

ARTS ACCESS

news

winter 2001

Weave Movement Theatre performance "Anybody Home?" May 18th, 2001

A review by Heather White, a participant in Art Day South*

"On Friday we went to see [*Anybody Home?* by Weave Movement Theatre]. The first part was about a wedding in the olden days. There was a slide projector and acoustics to help to tell the story.

The Lady came out and threw the toy man off the wedding cake. Two people came out. The Lady pulled up her long skirt, climbed up the stepladder and let her skirt fall down. She held onto the man to tell the story. There was another Lady under the table and every time she heard her name she shook the table to death. Everyone laughed. The Lady turned the man around, lifted up her skirt and climbed down the ladder and they walked off.

The Lady came out from under the table in a wheelchair. She slowly lifted up her head and danced and took off her clothes one by one. She was left in a singlet-top and a petticoat. She slid off her chair and rolled around on the floor with her petticoat over her head. Two people carried her off.

Then two different people came out to dance. The man got into the wheel chair and danced with the Lady. They looked good. Then they went off and lights went off. Five people came out and sat on chairs then two came out in wheel chairs. On the chairs were feather

headpieces which they put on. Then they ballet danced as two men pretended to shoot them with bows and arrows.

The next part was when dancers came out dressed as houses and there were bricks and lights on the houses. The houses said which suburbs they were from. Then the dancers took the houses off and began moving over a couch. It was very clever.

While they were doing this they were watching an imaginary game of football.

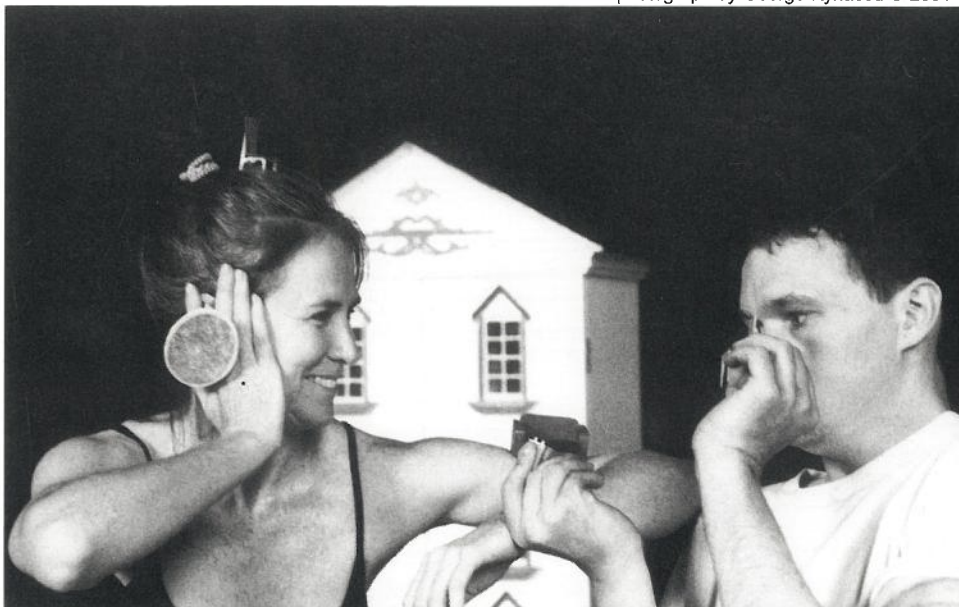
Finally one dancer put a house back on and she was a shy house. She did actions and the other dancers copied her.

I thought the play was very clever and I enjoyed it very much. The end."

Heather White

** Art Day South is an Arts Access project for adults with an intellectual disability.*

Jenny Scott and Antony Riddell
photograph by George Kyriacou © 2001



AF

700.9945

Ac2AR

From the desk of the Executive Director

Welcome to the Arts Access Winter newsletter. As we are featuring two articles about recent work, Arts Access' *Artability* and Weave's *Any Body Home?*, I thought it would be a good time to talk about critiquing work. At the recent Art of Difference Festival at Gasworks, Port Melbourne, Caroline Bowditch (who graced the cover of the last newsletter, and performs with Weave Movement Theatre) talked about the lack of real critique of work, especially from peers. It's a very current issue, especially in the sectors of the arts such as youth arts, community arts and disability arts, because of the tension between valuing the benefits of the process, mostly for the individuals involved, and valuing the product in its own right. The Danish Association of Theatre for Children has even developed Seven Criteria for Quality, that the industry uses in assessing work! It includes aims and objectives, context and appropriate choices, performers' work, the relationship to the audiences, the impact, ethics, etc. (See Lowdown Magazine, April 2001 for more detail, it's fascinating reading!).

