

FREE AND CHEAP EVENTS

TWO free lunchtime concerts presented by the Victorian Arts Centre promise to be well worth a visit. Comedian Glynn Nicholas, from ABC TV's Big Gig, will feature in a performance at the Melbourne Concert Hall from 1.10 pm to 1.50 pm on Monday June 24. The Peaceful Anticipation Social Aid and Pleasure Club, a gospel choir which includes some of Melbourne's most talented jazz artists, will perform at the concert hall on Monday, July 15th from 1.10 pm to 1.50 pm. You don't need to book for either performance; just turn up.

MYTHOLOGY in Music is a performance which introduces mythological characters through dance, words and music. It's presented by the Victorian Arts Centre as part of the OPEN MIND series devised by Melbourne pianist Len Vorster. It is on at the George Fairfax Studio on Sunday June 30 at 3 pm.

DISCOVER the skills, thrills and hard work of the Australian rock music industry. *Rockbiz* is an exhibition which takes you behind the stage and on the road with the popular Melbourne-based band Crowded House. It's showing at the Performing Arts Museum at the Victorian Arts Centre until June 23 from 11 pm to 5 pm Monday to Friday and from noon to 5 pm Saturday and Sunday. Tickets are \$1.30 concession.

DURING April EASE distributed tickets to:

Greater Union/Village Cinemas, Hoyts Cinemas, The Last Laugh, the Royal Commission into the Australian Economy, Gloria Loring in Concert, Racing Demon, The Comedy Club, Diving for Pearls, Storming St Kilda by Tram, The Mikado, Turandot, Warrant, Romeo and Juliet, Charlie Pride, Phantom of the Opera, Melbourne Symphony Orchestra, Lucrezia Borgia, Frank'n'Stein, A Midsummer Night's Dream, Let the Blood Run Free, Crosby, Stills and Nash, La Clemenza, The Melbourne Comedy Festival.

EASE is edited by Catherine Magree. This issue was laid out by John Paxinos using our new software AmiPro. Contributions and letters are welcome and should be sent to Arts Access, 109-111 Sturt St, South Melbourne, 3205.

FREE TICKETS A GREAT SUCCESS

OUR recent acquisition of 100 free tickets to the INXS concert at the Tennis Centre proved a huge success with EASE members. Our thanks to Camilla Ella and the INXS promoters at the Tennis Centre for providing these tickets for EASE clients who would not otherwise have been able to attend. The sheer disbelief, joy and excitement at the other end of the phone made our day!

EASE wants to create a list of members who we can ring if we receive free or low cost tickets at short notice. If you or your group would like to be on the list, contact the EASE office on 699 8497 or 699 7636.

EASE STAFF

Julie-Ann Willems - Project Officer
Lisa McKoy - Clerical Project Assistant

VOLUNTEERS

John Pidd
Hilary Ash
Barbara Kitchen
Rifka Knox

EASE FUNDING

EASE is a project of Arts Access and is funded from a range of funding sources including the Federal Department of Community Services and Health (Disability Services) and the Victorian Department of Sport and Recreation. In addition, income earned through service fees, subscriptions and ticket commissions help support the project.

Ease

EASE Newsletter - Arts Access Society Inc.

June 1991

THEATRE COMES ALIVE FOR LOW VISION PATRONS

A REVOLUTIONARY new concept for theatre patrons with low vision is being pioneered in Australia at the Victorian Arts Centre's Playhouse Theatre.

Audio Description is the art of describing what is happening on the stage when there is no sound.

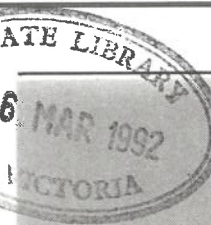
Through means of a small transistor and earpiece picked up before the performance, it gives visually impaired people details of the program notes, scenery, costumes and body language as the play progresses. No longer do they have to rely on friends whispering to them the details of what is happening on stage.

Marjory Lane, a volunteer worker with the Association for the Blind, was responsible for importing the necessary technology to Australia and has adapted the teaching of the skill of Audio Description to Australian conditions.

