

Letters of Support

As many of our readers will be aware EASE has recently been through a critical funding period. During discussions with the Ministry for the Arts we contacted some of our clients requesting letters of support. We were overwhelmed with the response and wish to thank all who wrote so glowingly of our service. As a result of those letters and work undertaken by Arts Access staff, the Ministry for the Arts and Community Services Victoria have agreed to provide funds until June. The Ministry will assist EASE and Arts Access to work on a long term business plan over the intervening months. The objective of this plan will be to move the project toward self sufficiency.

Below is a selection of edited extracts from letters sent in support of EASE:

"I am writing on behalf of the many clients at the Oakleigh Centre and the pensioners associated with the Recreation Department. Many are now using the service themselves, they are now planning their own entertainment timetable. They are ringing to enquire about events, about availability of tickets, to book tickets and to find out how to get to the venues. This situation is the basis to our Recreation Philosophy. That is to have our clients attempt to organise their own recreation time, to pursue their own interests."

Ros Young and Ginta Pukitis, Oakleigh Centre

"Headway Victoria is an organisation that represents and promotes the interests of people with head injuries and their families. One of the objectives of Headway is to create opportunities that

allow our members to gain access to community based services and activities. EASE has provided easily accessible information to our members and staff at Headway, information regarding purchasing of tickets, wheelchair accessibility, transport to and from venues. Our aim is to help our members to once again become independent in as many avenues as possible."

Sandra Batten, Community Liaison Worker, Headway Victoria

"Since becoming disabled I have discovered that a great deal of preliminary enquiry and organisation must go into every outing to determine whether or not venues are suitable for wheelchair users. Often the people dealing with enquiries don't have the knowledge and experience to fully understand my needs. And needs vary widely according to disability. EASE promptly provides me with this information and has a clear understanding of the needs of disabled people. Arts and entertainment are not just the icing on the cake. They are an essential part of life and have been considered so in the "primitive" societies. This is an aspect of equal opportunity that has been addressed in a unique and practical way by EASE. I see no-one else in the community doing this."

Janice Jenkins

"My husband and I have escorted elderly citizens living in our area to shows on several occasions in recent months under the EASE scheme. We were able to provide them with safe conduct to the show and the EASE scheme allowed them to see a show at a price acceptable to them. The EASE scheme also

provides the opportunity for my husband and I to have contact with elderly and incapacitated people which we otherwise wouldn't have. We have genuinely enjoyed this contact."

Heather Pollock

"I wish to express some of the thrill it was to accompany a group of residents to hear the State Orchestra of Victoria. It was with some intrepidation that I accepted your invitation to take Intellectually Disabled people out of their Institution to a Symphony Orchestral Concert. The units were asking what they should dress the residents in, the staff accompanying the residents were also wondering. The experience was new for all and sundry. The residents had not been asked to sit quietly for a long time on any previous occasion. The behaviour accepted at the Centre was not acceptable in town, much less the theatre."

"I need not have worried for the residents were dressed looking excited and well groomed, waiting for our transport. Their behaviour was not attracting notice, they responded to whispered advice and they all enjoyed the atmosphere, the glamour, the music and the visual spectacle. Weeks afterwards they still talk about the wonderful evening. This experience has raised the living experience, the expectations and the confidence of all who participated. Without the involvement of Arts Access these people would not have discovered this world and their ability to enjoy this music etc."

M.M. Currie, Caloola Centre

EASE HOTLINE: 699 8497

ARTS ACCESS SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

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Ms Marie Van Baer
Disability Services
Public Library
328 Swanston Street
MELBOURNE
VIC 3000

If undelivered return to:

Arts Access Society Inc.
109-111 Sturt Street, South Melbourne, 3205. Australia.

