

*Prague Quadrennial
of Theatre Design and Architecture
1991*

With financial assistance from
Queen Elizabeth II Arts Council of New Zealand
Ministry of External Relations and Trade
Association of Community Theatres (ACT)
and help from the Department of Internal
Affairs

Theatre Design / New Zealand, Prague 1991

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Set and Costume Design

- 1.1 D. Hwang / *M. Butterfly* / stage design / Mercury Theatre 1991 / director P. Minifie
- 2.1 W. Shakespeare / *Merchant of Venice* / Stage design / Court Theatre 1990 / director E. Hooper
- 2.2 G. B. Shaw / *Saint Joan* / Stage design / Court Theatre 1991 / director E. Hooper
- 3.1 Puccini / *Turandot* / stage and costume design / Mercury Theatre 1990 / director R. Hawthorne
- 4.1 L. Carroll / *Alice in Wonderland* / Costume design / Southern Ballet 1988 / director R. Kerr
- 4.2 Rossini / *Barber of Seville* / Costume design / Canterbury Opera 1989 / director E. Hooper
- 5.1 M. Gow / *Away* / Stage design / Court Theatre 1988 / director E. Hooper
- 6.1 G. Veredon / *Wolfgang Amadeus* / Stage and costume design / Royal New Zealand Ballet 1991 / director H. Haythorne
- 7.1 Rodgers and Hammerstein / *Carousel* / Stage and costume design / Mercury Theatre 1989 / director R. Hawthorne

Mozart

- 8.1 W. A. Mozart / *Don Giovanni* / Stage and Costume design / Mercury Theatre 1989 / director R. Hawthorne

Architecture

- 9.1 Aotea Centre Auckland. Realized Project.

Ian Aitken

Tony Geddes

Tracy Grant

Peter Lees-Jeffries

David Thornley

Erik Ulfers

John Verryt

Tracy Grant

Ronald Parker



▲
Ronald Parker
Aotea Centre, Auckland, New
Zealand

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The Designers

Ian Aitken

Born 1955, New Zealand, presently works as a freelance production designer in film, television and theatre. He has worked in Australia, Canada, and North America.
Exhibited at the P.Q. 1983.

Tony Geddes

Stage designer with Court Theatre since 1983. Also designs for Canterbury Opera and Wellington City Opera.
Exhibited at the P.Q. 1987.

Tracy Grant

Born 1961, New Zealand. Scenographer and costumer, designer of drama, musical and opera. Awarded Winston Churchill Memorial Fellowship 1988.

Peter Lees-Jeffries

Scholarship winner, and freelance designer he has over the past 30 years created costumes for drama, opera and ballet.

David Thornley

Born 1944. Since 1979 he has co-operated with a number of different theatres, designing for drama and modern ballet. He exhibited at the P.Q. 1987. Prague Quadrennial '91 Commissioner General for New Zealand.

Erik Ulfers

Since 1977 he has designed scores of productions in both Europe and USA including costumes and sets for ballet, musicals, drama and television.

John Verryt

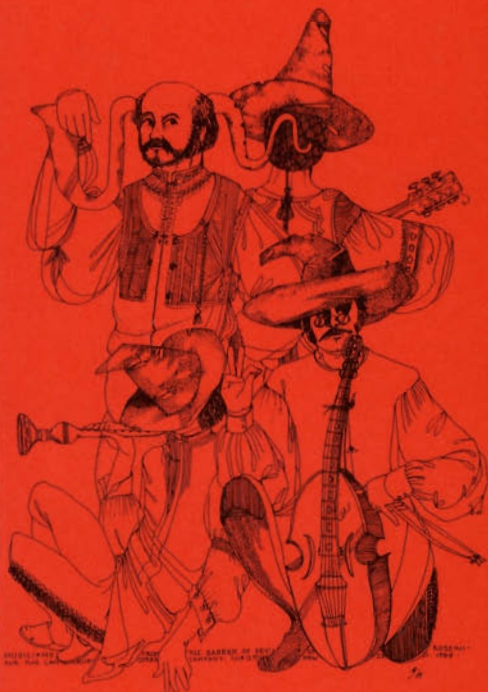
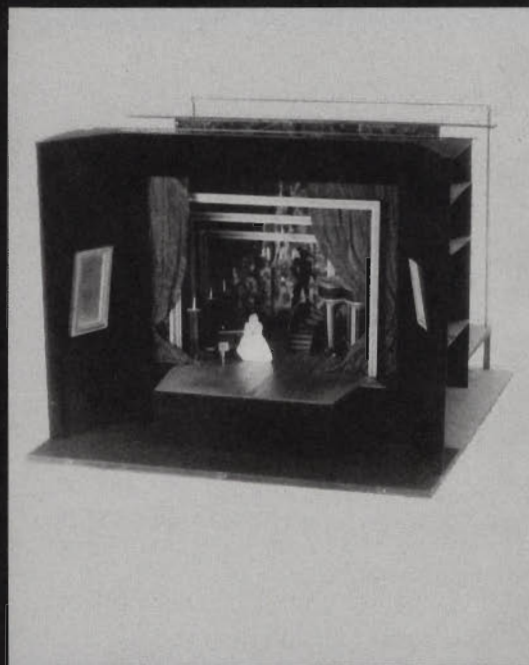
Currently Head of Design at Mercury Theatre, Auckland, New Zealand. Productions include stage and costume design for opera, musicals and drama.

Ronald Parker

Architectural Association School London 1947-51
Lifetime interest in theatre / cinema. Actively involved with various theatres particularly set design. Work includes Sydney Opera House Competition (Hon. mention group).
Believes actor / audience relationship the essential design element.

▲ Peter Lees-Jeffries
Costume design drawing for
Barber of Seville, Rossini

▲ Tracy Grant
Set design model for *Don Giovanni*, W. A. Mozart



▶ Tony Geddes
Set design drawing for Act 1,
Scene 1, *Merchant of Venice*,
W. Shakespeare



Introduction

So conscious are New Zealand theatre artists of the geographical isolation of their country and the danger of being or being thought a backwater, that perhaps more than in any other nation, they go out of their way to stay *au courant* with international developments in the design field. New Zealanders are both great travellers and great readers. Our designers go abroad to see the most recent wonders or subscribe to those periodicals that describe them.

This is not to say that they are slavish imitators of the latest international trends. The nationalism and pride in identity, which is such a feature of contemporary New Zealand life, is far too strong for that. In any case, two major factors prevent the country being a mere design colony of Europe or America.

Firstly by the standards of the theatres of the great cities of the Northern Hemisphere ours is a poor theatre. New Zealand does not have a long history of state or civic patronage of the arts. Indeed in a sport-crazy country, it is a principle that has constantly to be fought for. The budgets, compared to those for European stages, are laughable. Consequently some of the more startling recent developments in hydraulics and electronics are way beyond the purses of our theatres.

Secondly, because it is a comparatively young theatre (only two of the five professional theatres have so far celebrated their 25th birthdays) there is no great backlog of expertise or inherited material. Here you make armour—you don't go out and hire it or dust it down from the storeroom, if you are going to do *Saint Joan*.

Far from being disadvantages these restrictions are two of the main sources of energy and inspiration in the design in our theatres. Miracles are worked with the most unlikely materials and remarkable inventions emerge because we simply cannot afford the sophisticated electronic equipment that might otherwise be required.

New Zealand theatre design is characterized by world awareness, intense national pride and the flair and ingenuity of the poor.

Elric Hooper M.B.E
Artistic Director, Court Theatre
Christchurch, New Zealand

▲ John Verryt
Stage and costume design for
Carousel, Rodgers and
Hammerstein

