

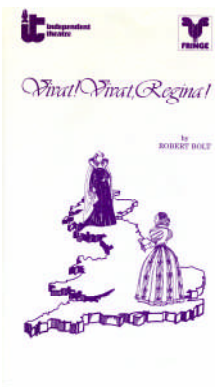


Greetings I T friends

Next year we will celebrate our 25th birthday. Watching a rehearsal of our final offering for this year, *Major Barbara*, I reflected on the fact that half the cast of this brilliant play would have been pre schoolers or perhaps not even born when we launched in 1984.

As I marvelled at the talent of this group of young actors and the amazing performances of all the cast, I began day dreaming about the great many actors with whom I have had the absolute pleasure of working during these past 25 years. (I should have been concentrating on my lines but hey, I'm an actor.)

The cast of our first production, *Vivat Vivat Regina*, contained actors whose day jobs were many and varied. We had lawyers, teachers, salesmen, a bike maker, a jazz drummer, a barber, a singing telegram and even a male stripper. Not that those talents were on show during this wonderfully costumed telling of the Mary, Queen of Scots versus Elizabeth I saga.



It was great fun, but the professional standard we achieved through Rob Croser's vision and direction was way beyond that which should have been the case for such a young company. Admittedly a prominent member of the S. A. community, sitting in the front row, vomited during the opening night performance.

Hopefully that had more to do with the fact that corn flakes on an actor's face look remarkably like scabs. Even on stage the sight of Lord Darnley's pox of cereals was enough to make anyone sick.



I remember there was some discussion about rolling a cabbage down the aisle following Mary's off stage beheading.

I doubt that happened but what are these blokes looking at? Incidentally the slim one in pink in the centre of the picture is Adrian Shirley. A master of many theatrical skills, Adrian is one of four of us still active in I T from the original cast, crew and committee of the company.

From the Royal Courts of England and Scotland we have journeyed through numerous Courts of Law.

Through the pens of Shaw, Shakespeare and Steinbeck, Ayckbourn and Albee, Wilde and Williams and many others, we have ridden an elephant in India, the odd train or three, an old jalopy on Route 66, a raft on the Mississippi and a ship to Israel.

We got caught up in the French revolution and ancient Greek wars. We sat in a leaky old church in South Africa and visited Venice a couple of times. We walked the battlements of Elsinore, dug graves in Ireland and had some terrific sword fights but I'm afraid we can never go back to Manderley again.

There were 35 names on that original programme. The number appearing on subsequent programmes has now passed 1000. Traditional names like Sue, Jane, David and John have now been joined by Fahad, Makarand Rajesh and Sri, by Shedrick, Chika, Ajang and Pon.

Three of the American theatre's most acclaimed personalities, Frank Galati, John Marans and our great friend and benefactor, John Logan have come to Adelaide to work with us. They remain firmly connected to the company. It was through Frank's endorsement that Rob was able to adapt John Steinbeck's *East of Eden* and meet with Elaine Steinbeck. She told him that the great author would have been delighted with this interpretation of the novel. High praise indeed!

Of course, we actors could not have had so much fun and adventure without the support of our management committee. From finance to front of house they work tirelessly to maintain the standards of the company.

Again, over the years committee members have come from a great variety of backgrounds. We even currently have an Olympic Games medallist but no male stripper (that we know of).

Regardless of all the magnificent assistance from back stage to box office the fate of the enterprise is in the hands of actors. Having to be as mad as George III to adopt this muse they must breathe life into a story or an idea. They must move you, our revered Patrons and Subscribers and indeed the general public, to laugh, cry and reflect on every aspect of the human condition.

At each performance these fallible creatures get one shot at getting it right, "to hold as 'twere the mirror up to nature etc. etc.". No plasma screen can possibly present the flesh and blood tension that is generated by living, breathing (and sometimes spitting) actors on a stage.

We have been gifted with the enormous talents of a great many actors over the past 25 years. The present cast of *Major Barbara* is right up there with the best of them. Pictured here are a few of them in rehearsal.



Funny critters, actors, but I'm so proud to be one of them.

Regards

Allen Munn



independent theatre inc

PO Box 435 UNLEY B C 5061 South Australia 5062
ABN 2740 3529 904 www.independenttheatre.org.au