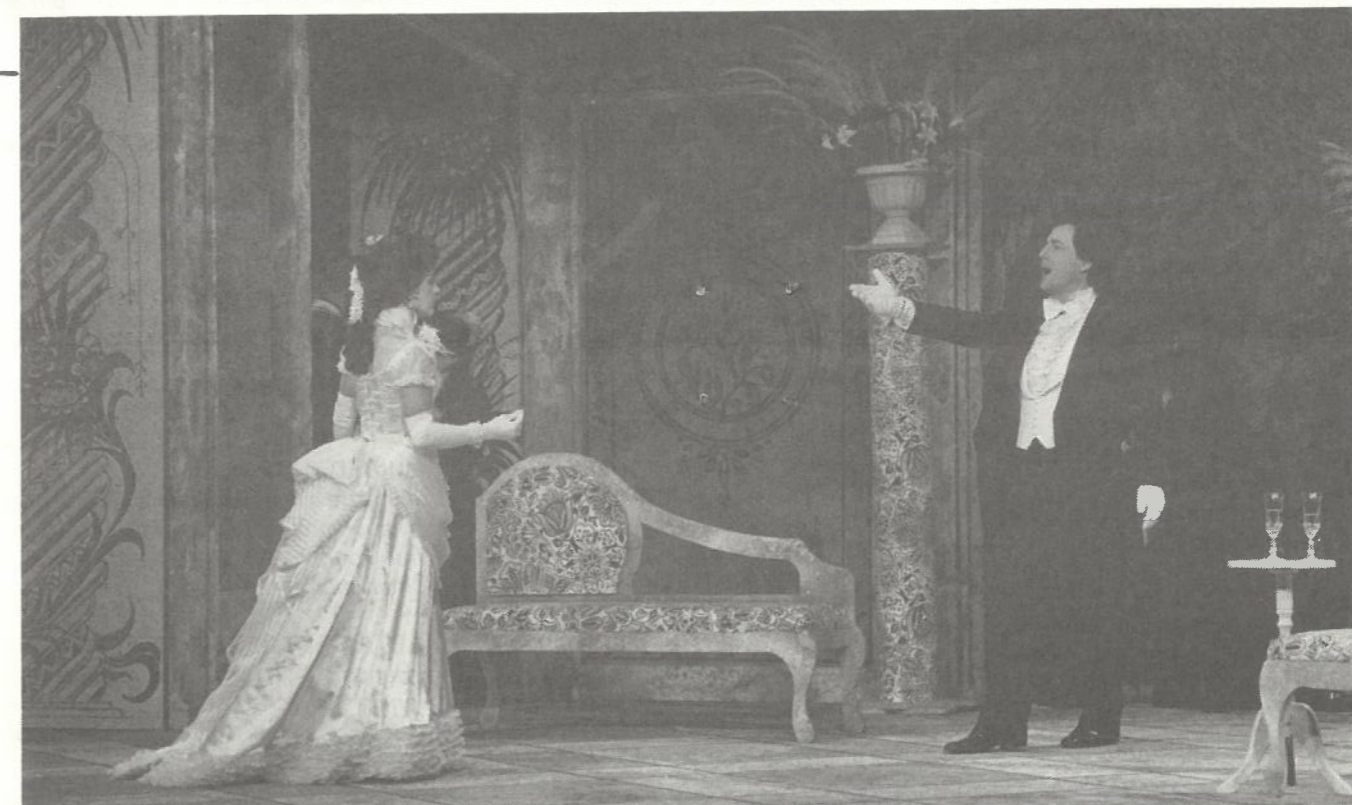
Ease

Newsletter of Arts Access Society Inc. - EASE Supplement



ARTS
Access

April 1989



Judith Henley (Violetta) and Geoffrey Harris (Alfred) in the Victorian State Opera's 1981 production of La Traviata. Photo: David Parker

OPERA '89

During 1988, EASE distributed a limited number of tickets to the Victorian State Opera (VSO) season. Opera makes for magnificent theatre.

This year's VSO season includes such stars as: Kiri Te Kanawa, Joan Carden, Marilyn Richardson and Geoffrey Chard. But at the opera you not only see the stars you are part of a cultural and social event. Each opera is magnificently designed to take full advantage of the huge State Theatre stage. Most performances are sold out and you are part of an enthusiastic audience.

