.

Lowdown: How do you feel about the suggestion that theatre-in-education companies should be funded by the Education Department.

Evan Williams: Naturally, I'd be very happy to see any funds coming from the Education Department to the arts, but, as I say, that is a decision for them to make.

Lowdown: The "Initiatives and Policy. . ." paper states that 'priority (in funding) is given to organisations which, in the opinion of the Council, set the highest standards and can offer the best prospects of long-term benefit to the community'. How do you assess 'long-term benefit to the community'?

Evan Williams: The Advisory Council assesses that as best it can. The words have been framed rather broadly. Obviously, the criteria would vary from case to case, and from art-form to art-form. I wouldn't venture to make distinctions about the relative importance of youth performing arts, or craft centres, or puppetry in the Western suburbs, but generally, the Council is looking for stable, well-administered, responsible, community-based organisations which command both popular and local Government support and offer the best prospects of long-term professional development for artists.

Lowdown: N.S.W. is considered to be the state with the lowest per capita arts funding ratio in Australia, although increases have occurred in the last few years. Do you have any explanation for why this is so.

Evan Williams: I wouldn't dispute the figures. I'd prefer not to comment on what are essentially Government decisions, but I would simply make the point that if you look across the board at all areas of Government funding — that is, health, transport, social welfare, roads, education — you will probably find that on a per capita basis, N.S.W. is behind many of the smaller, less populous States. The fact is, that in per capita terms, N.S.W. receives the lowest share of Commonwealth Tax Reimbursements. This seems to be built into the Federal system and it's a situation that the Commonwealth Grants Commission has been trying to redress. So, in that respect, I do not think that the arts are exceptional. It should also be remembered that in a large city with a strong population base to support the performing arts, the amount of subsidy required should be lower.

Lowdown: Can this argument be applied to youth-orientated activities given the desirability of low audience numbers for quality of experience in youth performing arts — particularly theatre-in-education; and the low box office potential because youth performing arts are involved with a non-income earning group?

Evan Williams: Unfortunately, there are lots of Cinderellas, and maybe youth performing arts is one of them. For a long time, we thought Regional galleries were one of them — they needed to be upgraded and a lot has been done in this area. As I said, Youth performing arts policy is under review.

Helen Rickards for Lowdown
Evan Williams — Director,
Division of Cultural Activities
June, 1982

FUNDING ALLOCATIONS — AUSTRALIAN COUNCIL (THEATRE BOARD) N.S.W. 1980-1981

Community/Regional

Bread and Circus	5,000
Hunter Valley Theatre Co.	65,000
Murray Rr. Performing Group	25,000
New England Theatre Co.	15,000
Riverina Trucking Co.	38,000
Sidetrack Theatre	20,000
Southern Regional Theatre	3,500
Theatre South	15,000

Youth Drama Groups

Bathurst Players Youth Theatre	1,900
Freewheels T.I.E. Newcastle	42,175
North Coast Nomads Theatre Co.	5,000
PACT Co-operative	14,500
Shopfront Theatre for Young People	4,000
Toe Truck Theatre	77,500
N.S.W. Theatre of the Deaf	38,000
Marionette Theatre of Australia	100,000

From the N.S.W. Education Department ...

The recent National T.I.E. Director's Conference in Adelaide noted the "lack of assistance given to theatre-in-education in N.S.W. by the N.S.W. Department of Education and urged the Minister to take immediate action to provide Theatre-in-Education companies with adequate assistance".

The Education Department's Ministerial Press Secretary informed Lowdown that in the N.S.W. Education Department, there is no policy in the area of theatre-in-education and youth performing arts. No Division of the Department is concerned with arts activities in schools — these are administered under the general area of 'Studies'.

The Department's Policy support Unit spokesman, Mr. Neil Morrison told Lowdown that the Department offers "no direct support for the arts — this comes from the Division of Cultural Activities. However, at the Minister's request, a committee has been set up to consider the Department's role". This committee is a Departmental structure whose aim is to work on a policy statement. According to Mr. Morrison, the statement is expected to "reflect the practical realities of arts activities in schools" and after initial guidelines have been formulated, these will be made available to interested community groups — particularly, parents. (When asked, Mr. Morrison did say that he thought it would be important to inform performing groups as well).

"The Department has a concern that opportunities to benefit from the arts and shows can be shared by schools in remote and country areas, as well as by schools in the city. They are also concerned that visiting groups provide a balanced programme at evenly spaced intervals throughout the year".

