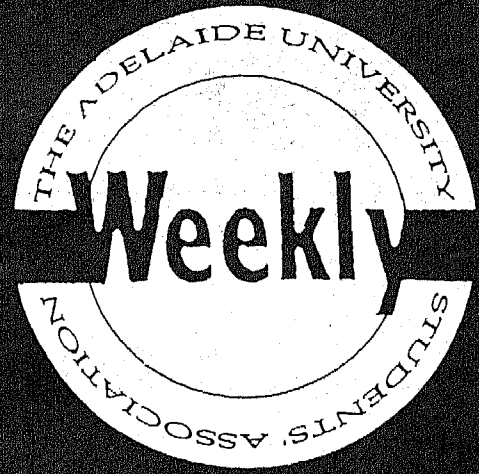
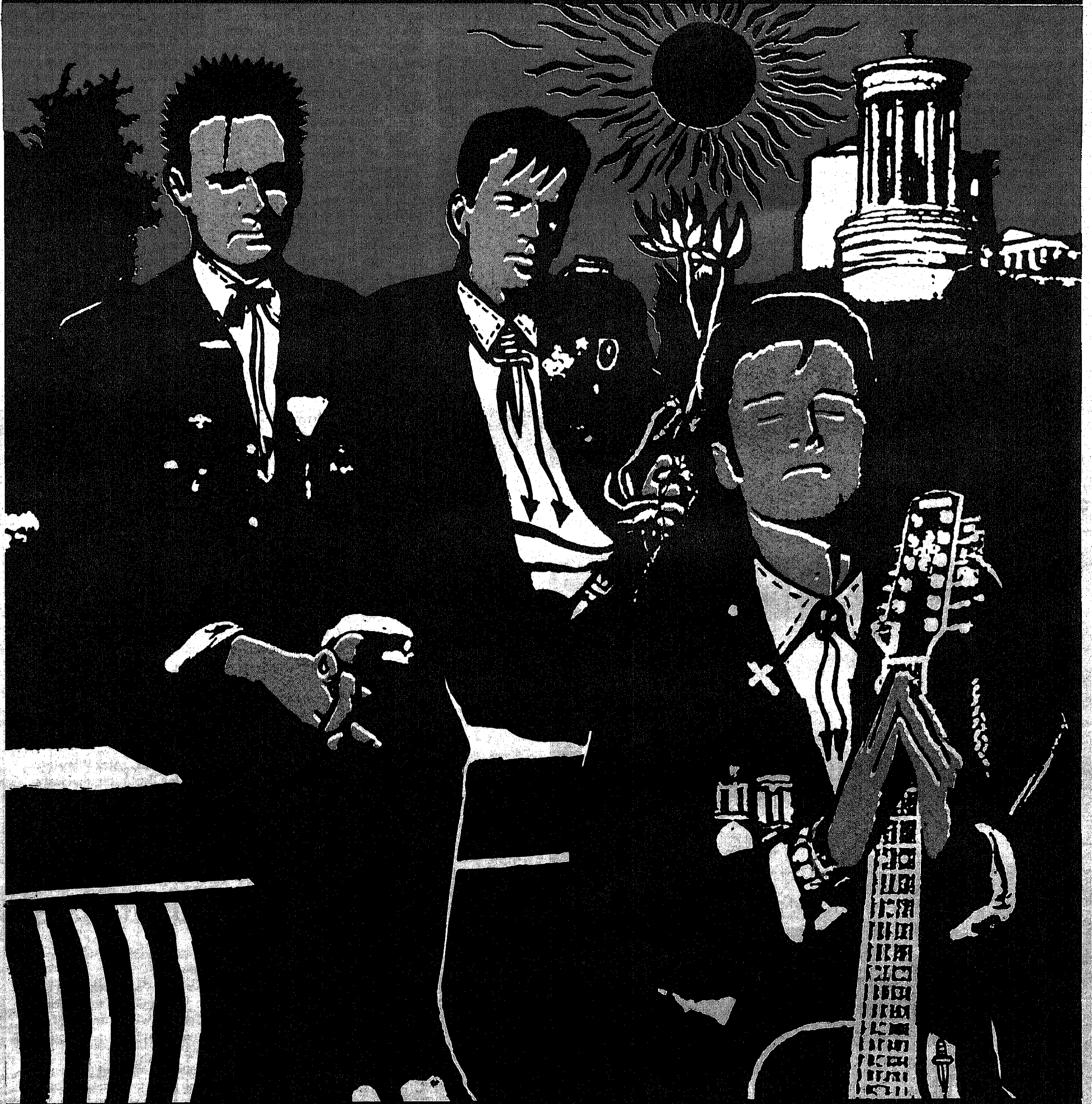


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# OnDit



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*doug anthony allstars*

*interview inside*



# NUS on \$ in Education

On March 7th, last week at SAIT, the National Union of Students held one of the ten debates held around the country entitled "Who Pays for Education? - Financing Higher Education in Australia". There were to be three speakers: Dr Bruce Chapman (consultant to the Committee on Higher Education Funding), Alexander Downer (Federal Liberal member for Mayo) and Mike Elliot (Australian Democrats Education Spokesperson). Unfortunately, Dr Chapman was delayed and did not speak, however, the debate was an interesting one and well attended.

The purpose of the debate was to provide information to students about the various issues involved in higher education funding. A copy of "Financing Higher Education" the broadsheet is available from the SAUA if you missed the debate.

Here you will find printed the opening notes from Kate Deverall, who is the President of our National Union.

Mel Yuen

## The Financing of Higher Education Debates

One of the main roles of the National Union of Students is to ensure that you, as students, are fully aware of all the major aspects of education policy that affect your careers and future. The forthcoming Federal Election is an example of a time when you need all the available information so that you can make a choice about how you vote. As part of our efforts to provide you with this information, NUS has organised a series of public debates on campuses around the country on the theme *The Financing of Higher Education*. At ten campuses across Australia, students will hear a variety of perspectives on how higher education should be paid for - ultimately, one of the big questions for you to work out in the lead-up to the election.

## Financing Higher Education

Over recent years, there has been an enormous amount of debate in Australia, and indeed around the world, about how best to pay for the higher education system. At the end of the day, higher education is a very expensive business - in 1990, the Federal Government will spend over \$3.3 billion on the system. In an era of declining Government spending on a range of programs, considerable discussion has occurred on where this money should come from.

In the 1990 Federal election, this question will be one of the many issues that you will have to take into account when you cast your vote. The different parties have very different positions concerning how higher education should be paid for; hopefully, the Financing Higher Education debates will go some way towards giving you the information you need to make a decision.

The major development over recent years in terms of higher education financing has been the growth in support from many quarters for a user-pays system of payment. In such a system, students are regarded as individual users of

higher education, and are called upon to pay for this use. The two major variants of user-pays schemes on offer in this election, albeit very different ones, are the Government's Higher Education Contribution Scheme, and the Coalition's \$1200 up-front fee.

The National Use of Students remains opposed to the introduction of user-pays systems in higher education. On a theoretical level, what user-pays does is to suggest that students receiving financial benefits from higher education do not repay some significant part of this extra benefit through the concept of a sliding progressive tax scale. This is clearly nonsense. If you as a student make more money because of your education, then you pay for that in a variety of ways - most notably in the fact that your weekly tax payment represents a higher proportion of your wage than it would have otherwise.

The whole notion of user-pays tends to negate one of the fundamental principals of expenditure on education - that it is an investment, not a cost. There is a fairly clear link in countries around the world between the level of expenditure on higher education and the overall economic productivity of the country. While \$3.3 billion is undoubtedly an enormous amount of money, the returns on that expenditure to the Government and to the community as a whole are even larger. For example, higher tax revenue through large numbers of people moving into higher tax brackets. Reduced expenditure on public programs such as health due to research improvements. Increased retention rates at schools flowing

from better-trained teachers. The Federal Government is investing \$3.3 billion in higher education on our behalf - and the returns are available to, and will benefit, all Australians.

Even allowing for this principle, there is still some merit to the argument that the Commonwealth purse is not deep enough to cover all this expenditure. So where should extra money come from? Currently, the only suggestion that has really been publicly canvassed has been the adoption of individual user-pays schemes such as the Higher Education Contribution Scheme or the \$1200 fee. NUS believes that reliance on these forms of financing will not only fail to bring enough money to maintain and expand higher education, it will ultimately have very negative effects on the socio-economic composition of the system. Any form of financing higher education must have the dual aims of a major funding increase with not only no adverse effects on equity, but actually an improvement. On these grounds, NUS supports the principle of a small levy on business to help fund higher education.

The Federal Government is in the process of introducing the national Training Guarantee, which is basically a scheme to ensure that all companies spend a minimum amount on training. If companies don't fulfill the criteria, they will pay a levy to the Government to be used on training. NUS believes that this principle should be extended into higher education as soon as possible.

National Union of Students

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March 7 - 17 7.30 p.m.

(excluding Sunday & Monday)

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## PRODUCTION NOTES

ON DIT is the weekly newspaper of the Student's Association of the University of Adelaide. The editors have complete editorial control except when threatened with legal action. Opinions expressed in the paper are not necessarily our own.

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## ATTENTION ALL JOURNALISTS!

Thanks to everybody who came along to the Press Club workshops last week.

The portfolios with examples of news stories and reviews in them will be ready on Wednesday. Due to problems with the allocation of pigeon holes in various departments, we will be unable to send them out to you. Just come into the office anytime on Wednesday and pick them up.

We now have some camera equipment, so could all the people who expressed interest in doing some photographic work come and see us on Wednesday between 2:00 and 3:00?

See you then.

**OnDit** PRESS CLUB



## No Confidence Motion in Union Manager Passed

Last Wednesday, a meeting of the General Staff Association moved a no confidence motion in the Union Personnel Manager, Robert Brice.

The meeting was called by GSA Shop Steward, Richard Shipton, in response to the alleged demotion of Dave Maslin, the Steward and House Supervisor.

A confidential letter from Brice to Maslin dated March the 6th was tabled at the meeting by Maslin. The letter indicated a series of concerns regarding Maslin's position as Steward and House Supervisor.

It informed Maslin of a decision made at the Union Board meeting on the 5th of March to employ an Operations Manager. Brice states in the letter that "The consequences of this appointment are considerable..." and that he would need to "...sit down (with Maslin) and discuss (his) future duties and responsibilities."

It was claimed at the GSA meeting that the appointment of an Operations Manager would effectively demote Maslin.

The letter stated that:

"The Board emphasized that it respected and acknowledged your

(Mr. Maslin's) outstanding work as a Steward/House Supervisor, however, it believed that the Union could operate better if a person of different skills were to be employed to have the overall responsibility for stewards, cleaners, maintenance and the organisation of conferences and capital works."

All of these duties are currently conducted by Mr. Maslin.

The letter asserts that Maslin has "...been under a lot of stress.." and that there had been other matters which had caused Brice concern.

Shipton strongly rejected this claim. He said that although Maslin had some health problems they were "...only minor and in no way connected with his work as a House Supervisor."

The second claim was also rejected by Shipton, who said that these instances other concerns were not related to Maslin's position.

Shipton spoke in support of three motions; that the position of Operations Manager not be filled, that Dave Maslin remain as House Supervisor, and that a third steward be appointed without delay.

Shipton told the meeting that it was the highest turn out in recent

memory at a GSA meeting. He told ON DIT that "it was about 99%".

53 people voted in favour of the three motions and nobody voted against. There was one abstention.

The meeting then discussed a motion of no confidence in Rob Brice. Shipton spoke for the motion, expressing a strong concern with the way the Union was being managed.

Mark Leahy, the Federated Clerks Union Shop Steward, echoed the

sentiments of Shipton.

A secret ballot was held and the no-confidence motion was passed with 48 for, 4 against and one abstention.

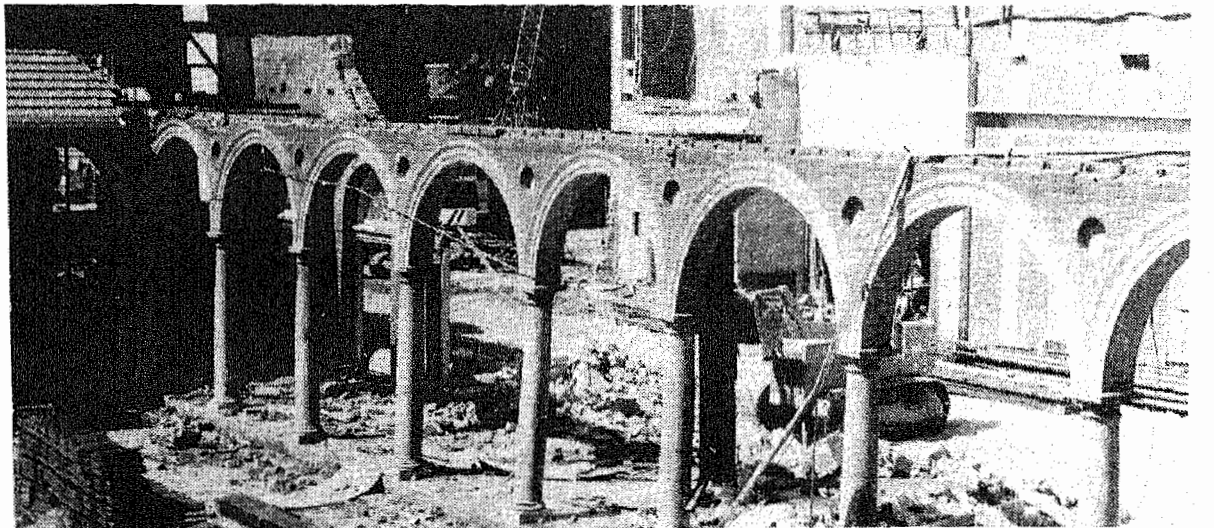
A letter was sent on March the 7th to Andrew Hamilton, Union President, from Shipton, Leahy, James Fairweather (LATU Shop Steward) and Andy Flack (LATU Shop Steward [Bar]), indicating the result of the GSA meeting.

The letter stated:

"We emphasize the overwhelming support for both motions. We wish to indicate that, unless (Union) Board responds satisfactorily to these matters within two weeks, industrial action will be seriously considered."

The ball is clearly in the Union Board's court. It remains to be seen whether a peaceful conclusion will be reached or if the GSA will consider industrial action.

David Penberthy



## Higher Education Forum

On Wednesday, March 7th, the National Union of Students and the SAIT Union held a forum on the financing of higher education in Australia with the three major political parties. Alexander Downer, the Federal Liberal member for Mayo, represented the Coalition, Mike Elliot, the Democrats Education spokesperson, presented the Democrats positions.

Unfortunately, Dr Bruce Chapman from ANU could not attend due to a delayed flight. The President of NUS, Kate Deverall, gave a synopsis of the ALP's position in place of Dr Chapman.

The philosophy behind HECS is that tertiary education is a form of consumer activity and it would be "unfair, unjust, inequitable and inappropriate" if the direct beneficiaries of education did not contribute towards this cost.

The Australian Labor Party believes that the general community benefits from higher education and subsequently should finance 80% of its costs.

Vital to HECS are income thresholds. If you earn under \$22,000 per annum you do not have to pay HECS. This helps those on a low income but at the same time reduces revenue.

The first speaker after Kate Deverall was Mike Elliot of the Australian Democrats. He criticised the policies of both the Liberal and Labor parties. Elliot believes the Coalition's policy of upfront fees was worse than HECS and would return Australia to the early 1970s when people in low-income groups had to compete for scholarships.

Those missing out often had to repeat Matric even though they achieved the entrance mark to their particular course.

The Democrats feel that certain groups would be discriminated against with up-front fees, particularly workingclass women and mature age students. Elliot said this was already occurring under HECS.

Elliot said one of the major problems with HECS is that it discouraged graduates from continuing education. Someone wishing to enhance or update their skills would have to pay extra tax up front.

Elliot also criticised HECS on the grounds that graduates pay a progressively higher income tax as they move into higher tax brackets. HECS means being taxed twice.

The Democrats propose free education for all. This would also include the liberalisation of entrance criteria to broaden the participation base at universities.

Increasing the availability of AUSTUDY (to cover most students) and raising the AUSTUDY level to the equivalent of unemployment benefits are parts of the Democrats education programme which also includes improved childcare, increased benefits for students from rural areas and providing scholarships to overseas students.

The Democrats believe such plans could be financed by raising the percentage of GNP spent on education, which they say is relatively low by Western standards.

Alexander Downer (Liberal)

agreed with Mike Elliot on the need to increase funding to tertiary education. He said the Liberal Party would ensure that the population was better educated under Liberal rule.

The similarities stopped there. Downer attacked the Democrats vehemently, calling their policies "the policy of the beaded bag".

Downer said to the pro-Democrat audience: "I could make a good fellow of myself promising everything you like."

The Liberals would charge 75% of students a \$1200 up front fee which would be paid each semester. Downer made the point that this was less expensive than the \$1600 up front HECS option.

The remaining 25% of students would receive scholarships, distributed by the institution, to cover their fees.

Downer said that money received through up front fees would not direct to the educational institutions involved; allocation of funds would be, like scholarships, in the hands of the institution's administrators.

