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Extended Essay in Theatre

The Effects of Technology and Modern Life Style and Theatre in the 21st Century in the Western World

Has the advent of modern technology and the technological culture and modern lifestyle affected the economic interests, productions and roles of stage practitioners and production staff in private western theatres in the 21st century in a negative or positive way?

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Abstract:

Theatre has been an important part of human culture for centuries; however it is beginning to hold less interest and influence due to competition with the modern film industry. Many argue that to keep itself alive theatre must change; however others believe that this would negatively impact upon theatre. This investigation aims to discover whether small scale theatres are being negatively or positively affected by the advent of modern technology and, technological culture and the modern lifestyle. To do this the following have been considered:

- The specialisation of theatre and broadening of actors' roles
- Popular culture and theatre's changing demographic
- Marketing and consumerism
- Film and Media
- Technological changes due to the need to be 'green'

In addition interviews with theatre practitioners, a range of secondary sources from various geographical areas as well as surveys and statistics, have also been used to formulate a conclusion. This conclusion was developed by using these sources to develop key ideas under each of the sections. The outcome was that though small scale theatres **are** being negatively affected in some ways by the development of technology, the technological orientation of society and the modern lifestyle, these three factors have also had a positive effect on these small scale and private theatres as they allow them to develop.

217 words

Introduction:

Theatre is an art form that has been present throughout human culture for thousands of years, evolving from Greek tragedies and Aboriginal stories of The Dreamtime, to Shakespearian theatre, to the Terry Pratchetts and various other playwrights and styles of today. However some members of the theatre industry believe the advent of modern technology and the technological culture and modern lifestyle have affected the economic interests, productions and roles of stage practitioners and production staff in private theatres in the 21st century in a negative manner. This investigation aims to prove that theatre is in fact changing for the good as, due to the influences above, to appeal to the audience and relate to contemporary culture (as theatre has always aimed to do), it is necessary for it to adapt and develop new forms or areas. To determine this, it is necessary to consider; the specialisation of theatre and broadening of actors' roles; popular culture and the changing demographic of theatre; marketing and consumerism; film and media; technological changes and the need to be 'green'.

The Effects of Technology and Modern Life Style and Theatre in the 21st Century in the Western World

The Specialisation of Theatre and the Broadening of Actors' Roles

Theatre has become less popular since the end of the late 20th and into the early 21st century and as such theatre has become a tougher and more competitive business¹. To conserve money, theatres are beginning to specialise in certain styles with an aim to draw select groups to the theatre². This has both a negative and positive effect on theatre as an art form, causing two distinctive changes³. Firstly, negatively speaking this has caused some styles of theatre to suffer exponential losses in popularity⁴. As theatre is capturing less and less of an audience, it is only natural that theatres would specialise in the most popular styles and allow others to fade⁵. An example of this is the mega musical⁶, a style of extravagant musical theatre which appeared during the 1990s⁷ and became a major style of theatre playing from venues such as *The Instant Cafe Theatre Company* in Malaysia to London's *West End* and it is still one of the most popular styles of musical today⁸. Andrew Lloyd Webber's *Cats* and *The Phantom of the Opera* are excellent examples of this⁹. In this case, smaller musicals have begun to lose their hold, not being able to compete with the crowd awing large scale effects and dramatic songs and dance sequences¹⁰.

Though this evidence seems to show that specialisation is negatively impacting on theatre, this is not necessarily the case¹¹. In actual fact in doing this certain genres grow and expand¹² giving birth to new styles¹³ and strengthening the remaining ones¹⁴; this is the same process of 'survival of the fittest' that has allowed theatre to be successful for so long. It can cut those areas that no longer appeal and strengthen

¹Brown, J.R. (1995) *Oxford Illustrated History of Theatre: Theatre Since 1970s*, pg 499

²Ibid., pg 498

³Comans, C.A., (2007) *The New Wave: A Brisbane Perspective La Boite Theatre Company's Distinctive Contribution, Proceedings Enter the New Wave Symposium*, University of Melbourne.

