

BUCKNELL DEPARTMENT OF THEATRE AND DANCE PRESENTS

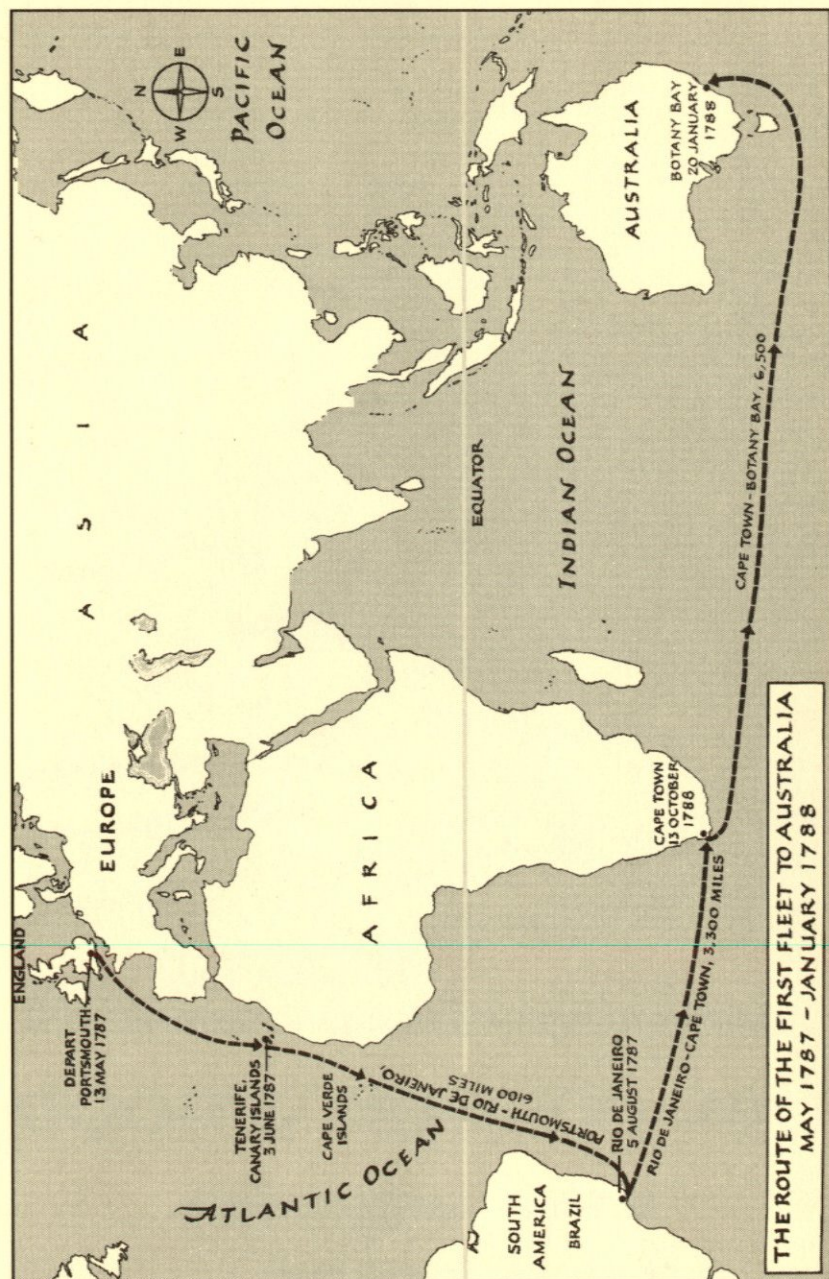


OUR COUNTRY'S GOOD

BY TIMBERLAKE WERTENBAKER

APRIL 23 - 26 1993

UNIVERSITY THEATRE, COLEMAN HALL



DEPARTMENT OF THEATRE AND DANCE PRESENTS

OUR COUNTRY'S GOOD

BY TIMBERLAKE WERTENBAKER

DIRECTORROBERT GAINER

SCENE DESIGNER.....TIM STEIMLE

LIGHTING & SOUND DESIGNER.....STEVEN A. DRAHEIM

COSTUME DESIGNER.....F. ELAINE WILLIAMS

DIALECT COACHSTEVIE KALLOS

CAST (IN ALPHABETICAL ORDER)

