

100 St Kilda Road  
Melbourne 3004  
Australia  
PO Box 7585  
St Kilda Road Vic 8004

T + 61 3 9281 8000  
F + 61 3 9281 8282  
info@theartscentre.com.au  
theartscentre.com.au

the Arts Centre  
ABN 83 295 983 059



media release

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## Take a Bow, Reg Livermore

Opening November 5, *Reg Livermore – Take a Bow* is a free exhibition which pays tribute to the career of iconic performer and theatre legend Reg Livermore, applauding his unique contribution to Australian performing arts as an actor and writer.

Reg Livermore has been entertaining audiences for over 50 years. *Reg Livermore – Take a Bow* reflects on his journey from a young stage-struck boy to his place as one of Australia's foremost performers. The exhibition celebrates his remarkable career including roles in *The Rocky Horror Show*, *Barnum* and *The Producers*, and his groundbreaking solo shows that began with *Betty Blokk Buster Follies*. Featuring stage costumes worn by Livermore and material from his personal archive, this is a rare opportunity to experience the creative talent of an Australian theatre legend.

Said Livermore about the exhibition: "I've been called many things over the course of my theatrical career...a national treasure... the King of the Boards... a genius at work... a legend ... etc etc (notice I only mention the good things). NOW they're telling me I'm a Museum Piece. Actually I take this as a compliment and very great honour. I am looking forward to the exhibition immensely, I'll be able to see exactly what I've been getting up to during the past 50+ years. I think you should find it interesting too. Put me in your diary."

*Reg Livermore – Take a Bow* features unique stage costumes donated by Livermore to the Arts Centre's Performing Arts Collection in 2006. Highlights include those worn for his best-known characters including Betty Blokk Buster, Vaseline Amalnitrate, Tara the Incredible and Carmen Marahuana.

In addition, Reg Livermore has generously provided access to his own collection of photographs, posters, scripts, correspondence and production footage.

Livermore's solo shows, which he wrote and performed during the 1970s and 1980s, are central to the exhibition. Innovative, outrageous and often controversial, these cabaret-style productions simultaneously entertained and challenged his audiences, and elevated Livermore to stardom. These shows burst onto the stage with *Betty Blokk Buster Follies* in 1975, followed by *Wonder Woman* (1976–77), *Sacred Cow* (1979–80), *Son of Betty* (1980), *Sacred Cow II* (1982) and *Firing Squad* (1983).

*Reg Livermore – Take a Bow* also provides an overview of his broader career including his work with repertory theatre companies in the late 1950s and 1960s, and his subsequent move into rock musicals, which began with *Hair* (1969) and led to his role as Australia's first Dr Frank'n'Furter in *The Rocky Horror Show* (1974). Other major musicals that starred Livermore are also represented including *Barnum* (1981–82), *The Producers* (2004–05) and Opera Australia's *My Fair Lady* (2008). In addition, Livermore's expert portrayal of character roles in Gilbert and Sullivan operettas for the Victoria State Opera and Opera Australia is honoured.

The exhibition also pays tribute to Reg Livermore's other original works including the musical *Ned Kelly* (1977–78); his series of one-man shows based on his long-term character, Leonard, initiated in 1989 with *Wish You Were Here*; and his plays *The Thank You Dinner* (2001 & 2008) and *Turns* (2011).

Since 1975, the Arts Centre has assembled one of the best performing arts collections in the world, comprising more than 400,000 items relating to circus, dance, music, opera and theatre.

The priceless collection comprises costumes, posters, programmes and other personal memorabilia from artists ranging from the legendary Dame Nellie Melba to Dame Edna Everage, and her cultural successor, Kylie Minogue.

**Reg Livermore – Take a Bow** is part of the Arts Centre's Icon exhibition series; a major annual exhibition that celebrates the careers of Australia's most recognised performing artists. Since the inaugural exhibition in 2005, the Icon exhibition series has been an outstanding success, attracting over two million visitors to the Arts Centre. Previous exhibitions have celebrated Australian icons including Kylie Minogue, Nick Cave, Dame Edna Everage, and more recently women in the Australian music scene with the *Rock Chicks* exhibition.

**Reg Livermore – Take a Bow**  
**5 November 2011 – 26 February 2012**  
A FREE exhibition  
the Arts Centre, Gallery 1

The Arts Centre is the flagship of the performing arts in Victoria, and the focal point of Melbourne's cultural precinct. To find out about what's on offer visit [www.theartscentre.com.au](http://www.theartscentre.com.au) or become a fan of the Arts Centre on facebook.

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**For further media information, interviews or images please contact:**

Jessica Bendell, Senior Publicist on 03 9281 8442 / 0427 040 086 or [jessica.bendell@theartscentre.com.au](mailto:jessica.bendell@theartscentre.com.au)