Theatre Company's Distinctive Contribution

⁴Op cit. Brown .R. pg 500

⁵Ibid. pg 505

⁶Stafford, M.R., (2001) *Age, Income, and Gender: Demographic Determinants of Community Theatre Patronage*

⁷New York TV Show Tickets Inc., *The Advent of the Broadway Mega Musical*, <http://www.nytx.com/Links/Broadway/Articles/megamusicals.html>, (03/12/09)

⁸Ibid.

⁹Op cit. Brown J.R., pg 500

¹⁰Lyen .K., *Is Musical Theatre Dead?*, <http://www.kenlyen.com/gpage2.html>, (4/04/10)

¹¹Ibid.

¹²Op cit. Brown J.R., pg 501

¹³Perkovic, J., <http://newmatilda.com/2010/01/08/changing-face-australian-theatre>, (11/02/10)

¹⁴Ibid.

and expand those that do¹⁵. Another very similar change that took place and has provided a basis for what theatre is now becoming, is the combination of theatre with other Art forms¹⁶. In the 1970s and 80s, visual artists such as Robert Wilson, who wished to express themselves in a more solid medium, sought theatre as a means to achieve this¹⁷. In addition other companies such as *La Theatre du Soleil* formed and began to combine song, dance, visual effects and circus and set the stage for theatre today¹⁸. Unfortunately this combination of theatre skills created difficulties for actors both then and now¹⁹. They can no longer afford to confine themselves to one style or art²⁰, as was common practise previously²¹. They must now be able to work in a variety of theatres which specialise in different genres and skill areas. Shane Daly, a youth theatre instructor at the Brisbane Arts Theatre supports this, stating that “actors can’t afford to just be a dancer or just act or just be a singer, they have to do everything”²². Unfortunately this need to be qualified in multiple areas causes some actors to learn each area to a mediocre level²³, rather than in depth, resulting in degradation of ability in these areas²⁴. In addition to this many of these actors then teach others and so the cycle continues²⁵. Though this practice has negative effects on theatre as it decreases the quality of productions²⁶, it also succeeds in bringing the exceptional to the fore²⁷. Those who are able to excel in all areas are therefore able to stand out²⁸. From this evidence it can be determined that whilst specialisation of theatre breaks it down into its most popular forms²⁹ and removes the least accomplished, it also allows for popular forms of theatre to expand and strengthen themselves³⁰ and develop into new genres³¹. Through the broadening of actor’s prerequisites negatively impacts on the quality of production especially in small theatres by allowing for mediocre actors³² to emerge, it also acts positively by bringing the exceptional to the fore³³.

¹⁵ Op cit. Lyen.K.

¹⁶ Op cit. Perkovic J.

¹⁷ Op cit. Brown J.R., pg 501-502

¹⁸ Ibid., pg 506-507

¹⁹ Op cit. Comans C.

²⁰ Harvest Rain Theatre Company, *Training the Theatre Stars of Tomorrow Today*, http://www.harvestrain.com.au/01_cms/details.asp?ID=772, (12/04/10)

²¹ Op cit. Brown J.R., pg 506

²² Daly S., Interview with Speaker, Brisbane Arts Theatre, Brisbane, QLD, (01/02/10)

²³ Op cit. Perkovic J.

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Op cit. Brown, J.R. pg 507

²⁶ Op cit. Lyen K.

²⁷ Op cit. Comans C.

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Op cit. Brown J.R. pg 507

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ Bennett S., 1997, *Theatre Audiences: a Theory of Production and Reception*, pg 11-12

³² NASM Opera/Musical Theatre Committee, 1985, *The Education and Training of the Signer Actor*, pg