But what Caroline wanted, was simply some truthful feedback about the Weave show, so that they could listen and learn and continually improve. She also talked about pushing herself as a performer, and not allowing herself concessions because of her disability, which is the same for any artist – that's how the best work is made.

For example, I think Back To Back Theatre is so successful as a theatre

company, (OK, I'm biased), because the actors demanded toughness and rigour from the Artistic Directors (I worked with two in my time there), to the point that there were raised tempers occasionally. The actors wanted to be really pushed as performers, so they kept improving, and the work kept improving as a result. No-one would argue that the Back To Back actors aren't amongst the most accomplished and polished performers in the country, but it's been because of really hard work.

Caroline spoke so clearly about how she wants to work hard, and that she wants to be pushed from all sides. She indicated that we are a bit scared of hard work nowadays, but that as individuals, the most satisfying thing to do is to conquer something that's really tough.

So I believe that while the ongoing debate about what's the right balance between process and product is an important one, perhaps more important, is a need to encourage and acknowledge individuals' own aspirations, and to ensure that we support those aspirations adequately. That way, we are making the process more satisfying, and we are also helping to improve the resulting product.

Nicole Beyer, Executive Director

This edition of Arts Access News is also available on-line at www.artsaccess.com.au

An audio tape version of Arts Access News is available. Please call the office to arrange your copy.

Copy deadline for next issue
7th September 2001

Please direct enquiries about the Arts Access newsletter to:

Arts Access
24 Eastern Road, South Melbourne
Victoria Australia 3205
03 / 9699 8299 Telephone 03 / 9699 8868 Facsimile
03 / 9699 7636 TTY
Email info@artsaccess.com.au
Website <http://www.artsaccess.com.au>

Tenth Birthday Celebrations for Audio Description in Australia

Audio description was premiered in Australia at a Melbourne Theatre Company performance of Arthur Miller's "The Crucible" on Wednesday, 12th June, 1991.

Ten years on, the art of live description for people who are blind or vision impaired, continues to be offered at most major theatre productions in Melbourne and is now making its way to television and video.

In 1988 the Vision Australia Foundation invited the developers of Audio Description, Dr Margaret Pfanstiehl and her husband Cody to travel from Washington D.C. to train six people in this exacting art. Today, Marjorie West, a volunteer at Vision Australia, continues to coordinate and train over twenty describers. These people offer their time free of charge to provide improved access to the visual images used in the arts through a description of what sighted people take for granted.

Through the means of a small radio receiver, the describers provide a comprehensive commentary which guides the blind or vision impaired audience through the presentation with concise, objective descriptions of new scenes, settings, costumes, body language and "sight gags," all slipped in between portions of dialogue or songs.

Live audio description is now also being offered for television dramas such as 'Water rats', via a simulcast between 3RPH (1179AM) and Channel 9 Melbourne and is proving to be a great success. Videos, with audio description, are also available on audio cassettes for people with no vision and can be borrowed from the Vision Australia Library.

Arts Access would like to congratulate all of the dedicated and highly trained volunteers from the Vision Australia Foundation for their outstanding work over the past ten years.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY!

For more information regarding this service, or to book tickets for an Audio Described Performance, contact:

Fiona Hanrahan at Arts Access
ph: 03 9699 8299

Forthcoming Audio Described Performances

Melbourne Theatre Company 'Up For Grabs' -
Saturday 21st July 4pm

'The Rain Dancers'
Saturday 11th August 4pm
Monday 13th August 6.30pm

'The Seagull'
Saturday 8th September 4pm
Monday 3rd September 6.30pm

'The Duchess of Malfi'
Saturday 29th September 4pm
Monday 24th September 6.30pm

'Mamma Mia'
Wednesday 23rd January (2002) 1pm
Wednesday 6th February (2002) 1pm



Artability : Expect the Unexpected! Arts Access & Partners on Parade Centenary of Federation Parade, Sunday May 6 2001



On Sunday 6 May, 2001 Arts Access presented a stunning entry for the Centenary of Federation Parade entitled *Artability - Expect the unexpected!*

Participants included over 150 people with disabilities, mental health issues, and the deaf community, who marched down Swanston Street representing important issues from the last one hundred years that have impacted on their lives.

