

media release

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RECORD YEAR FOR NEW MTC TEAM

Melbourne Theatre Company under the new direction of Artistic Director Brett Sheehy AO and Executive Director Virginia Lovett is delighted to announce that its 2013 season has achieved the highest box office in its 60 year history at \$13,500,000, a margin of \$750,000 over the previous record year of 2011.

As well, 2013 has seen the Company record its highest number of single ticket (non-subscription) sales in a decade. Single ticket attendees topped 70,000 with nearly 33% first time attendees to the company.

MTC Artistic Director, Brett Sheehy, said he was 'thrilled with the result, especially given the number of risky initiatives undertaken this year. All credit must go to the MTC team who had no additional resources to successfully implement a raft of programs which increased our overall activities by 25%.'

These initiatives included:

- the NEON Festival of Independent Theatre including NEON Extra;
- programming of the vacant Zeitgeist slot to enable an immediate response to a new work which resulted in *The Beast* by Eddie Perfect;
- programming MTC's first family show in a decade - *The Book of Everything*;
- co-presenting MTC's first international production - *One Man Two Guvnors*;
- establishing MTC Connect - MTC's multicultural outreach program;
- establishing a new Women Directors Program.

During 2013 the Company forged key alliances to broaden the company's audience and awareness, with Tourism Victoria, City of Melbourne, Melbourne Festival and the Melbourne International Comedy Festival.

'MTC had tremendous success in building key collaborations across tourism and public engagement. Interstate visitation increased by 10% for our major show *Rupert*, and the key festival partnerships increased our first time attendees to MTC considerably', said Virginia Lovett, MTC Executive Director.

The inaugural year of NEON Festival of Independent Theatre saw more than 5151 ticketbuyers attend five critically acclaimed shows generating \$121,000 in Box Office revenue that went directly to some of Melbourne's best independent theatre-makers. Approximately 35% of NEON ticketbuyers were new to Southbank Theatre.

Next year MTC embarks on its first international tour in thirty years with a new Australian play. Following its world premiere in August, David Williamson's *Rupert* tours to Washington D.C.'s Kennedy Center for the World Stages: International Theater Festival held between 12-15 March 2014. The Company will present

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five performances in the Eisenhower Theater and no doubt the topic of Rupert Murdoch will spark considerable interest in the US as it did here in Australia.

The Monthly awarded MTC's NEON Festival *Best of Australian Arts 2013 in the theatre category* and described it as 'The most important initiative in Melbourne theatre [which] demonstrates the virtues of a wider vision.'

ENDS

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