23

³³ Banham M, 1995, *The Cambridge Guide to Theatre*, pg242

Popular Culture and the Changing Demographic of Theatre

Along with specialisation, popular culture is changing theatre, even playing a role in specialisation³⁴, especially in private theatres³⁵. With “audiences literally dying off”³⁶ according to Kath Kunde³⁷, small theatres have begun to search for a new demographic to target³⁸. These small theatres, unlike large production venues, cannot afford to run a broad range of plays for specific age groups and interests³⁹. So instead, since the 1990s, many theatres have begun attempting to tap into the 24-30 age bracket⁴⁰. Due to this, plays of a classical nature have been replaced by adaptations⁴¹ which incorporate popular styles of music or television shows, such as *Macbeth the Contemporary Rock Opera* with music by Clarry Evans and Julie Stevens and *Kiss Me Kate* lyrics by Cole Porter to make them more relevant⁴². New plays are also being written highlighting both the trials and the humour one can find in modern life⁴³ e.g. *He Died with a Felafel in His Hand* and *Tasmanian Babes Fiasco* (both by John Birmingham) which highlight the humour of living in share houses⁴⁴. Connections are also being drawn with TV and movies with plays⁴⁵ such as *Doctor Who: The Stage Production* rumoured to be hitting the stage in the coming years⁴⁶. Theatre has also expanded into areas such as improvisational theatre⁴⁷ in an attempt to capture younger viewers⁴⁸ and provide a type of interaction that film cannot⁴⁹.

However is this improving theatre or negatively impacting on it? Some argue that these new plays are diverging from the original theatre⁵⁰ of Shakespearean dramas and comedies and the tragedies of Sophocles; however they are not all that different⁵¹. They still capture the essence of those plays by highlighting the human faults⁵² and making relevant references appropriate to the time so as to appeal to

³⁴ Op cit. Comans C.

³⁵ Op cit. Lyen K

³⁶ Kunde K., Interview, Brisbane Arts Theatre, Brisbane QLD, 7 Feb 2010

³⁷ Director of the Brisbane Arts Theatre Youth Drama Ensemble (2005-2010)

³⁸ Op cit. Perkovic J.

³⁹ Op cit. Stafford M.R.

⁴⁰ Wilkinson .C., *Noises off: Are Audience just too Old?*,

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/stage/2010/jan/28/is-your-audience-too-old>, (04/04/10)

⁴¹ Op cit. Bennett S., pg 13

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ Bristol M.D., 2001, *Shakespeare and Modern Theatre: The Performance of Modernity*, pg 75

⁴⁴ Ibid. Banham M. pg 253

⁴⁵ Op cit. Stafford M.R.

⁴⁶ Op cit. Bennett S. pg 10

⁴⁷ Op cit. Bristol M.D, pg 76

⁴⁸ Op cit. Wilkonson C.

⁴⁹ Reilly A., 2004, *An Actor's Buisness: How to Market Yourself as an Actor No MATter Where You Live*, pg 24

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ Aebischer P., 2003, *Remaking Shakespeare: Performance Across Media, Genres and Cultures*,pg 42

⁵² Op cit. Bennett S., pg 9

the audience⁵³. For example in Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream* the phrase "You must say 'paragon:' a paramour is, God bless us, a thing of naught."⁵⁴ as spoke by the mechanical Flute implies a type of sexual innuendo concerning a non-sexually active woman⁵⁵ which is also found in "He Died with a Felafel in His Hand", as in the line "When a woman doesn't want to have sex she's called frigid"⁵⁶.

Improvisational shows have also gained a lot of popularity with groups such as Brisbane's *Impro Mafia*, Tokyo's *The Yellow Man Group* and Hamburg's *Steif Biesen* enjoying immense success⁵⁷. The increased popularity of these shows highlight a return of traditional actor-audience interaction⁵⁸ originally found in Italian *Commedia Del Arte* plays where the characters appealed to the audience⁵⁹, asking them questions and using audience reactions to decide what would happen to the characters⁶⁰. This style of theatre also holds appeal for children⁶¹ and is therefore often used by some small theatres who aim to condition children into holding a greater interest in theatre⁶², relying upon the "creating audiences of tomorrow cliché"⁶³. Again the approach taken is to reinvent the classics⁶⁴ converting fairytales to modern versions to spark more interest⁶⁵. Though two different demographics are targeted by theatres, the aim and methods are the same: firstly to draw in a fresh audience⁶⁶ to replace an aging one⁶⁷, and secondly to spark an interest in theatre so that it may be preserved in the future⁶⁸ by showing and writing plays that appeal to modern society⁶⁹. Again rather than destabilising theatre this strengthens it by allowing a connection to audience interests to emerge⁷⁰. According to Jay McAdam⁷¹, "theatres must continue to offer what people want and need and are currently at the crossroads where these changes are significant but not unpleasant"⁷².

