

Manipulation

official organ of the
Puppeteers' Co-op of
Melbourne

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ACTORS' EQUITY.

At the last Co-op meeting, Greg Jones, organizer from Actors' Equity, came to speak. Here is a summary of his talk.

Equity has always maintained that a puppeteer is a performer, and therefore eligible for membership. A performer can join Equity if he/she can show proof of professional engagement (i.e. bookings). The entry fee and dues structure (see table below) can be, and often is, reduced on grounds of economic hardship.

There has been a restructuring within Equity just recently. The old system of Quarterly General Meetings has been replaced by one of an Annual General Meeting in September, supplemented by Special General Meetings as required, and Group and Cast meetings dealing with matters of special interest to the members concerned. Special interest meetings are held whenever and however the members see fit - there is no formal structure and no minimum number imposed by Equity.

Equity prepares submissions to inquiries, gives advice on grant submissions, handles workers' compensation claims, and can refer you to accountants and insurance companies conversant with matters of concern to performers.

A Free Legal Aid service has just been set up. It offers members free first consultation for advice and assistance with any legal problem, including the making of a will, consumer complaints, tenancy problems, buying or selling a house, etc. Solicitors are available for this service between 5.00pm and 7.00 pm on Fridays, so people needn't lose time from work, or alternatively at a convenient time during office hours.

Entry fee and dues structure.

| | | | | | | | | | |
|--------|-------|-----|-----|-------|------|------|------|-------|---------------------|
| \$100 | entry | fee | and | \$ 45 | dues | each | year | | actor/announcer. |
| \$ 40 | " | " | " | \$45 | " | " | " | | ballet/chorus |
| \$ 15 | " | " | " | \$21 | " | " | " | | TV extra |
| \$7.50 | " | " | " | \$21 | " | " | " | | theatre supernumery |

BUT IT IS POSSIBLE TO NEGOTIATE PAYMENTS SUITED TO YOUR INCOME.

Greg also spoke on other matters of interest.

Much was said on the subject of being ripped off. It seems that whenever you do a performance for a school, shopping centre, council, library, community centre, in fact whenever you are engaged by an organization, you are being employed by that organization, and they are obliged to pay you at award rates. In other words, they should not refuse to pay you a fee based on award rates. (see overleaf for a summary of current weekly and casual rates for performance) And, by the way, you and your audience are generally covered by their insurance. If you perform on your own premises or do a performance that is entirely of your own generation, you need your own insurance.

Television (this won't surprise you) is an area rife with instances of exploitation of performers. Channel 10's Early Bird Show was a classic case of "No, we don't pay you for being on (BEING) our programme, but think of what the exposure will do for you". Documentary makers resist paying performers when they film them at work. The ABC has a policy of only paying award rates to union members - non-members can take what they're offered or starve. Channel 7 made \$220 million last year. The 9 Network made \$343 million. The ABC is constricted more by lack of vision than lack of funds. TV can afford you. Also, you can backbill a television station for work done in the last five years for which you feel you have been inadequately paid.

The question of structuring your performing group as a company or as a partnership was discussed. It is an expensive business to form a company (some hundreds of dollars) but it affords certain protections not available to partnerships. Greg suggested that one type of company, the company limited by guarantee, can mitigate the problems caused by bankruptcy. In this arrangement, the company's articles of association state a certain amount of money to be contributed by each member - e.g. \$10 - and this amount, the guarantee limit, is the total liability of each member should the company go bust. In the case of a partnership, each partner is liable for all the debts of the group, so that personal property and income are just as vulnerable as group assets when debts can't be met. On the question of pay within the group: if a group's income is not large, members cannot pay themselves at award rates. If you are a company, as directors of that company, members are responsible for all financial organization, and cannot be bound by any award.

Greg also provided a little background on Equity's past lack of involvement with puppetry.

Awards are either Federal or State determined. State determinations cover everyone not named in the Federal award. Puppeteers were deliberately not named under the Federal award back when the Elizabethan Theatre Trust was setting up the Marionnette Theatre of Australia. The Trust maintained that the cost of Federal award payments to puppeteers would be prohibitive, and Equity agreed to allow them to fix their own rates of pay,

In the past, in Victoria, some employers, notably the Parry Marshall Puppet Theatre and Pilgrim Puppet Theatre, actively discouraged union membership among their employees, and fostered the belief that puppeteers were not even eligible for Equity membership. Consequently, few Victorian puppeteers have joined the union, there has been little feedback to the union, and thus little union involvement in our field.