Because of the success last year EASE will again be distributing tickets to some VSO performances. EASE is also finalising arrangements with The Australian Opera so this year will there will be a lot of opera.

Opera is wonderful entertainment to attend as a group. Unfortunately EASE may not be able to fulfil all the demand, but we can help you try other avenues. The VSO, for example, has a special BP Youth Subscription price (for those under 21) which averages out at \$11 per opera. The Australian Opera have a similar package. For details on this, the VSO season and The Australian Opera season please ring us. Alternatively see page three of this newsletter.

VENUE NOTES

MUSEUM OF VICTORIA

Corner of La Trobe and Russell Streets

Opening Times

10.00am-5.00pm seven days per week (entry to special exhibitions closes at 4.15pm).

Cost

Admission free. Some specialised major exhibitions have a charge. Ring 669 9888 for further details.

Parking

No "disabled" parking in either Russell Street or La Trobe Street. An area for buses can, however, be arranged. First contact the Museum's Community Services Department on 669 9997. Individuals may consider contacting the city council for advice ring 658 9800 ext. 2214.

Access

The Museum of Victoria is housed in an old building. Many of the display areas are on different levels or separated by stairwells. The Russell Street entrance offers access to the widest range of exhibitions, where it is possible to spend a morning or day without stress. However, to see the entire range of exhibitions by wheelchair it is necessary to take a very circuitous route, under the guidance of security personnel, through sections not open

to the public.

Wheelchair Access

A. Most direct access from Russell Street, through a gate in the corrugated iron fence. If you are unaccompanied it would be advisable to ring beforehand and Museum staff will keep an eye out for you. Attendants from the Russell Street foyer need to open the gate from the inside. This is not necessarily a pleasant entrance, workmen leave rubbish and construction materials on the path between gate and building. The ground floor exhibition areas however are extensive. The lift to other floors is a goods lift.

B. La Trobe Street, through the State Library. Front glass door is stiff. This entrance includes a hoist beside four steps and will only give direct access to the Swanston Street ground floor exhibition area as well as an elongated area down the Little Lonsdale Street side. A word of warning: Library hours do not always correspond to Museum hours, it is advisable to contact the Museum beforehand.

C. No access from Swanston Street - steps and revolving door.

Toilets

A. No suitable toilets at Russell Street entrance.

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EASE 699 8497
ENTERTAINMENT ACCESS
SERVICE

EASE aims to assist people with special needs to attend Melbourne's mainstream entertainment by providing information, social support and incentives. EASE also aims to encourage promoters and venue management to ensure physical access is feasible at all events within the Melbourne metropolitan region.

INFORMATION HOTLINE: 699 8497
Advice about venue accessibility, what's on and booking procedures.

BI-MONTHLY NEWSLETTER
Information, articles, letters and announcements of tickets available through EASE.

TICKET SCHEME
Low cost tickets to a variety of entertainment events. We would like to acknowledge the generous support over the past two months of: Melbourne Theatre Company, Michael Edgley International, Greg Hocking and Tim Woods, Victorian Football League, Dennis Smith Productions, Malcolm Cooke, John Hannsen, Victorian Arts Centre Trust, Melbourne Symphony Orchestra, Moomba, Australian Pops Orchestra.

EASE STAFF
Chris Milton, Co-ordinator
Barbara Milne, Administrative Assistant
Jeanette Pierce, Secretary/Bookkeeper

VOLUNTEERS
David Eustice
Christine Duncan
Noel Spurr

EASE FUNDING
The EASE co-ordinator's salary is presently funded by the Federal Department of Disability Services and the Victorian Department of Sport and Recreation.

BECOME A MEMBER OF ARTS ACCESS
The Arts Access Society created EASE and now supports the scheme. Arts Access is a non-profit organisation committed to providing access to the arts for those people disadvantaged by physical, intellectual, emotional or financial conditions. By becoming a member you not only support EASE but also the Society's work. For further information ring 699 8299 or write to Arts Access 109-111 Sturt Street, South Melbourne 3205.

