

Name:

David Watt

Qualifications

- PhD - University of NSW (1977)
- Bachelor of Arts (Honours) - Monash University (1970)

Academic Appointments

- Associate Professor, School of Drama, Fine Art & Music, 2007
- Senior Lecturer, The Conservatorium, The University of Newcastle, 2002-2007
- Senior Lecturer, Department of Drama, The University of Newcastle, 1991-2001
- Lecturer, Department of Drama, The University of Newcastle, 1977-1991
- Tutor, School of Drama, University of NSW, 1976-1977
- Lecturer, School of English and Linguistics, Macquarie University, 1975

Biography

David gained his PhD in Drama, via a thesis on the Elizabethan History Play, from the University of NSW. After brief teaching appointments at the University of NSW and Macquarie University, he took up an appointment at the University of Newcastle in 1977, and has worked here ever since. His main areas of teaching have been community-based performance, documentary and site-specific performance, modernist theatre (particularly Brecht), and "popular performance", including medieval and Elizabethan drama and commedia dell'arte as well as contemporary work, and various aspects of contemporary performance. He has had a long involvement with a number of grassroots cultural organizations, ranging from the Workers Cultural Action Committee of Newcastle Trades Hall Council and the Newcastle Community Arts Centre to Freewheels Theatre in Education.

Research Interests

He has published consistently, particularly on community-based performance, in which he has an international reputation, and most notably in a book, *Workers' Playtime* (co-authored with Alan Filewood from the University of Guelph in Canada), which explores labour movement theatre since 1970 in Australia, Canada and the UK. His international reputation has facilitated the establishment of connections with colleagues both in Australia and overseas, and occasionally to collaborations on projects – he is, for example, the Chief Investigator for Newcastle on AusStage, an ARC-funded collaboration between 18 Australian universities to establish and maintain a web-based database of live performance in Australia since white settlement, and his collaboration with Prof Filewood has extended into a project on the documentary theatre work of British theatre maker Peter Cheeseman. His most recent research has resulted from a developing interest in questions of place and performance beyond the conventionally theatrical, and in the role of the generation of performance in community contexts in investigating questions of history, heritage and popular memory, and the ways in which these processes may assist in

consolidating senses of local identity. Most of these have been practice-as-research projects and have thus led to artistic research outcomes (like the production of the interactive, site-specific performance piece *Ngarrama* in 2007 or the *Royal on the Move* procession which ceremonially marked the closure of the Royal Newcastle Hospital in 2006) as well as conventional academic publication. They have also involved cross-disciplinary collaborations with academic colleagues in Cultural Geography, Aboriginal Studies and Fine Art at the university, and collaborations with local government and arts organizations, artists and Community Cultural Development workers, made possible by his involvement with local grassroots cultural groups as well as his research.

Professional Activities

Teaching

- Theatre for community development and social change
- Documentary and site-specific performance
- Popular Theatre
- Brecht and political theatre in the 1920s and 1930s
- Medieval theatre

Supervision

David has supervised at Honours, MA and PhD level, predominantly in the area of theatre for community development and popular theatre in Australia, Indonesia and the West Indies, and has also supervised a range of practice-as-research projects within the now discontinued Master of Creative Arts degree.

Research Grants

Publications

Books & Monographs

- *Workers' Playtime: Theatre and the Labour Movement Since 1970*, (with Alan Filewod), Sydney: Currency Press, 2001.

Book Chapters

- (With A. Filewod), "Melbourne Workers Theatre: The Meat in the Sandwich", in G. D'cruz (ed.), *A Class Act: Melbourne Workers Theatre 1987-2007*, Melbourne: Vulgar Press, 2007, pp. 30-59.
- (with K. Schaefer), "Nobbys, Newcastle: place, history, heritage, identity and performance", in Gay McAuley (ed.), *Contested Ground: Performance and the Politics of Place*, Berlin: Peter Lang, 2006
- 'The Popular Theatre Troupe and Street Arts Community Theatre: Two Paradigms of Political Activism', in Steve Capelin (ed.), *Challenging the Centre*, Brisbane: Playlab Press, 1995, pp. 13-33.
- "'The Oldest Person on the Set": Collaborative Work at Melbourne Workers' Theatre', in Gareth Griffiths (ed.), *John Romeril*, Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1993, pp. 103-120

- 'Interrogating "Community": Social Welfare Vs Cultural Democracy', in Vivienne Binns (ed.), *Community and the Arts: Theory, History, Practice*, Leichhardt: Pluto Press, 1991, pp. 55-66.
- (with Graham Pitts), 'Community Theatre as Political Activism: Some Thoughts on Practice in Australia', in Vivienne Binns (ed.), *Community and the Arts: Theory, History, Practice*, Leichhardt: Pluto Press, 1991, pp. 119-133.