In N.S.W., companies who wish to perform in schools need to seek approval from regional Departmental accreditation committees. These committees are co-ordinated by an officer from In-Service Education, Mr. Ian Evans, and are made up of parent representatives Principals and teachers. According to Mr. Meoney, from the Community Relations and Information Unit, "it's in a group's own interest to gain Departmental inclusion, because if a programme is curriculum approved, then its benefit can be justified". These committees can judge whether a

programme should be staged "at lunchtime, if it's not suitable to fit into the school curriculum, or whether it might be of worthwhile quality to vary the curriculum". Mr. Meoney also said that groups can approach school Principals directly, but that it's "in the Department's interest not to be caught between parents who disapprove of groups, and the groups themselves". Mr. Morrison explained that there are no representatives from the performing arts on these committees because they are also a Departmental structure.

**the Department offers
'no direct support for
the arts . . .'**

Liaison with companies performing in schools is a low profile area for the Education Department. Mr. Morrison's attitude to E.P.A.C. (Education Performing Arts Companies organisation) was noncommittal — "they have written to this department, and have spoken to the Minister" he said. Mr. Meoney's attitude is that liaison with Theatre-in-Education companies would mean that "they'd be better able to service schools, and the Department would be able to learn how to better communicate social and cultural ideas".

It was difficult to find information on general youth performing arts activities through the N.S.W. Education Department but members of the Department were prepared to talk about theatre-in-education.

Lowdown asked Mr. Morrison how important he feels theatre-in-education is. "I think it is one of several important areas", he said. "It raises several difficulties, and possibly it suffers more because it isn't so easily categorised as a few of the arts activities. Theatre-in-education has a philosophical problem about whether it's education or entertainment — unfortunately, this has not been established and recognised. They've a danger of being didactic, and this affects their arts value and loses their entertainment value. At its best, theatre-in-education is extremely good — a fine method of education — highly motivating, but it's extremely difficult to sustain work on that level. I'd be sorry to see theatre-in-education supplant other arts activities in schools. I think there's still a very important role for theatre in schools, and for drama, music and dance.

Theatre-in-education is seen administratively as an arts activity for which the only source of funds is through arts funding agencies. In South Australia, the Department itself has established theatre-in-education groups. It's seen as a Departmental activity. Now that might be some proposal that can be made to us, but then, if it were done, it would cut itself off from other sources because funding authorities like to be sure they're the only funding authority".

He said that the N.S.W. Education Department can't have any commitment to supporting youth performing arts companies other than in an indirect, facilitative way. Some small assistance has been given by the Department in the form of a teacher secondment, to FREEWHEELS in Newcastle.

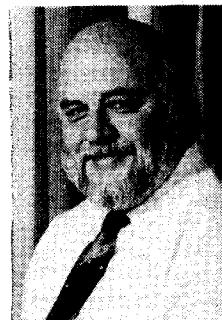
Mr. Ron Mulloch — Minister for Education in N.S.W. — was unable to speak to Lowdown. Apparently, however, he has expressed an interest in theatre-in-education, but support for companies is a 'question of funds'.

Mr. Morrison said of the proposal that some funding for T.I.E. companies should come from the Education Department "It is a very

ARTS ACTIVITIES IN N.S.W. (Cont.)



*Neil Morrison Policy Support Unit,
Ed. Dept.*



*Frank Meaney Community Relations
and Information Unit Ed. Dept.*

strong view in the Theatre Board — it was outlined quite clearly by the Minister to the Board. Our previous Minister when approached with the question generally strongly supported the continuation of arts funds through the Premier's Department. He said he did not wish the Department to assume that responsibility, and that statement hasn't to my knowledge been modified in any way".

"It's not a matter for the Education Department to say whether we ought to fund Theatre-in-Education or not, it's a matter for the Government to decide how its funds are to be allocated. It's not among the purposes for which we are given funds, and unless you have approved funding for a particular budget, you can't do it".

Mr. Meaney feels that it would be a "step backwards" for the Education Department to fund youth performing arts activities. "The Department of Education has shed ancillary responsibilities so that it can get on with the job", he said.

