

Sunset Boulevard - Opening Night State Theatre, August 17

LAUNCHING amu-
sical or any theatrical
event in a major city
is a costly exercise.
Fortunately **The Pro-
duction Company**
has an enthusiastic
“angle” in **Mrs.
Jeanne Pratt AC** and
her generous sup-
port group.

Their involvement
means affordability
and accessibility to
many theatre-goers
who otherwise may
not have had the op-
portunity of enjoying
the experience.

Sunset Boulevard involves an aging silent
screen star who lives a reclusive life in a se-
cluded mansion at 10086 Sunset Boulevard.
Her glory days have long passed, but in her
mind she sees her adoring fans waiting for
her return to the silver screen.

She enlists the aid of a young Hollywood
writer to create a movie script for this come-
back, unfortunately like her the script it is a
tragic failure.

Complications arise when the writer Joe Gillis
becomes her lover after being seduced by the
wealth and former glory she possessed.

All this time her faithful manservant Max
Von Mayerling is observing his beloved
Norma Desmond slowly descending into mad-
ness.

The opening night audience at Melbourne’s
State Theatre witnessed another triumph for
The Production Company. The capacity
crowd of first-nighters were treated to a tour
de force by a leading lady who encapsulated
the character of Norma Desmond.



Terence Donovan and David Campbell

Judi Connelli deserved the standing ova-
tion she received, as did **David Campbell** play-
ing her young lover Joe Gillis and the find of
the night for me was **Roger Howell** playing
Max Von Mayerling.



Judi Connelli



Terence Donovan and Judi Connelli

The entire company worked extremely hard
to bring the show together with only 10 days
rehearsal.



John Michael Howson and Peter Ford

The Production Company endeavors to
bring mainstream theatre to the public with
minimal rehearsal time, simplistic sets and
unfortunately only a handful of performances.
All this of course keeps the production costs
down thus the affordability to the public.

At the after party I spoke to **Terence Dono-
van**, who played the character of Cecil B. De
Mille, about the possibility of touring this
production. He eagerly agreed it would be a
great way to showcase a musical around Aus-
tralia. Fingers crossed.

Sunset Boulevard has a company of 24 and
an orchestra of 29 who are on stage through-
out the performance. The score drives the
narrative, in particular the memorable “With
One Look” being a show-stopper.



Rowena Wallace and Matt Hethrington

connect to our website metronews.com.au

Opening Nights, Cocktail Parties and Balls

AUGUST has been a busy month socially,
with opening nights, cocktail parties and balls
to attend.

Beginning with the 2nd birthday celebration
of a club I belong to “**The Debonaires**” a
group of singers and musicians who meet
once a month to enjoy what singers and mu-
sicians do best, eat and drink a lot. Members
include **Brian Cadd, Lisa Edwards, Bob Val-
entine, and Wilbur Wilde**. There’s never a
dull meeting.

Tales of the Silk Road

One of the most enjoyable theatrical experi-
ences I have ever had, was the Tales of the
Silk Road by the **Lanzhou Song and Dance
Company**.

The production was magnificent and I’m not
ashamed to admit it, during the Pas de Deux
by the two principals, I was moved to tears,
such was their interpretation of the narrative.

Blue and White Ball

The Blue and White Ball was held at the
Grand Hyatt in aid of the Leukemia Founda-
tion. We were joined by **Dr David and Clair
Marsh, Loraine Podgornic and Annette
Allison**.



Annette Allison, Pauline and Mal Walden.

Being a Hawthorn supporter, I gratefully ac-
cepted an invitation to lunch in the Board-
room with the president **Ian Dicker**, the coach
Alistair Clarkson and the captain **Richard
Vandenberg**.

We were given the inside story on Haw-
thorn’s youth policy and Ian Dicker’s future
as president. Don’t be surprised if a former
high profile Victorian politician gets the nod
next year.



by Ken James

Life Education

Life Education is a very important drug
awareness programme for young people, so
a great night of fundraising was held at the
Hilton on the Park on Wednesday August 12.

My fiancée Rosemarie had her eyes on a set
of black pearls she dearly wanted. Unfortu-
nately we were out bid and they eventually
sold for \$13,000.

The evening was hosted by **Rob Gell** and
we danced all night to the sounds of **Lisa
Edwards**, who by the way has just released
her new album.

Look Out Melbourne

I attended a fabulous cocktail party welcom-
ing home **Jane O’Neil** who has spent the last
21 years working in New York. Look out Mel-
bourne; Jane is back and rearing to go.



Jan Cain, Anthony Gissing and Nancye Willmott.

Lunching with my good friend **Anthony
Gissing** is always a treat, as he is as my law-
yer and executor of my will. He signs his cards
to me, executor in waiting. That sense of hu-
mour brightens up a cold Melbourne day.

A Great Day

After Yum Cha (one of my favourite ways to
eat) at **Crown** with my son and beautiful
granddaughter, it was off to the **Melbourne
Aquarium**. Fortunately my son bought his
video camera to record her reactions. The fish
were amazing.

Recommended “must do” when visiting
Melbourne.

Trish’s Birthday

My close friend, **Trish Nelson** and her part-
ner Graham had organized around 60 of their
pals to a restaurant in Abbotsford then back
to her house for more celebrating. Guests in-
cluded **Lillian and Richard Frank, Adele
Palmer, Annette Allison, Manuela and Tony
Bennett**. The girl loves a party.

My gymnasium contacted me the other day
enquiring as to why I hadn’t been around so
regularly. Must be time to get back in to it.

Look forward to more fun next month.