Refereed Journal Articles

- (with K. Schaefer), "Not Going Quietly: The Royal on the Move Procession", *About Performance 7: Local Acts – Site-based Performance Practice*, 2007
- 'The Maker and the Tool: High Culture, Popular Culture and the Work of Charles Parker', *New Theatre Quarterly*, No. 70, May 2002.
- "'Excellence/Access" and "Nation/Community"', *Canadian Theatre Review*, Spring 1993, pp. 7-11.
- 'Community Theatre: A Progress Report', *Australasian Drama Studies*, No. 18, 1991, pp. 3-15.
- 'Mainstreet: Making Theatre in the Country', *Meanjin*, Vol. 50, No. 2/3, 1991, pp. 219-230.
- 'Theatre and Political Intervention: the 70s Project in Britain Reconsidered', *MinnesotaReview*, N. S. 36, 1991, pp. 71-88.
- 'Introduction to Andrew Bovell, The Ballad of Lois Ryan', *Australasian Drama Studies*, No. 17, 1990, pp. 86-89.
- "'Art and Working Life": Australian Trade Unions and the Theatre', *New Theatre Quarterly*, No. 25, 1990, pp. 162-173.
- 'The Trade Union Movement, Art & Working Life and Melbourne Workers' Theatre', *Australasian Drama Studies*, No. 14, April 1989, pp. 5-18.

Non-Refereed Journal Articles

- (with Graham Pitts) 'The Imaginary Conference', *Artwork*, No. 50, August 2001, pp. 7-14.

Book Reviews

- Review of Terry Lane, *The Full Round: The Several Lives and Theatrical Legacy of Stephen Joseph*, Castiglione del Lago, Italy: Duca della Corgna, 2006, in *New Theatre Quarterly*, No. 92, 2007, pp. 430-431.
- Review of Jan Cohen-Cruz & Mady Schutzman, eds. *A Boal Companion: Dialogues on Theatre and Cultural Politics*, (Routledge, 2006), in *Modern Drama*, 50:1, 2007, pp. 98-102.
- Review of Peter J. Wilson and Geoffrey Milne, *The Space Between Us: The Art of Puppetry and Visual Theatre in Australia* (Currency Press: Sydney, 2004), in *Australasian Drama Studies*, No. 47, October 2005, pp. 162-4.
- Review of J. Collier and J. Spencer (eds.) *Staging Resistance: Essays on Political Theater*, Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1998 and R. Boon and J. Plastow (eds.), *Theatre Matters: Performance and Culture on the World Stage*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998, *Australasian Drama Studies*, No. 36, April 2000, pp. 168-171.
- Review of Maria DiCenzo, *The Politics of Alternative Theatre in Britain, 1968-1990: The Case of 7:84 (Scotland)*, in *Essays in Theatre*, Vol. 16, No. 2, May 1998, pp. 233-235.

- Review of Neil Cameron, *Fire on the Water* (Currency Press, Sydney, 1993), in *Australasian Drama Studies*, No. 28, 1996, pp. 205-7.
- Review of Baz Kershaw, *The Politics of Performance* (London; Routledge, 1992) and Bim Mason, *Street Theatre and Other Outdoor Performance* (London; Routledge, 1992) in *Australasian Drama Studies*, No. 23, 1993, pp. 214-217.
- Review of Richard Fotheringham (ed.), *Community Theatre in Australia* (Sydney: Methuen, , 1987), in *Australasian Drama Studies*, No. 18, 1991, pp. 231-235.
- Review of Stephen Lowe's *The Ragged Trousered Philanthropists*, *Australasian Drama Studies*, No. 9, 1986, pp. 111-116.

Other Publications

- Entries on Community Theatre, Paul Brown, PP Cranney, Andrew Bovell, Mainstreet Community Theatre and Melbourne Workers' Theatre in P. Parsons (ed.) *Companion to Theatre in Australia* (Currency Press/Cambridge Uni Press, Sydney, 1995)
- 'Decentring the Theatre: Don Mamouny Interviewed by David Watt and Jenny Lee,' *Meanjin*, Vol. 50, No. 2/3, 1991, pp. 231-240.

