

SYDNEY THEATRE AWARD – LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT

REG LIVERMORE ACCEPTANCE SPEECH

I WAS A FORTUNATE YOUNGSTER, BY THE TIME I WAS KNEE HIGH TO MY DAD AND MUM I PRETTY WELL KNEW WHAT I WANTED TO DO WITH MY LIFE. I WANTED TO ENTERTAIN PEOPLE. A CHILD OF FIVE OR SIX COULDN'T POSSIBLY KNOW HOW SUCH A DREAM MIGHT BE REALISED OR WHERE THE DREAM MIGHT LEAD HIM. NO MATTER, I BEGAN ENTERTAINING PEOPLE.

BY THE TIME I WAS TEN MY LOUNGE ROOM AND BACKYARD CONCERTS WERE THE STUFF OF NEIGHBOURHOOD LEGEND.

AT SAME AGE TEN I WAS TAKEN ONE AFTERNOON TO THE THEATRE ROYAL IN SYDNEY TO SEE THE MUSICAL ANNIE GET YOUR GUN, IT STARRED THE AMERICAN IMPORT EVIE HAYES. A FORTHCOMING ARTICLE ON THE YOUNG BOY ACTOR REGGIE LIVERMORE WAS BEING PREPARED FOR THE PIX MAGAZINE AT THE TIME, SO AFTER THE PERFORMANCE I WAS TAKEN BACKSTAGE AND PHOTOGRAPHED WITH THE STAR IN HER DRESSING ROOM. THAT AFTERNOON I DECIDED THAT WHEN I GREW UP I WANTED TO BE A STAR JUST LIKE EVIE HAYES. HAPPILY IN THE INTERIM THAT NOTION MORPHED SOMEWHAT AND EVENTUALLY I BECAME A STAR IN MY OWN RIGHT, A STAR JUST LIKE ME.

THAT I HAVE NOW BEEN PERFORMING NOW FOR SIXTY YEARS IS OUTLANDISH, AN UNIMAGINABLE FACT BUT TESTAMENT TO THE CHALLENGE ALL PERFORMERS FACE DURING THEIR CAREERS, THE ABILITY AND WILLINGNESS TO REINVENT OURSELVES MANY TIMES OVER, WE ARE CATS WITH MANY LIVES.

MY PROGRESS HAS BEEN A GOOD ONE AND PRODUCTIVE, IT HAS TAKEN ME INTO ALL AREAS OF THE THEATRE BACK AND FORTH THROUGH ALMOST EVERY CATEGORY, PROVIDING EXCEPTIONAL OPPORTUNITIES ALONG THE WAY. AND IT HAS LASTED THE DISTANCE. THROUGHOUT I WOULD DESCRIBE MYSELF AS HAVING BEEN A GOOD ALL-ROUNDER, RATHER THAN RESORT TO THE BELLIGERENTLY COCKY TERM USED TO DESCRIBE SUCH PEOPLE NOWADAYS. I'M NOT AND NEVER HAVE BEEN A TRIPLE THREAT. BUT I AM INDIVIDUAL. IF THAT'S THREATENING?

OVER THE YEARS MUCH HAS BEEN WRITTEN OR SPOKEN ABOUT MY WORK AND I'D LIKE TO MENTION A COUPLE OF PEOPLE HERE WHO WERE SIGNIFICANTLY SUPPORTIVE IN MY DEVELOPMENT AND OF MY WELL BEING. IN MY FORMATIVE 20's IT WAS THE REVIEWER DENIS O'BRIEN WHO ENCOURAGED ME THE MOST KEENLY

AND ENTHUSIASTICALLY, HE WAS ALWAYS MY CHAMPION NO MATTER WHAT WAS AT STAKE, HIS REVIEWS LENT ME GREATER CONFIDENCE, THEY SPURRED ME ON, I'M SURE THAT WAS THE GOOD MAN'S INTENTION.

IN MY 40's WHEN I WAS A SOLO PERFORMER, AT RISK, ADVENTURING OUT THERE ON A VERY HIGH WIRE SOMETIMES, WITHOUT A SAFETY NET, HOPING FOR SOME RELIABLE REASSURANCE AS TO WHAT I THOUGHT I WAS ON ABOUT, ENCOURAGEMENT CAME THEN FROM THE FINEST EVALUATION THERE WAS TO BE HAD, THE INTELLIGENCE, UNDERSTANDING AND PATIENT EVEN-HANDEDNESS OF HARRY KIPPAX. WHAT I GOT FROM HARRY WAS HIS RESPECT, A GIFT I DID NOT EXPECT, ONE I DID NOT ACCEPT LIGHTLY. I GOT AN EXTRA INCH OF HEIGHT ALSO.

THE AWARD IS A WONDERFUL ACKNOWLEDGEMENT, AND A VERY GREAT HONOUR, I SHALL CHERISH IT. THIS REPRESENTS MY LIFE IN THE THEATRE, A LIFETIME OF STRIVING AND ACCOMPLISHMENT. IT IS NOT FOR ANY PARTICULAR NOMINATED PERFORMANCE OR ENTERPRISE, IT'S FOR ALL OF THEM, EVERYTHING, THE GOOD EVEN THE BAD, THE SUM TOTAL OF MY OUTPOURING.

I CAN'T SAY I HADN'T HOPED SOMETHING LIKE THIS WOULD OCCUR ONE DAY, PREFERABLY BEFORE STUMPS, BETTER THAN AFTER STUMPS.

HOWEVER IT DOES TAKE RATHER A LONG TIME TO EARN, ALSO TO BE CONSIDERED WORTHY. APPARENTLY I HAVE NOW BEEN AROUND LONG ENOUGH, AND HAVE BEEN SO JUDGED.

PLEASE ALLOW ME TO SALUTE ALL THOSE WHO WERE OR WITHOUT KNOWING MAY HAVE BEEN MY MENTORS OVER THE YEARS, ALL OF MY COLLEAGUES ON AND BACK OF THE MANY STAGES I'VE PLAYED, MY LONG SUFFERING PARTNER ROB, MY PARENTS, MY FAMILY, MY FRIENDS, THE AUDIENCES, YES EVEN THE OCCASIONALLY PESKY CRITICS.