Greg Jones is an expuppeteer himself, and sympathetic to issues of concern to puppeteers. If you have any enquiries on any of the subjects touched on above, you can contact him at Actors' Equity, 147 Wellington Parade South, Jolimont 3002. The Phone numbers - 63 6689 and 634878.

Our thanks, Greg, for your generous response to our request for information.

MEETINGS.

The next Puppeteers' Co-op meeting will be on Monday 21st July, at 8pm, at B'Spell's workshop, 11 Abbott Street, Abbotsford, opposite the Collingwood Footy Ground. Bring some coffee - B'Spell's running out.

The next Puppetry Guild meeting will be held on Thursday 24th July, at Handspace's workshop, 108 Gertrude Street, Fitzroy (3rd Floor). The subject of the meeting will be a report on the UNIMA puppet festival just held in Washington, given by Axel Axelrad. Be there at 8.00 pm, bring a snack.

PEOPLE.

Helen Rickards and Ken Evans are in Europe at the moment, performing the latest Handspace show, the Bunyip of Berkeley's Creek. They appeared at the Washington puppet festival, are performing in London at the moment, and will be part of the Edinburgh Fringe Festival in September before returning to Melbourne. Rumour has it they're longing for news from home - you can write to them at 32 A, Surbiton Hill Park, Surbiton, Surrey, United Kingdom.

Peter Seaborn was in town for a brief visit the other week. He brought with him a set of Commedia masks which he has just completed for a Sydney production. Beautiful craftsmanship, and an inspiration to wear!

Maeve Vella leaves Melbourne next week, for a stint in Sydney on the Marionette Theatre of Australia's revival of the Magic Pudding. Some discipline at last, Maeve.

The New Boob - Ann, Lindy Ferguson and Toni Bruns are constructing a show for kindergartens and would appreciate some assistance. You can contact them at 28 St. Vincent's Place, Albert Park, phone .

GREG Jones has a 6 foot centre bridge marionette theatre for sale, including numerous marionettes. No reasonable offer refused. Contact him through Actors' Equity

Nigel Triffitt will be staging the new, improved Momma's Little Horror Show at the Last Laugh in January of 1981.

THE GARDNER PUPPET THEATRE.

Bonnie Gardner has kindly provided some notes on her current programme...

"UNDER SHARK BAY" - for primary schools. This programme begins with a name fishing game as a participation item by the whole audience. This not only sets the scene for the play to follow but teaches ways of simple puppet making as well. The play itself has a historical setting during

the voyages of William Dampier down the coast of Western Australia in 1688 and 1698. Basically it is a fantasy story about a ship boy, Frederick who falls overboard from the Cygnet to be rescued by a pirate, and later involved in an underwater adventure. Frederick, a very shy boy, discovers his own self-esteem during his adventures. This story is told live by Ralph and Lorrie, making use of a theatre with scenery and lighting effects. Music only is on tape. We vary the play slightly for different age groups, more emphasis on history for the older children. Puppets are both glove and rod, with one simple marionette and shadow puppet included.

PRE-SCHOOL PROGRAMME. This is especially written for very young children. It consists of two short plays done in the theatre with glove puppets at the beginning and end of the programme. This year we use a family situation story and one using Australian animal puppets. Between these theatre plays we do participation items with the children in front of the theatre, including our two caterpillars, where all the children in the audience hold onto the long caterpillars and dance them around the kindergarten.

In second term we have many more pre-school programmes than primary ones, but we recommend visitors to see the new primary programme "Under Shark Bay" if at all possible.

GARDNER PUPPET THEATRE GIG GUIDE.

Primary School Bookings. (UNDER SHARK BAY)

| | | | |
|-----------|---|------|------|
| July 24, | Dallas P.S. Kiewa Cr. Broadmeadows | 1.15 | 2.30 |
| July 25 | Werribee Sth. P.S. Diggers Rd. | 1.30 | |
| July 31 | Burnley P.S. Bellevue St. | 9.30 | |
| and | Chelsea Hts. P.S. Chelsea Rd. | 1.15 | |
| August 5 | Gembrook P.S. Main Rd. | 1.15 | 2.30 |
| August 6 | Koon Park P.S. St. Vigons Rd., Reservoir | 1.15 | 2.30 |
| August 12 | Coldstream P.S. Ingrams Rd. | 1.15 | |
| August 18 | St. Scholasticus, Starling St., Bennettswood | 1.15 | |
| August 19 | Chelsea P.S. Argyle Ave. | 1.15 | 2.30 |
| August 20 | Blackburn P.S. Whitehorse Rd. | 1.15 | 2.30 |
| Sept. 9 | Thomastown P.S. High St. | 1.15 | 2.30 |
| Sept. 15 | Fawkner East P.S. | 1.15 | |
| Sept. 16 | Woodville P.S. Warringa Cr., Werribee | 1.15 | 2.30 |
| Sept. 19 | Tecoma P.S. Main Rd. | 1.15 | 2.30 |