Duckling/Lieut. George JohnstonJessica M. Alexander

Major Ross, RM/Ketch FreemanJames Gregory Amlicke III

Mary Brenham/Rev. JohnsonAshlynn Billingsley

2nd Lieut. Ralph Clark, RMDainius A. Drukeinis

Capt. Tench, RM/Black Caesar.....G. Matthew Hannah III

Liz Morden/Lieut. Will DawesLeane Hood

Meg LongMandy Kalish

Captain Arthur Phillip, RNKevin Klaus

Aboriginal Australian.....Colleen Lyttleton

John WisehammerJefferey Pennington

Capt. Collins, RM/Robert SidewayGabriel Rafael Portuondo

Dabby Bryant/2nd Lieut. FaddyKatie A. Strauch

Capt. Jemmy Campbell, RMTommy Zappulla

Harry Brewer, RN/John ArscottBernard David Zilinskas

TIME: 1788-89

PLACE: SIDNEY, AUSTRALIA

SCENE TITLES

ACT ONE

- Scene One.....The Voyage Out
Scene Two.....A Lone Aboriginal Australian Describes
the Arrival of the First Convict Fleet in
Botany Bay on January 20, 1788
Scene ThreePunishment
Scene FourThe Loneliness of Men
Scene FiveAn Audition
Scene SixThe Authroities Discuss the Merits of the Theatre
Scene Seven.....Harry and Duckling Go Rowing
Scene Eight.....The Women Learn Their Lines
Scene NineRalph Clark Tries to Kiss His Dear Wife's Picture
Scene TenJohn Wisehammer and Mary Brenham
Exchange Words
Scene Eleven.....The First Rehearsal

ACT TWO

- Scene One.....Visiting Hours
Scene Two.....His Excellency Exhorts Ralph
Scene ThreeHarry Brewer Sees the Dead
Scene FourThe Aborigine Muses on the Nature of Dreams
Scene FiveThe Second Rehearsal
Scene SixThe Science of Hanging
Scene Seven.....The Meaning of Plays
Scene Eight.....Duckling Makes Vows
Scene NineA Love Scene
Scene TenThe Question of Liz
Scene Eleven.....Backstage

NOTES

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND:

England chose to rid itself of its criminals. "The first Act authorizing transportation of criminals was passed in 1597, being 'An Act for the Punishment of Rogues, Vagabonds, and Sturdy Beggars...to be banished out of this Realm, and all other Dominions thereof....' Further Acts were passed in 1664, 1666 and 1718, permitting the transportation of felons to America.

With America's Declaration of Independence in 1776 it was no longer possible to transport criminals, and the prisons and prison hulks (disused warships moored in English harbors) in Great Britain became rapidly filled to excess. Conditions for prisoners became worse and worse.... Eventually Botany Bay was chosen and Arthur Phillip was given the task of establishing a settlement there for both convicts and free settlers, and the First Fleet carrying 778 convicts set sail on May 13, 1787. This fleet sailed from Portsmouth, consisted of six transport vessels...three store ships and the Royal Navy escort...of two ships.

The total complement of souls in the fleet at the outset of the voyage is believed to be 1,493, consisting of 586 male convicts, 192 female convicts, 233 merchant seamen, 20 officials and their servants, 210 Royal Navy seamen and 252 marines, with their wives and children. Forty-five died on the voyage, and seven children were born. The fleet sailed via Tenerife, Rio de Janeiro and Capetown en route for Botany Bay. They arrived on January 18, 1788, after a voyage of 7 months. All vessels assembled at Sidney Cove in Port Jackson on January 26, 1788, to establish the settlement of New South Wales....

It is estimated that between 1788 and 1868 about 162,000 men and women (and some children) had been transported, and for the first 50 years about 40 percent of the total population of Australia was made up from criminal classes.

