



Greetings I T Friends



On Nov. 7 last year I turned 78. It was the opening night of *Vanity Fair* and I was cavorting on the Odeon stage dressed in a Lycra leotard with what hair I could muster dyed pink. What was he thinking I hear you ask. Well, surrounded by beautiful women, great friends and most importantly, in the cast of an I T play is my idea of a perfect party.

You see it just ain't that easy to get the nod, so strict is the professional standard Rob maintains.

This was reinforced by I T Chairperson, Tom Carney, in his, as usual, inspiring report at our recent A.G.M. Tom related his efforts to obtain a part in an I T production following his return from Switzerland in 1992 where he had acted in a couple of English-speaking plays.

Seeing "Hauptmann" he was impressed and, though performing with other amateur groups, his goal was to perform with this company. He related, "I always found the IT productions to be without fault, close to or at a professional standard. The quality of the productions was much higher than any of the plays I was in. And my fellow actors were often talking about Independent Theatre, especially the fact that they didn't hold open auditions, and wondering how one might get into an IT show. Occasionally someone I had acted with did get cast in an IT show, and I guess the best word to describe my reaction was "jealousy". Finally in 2000, after a few earlier attempts, he was cast in "The Front Page", and as he says, the rest is history.

His reason for relating this insight was to show where I T sits in the Adelaide theatre community, from an actor's point of view. He also posed the question, "How do Adelaide audiences view Independent Theatre? Are we considered an amateur or professional company?" His feeling is that we are viewed as somewhere in between.

He went on. "There are many amateur theatre companies in Adelaide, at least twenty. Some are community-based, and probably get most of their audience from their community. Most of these actually have the name of the community in their title. We definitely don't fit into this category. Others perform musicals only. We don't fit there either.

Some are not associated with any particular community, and do either plays only, or a combination of plays and musicals. Do we fit in with these groups? I don't really think so. For the most part, these companies perform what I would call popular well-known plays by well-known playwrights, usually comedies.

Amateur groups that I think are somewhat similar to ourselves are the University of Adelaide Theatre Guild and Mixed Salad Productions. They tend to do a mixture of well-known and lesser-known plays and playwrights, comedies, dramas and occasionally Shakespeare.

Strictly speaking, we are an amateur company, because

we are all volunteers. However, I think we would all agree that our productions are of a professional standard. So how do we compare to the professional companies in Adelaide?

On the top of the list is the State Theatre Company. They perform about eight plays a year, which allows them to have quite a bit of variety in their program. They often offer what I would call "challenging" theatre like ourselves, something you seldom find in the amateur companies.

Other professional groups are Brink Productions, (much smaller than State Theatre, performing one or two shows a year, mostly new plays, adaptations or new translations), Windmill Performing Arts and Patch Theatre Company which are professional children's theatre groups, and Vitalstatistix, a professional women's theatre group based in Port Adelaide. I don't feel that we are competing for audience with these companies.

So, where does Independent Theatre fit in the Adelaide theatre community puzzle, from an audience perspective? Right in the middle, I think, between amateur and professional. Is being in the middle an advantage or a disadvantage? Some would say it is a disadvantage. Some would say that we are too expensive and too serious for the amateur theatregoer, and that, for the professional theatregoer, we are not, well, "professional". However, I think being in the middle should be an advantage. We can offer quality theatre that challenges the amateur theatregoer who wants a bit more than light comedies and musicals, giving them something to think about after they leave the theatre. And for the professional theatregoer, we can offer productions of an extremely high standard at a much cheaper price.

The challenge that we have, as a company, is how to market ourselves to both of these groups. Is it a challenge that we can meet? I think we'll probably need a bit of help, from our benefactor, patrons, supporters, and possibly even some marketing expertise. But, in the words of the leader of a much larger organisation than this one, I say, **YES WE CAN !!!**

Mister Johnson feels the same. The title character in our first production of 2010 never gives up on his dream. It leads him through a series of colourful adventures full of African music and dance. It also gets him into some serious trouble.



Get your friends & relatives to check the details of this joyous yet moving story, (shown here in rehearsal), at our above web site where they can now buy tickets online.



Regards Allen Munn