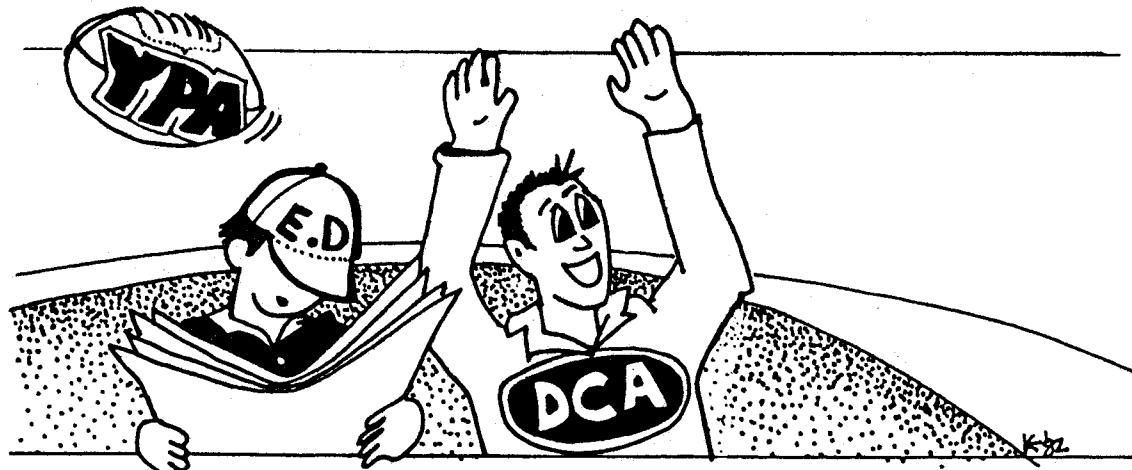
It is depressing to note that in 1974, a report called "The Arts in Schools" was compiled by an interdepartmental committee — representatives from the Dept. of Education, the Ministry of Cultural Activities and the Treasury. This report preceded the National Education in the Arts Study. Conclusions from this report are reprinted below. Regarding these findings, Mr. Morrison said — "it's easy, I suppose, to be cynical and say that they haven't come to much, but they have helped to make a far more receptive climate for arts generally in schools. They were probably written in a more optimistic period, but it was an extraordinarily interesting study at the time.

Helen Rickards.

From Interviews with Neil Morrison, Policy Support Unit, N.S.W. Education Department; and Frank Meaney, Community Relations and Information Unit, N.S.W. Education Dept.

Summary of conclusions from "Arts in Schools" Report (1974)

- We consider that the arts are indispensable in the education of children and that participation in arts activities should occupy a significant proportion of school time. Furthermore, we believe that teaching must be competent and that all necessary accommodation, equipment and materials should be readily available.
- In general, the status of the arts in New South Wales Government schools is not yet commensurate with their educational significance.
- That as a part of their arts courses it is essential that pupils be given opportunities to experience the work of artists at first hand.



ARTS ACTIVITIES in N.S.W.

As this edition of Lowdown focuses on youth performing arts in N.S.W., Lyn Tuit — Lowdown's N.S.W. correspondent — invited some N.S.W.'s companies to submit short articles on their work, or on particular aspects of their work. Those included are not the only companies and organisations working with and for young people in N.S.W. — for instance, information is not included about Toetuck, Shopfront or Pipi Storm — however, they do represent some of the Y.P.A. activity in the State, and have not been regularly covered by Lowdown.

freewheels theatre-in-education co.

FREEWHEELS has been based in Newcastle since late 1976, and is the resident Theatre-in-Education company in the Hunter Region. The Hunter Region is about the same geographical size as Tasmania, has a large population, and is presently in the throes of trying to cope with the economic and social difficulties associated with massive industrial development.

The main areas of FREEWHEELS' work is in regional schools. The company is performance oriented, so that we spend most of our time performing our shows and doing follow-up discussion in as many of the 255 government schools here (as well as non-government schools) as we can. We usually present three programs each year, appropriate for Infants', Primary and different levels of Secondary Schools. Quite often our shows find an adult audience as well when we perform in community venues throughout the region.

An important area of FREEWHEELS' work during the last three years has been the commitment to developing a trilogy on adolescent personal relationships, which links into the Personal Development curriculum in secondary schools. To many Departmental people and parents this is a very private and controversial area for a T.I.E. company to be involved in. This has not deterred us. During the three years we have created an intelligent and relevant contribution to this area of the curriculum in Hunter schools.

