

## THE THEATRE OF THE DEAF

1983 was an exciting year for the Theatre of the Deaf. It saw great professional development and a change of name from the NSW Theatre of the Deaf to the Theatre of the Deaf. The year commenced with visual theatre workshops which introduced our special skills to those interested in deaf theatre and which also served to help locate and train new talent for the company.

The company worked consistently in schools with the following shows: Alphabits and Crackers for Infant Schools, Finger Painting for Primary and Lower Secondary Schools and Hooligan's Hands for Secondary Schools. The company, which consisted of one performing group in 1983, performed to 55000 children in schools throughout NSW and the ACT.

In March, the Theatre of the Deaf was invited to appear at the Orange Festival in Bathurst and received much acclaim, being invited back by many schools in the area. Other successful tours were made to Lithgow and the ACT. The latter tour culminated in a performance at the Australian National Gallery.

The company was able to retain the services of talented deaf actress Carol Lee Aquiline due to considerable support from various donors. Carol, who was originally only to be with us for one year, joined the company in 1982 from the National Theatre of the Deaf in the USA.

The company also received a grant from the Multi-Cultural Education Co-ordinating Committee to run a project in schools involving performances of Finger Painting with follow up workshops in visual theatre. Schools which participated in the project were very enthusiastic.

Hilary Beaton, a former actress with the company, received a grant from the Literature Board and the Theatre Board of the Australia Council to work with the company as a writer-in-residence. During her time with the company, Hilary wrote a piece of theatre-in-education and worked on a play for adult audiences.

The company made guest appearances on the following television shows: Simon Townsend's Wonder World, Jam Sandwich and Romper Room, and also received much favourable print coverage.

1983 saw a maturing of the company's artistic style. The Theatre of the Deaf performs as a tightly knit ensemble with highly

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developed performance skills. Those who saw the company perform, were highly impressed. It was still a difficult year financially due, once again, to low levels of funding. It is gratifying however to see the increasing support given to the company from the private sector and other institutions.

General subsidies to support the group's activities were received from the Theatre Board of the Australia Council and the NSW Division of Cultural Activities.