⁵³ Ibid.

⁵⁴ Shakespeare W. , Act 4, Scene 2, pg103

⁵⁵ Wylie E., *A Midsummer Night's Dream: Lecture*,

<http://newterra.chemeketa.edu/faculty/CWC/eng105/MNDLEC.htm>, (20/06/10)

⁵⁶ Idib.

⁵⁷ Blatner A., 2006, *Interactive and Improvisational Drama: Varieties of Applied Theatre and Performance*

⁵⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁹ Op cit, Reilly A., pg 45

⁶⁰ Ibid. pg 12

⁶¹ Op cit. Aebischer P, pg 39

⁶² Op cit. Wilkinson C.

⁶³ Op cit. Stafford M.R.

⁶⁴ Skinner R.D., 2007, *Our Changing Theatre*, pg 245

⁶⁵ Op cit. Bennett S. pg 15

⁶⁶ Op cit. Skinner R.D. pg 245

⁶⁷ Op cit. Reilly A, pg 5

⁶⁸ Ibid.

⁶⁹ Op cit. Aebischer P., pg 41

⁷⁰ Ibid.

⁷¹ Co-founder and Executive Director of 24th Street Theatre, winner of 1999 Innovation and Leadership Award in Arts Education by the USC Rossier School of Education

⁷² Op cit Skinner R.D., pg 246

Marketing and Consumerism

Today in the modern consumerist age, theatre, like many other things, has become a commodity to be bought and sold⁷³. The theatre that sells the most tickets, makes the most money and therefore survives, is considered the most successful theatre⁷⁴. Therefore theatre has become dependent upon marketing and marketing technologies⁷⁵. According to Lyn Gardner⁷⁶ successful theatre has become "seen as the venue that returns the following year bigger, shinier and selling more tickets than ever before"⁷⁷. Due to this, for theatres to be successful they must now advertise online effectively⁷⁸ as well as through traditional means⁷⁹. It is extremely important to target internet consumers as the majority of ads are viewed online, more than anywhere else⁸⁰. This means that every marketing opportunity counts⁸¹ and marketers must sell to the consumer with just one glance at the poster, promotional video etc.⁸² This affects theatre as an art form in smaller venues and actors too in various ways⁸³. Thus actors are often selected for their marketability (e.g. they are well known or have the 'face' of a character) rather than their skill⁸⁴. Examples of this are Keira Knightly being cast in *The Misanthrope*⁸⁵ and James Earl Jones in *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof*⁸⁶. These actors provided a selling point for the productions they starred in, with their names speaking louder to the public than any critical review could⁸⁷. In addition, due to the large number of actors in the world today⁸⁸ there is increased competition for jobs⁸⁹. Actors now must also market themselves to a greater extent than ever before⁹⁰. They must attempt to sell not only their talent but also their face⁹¹, their actions⁹² and their entire demeanour⁹³ to

⁷³ Idib.

⁷⁴ Op cit. Brown J.R., pg 504

⁷⁵ L.W. Hardy, (1993), *Theatre Objectives and Marketing Planning*, European Journal of Marketing, Vol. 15 Iss: 4, pg.5

⁷⁶ Founder member and editor of the City Limits cooperative theatre department. Journalist for *The Guardian*. Studied Drama and English at Kent University.

⁷⁷ Gardner L., *Artists are Doing it for Themselves*, The Guardian (31 March 2010)

⁷⁸ Ibid.

⁷⁹ Op cit. Aebischer P, pg 43

⁸⁰ Ibid.

⁸¹ Op cit. Hardy L.W. pg 16

⁸² Dreverman .P.,(1971) *Lorraine Believes in Selling Theatre*, The Age (10 November 1971), Melbourne

⁸³ Op cit Brown J.R. pg 10

⁸⁴ Ibid.

⁸⁵ Op cit. Hardy L.W., pg 14

⁸⁶ Idib.

⁸⁷ Lawson .M., *Is This a New Golden Age for British Theatre?*, The Guardian (2 December 2009), London

⁸⁸ Op cit Brown J.R. pg 511

⁸⁹ Ibid.