The main criticism Downer had of HECS was that 80% of students were using the deferred payment option and that students working overseas were not paying HECS. This reduces revenue and places a 'tax burden around people's necks'.

Downer refuted the suggestion that institutions would be given 'free reign' to increase fees for places outside of the normal faculty quota.

Downer gave no assurances that the Coalition would not increase the up front fee above the inflation rate.

Shane Carty





Can men be feminists? I don't know....a friend of mine makes a rule of distrusting the so-called "Sensitive New Age Guy", who can chat for hours about Goldman, Greer, Kristeva, Spender and so forth, all with a view to taking her home for a night of pleasure after a splendid ideologically sound preamble. Perhaps only women can be feminists. After all, people tend to adopt a certain stance or ideology as a response to the oppression they experience personally.

But if men can't be feminists, they can certainly be complete misogynists.

You may have seen a series of scurrilous posters around campus last week, based on the "A Woman's Place is at Adelaide University" stickers contained in the Union showbags during enrolment. The posters showed the usual lack of imagination and banal sexual overtones one has come to expect from these groups of insecure men- "A woman's place is in the beauty parlour", "A woman's place is in the back of the car", "A woman's place is in the bedroom, hers is a life devoted to pleasing man", just to name a few.

There is nothing to be gained

from bandying about the usual accusations- "It's the Engies!", "It's the Liberals!" and so on. Sure, these groups have been and in some cases still are guilty of some of the worst excesses of male insecurity, but to brand them all misogynist is to reveal a paranoia similar to that of the poster-makers.

All that needs to be said is that the people responsible for the posters were men. It seems astonishing that, in the light of the tremendous barriers women still face in entering higher education and dealing with sexual harassment, gender-biased

curricula and campus security (to name a few), there are still pockets of resistance to any effort to bring about a more harmonious and equal relationship between the sexes.

The posters are not the only thing. Recently we heard the Call to Australia condemning "lunatic feminists" as "dangerous women who want to be men" and "enemies of the family unit". There are still people who can't understand why a man can't run for Women's Officer. How many women would want to seek advice from a man regarding sexual harassment or assault?

It is not a question of winning a war, but addressing and redressing the balance.

It was International Women's Day last Wednesday. Instead of seeing it as a time in which women confront feminist issues, surely men should stand back as well, and take a good hard look at their attitudes and behaviour.

David Penberthy  
Steve Jackson

### Arthur Boyd series "The Judges" moved to Union Bistro

Are they a seething indictment of the Australian legal system? Or are they just finger paintings by some incompetent ponce? Make up your own mind, but they're now in the Union Bistro.

They are, of course, **The Judges**- a remarkable series of twelve paintings by internationally renowned Australian artist Arthur Boyd, AO.

These valuable works caused quite a stir on their arrival in Adelaide twenty two years ago for the 1968 Festival of Arts.

**The Judges** were tucked away in the bowels of the Union Cellar for years. They have been moved to the Union Bistro- soon to be renamed Boyd's Bistro- where they will be accessible to the general public.

Distinguished members of the University and the arts community gathered in the Bistro last Thursday to hear speakers Dr. Harry Medlin and Emeritus Professor Tom Browning launch **The Judges**.

Alex Webling went along and prepared this photo essay.



Jenni Jones, Union Art Officer, peruses the Boyds.

president  
wendy wakefield



After informing students during Orientation that I would be writing a column for On Dit every week, there was no contribution in the last edition (Vol 58, No 2, March 5). I did write a column, but unfortunately it did not find its way into print. Sorry about that folks, the problem is now sorted out and it won't happen again.

The next meeting of SAUA Council will be held on Thursday, March 22 at 6.30pm in the Union Board Room. All students are welcome to attend and participate.

**Federal Election**

The federal election is receiving substantial coverage in the media. However one very important issue that has not had a high profile is higher education policy.

The SAUA has invited education spokespersons from the Australian Labor Party, the Liberal Party and the Democrats to participate in a Federal Election debate, specifically on the issue of higher education policy, and how it affects us as students in higher education. This debate will be held on Tuesday March 20 at 1.10pm in the Mayo refectory. We are in the process of producing a SAUA Education

Bulletin which includes more information about the debate, the federal election and SAUA policy relating to tertiary fees. The National Union of Students (NUS) has produced a tabloid which details and compares the various policies. These publications will be distributed prior to the debate.

I hope you come along and put the politicians on the spot with tricky questions. We will be putting out a press release for this event, so you might even get on the tele!

Also, on Tuesday 13 March at 2pm the South Australian Branch of NUS will hold a forum to discuss the education policies of the Liberals, ALP and Democrats. This will be held in the South Dining room, Level 4 of Union house.

**Barr Smith Library**

At the first meeting for 1990 of the Library Committee the issue of borrowing rules was raised again. For those new to Adelaide Uni, borrowing rules were changed for a trial period last year. The time period for undergraduate loans of main collection books was reduced from two weeks to one

week. This went ahead despite my opposition and that of Anthea Howard, the previous Education Vice-President of the SAUA. The trial period failed, as we predicted, because (among other reasons) one week was just not enough time, and as a result, books were being hidden on the shelves, and some students were unable to complete their essays by the due date. Later this year the borrowing rules will again be reviewed. I will keep you up to date when this occurs, but in the meantime if you have any comments, problems or suggestions, come and see me in the SAUA or write me a note.

For first year students, the library has produced Library Skills Workbooks which cover all aspects of library use, and will help you to learn to use the library effectively. These have been produced for five departments on a trial basis - Anthropology, English, German, History and Politics. You may be interested in working through these books, as having good research skills is an invaluable asset for a student. For students not studying in those departments, don't hesitate to ask library staff if you have any

problems or are feeling a bit lost.

**Waite and CASM**

During Orientation I spoke to students studying at the Centre for Aboriginal Studies in Music and the Agricultural Science students who will spend the latter part of their degrees studying at the Waite Institute. Both of these are part of Adelaide Uni. I will be making regular visits to the Waite and CASM (well, that is, when the building is up at CASM) so that these students have the opportunity to speak with me about any concerns they may have.

**Mergers**

University Council at its meeting of March 9 resolved to set up a Merger Implementation Committee of the University of Adelaide and the South Australian College of Advanced Education, City campus. The formal process of the merger has begun. Just as I am the student representative on the MIC with Roseworthy College, I will be the rep on this MIC. I am available to receive your comments if you would like to have input on this issue.

women's officer  
natasha stott despoja



On December 7th last year at the University of Montreal, Canada experienced its worst mass slaying. A gunman, dressed in hunting garb and carrying a semi-automatic rifle, opened fire killing 14 women and injuring 12 people before finally killing himself. At one stage he ordered all the men out of the lecture theatre and shot the women. The man expressed his misogyny, in a letter in which he blamed women for ruining his life and ultimately, in murdering them.

The Students' Association Council and the University's Education Committee expressed its condolences to the University of Montreal over the tragic and senseless deaths of these women. The SAUA also reaffirmed its commitment to the provision of a safe and secure campus for all women so they could participate fully in campus life.

The message from the Ecole Polytechnique, University of Montreal reads:

"In the aftermath of the December 6 tragedy at Ecole Polytechnique, your kind words of sympathy have been a source of consolation. Indeed the staff and students were deeply touched. On their behalf, please accept our most heartfelt expression of gratitude.

May peace, love and serenity be with us all during 1990."

Women and Sport Week 1990 is fast approaching. The week is from Monday, April 2nd to Friday, April 6th. Events on this campus will include free self-defence and aerobics classes, and a fun run. Prizes will be awarded to fun run winners and runners up and entry is open to any woman on campus. An entry form will be included in next week's edition of On Dit.

The events are as follows:

Monday, April 2:  
Aerobics Class 10 a.m. Dining Rooms. For women at any level. The pace will not be too hectic so if you've never tried aerobics before now is the ideal opportunity. FREE.

Tuesday, April 3:  
Self-Defence Class. 1.10 p.m. Women's Room. Women only. FREE.

Wednesday, April 4:  
10 a.m. Aerobics Class #2, Dining Rooms.

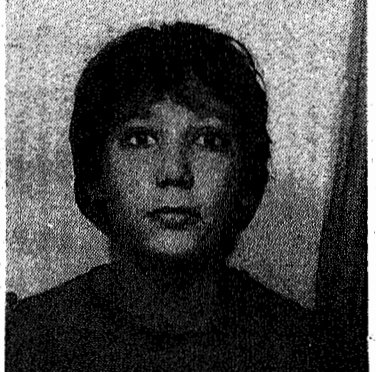
Lunchtime Fun Run. Entry available to all women. Great prizes. Entry forms available from the SAUA and next week's On Dit.

Thursday, April 5:  
1 p.m. Self-Defence class #2, Women Only. Women's Room.

Sign up for the fun-run, self-defence classes and aerobics classes NOW in the SAUA!

Any clubs interested in getting involved please contact me in the SAUA regarding hosting functions or highlighting your sport on campus during that week.

education vice-president  
mel yuan



It seems that NUS has received a fair amount of criticism to date in this newspaper, so I would like to clarify a few things. I think I can do so, not because I am an NUS office-bearer, but because I too was an Observer to NUS National Conference. There were seven delegates elected at the annual elections in September as per NUS and SAUA regulations. We are also entitled to seven Observers, and these positions were decided at SAUA Council by an election, and of the seven, only four elected to go.

I went as it was decided that office-bearers could benefit from the experience. Sounds corny? Yep, it is, but the fact remains that

it was interesting as it provides a forum whereby student representatives from around the country are able to swap information about amalgamations, dealing with institutional bureaucracy, policy making, how to be a good representative generally or whatever. This may sound like a waste of time to some but have you ever spent most of your week sitting in meetings and behind a desk writing reports and submissions, but not actually receiving any feedback, criticism or help?

All student representative organisations suffer from the same problem and that is AWARENESS. By awareness I mean that those you represent are unaware of the work you are doing. This may be because there is not enough time to talk to everyone personally, there may not be enough time or money to prepare a newsletter, or your student newspaper does not allow enough space. Obviously with NUS the problem lies with the actual physical distribution of information, with so many campuses distribution becomes bloody difficult, costly and time-consuming. During O'Week there was a NUS newsletter for people to collect, but who did?

Throughout the year all of us in the SAUA will attempt to keep everyone informed generally, but if you don't read these columns how will you know? To try and alleviate this problem somewhat the SAUA is organising a debate to be held on the 20th of March, whereby the various political parties will be invited to speak about their view of Higher Education. This way you will also be able to ask questions about how their policies will affect you, as a student. This is important as we approach the Federal Election on the 24th.

A Special Meeting of Students' Association Council will be held on Thursday March 22 at 6.15pm in the Union Board Room to discuss the following proposed change to the Regulations:

"That Section 8 of the Association's Administrative Procedures be repealed and replaced by the following:  
The Association's solicitors shall be determined from time to time by the Students' Association Council."

Wendy Wakefield  
President

# why election campaigns don't matter

This election campaign has seen the complete demise of the credibility of the major political parties in the eyes of most Australians. Steve Jackson explains why.

This federal election has more than ever before revealed the scepticism and cynicism of the voting public towards the major political parties. There exists a general suspicion within the electorate that the politicians don't have the ability to control the economy, but are nevertheless presenting policies that are long on slick promises written by election number-cruncher specialists but short on figures and assurances that are creditable after careful examination. Voters these days assume that election promises are lies. This is a major advantage for the incumbent government since it can claim that it has a more informed appraisal to make predictions and promises. A classic example of this is the "there is no alternative" line adopted by Margaret Thatcher in the mid 1980's and imported to Australia by the Treasurer Paul Keating.

A classic example of the problems that the Opposition faces (if it isn't 'on the ball') was the crucifixion of Andrew Peacock by Paul Lynegham on ABC's "Nightline" last week. Peacock was unable to deliver figures on spending cuts (despite it being on page 27 of the Liberal Party Election Policy document) or indeed much detail on any of his "answers". The guarantee of his fiscal responsibility was a repeated "the reality is...blah blah blah". Peacock has a great deal of difficulty in constructing a view of the economy at the present time that doesn't make any election handout promise look like a cynical political exercise in

The general mood among political analysts within the more informed media (read not-Murdoch owned) is that this election will see the swing away from the two major parties that occurred in the 1989 Tasmanian election becoming a nation-wide trend. Independent candidates and the Democrats stand to gain considerable ground on the two major parties. Unfortunately due to the essentially undemocratic Australian Federal Voting system for the House of Representatives this likely increase in first preferences may not be translated into seats for these minor parties. Jeanine Haines in the seat of Kingston is one possible exception to this. Public reaction to the election result will in all likelihood reflect dissatisfaction with the undemocratic voting system in the Lower House. This can only deepen the sceptical

attitude that many Australians have towards politicians and the two major parties.

But there is another dimension to the mood of scepticism that hangs over this election, and that is the role of the media in reporting policies, electioneering and results of opinion polls either commissioned by themselves or by a political parties. How does the front cover of this week's *Bulletin* (titled "Trust me. I'm an Independent") affect public opinion? How does Paul Kelly's announcement in the Weekend Australian of 10-11 March that the ALP will win primarily because "Peacock is seen to lack substance [and] this won't change" affect public opinion? Does the fact that politicians nowadays have a fear of hard factual political campaigns mean anything? Would public opinion towards politicians alter if they adopted a more factual approach in their political campaigns?

In short, I doubt it very much whether media reports have a noticeable affect on public opinion in the weeks immediately before an election. This means that policy detail has little impact on voters. There are a number of reasons why.

Consider this. Both parties claim that they are ahead of the other parties according to their own (totally unbiased) surveys. The Liberals claim that their advertisements are having a considerable impact on the electorate yet the ALP claim they are counter productive-they lack substance. Most polls initiated by newspapers and the major parties suggest however that there will be a considerable swing to the minor parties and away from Liberal and Labor. The polls suggest that the National Party will be decimated by these elections. The Nationals claim otherwise.

For every survey there is a conflicting survey. This can only add more confusion and indecision in the minds of the average voter (if s/he exists) that already treats opinion polls with scepticism.

Disagree? How often have polls proved to be wrong on election day. How often do they have to be wrong for us to think they, perhaps, are always incorrect. Add the proliferation of polls that have conflicting results and can you believe there is a "general mood" in the electorate which reflects or influences how you vote? Can you believe in the integrity of the manner in which

the print and electronic media treats the evolution of the election campaign? This is not an accusation that the media is dishonest in its reporting but that it relies on, to a great degree, the results of opinion polls to create new stories and issues.

Politicians answer questions from the media that are based on statistics that claim to reflect the mood of the electorate, yet it is these very statistics that create what Jean Baudrillard has referred to as "a state of suspense and of definitive uncertainty about reality".

Baudrillard is one of the few French academics to break the insularity of university life. His ideas have become publically known (he was interviewed recently in *The Face*) even if only in a superficial namedropping sense. Nevertheless the dark cynicism and abandonment of hope that permeates his latter writings in the mid 1980's (he was once a prominent marxist) has touched a populist nerve. His writings on the media and the ability of the media (or rather the inability of the media) to manipulate public opinion are particularly influential.

## "Politics these days is invariably bad news."

Baudrillard argues that the reliance of the media on opinion polls as a basic starting point in reporting election material invalidates the media's authority to manipulate public opinion to a large degree.

Despite the media bombarding the masses with endless facts and figures that are supposed to represent what we are the information is incomplete and the information that is given has little persuasive power. As society becomes increasingly measured and population sectors identified and reduced to trends and economic patterns we become increasingly sceptical about state institutions that rely on such figures.

This is because (A) we suspect that statistic gathering methods influences the result as much as the survey sample itself; and (B) statistics create norms that guide policy. These norms are alienating for the majority of the masses who lie outside the 'ideal type' normative that the statistics have 'found'. These norms invalidate the institutional legitimacy of these people. Baudrillard argues that we react to this by rejecting the image of the community based on these statistics that the

media gives us and to which government responds.

Baudrillard however pessimistically and erroneously concludes that the excess of information that the (post?)-modern media feeds us (as he terms it) is totally responsible for a breakdown in the idea of the community as the unifying focus in everyday and formal political philosophy leading to a silence of disbelief from the masses: scepticism.

Baudrillard's conclusion certainly reflects a mood familiar to many but he blurs the distinction between how we react to government performance as it affects our own lives and the presentation of it by the media and the ideological impact that it has on us (including the influence of opinion polls). Baudrillard assumes that the media is the sole source of information about politics for the "average" voter.

The dominance of issues such as interest rates, healthcare and wage/tax policy as it affects the voter in this election clearly indicates however that it is those issues that immediately affect our own day to day life that the politicians regard as being important during election time. There is no detailed economic debate. The average voter faced with conflicting yet incomplete evidence in these debates and possessing little expertise of his or her own is unable to form a definitive opinion. As such, the politicians realise that to pursue such a path is futile.

A good example of the failure of relying on policy, policy and more policies to win elections was the defeat of the Hayden Labor campaign in the 1980 Federal election by the seriously troubled but very glib and confident Liberal Party lead by Malcolm Fraser. Still better is the appalling "read my lips" campaign of George Bush in the 1988 American Presidential elections.

Politicians prefer to construct a vision of a nation with a common purpose-to unify a disparate population into a community through their rhetoric and to make the opposition appear divisive.