The first part of the trilogy was presented in 1979. It was **The Right Thing To Do**, written by Peter Matheson. Its subject was teenage pregnancy, and the production handled the issues involved skilfully and sensitively. 1981 saw the production of **Puberty Daze**, again by Peter Matheson. This show was done in a heightened theatrical style with a strong stress on large performances, humour, touches of vaudeville, and moments of astonishing seriousness for such a topic.

Now in 1982 we are presenting the middle play of the trilogy: **Until Ya Say Ya Love Me!** — devised and produced by Magpie T.I.E. Company in South Australia in 1980. The theme of this play is being responsible in adolescent personal relationships.

So the three productions chart a kind of emotional history of adolescent development from puberty through more intimate stages to the possibility of unwanted pregnancies. As a trilogy they form a significant contribution to theatre-in-education in Australia.

Because FREEWHEELS is a regional T.I.E. company and spends a lot of time travelling throughout the Hunter, we encourage audiences to come and see us in a Newcastle theatre for at least one production each year. We call this our community production, and 1980 saw our first one: **We Won't Pay, We Won't Pay**, by Dario Fo. It was the Australian premiere of Fo's work, and attracted a good cross section of the Newcastle and Hunter theatre-going audience. **We Won't Pay . . .** was also the opening production in the Wood Street Theatre, a converted warehouse seating about 100.

Our 1981 community production was part of the Newcastle Mattara Spring Festival and, in keeping with the festive spirit, it was a celebration of 25 years of Australian rock 'n' roll. Called **That's Vinyl**, the show was certainly a nostalgia trip for young and old. For this production, FREEWHEELS combined with a local rock band, THE MUSICAL FLAGS.

This year we will mount another community show during Mattara (the script is still being written).

As well as these major community productions, we occasionally present performances of our schools' programs for the wider public. Recently we performed **Red Earth**, written by Richard Tulloch and with guest actor, Tom Lewis, in the Newcastle City Hall. The evening was very successful, and aroused a great deal of public interest about theatre-in-education in Newcastle and the region. Such public interest has been encouraging. We now plan to present a public season of **Until Ya Say Ya Love Me!** in the Wood Street Theatre. This will allow interested parents to see the work we are doing in the Personal Development area. They will also be able to see this creature, theatre-in-education, in a different habitat — a public theatre.

The Hunter Region is very rich in local history, and FREEWHEELS has ventured into this area already with a trilogy on unemployment and a play about the history of mining in the Hunter (**Coal Soap**, by Peter Matheson).

Because FREEWHEELS is a regional T.I.E. company, I believe that this area of local history is one where more work will need to be done in the future. . . .

Brent McGregor
ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

THE MARIONETTE THEATRE OF AUSTRALIA LIMITED

The MTA began its Performance in Schools program in 1975 with "The Wacky World of Words". Since that year its commitment to education performances has increased and is now regarded as a major activity of the Company.

In 1982 the Company is undertaking 1,200+ performances in primary and infants schools in N.S.W., Victoria, Queensland and the A.C.T. It is generally felt that saturation point has been reached.

The present structure of each production is as follows: A two-person show commissioned by the Company. Sets and puppets of high quality and design. A strong storyline with educational and social content. The themes of each show are developed with reference to accepted school curriculum, however with liberal doses of artistic freedom.

In 1983 the MTA will begin a phase-down of its schools program in order to concentrate its work at its new theatres in The Rocks (Sydney). More emphasis will be directed to bringing school children to these theatres, and to the development of follow-up activities, e.g. workshops in puppet-making or play-making.

The MTA produces a quarterly newsletter containing information on all of its activities which can be obtained by writing to:

The Marionette Theatre of Australia
106-108 George Street
THE ROCKS 2000



From 'Forever Mountain' — M.T.A.

Past productions:

1976 & 1980	Roos
1977	Hands
1978 — 1982	Puppet Power
1979, 1981	Forever Mountain
1979, 1981	Top End Tales
1982	The Old Man and the Titan, Aesops Fables, Yours and Mine

"DOWN UNDER THE THUMB"

SIDETRACK THEATRE AND DRAMA AROUND the KITCHEN TABLE

As has been commented by many practitioners of T.I.E. in Australia, there is a great diversity in the form of T.I.E. groups. SIDETRACK THEATRE takes its plays to "community venues"; to those people who usually do not experience theatre; schools, Social Clubs, Migrant Resource Centres, Factories (surrounded by all their associated machinery), Coffee Shops, Local Halls; in fact anywhere with a large enough space, an audience and a power point.

