

## VENUE MANAGERS FIND DIFFERENT ROUTE TO FILLING PRODUCT VOID

Perhaps it was the 26 year gap since Sir Peter Shaffer's marvellous play had been performed professionally in Perth, Western Australia...



Maybe it was the drawcard of Tim Minchin, rising star of the international comedy stage, whose inspired casting as Mozart intrigued everyone...

Possibly it was the Perth Theatre Company's reputation linked for the first time with His Majesty's Theatre's entrepreneurial management, not to mention the eminently suitable proscenium stage in the beautiful old theatre: the period set and costume design were exactly right for the Maj's Edwardian splendour.

But whatever it was, and chances are it was all of the above, the July season of *Amadeus* is regarded as a success story.

Audiences got behind it, media supported it, reviewers loved it, houses were extraordinarily healthy, word of mouth was enthusiastic - it was a dream season for both the venue managers, OIFC Perth, and the Perth Theatre Company, who were collaborating for the first time.

Perth Theatre Trust, who underwrote it, had every reason to be proud of their confidence in the project.

Rodney Phillips, General Manager of HMT, whose brainchild the project was, was ecstatic. The project was largely in response to a lack of high quality touring product in Australia and was a huge risk. The theatre normally deals with the nuts and bolts of putting on shows rather than artistic content.

"Enthusiastic attendance and feedback surpassed all our expectations and we played to 86% capacity for the 12 performances," Phillips said. "That's an average of 742 people per performance – for a straight play to achieve those sort of attendances in Perth is phenomenal in today's market.

"This will be the inspiration for us to continue presenting great plays from the international repertoire in professional productions which, sadly, don't seem to have been presented in Perth in recent years. I'm talking about locally-produced plays."

*Amadeus* employed scores of local arts specialists, from actors to scene designers and builders, technical crew, costume and wig makers and make up artists. The only out of town performer was Sydney-based veteran actor Dennis Olsen - more usually associated with Gilbert and Sullivan shows - whose performance as Salieri was received with universal acclaim.

*Amadeus* was part of PTT's celebration of Mozart's 250<sup>th</sup> birthday, saluted all over the world in 2006. The year started with a Mozart Festival at Perth Concert Hall in January (another resounding success, which put paid to the naysayers who declared the month the time when no-one stays in Perth because of school holidays), will continue in October with the *Mozart*

*Meets the Kids* concert at Perth Concert Hall and will end in December with *The Magic Flute* at the Maj.

Phillips is already in discussion with PTC to build on this successful season with another in 2007. Plays by several 20th Century playwrights are on the drawing board.

Amadeus Energy was brought on board as principal sponsor, the company's first time supporting a theatre production. The obvious link came about by chance when the name came up while Phillips was reading a local newspaper. Amadeus Energy was very pleased to be involved and enjoyed both the profiling and the chance for clients and staff to experience the production.

Geoff Towner, Amadeus CEO, said, "Being able to support the arts for this very appropriate and important production is something we have enjoyed doing very much."

A great opportunity for energy boom money to shake hands with its cultural side.