Which returns us to the points Baudrillard is making. In "The Masses; the Implosion of the Social in the Media" he writes;

"This is our destiny; subject to opinion polls, information, publicity, statistics; constantly confronted with the anticipated statistical verification of our own behaviour, and absorbed by this permanent refraction of our least movements, we are no longer confronted by our own will...we cannot do much against this

obscene circularity of the masses and of information. The two phenomena fit one another: the masses have no opinion and the information does not fit them."

It is not that the information doesn't fit them but that people trust their own judgement based on their own personal experiences rather than the overflow of meaningless information at election time.

The mood of cynicism and scepticism that hangs over this election is not the result of the collapse of meaning in these electronic times but the collapse of confidence in the politicians to have a positive affect on people's lives. Politics these days is invariably bad news.

Carol Johnson in an excellent study of Labor Parties in power (*The Labor Legacy* (1989)) explains that the dominance of industrial and economic policy in government has dissatisfied many supporters of the ALP who believe that the party has neglected socially important issues such as sexual and racial equality, welfare and standard of living questions that are not directly determined by money-in-the-pocket.

Johnson's conclusion reflects on the problem that burdens all governments and has led to the growth of a widespread scepticism about government. That problem is the necessity of appearing economically responsible to the electorate. Social policy is judged in the media through its relation to the elusive notion of 'economic responsibility'.

In times when all economic news is bad this burden has to many Australians become more and more ridiculous and of little relevance to them. Social reform, we are told relies on social wealth but this wealth, we are told is always coming tomorrow after the belts have been brought in another notch. As we are learning, this tomorrow never comes.

Add to this the observations about how the masses react to media information on economic statistics and opinion polls and it is no surprise that everyone is predicting a swing away from the major parties. It's not that the independents aren't that attractive, they're just different. They don't talk economics. Vote for them because the major parties can't make a difference to your lives that you will enjoy, it will only make you more cynical.

Steve Jackson.

# Kronos: revolutionising the string quartet

**Geoff Griffith listened to the Kronos Quartet and loved it.**

As hush descended upon the Elder Hall crowd, a full house, The Kronos Quartet strolled unassumingly on stage. It was now that any connoisseurs of the string quartet not already familiar with Kronos got their first mild surprise: Kronos believe in wearing what they feel is comfortable on stage. No boring black and white here but individuality. Kronos is HIP.

The concert began and the Quartet flung themselves into a tempestuous flurry of dissonant, atonal screeches, moans and scrapes. Immediately afterwards, a slow scampering, a pattering sound and a scattering of staccato notes lurched the music into a new direction altogether. To many, this perhaps exemplifies twentieth century music at its most obnoxious and esoteric: a relentless assault on the ears and sensibility which leaves the audience altogether bemused, but nonetheless in rapturous applause for something it finds a bitter but necessary pill, indigestible unless safely couched in the jam of standard "classical" works.

There is no need to play young Fogey here, however, ruthlessly lampooning the Emperors new clothes. Kronos choose and commission new works that deserve

a hearing and an enjoyable one at that. John Zorn's "Cat O'Nine Tails" was an amusing pastiche of Warner Bros. cartoon soundtracks of the forties and fifties. Using witty scene-painting (the cries of seagulls, for example) scurrying sounds, suggesting the movement of cartoon animals, and bringing it altogether employing abrupt filmic cuts from scene to scene. The crowd was kept well entertained.

Two modern African pieces, also written for Kronos, followed. In contrasting ways they both blended western composition techniques, arrangements and structures with unmistakably African rhythms and content. Again, any thought of remote esotericism was quickly dispelled as the drumming or plodding beat (at times produced by the quartet using their instruments as percussion) conjured up views of toilers under the baking African sun. In this sense, a composer's programme notes can often enhance a listener's appreciation of what she or he hears; at other times, as D.M. Lawrence thought, the critic's task must be to protect a work from its artist.

H.M. Gorecki's "Already it is Dusk" returned us to Eastern Europe, austere contrapuntal harmonies and bleakness interposed

with driving rhythms. As usual, Kronos were completely comfortable with its material, and presented the very formal structure of the work with beauty and clarity.

While amplification and the occasional use of recorded drumbeats and external sound effects removed the Kronos' offerings far from the traditional idea of a string quartet as the apogee of pure musical thought, the last work played, Marta's "Doom (Sigh)", broke every rule in the book. This repetitive, dirge-like piece consisted for a large part, of recordings of two Hungarian women mournfully recounting dead parents and war. The blending of speech-rhythms from these remote villages with superimposed musical commentary from the quartet was a worthwhile experiment (anticipated by Bartok and others in their folk-song collecting research), but I found the insistent wailing and sniffing that permeated the piece over-emphasised.

The Kronos Quartet have earned their share of hyperbole during this Festival, but their mission is a very real one; they make the presentation of new music a naturally exciting and moving experience, instead of an unpleasant chore.

**Geoff Griffith**  
Kronos Quartet  
Wednesday March 8  
Elder Hall



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# the politics of theatre

Andrew Joyner witnessed a revolutionary production of a Moliere's tale of greed and sexual excess.

Representation, whether it be performed in a theatrical hall or precisely documented in a textbook, is invariably political. Moliere's "Don Juan", an interpretation of a tale which has been variously documented throughout the canon of "Literature", is indeed heavily weighted with the force of ideology, either in Juan's damnation at the play's conclusion, or in the hypocrisies of the society that confront the hero. In that interpretation of this play, the Georgian Film Actors Studio have created a drama which is both intensely theatrical and radically political, a drama whose strength lies in its awareness of the politics of representation.

In a recent article from the Adelaide review (March 1990), Jeremy Eccles, whilst considering Mikhail's Tumanishvili's Marxist interpretation of *Richard III*

(Adelaide Festival, 1988), states that he expected the Georgian director to take a much more political approach to Moliere's play, reinterpreting it in the light of both Marxist thought and modern Russian society. He expected Tumanishvili to "see more of Moliere's offending politics in *Don Juan*". However Eccles finds the play to be exactly what he didn't expect - "a completely theatrical, and hardly political version," Eccles is not making a judgement upon the play because of this fact, he is merely stating that the audience should not go along and expect to see a heavily politicized reinterpretation.

And yet I would disagree with Eccles. While the play performed by Georgian Film Actors is certainly intensely theatrical, it is also strongly political, for Tumanishvili's reinterpretation

investigates the politics of theatre, the way in which ideology and fictional representation interact as they are enveloped within the convention of literature. In fact, their interpretation of Moliere's play works directly against such positioning of the text, reviving the drama so that it defies a unitary classification, battles the myth of the literary canon, and asserts its own inevitable contradictions. It is a performance which fights the traditional consumption of literature, and as such it becomes distinctly radical.

Tumanishvili's interpretation shifts the focus of the play away from the judgmental concerns of Juan's blasphemous villainy towards the arguments between Don Juan and his servant Sgarnelle - "the debate as to the correct way of living." The moral and ideological closure of the play is similarly dismantled through the ambiguity of the play's conclusion in which, rather than seeing Don Juan banished to Hell for his sins, the audience is presented with an image of him riding joyfully off into

immortality.

The historical unity of the play, a unity which would adhere the performance to the convention of literature, is also displaced by having bebop jazz music underscore many of the scenes and snatches of the Mozart opera (of which Moliere's play is a source) suddenly appearing in the dialogue. However Tumanishvili's masterpiece is the introduction of the prompter, played superbly by Laura Rekhviashvili. She coaxes and harrasses the actors so that Tumanishvili is able to transfer the dialogue to another character without losing any of the quality of the drama. In fact, the robust humour that this character provides enhances the tone of Moliere's play. But her most significant role is to dispense the textures of the drama, to act as a self-conscious element which directs the audiences' awareness to the role that ideology and history play in the construction of dramatic meaning.

The play, though, is not just an intellectual exercise. Above all else, the audience is left

entertained. Having not seen Tumanishvili's *Richard III*, I was rather sceptical about going to see a performance of a play in a language that I could not comprehend. And yet, I thoroughly enjoyed myself. The performance is designed so that non-Georgian speakers can easily comprehend the action, and the scene summaries are very clearly set out. The acting is simply excellent, the best that I have seen in a long while. All of the performers carry off their roles with such charisma and energy that the audience cannot help but be charmed. Most importantly, all of the actors, especially Zurab Kipshidge as Don Juan, have an acute awareness of the audience, interacting with the crowd with confidence and panache. Moliere's *Don Juan* as performed by the Georgian Film Actors Studio is both entertaining and intoxicating, whether it be the genuine humour of the acting or the elegant inversion of Tumanishvili's interpretation. I cannot recommend it too highly.

Andrew Joyner

## a witty pinhead?

Kerry Shale's *Confederacy of Dunces* is a Festival hit that weaves black comedy, one man and thirteen personalities. Rachel Healy reports.

J.K. Toole's Pulitzer Prize winning novel has been converted by Kerry Shale to a 2-hour, one play, and whilst you can't judge a book by the Booker (or play by the Pulitzer), the result is a terrific Festival production, performed by a master craftsman.

Shale performs the story of Ignatius J. Reilly, a lazy, slothful and belligerent man whose downfall is plotted by a confederacy of 12 dunces. Shale tells the story of Ignatius J. Reilly, a lazy, slothful and belligerent man whose downfall is plotted by a confederacy of 12 dunces. Shale tells the story of Ignatius J. Reilly in the role of the author - J.K. Toole, a portrayal of the man who eventually kills himself because no-one would publish his book. The weaving of the comic story and the last hours of the despairing writer are successful due to Shale's meticulous attention to differentiating the story and the teller. He creates a world inside a world, with Toole as the despairing prince of a work that no-one can appreciate.

The 13 characters of Toole's tale are led out individually by Shale, each entirely different in mannerisms, voice, accent and eccentricities. These develop into a collage of characters that Shale displays at will, narrating the story

only occasionally. His characters are like watching a human cartoon - they tend to be caricatures, grotesque and larger-than-life, accentuating the humour yet living and breathing in the confines of the performer's body. The pompous Ignatius J. Reilly is the simpering Darlene and the brutish Patrolman Mancuso at Shale's will, and the deftness by which he makes individual each of the garish dunces is a monument to his acting abilities.

Kerry Shale's vocal abilities carry the show and provide most of the comedy. His extraordinary voices and energy keep the audience's attention for two hours, however he could have been almost as successful performing *A Confederacy Of Dunces* on the radio. The sparse set is hardly utilised as most of the action and humour exists in the voice of Shale. His adaption of an entire novel on stage in the character of the author provides a vehicle telling a hilarious story by a man plagued with hopelessness and despair. *A Confederacy of Dunces* emerges as a very worthwhile festival production, it's bloody good fun and kudos to the sole performer for being so clever.

Rachel Healy



## a great voice but it's no history of the women's movement

Jeannie Lewis conceived *Voxy Lady* from personal experiences, books, articles, poems and conversations with friends. *Voxy Lady* led the audience through five different phases, from the 'Release of the Breath', through to the 'Time to Speak Out'. Strongly emphasized was the concept of the voice as an instrument for sound, as well as a medium of expression.

As a piece of theatre, however, *Voxy Lady* did not live up to its promise to be a 'history of women's voices'. Historical or chronological narrative of women's history was not obvious at the best of times. The audience was introduced to the mythical figures Cassandra (the prophetess), Sirena (the songstress) and Gaieta (the life-giver), but these characters faded and reappeared rather arbitrarily in the course of the evening, to be replaced with other characters, amongst others - the metaphorically dumb female, the Aboriginal child (or Indian) Jumala, the "jingju" (Beijing opera) singer the African woman.

There appeared to be little pattern or structure in *Voxy Lady*'s chronical of women's subjugation in history. Narrative and gestures were secondary rather than primary, and therefore not always immediately comprehensible; irony and humour even in the sketches were uneven, with only a few good punchlines.

Stage props consisted primarily of dividing screens, and were not helpful. Their positioning and repositioning (by an inappropriately dressed stage manager) proved to be distracting rather than functional in indicating sequence changes.

In between the theatrical jumble, however, was a lot of superlative singing. Jeannie Lewis has an excellent voice: rich, powerful and clear. Many, many singing styles were explored and all were handled admirably: from Puccini to disco, "jingju" (Beijing Opera) to African to South American songs, jazz to blues. Her ability to maintain her singing intensity even 1 1/4 hours into the performance was astonishing. Regrettably the theatrical intensity and pace failed to measure up.

Some of the audience left the performance even before it was over, but amongst the enthusiastic were Jeannie Lewis' regular listeners.

The concept of *Voxy Lady* was, I thought, excellent and to some extent familiar. Its treatment, however, lacked cohesiveness which even the superb singing did not salvage. A cabaret evening in place of theatre with Jeannie Lewis would possibly have been much more satisfying.

Isabella Ho

## fairies in the park

Jo Pugsley experienced the romance of a night with the fairies in the Botanic Gardens.



Hazlitt once said when reviewing Reynold's performance of a "Midsummer's Night Dream", that which is merely an airy shape, a dream, a passing thought, immediately becomes an unmanageable reality. "This seems to be the usual problem with a production of this early Shakespearian comedy, the alienation of the audience from the reality of the drama. A 'Midsummer Night's Dream' is most importantly a comedy about eroticism, passion

and a rather sinister sensuality which is too often forgotten under the child-like image of Tinkerbell-style fairies dancing around the roots of plastic elm trees. It may superficially serve as a spectacle for children but to attempt to make it a fantastical performance that is to be acclaimed in a child-like manner is to do it an injustice. With Glenn Elston's production of the play it was fantastic to at last see someone who could successfully capture both the earthy and dreamlike

qualities of the play, and mix them together to create an imaginative, energetic and entrancing performance.

A too symbolic forest like setting over-intensifies the wonderland quality of the play and thus only further distances the audience from the drama. Either a complete change of scene is needed (as was done by Peter Brook in his 1970 performances of the play when he set the action in a circus arena) or the 'real thing'. Elston opted for the latter and succeeded. That it was performed in the Botanic Gardens dissolved that separation that is often created between actors and audience by an enclosed theatre type setting. The setting changed throughout the play, the first and last scene held before the lake (there was a wonderful opening with the black out being broken by the light from a row boat which was transporting the Athenian duke Theseus and his fiancée Hippolytia to the stage area). The second scene was held between two large trees somewhere towards the centre of the Gardens.

Instead of the play coming to the audience we had to move to it. Like the lovers Hermia and Lysander, we were forced to escape the Athenian city and flee to the forest. This gave us the opportunity to prepare ourselves for the change in action and introduction of the fairy king and queen Oberon and Titania and their attendants Puck and the Mustard Seed.

The earthy nature of the piece established by the setting was enhanced by the excellent performances of the actors. The mystic of the Gardens was further

emphasised in the physical contact between the actors. A raw sexuality that works so well in Shakespeare (one only has to note the success of The Rustavelli Theatre's production of "Richard III" to see this) was best realised in the action between the fairies.

The juxtaposition of reality and dream was maintained throughout the production by all members of the cast. The performance of Alan Charlee as Puck was particularly outstanding. The sexual relationship between he and Phil Sumner as Oberon was cleverly counterbalanced by his fantastical acrobatic skills as he swung from trees, somersaulted over other characters and cartwheeled through bushes.

There was so much energy and life in the performance it was great to see a company that threw themselves into a passionate production instead of relying on the extremely clever yet sometimes stifling poetry of Shakespeare. After all, as witty as his work is, it was created with the intention of performance. And what a performance this was! The seriousness of the lovers was contrasted by the delightful comic relief of Bottom and the Athenian Players. Voice work was excellent, the important contrast between the poetry of the lovers and fairies and the more uncultured natural speech of the Athenian players being well established. It was also good to see that the actors did not strain their voice nor gasp their lines using deep breathing techniques to maintain the rhythm of Shakespeare's poetry.

All facets of theatre were used to

maximise audience entertainment. Lighting and music were excellently interpretive of the mood created on stage. The whimsical xylophone tapping out the mischief of the fairies, the fireworks adding the festivity to the wedding scene. Different levels of stage work enhanced the drama. How stunning it was in the final act to see Puck make his entrance at the top of 20 metre high river reeds on the other side of the lake which itself was flooded by blue light.

My only criticism of this magic evening is perhaps the drawn out breaks that occurred between acts. At one stage the Director had to step in and entertain the audience while the actors prepared themselves for the next scene as the break was so long. But given that (a) they had to move from one side of the Gardens to the other in total darkness and (b) completely change their costumes as many of them were playing at least two if not three characters I am surprised the wait was not longer. Besides exceptions must be made for what was an extremely complicated production. Great to see a theatre company taking risks with Shakespeare that more than paid off.

For those who have not got tickets for the performance they are now unfortunately sold out. But for those who are already going, all I can say is I do not doubt that you will have a simply magic night among the fairies in the Botanic Gardens!

Jo Pugsley

## tango as sexy as an economics examination

Holly McKnight reviews an absolute bomb.

Los Dinzel and Osvaldo Requena put together a Festival show that was billed as "a dance of feminine wiles and masculine domination...of passion smouldering under an unflinching surface." Erotic stuff-just the thing to see with that certain someone. Pity the show didn't live up to its advertising. In fact, this show was as far from erotic and sensual as you can get.