SIDETRACK is based at the Addison Road Community Centre in Marrickville, N.S.W. This centre, a collection of army barracks, was handed over to the people of the local area to pursue "community activities". Due to the ethnically diverse nature of the local community, Addison Road is home to 26 ethnic cultural groups, with activities ranging from the Aboriginal Dance Company, to the Sicilian Puppeteer, to a group which recycles refuse from Industry for the use of creative arts around Sydney. SIDETRACK'S home is deeply embedded in this cultural mix. Our local schools, with whom we consult regarding our productions, receive a constant influx of different ethnicities depending on the last wave of immigration. Here we see a large number of "new Australians" who cannot speak English, do not know our customs and are very isolated in a new, and very different world.

As a consequence all plays devised and performed by SIDETRACK examine issues resultant of the multicultural Australian society, whether they be specifically teaching orientated, such as English-as-Second-Language plays, or examining the nature of the factory and its interface with middle management.

The necessity for "issue" based content is one that plagues most T.I.E. groups. Having to legitimize our existence to teachers, and educational administrators while providing students with a valuable theatrical experience, and in our case, designing the productions suitable for our local community audiences — many of whom have limited English Language skills, is a mountainous task.

Don Mamouney, who directed "**Down Under the Thumb**" decided on the common ground. The interaction between parents, children, the school and the workforce. How does this effect the young...the group most at risk while Australia struggles with its multiculturality.

These are very sensitive issues, for all involved, especially the kids. Would they talk to us, or would they shy away from a potentially threatening situation. The untapped emotions and energies of the young girls interviewed provided enough for 18 plays. So

many tales . . . someone wanted to listen! Some were very startling, others smashed our preconceptions, but the same points recurred regardless of the ethnicity of the girls. Our initial shock was soon tempered with the fundamental emotions that produce conflict — love and respect for parents, mixed with a want for freedom, to attain the image of the "Australian way of life".

In order to improvise the play effectively, we needed a cast that truly represented the young people who had contributed to the research. What ethnicity should they be? The play was for all children, parents and teachers, we did not want to delineate one culture to which this situation was specific. Further-more the difficulties of finding 4 actors with similar origins was insurmountable.

The actors cast were French, Lebanese, Italian and English. All have been in Australia for greatly differing time periods, and all had experienced some form of cultural conflict. The two actors playing the children both have non-Anglo parents and spent their childhood in Australian Schools. Their experiences added the emotive power needed to correctly depict the issues with which we were dealing. All actors retain their native language when needed (except the English actress who speaks great Greek!) and an imaginary country "Oxitanois" became their "home country". A multicultural cast, doing a multicultural play, in Australia . . . that country which is common to us all.

Perhaps the most worthwhile experience for all the SIDETRACKERS was when the young people we had interviewed, saw the play "**Down Under The Thumb**". They were viewing for possession of the lines in the play. It was theirs! Parents were pleased that finally someone had depicted their position; their conflicts in bringing up their children. Teachers who battle with the Anglo Institution of School, populated with non-Anglo pupils, felt we were on their side.

It was a story with which we could all identify; we all have families; we all experience those bitter-sweet moments that make them **our** family. You know . . . that Drama around the kitchen table.

Ann Hinchliffe



From Sidetrack's 'Down Under the Thumb'.

Photographs taken by Dallas Lewis



MUSICA VIVA AUSTRALIA

MUSIC EDUCATION ON THE MOVE

Musica Viva's Music Education Pilot Performance Project is one hell of a mouthful to describe one of the most important initiatives Australia's largest non-profit classical music organisation has undertaken in the last few years.

The Pilot Project commenced with a series of discussions in 1978 as to the character of the organisation's education program. Up until that time special education programs had received little emphasis or attention from the organisation with the majority of the budget and time having been devoted to the promotion of hundreds of concerts for overseas and Australian artists in 50 cities/towns of Australia and a large export program for high quality Australian musicians.

What caused the organisation concern was that the majority of school events and other education performances were really only a series of 'one off' isolated entertainments. Whilst the performances were of high quality and enjoyed strong support from schools and students they were in no way integrated into the overall school teaching program and had little long term impact or significance. The performances simply didn't have a logical place in the overall school program. It was decided that this situation wasn't satisfactory and that it needed to be investigated and acted upon — quickly.

