



# Not the Programme Notes

*Being sundry items of interest about our upcoming productions and the arts in general  
March 2010*

## *Being a Sponsor*



The great Paganini, best known as a violin virtuoso, also played the viola. When he asked Hector Berlioz to write a concerto for the latter instrument, he did not get what he expected. Berlioz, a great admirer of Byron, based his concerto on *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage* – the viola would represent Harold, with the orchestra representing his adventures.

Paganini hoped for a work that would challenge his virtuosity, with difficult technical passages and blazing solos. But Berlioz loved orchestras – the bigger the better, and the final work resembled a symphony rather than a concerto. At the beginning of the final movement, Harold drinks poison and dies, leaving the orchestra to carry on without him, despite the obvious possibilities for the viola presented by the bacchanalian orgy taking place. Paganini was disappointed, to say the least!

So Paganini never played *Harold in Italy*, but he did pay Berlioz his fee. He recognised the value of Berlioz's work.

You don't always get what you think you paid for, but hopefully, like Paganini, you receive great value. As you do when you become a sponsor of Valley Artists.

Our objectives certainly include the presentation of theatre that entertains our audiences, but extend beyond this.

Our constitution requires us to encourage all kinds of theatrical expression, to be a highly competent production company capable of assisting any theatrical venture for members of the community, to assist in the education and training of our youth, to acquire property to further our objectives, to invite donations and grants and generally do anything legal in pursuing our objectives.

What we are doing, and what you support as a sponsor, is making a great contribution to the welfare of our community, helping to make this valley the unique place that it is.

How have we performed against our objectives in our thirteen years?

Our productions – at least 25 by my count – have ranged from Shakespeare (*The Dream, Richard III*), through classics of the stage (*The Importance of Being Earnest*), contemporary Australian drama (*Hotel Sorrento, The Removalists, Summer of the Seventeenth Doll*) to childhood classics (*Wind in the Willows*).

We have staged the works of local artists and groups such as Pencil Orchids (*Come to Pieces, eclecticA, The Finneys*).

Valley children have been an important part of many of our works, and *The Ugly Duckling* featured a cast of children almost exclusively. We have organised many workshops to encourage the development of their talent.

These workshops also benefit adults, of course, and we have granted a significant number of scholarships to local people to attend professional training in their chosen area of expertise – stage management, direction, production, acting.

Each year we organise the Short Film Festival, which attracts entries from around Australia. It features a contribution from Laguna School, and our members assist in the filming and editing of their short film.

We have acquired an impressive array of equipment – sound and lighting, curtains, seating, a couple of marquees – that are made available to other organisations.

We make a major contribution to Laguna Hall each year through rentals paid for our use of the hall.

We have applied for and received grants that have helped our expansion and the maintenance of our very high theatrical standards. As have the donations of our sponsors.

It all adds up to a major contribution to the welfare of this community, and we hope that our sponsors are aware of this and proud of their part in our activities.

In appreciation of their support – our way of saying ‘thank you’ – our sponsors receive tickets to our performances, and are invited to our annual sponsors’ dinner – surely the party of the year!



*Here's a clue to our next Sponsors' Night - there's been nothing like it since 1945. Don't miss it!*

Berlioz didn't please everybody. Critics said of him and his works:

*"He stands very low in the scale of composers";*

*"Berlioz, musically speaking, is a lunatic... His music is simply and undisguisedly nonsense";*

*"We would rather be inclined to class Berlioz as a daring lunatic than a sound, healthy musician";*

*"Mere rubbish and rot";*

*"The caperings and gibberings of a big baboon, over-excited by a dose of alcoholic stimulus"*

... and so on.

It certainly appears that you can't please all of the people all of the time!

Occasionally one of our productions may please some of our audience less than others, but our sponsors tend to take a broader view of things, judging everything we do and they support, in the context of our overall objectives.

So we ask you to join Paganini and others who take the larger view – if you haven't already done so - become a sponsor now!

How? Simple: fill in the form at the end of this newsletter, or call Karen (4998 3361) or Fiona (4998 3339), or you can email us at [sponsors@valleyartists.org](mailto:sponsors@valleyartists.org). We'll be more than happy to help you!

### Thought for today

'Sometimes when I reflect back on all the wine I drink I feel shame. Then I look into the glass and think about the workers in the vineyards and all of their hopes and dreams. If I didn't drink this wine, they might be out of work and their dreams would be shattered. Then I say to myself, 'It is better that I drink this wine and let their dreams come true than be selfish and worry about my liver.'

*~ Jack Handy*

"Everybody's got to believe in something. I believe I'll have another beer."

*- W. C. Fields*

# What does it take to stage a Valley Artist's production?

Peter McCloy speaks to Sabrina Panorotto about her first time experience



It takes a lot of dedicated people, and occasionally a horse, to bring one of our productions to the stage. This is the cast and crew of one of our early productions - *Midsummer Night's Dream*. Recognise anyone?

When the house lights dim, a figure dressed in black removes a footstool from the stage, and replaces it with a box on which sit our props. She has placed it in exactly the right position, and facing the right way, so that we can be totally confident when we turn around, that everything will be in its place.

Then the music starts, and Sabrina gives us our cue, and on we go.

Sabrina has looked after us from day one. She has helped us with our makeup, made sure that we're properly dressed, and generally cared for us. After the show, we'll eat the food that she has prepared for all the cast and crew (delicious).

It's a first time for Sabrina Panorotto – being part of the crew that works behind the scenes to make every Valley Artists production run smoothly and on time, and ensure that all involved are well fed at the end of the night.