"Audio Description was invented by Margaret and Cody Pfanstiehl in Washington D.C., where it is now available in 14 theatres," she said.

"In April 1988 I went to Washington to see the technology at work and to meet the Pfanstiehls. In November they came to Australia and conducted a four day training program for Audio Describers. The Describers have to be quick and must see the play three times before they can describe it.

"As soon as it is established at the Playhouse we want to spread it to theatres around Australia. We have already had interest from the management of the Sydney Opera House and the Performing Arts Trust in Brisbane.



THE MTC'S production of Shakespeare's *The Taming of The Shrew* stars Hugo Weaving as Petruchio and Pamela Rabe as Kate. This is one of the forthcoming productions low vision theatre patrons will be able to hear Audio Described at the Playhouse Theatre.

"At the moment visually impaired people only absorb about 50 per cent of the content of a play. They get embarrassed when told not to whisper during the performance so many of them don't bother going. Audio Description will bring all those people back."

Accessing Audio Description is simple. You simply book it in advance with the EASE service. The units can be used for any seats in the house. The equipment is collected from the box office upon arrival. Fifteen minutes before the show begins, take your seat, put the earpiece in and turn the transistor on.

From a sound proofed booth at the back of the theatre, you will hear the Descriptor read the program notes and describe the stage setting. Afterwards, you will need to return the equipment promptly to the box office.

Audio Description will be premiered in Australia at a performance of Arthur Miller's *The Crucible* on Wednesday, June 12 at 8 pm at the Playhouse Theatre. Audio Described performances of *The Taming of the Shrew* will play on Monday, July 15 at 6.30 pm, Thursday, July 18 at 8 pm and Saturday, July 20 at 4 pm.

Audio Description will take place at certain performances only for MTC plays on at the Playhouse. Check with EASE to find out which dates are available. EASE can also book discount tickets. To book the service, call EASE on 699 8497 or 699 7636.

The establishment of Audio Description at the Playhouse has been sponsored by the Victorian Arts Centre, the Rotary Club of Hawthorn and the Association for the Blind.

ARTS ACCESS SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

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VENUE NOTES

RUSSELL ST THEATRE - MELBOURNE THEATRE COMPANY (MTC)

19 Russell St (between Collins and Flinders Sts) Melbourne, 3000
Melway Map: 1B K10

To Book: Credit Card Bookings:
MTC ph: 654 4000 Bass ph: 11500

In Person: MTC Box Office or any BASS Outlet.

N.B. EASE can assist with bookings for all MTC productions.

PUBLIC TRANSPORT

TRAINS: Flinders St; TRAMS: Flinders, Collins and Swanston Sts; BUSES: Russell St and Flinders St; TAXIS: Russell St entrance to Hyatt Hotel.

PARKING

GENERAL

Street parking is difficult, with few accessible parking spaces. The best parking stations are: 101 Collins St in Flinders Lane (between Russell and Exhibition Sts) or Flinders Gate (HOYTS) - enter from Flinders Lane or Flinders St (between Swanston and Russell Sts).

THE BOX OFFICE

From the entrance corridor turn right into the foyer. The box office is on the right hand side of the foyer. Box office hours are Monday to Saturday 9 am to 8.30 pm. (The box office is also a BASS outlet and tickets for any event on sale through BASS can be purchased here up to 5 pm.) The box office counter is fairly high but a transaction is possible for wheelchair users. M.T.C. productions run Monday to Saturday.

THE FOYER

The foyer is quite small and is non-smoking. Smokers use the footpath area outside the main entrance. The floor surface is carpet. The candy bar is on the right just past the box office. Tea, coffee, soft drinks, confectionary and cake are available pre-show and at interval. The bar is not licensed. There is limited seating in the foyer. There is no foyer for the balcony. There is a T.V. monitor in the foyer for latecomers.