While the tango is a great dance to watch as a background in sleazy B grade movies, it isn't something that people can generally sit through for an hour and a half, especially without an interval. This is probably why the company decided to throw in accordion solos between dance numbers. Now for some this may be just what they wanted to break up the monotony, but not for the twenty or so people that walked out. The tango isn't a dance with a great deal of

versatility. None at all actually. Apart from intertwining their legs without falling on their arse, not a lot of movement takes place.

One of the other reasons the show failed was because of the venue. The Thebarton Theatre does not offer a cozy atmosphere, but more like the holding cell for cadavers in the morgue. The show would have benefitted from a venue like Club Foote or Limbo where the audience could see the emotional interaction and also have a few drinks when those bloody squeeze box solos came around.

"Tango" wasn't really the proper name for the show in the first place. It should have been "Costumes for the Tango". Each number had an entirely different set of costumes for each performer. Now this may not sound excessive to some, but each number lasted for approximately three minutes, which

adds up to a lot of money to spend, per minute. The best/worst (depending on how you look at it) costuming decision was for the singer. Her songs took up less time and moved around the stage less than the dancers, however she, too, had full outfit changes. She had a lovely voice, but hey unless you speak fluent spanish AND can understand it through a microphone, you missed the whole point.

The show is not one that should be put at the top of the list of things not to miss. Unless of course you are into accordions, costumes, and long distance viewing. And it sounded so damn SEXY in the Festival guide.



# A circus for the age

Michael Nelson interviews the strongman from Archaos, Pascal 'Pascualito' Voinet.

Archaos, famed for chainsaws and chickens on chains, have hit the Adelaide Festival! With their anarchist style of circus they are causing a sensation all over the world. Indoor fireworks, angle grinders and a band that tries to out do Wagner for sheer noise, combine to provide a show that is the future of circus worldwide.

After seeing the show last Saturday, I slipped down to their tent in the Wayville showgrounds. With the band doing a sound check, I grabbed the barely moustached Pasqualist. He is a huge man who wore very little during the show while sporting a mean sexy look. His metal blue eyeshadow was fetching too.

**ON DIT:** How did you get into a circus like this. I mean, it is not your average circus with lions and lion tamers is it?

**PASQUALIST:** I've always worked as a performer on the street since I was seven years old. I had my own circus, but two years ago my producer ran off with all the money. So then I went with another show called Freaks, which is the adaptation of a film of the same name, but I left because I was always backstage. It was too hard for me, so then Pieriot asked me to come to Archaos. (Pieriot is the director and driving force in Archaos).

**ON DIT:** Given the Archaos fever that all of a sudden seems to have struck Adelaide, how popular are you in the rest of the world?

**PASQUALIST:** We are more

popular all over the world than we are in France because they don't know us very well. And those who have heard of us, only have heard of us because we are so well known around the world. They know Archaos.

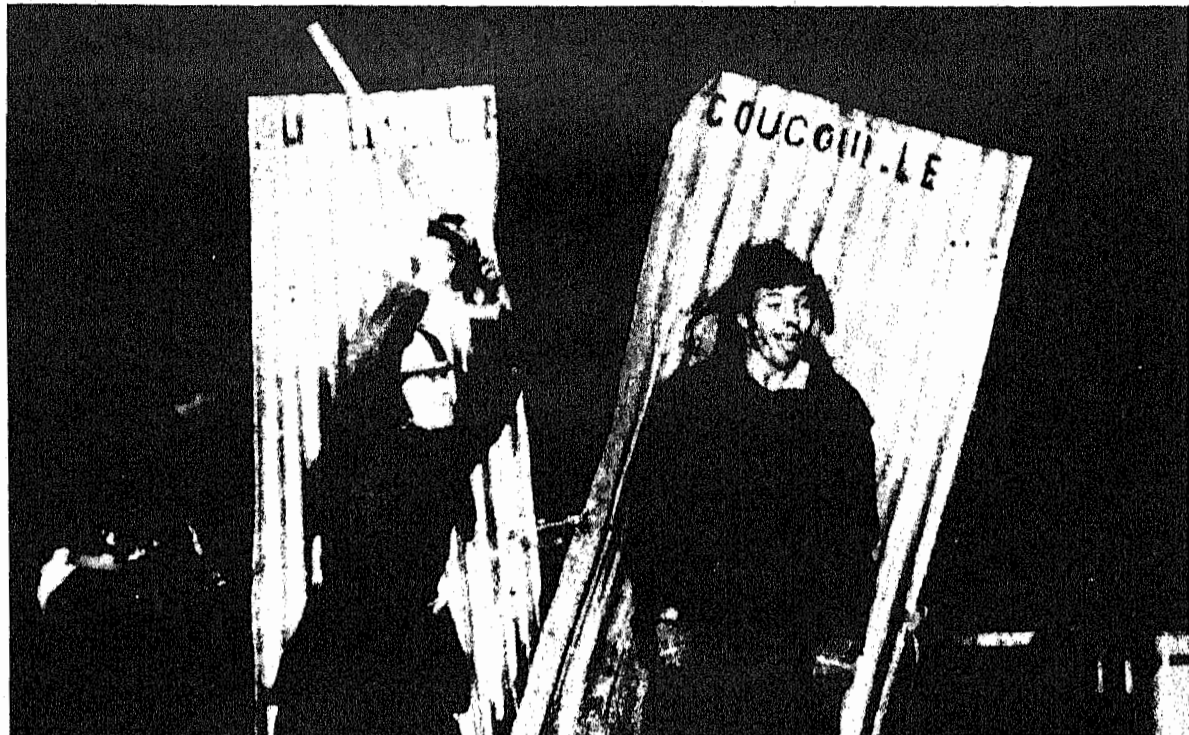
We have two problems: when Archaos was built we had a lot of problems with traditional circuses and that's why we left France to start off the show. Now they respect us and the audience in France now understand what we want to say.

At this point, a slick looking punk wearing black wraparounds and black Leather skid pads past on a motor bike. Conversation stops while the dust settles. Then the show's leader, Pierriot Pillot-Bidon calls from Sydney, saying his flight is late and he's bored. Everyone in the tent chuckles at this and somebody suggests he could have been bored in France and saved 4000 francs.

I then threw an easy one at him.

**ON DIT:** You've been with the show nine months now and been travelling all that time. Don't you get tired of it?

**PASQUALIST:** No, I love it. Archaos has two groups, one that stays in France and competes with the traditional circuses, and this one which travels all around the world.



If I didn't like it, I wouldn't be doing it.

Archaos has been around for 4 years now and have been progressing in leaps and bounds. And now in Adelaide, with a cast of 31 from all over Europe, they are evoking responses as varied as "a grubby show" and "an elemental theatre with the power to amaze".

**ON DIT:** You were telling me about your London tour. How did you find England?

**PASQUALIST:** It was not too bad, but the French people don't like the English girls because they are ugly and the food is disgusting. So when we went we brought our own pastis (ie, Pernod) and our own girls.

**ON DIT:** Yeah, I quite agree. You also said before, that you got the idea for the chainsaws from an English circus called Circus Hazard. What image are you trying to give the clowns with the chainsaws by using not smiling faces, but roaring weapons?

**PASQUALIST:** It's natural. In Australia you don't use horses to travel around. It's just a myth. Our people use chainsaws 'cos they're better than cream pies. Le clune nouveau est arrive? (The new age clown has arrived!)

And that's the message Archaos wants to get across. Fans of the old style circus should go along, as with all the people who want to see something new. It's a happening thing, put together with consummate skill and flair into a bizarrely

brilliant performance. Before I left I asked Pasqualist whether there was a hidden message in then show.

**PASQUALIST:** A message in the show? No, I don't think we have a message in the show. The only message we can have is we are alive, and we are dreamers and if the audience likes everything we do, well that's okay. The audience needs to dream and even if it's sometimes a nightmare we are here only to give that a form.

Archaos are playing at the Wayville Showgrounds until the 24th, so if you want to be entertained and provoked, go and see them; its unlike any Advertiser review or and other circus you've ever seen.

Michael Nelson

## France in high heels!

Michael Nelson interviews the very chic French cabaret singer Helene Delavault.

Born in Paris and brought up in Brittany, Helen Delavault is the latest star to burst upon the Festival horizon. She has performed in Germany, France, Spain, America, in fact most countries in the Northern Hemisphere. She has also performed with Australia's own Peter Brook in "Tragedie de Carmen". Now she has come to the Festival to regale Australian audiences with her unique style of cabaret; singing in German, Spanish, English and yes, French. I caught up with her on Tuesday last and asked a few deeply relevant questions.

**ON DIT:** Where do you find your material? Do you rewrite old songs, or do you use original pieces?

**HELENE DELAVALT:** I discovered the songs mainly by chance a few years ago. I wanted to be an opera singer and I started by singing them to my friends. Some

of them seemed a bit passe, but on the inside I thought they could be funny and relevant to modern audiences.

Having ascertained her background and inspiration for an act Le Matin de Paris described as "an entertaining performance that one rarely has the opportunity of hearing", I moved on.

**ON DIT:** In your act, you try and recreate the cabaret atmosphere, n'est-ce pas?

**HELENE:** Yes, In concert halls you have a badly lit place with a singer who may be badly dressed or who didn't know how to stand and I think it's very important that what you see has to be in accordance with what you sing. And also, I like to link the songs I sing. I sing "La Nuit d'Argentine" you know, the typical sexy sort of thing, and after "J'ai les calfards" (Lit: I've got cockroaches, but the expression

means I've got the blues) which is the same woman saying "AH, what am I doing?"

The interview moved on from the tightly knit act that Mlle Delavault has been performing for two years now to her plans after the Festival.

**HELENE:** After the Festival, I plan to return home to my parents in Paris. Then we're going, my pianist, Claude Lauoix and my lighting man, Jean Claude Fall to Romania.

I asked the ideologically sound question; what she and the French people she knew thought of the Eastern bloc.

**HELENE:** We were thrilled. I haven't watched television so much in a long time. We all saw the fall of the Berlin Wall, and of Romania. I think it's fantastic and we plan to tour the East as soon as possible.

So there you have it, an ideologically sound French cabaret singer. The interview over, she flounced her long red hair (which has earned her the epithet "The Rita Hayworth of the singing world"), and with a nod and a smile strolled out of the Hyatt. Go and see this woman before she goes. This woman is France in high heels. Eh Oui, ca va?





## a simple story about Hitler, Marilyn Munroe and a white rabbit

Jill Liesche and Fiona Henderson caught the Grassroots Theatre Company at the Zerospace where they play at 11 pm until March 18.

"Christ, I wonder who the stupid bastard was who suggested I go into politics."

Love Play is a black comedy portraying two of history's most discussed characters bringing their separate nightmares of Hell. Neither Marilyn Monroe nor Adolf Hitler managed to finish their business on earth, but found it was too late to remedy this once they were dead.

Love Play is reminiscent of Beckett's "Waiting For Godot". Its characters have the same aimlessness as the eternally trapped who refuse to recognise that they are snared. Adolf and Marilyn, of course, need less introduction than Satre's characters in "Huis Clos", but their crimes were equally heinous. Neither Adolf nor Marilyn recognise their crimes/folly however, dwelling on the past and planning a future rather than coming to terms with the implications of the present.

The present does however have a part to play as the tension between the two collections of values and experiences - both equally depraved - resolves itself again and again in unsatisfactory lovemaking which leaves both of them still fleeing further and further from facing the truth about their unsatisfactory lives.

"I'm now convinced, if that woman was a German I would have been too stuffed to invade Poland."

Adolf lays the blame at the feet of his followers, who demanded his role as their father - Marilyn's agent and her "contracts" never allowed her to play her innate roles as a mother. Adolf is obsessed with his need to obliterate and create, his paternal role unrelated to love or women. Marilyn's need for motherhood expresses her deep desire to be truly loved, to live a life not merely a script.

Nicholas O'Callaghan and Janice Lawrence convincingly capture their characters without simply reviving tired stereotypes. Both actors deliver mature, convincing performances, vividly portraying the strengths as well as the weaknesses of their extraordinary characters. The minimalist setting,



consisting only of an about-faced sofa, sets an appropriate stage in 'Zerospace' for their performance.

At the end of the play one is left with the notion that immortality may only be attained by dying - indeed, longer, less dynamic lives are simply not remembered. For Adolf and Marilyn in Love Play, however, death has provided them with a new dimension in which to work.

### Spider Rabbit

It takes a lot of chutzpah to carry off a production like "Spider Rabbit", but the enigmatic Nicholas O'Callaghan does so almost singlehandedly. The simplicity of "Spider Rabbit" belies its more serious implication - the black side of human nature. Under certain conditions of duress, everyone will perform activities they would never have considered during their normal course of duty. "Spider Rabbit" emphasizes the debasing effect that war wreaks on sweet, simple-minded creatures.

A soft, fluffy, pink-eared rabbit

delves into his khaki duffle bag, producing both innocuous articles like a bunch of carrots, and more bizarre implements such as hand grenades, an electric saw and a bloody bandage. As Spider Rabbit's back turns, the large, black clinging spider comes into view, overwhelming the cute and likeable image. And, let's face it, only the black side of a white bunny would quaff a glass of blood, stirred not shaken with a testicle impaled on a silver toothpick!

You'll either love or hate "Spider Rabbit", but it will certainly make you think Nicholas O'Callaghan disarmingly captivates his audience - one minute warm and cute, the next terrifying.

The Good Fairy eventually confronts Spider Rabbit with his duplicity, but his pleadings with her for forgiveness is marred by the ever-present spider, the back side, the black side, of us all.

Jill Lieschke  
Fiona Henderson

## Obsessive tendencies

"Obsession" is fascinating. This dynamic duo present an excellent expression of comic games and relationships through mime. In highschool drama our productions were always evaluated in terms of use of space, control of movement, originality and the like. This production reminds me of those days because the actors are so highly skilled at these things. Their bodies are flexible tools of expression. Their minds are creative. The result is some astounding theatre.

Antebodies quote Etienne Decroix, the founder of Corporeal mime, when they claim that their aim is to achieve, 'the body of a gymnast, the mind of an actor and the heart of a poet'. Their holistic and idealistic philosophy certainly led them towards a finished and fantastic production. Their motions are set to powerful music, speech is used sparsely and to full effect. The theme is quirky and incredibly interesting. These two likeable,

crazy characters communicate through serious but silly games. The games they play are funny because of their comic representation but they are also touching because they are so true to life. They compete, they flirt, they flaunt their talents and they vie for power; they become friends.

It is the kind of show one might expect to be boring in parts, because mime can be like that. However, the structure is too tight for this. The stories build up and die down in a musical, rhythmic way. The ending is about the boring old mines on the Christian Television ads. "Obsession", an absolute bargain at \$7 concession.

Thérèse Manson  
Obsession  
Antebodies  
Lion Theatre  
Living Arts Centre  
24th February - 4th March,  
9.30 pm



in the form of abstract, but very slick and amusing comic sketches. The first two stories are outshone by the other two - it really is very hard to compete with a stuffed red floral hippopotamus, who is mistaken for the dog next door. The monologue given by the poor, bewildered lady who has agreed to mind her neighbours dog is incredibly funny, mystified as she is by the dog's docility. "... perhaps he's fasting. Trying to surprise his owners by shedding a few kilos. I wouldn't mind, if only he'd tell me ..."

Ms Semiotician is also brilliant. She is the epitome of the absent minded, self complacent academic, finding an intricate significance in the most common of objects and occurrences, until she finally drowns in the sea of her own perplexity.

Don't search too deeply for

hidden messages, or you will find yourself lost in a mire of symbolism, feminine frustration, and flying hippo herds.

The stories are too disjointed and lack a common point of focus. Though their ideas are amusing, they are very abstract. Take each segment simply as it comes, without looking for continuity and you will enjoy yourself immensely. The girls are fresh and vivacious and they are all versatile performers. There was an excellent piece of improvisation and they obviously work together well. They are a very evenly matched group, using the minimal scenery and props. This all helped to produce a lively, animated, professional show, enhanced by music and dance. If you enjoy puzzling and entertaining silliness, you will love *Chasing Spaces*.

## float your own boat

"Who needs a boat when you can float? No Boat ... No float? Got float ... can Boat. Can Boat Float? Float that Boat." Confused? So was I. *Chasing Spaces* is a Melbourne company of nine young women, all Drama, Music or Dance graduates. They have all shared in the writing and directing of "Boat Equals Float" - a collage of four separate short stories, told in interwoven episodes. Each story centres on a single woman, ranging from the fantastic to the comic, dramatic.



The stories vary in liveliness and humour. The outcast lonely Sylvia escapes her prosaic existence through bizarre fantasies. But her frustrated visions become grim and unfathomably complex. The girl who wants to fly and "untangle this string of events that ties me to these earthbound mundanities" has some interesting dance sequences, but her story seems a bit pointless.

However, the play never drags. Just as you start to wonder what it really is all about, light relief comes

## hot n sleazy

Playing their own brand of Cajun music ( a sleazy French/American nightclub sound from Louisiana) at Little Sisters this week is Melbourne band, *Zydeco Jump*.

Zydeco Jump is a difficult group to pin down. They seem to hover somewhere between rockabilly, folk, rock and roll and jug band music. Consequently, they end up sounding something like a cross between the Bushwackers, Tom Waits and Patsy Kline. A feature band on the Big Gig, Zydeco Jump is coming to Adelaide to play at the Fringe as part of the Little Sisters Cabaret.

