



# NEWSLETTER

ISSUE No. 6

June - July 1995



# THEATRE OF THE DEAF

## XIIth WFD CONGRESS Vienna, Austria

We are proud to announce that we have been selected to perform at the XIIth World Federation Congress for the Deaf in Vienna, Austria. This is the second time we have participated in WFD, the first being in Tokyo, Japan in 1991.

The travelling "circus" will consist of the 4 actors - Robert, Lisa, Damien and Caroline as well as Mike our Artistic Director, and Pam our interpreter/tour manager/mother/nurse/chaperone!!

We will leave our shores on 6 July, giving us a few days to settle in, rehearse and relax in preparation for our grand performance, *HANDS & TALES* on 11 July to an international audience! For the next few days, we will have the wonderful opportunity of meeting, sharing and socialising with other Deaf theatre groups and conference participants as well as attending a few Congress sessions.

The Congress will come to an end on 15 July but our good times will continue!! We will have a one week break and we can go wherever we'd like to go (not too far though!). The only responsibility we will have is to get back to Vienna by 21 July to catch the plane home together!



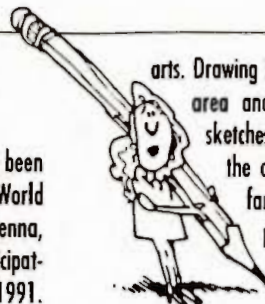
These are our tentative destinations: Mike and Caroline - Berlin, Germany; Pam - on tour around Austria; Damien - Italy; Lisa - France; and Robert is tossing up between Holland and Germany!!

We are all looking forward to this trip and meeting new contacts with a view to more international tours in the future. We remain one of the few Deaf theatres that use the visual theatre style enabling us to communicate to anyone, no matter the language.

## PROFILES OF OUR NEW ACTORS

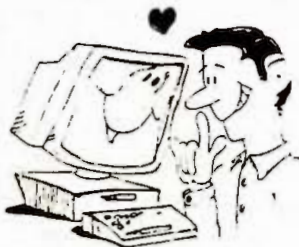
A warm welcome is extended to our new actors, Lisa Mills and Damien Walters. They joined the Company at the start of this year and both are doing well, settling into our 'family' and learning the tricks of the trade very fast! Read on to find out a little about them...

**LISA:** Born in Central Queensland, she performed in yearly regional eisteddfods from age 7 to 15. She moved to Brisbane and completed her Bachelor of Arts Drama degree at the Queensland University of Technology. Besides having a passion for theatre she also has an avid interest in visual



arts. Drawing is her primary skill in this area and she enjoys developing sketches for her portfolio. Lisa is the only Deaf member of her family which includes her parents and three younger sisters who live on the Sunshine Coast in Qld.

**DAMIEN:** Born in Townsville, Qld, he grew up in Adelaide, SA, in a large Deaf family. He made his debut in 1987 in the movie *CAPTAIN JOHNNO* and won the Australian Actor Award in 1988. He has also performed in several theatrical shows. During his spare time you will find him working on his beloved computer or listening to music.



Having been exposed to sign singing through TOD's work this year, Damien is keen to further develop his skills in that area.

We wish Damien and Lisa an enjoyable working experience with the Company.

## THE VERY FIRST DAY

Our new primary school show *THE VERY FIRST DAY* has been developed and is a success in schools already. This is a full mask performance and is a great opportunity for children to see non-verbal communication in action and to experience the wonderful world of the mask.

The charm, humour and naivety of our masked characters and the trouble they get in to will help children realise that everybody is nervous when starting something for the first time. It is a positive and uplifting show for young children with the basic message that overcoming your fears can lead to success. The story is set in a factory, and the four characters are an employer and three employees.



The actors thoroughly enjoyed working on this show, directed by Russell Cheek. It was a challenge for them as mask work involves more body movement and no use of facial expressions. The colourful and dynamic set and costumes were designed by Philippa Playford. *THE VERY FIRST DAY* will continue to be performed at schools throughout Sydney metro and country areas in 95/96.



## WORKSHOPS FOR YOU!!!

We are presenting 2 different workshops for interested people!

The first is a **SING 'N' SIGN** Workshop held on 17 & 18 June (9.30am to 4.00pm) upstairs above TOD's office in Redfern. Sign singing skills will be taught and participants will learn how to translate the lyrics into Auslan, incorporate the art of sign language with music and develop the skill of sign singing further. It is important to **NOTE** that this workshop is for people who know Deaf culture and are fluent in Auslan.