ENTRANCES

GENERAL

There is a 1" step from the footpath into the theatre, increas-

ing to 3" as the footpath slopes downhill. This can be accessed in an electric chair without difficulty. The corridor from the main entrance doors to the foyer is a gradual ramp downwards. The main entrance doors are outward opening double doors. The handles are quite high but there is an usher on duty who will assist if necessary. The entrance corridor is carpeted.

ACCESSIBLE

Wheelchair access is via the main entrance doors from the street, past the door to the foyer and up a steep ramp leading to the back left hand side aisle of the stalls auditorium. Assistance would be required to access this ramp.

SEATING

GENERAL

Russell St is a permanent proscenium arch theatre. The auditorium has a centre aisle and side aisles. The auditorium is raked for better viewing. The stalls has a capacity of 334. There is a lobby area at the back of the stalls with a capacity of 30 but these seats are sold as B reserve as they are a long way back. The balcony has a capacity of 30. The balcony can only be accessed via the stairs, is quite dark and has quite a few hidden steps.

ACCESSIBLE

Wheelchair users can transfer to aisle seats in the left hand side aisle of the stalls auditorium. Alternatively wheelchairs can be placed in this aisle with accompanying persons in the theatre seat next to the wheelchair. Wheelchairs are not on a flat surface but a slight downward slope.

FACILITIES

For Visually Impaired People: None.

For Hearing Impaired People: None.

TOILETS

GENERAL

No accessible toilets in the theatre. The only toilets are located upstairs, accessed via two sets of steps. The female toilet is accessed via the corridor off the far side of the foyer and up the stairs. There is a sliding door and three small cubicles. The men's toilet is accessed via the main entrance corridor and up the stairs. The

men's toilet has an inward opening door and is slightly bigger.

ACCESSIBLE

Theatre patrons can use the accessible toilets at the Hyatt on Collins, second level, 123 Collins St, Melbourne.

TELEPHONE

There is an accessible public telephone in the foyer located opposite the box office to the right of the entrance stairs into the stalls auditorium.

EASE - ENTERTAINMENT ACCESS SERVICE

-----Ph: 699 8497-----

Making Entertainment Accessible for Everyone!

The Telephone Advice Service and Ticket Scheme for people with special needs.

Office Hours: Monday to Friday 9 am to 5 pm.

Phone: 699 8497, 699 7636

TTY: 699 8497

Address: 109-111 Sturt St, South Melbourne, 3205.

Ticket requests: EASE will negotiate for tickets to any event at your request.

Ticketing information: To find out what's on and how to book just give us a call.

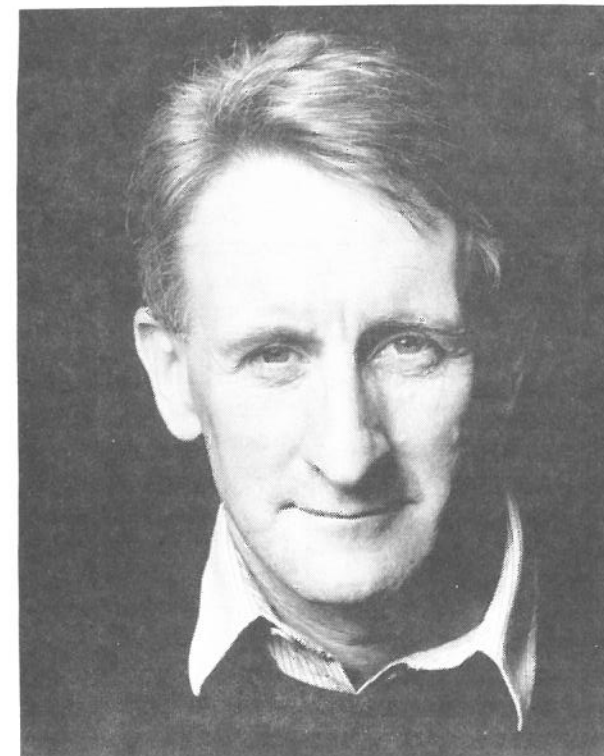
Access Information: is available about venues in Melbourne - over the phone, in the EASE newsletter and the Melbourne Venue Guide.