George Butrumlis, vocalist and accordion from the band, explained that the difficulty with classification was something Zydeco Jump had grown used to.

"We're playing at the Folk Festival at Port Fairy on the weekend. In away we scrape into Port Fairy by the skin of our teeth. We're like the closest thing to a rock and roll band they've ever seen. But because it is Zydeco, it gets in on the strength of "ethnic

music" or something. They looked at us strangely last year, but they loved it."

The Zydeco sound has received little attention in Australia, and Louis was keen to discuss its origins and style.

"Our style springs from Cajun music. Cajun music is played by the French speaking Arcadian population of Louisiana, and it's played by white people. Zydeco is the black offshoot of that, from the black French-speaking people of the same area."

"Zydeco, is much more influenced by the blues, and rhythm and blues, and it draws heavily from the Cajun style of music. It revs Cajun up a lot- they put sax in instead of violin, the rub board instead of the triangle, and a big accordion instead of a little concertina squeezebox thing. They beefed up the drum kit and rocked it up basically. It's much



more dance oriented."

Louis' interest in Zydeco goes back to his days with Jo Camilleri and the Black Sorrows.

"In the early years with the Black Sorrows we actually did quite a bit of Zydeco music. The Black Sorrows have changed their style now, and don't really do much Zydeco."

"Our style detracts a little bit from normal Zydeco in that there's actually four lead singers in the band. As far as genuine Zydeco bands from Louisiana and

Lafayette are concerned, we're probably vocally stronger than them. There's a lot of emphasis on the vocals and the harmonies in the band. We can all hold a tune and sing harmonies, and some of the harmonies in the stuff that we do aren't really a feature of normal Zydeco."

"Our main concern is that everybody gets into it and dances. We want them to sweat."

ZYDECO JUMP will be playing three shows only, from March 12 to 14 at 9pm, in the

Little Sisters Cabaret at the Living Arts Centre.

David Penberthy

## magical mayhem and a siamese twin

Playing at Little Sisters for the Fringe this week at 7 pm is yet another witty caberet act, 7 O'Clock Itch.

The Seven O'Clock Itch is one of the richest and most diverse acts playing at this year's Fringe. Its members include a script writer for Steve Vizard Live, an internationally acclaimed magician, and members of comedy team The Wiggling Bros, formerly the Cabbage Brothers.

Louie Dingerman, one of the Wiggling Brothers, explains how the show manages to draw together such disparate elements.

"We're sort of a Vaudeville freak act. We're dodgy sorts of characters. The idea is that Tony's character, the chronic gambler, tries to make money for an operation so that the Wiggling Brothers can get separated."

The Wiggling Brothers are Siamese twins, trapped together in a gigantic black suit. The magician Sam Angelico will only free them if he is paid the required sum of money.

"We get the idea to try and separate ourselves with a guillotine. It's not an overt story line in any way, but Tony, as the compere, gives some sort of narrative as to what happens when he gets his head chopped off. They are parts of the show in which he comperes with his head, without his head, and so forth."

Virtually all the performers in the Seven O'Clock Itch have enjoyed considerable success in their own right.

"Sam Angelico was a member of "Mama's Little Horror Show" which toured Europe, and he'd done shows at the Last Laugh in Melbourne. He's been involved since the start of the whole comedy thing in Melbourne. He's basically the best magician I've ever seen. He doesn't actually talk...he just makes noises. But he communicates really well."

"At one show, it was near the end of the night, and Sam was finishing off the act and the rest of us were off stage. There was a candle burning off stage and it fell over onto a chair and started a fire. There was a fire off stage, and Sam managed to tell the sound technician without speaking what was going on. The fire was put out, the audience didn't even know, and Sam kept on performing. He's wonderful."

"It's basically just Sam and a few props. He's got a few doves which appear, disappear, and get shot..."

Louie and the rest of the guys in the group are part of the strong comedy tradition which has grown out of Melbourne in recent



years. "We've got the venues in Melbourne, and a long tradition of alternative theatre over the last decade. It's also the cold and the weather...it's very different to Sydney where people just sit

around enjoying the weather, but during the Melbourne winter we tend to become a lot more creative. It's too cold to go outside so you've got to dream up something to do."

If you want to experience the

Seven O'Clock Itch, you can catch them at the Little Sisters Cabaret in the Living Arts Centre from March 12 to 18 at 7pm.

Kylie Smith

## Old MacDonald like you've never heard before

*thumbs down for all those in favour*

Not quite Kronos, the Como Quartet really know how to rip a piece to bits as Asha Mayer reports.

The "Como String Quartet" is not what you would expect. First of all, there are five of them. If you think that idea is 'absolutely off-the-wall and wacky, you should see their action-packed show.

It's musical acrobatics at its finest. But don't be mistaken, The "Como String Quartet" are more than mere performing musical monkeys, they are extremely talented musicians. It was this talent that allowed them to cleverly fiddle with the traditional strings of classical pieces. Would you believe a steamy rendition of Vivaldi's "Four Seasons", perhaps Mozart's Symphony No 5 at 128 b.p.m.'s? Even Old McDonald and his farm took a battering. And where was the piano during the piano concerto?

Well, there wasn't one: anymore than there was an appearance by Jeannie Little, who was listed on the programme for a recital of Shakespeare's sonnets.

Clearly, 'anyway is OK' for these renegade, convention breaking performers - as long as it's done well. And it is. Apart from their obvious musical ability, they invite the audience to participate, so be warned. The best laughs come from ad-lib audience victimisation: prepared mediocre jokes received mediocre laughs - but they were rare to say the least.

Their sideline facial contortions are also impressive and kept the five year old junior loud mouth to my left in constant fits of laughter. Definitely a show for all ages.

It was not as polished as an Adelaide Symphony Orchestra performance, or half as predictable as a Kylie soundtrack, but once a busker, always a busker. These musicians won the National Edinburgh Buskers Championship - and you'll see why.

They can do whatever they like - usually at the expense of some poor "Fringe" dweller sitting closest to the microphone. Given their history of wandering through the Bourke St Mall delighting the street audience, they make it an entertaining hour.

Definitely go and see the "Como String Quartet". You will be truly enlightened by the comic possibilities of four violins, one cello, a few pelvic thrusts and some lusty delivery.

Suzanne McPherson

### Mainstreet Theatre Living Arts Centre

Alarm bells should ring when, after about ten minutes of a show you are already saying, "Well, I'm sure the next bit will be funnier", and about two thirds of the way through you are feeling sorry for yourself for coming.

*All Those In Favour* was not written for me. Nor was it written for anyone else I know. It is a satire or an exposition or a something of democracy, good government and our responsibility to participate in the democratic process. Big deal.

The slapstick was OK, the set was good, one or two lines were funny. Big deal.

Nevertheless, though it totally failed to grab or even gently tweek me, it would probably make an interesting exposition to twelve year olds of a few fundamentals of



our political system. The twelve year olds in front of me enjoyed themselves quite a bit, and the large amount of work invested in the programme seemed to be aimed at them.

Advice to other democracy addicts: stay home, watch re-runs of "Yes Minister", and save \$10.

James Roberts

## dogpaddling

Some things are funny because we have all done them. Like peeing in the bath. Like tormenting pets. Amongst the funniest things are those we've all done to our families, like peeing in the bath while another family member is present.

*Dogpaddling* is Shaken and Suspicious' exquisite review of family operation, co-operation and interpersonal torment. Giles and

Pidd sing, dance, play and stand on tables whilst the audience laughs a lot and goes home satisfied.

This is a great feeling.

Sometimes it is warm and fuzzy, like those strange trust games they used to make us play in primary school to make us all better human beings, and other times it is embarrassing because you're certain someone has been taping your home life and selling it to a Fringe theatre group.

*Dogpaddling* shines because it is not often that you feel pretty happy spending \$8 on a show and \$1.40 for a (small) cup of Coopers and still want to rave to people about what a jolly good time you had.

James Roberts

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# FOOTLIGHTS SURVIVE AGAIN!!

**Exploding Sacred Cows** is the new Footlights revue and this coming week it's even funnier.

"And being prepared is always...um...er...vital."

The hesitant, hopeless lecturer's advice proved to be somewhat ironic on the opening night of "Exploding Sacred Cows". And yet, somehow, Footlights managed to pull it off and leave me (and most of the audience) convinced.

The climactic point came in the second sketch, where the wrong tape was put on, followed by a long silence. A lone spotlight shone on the back of an empty stage. Much nervous laughter and squirming. Finally, Damien Storer walks on for the sketch half-naked, and proudly announces: "I'm going to stand here, in my jocks, until the music comes on [scratches genitals]." BRILLIANT! The number one rule of comedy: if you're going to make mistakes, make them big, confident and loud.

Without wanting to harp, we shouldn't have had to endure clumsy set-changes, props accidents and under-rehearsed (fortunately never completely forgotten) lines. Schedules have been getting

increasingly tight and problems increasingly desperate as the season has approached (and by the way, wasn't the piano playing great?), but Opening Night demands more than a dress rehearsal that people pay to see.

Looking past the problems, a lot of the source material was very strong, and frequently pushed itself beyond the commercials: pillars of society: social stereotypes cannon fodder of revues. Even so, the most obvious targets were often the funniest to watch going down in flames:

"After I've come home from a hard day's work, beaten up the wife, fucked one of the kids and shot the dog, I want a full 'alf hour of news."

Also impressive was the degree of outrageousness which the Footlights were prepared to go to, such as pointing out a member of the audience as an ex-lover or slipping a condom onto Big Ted before throwing him on top of Jemima. The 'Brady Family' sketch, while the concept is nicked, went further than I would have thought

conceivable (these guys haven't consulted a lawyer), and was brilliantly put together. I was gasping for breath, partly through laughter and partly through incredulity that they would dare to say these things. It's probably the highlight of the show, and is *definitely* actionable (but anything's actionable nowadays...).

Having said that, some sketches would have benefitted from being pushed even further out onto the edge (The Stockbrokers, "Domestic Silence", "Beer"). While it can be seen as a cop-out in writing terms, there is something implicitly funny about seeing someone do strange things and go completely mental - the Liz Smylie dribbling sketch in "Be Afraid..." comes to mind, and it had its equivalent here with "Nutella" - no prizes for guessing what it involved.

The "Dribble M" sequence was also hilarious, but with a better production could have been even more biting.

The sketches that worked least well were those of self-referential humour, which tend to be unnerving rather than funny (e.g. cast members bickering amongst themselves) and the "Gorby"

sketch, which simply fell apart half-way to the line. The closing 'Mega-Capitalist' piece contained some funny parts, but was conceptually a mess, its sole *raison d'être* seemingly being to get all cast members on stage at the same time. It does, however, culminate in what must be the most bizarre finish to a revue *ever*.

Of the cast, Matt Hawkins exuded a remarkably Shaun Micallef-esque stage presence, confident but very laid-back. Katie Abbott was *born* to take off Wendy James - once she put the costume on, the resemblance was staggering. Arna Evers-White's sketches were no less funny than the rest of the ensemble's, but seemingly more world-weary, giving a level of depth and maturity which isn't normally associated with university revues.

Despite the teething problems mentioned, by the time you read this, "Exploding Sacred Cows" will be well worth seeing, and will probably be a riot by the end of the week. All reports from people viewing the show towards the end of last week indicated a vast improvement in both production and performance. People who saw

"Less Than Zebra" last year might want to be wary, however, as (I am told) there were five or six sketches taken from there.

As for *The Advertiser's* review (and I only mention it in case it has discouraged you from going), it was as rushed and badly composed as most *Advertiser* reviews for this Festival have been, the references to decorative bimbos were insulting and inaccurate, and the two stars it received on Thursday morning had magically retreated to one by Friday - such is the level of competence of its Festival coverage and journalists.

But the worst of it is that Patrick McDonald's job is now in grave danger, as Piers was *not* impressed with his derogatory references to the Benny Hill show. When you're busy lobotomising the masses, the last thing you want is them *thinking* about their comedy, eh?

Even though they *still* can't come up with a decent name, Footlights have once again done a very competent job.

Simon Healy  
Little Theatre until 17 March

## Darwin moves south

Avarice is a virtually, or was that virtually, unknown theatre company from either Canberra or Darwin. Based in Melbourne, they have come to Adelaide with their PRE-POST MODERN LOVE STORY-MERCUROCHROME, which by all accounts (or at least mine) is a pretty nasty piece of theatre. Winners of the Palm D'or at Cairns and Milla-Milla Film Festivals, and the 25 metre breaststroke at Tennant Creek Primary (1962), they present the audience with something of a moral dilemma. Some people see the play as a seething indictment of domestic violence. Others see it as a glorious celebration of domestic violence. What is going on?

Beverly, Steven and Kim, the three people behind Avarice, explain:

"We're completely sick of the word post-modern so we decided to use it in the title. Pre-post gives the impression of being pre-posted, as in Australia Post."

Hey, wow! They're actually deconstructing the whole concept of packaging!

"That's right" Bev replies. "Like...just don't cage me in."

It is refreshing to see a theatre company which is determined to take the piss out of the absurd theorising of the theatrical establishment. This cynicism can be traced back to the undergraduate theatre the troupe has been involved

in. "We've done a couple of university revues at the ANU. We've lived all over the place. I lived and studied in Darwin for a while, and Steven did all of his schooling there. The play is actually a reflection of Darwin, it's an absurdist kind of fantasy."

"There's two characters, (in a strong Australian draw) Trevor and Raelene, and they just exist in their own world. He beats her up, and she doesn't actually notice for half the show. She's completely off with the fairies, absorbed with Women's Day and New Idea, and stereotypes like "you should have a perfect family because you're supposed to" and so forth."

"Parts of the show are, apparently, quite offensive. We don't set out to offend anybody deliberately. There's one part where Trevor and Raelene's baby dies, so they lop off the top of her head and turn her into an ashtray. People get really upset about it, but we thought it was one of the funniest things in the entire play."

"We showed the play to our group of ideologically sound friends, and they were really shocked, which was great because we're sick of ideologically sound people."

Bev denies that the show is merely an amoral piece of darkness and cynicism. There is, she

believes, a political message in the show.

"Mercurochrome" is about oppression and people who stand by while they are being oppressed. We're not excusing Trevor's abuse and "wife-bashing" in any way, but we're looking at the social basis of his seething aggression."

MERCUROCHROME will be playing at midnight at the Wetpack Theatre in the Living Arts Centre from March 11-18. For a chance to win a free ticket to the Wednesday performance, enter the competition on the back page of ON DIT.

David Penberthy

## Music in the Fringe

Among the very few art music events in this year's Fringe program is the debut of "12th Mode" in three twilight concerts at Fables Bookstore, Chesser Street on the 13th, 14th and 15th March at 6.30 pm.

"12th Mode" is a group of five Adelaide composers; Maxine Bradshaw, Ed Elksnitis, Charli Holoubek, Bill Hughes and Peter Leech. The members of "12th Mode" represent diverse musical backgrounds, interests and influences and these can be heard in

the rich variations of the groups output.

Charli Holoubek is a well known guitarist in the Adelaide rhythm and blues scene through his successful bands "Rhythm Willie" and "Gumbo Ya Ya".

Peter Leech has recently returned from Europe where participated in a conducting contest and received the distinction of getting an Honourable Mention in the highly competitive contest. Peter is currently based in Melbourne studying and conducting at the Victorian College for the Arts.

Ed Elksnitis, another guitarist, has taken a keen interest in electronic music. Ed also enjoys writing in many different styles. Bill Hughes studied the classical masters and now has combined this with rock influences.

Maxine Bradshaw is one of the few female composers of contemporary art music in South Australia and contributes her own unique style.

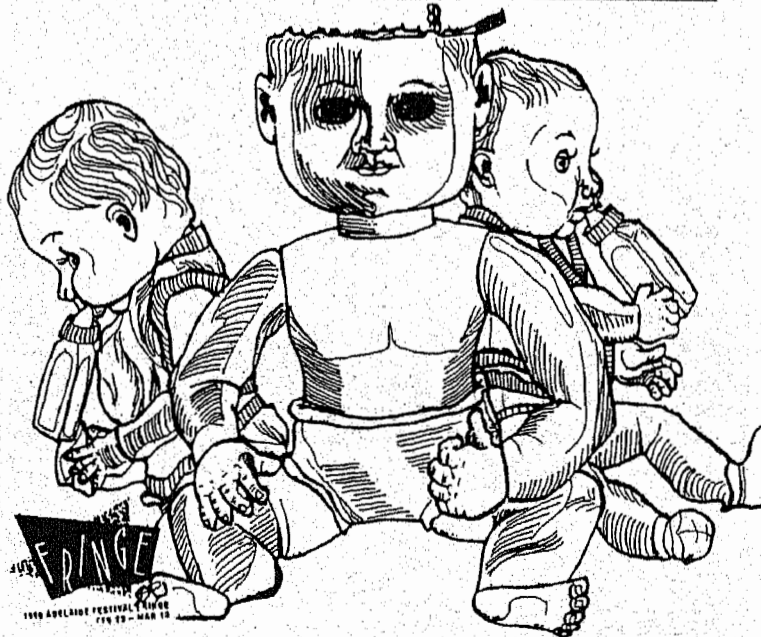
The Chamber Group consist of a string quartet, piano, clarinet, flute and classical guitar. The aim of the performances is to provide an informal and relaxed atmosphere, moving away from the usual concert hall situation.