⁹⁰ Op Cit. Reilly A., pg 6

⁹¹ Op cit. Lawson M.

the director. This makes it often difficult for the best actor to receive a role⁹⁴, as those best at marketing themselves will obviously be most successful⁹⁵. As tickets are sold on looks and reputation a better actor who is perhaps not as good looking, may not get the part, whilst an actor who is less competent may⁹⁶. An example of this on a large scale is the opening ceremony of the 2008 Beijing Olympics where Yang Peiyi was chosen to sing at the opening ceremony⁹⁷, but in the performance was replaced by Lin Miaoke as she was more beautiful⁹⁸. This not only can reduce the quality of the performance but it also does not allow a younger actors to develop their skills⁹⁹. However some directors are taking the risk of hiring inexperienced or not strictly 'good looking' actors¹⁰⁰, but it is becoming less and less common¹⁰¹. This is due to the precarious financial situations of many small theatres¹⁰², especially after the 2009 global financial crisis¹⁰³. Artistic directors, directors and stage managers have become more wary of hosting unknown plays¹⁰⁴ or casting unknown actors¹⁰⁵ because of this preferring to stick to those shows and actors which they can be sure will sell sufficient tickets¹⁰⁶.

Film and Media

The film and media industry has become a major part of popular culture today¹⁰⁷ and its influence can be seen in both the positive and negative effects it has had upon the theatre industry¹⁰⁸. With only 9% of Australians that classed themselves to be in good health saying that they went to the theatre¹⁰⁹, and 65.2% saying that they attended the cinema in 2002¹¹⁰, the theatre industry is now facing competition in the form of the film and media industry and this has had two major effects upon theatre¹¹¹. Firstly audiences expect that when they view a theatre show that it

⁹² Ibid.

⁹³ Op cit. Lawson M.

⁹⁴ Ibid.

⁹⁵ Op cit. Skinner R.D.pg 248

⁹⁶ Op cit. Reilly A, pg 7

⁹⁷ Ibid.

⁹⁸ Spencer R., *Beijing Olympics: Faking Scandal Over Girl Who 'Sang' in Opening Ceremony*, The Daily Telegraph (12 August 2008)

⁹⁹ Op cit. Lawson M.

¹⁰⁰ Op cit. Hard L.W. pg 8

¹⁰¹ Ibid.

¹⁰² Op cit. Knopf R. pg 319

¹⁰³ Ibid.

¹⁰⁴ Op cit. Brown J.R., pg 503

¹⁰⁵ Ibid.

¹⁰⁶ Op cit. Knopf R. pg 324

¹⁰⁷ Leis W., 1990, *Under Technology's Thumb*, pg 23

¹⁰⁸ Ibid.

¹⁰⁹ *Social and Demographic Characteristics of Cultural Attendees*, http://www.culturaldata.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0003/79725/Social_and_Demographic_Characteristics_of_Cultural_Attendees.pdf, (02/05/10)

¹¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹¹ Ibid,

matches the television or movie production¹¹². Secondly they are used to having realistic special effects¹¹³ and so theatre must offer these things too to be competitive enough to survive¹¹⁴. The expectations placed upon the theatre industry due to the popularization of many major plays are both somewhat destabilising and yet also improving theatre¹¹⁵. It has a negative effect in that it does not allow for so much variation in shows¹¹⁶ or production material¹¹⁷. Actors are often expected to be similar to their film counterparts¹¹⁸. An example of this was the recent 2009 production of *Sweeney Todd: the Demon Barber of Fleet Street* by the Roleystone theatre group in Perth¹¹⁹. In 2007 Tim Burton released his version of the classic stage musical in feature film form. The release and subsequent popularity of the movie meant that when the Roleyston Theatre Group released their version, it was significantly coloured to emulate the screen production¹²⁰, especially in terms of costume, makeup and characterisation¹²¹. From this example it can be seen that due to film adaptations of musicals and plays, a lot less originality can be put into the performance¹²². However the adaptation of plays into film productions can also add to a performance¹²³. Many actors today develop their characters separately to previous adaptations¹²⁴ however they add interesting quirks that they have seen appear before in other productions or in this case films¹²⁵. Likewise, it often helps directors¹²⁶, stage crew¹²⁷ and costume¹²⁸ to have a previous adaptation from which to draw inspiration¹²⁹. This borrowing and duplicating of previous performances has happened since the advent of theatre¹³⁰ and therefore cannot be seen to be degrading theatre but rather developing a long tradition of adaptation and copycatting¹³¹. In addition to this, theatre has also been influenced by media in that due to the widespread use of film technology theatres are now being expected to use the same types of technology¹³². This is often extremely costly¹³³ for small