Sabrina has always been excited by new projects. She had been to a number of VA productions before she took the plunge, encouraged by daughter Edna, who was cast as Dulcibella in *The Ugly Duckling*.

“We both read the script, and it sounded great, so Edna attended a Valley Artists

workshop and got the part. That decided me – I wanted to be involved,” says Sabrina. “I'll do anything I can do, I told them, just put me in where I'm needed.

“I didn't really know what I was doing. It was chaotic at first – more than I thought it would be – make it up as you go, they told me. Of course, everyone was very supportive, and it was a lot of fun. There was method in the chaos – the excitement of theatre, it was spontaneous and creative – and it all came together on the night, of course!

“I became involved in the excitement of the actors, roped in to their emotions, their highs and their lows.

“It was fairly hard work in the last two weeks – eating, sleeping, school for Edna and work for me, and then the show.

“Would I do it again? Absolutely! It's such a buzz, an amazing adrenalin rush!”

Our next production is David Williamson's *Money and Friends*. The cast is set, and ready to go, but we still need stage crew.

Interested in becoming involved? Contact director Bob Philippe on 4998 8278. You'll be in good company, and you'll enjoy the experience.

## Our Competition

Our question last issue was: How will rubbing yeast into Harry's horse's mane keep birds from nesting in it? You will recall that this was the advice offered by Oz, who obviously knew what he was talking about, because it worked.

Why? Because yeast is yeast and nest is nest, and never the mane shall tweet. Folklore!

No correct answers, but Anne Adams was fairly close, so I've decided to award her the prize. So Anne, a bottle of wine is coming your way. Come to think of it, I might just turn up with two bottles and have a drink with you.

Now for this month's question.

Staying with our equestrian theme: Readers will be interested to know that in the 19<sup>th</sup> century the amount of horse manure produced per square mile in London amounted to 600 tons. In 1879, describing the scene, Tennyson wrote "Stench of old offal decaying, and infinite torment of flies."

It was a great time to be an entomologist. John Lubbock was a Liberal MP, and his book *Ants, Bees and Wasps* ran to 18 editions. He had a tame wasp which he presented to the annual meeting of the British Association for the Advancement of Science in 1872. Next year, when the wasp died, *Nature* gave it an obituary.

However, in 1871, Lubbock did something far more memorable, affecting all of us to this day. What was it? A clue - Wollombi benefits from what he did.

As usual, an interesting bottle of wine from a local vineyard to the first correct answer emailed to [info@valleyartists.org](mailto:info@valleyartists.org).

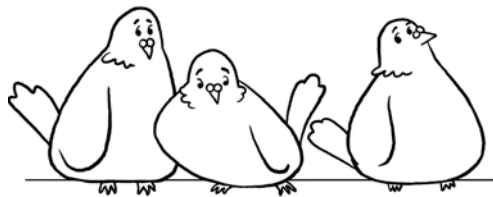
## Pigeons trained as art critics

Racing pigeons can be trained to study paintings and evaluate them like a critic, according to scientists.

A study in Japan offered pigeons food as an incentive to study the colour, pattern and texture of paintings, reports the Daily Mail.

First, four pigeons were placed in a chamber with a computer monitor displaying watercolour and pastel paintings by schoolchildren. The paintings were divided into 'good' and 'bad' categories by 11 adults, including an art teacher, depending on whether the images were clear and precise.

The pigeons were shown each category and rewarded at the good pictures, but not presented with a mixture of both categories and the researchers noted the birds consistently pecked at the 'good' paintings more often.



some of the paintings from with food when they pecked the bad ones. They were then new and old paintings from

However, when they were presented with monochrome paintings, they were no longer able to distinguish between the paintings, indicating that they use colour to discriminate.

The second experiment looked at eight new pigeons, which were trained to recognise the paintings' texture - four were trained to peck at watercolours and four at pastels.

Professor Shigeru Watanabe, of Keio University, said: "This research does not deal with advanced artistic judgments, but it shows pigeons are able to acquire the ability to judge beauty similar to that of humans."

*Not the Programme Notes* is edited by Peter McCloy on behalf of Valley Artists, who do not necessarily share the views of the editor. All correspondence to [info@valleyartists.org](mailto:info@valleyartists.org).



## Valley Artists Sponsorship Packages

Sponsorship enables us to bring you a level of performance which rivals most theatre companies. Sponsorship allows us to send our youth and others on performing arts scholarships to NIDA or ATYP. It allows us to run educational workshops throughout the year. It helps us to help other community events by supplying lighting/sound gear and technicians.

We are a not-for-profit organisation. All funds are committed to the administration of the organisation and the staging of our productions. All of us are unpaid volunteers.

As a sponsor, you will be entitled to tickets to all our productions, our invitation only Sponsors' Night, and advertising/acknowledgement in our program. Donations may be tax deductible.

To become a sponsor, fill in the form below, and return with your payment. If you would like further information, call Karen (4998 3361) or Fiona (4998 3339), or email us at [sponsors@valleyartists.org](mailto:sponsors@valleyartists.org).

As a sponsor you will be entitled to:

Sponsorship level	Cost	Tickets	Sponsors Night	Program
Gold	\$900	6	6	1/2 page
Silver	\$600	4	4	1/4 page
Bronze	\$300	2	2	Mention
Aluminium	\$150	1	1	Mention

### Payment Details

Business Name \_\_\_\_\_

Contact Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_ Preference: Email/Post

Package selected: Gold (\$900)  Silver (\$600)  Bronze (\$300)  Aluminium (\$150)

Please pay by cheque to Valley Artists Inc, c/- Laguna Store, Laguna NSW 2325

or

Pay cash or by credit card at Laguna Store