Fables Bookstore will be holding an art exhibition concurrently with this series of concerts and wine educator Paul Le Lacheur will be providing free wine tasting on all three nights from 6 pm.

It is hoped that "12th Mode" can attract a wide audience with interests in innovative music of all genres.

The concerts promise to be a taste of something new for Adelaide audiences.

Matt Hawkins







# V. Spy V. Spy

**v.Spy v.Spy returned to Adelaide last Friday week to play The Old Lion. On Dit was there, and consumed vast quantities of liquor. Earlier in the week, Jason Bootle interviewed drummer Cliff Grigg.**

v.Spy v.Spy are one of Australia's best live bands, and their recordings vary from good to excellent. Their line-up comprises Craig Bloxom (Bass, Lead Vocals), Michael Weiley (Guitar, Lead Vocals when Craig can't be bothered) and Cliff Grigg (Drums, Backing Vocals). They play "trio music". If you don't know what that means, read on...

Their career started in '82 with the "Do What You Say" single, closely followed by the "Four Fresh Lemons" EP (at last count, these were changing hands for \$200 a time). A long silence was followed by a signing to WEA and the excellent "Meet Us Inside" mini-LP. After that, v.Spy have been fairly prolific, producing their debut "Harry's Reasons?" and "A.O. Mod. TV. Vers." in 1986, "Xenophobia [Why?]" in 1988 and "Trash The Planet" late in '89.

v.Spy v.Spy played Adelaide last Friday week in support of "Trash The Planet" album. Jason Bootle spoke to drummer Cliff Grigg before the concert:

Like any record company, WEA are trying to convince us that "Trash The Planet" is the album v.Spy v.Spy have always threatened to make. The spies have finally come in from the cold. (open mouth, insert middle finger).

But nobody reads press releases anyway - more worrying is the television ad which proclaims that v.Spy v.Spy are "a great Aussie Rock'n'Roll band."

What did Cliff think of this summary?

"I haven't seen it, but 'Great Rock'n'Roll'? One of those corny voice-overs? (laughs)."

Their early days in Sydney have been well-documented, but less has been known about the band members' histories.

JB: *Your ex-squat in Sydney has passed into Australian folklore. What was your background before you moved in?*

"I lived in a country town called Armidale in NSW, at that time they were living in Nelson's Bay down on the coast. I played in a couple of high school bands, but nothing serious. I moved to Sydney in 1979 to go to Art School, but Mal Fraser didn't give me any money, so I chucked it in.

"I met up with Michael and Craig in '81, and we're still going strong."

JB: *Your drew the 'gargoyle' designs on the sleeve of TTP. Have you done any other artwork?*

"In fact, on the cover of "Harry's Reasons?", there's lino cuts that I did, and I've done some artwork for every song, and that's what I've done with this one."

Cliff artistic pursuits don't stop here - he also recently involved in a "Paint Your Bandwagon" exhibition at a Redfern art gallery.

All of the Spies' first three albums were recorded in Australia

and produced by Les Karski. By the time of "Xenophobia (Why?)", this approach was beginning to wear a little thin, and so they ventured over to England to record TTP with Craig Leon (Ramones, Blondie, Jesus Jones).

"The fact that we went overseas was a big inspiration for the whole album. We wrote "Clear Skies" (the second single) in half an hour. It literally came out of the sky and landed in our lap. It only happened like that because we were in London, rehearsing in "South of the River" which is just a sleazy little rehearsal studio, because we were there to write songs...we couldn't escape that...there was just us and that...nothing else.

"Working with Craig was a really good choice. In lots of ways he relaxed us and got us motivated where Les didn't. But Les did a lot of things that Craig didn't."

It has only been two and a half months since the Spies last played Adelaide, giving them one of the busiest touring schedules of any band around. Was this heavy schedule going to affect their recording quality?

"We like to play more than one show a week, but we've got to put our energy into writing songs. We

want the songs to get better, it doesn't matter how you record them, if there not good songs they don't record well."

v.Spy v.Spy have been categorised in the past as a *Midnight Oil Jnr* and even lumped in with Sydney mods. There are now cries of "mellowing" and "selling out" from some quarters.

"You can't please everyone. When you go and make an album, the band should try and please themselves, and that way you'll get out of what is in the song when you play it, and you will sing it like you mean it."

A query about how they approach playing different venues was met with predictable replies of "every show is just a Spies show", but he was prepared to stick the knife into their Adelaide destination:

"We're playing the Old Lion this time, and I don't think it's a premier venue or anything, but we'll put on our best show...."

DATELINE: Friday, 2nd March, 8.30pm, The Less Than Premier Venue.

Let me explain the Press Pass concept to you. It involves free entry, without getting frisked by the bouncers (watching them grimace as they attempt to treat you nicely is enough to make anyone's night), backstage passes after the gig, which involve the chance of having

a chat to the band whilst eating imported cheeses and specially prepared delicacies.

But I've left out the important bit! FREE DRINKS ALL NIGHT! Corruption runs rife in the record industry, and we were proud to be a part of it.

The Mark Of Cain, in an interview, said that they were asked to support v.Spy by the promoter because "theyt are both trios, y'know?" When they asked said promoter whether he knew what sort of music they played, he replied with what must be one of the classic quotes of 1990: "Y'know, three-piece music." Faced with such an intellectual heavyweight, what could TMOC do but accept the support slot?

While their tales of urban horror and decay went over the head of much of the Spies' SA.FM audience, The Mark Of Cain were relentless and frightening. Their lead singer/guitarist John stomped on stage and screamed "WAKE UP!" at the unsuspecting crowd, and continued to pour his soul out into the microphone for the next 40 minutes. In the frequently flatulent and unimaginative Adelaide underground scene, TMOC are not so much a breath of fresh air as a hurricane. Although the comparison is a little odious, they are the next best thing to seeing the legendary, and sadly departed, Rapeman. Awesome.

And the headliners hadn't even

started! The hall was much more crowded than when they toured in mid-December, due in part to the fact that they only played one show this time. They opened up with "One Of A Kind", with its altered final line of "We're off our face/ Most of the time!", and simply played a set of their best tunes with infectious enthusiasm.

There were only two tracks from "Xenophobia [Why?]" and a heavy focussing on material from their excellent newie (see album reviews). As an encore bonus, we got the instrumental "Dangerman" from "Harry's Reasons?", including a speech on the TV show ("which we used to stay up until 5:30 in the morning to watch") which inspired it. Craig later said that they hadn't played it in "over two years".

We were pretty seriously floating on fluid by this stage, but don't think our objectivity was compromised. The Spies were even better than when they last came here, and the audience and band worked off each other's energy, reachir frenzy by the end of the night. Unlike most pub gigs, the mood was relaxed and happy, without any problems with violence, even in the crush at the front. No wonder the bouncers looked so pissed off...

Post-gig, drugs flowed freely, the band scammed off the groupies, and alternating videos of "The Wall" and Hitler's collected speeches ran on the 100-cm monitor all night. No, sorry, nothing that outrageous, but there were some very lovely strawberries on the smorgasbord, and Cliff, Michael and Craig turned out to be very approachable, talkative, down-to-earth guys. If I was in a band on a touring schedule as hectic as theirs, the last thing I would want to do is to stick around talking to record company and press types, but they actually chose to stay, have a chat, and sign various posters and record covers.

While all this was happening, the over-worked bar staff totted up all the complimentary drinks purchased that night, which must have gone close to the Brazilian national debt.

The most embarrassing moment of the night was when I asked Craig about the band's split with manager "Russel Morris" (referring to ex-manager Gary Morris). More cruel types would have serenaded me with a few bars of "The Real Thing", but Craig merely corrected me and patiently explained the story.

As for the future, there is a possibility that v.Spy will be touring the USSR in 6 weeks' time with an Aboriginal band as part of their involvement in the "Building Bridges" project.

Why are the Soviet government interested in them?

"Because we're a three piece, and so they reckon we'll be cheaper to take."

Just another band that plays "three-piece music", eh?

Simon Healy  
Jason Bootle





**Succeeds When Daylight Fails Tyrnaround**  
*Polyester*

"Succeeds When Daylight Fails" is the debut album by Tyrnaround, a five piece Melbourne band whose brand of psychedelic power pop is influenced by late sixties British bands *Small Faces* and *The Pretty Things*.

From the word go this album is a game of spot the influence. Despite this, the band still manages to create a sound of their own, with imaginative guitar, keyboard sounds and some nice harmonies. The album opens with "As I Walk With You", which sounds like the Beatles with fuzz guitar and a chorus similar to "Lazy Sunday" by the Small Faces. "Nothing" is the next track and has a guitar riff which reminds me of the Beatles ("Getting Better"). "Keys and Chains" and "Somewhere to Go" both have catchy pop tunes with Hoodoo Gurus type harmonies and "Constance" has a "Who" type sound. The two most interesting songs are the psychedelic "Look Inside" with its way out lyrics, "Eccentric circles running through the remnants of my past" and "Uncle Sydney" is a weird song about a psychopathic family member.

Overall, an impressive debut album  
Rating: 7 out 10.  
Jack K.

**Bread and Circus ToadThe Wet Sprocket**  
*CBS*

Is it even worth listening to an album by a band whose name sounds like it was rejected by Monty Python? Too bloody right it is.

Had I been played this album without knowing which band it was, I would almost have said V Spy V Spy. The lead singer sounds uncannily like that of V Spy V Spy and songs such as "Unquiet" and "Know Me" are virtually indistinguishable from the early work of the aforementioned band. Toad's lyrics are pretty deep at times and seem to express disillusionment with life, but without sounding the remotest bit like Leonard Cohen, i.e. both dead and alive at the same time.

*One little girl  
Is beaten till she faints  
Told that this is love*

*Told that she will have to take it.*  
Polished production makes this album a most enjoyable one. The only problem I can see is that it will be neither bought nor given radio time due to the band's odd name.

Simon Andrews

**Here We Are Gloria Estefan**  
*CBS*

First Miami Sound Machine, then Gloria Estefan and Miami Sound Machine, now just Gloria by herself with the rest of the band playing behind a curtain in another room. An appealing love song that SAN will probably pick up, and she does have a great voice. For fans (is this possible?) there is a live version of "1,2,3" on the B-side.

James Nuttall



**Blue Sky Mining Midnight Oil**  
*CBS*

Pete's head may be sparse and devoid of growth, but not so the latest inspired offering of subtle rather than slogan bearing music from Midnight Oil.

Certainly this album will be disappointing for those who hoped for a return to the aggressive rock and straight-forward politics of "Red Sails" after that intermission, "Diesel and Dust". However, for those who grow with the Oils (excluding public growth), "Blue Sky Mining" is a wonderful follow up to the worldly acclaimed "Diesel and Dust".

The Oils, approaching middle age have, over the last few albums, lessened the punch of their music and vocals and in the process, extracted a rich melodic sound which strengthens with every listen. The tracks, penned mostly by Rob Hirst and the musician Jim Moginie, abound with swirling political imagery:

*In the end the rain comes down,  
Washes clean the streets, of a blue sky town.*

This, combined with their extensive use of strings and their attention to detail, provides the ingredients for a new chapter in the Oil's career. Accentuating this, the haunting choruses that accompany songs such as "Stars of Warburton", "Bedlam Bridge", "Mountains of Burma", "River Runs Red" and "One Country".

*I can shake, I can move  
But I can't live without your love.*

What? An Oil's love song? Yes, they touch a tender spot with "Shakers and Movers". A rarity seeing as their last soppy tune was "Head Over Heels", off their debut album (symbolic maybe?).

The weak point of the album is one of the more up-tempo songs, "Forgotten Years", which lacks musical substance, while the two songs in the same range, "Blue Sky Mine" (the first single) and "King of the Mountain" are powerful, well-crafted and almost groove.

"Antarctica" pleads for the discovery of an untouched eco system, reminiscent of "Arctic World" but much better.

At which the album ends, and you are left begging for an encore. On this alone, I am compelled to make a bald, er, bold statement, "Blue Sky Mining" is the Oil's best album for sure, to date but who knows what the future holds.

Nathan Barnes

**Price of Love Bad English**  
*CBS*

More soppy A.O.R. shit by ugly old wankers trying to be young pretty wankers. A boring, schmaltzy, perfect for EM synth-rock ballad. Bob Downe will perform this in 10 years' time.

James Nuttall

**Sometimes She Cries Warrant**  
*CBS*

Ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha.

Bad English are "artistes" compared to these morons. More of the same from the Rock Star wanna-bers that are currently flooding radio and television everywhere, like a glam cancer. This is their attempt at a lovey-dovey ballad to show that deep down underneath the make up and spandex, they really are serious musicians. They don't understand that shit is still shit no matter how nicely you wrap it up.

James Nuttall

**Raging Silence Uriah Heep**  
*Festival*

The millionth or so album by these early seventies English plod rockers. Not bad at all for a comeback reunion (contractual obligations?) record, and miles better than those made by their contemporaries. Still, the songs are the same boogie-rock with a bit of synthesizer, so they do get a little tedious. The best songs by far are 'Rich Kid' which stands out as a really grungy garage blast, and the version of 'Hold Your Head Up' (in fact, they are similar to the Party Boys but have more trendy synths and flashy guitar licks). Warrant and Co. could learn a lot from these guys.

James Nuttall

**Reading, Writing and Arithmetic The Sundays**

*Rough Trade*

The Sundays are currently *the* hype band from Britain, and so a first listen to "Reading, Writing and Arithmetic" is certain to garnish a reaction of 'ho hum, more jingle-jangle pop'.

The Sundays, however, have so much more going for them. Most obvious is Harriet Wheeler's voice, which can jump from being colloquial to truly transcendent in a matter of seconds. She is dazzling to listen to, and quickly alerts the listener that this is something special.

It's been argued that their lyrics owe a debt to The Smiths, which is true for such gems as "The only thing I ever wanted to say was wrong" and "If I could have anything in the world for free/ I wouldn't share it with anyone else but me," and as for the song title "I Kicked A Boy"...enough said. But the self-pity is always more restrained and likeable, and I would choose Harriet Wheeler singing the phone book over Morrissey droning the most inspired composition every time.

Musically, they get a little aggressive on "Hideous Towns" (which is enormously enjoyable despite its awful lyric), but other than that, it's familiar guitar-pop territory, with the guitars always tasteful underdone.

If you can handle the fact that they sound so *precious* (you're afraid to touch the record at the end of Side 2 for fear it'll shatter into a million pieces), you could easily grow to love "Reading, Writing and Arithmetic". The find of 1990 so far.

Simon Healy



**Friendly as a Hand Grenade Tackhead**  
*World Records/ CBS*

TACKHEAD: a fusion of metal guitar growl, panther-sleek soul and monstrous beats that pummel the spine and massages the heart.

FRIENDLY AS A HAND GRENADE: relentless in its attack on the senses. Bleak pictures of liberty and freedom are painted in your mind, whilst a revolt occurs in your lower abdomen flowing right down to the soles of your feet. A revolution that you can dance to!

*Stealing*, with its George Clinton/ Bootsy Collins backbeat asks people to join the Rev. TACK in his: *we accept donations from all denominations*, message against T.V. evangelists. The instrumental *Free South Africa*, attempts to firebomb apartheid with blasts of beat and guitar screams of terror. *Demolition House* does just that courtesy of a killer Doug Wimbish bass line and an aural collage of various samples.

VERDICT: Tackhead refuse to follow the fashion mentality of other dance/rap bands around providing a fresh break from whether their dicks are bigger than the home boyz with the fresh gold chains.

Jason Bootle.

**Sydney Young Blood Sydney Young Blood**  
*Circa Records*

This debut album by Sydney Youngblood, a 27 year old part-black-part Cherokee Indian, should be popular with fans of American black dance music. Some of the better tracks on this album include the soulful "If Only I Could" and an excellent cover of Bill Withers' "Ain't No Sunshine". What especially makes these tracks stand out apart from fine singing is the Spanish guitar playing, which combines well with the dance/Balaeric backbeat. Other standout tracks include acapella "Kiss and Say Goodbye", "Sit and Wait" (with an excellent keyboard riff) and "I'd Rather Go Blind", which has a similar feel to Marvin Gaye's "Sexual Healing". Apart from these songs the rest of the album is typical boring dance music and spoils what could have been an excellent record.

Jack K.

**World Trade**  
*Polygram*

Interesting fact: after *On Dit* writers review records, they are allowed to keep them. One would think that this is a bummer if one gets a crap record, but not so. Simply take it in to Ray's Second-Hand Record Store in the city and sell it to him.

Why am I admitting this appalling abuse of office to you? Because the sole impression that World Trade have left on my life is to make me four dollars richer. And provided me with a laugh, courtesy of their biography:

*"World Trade forms a link between select virtuoso bands of the past (Genesis, King Crimson, Yes, Pink Floyd) and the future of progressive rock."*

What does this mean? That their coke roadie was once married to the assistant engineer on *Atom Heart Mother*? Does anyone give a bollock?

This is flatulent, cliché-ridden, pretentious session-muso twaddle of the lowest order.

