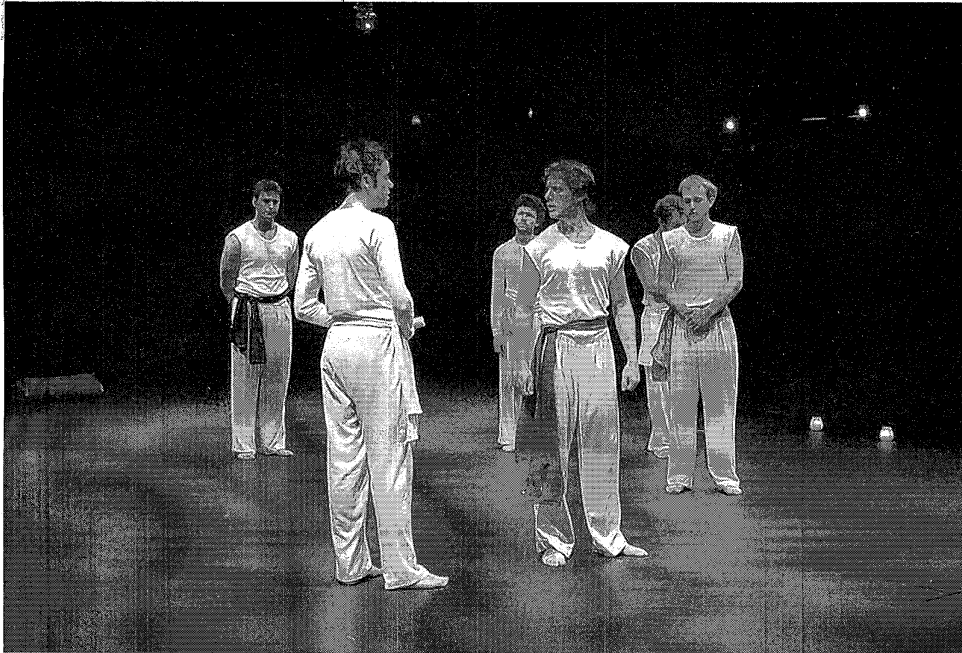


ARTS



Academy students perform Shakespeare in lucid if minimalist style.

Cherry ripe for bawdy Bard

Theatre

Pericles

By William Shakespeare

New Theatre

WA Academy of Performing Arts

Review: Geoff Gibbs

PERICLES is one of Shakespeare's last plays and possibly his most perplexing. For centuries scholars have debated its genesis and some believe Shakespeare to be but one of its authors.

Graduating actors at the WA Academy of Performing Arts were fortunate to have guest director Kate Cherry, from the Melbourne Theatre Company, to steer them through its convoluted plot and its 45 two-dimensional characters.

Cherry successfully harnesses the energy and youth of this engaging company of 16 actors and skilfully moves them through the challenging open spaces of the Academy's New Theatre.

This is a minimalist production, however, with reduced resources for the set, costumes and technical support. It was less than we have come to expect from the Academy for the final play of the three-year actor training program.

Within these restrictions, Cherry produces a lucid, animated and intelligent reading of the text and is helped enormously through the presence of the poet Gower (skilfully played by Alice Ansara), as the narrator charged by Shakespeare to work frequently on the imagination of the audience.

Her detailed and clear narrative leads the audience through incest, shipwrecks, murders and mayhem, and often reminds us what has recently passed just in case our concentration has lapsed.

Cherry uses two actors to play Pericles because there are many decades between the one we first meet (Eamon Flack) and the one who is reconciled with his lost wife and child in the play's final scene (Austin Castiglione).

Flack initially lacks the heroic status of the young Pericles and it is not until his confrontation with Simonides (commandingly played by Eden Falk) that he claims and holds his space on the stage. Castiglione captures the nobility, pathos and loss of the older Pericles well, so that the final reconciliation scene, though bordering on melodrama, is emotionally charged and profoundly moving.

The women in the cast are uniformly strong with a beautifully judged

performance from Erica Baron as the chaste Marina who so successfully preserves her virtue (and our belief in her capacity to do so) in the outrageous bordello run by Lucy Bath, who puts in a show-stopping performance.

Rachael Rastrick is entirely convincing as the mystical Lady Cerimon without whose magical libations the final reconciliation would have been impossible.

The more turgid moments of Pericles are diluted with some of marvellous comedy and the three fishermen, sporting broad New Zealand accents (Thomas Milton, Daniel Roche and Dion Campbell), are given ample scope to charm and delight.

But many of the minor characters lack energy and the men, especially, are prone to shout in the more dramatic and passionate moments.

Pericles is a chance for young actors to master some of the most difficult and challenging material of the world theatre repertoire, and is the kind of experience essential for their careers.