DAVID COLLINS,

An Account of the English Colony in New South Wales

THE FATAL SHORE

THE FIRST FLEET

So it had a motley crew, this Noah's Ark of small time criminality; and for all the trades represented aboard, it was absurdly ill-chosen for the task of colonising New South Wales. The authorities had used no criteria of selection apart from youth, and that erratically. There was no choice by trade. The colony that would have to raise its own crops in unknown soil had only one professional gardener, and he was a raw youth of twenty. It would need tons of fish, but had only one fisherman. There were only two brickmakers, two bricklayers and a mason for all the houses that would need building; no sawyers were aboard, and only six carpenters. This muddle and lack of foresight in the choice of convicts typified the planning, being one of many matters over which Captain Arthur Phillip had no control.

PUNITIVE MEASURES

Phillip reluctantly stepped up the punishments for food theft, where were already draconic but no longer deterred the starving. In 1790 one man got 300 lashes and 6 months in chains for stealing 20 ounces of potatoes, and another drew 1000 lashes for taking 3 pounds of the precious tubers. After such treatment, a man would be incapacitated, literally skinned alive. Huge rewards (in food, the only currency that mattered, for there was no money circulating in this jail) were offered to convicts who helped catch food thieves. Thus in May 1790, convict Thomas Yarsley received 60 pounds of flour for catching a man stealing garden vegetables. One prisoner named Joseph Mansbury had been flogged so often – some 2000 lashes in three years – that his back appeared:

quite bare of flesh, and his collarer bones were exposed looking very much like two ivory polished horns. It was with some difficulty that we could find another place to flog him. Tony (Chandler, the overseer) suggested to me that we had better (do it on) the soles of his feet next time.

MARY (DABBY) BRYANT

The sea route produced one epic escape in the early 1790's whose notoriety blossomed in London, reached back to Botany Bay and gave heart to would-be absconders for years to come. It was led by a woman, (Dabby) Bryant (b. 1765) – "the Girl from Botany Bay", as the English press later dubbed her – who, with her two small children, her husband William Bryant, and seven other convicts, managed to sail a stolen boat all the way north from Sydney to Timor, a distance of 3,250 miles in just under ten weeks. (However, she was re-arrested and sent back to England for a further trial. Her husband and both her children died of fever on the voyage. When she reached London and was committed to Newgate as an escaped felon, all she could look forward to was another transport ship...surely a just government could not send this bereaved heroine and her companions back to the thief-colony? So thought James Boswell...and this kind-hearted writer pressed...the British home secretary...with letters urging clemency and pardon for her. In May 1793, (she) received an unconditional pardon. Boswell then settled an annuity of 10 pounds for her, and back she went to Cornwall. (She was not yet 28.)

RALPH CLARK.

When Ralph Clark was eventually posted from Sydney Cove to Norfolk Island, he saw to it that Mary Brenham was transferred with him. In 1792 he went back to England and was briefly reunited with his Betsey Alicia. After that, his diary ceases before he could see his ideal again. In December 1792, he returned to service in the war against France. Early in 1794 Betsey Alicia died in childbirth, and the child was stillborn. A few months later, Clark's darling boy, Ralph, then a nine year old midshipman, died of yellow fever on board ship in the Carribean during a fight with a French ship. Clark was on board too, and was killed in battle the same day. However, that was not quite the end of Clark's line, for at the time of his death he had a three-year old daughter whom he scarcely knew. She had been born to...Mary Brenham, on Norfolk Island in July 1791. At Clark's insistence, she had been christened Alicia. There is no reference to her mother in his journal.

TWO MORE FACTS:

The first theatrical performance on Australian soil took place on June 4th, 1789, when the convicts of the penal settlement of Sidney Cove, performed George Farquhar's play, *The Recruiting Officer*, in honour of King George III's birthday.

Robert Sideway did found Australia's first professional theatre when he got his convict's leave.

THEATRICAL BACKGROUND

Robert Hughes' historical work, *The Fatal Shore: The Epic of Australia's Founding* (1987), and Thomas Keneally's novel, *The Playmaker* (1987), served as the two primary and inspirational sources for the creation of Timberlake Wertenbaker's play, *Our Country's Good*.