The only other amusing thing about World Trade is that they actually *believe* they have Something To Say: as their axe hero Bruce Gowdy put it in a fit of inspiration, "If we want world peace, together we can achieve it. It's that simple".

Anyone wanna buy a used biography?

Simon Healy

**Seasons End Marillion**  
*EMI*

Marillion's recently departed vocalist, Fish, left because of musical differences with the rest of the band. On the basis of *Season's End*, I commend fish's judgement. *Season's End* is not the worst album imaginable, but it could be the most boring. Marillion play faultlessly - like a computer. New vocalist, Steve Hogarth's dispassionate mumbblings are in tune, but who cares when the songs are tuneless, and the guitar gymnastics are predictably indulgent. Post Marillion albums were never classics, but neither were they as dreary as *Season's End*.

Patrick Allington



**The Language of Life  
Everything But The Girl**  
WEA

This is the fifth album by British duo *Everything But The Girl*. The music on this album should appeal to fans of light jazz/pop music (e.g. Sade). Despite the excellent singing and the fact that some very well respected musicians played on this album, I found it very boring.

- Question: This album would be
- (a) suitable elevator music for David Jones
  - (b) good to play while you watch moss grow on trees
  - (c) exciting for accountants
  - (d) a nice dinner plate with pictures of two ugly people on it
  - (e) all of the above

Rating: 3 out 10.

Jack K.

**Trash The Planet**  
v.Spy v.Spy  
WEA

The fact that they're the nicest bunch of guys you could ever hope to meet and a blood-curdlingly brilliant live band has to be set aside for a moment, as the pretence of objectivity is set up in reviewing the Spies' fourth album.

Fortunately, "Trash The Planet" is highly impressive, and - a big advance on the relatively mediocre "Xenophobia [Why?]".

The first single, "Hardtimes" was a great taster: it was easy to forgive its frequently wooden lyrics in light of the staggering musical inventiveness apparent- how many bands do you know that can go from Mudhoney to Big Country in the space of ten seconds.

v.Spy have gone for a melodic, commercially viable sound on "TTP" which fits them surprisingly well, and fortunately haven't compromised these gains by piledriving their audience into the ground lyrically.

Only "Our House" and "Hooligans" suffer from banal lyrics (although the latter features the fine couplet "I'm only happy when I couldn't care less! I like to leave my life in a mess"), and the tunes are consistently strong and very hummable. "What The Future Holds", "Take It Or Leave It" and "Have No Fear" are statements of hope and optimism and, just as importantly, instantly accessible songs.

"A New Start" is the most experimental they have attempted to date, a direction I would like to see them pursue more in future, and "Asleep At The Wheel" sees the glorious return of the Michael Weiley Speech Solo.

In a year that is shaping up very promisingly for Australian albums, "Trash The Planet" can hold its head high.

Simon Healy

**Goin' To Pieces**  
Nick Barker & The Reptiles

White/Festival Records

Trepidation surfaced as I lowered the stylus onto this one. I expected to be disappointed, I'll admit, and I wasn't disappointed. Perhaps it's the fault of the scribes. If as it is claimed, "Nick Barker is the great white hope" of Australian rock'n'roll threw its odds on the opposition will target his unmuscl'd paunch.

It would be easy to mock the cover of Steve Harley/Cockney Rebels *Make Me Smile* but to the Reptiles credit, they did pick one hell of a song. For that reason it certainly rates a mention.

The other problem is in the songs themselves. Singles should indicate the musical strengths contained in the album. When this expectation is not realized, I'm inclined to feel cheated and it's unfortunate because I'm sure Nick Barker and The Reptiles could do it better. With the hype he's had, that's another



*Goin' to Pieces* (the album) is a pastiche. A collection of songs packaged like one of Mom's Apple Pies. There's the two singles *Goin' to Pieces* and *Make Me Smile (Come Up and See Me)* and one other standout *Resurrection Time*. It's all passably good blues based rock'n'roll - not exactly barroom

stuff, but there's harmonica licking around the edges. Strong stuff you think. No, not really; and that's one problem with this record. Vapid and uncommitted production ribs the songs of any intent.

Alex Wheaton

**Axeman's Jazz**

• The 'News' is now host to a 'Poison Pen' column (a title designed to endear), revealing inside goss on the music industry (sounds familiar?).

Unfortunately, it could only avail itself of two items; the first tedious, boring and hardly exclusive, i.e. what were JJJ's first words on air; and the second, on the performance of a local band that the Axeman covered a week previously was so wildly inaccurate the subject is considering legal advice. For the right payola, guys, you too can syndicate the Axeman.

• Paul and Linda (McCartney, idiots) celebrate 21 years of connubial bliss this Monday. That means marriage for those of you who wish to impress friends with an in-depth knowlege of the Lifestyles of the Rich and Famous.

star of siam

The Star of Siam  
Thai Restaurant  
67 Gouger Street  
Adelaide

I had recently travelled with Thai airways and sampled some of their culinary delights, ie, sticky rice that could wipe Selley's super glue from the market and spicy omelettes made with eggs that would make Edwina Currie laugh at her salmonella problem. After such an experience, I was ready to give Thai food a miss at least until I had found another cheap ticket to Europe. However, having heard fantastic reports about the Star of Siam, I prepared myself for the worst and gave it a bash.

It is great to see a reasonably priced restaurant with excellent waiting staff. Living in Adelaide I am used to a \$15 meal which means arriving at the door, waiting for 10 mins until someone can bother to confirm your booking, and then being told to find your intimate table for two is "somewhere over there near the toilet door" so that you can romantically delight in the

wafts of everyone's excretion every time it opens.

Upon entering the Star, we were politely greeted and literally carried to and seated at our table. Having immediately been indulged with apertifs (a couple of Cooper's Ales) our glasses never remained empty for the rest of the night and yet not once did we have to lift a bottle. How nice it was to be pampered.

The fantastic service was followed by an excellent meal. Good Thai food should be hot but not so strong that the spice masks the subtle flavour of the other ingredients. I started the two course meal with the Thai carrot salad and Dave had the spicy vegetable with minced pork. Conversation ceased while we happily indulged. Having made our way through the first five mouthfuls, we looked into each others glistening eyes from across the table. Perspiration poured from our brows. No, this was not love, just amazingly hot food. It was great to eat a raw simple dish like

the carrot salad that had a touch of originality with the added red chili and nuts. An ideal entree, as it was light and refreshing and increased your appetite for what was to come.

With the main course the heat continued for Dave, who against my strong advice opted for the red beef currie with bamboo shoots. I said before, the essence of Thai food is in the balance in the ingredients so nothing overpowers the other flavours. A delicious ginger sauce topped perfectly cooked shoots and tender meat (which Dave intially complained of as too tough. On tasting it, I had to disagree and put his observation down to a tooth erosion problem due to high alcohol consumption.)

I opted for the vegetarian dish with peanut sauce. No Kraft's crunchy peanut paste but real nuts covering slightly undercooked green vegetables, just the way they should be done so the flavour and nutrients are retained. Maybe a touch bland, but perfect after such a hot entree. We skipped on desserts as we had a play to go and see, but

as sticky rice with mango and Thai ice cream.

The prices were amazingly cheap considering what we ate. The average price for an entree is \$4 and a main course of \$9. Considering that you have got such an amazing variety of dishes-shrimp, squid, beef, soups and salad- finding such little difference in cost is excellent.

Alcohol is available to buy or you can do as we did and BYO. It's good to see people so willing to accomodate for those who could not afford or did not want to buy from the Star's selection.

A truly faultless evening which was thoroughly enjoyed by both parties came to only \$34. I had to make one or two extra trips to the toilet but then there is nothing like good hot food to clear the nose and purify the system. If you want truly original Thai food perhaps the best in Adelaide, this is the place to go.

Beware, Booking is essential at least 2 days beforehand, otherwise you just won't get a table. Believe me...it is well worth sweating over.

Joanna Pugsley

thin blue line



"The Thin Blue Line" is an investigation of the murder of a policeman in Dallas Texas in November 1976. It is a series of interviews with people who were actually involved with the case: the accused murderer, witnesses, lawyers, police, etc. The interviews are interlaced with reenactments of what the witnesses claimed to have seen, snippets from old black and white detective films and various B-grade movie techniques that give this film an almost surreal feel.

Adding to the surrealism is the brilliant music by Philip Glass

which is reminiscent of his music for the films Koyanisquatsi and Powaquatsi.

It soon becomes apparent that the official investigation of the crime was a fiasco. Firstly, the murdered policeman's partner failed to get the registration number of the murderer's car or to call for help immediately. For a whole month there were no clues as to who or where the murderer might be until a sixteen year old boy, himself in the middle of a known crime-spree and having already boasted to his friends that he was the murderer,

wanted to know for a reward. Then there was the man who claimed to have 'instant memory recall' but came forward claiming to have witnessed the crime. This encouraged other seedy characters to emerge as questionable witnesses. One laughable woman admitted it had always been her dream to be a detective and that she always investigated murders in her neighbourhood, while her husband confessed to his employer that he would tell the police whatever they

who had a lot of trouble remembering anything when interviewed for the film. Unfortunately, the hype surrounding the whole case meant that people were taken seriously in the desperation to pin the crime on someone.

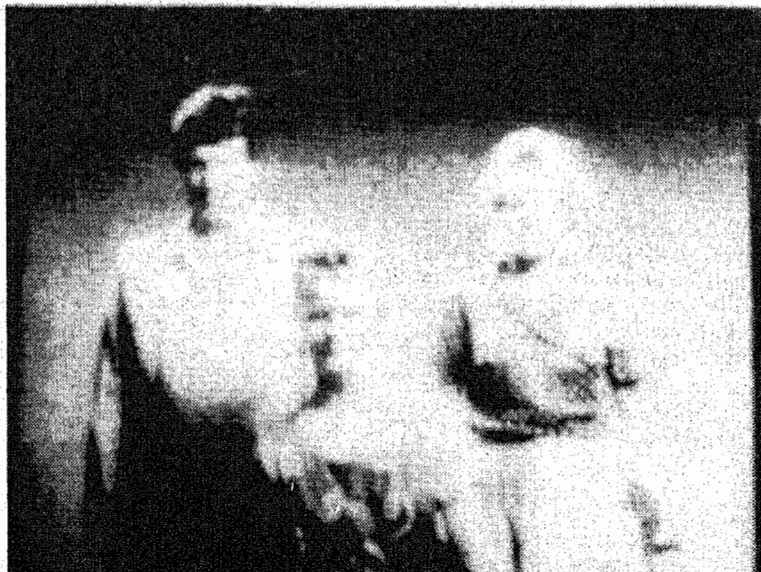
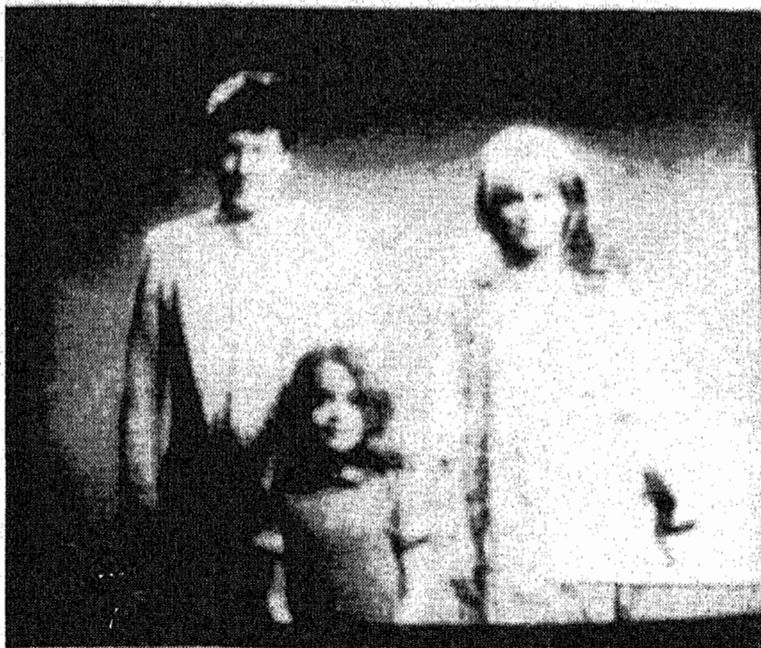
From the beginning, this film makes the reviewer question the motives of the police and the value of a judicial system that could allow such a sham of an investigation to culminate in the sentencing to death of an innocent man. As usual the mass media played an important role and had a lot to answer for. The injustices of this case and the hysteria surrounding it brought to my mind memories of the Azaria/Lindy Chamberlain case.

"The Thin Blue Line" is an intriguing and compelling film. It is also a very pertinent film when only a week ago capital punishment was being discussed in State Parliament.

Kate Giles



soap frenzy soap frenzy soap frenzy



Sado-masochism? Boredom? Braintdeath? or truly tacky taste? What is it that makes thousands of Australians tune in every night to the array of soapies currently shown on our screens? After strapping myself to an armchair, I gritted my teeth and shuddering as I reached for the remote control, I set about the grisly task of finding out.

First stop "Home and Away" on Channel Seven. This show is a bulimic's dream - watch and throw ... and throw. For tuning in on life at Summer Bay, I was rewarded by the nauseatingly full-frontal display of the show's supposed 'hunks' in full Speedo regalia. Craig MacLachlan and Julian MacMahon posed wistfully as though they really thought they were in a tampon commercial, offering touching moral insight on the joys of maintaining their self-respect by not cheating in the local "Iron Man" contest. All this was littered with great conviction whilst modelling two skimpy lycra wonders.

The show also boasts an overweight version of Kylie Minogue, and a very appealing canine who was also the show's most talented actor, looking perpetually bored by the lives of these cretins as they agonised over what to wear to the dance and who would win the beauty contest. Feeling desperately embarrassed that this who was actually Australian, I could endure no more and flicked over the "Eastenders" on Two.

Prepared for the worst, "Eastenders" came as a bit of a relief. Watching this is an uplifting experience. Everything in the lives of the Eastenders is so depressing, miserable and grey that you'll instantly feel better about your own existence. This soap is truly the best on offer in its genre with a delightfully smutty, tabloid storyline. The night I watched it they had a rapist moralising to his victim, a heroin addict blackmailing a Turkish adulterer, an attempted murder as well as some meaty

prison scenes featuring a real life murderer playing Dirty Dan. This is what soaps should be about - non of your highschool dance drivel here, "Eastenders" has a much fleshier, scandal-crammed plot on which you can really cut your incisors, without gagging as with "Home and Away".

But it was back to base level with "Neighbours", a dog named 'Bouncer' also being its most riveting performer. A resident 'hunk' seems to be a necessary element in Australian soaps, Neighbours having its own 501 poseur-bullyboy (Ashley Paske), who was preparing to pulverise a flatmate for making sexual overtures to his girlfriend. This was cutie-pie Neighbours big shock tactic, mentioning sex in the midst of middleclass suburbia.

I desperately tried to distinguish some plot from all the teeny-bopper sap, but only encountered a pubescent worm fighting with his extremely menstrual mother, a transvestite running a coffee shop, a telling indepth discussion on teen sex and the failures of some juvenile computer hackers. Thrilling stuff, I found myself gripping my chair in anticipation of the commercial break, purely for its superior entertainment value.

So there's an overview of the sludge that is soap, festering ad nauseum on your apparently innocent TV screen every weeknight. If you do feel an attack of weakness and just have to indulge in some mindless, addictive drivel, "Eastenders" is by far the better option as a grittier, grimmer soap. Don't debase yourself with the bubble and squeak of "Neighbours" or "Home and Away".

