

ADELAIDE UNIVERSITY THEATRE GUILD

(in association with the Australian Elizabethan Theatre Trust)

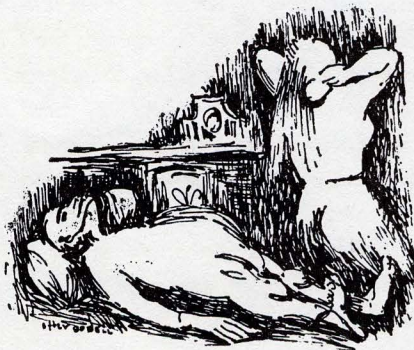
presents

THE WORLD PREMIERE OF

THE HAM FUNERAL

by

PATRICK WHITE



AT THE UNIVERSITY UNION HALL

15th-25th NOVEMBER, 1961

8 p.m.

ABOUT THE PLAY—by the author

During a visit to my native country in 1946 I met William Dobell, who told me how he came to paint "The Dead Landlord", and suggested the incident might contain the theme for a play. Early the following year I returned to London to gather up my goods and chattels after deciding finally to settle in Australia. I was the only lodger in a house in Ebury Street, where I had lived on going to London as a young man, to which I had returned on and off during the Nineteen-Thirties, and where I experienced the first months of the London blitz, in the basement, and the coal cellar under the pavement. By 1947 there was a bomb-site next door. Blast and the lean war years had stripped the house of most of its superfluities.

As I sat in my empty room I began to play with Dobell's anecdote: of how his landlord had died, how the landlady had taken down her hair, announcing there would be a ham funeral, and that he must go to fetch the relatives.

Out of those original facts and my own self-searchings and experience as a young man in the house in Ebury Street, the play of THE HAM FUNERAL developed. That it departed from its origins will soon be obvious to an audience. It is not a naturalistic play. The chief problem was how to project a highly introspective character on the stage without impeding dramatic progress. I have tried to overcome this, partly through the conflict between the Young Man and those human symbols Mr. and Mrs. Lusty, the figures in the basement with whom he wrestles in his attempt to come to terms with life, partly through the dialogues between the Young Man and his anima, the Girl in the room opposite. The Relatives become an expression of the conscience, with its multiple forebodings. As for the two scavengers, a lapse of time and a change of scene were necessary, so I gave way to my weakness for music-hall. In any case, many actual interludes are a mixture of the hilarious and the brutal. When the producer, for visual reasons, suggested setting the play farther back, in the 1918 period, I agreed, as I felt it might increase the air of surrealism and timelessness which I had been aiming at, and after all, the despair and confusion of today—the "foetus in the dustbin" and the "stars which may explode in one's face"—were already immanent in a poetic sense.

Now that it is to be seen on the stage we only hope the courage of the Adelaide University Theatre Guild and the skill of John Tasker as a producer will have dissolved my stubborn groups of statuary into the fluid lines of workable theatre.

James White

THE HAM FUNERAL

by PATRICK WHITE

CAST (in order of appearance)

YOUNG MAN	.....	John Adams
LANDLADY	.....	Joan Bruce
LANDLORD	.....	Hedley Cullen
GIRL	.....	Anne Dibden
FIRST LADY	.....	Pat Griffith
SECOND LADY	.....	Kathleen Steele-Scott
FIRST RELATIVE	.....	Dennis Olsen*
SECOND RELATIVE	.....	Don Porter
THIRD RELATIVE	.....	Tony Georgeson
FOURTH RELATIVE	.....	Brian Bergin

* By arrangement with the National Institute of Dramatic Art, N.S.W.

—◆◆◆—
The stage remains set in four main sections, representing the basement of a lodging-house, the stair-well and hall, and two bedrooms on ground floor level.

The time could be 1918.

—◆◆◆—
There will be ONE Interval.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

—◆◆◆—
The ham used has kindly been provided by W. Jacobs Limited.