Beginning with "the big white blob" representing 1900s *institutionalisation*, the entry then moved onto pink Beauty Pageant contestants from the 1950s and orange protesters reflecting 1970s *Disability Rights* and the continuing accommodation issues for people with Acquired Brain Injury.

Then a yellow "Transport Queen" rode on top of a winged Maxicab (in her wheelchair) representing the 1990s Disability Discrimination Act and transport accessibility while her "Transport Angels"

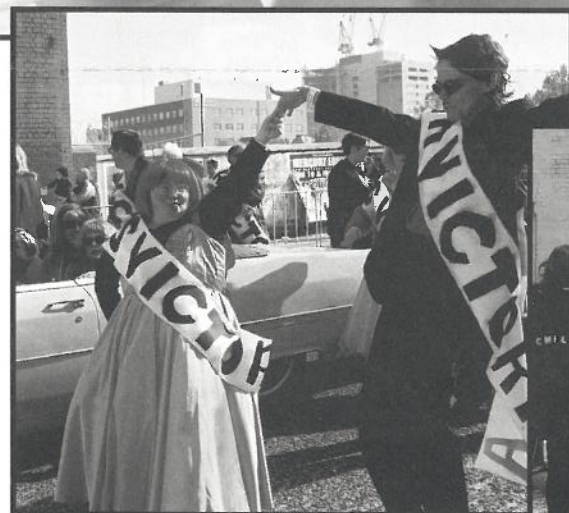
danced to Kylie Minogue's "Locomotion" and "I Should Be So Lucky!" Grooving closely behind were multicoloured "drag celebrities", fantasy puppets and "sign singers" all celebrating the *diversity* of 2000.

The parade entry closed with a huge mobile map of Australia spelling out the final message "sorry", acknowledging our Aboriginal community and representing *reconciliation* for 2001 and beyond...

By joining 7,500 people in the parade and 300,000 spectators, the *Artability* project was a major public event for Arts Access and provided a fabulous promotional opportunity for our organisation and for our collaborative partner organisations.

Congratulations to all those people who participated both on the day and behind the scenes – your enthusiasm and commitment made the project an outstanding success!

Jo Cohen, Artability Parade Coordinator.



6. **Dramability "drag celebrities"** representing diversity in 2000
7. **Just Us** puppets representing individuality in 2000
8. **Deaf Sign Singers** representing empowerment in 2000
9. **Splash Art Studio's "Map of Australia"** representing reconciliation in 2001 and beyond...

5. **Weave Movement Theatre** representing Disability Discrimination Act of 1990s and transport accessibility

Photos by Catherine Acin, from Top Left:

1. **Great Escape**, banner-carriers extraordinanaire
2. **Art Day South** participants representing institutionalisation of the 1900s
3. **Art Day West** participants representing Charity Beauty Pageants of the 1950s
4. **Inability, Possibility** representing Disability Rights Movement of 1970s and continuing accommodation issues for young people with A.B.I.

ARTS ACCESS



Mission

Arts Access provides access to arts and cultural activity for people who are disadvantaged including people with a disability.

Seeking and Nurturing New Work

The success of Arts Access over the last 26 years has been largely due to moving with the times and grabbing opportunities enthusiastically. By constantly exploring new ways of increasing access to the arts, we have been able to nurture new projects and then allow them to take on their own life. Somebody's Daughter Theatre, Weave Movement Theatre, Big Bag Band and Club Wild have all resulted from projects that Arts Access originally helped to establish. Our philosophy is to use our expertise, our experience in producing arts products that increase accessibility in some way, and to then allow that methodology to become part of the broader culture. We don't need to maintain ownership, as our ultimate aim is for the arts to become more accessible in its own right. The ideal world would be one where Arts Access did itself out of business!