ON TOUR 22 to 26 Sept., Seymour, Corryong, Mt. Beauty, Bright, Beechworth

GARDNER PUPPET THEATRE

Pre-school bookings :

| | | | |
|---------|--|-------|------|
| July 17 | Greenbrook K. 31 Lowalde Dr. Epping | 9.00 | |
| | Thomastown K. Harbord St. | 11.00 | |
| | Dalton Rd. K. Lalor | | 1.30 |
| July 21 | Cooinda K. Dinsdale Rd. Boronia | 9.00 | |
| | Stanley Cochrane Mem. K. 33 Hitcham Rd. | | 1.30 |
| | Mooroolbark K. 6 Grey St. | 11.00 | |
| July 22 | Serrell St. K. East Malvern | 9.00 | |
| | Lloyd St. Baptist K. East Malvern | 11.00 | |
| | St. John's K. 2 Carmichael Rd. | | 1.30 |
| | East Oakleigh | | |
| July 23 | Vistaway K. Werribee | 9.00 | |
| | Tramoo K. Honour Ave. Werribee | 11.00 | |
| | Mamor K. Werribee | | 1.15 |
| July 24 | Broadmeadows K. 38 Westmere Cres. | 10.30 | |
| July 28 | Baily Reserve K. 1202 E. Boundary Rd. | | |
| | E. Bentleigh | 9.00 | |
| | Caulfield E. 55 Orrong Rd. Elsternwick | 11.00 | |
| | N. Clayton K. 19 Dover St. | | 1.30 |
| July 29 | Louisa St. K. Kilsyth | 9.00 | |
| | Maroondah K. 16 Tyon St. Ringwood | 11.00 | |
| | Parkmore K. 41 Jolimont Rd. Forest Hills | | 1.30 |

FOR MORE DATES, CONTACT 870 8998

HANDSPAN GIG GUIDE

| | | | |
|---------|---------------------------|----------------------|------|
| July 16 | Carringbush Library | All Day | |
| July 17 | Lalor Park Library | AM & early afternoon | |
| | Hawthorn Library | | 4.00 |
| July 18 | Glen Waverley Library | | 4.00 |
| July 20 | Community Arts Conference | | 3.00 |
| July 21 | Verdale P.S., Vermont | 9.30 | 1.15 |
| | | 11.00 | 2.30 |
| July 22 | Heathmont K. | 10.00 | |
| July 24 | Melton Playgroups | 10.30 | 1.30 |
| July 25 | Nunawading P.S. | 9.30 | |
| | | 10.45 | |
| July 28 | Lutheran P.S. HORSHAM | 9.30 | |
| | Quantong P.S. " | 11.30 | |
| | Brimpaen P.S. " | | 1.30 |
| July 29 | St. Michaels P.S. " | AM - 2 performances | |
| | Horsham High | PM | |

| | | |
|---------|-----------------------------|-------|
| July 30 | St. Stephens K., Gardenvale | 11.00 |
| July 31 | St. Kilda & Balaclava K. | 10.00 |

FOR MORE DETAILS, PHONE 415978.

EXTRACT from the DETERMINATION OF THE ENTERTAINMENT EMPLOYEES (PERFORMERS)
BOARD OF VICTORIA.

Minimum rates of pay for artists performing at dances, cabarets, hotels restaurants and theatres from January 4th, 1980.

| | |
|---|-----------|
| WEEKLY : Variety artist/entertainer/actor | \$ 167.70 |
| Chorus / ballet | \$ 159.20 |

Holiday Pay : A sum equalling $1/12$ of the total ordinary wages paid during the engagement shall be paid as Annual Holiday Payment at the END of the engagement, regardless of the length of engagement or salary - Annual Holiday Payment is calculated on the actual wage paid to an artist and not on the award minimum.

In addition, a sum equal to $17\frac{1}{2}\%$ of one twelfth of the applicable rate shall be paid as a loading.

Sunday work : one third of the weekly rate additional to the weekly rate.