PLAY PRODUCED BY JOHN TASKER

by arrangement with the National Institute of Dramatic Art, N.S.W.

Set and decor by S. OSTOJA KOTKOWSKI

assisted by Jack Cartmell, Harry Medlin, Bert Ratcliffe, Alex Sadlo, Jeff Scott,
Roslyn Barker, Betty Martin, Diana Medlin and Kathleen
Steele-Scott

Stage management by GORDON BEATTY

assisted by Jack Cartmell, Harry Medlin, Jeff Scott, Andrew Taylor, Joan
Allister and Elizabeth Butcher

Lighting by Geoff Ward

assisted by Reg Bennett

Sound by Don McCoy

Music provided by Jeremy Wesley Smith

and played by Mick Kenny, Max Neil, Michael Pryce, Jeremy Wesley Smith
and Max Thomas

Wardrobe by Pat Elliott and Betty Johnson

Publicity by Michael Schneider and John Temple

Makeup supervision by Phil and Pat Grummett

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Patrick White is the greatest Australian writer of our time, but his work has long since overflowed national boundaries. At the moment in London and in New York his latest novel, Riders in the Chariot, is receiving the sort of attention accorded to very few living writers.

He has not climbed easily to this eminence, though discerning critics singled him out on the publication of his first novel in 1939. He is a fourth generation Australian, born in New South Wales in 1912; he went to English and Australian schools, worked as a jackeroo and studied modern languages at Cambridge. He almost ruined his life by becoming a London intellectual, but was saved by wartime service in the R.A.F.; another potential disaster as a Mediterranean beachcomber was averted by his return to Australia in 1949.

With an undoubted, if not very successful, masterpiece behind him, The Aunt's Story, he struggled on a small farm at Castle Hill with goats, schnauzer dogs, fowls, asthma and The Tree of Man. This novel about two simple people growing in Australian soil won him the international acclaim that was intensified by the study of a complex, obsessed explorer, Voss. His new novel, Riders in the Chariot, different again but still unmistakably White, is the most comprehensive of all his works.

He has always been interested in the drama, and has had a play performed in London. Since THE HAM FUNERAL, he has written another play and is at work on a new novel. Plainly his genius is enjoying the full exercise of its powers.

Geoffrey Dutton

ABOUT "The Dead Landlord"—

I have been trying to trace the whereabouts of "The Dead Landlord" painting. I am told that it is now in the possession of some French newspaper man "somewhere in France". I have been working on another one to replace it and have it about half completed.

My thanks to you for your invitation to the premiere of Patrick's play, I should like very much to be there but unfortunately that is impossible. Please give him my very best wishes for the success of the play.

Bill Doherty

ADELAIDE UNIVERSITY THEATRE GUILD

Patron

The Vice-Chancellor, H. B. Basten, Esq., C.M.G., M.A.

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PROGRAMME FOR 1962

Mar.: The Australian Elizabethan Theatre Trust in association with the University Theatre Guild will produce the Festival play (SAINT JOAN, by Bernard Shaw), in the Bonython Hall. Members will be entitled to preferential bookings at concession rates.

May: Joint production with the Adelaide University Dramatic Society—
THE GOOD WOMAN OF SETZUAN, by BERTOLT BRECHT.

Jul.: A comedy. Possibly:—

RHINOCEROS, by EUGENE IONESCO
or ROMANOFF AND JULIET, by PETER USTINOV

Sep.: MOBY DICK by Herman Melville, adapted by Orson Wells.

Nov.: An Australian play. Possibly:—

SEASON AT SARSAPARILLA, by PATRICK WHITE

MEMBERSHIPS: Double, £2/2/6; Single, £1/5/6

are available from Miss Beryl Pearce, University of Adelaide, or from
CAWTHORNE'S.

UNDERGRADUATE MEMBERSHIPS: Double £1/5/-, Single 12/6,
are available on application to the Secretary only.