Louise Bassett

# two views on astrology

**Symbols for Women: A Matrilineal Zodiac**  
**Sheila Farrant**  
**Mandala (Allen and Unwin) \$19.95**

Astrology - the study of the effects of the movements of the sun, moon and planets in relation to the twelve constellations of the zodiac - is one of the most popular belief systems of modern culture. Most people know their sunsign (starsign), and millions regularly study their daily, weekly or monthly horoscope in newspapers or magazines. Many even believe so strongly in the influence of the planets on their lives and destinies that they have consulted professional astrologers for detailed readings of their personal horoscope. As Sheila Farrant notes, Astrology, whether or not one believes in it, is a powerful social discourse which influences to varying degrees, the life choices of a great proportion of the population. Further to this, she argues, astrology is more than a fad of popular culture. Drawing on studies in archaeology, semiotics, anthropology and psychology, Farrant contends that astrology is a symbolic language constructed of signs and images which have their continue to have significance to the

human psyche today. Within this symbolic language, however, she notes the representation of women has been distorted by patriarchal control of the discourse. Women are symbolically underrepresented (only two of the twelve signs, Libra and Virgo, are pictured as female), the signs are divided into the categories of 'masculine' and 'feminine', those representing 'feminine' elements and characteristics such as emotion, peacefulness, intuition, changeability and feeling are undervalued, and women are generally characterised in a stereotypical and oppressive fashion. The male biased and gendered nature of astrology in the present era has two implications according to Farrant. Firstly, it denies women role models, and stereotypes them into narrow and oppressive roles, and secondly, it denies all people access the 'feminine' principle which is desperately needed within the context of a society which is increasingly destroying the environment and which has a history of war, violence and

oppression. Hence the importance of restoring the 'feminine' to astrology. According to Farrant this task requires not the construction of a new discourse, but instead the reinvoking of the discourses of an ancient matriarchal past when women had symbolic equality as well as social and political rights which modern women are still fighting for. Most of Farrant's book is concerned with a study of this past. A section is devoted to each of the twelve signs of the zodiac, and for each of these Farrant explains the personality of the sign's female ruler, and an analysis of the distortion which these factors have experienced under patriarchy. This discussion is presented in rich and imaginative terms - Farrant creates lively, vivid and emotive images, and she includes in the text some fascinating historical information regarding ancient societies and the goddesses which they worshipped. Her careful dissection of the bipolar gender divisions upon which astrology is based is extremely useful and in tune with many recent feminist writings. Her claims that women should receive equality

within the realm of the symbolic and that astrologers should cease to label some characteristics and traits 'feminine' and others 'masculine' and instead allow all people access to a variety of characteristics regardless of their sex, is well argued, and very convincing. Unfortunately, despite this, the book is ultimately based on premises which are at best unproven and at worst of doubtful accuracy. Like much new age literature *Symbols For Women* is based on a strange mixture of fact and fantasy, and often Farrant confuses the two. Her discussion of the significance of a symbolic language to the human psyche, for example, invokes anthropological and psychological evidence, derived from theorists such as Jung and Levi-Strauss, and as such it has credibility. Her a prior assumption that people's personalities and destinies are influenced by their relation to these signs, however, is a leap of logic, and no evidence is offered in support of it. Further, her contention that many ancient societies took the form of utopian matriarchies, although popular with many cultural feminists, is an argument which has received much criticism from feminist

anthropologists, and Farrant fails to mention these dissenting views. *Symbols For Women*, then, is an interesting book, which is well written, and enjoyable to read. It will probably have more appeal to the astrology enthusiast than to those approaching it as an academic text. Hopefully readers approaching it from this former perspective will be challenged, and will begin to broaden their own view of the zodiac. For those approaching the book from a perspective of scepticism, however, Farrant leaves one vital question unanswered. Should modern society continue to regard astrology with the respect which astrologers believe it commands? - or should it be regarded only as a symbolic discourse which has a history of significance to various human societies? Ultimately *Symbols For Women* would have been more convincing if Farrant had concentrated more on the latter part of this question, rather than upon making doubtful claims regarding ancient matriarchies and the supernatural powers of astrology.  
**Kathy Edwards**

## Astrology: Fraud or Superstition?

**Chaz Bufe**

See Sharp Press (available Jura Books, Sydney.)  
 A rather different tone in this review by our resident anarchist B.A Kunin.

The late twentieth century has seen an incredible and quite unwarranted resurgence of interest in Astrology - "the study that assumes and presumes, to interpret the influence of the heavenly bodies upon human affairs". There is hardly a news-stand in the country that does not stock a cheap and readily affordable guide to Astrology. Indeed recent surveys indicate that some 66 million people in the USA alone believe that Astrology has some "scientific" validity. It is thus, my sincere hope that Mr. Bufe's short, easily digestible and inexpensive pamphlet: *Astrology: Fraud or Superstition* should sell by the millions and be seen upon the shelves of every high-street bookseller or news agent that seeks to profit from the scale of astrological guides. It is undoubtedly the perfect remedy for those who are sick of arguing with, or simply exasperated by a friend or lover who simply refuses to acknowledge that astrology is a patently false, silly, completely irrational and a philosophically inept system of self-deceiving magical-religious nonsense with no basis in fact whatsoever. My only wish is that Mr. Bufe can produce an even smaller and cheaper edition to enable me to carry a few copies

around with me at all times - so that on every occasion that someone asks me what my star sign is (which is sometimes as many as 5 times a night) I can promptly hand them a copy. Mr. Bufe does in this compact, anti-religious tract display considerable skill as a pamphleteer. It is clear, punchy, concise and exhibits an economy of style in its composition such that hardly a word is wasted. It can be easily read, if left undisturbed, by the average reader in less than half an hour - being as it is about as bulky as a somewhat longish newspaper or magazine article. Nonetheless, all of the most important issues - historical, philosophical, scientific, sociological and psychological are adequately and convincingly covered and discussed with precision, clarity and intelligence. The study begins with an informative history of astrology. It then goes on to discuss half a dozen or so major, and quite compelling scientific objections to this trandulant pseudo-science. This is followed by a brief survey of recent empirical, sociological and psychological evidence concerning the plausibility and grounds for belief in astrology - drawn from studies by professional (i.e. university) statisticians,

sociologists and psychologists. The author concludes with his own personal assessment concerning the role, belief and present popularity of this astrological ideology. "Why do so many choose astrology as a belief system rather than Mormonism, Catholicism, Islam etc.? A probable reason is that astrology fills the needs of so many people for a system of pre-ordination, yet it does not contain the most unpleasant aspects of conventional religions. It is silly and utterly irrational, and almost certainly influences some to make unfortunate personal decisions. But unlike such religions as Judaism, Christianity, Mormonism and Islam, astrology is not based upon guilt, misogyny and sexual repression. It's simply based upon credulousness, irrationality, and the eagerness of human sheep to be led. Astrology is a handy crutch for those who are repelled by the more overtly reactionary, inhumane aspects of conventional religions, but are not yet ready to free themselves from supernatural pre-ordination systems. In itself, this turn from organized religion is mildly encouraging. But what would be more encouraging would be to see believers in astrology rise from the procrustean bed of their irrational beliefs and begin to think for themselves."

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**Activities Week beginning Monday, March 12th**

**Monday, March 12th**

10 am - 5 pm  
Adelaide Festival Exhibition in Gallery/Coffee Shop *Sigraph* 1989  
American Computer Graphics. Open daily until Sunday March 18th.

1.10 pm  
Activities Committee Meeting in Board Room.

**Tuesday, March 13th**

1 - 2 pm  
Footlights production of "Exploding Sacred Cows" in Little Theatre. Continues Wednesday until Saturday, March 17th at 7.30 pm. All students \$7, Public \$10. Tickets at BASS.

11 pm  
Opening night of Kidney Art Ensembles' "Diary of a Madman - Now a Musical Fantasy" in Little Theatre. Continues until Saturday, March 17th. Students \$8, Public \$12. Tickets at BASS.

**Thursday, March 15th**

1 - 2 pm  
Jazz in Gallery/Coffee Shop with "Ad Lib Ensemble". Free.

**Friday, March 16th**

1 - 2 pm  
Out Theatre present "All Thrills, No spills" safe sex cabaret in Union Bar. Free.

6 - 9 pm  
Pianist Danielle Poulos in Union Bistro. Free.

9 pm - Midnight  
Free entertainment in Union Bar with "Roaring Jack" (from Sydney). AU Students free, Guests \$5.

**Saturday, March 17th**

9 pm - Midnight  
60's and 70's night in Union Bar with "The Boys". AU Students \$3, Guests \$4.

*Pick up your Activities Programme, Craft and Leisure Course Outline, Vitari voucher and State Theatre co. offer from your pigeonhole.*

**Coming Entertainment**

"Billy & the Redfins", "Espresso Bongo", "Cartoon", "Camerata String Ensemble", "Artisans" and more.

**AU Catholic Community**

All are welcome to join us in the celebration of Mass on Wednesdays at 1.10 pm in the Chapel. If you have any liturgical suggestions then feel free to speak

to our Liturgy Co-ordinator, John J. Monaghan, after Mass. Alternately, you may leave a message in the AUCC pigeonhole, Clubs Association, Lady Symon Building. Every alternate Friday during semester we hold discussions at 1.10 pm on many varied topics ranging from racism to the environment. Our next lunchtime talk is to be held on March 23 in the AUCC room. We are located above the *On Dit* office.

**Broad Left Law Group AGM**

The Law School is changing for the better, however, this doesn't mean we should sit back and relax. Constant agitation is essential. Feel free to come and agitate with us at our Annual General Meeting on Tuesday, 13th March at 1.10 pm in L1. We will choose convenors for the coming year and get organised.

**Clubs Association**

Could all 1990 club contact lists please be submitted to Vicki Ferguson, Clubs Association Administrative Secretary by March 30th, 1990.

**Clubs Association Executive**

For Sale:  
HP-75C Portable Computer, printer and manuals. Useful for advanced scientific calculations. Cost \$2,300. Sell for \$750. Ph: 265 4028.

**Senator Gareth Evans** talks on Australian Policies in South East Asia, Friday, 16th March, 7 pm, AU Student Union, North/South Dining Rooms, Level 4. Cost \$30. Contact David Trebilcock: 223 5795.

**Federal Election Forum**

The National Union of Students South Australian Branch has organised a forum to discuss the Higher Education policies of the ALP, Liberal Party and Democrats. Come along to the South Dining Room (Union House, Level 4) at 2.00 pm on Tuesday, 13th March.

**To all members of the Overseas Students Association:**

The AGM of OSA will be held on 24th March (Saturday). Lunch will be provided. More details coming up soon.

**Science Fiction Association AGM**

Monday, 12th March, 6.30 pm in the Clubs Common Area, Level 5, Union Building. All welcome. Wine and Cheese.

**Student Christian Movement**

An open forum for anyone interested in issues of faith, justice and peace. Thursday, March 15th - Brian Lewis Smith gives an introduction to Social Justice and Christianity. All welcome - bring your lunch to the Chapel at 1.10 pm.

**Surf Club**

Attention Grummets, Hodads, toasties, and surfed out waxheads. The new AU Surf Club is stoked to announce its Inaugural General Meeting on Tuesday 13th March on the Cloisters Lawn at 1 pm. Don't forget your legropes! Come and join the Surf Nazis and die!

**Touch Club**

Nominations for the 1990 Intermural competitions are now being accepted. All interested teams and persons contact me or leave nominations in the Touch pigeonhole, Jerry Portus Room, Lady Symon Building.  
**Stephen Fricker**

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**O Ball thankyou**

Barry Salter, Anne McEwin, Georgie Matches, Sharon Middleton; Tim Marshman, Dave Blakeney; Alan Fairley, Alex Wheaton, Janet Reid, Death, Richie, Dave and Ray the Union Stewards, University Security, Andrew and the bouncers; Donald Duck, Roger Clark, Andy, Paul and the Bar Staff, Chris Shaw and the Refectory Staff, the Cleaners; Wendy Wakefield, Elvis Presley, Mel Yuan, Ian Steele, Nat Stott Despoja, Dave Penberthy, Steve Jackson, Simon Morris; Andrew Williamson, Haroon Hassan, Nick Clarke, Sean Heylen, Mel Coad, Lainie Hall, Wally Shlardbaster, Jo Gilbert, Saul Gilbert, Ben Wilson, Ben Pearson, Mark Wilson, Toy Boy Martin, Nick and Jacki, Ursula Winfield, Nick (release the bats) Cave, Mim Leenders, Lachy McKinnon, Mel Sanders, Emma Buter, Emma Bentley, Kate Griffiths; Jackie Riddell, Maynard Crabbes and everyone from Triple J FM, Coopers Brewery, WEA, the Editors from "Crow Magnus"; Boom Crash Opera, Nouveau Au Go Go, Just Kidding, The Chrysalids, Barry Moysse, The Coneheads; Peter and Dave Nightcruiser DJ, Hau, Daniel and models from SAA's House; Suzi O'Brien, Ben Guy, Kamal Farouque, Ty Newnham, Sarah Lorenz, Mark Gamicheff, Monica Carroll, Elita, Peter Wilmott, Michelle Northcote, Eric Smith, and Mr. Gollywog.

**Thank you.**

Sheri Pickering, O'Ball Director 1990.

**STUDENT RADIO 12/3/90**

**MONDAY**

10.00 "Three Boys, A Girl And Their Dog"  
11.00 "Weave & Dive"  
11.30 "Orinoco Flow"  
12.00 "Voices In The Dark"

**TUESDAY**

10.00 "Stir Fried Armadillos"  
11.00 "Adelaide Underground"  
12.00 "Russ Hinze Benefit Show"

**WEDNESDAY**

10.00 "Baltic Radio"  
11.00 "Good Times"  
12.00 "Buster Gonad and his UNFEASIBLY Large Testicles"

**THURSDAY**

10.00 "UV-Blockout"  
11.00 "British Beat"  
12.00 "Nerdorama"

**FRIDAY**

10.00 "Ilva Wakefield"  
11.00 "Eleventh Hour"  
12.00 "The Heavy Concept Show"



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# Bot Chat



with  
**Salmonella Harris**

Here's an interesting letter ON DIT received the other day- a tragic tale of an academic from the Conservatorium with lots to do and nowhere to park.

The Council Member for Parking  
University of Adelaide

Dear Sir

It typifies perfectly the current intellectual malaise of this University, that within a few weeks of my return from fulfilling commitments overseas, to receive such garbage as the enclosed.

I have contact hours on Tuesdays and Thursdays with two hour classes at 11 am and 2:15 pm on each day, and research and postgraduate supervisions before and after. On other days there are also meetings, honours and postgraduate student needs to say nothing of my research, which although the object of international medals (my EJ Dent Laureatship is the equivalent of the Nobel Prize in Musicology and public honours. On most days I am committed to work in this university from 9 am to about 7 pm.

In future I shall adopt a vigilante position with such documents left on my care, and in the event of this happening, I will promptly terminate all classes for the remainder of the day and inform the students of the obstruction caused to teaching by the parking department. Moreover I shall lose no time in bringing such matters to ministerial notice, since they constitute a disruption of academic efficiency in teaching and research.

If persecuted to pay fines, I can assure you I will deduct the cost of the fine from my next months contribution to the University of Adelaide Foundation.

Far from being efficient in the protection of my blue ticket holders entitlement and right (365 x 24 yearly hours), there have been instances in the past when drivers of other vehicles have damaged mine, on two occasions your officers say in happen and failed to take the appropriate action! The repairs cost me \$1,800 in panel beating.

If you expect bust academics, who at 9 am must find a parking place in the Napier Building underground garage and are obliged to run too and from their vehicles on Goodman Crescent for rest of the day simply to move them elsewhere, then you must only assume that we academics have nothing better to do.

It is time that the University of Adelaide revalued its non professionalism, and that its leading scholars be assigned the rights and privileges to which their public and scientific honours entitle them. Without that we will have no other option but to transfer our intellectual leadership elsewhere.

Yours

Andrew D McCredie

## AGAINST THE USE OF SUBLIMINALS

Those of you who buy cartoned milk may have noticed a variety of subliminal messages printed across the little folded bit on the top. As if the thought of having your subconscious tampered with by any form of subliminal isn't bad enough, the people at Farmer's Union have come up with possibly the worst subliminals one could possibly imagine. The basic thrust behind this Orwellian campaign seems to be to engender messages of a conservative and conformist nature into the public psyche, or at least the psyche of all flavoured milk drinkers. Some of the messages are:

"Wear Seatbelts"

"Love Australia"

"Be Neighbourly"

"Try Harder"

Surely this sort of surreptitious social control is illegal anyway.

ON DIT is concerned that the minds of the young and impressionable are being warped by the criminal actions of the marketplace.

In order to counteract this kind of insidious propaganda, ON DIT is running a competition to come

up with the best subliminals for milk cartons.

Here's a few examples-

"Don't enrol to vote"

"Blaspheme Daily"

"Abuse Liquor"

"Masturbate Wildly On Public Transport"

.....and so forth. The best entries will be revealed on the back page of next week's ON DIT, and the very best will be sent off as a polite suggestion to the Farmer's Union people.

USE BY

FARMERS UNION



REDUCED FAT ICED COFFEE

## RED STUFF THAT GOES ON YOUR KNEE

That's right, it's Mercurochrome....a pre-post-modern (wank wank) love story, being put on by the Avarice Theatre Company at this year's Fringe. ON DIT has ten tickets for their show at 12:00 midnight, this Wednesday March 14th at the Living Arts Centre. To win a ticket, simply come into the office and list all seven of the deadly sins, and feel free to commit some of them while you're here.

## THOUGHT FOR THE WEEK

This one's a real doozy!

Now therefore kill every male among the little ones, and kill every woman that hath known man by lying with him. But all the women children, that have not known a man by lying, keep alive for yourselves.

Numbers 31: 17-18



## DEATH TO HIPPIES

We're sure that everybody was extremely distressed that the fungus-ridden poplars were recently chopped down on the Maths lawns. One student was driven to poetic heights, or should we say lows, by the tragedy. What follows is the sort of ponsy angst-ridden teenage poetry which would drive the most sympathetic environmentalist to chainsaw the head of a koala. So folks...here it is, a BOT CHAT special....

### THE INCREDIBLY BAD POETRY CORNER!

I stepped out of the maths building to be confronted by their emptiness... shocked to stillness, I wept inwardly; dumbfounded. Innocent and defenceless against the violence, too apparent. We all lose at their passing.

Helpless anger rising within me. I silently ask Why? and Who? What could possibly justify this? Murder of the beautiful, this rape of the aesthetic, I mourn their death.

Cynically I notice that this atrocity was committed when there were none to protect or protest. How long has this been planned? Oh the silent red wheels of buracrasny (SIC!! Ha!) grind and churn out inanities.

Margaret.

(semi-anonymously, presumably for her own protection)