¹¹² Dickson A., *Plays Beamed into Cinemas; Is this the future of theatre?*, The Guardian (22 August 2010)

¹¹³ Ibid.

¹¹⁴ Op cit. Skinner R.D., pg 249

¹¹⁵ Op cit. Dickson A.

¹¹⁶ Op cit. Brown J.R., pg 499

¹¹⁷ Op cit. Dickson A.

¹¹⁸ Ibid.

¹¹⁹ Stanley T., *Sweeney Todd at Roleystone*,

http://www.theatre.asn.au/theatre_reviews/sweeney_todd_at_roleystone, Theatre Australia, (19/11/09)

¹²⁰ Op cit. Stanley T.

¹²¹ Jaymez J., *Sweeney Todd the Demon Barber of Fleet Street*, <http://theplaysthething-jcreviews.blogspot.com/2009/12/sweeney-todd-demon-barber-of-fleet.html>, (04/12/09)

¹²² Knopf R., 2005, *Theatre and Film: A Comparative Anthology*, pg 325

¹²³ Op cit. Brown J.R., pg 501

¹²⁴ Ibid.

¹²⁵ Baugh C., 2005, *Theatre Performance and Technology: The Development of Scenography in the Twenty First Century*, pg 72

¹²⁶ Op cit. Kopf R., pg 328

¹²⁷ Op cit. Gardner L.

¹²⁸ Ibid.

¹²⁹ Op cit. Knopf R., pg 331

¹³⁰ Ibid.

¹³¹ Op cit. Baugh C., pg 69

¹³² Op cit. Knopf R., pg 421

private theatres and some argue that it also draws the audience's attention away from the actors and the actual production¹³⁴. For example Brisbane Arts Theatre recently purchased a new lighting rig to the cost of several tens of thousands of dollars¹³⁵. However when this equipment is installed it can also have positive effects. Lighting has always played an important part in highlighting key actions¹³⁶, characters¹³⁷ and events onstage¹³⁸. With the advent of new technology, the effects could be further amplified¹³⁹, giving wonderful and realistic settings for the play¹⁴⁰. The lighting could also be used to enhance costume and makeup elements¹⁴¹. For example when using a blur gel is used the colour orange will stand out immensely as I discovered when participating in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* at the Brisbane Arts Theatre¹⁴². These adaptations of modern film and media technology into the private theatre industry can not only add to theatre but also serve to provide innovations for the future survival of small theatres¹⁴³.

Technological Changes due to the Need to be 'Green'

In modern society today we are all extremely aware of our impact on the environment¹⁴⁴ and the world around us and as such theatre has also been affected by our new interest in being environmentally friendly¹⁴⁵. As one of the largest users of electricity and resources¹⁴⁶, theatre is coming under pressure to change to become more environmentally friendly¹⁴⁷. For example, Australian theatres are now being asked to change all their light fittings so that they may use low energy light bulbs¹⁴⁸. Though this action seems entirely positive, it offers a challenge to many theatres¹⁴⁹; firstly to raise enough funds to complete installation¹⁵⁰, and secondly to install the lighting in such a way that the effect of the lights can be maintained¹⁵¹. It

¹³³ Gardner L., *Modern Theatre Relies too Much on Technology*, The Guardian (17 April 2008)

¹³⁴ Ibid.

¹³⁵ Op cit. Brown J.R., pg 497

¹³⁶ Op cit. Gardner L.

¹³⁷ Op cit. Baugh C, pg 69

¹³⁸ Ibid.

¹³⁹ Op cit. Brown J.R., pg 494

¹⁴⁰ Ibid.