Public Holidays : one sixth of the weekly rate additional to the weekly rate for Labour Day, Good Friday & Christmas Day. One twelfth of the weekly rate additional to the weekly rate for all other holidays.

| | | |
|--------------|--|----------------------------|
| REHEARSALS : | During the 3 weeks preceding the opening performance - | |
| a) | up to 36 hours per week | $3/4$ weekly rate per week |
| b) | Between 36 and 48 hours | the weekly rate " " |
| c) | over 48 hours per week | overtime rates |

| | | |
|----|--|-----------------------|
| | Prior to the 3 weeks preceding performance - | |
| a) | up to 20 hours per week | $1/2$ weekly rate " " |
| b) | between 20 and 30 hours | $3/4$ weekly rate " " |
| c) | between 30 and 40 hours | the weekly rate " " |
| d) | over 40 hours | overtime rates |

CASUAL : A casual engagement is paid by the performance and not by the day.

| classification | rate per performer | annual holiday pay | total minimum per performer |
|----------------------------|--------------------|--------------------|-----------------------------|
| Variety artist/entertainer | \$ 38.57 | \$ 3.78 | \$ 42.35 |
| actor | \$ 32.14 | \$ 3.15 | \$ 35.29 |
| Chorus/dancers | \$ 30.51 | \$ 2.99 | \$ 33.50 |

SUNDAYS : minimum of double the above rates. PUBLIC HOLIDAYS : 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ times the above rates, except Labour Day, G. Friday & Christmas Day, which are double the above rates. REHEARSAL RATES : \$7.35 for first hour and \$5.67 per half-hour or part thereof after that.

FOCUS INCORPORATED ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING.

For those people who are Focus members and who either wish to nominate members for the committee or to Vote in the elections -

- 1) Nominations close on the 9th of July.
- 2) The AGM will be held on the 29th of July, at the R.W. Close Committee Room, 1st floor, Hartley Building, Adelaide College of Advanced Education, Kintore Ave, Adelaide. ((As this letter only arrived on the 9th, it makes me wonder how interstate members are supposed to nominate. Ed.))

PUPPETRY COOPERATIVE

People interested in joining, or finding out about, The Victorian Puppetry Coop should contact B'spell Performance Troupe on 414793. The Coop is establishing itself as an information and resources organization for people interested in learning about, promoting or working in the field of puppetry.

THE COMMUNITY ARTS CONFERENCE - the major field of Arts activity
in THE NEXT TEN YEARS.

The Victoria Hotel, Little Collins Street, Melbourne.
July 19th to the 22nd.

Increasingly important in the cultural life of Australia is area of Community Arts. It has been three years since a Community Arts Conference has taken place in Australia. This conference, organized by The Community Arts Cooperative is important to those people actively involved in Youth Theatre.

On the Sunday of the Conference, July 20th, VYTA is holding a gettogether of COMPANYS PERFORMING FOR YOUNG PEOPLE. This is an opportunity to meet the people who we will be working for in the next ten years. Here you can introduce yourselves, EXPLAIN THE SORT OF WORK YOUR COMPANY DOES and get to know the points of view of other people working in your field.

This event is not to be missed.
The Venue is The Jaccaranda Room, The Victoria Hotel, 2-30 pm,
July 20th.

YOU'RE ON, YOUTH THEATRE FESTIVAL

VITA & THE DRAMA RESOURCE CENTRE are presenting seven days of non-stop theatre activities for and by young people. The program includes - children from city, suburban and country secondary schools presenting their own material, and three days of Asian theatre in music, dance and drama.

This Festival follows the success of Melbourne's first Youth Theatre Festival, in Melbourne last year, when over 1,000 children attended.

The Festival will take place in the theatre complex at the Rop Factory, 29 Dawson Street, Brunswick, from the 4th to the 10th of August.

Schools from all over the state have been invited to attend, both as performers and as audience. The festival will bring together children of widely divergent back-grounds to see and discuss a rich variety of entertainment. The experience will encourage a broadening of perspectives and lead to a more exciting and vital youth theatre for the state of Victoria.

The theatre traditions of the different countries of the Asian continent and islands share a variety and sophistication of which most Australians are unaware. 'YOU'RE ON' offers a rare opportunity for the children of our State to be audience to a showcase of the many different styles of Asian performance. This can only enrich their own perceptions of the theatre arts and eventually of the perceptions of The Australian Community as a whole.

'YOU'RE ON' represents a mile-stone in the cultural development of this state. For the first time, children from different back-grounds and perspectives can come together and show each other their views of the world as expressed in theatre and drama activities.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT - SUE GALLEY, DRAMA RESOURCE CENTRE, 347 4602. OR DON ASHBY, B'SPELL PERFORMANCE TROUPE, 414793. N