The second one, **INTRODUCTION TO VISUAL THEATRE** Workshop, will be held on 29 & 30 July (9.30am to 4.00pm) in the same place as above. Participants will learn to lose their inhibitions in expressing themselves physically through techniques in visual communication and visual vernacular. This workshop is open to anybody (Deaf and hearing) and a knowledge of Auslan and Deaf culture is not needed. For more information or to make a booking please contact Mike Canfield on TTY: 318 2835 • Voice: 310 1255 • Fax: 318 2186

## PARRAMATTA RIVERSIDE THEATRE



On Friday, 31st March, Theatre of the Deaf performed our new primary school show, **THE VERY FIRST DAY** at the Parramatta Riverside Theatre (Lennox Theatre) for the general public.

The response from the audience was excellent so we decided to perform our Community show, **HANDS & TALES** at, once again, Parramatta on Friday, 26th May.

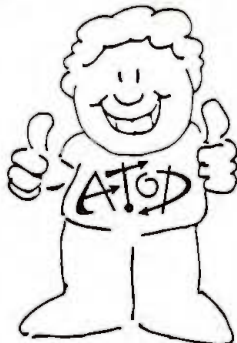
This time the response was overwhelming!! What a crowd! Both the Deaf and hearing members of the audience loved the show with its variety of visual fairy tales, comedy skits and the ever popular sign singing. Our Deaf version of **GREASE** was a hit! Unfortunately some people were turned away as all the seats were sold out!!

Parramatta seems a popular venue so keep your eyes open for further shows later in the year.

Funds raised at the two performances will help pay for expenses to Vienna where our actors will perform in July.

## THE LATEST IN T-SHIRTS!!

We have launched our new T-shirts to face the world with pride when we go to Austria for **WFD!!** There are two changes to our current style: instead of black and white, we now have black and light blue and instead of **TOD** across the front, we



now have **ATOD** (Australian Theatre of the Deaf). Ironically, there is a word 'tod' in the German language which means 'dead'....so to keep things nice 'n' easy and to clearly show where we are from we felt it was best to add a big 'A', making it **ATOD!** **MAKE YOUR ORDER NOW!!!**

## AGM - ELECTION OF BOARD MEMBERS

At our Annual General Meeting held on Monday, 8th May, 1995, the following were elected to the Board of Theatre of the Deaf:

COLIN ALLEN	BRETT CASEY
MARCIA GIRKE	MARIA HUNTER
ANNA MESSARITI	JENNY NICHOLLS
MITZI ZAPHIR	

Margaret Davis, who has been a Board member since 1991, has retired and she will be sadly missed by the company.

Shall we vote for Tim-Tams or Monte Carlos ???



This project has been made possible with assistance from the New South Wales Government through the Ministry for the Arts



## THEATRE OF THE DEAF presents THE SIGN OF THE PHANTOM

A MUSICAL BY MELISSA REEVES

George Phantom is at a loose end, going anywhere the wind blows him. One strange afternoon the wind blows him to the Hills of Calm Mental Institute where the seemingly jovial Dr. Noah employs him as a cleaner. As George gets to know the inmates he discovers that the rigid line painted by society between sanity and madness is a delusion and he is drawn into a bizarre guerrilla war against the hospital establishment aided by the surreal armies of the unconscious.

All singing, all signing, all dancing **THE SIGN OF THE PHANTOM** is a darkly funny fantasy, jumping between the colourless world of the institution and the frightening but exhilarating world of the imaginary, where chairs listen to your thoughts and walls have hands.

**THE SIGN OF THE PHANTOM** is a new concept in music theatre, challenging the senses with music you can see, feel and hear.

**Writer:** Melissa Reeves  
**Director:** Mike Canfield  
**Musical Dir./Orig. Music:** Matthew Fargher  
**Choreographer:** William Forsythe  
**Designer:** Andrew Raymond  
**Cast:** Theatre of the Deaf acting ensemble: Caroline Conlon, Robert Farmer, Lisa Mills, Damien Walters and guest performers: Dale Caldwell and Janet Andrews.

### PERFORMANCE SPACE:

7 Sept to 1 Oct '95 (Preview 6 Sept '95)

### FURTHER INFORMATION:

Voice: (02) 310 1255 • TTY: (02) 318 2835

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