Information, Debate and Networking

As Victoria's peak arts and disability organisation, Arts Access plays a crucial information and communication role for the arts and cultural sector in Victoria. The organisation maintains a register of artists and arts organisations, and each year responds to hundreds of enquiries for information, advice and referrals from government agencies,

community arts and health organisations, local government authorities, etc.

Arts Access is a respected leader in community based arts practice and community cultural development and we have extensive networks in the arts, health, disability, and community cultural sectors.

Arts Access plays a key role in fostering critical debate within the arts and disability/disadvantage sector through conferences, forums and training programs. As a member of the national network of peak arts and disability, arts and disadvantage organisations (DADAA), Arts Access helps to contribute state issues to the broader national picture.

STAFF BOARD

Executive Director Nicole Beyer	Chair Alan Moor
Finance and Administration Manager Simon Gould	Deputy Chair Robyn Charlwood
Artistic Program Manager Ruth Whittingham	Carl Carthy Ian Pidd Mark Robinson
Artistic Project Coordinators Jo Cohen Anne Riggs	Andrew Sanderson Cecily Tange Sandra Taylor-Bowman Jane Trengove
Access Program Manager Fiona Hanrahan	Thanks... Anne Cohen Rachel Devine Crisna Gehrke
EASE Administration Officer Jenny Penhall	
Training Coordinator Caroline Bowditch	
Administration Officers Sue O'Neill Edwina Exton	

Become a member and help us to reach more people

Arts Access is a not-for-profit organization that requires the support of our members to continue our work. Why not help us to reach more people by becoming an Arts Access or EASE Member. Arts Access membership is open to everyone. Your membership contributes to the overall running of our Artistic Program, Entertainment Access Service (EASE), Training Program and Access/Advocacy work.

Annual Membership gives you:

- "Arts Access News" to keep to up-to-date with the year's activities
- invitations to public events
- discounts on various Arts Access services and products
- voting rights at our Annual General Meeting
- up-to-date information and advice on access issues

EASE membership is for people whose access to venues or choice of seating is restricted due to physical or sensory impairment.

In addition to receiving the Arts Access Newsletter, EASE Membership gives you:

- Membership Card – for use as identification for discounts and access requirements
- Ticket Update – a bi-monthly publication listing upcoming events and access information
- Information on audio described and sign interpreted events
- Venue Access – information sheets available when booking, access information available by phone. **Free Vic Venue Guide!**
- Booking Service – use of the EASE Ticket service to purchase tickets and arrange special seating requirements to arts and entertainment events
- Special Officers – notification of discounted and free tickets

Membership Form

Please fax or send to Arts Access, 24 Eastern Road South Melbourne Vic 3205 Fax: 03 / 9699 8299

Arts Access Member			EASE Membership		
Individual	\$25	<input type="checkbox"/>	Individual	\$25	<input type="checkbox"/>
Community Group/Small Organisation	\$55	<input type="checkbox"/>	Groups/Organisations	\$55	<input type="checkbox"/>
Corporate/Large Organisations	\$195	<input type="checkbox"/>			

I would like to make a Donation of (please tick)

\$20 ☐ \$50 ☐ \$100 ☐ Other

Payment

Please find enclosed a cheque / money order for the amount of \$

or please debit my

Bankcard ☐ Mastercard ☐ Visa ☐ Amex ☐

Card Number

Name on Card

Signature

Expiry Date

Amount

All Donations of \$2 or more are tax deductible and greatly appreciated!

**ARTS
VICTORIA**



Arts Access is supported by
the Australia Council, the Commonwealth's arts funding and advisory body
the Victorian Government, through Arts Victoria - Department of Premier and Cabinet
and the Department of Human Services

email • info@artsaccess.com.au
web • <http://www.artsaccess.com.au>

print design • www.slightly.net

If undeliverable return to:

ARTS ACCESS

24 Eastern Road,
South Melbourne, VIC, 3205

Telephone (+61 3) 96998299 Facsimile (+61 3) 9699 8868
TTY (+61 3) 9699 7636 EASE Bookings (+61 3) 9699 8497

Arts Access Newsletter

Print Post Approved
PP325649/0005
ISS N 1329 0517

**SURFACE
MAIL**

**POSTAGE
PAID
AUSTRALIA**

Ms Anne Sedgley
Serials Librarian
State Library Of Victoria
328 Swanston Street
MELBOURNE VIC 3000