THE MUSEUM OF VICTORIA AND ITS SERVICES
The Museum of Victoria hosts several major travelling exhibitions each year as well as an exciting range of temporary and permanent exhibitions. The Museum also provides an array of services which improve access to and appreciation of its collection.

Although housed in an old and uncompromising building large sections of the display areas can be reached without excessive difficulty. There are plans to build a new home south of the Yarra. Even so the old building offers a feeling of history quite appropriate to many of the displays.

The permanent exhibitions include: The Story of Victoria, Aboriginal Culture and Heritage (South East Australia), and Rural Victoria.

Most visiting exhibitions have an admission charge. Ring the Museum on 669 9888 if you would like more detail than is provided below. Visiting Exhibitions for 1989 will include:

LOOKS PHONEY (16 March – 1 October)
This exhibition, staged by TELECOM, looks at the telephone through the eyes of cartoonists, writers, artists, sculptors, toy designers, a telephone collector and songwriters.

GOLD OF THE PHARAOHS (22 March – 11 June)
This exhibition is a gesture of goodwill to Australia for its bicentenary by the Government of the Arab Republic of Egypt. It includes material unearthed from the royal tombs at Tanis in 1929 by French archaeologist Pierre Montet. The exhibition includes items from the tomb of the Pharaoh Psusennes I – items that are equalled only by those discovered in the tomb of Tutankhamen. Half this exhibition, accessed from Russell Street, is inaccessible to people using wheelchairs.

DO YOU WANT TO GO TO THE RACES?
Victoria Race Club will issue annual passes for disabled patrons – free of charge.
The pass is for a person with a disability plus an attendant, to attend Flemington Racecourse meetings. Car parking is also provided free. Provision is made to view the races overlooking the finish line, near the bookies (and close to the police rooms). Write to Sue Lloyd-Williams, Marketing/Publicity Manager, Victoria Racing Club, 1 Queens Road, Melbourne 3004. Give your name, address and disability and/or mobility (eg Wheelchair, crutches etc.).
Noel Spurr

VENUE NOTES *continued*
B. One multisex “disabled” toilet at La Trobe Street entrance. The area immediately outside the toilet cubicle is sometimes used for storage.
Phones
Public phones in Russell Street and Swanston Street foyers. May be too high for some.
Food
Coffee Shqp is accessible from the

HERITAGE WEEK (16 April – 23 April)
A week of activities for schools and the general public to highlight themes in the state's heritage. Part of a statewide program organised by the National Trust.
AUSTRALIAN DREAMING (21 September – June 1990)
Original Aboriginal art from Northern and Central Australia, currently touring the USA.
CAPTAIN COOK (15 August – 24 October)
An exhibition from the Maritime Museum, Greenwich, UK on the life and work of Captain James Cook.
COMMUNITY SERVICES DEPARTMENT
Community Services will discuss your needs, and interests and can tailor make activities to suit. If you are interested in discussing this or any of the examples below ring 669 9997.

GUIDED TOURS
Tours are available for families and groups by appointment. Tours of gallery areas are free, tours behind the scenes have a small charge.

ART/CRAFT SESSIONS
“Hands on” sessions with a theme for families and children in groups. 11 am – 3pm seven days a week during school holidays.

“TOUCH CART”
Sessions providing an opportunity to hold, feel and closely examine some of the collections.

OUTREACH PROGRAM
Community Services will visit organisations and groups with a specially prepared program, highlighting some aspect of the Museum's work and collection.

Swanston Street Foyer (access via La Trobe Street). No food available from Russell Street Entrance.
Helpful Hints
A. If you use a wheelchair advise the Museum (on 699 9888 or 699 9997) that you are on your way.
B. Don't plan to go to the toilet.
C. Plan to spend at least a morning in the building, there is a lot to see.

