

# Reminiscences of early days of television at the ABC

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K.D.

When TV was new people were fascinated of course and would do almost anything asked of them to take part in, or in some way, contribute to our programmes.

I remember one of our Social Studies telecasts was to be about the irrigation systems on the River Murray, so I rang the Grape Grower's Association among others to ask if they could provide some grapes from the area so that we might decorate our studio with them.

The next thing I knew about this was a phone call from a Vic Rail employee asking where I wanted the grapes to be delivered. I gave the matter to our Props Department.

On the day for transmission I arrived on the set to be confronted by a mountain of bunches of very ripe grapes being raked together by stage hands. "Where do you want them?" I was asked. There was no possible answer but "Just where they are!" since they virtually filled the TV studio. There was only room for the programme presenter to stand in front of the oozing, glistening mass and

do his best about reticulation systems and the productivity they sometimes provided.

When the telerecording was completed with closing captions super-imposed over valleys and hills of grapes, the Floor Manager asked me: "What do you want us to do with them now? Tread them?"  
I fled!

Then there was the talking cockatoo who on the day wouldn't talk! Oh dear.....

## TV Spectacular - Waging war on the White Monoliths

It all started with Hanny Exiner – she being the most fertile inspiration for dance educators in my generation; I being one of the pioneers of the ABC's educational TV programmes for schools.....

So! I engaged some or perhaps all of Hanny's 6 – 8 year old dance students to perform in a TV epic for primary students on the subject of oral hygiene! (A therapeutic application of dance even then??!) Picture the little darlings dressed in black and with devil's forks, for they were the fiendish bacteria of decay waging their dance of attack on a semi-circle of huge white monoliths representing teeth!

I suppose you could describe me as being at the height of my Cecil B. deMille period at that time and had persuaded the awestruck Props Department at Ripponlea (Channel 2) to construct and erect representations of teeth the size of Stonehenge! After this epic of the 'Devil Dance of the Tooth Decayers' the ABC settled back into its usual more prosaic way. But Hanny Exiner did not let me go!

I found myself on a committee for furthering the aims of dance education which became Ausdance and from which was born the DTAA and its there that I have been ever since – gaining so much more than I've ever given and becoming through your good graces, an Honorary Professional Member of an association which will continue to evolve a philosophy of body mind 'one-ness' and the healing and wholeing power of expressive dance movement.

**Drawing:** Jenny by Kate Durham