How to book with EASE: ring 699 8497 or 699 7636, discuss with Lisa or Julie-Ann what show you would like to see and any special seating requirements.

Exchange and Refund Policy: There is No Exchange or Refund on tickets booked with EASE so please be certain about your requirements before you make a booking. Uncollected, unused or returned tickets must be paid for.

Payment: may be made at the EASE office or by posting a cheque or Money Order made out to Arts Access. Payment is never made at the venue. The price on the ticket is not always relevant. Please make note of the ticket price at the time of booking or phone EASE for confirmation. Prompt payment for tickets is appreciated. Tickets should be paid in advance where possible or within one week of the event.

COMING ATTRACTIONS



JOHN Gaden stars as Uncle Vanya in the forthcoming MTC production of the same name, which commences at the Russell St Theatre on June 29. See Venue Notes on Page Two for more information on the theatre.

The MTC has some wonderful productions planned for its Autumn season. Mad Forest, a play by Caryl Churchill, focuses on two families before, during and after the recent revolution in Romania.

The play portrays a society which is deprived, brainwashed, overrun by informers and uncertain about the future. It bristles with intelligence, insight, touches of the surreal and Churchill's quirky humour. It is playing at the Russell St Theatre until June 15.

Shakespeare's The Taming of the Shrew, one of his liveliest and funniest plays, will play at the Victorian Arts Centre's Playhouse Theatre from June 22 to July 27.

A play with bite, wit, and many twists is The Marriage of Figaro, the French revolutionary classic on which Mozart based his opera. It is on at the Playhouse from August 3 to September 7.

EASE has discount tickets available for all MTC productions except for Friday and Saturday nights performances.

SPORTS FANS TAKE NOTE

BASKETBALL fans will be pleased to hear that EASE has tickets for some National Basketball League games this season.

Discount tickets for any games played by the Melbourne Tigers and the South Melbourne Swathog Saints at the Glasshouse are available from June until September 21.

Games are played on Thursdays, Fridays and Saturdays at 8 pm and on Sundays at varied times at the Glasshouse Sports and Entertainment Centre. To book tickets, contact the EASE office on 699 8497 or 699 7636.

MIDWEEK BALLET MATINEES

ARE you a ballet lover? If so, you will be pleased to know that the Australian Ballet is now performing mid-week matinees in Melbourne, and EASE has tickets for these performances. The tickets are for *Sleeping Beauty* on Wednesday June 19 at 1.30 pm and *Romeo and Juliet* on Tuesday July 9 at 1 pm. Both performances are at the State Theatre. Book through the EASE office on 699 8497 or 699 7636.

EASE TICKETS

NOW AVAILABLE

These are the tickets currently available through the EASE office for shows playing during June and July:

A Song To Sing O - Victorian State Opera, featuring Dennis Olsen

Phantom Of The Opera (Wednesday matinee only)

AUSTRALIAN BALLET - *Sleeping Beauty*, *Romeo and Juliet*

BASKETBALL - Melbourne Tigers, South Melbourne Saints

FILMS - at all Hoyts cinemas, all Greater Union cinemas, and Village cinemas at Southland, Knox, Airport West and Dandenong

COMEDY - at the Comedy Club and the Last Laugh

VICTORIA STATE OPERA - *Aida*, *Iolanthe*, *The Italian Girl in Algiers*, *The Magic Flute*, *The Marriage of Figaro*

MTC - *The Crucible*, *The Taming of the Shrew*, *Mad Forest*, *Uncle Vanya*

PLAYBOX - *Earthly Paradise*, *The Adman*

MELBOURNE SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA - Saturday Symphony, Meet the Music, Mozart Master, Master Series

AUSTRALIAN CHAMBER ORCHESTRA

Sandy Beach Sunday afternoon concerts

Ice Skating at the Sidney Myer Music bowl - wheelchair access on ICE!

EASE is currently negotiating for these tickets:

Hair, AC/DC, Football, Harry Secombe.