Subscription Seasons

This is the time of year when many subscription seasons begin. If you regularly attend theatre, opera or classical music it is possible to save money by buying subscription tickets. Although you have to pay for a season's entertainment in one go, you can save many dollars on expensive shows. Each company provides concession priced season tickets and some special deals, for example the Victorian State Opera BP Youth Subscriptions and The Australian Opera's Qantas Youth Series. For further information on subscription

Tickets 699 8497

MELBOURNE SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA
1989 Season
Venue: Melbourne Concert Hall
Cost: \$7.10
EASE has access to a limited number of tickets to the 1989 season. For more information please ring us.

THE CHERRY ORCHARD
by Anton Checkhov
Dates: 30th March - 6th May
Venue: Playhouse
Cost: \$12.20
The cast of this great play by a great playwright includes: Robyn Nevin, Neil Fitzpatrick, Helen Morse and Pamela Rabe. Anton Checkhov insisted that this play “is not a drama - but a comedy”. Yet it is a poignant blend of pathos and laughter.

VICTORIAN STATE OPERA THE AUSTRALIAN OPERA
Limited tickets will be available through EASE for some performances by these companies. Unfortunately details were unavailable at the time this newsletter was prepared. EASE should have details by the end of March.

How to Book with EASE

To book tickets with EASE, ring 699 8497, discuss with Barbara or Chris what you would like to see and where you would like to sit. Make out a cheque to Arts Access for the appropriate amount and post it to Arts Access, 109-111 Sturt Street South Melbourne 3205. We will either hold the tickets for you, post them or arrange for them to be at the box office – whichever you prefer. It does help us if you can provide a stamped, self-addressed envelope. All prices quoted include a \$1 commission on every ticket.

The above shows are only a selection of tickets available through EASE. We continually have a variety of tickets coming through the office. To make the best use of our services you need to ring us regularly. The more often you talk to us the more we know of your interests and the more often we will think of you.

LOVE WITH THE LIGHTS OUT
by Graeme Turner
Dates: 19th April – 6th May 8pm Venue: Carlton Courthouse Theatre, 349 Drummond Street, Carlton. Limited Wheelchair access. Cost: \$12, \$8 concession (tickets are not available through EASE). Group bookings of 10 or more \$10, \$7 concession. Bookings: Carlton Courthouse Theatre (347 2562) or Dover Bookshop, 178 Faraday Street, Carlton (347 7868). A warm and funny play that takes the audience into a different sensual realm. Cynthia and Keith's is a love affair with a difference – both are blind. Turner, himself visually impaired, writes of their awkward and poignant moments with wry humour and deep understanding. Be prepared for an unusual ending.

seasons ring us or:

MELBOURNE SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA
SUBSCRIPTIONS: 62 7471
MUSICA VIVA (Classical Music): 62 3421
VICTORIAN STATE OPERA: 62 3421
THE AUSTRALIAN OPERA: 62 3421
MELBOURNE THEATRE COMPANY: 654 4000
PLAYBOX THEATRE COMPANY: 650 4888

ESSINGTON LEWIS: I AM WORK
by John O'Donoghue
Days: 8pm Tuesdays to Saturdays
Dates: 28th April - 13th May
Venue: The Church Theatre
Cost: \$6
Essington Lewis, legendary giant of Australian industry, masterminded the building of BHP. Proud, resolute and fiercely nationalist, he guided the Big Australian from the age of horse to the age of steel. This play, by John O'Donoghue, dramatically reconstructs the public and private face of this elusive, conscience-driven man through a swiftly changing scenario which blends song, dance, burlesque and drama, passionately involving the audience in the process. N.B. Tickets to the preview performances on 24, 25, and 26th April 8pm can be purchased for \$5 at the theatre, phone bookings 819 1818.

THE VOCAL CONSORT
Date: 2.30pm Sunday 16th April
Venue: St. Alban's (Corner of Orrong and Wynnstay Roads, Armadale)
Cost: \$6
As members of the Australian Boys Choir leave the choir and their voices settle they have the opportunity to join The Vocal Consort. Music chosen for this programme covers a thousand years of music history to capture the richness of the tradition of choral music for male voices.

This Month's Choice Selections