¹⁴¹ Op cit. Kopf R., pg 421

¹⁴² Munro-Wallis N., *A Midsummer Night's Dream*,

<http://www.abc.net.au/local/reviews/2008/05/30/2260439.htm>, 612 ABC Brisbane, (30/04/09)

¹⁴³ Op cit. Leis W., pg 25

¹⁴⁴ Lawler M., *The Eco-friendly Theatre of the Future*, www.dramabiz.com/pulse.hmt, Dramabiz (09/05/10)

¹⁴⁵ Sluis S., *Green Schemes: More Theatres Incorporate Environmentally Designs and Products*, Film Journal International (11 February 2010)

¹⁴⁶ Ibid.

¹⁴⁷ Op cit. Brown J.R. pg 501

¹⁴⁸ Ibid.

¹⁴⁹ Johnson T., *Australia is Seeking Nationwide Shift to Energy Saving Light Bulbs*, The New York Times (21 February 2007)

¹⁵⁰ Ibid.

¹⁵¹ Heinlein K.G., *Green Theatre: Promoting Ecological Preservation and Advancing the Sustainability of Humanity and Nature*, pg 10

is clear that these changes have the potential to reduce the quality of a environment in which plays are performed as well as the quality of the play itself by creating financial difficulties¹⁵², or by being unable to be installed in an effective way and so not create suitable lighting effects¹⁵³. However this need to change also provides a chance for development and ingenuity. According to the Shane Daly¹⁵⁴ he believes that theatre has always needed to change and adapt to face the challenges society places before it¹⁵⁵ and as such this need to change and develop to suit the modern context and needs is just another step in the evolution of theatre¹⁵⁶. It will not necessarily reduce the quality of theatre but can actually further its development through the creation of new and interesting methods by which to make the theatre more environmentally friendly¹⁵⁷. For example La Boite Theatre in Brisbane, Australia has developed recycling systems for its computer gear¹⁵⁸ as well as introduced natural climate control systems and lighting to replace previous systems¹⁵⁹. Other theatres such as The Wild Theatre in New York are entirely constructed from renewable and recycled materials¹⁶⁰, whilst the sets, props and costumes are designed to match¹⁶¹. It can therefore be determined that the need to be environmentally conscious in theatre today, is not entirely debilitating it as an art form in the small theatre context, but improving it by allowing for more ingenuity and therefore the expansion of theatre¹⁶².

¹⁵² Ibid.

¹⁵³ Op cit. Sluis S.

¹⁵⁴ Voice Coach; Brisbane Arts Theatre, writer of *Robin Hood: Care of Sherwood Forest* as well as many other children's theatre plays.

¹⁵⁵ Op cit. Heinlein K.G., pg 23

¹⁵⁶ Ibid.

¹⁵⁷ Op cit. Lawler M.

¹⁵⁸ Op cit. Comans C.A.

¹⁵⁹ Ibid.

¹⁶⁰ The Wild Theatre, <http://thewildproject.com/contact/index.shtml>, (01/03/10)

¹⁶¹ Ibid.

¹⁶² Op cit. Heilein K.G., pg 21

Conclusion:

The specialisation of theatre and broadening of actors roles, popular culture and a changing demographic, marketing and consumerism, modern film and media in terms of the film and television industry and the need to be environmentally conscious are to a certain extent reducing the quality and development of modern theatre in the context of the small theatre industry in western nations. They have done this by: reducing the types of theatre on offer; broadening actor's roles to the extent that their skills may become mediocre; moving away from the classical play to modern adaptations; making acting and putting on plays more about marketing than the art itself; using often overpowering visual effects and forcing large amounts of money to be put into making theatres environmentally suitable. However these drawbacks are outweighed by their benefits for theatre: allowing for different styles to be formed; introducing new and sustainable audiences; giving opportunities to young actors; allowing skilful experienced actors to also remain highly prized; allowing technology of theatre to develop; adding further inspiration that allows for better development of shows and characters and allowing for ingenuity, meaning that theatre can evolve suitably to fit and survive the modern era. All the effects of these technological and societal changes serve to change theatre but never destroy it. In the words of Shane Daly, "That's what I think is most beautiful about theatre, it will always change and take many forms and that's why it will never completely disappear. It will keep evolving now and well into the future".

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