Several pertinent lessons are offered in Pericles, not least of which is to beware of flatterers, champion loyalty, be charitable, value chastity and anticipate villainy when people are being most kind.

Flash new home for jazz

THE world's first arts complex devoted to jazz will open in New York next year. It will be headed by leading American jazz musician Wynton Marsalis, who said its acoustics were the first designed specially for jazz.

"In classical music halls, we have to play very softly for jazz to resonate," said Marsalis, a Grammy-winning trumpeter. "And it still comes out muddy."

The jazz complex is being built at Manhattan's Columbus Circle, a few blocks below the Lincoln Centre for the Performing Arts.

With construction costs of \$185 million, the complex will be part of the part of the \$2.5 billion twin-tower complex that will house the Time Warner headquarters, office space, a hotel, condominiums, a garage and shopping mall.

Music spaces will include a 1150-seat theatre, a studio space with 300 to 600 seats, depending on the configuration and a 140-seat jazz club.

The complex also will serve as a venue where jazz encounters other art forms, creating new dances with artists such as choreographer Twyla Tharp or recording soundtracks for movies or even fusing jazz with classical forms.



Computer-generated rendering of 600-seat performance atrium in New York's new jazz complex.

THE Glyn MacDonald Trio take inspiration from the European-flavoured jazz of Keith Jarrett, Kenny Wheeler and Dave Holland.

The group — pianist Glyn MacDonald, bassist Sam Anning and drummer Michael Perkins — was formed in mid-1999 while they were playing in the Australian Army Band in Perth.

They also studied at the WA Academy of Performing Arts.

Catch them in concert at the Hyde Park Hotel on Monday night for the Perth Jazz Society.

Tickets available at the door for 8.30pm start.



Oboist Diana Doherty

Tour de force from Doherty

Concerts

WA Symphony Orchestra

Perth Concert Hall

Roger Smalley at 60

Callaway Auditorium, UWA

Reviews: Neville Cohn

ON THE face of it, Graham Koehne's Inflight Entertainment — a concerto for oboe and orchestra — was a curious choice for the Great Classics. Written three years ago, it hardly qualifies for classic status and whether it is great is also debatable.

Nevertheless, it is certainly worth programming, although it would be an exaggeration to say its melodies imprint themselves indelibly on the mind. Rather, they rattle the circumference of the consciousness, much of it couched in gentle pastoral sequences, rather like slightly down-market Vaughan-Williams.

And there's much in the first movement with an American big band, Gershwin feel to it. A ferociously difficult cadenza during which oboe soloist Diana Doherty performed the near-impossible by playing chords as opposed to single notes — left one in little doubt of her talent.

Despite the relentless demands Koehne makes on the oboe soloist, Doherty proved she has tamed this most treacherous of

wind instruments. And at the conclusion of this marathon concerto, the young virtuoso played an unaccompanied piece — Blues for D.D. by Jeffrey Agrell — as encore. This, like the concerto, was a tour de force.

In his Perth debut, conductor Federico Cortese demonstrated the skills that have won him acclaim worldwide. Under his direction, the overture to Rossini's The Siege of Corinth — its first WASO performance in 45 years — flashed into life. Throughout there was impeccable chording from the brass and woodwind choirs, and Rossini's extended crescendo in the final bars brought the piece to an explosive end. Its playing could hardly have been bettered.

Cortese's rapport with the orchestra in Berlioz' Romeo and Juliet excerpts was

ROGER SMALLEY at 60, a birthday tribute to the WA composer, included six composers each contributing a work of about one minute.

These included delights such as a little samba played by Paul Tanner on marimba, vibraphone and brake drums. Catherine Cahill's velvety clarinet produced a fine miniature by Lindsay Vickery. But the gift of the oboe was the most memorable, with Cathie Travers played by the Australian

Piano Quartet. The Tower is a substantial piece, a delightful revisiting of the palm-court style of music-making, but with a sensuous, smouldering overlay.

With its affectionate obeisance to tango master Astor Piazzolla, The Tower is a work which, whether darkly brooding or zanily extrovert, will surely tempt choreographers.

It deserves to make it into the standard piano repertoire.

The greater part of the program was devoted to Smalley's own music, beginning with a minuet written at the age of nine.

His Variations on a Theme of Chopin was given a stunningly virtuosic reading by Adam Pinto.

We also heard Smalley in his own Barcarolle, one of his most successful keyboard works.

Another Smalley composition certain to last is his Music for an Imaginary Ballet, written for a battery of percussion. Its exotic, darting arabesques and trills sounded quite magical under the mallets of Paul Tanner.

Smalley's Trio for horn, violin and piano was a journey through often bleak and grimly austere musical landscapes.

It says much for the future of new music that an enthusiastic audience turned out for this birthday celebration.