Both Hughes' and Keneally's acclaimed works draw upon hundreds of original sources - letters, diaries and obscure documents. Each work creates a vivid picture of the system of convict transportation in counterpoint to the gracious facade of Georgian life. Their writings reveal the squalor and depression in the late 18th century in which one in eight Londoners was said to have lived by crime, under savage laws designed to deal with the mob.

In 1987, the renowned Royal Court Theatre in London, under the artistic direction of Max Stafford-Clark, commissioned playwright Timberlake Wertenbaker to create a play based on these two compelling sources. Utilizing their unique workshop process that involved extensive inter-disciplinary research and theatre improvisation techniques, Stafford-Clark, Wertenbaker and a company of 10 actors spent several months exploring and eventually creating the text for *Our Country's Good*. The play had a triumphant premiere in 1988 and received the Olivier Best Play of the Year Award.

SPECIAL THANKS TO:

Anne Badger
Chris Fry
Iris Gainer

Deborah Draheim
Dr. John Malcolm
Dennis Baumwoll

Danna Frangione
Michael Kamtman
Gary Grant

PRODUCTION STAFF

Technical Director Steven A. Draheim
Stage Manager Amy Gallagher
Dramaturgical Assistant Bettina Jaeger
Assistant Stage Managers Missy Brandon, Jen Berkenstock,
Nicki Sirianni
Assistant Lighting Designer David McGraw
Sound Engineer & Assistant
to the Sound Designer David B. Ames
Lighting TAs Andre Fuqua, Eric Youtz, Justin Youtz
Electrics Crew Russ Brink, Janet Celestino, David Fass, Casey
Galligan, Seth Gentlzer, Oliver Horst, Kevin
Hultquist, Janne Kilpelainen, Chris Preistaf,
Kenneth Smith
Property TAs Donna Carter, Nina Knoche, Andrea Preschle
Costumer Pam Miller
Costume Shop TAs Jennifer DeCamp, Sandy Prickett,
Laura Pye, Amy Sass
Costume Crew Jen Andrews, Chris Bird, Tim Bishop, Jessie
Campbell, Bernadette Finnican, Todd Hardy,
Tom Henderson, Bob Horst, Katie Hunt, Erik
Klinger, Rebecca Murray, Bob Roksandich,
Laura Schmidt, Penny Sullivan, Crystal
Theesfeld, Randle White
Scene Shop TAs Mark Farina, Chris Fronheiser,
Tim Steimle, Chris Williamson
Scenery Crew Joe Amopuso, Kristin Bowen, Ed Burnam, Clay
Charlesworth, Jamie DeFinnis, Natalie Dunlap,
Justin Frick, Ellen Gabriel, Rick Grassley, Jon
Hart, Mike Henery, Colin Kave, Greg Kolocouris,
Bonnie McNabb, Bill Moffa, Paul Olkowski, Rob
Oshinskie, Mike Phillips, Chris Priestaf, Brian
Preputnick, Desiree Ream, Andy Rill, Kevin
Schilling, Kevin Shinal, Candice Smith, Tom
Sylvester, Jon Troxel, Zack Vogel, Ed Wevodau

Publicity TAsGerrit A. Fedele, Anthony Prokopowicz,
Nicole Cobban
Dance TAs.....Megan Blamble, Megen Karakelian
Light Board OperatorNicole Cobban
Sound Board OperatorGeorge Love
Running CrewRonda Herman, James Mark, Nathan Wolaver,
Oliver Horst, Rudy Kovacs
Costume Running CrewCarlene Kalinoski
House Managers & Ushersprovided by Cap and Dagger
Additional Crewsprovided by TH 149

FACULTY AND STAFF FOR THEATRE AND DANCE

Shellie Cash-Mullerdance technique and theory
Steven A. Draheim.....technical direction, lighting
Danna Frangione, director of dancetechnique and theory
Robert Gainer.....acting and directing
Gary Grant, chair.....theatre history, theory, directing
F. Elaine Williams, director of theatredesign
Christine Fry, secretary

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