A report was commissioned in 1979 (with assistance from the Music Board of the Australia Council) and published in early 1980. In brief the report addressed itself to the establishment of an integrated approach to performance ensembles playing in schools whereby groups could be used as a vital teaching resource rather than isolated entertainments.

The report also contained detailed recommendations in relation to teaching aids such as audio visual material, lesson plans, children's activity books, the use of video and backup support by way of in-service conferences and regular newsletters.

The report was presented to the Division of Cultural Activities and Minister for Education in New South Wales with a detailed recommendation that a three year pilot project commence from the start of 1981. The Division provided funding and the Minister for Education agreed to provide a deployed teacher to act as consultant and co-ordinator in the Metropolitan West Region of Sydney.

The scheme has now been in progress for eighteen months and results have been particularly encouraging. Six different groups (the Early Music Duo, the Leonine Consort, the Sydney Wind Quintet, the University of NSW Ensemble, the Sydney Jazz Quintet and the Sydney String Quartet) have all developed detailed schools' programs with

ARTS ACTIVITIES IN N.S.W. (Cont.)

MUSIC EDUCATION ON THE MOVE (Cont.)

comprehensive support material which is distributed to all schools well in advance of the performances.

The pilot project involves a cluster of 72 Infant, Primary and Secondary schools and receives constant evaluation. Quarterly reports are made to the Minister of Education and all other music authorities actively involved in the scheme.

One of the most encouraging aspects of the scheme is the unprecedented level of support it enjoys from teachers. At the most recent in-service course on the scheme 91% of teachers involved attended and 97% of these rated the scheme in the high to indispensable category.

A final report on the scheme and its results is currently in preparation and will be released at the end of the first term 1983 with an action plan for appropriate follow up to the three year pilot. It is anticipated that the majority of the approaches adopted in the pilot scheme will be progressively integrated into Musica Viva's national education program.



The Early Music Duo — Greg Dikmans and Max Hynam.

Why was it that, after successive years of filling in funding application forms and receiving the standard "we regret to inform you . . ." response, the A.T.Y.P. has been reinstated on the funding roll? The solution to the questions seems to lie in the fact that funding application forms, even though dutifully filled out by the hopeful applicants with all the appropriate information cannot tell the full story. The official form needs to be augmented by a very "up front, hard sell, face to face" approach. When your application comes up for review at the funding bodies' board meeting there needs to be at least one person who, through some form of contact, can speak for your organisation from their own experience.

Members of the A.T.Y.P. Board of Directors sought a direct answer to the question "why are we always unsuccessful in our applications?" The answer from the Theatre Board was simple: "We don't know who you are!" The State Government's response was that they wouldn't fund us unless the Federal Government contributed.

A member of the Theatre Board kindly attended one of our drama workshops. So every avenue of communication was exploited in order to ensure an awareness by the Theatre Board of the A.T.Y.P.

While we have achieved our immediate goal of a full salary for our Artistic Director for 6 months, the A.T.Y.P. has yet to find a permanent home base from which to operate. The basic teaching equipment that we would like to have is at present beyond our reach. We are relying on the dedication of our Parent's Committee to find the funds for such investments. Our tutors receive a minimal "fee" for the time that they invest. Pupils' fees have had to increase in 1982 by 25% to cover our workshop overheads.

The funding of our Artistic Director definitely represents a break-through for the A.T.Y.P. The sentiments expressed by our Chairman at the last A.G.M. give an accurate picture of the status quo: "The A.T.Y.P. base is very solid. It **must** grow and develop or retire gracefully. I do not want to give my time to a lacklustre organisation, but to a viable Youth Theatre".

Russell Emerson
ADMINISTRATOR



The following is an extract from the Chairman's Report to the December 1981 A.G.M. of the Australian Theatre for Young People on the subject of full-time funding for our Artistic Director Jane Westbrook, excluding a \$1,000.00 grant from the N.S.W. Premier's Department.

"We have been neglected by both the State and Federal Governments in our applications despite the fact in other states Youth Theatres have had their funds raised considerably. So the A.T.Y.P. must be doing something wrong."

Six months later we find ourselves in a situation where we are granted a total of \$2,500.00 by the State and Federal Governments to cover the Artistic Director's salary for the last half of 1982.



TOE TRUCK THEATRE

Programmes - Term III, 1982

- Annie's Coming Out
- Women and Arts