

Cosi presents situations where audiences 'see':

- that behaviour which is easily accepted if performed by someone on the 'outside' will not be tolerated once labelled or 'inside';
- the debate/ relationship between a medical model verses other therapies;
- to implement change there is a need for the commitment by decision makers;
- the power of staff to undermine initiatives;
- institutional life and how routines /time tables can not be broken;
- once labelled /institutionalised the skills and life experience of people are not recognised or forgotten.

Generally hospital staff and the broader community have low expectations of people with psychi-

atric disabilities – 'keep it within their reach' – 'do not challenge them'. *Cosi* shows that given the opportunity people can achieve and develop exciting arts. It demonstrates that what is required is a willingness to develop new approaches and ways of achieving the end result – eg. it is not Opera that is difficult to understand, it is how it is set up for interpretation.

In *Cosi* people show 'eccentric' behaviour without regard for conformity or social convention, therefore audiences are able to gain some insight into the individually and humanness of characters, enabling audiences to connect with the characters and their stories.

A Fishy Story

Jack Skidmore

Although Dave liked his job at Accessible Arts he could hardly wait for Friday so he could go home, pack his fishing gear and go off for the weekend. He liked his job even better. Now that Accessible Arts had moved their office to the old wharf at Walsh Bay, now he could go fishing in his lunch break. The more he thought about it the more he was convinced that on that rainy day a week ago, it wasn't Helen Connors' beautiful face looking at him through the window of the office but a lovely dark haired mermaid. The next day Dave stopped at Coles and bought a string of pearls. As the sun sunk slowly in the west, Dave settled into his favourite fishing spot. Turning around to get the pearls from his bag; there standing right behind him was a big, long hairy bloke wearing shorts, a tattered old jumper and an old baseball cap.

'Hi I'm Hannible.'

Sitting besides Dave, as he was tying the pearls onto the fishing line, the big bloke looked at him kinda queer, so Dave told him that he was fishing for lonely oysters.

It was getting late and the only thing Dave had caught all day was Hannible. Deciding to give it away for the day, he was putting his gear in his bag, when Hannible sang out.

'I think I've got something!'

Hannible's eyes almost popped out of his head as he pulled in a lovely dark haired mermaid with one hand tangled in the string of pearls. As Hannible lived just around the corner in The Rocks, Dave thought he would take her round there until he figured out how he would get her home. Dave was out in the yard washing the salt out of his fishing gear and when he went back inside there was Hannible eating the mermaid.

Dave : 'you dirty animal Hannible, your nothing but a bloody cannibal.'

Hannible 'Its alright mate, I wasn't that hungry and I've only eaten a couple of titbits and saved the bottom bit for you.'