Conference Presentations

- (with K. Mee, B. Joyce and E. Edwards), "Performing Windale(s): performance-based Community Cultural Development techniques enacting/enabling possible futures in public housing estates", International Symposium on Applied Theatre: Engagement and Transformation, University of Sydney, October 2007.
- "Local Knowledges, Memories and Community: from Oral History to Performance Via Community Cultural Development", International Federation for Theatre Research, University of Helsinki, Finland, August 2006.
- "'Citizens', 'Artists' and the Sociality of Cultural Production in Community-Based Theatre' International Federation for Theatre Research Annual Conference, University of Maryland, July 2005
- (with Alan Filewod), "Counter-Globalisation: The Banner/Ground Zero Collaborations", Political Futures: Alternative Theatre in Britain Conference, University of Reading, April 2004
- (with Alan Filewod), 'From Class to "Cultural Community": Theatre and Labour in Australia', International Federation for Theatre Research conference, University of NSW, July 2001.
- (with Alan Filewod) 'Theatre and the union movement in Australia and Canada', Association for Theatre in Higher Education America, New York, 1996.
- 'Community Theatre and Training', Australasian Theatre Training Conference, Queensland University of Technology, Brisbane, 1995
- 'Street Arts Community Theatre and Bureaucratically-Induced Schizophrenia', Australasian Drama Studies Association Conference, University of Western Australia, 1993
- 'The Australian People's Theatre and the Rhetoric of Community Arts', Australasian Drama Studies Association Conference, University of Wollongong, November 1992
- 'The Trade Union Movement, Art and Working Life and Melbourne Workers' Theatre', Australian Universities' Language and Literature Association Conference, Macquarie University, 1989
- 'Community/Art: Some Definitions', CAMARP Conference, Sydney University of Technology, 1985

- 'The Active Audience: Creative Collaboration Between Performer and Spectator in the Elizabethan Theatre', Australasian Drama Studies Association Conference, Riverina CAE, 1980.

Artistic Work

Directing

- 2000: (director) *Bury the Dead*, by Irwin Shaw, Drama Studio
- 1999: (writer/director) *And This is Where the Story Really Starts*, a play-building project incorporating undergraduate and postgraduate students and a group of teenage mothers from the Family Care Cottage, Waratah, performed at health workers' conference, November, University of Newcastle.
- 1998: (devised and directed) *What's Left: Songs and Performances From the Great Depression*, Drama Studio
- 1992-3: (researcher, dramaturg, co-director), *Aftershocks*, by Paul Brown and the Workers' Cultural Action Committee of Newcastle Trades Hall Council. Director of touring version through the Hunter region in 1993.
- 1979: *Mankynd*, Drama Department
- 1978: *Box and Cox*, Drama Department

Scriptwriting

- 1985-6: (writer and assistant director), *The Rage*, a project of the Newcastle Community Arts Centre, funded by the Community Arts Board of the Australia Council. Toured in 1986 throughout the Hunter region, funded (\$21,600) by the Touring and Access Committee of the Australia Council.
- 1981: (writer and director), *Ardent Spirits*, performed over ten weeks at the Premier Hotel, Broadmeadow, and at the Upper Hunter Wine Festival.

Prizes, Honours & Awards

- City of Newcastle Drama Awards, Best Director of a Professional Production (shared with Brent McGregor), 1993

Thesis Examinations

Examiner of theses (MCA, MA and PhD) from:

- University of New England
- University of NSW
- University of Queensland
- University of Sydney
- University of Technology Sydney
- University of Western Sydney

- Queensland University of Technology
- Griffith University
- LaTrobe University
- James Cook University
- Macquarie University

Covering topic areas such as:

- British theatre
- Community theatre
- Youth performance
- "Radical" theatre
- Indigenous theatre
- Theatre for development
- New circus
- Devised theatre

Consultancies & Community Service

- Judge, Hunter Institute of Mental Health Drama Festival, 1998
- Board member, Freewheels Theatre Company, 1995- 2000 (Deputy Chair 1999-2000)
- Chair, Venue Hire Subsidy Subcommittee, Cultural Planning Reference Group, Newcastle City Council, 1994-1995
- Member, Cultural Planning Reference Group, Newcastle City Council, 1994-1995
- Script and production assessor for the Performing Arts Board of the Australia Council, 1989, 1992
- Member, NSW Community Arts Association Training Subcommittee, 1989-1991
- Committee Member, Workers' Cultural Action Committee, Newcastle Trades Hall Council, 1985-1998 (Secretary, 1992-1996; Public Officer, 1997-1998)
- Management Committee member, Newcastle Community Arts Centre, 1985-1990 (Chair, 1989-1990)
- Committee member, Australasian Drama Studies Association, 1983-1991 (Secretary, 1989-1991)
- Convenor, Australasian Drama Studies Association Conference, The University of Newcastle, 1987
- Convenor, Theatre Studies Section, Australasian Universities Language and Literature Association Conference, The University of Newcastle, 1980

Governance

- Member, Faculty Board, Faculty of Education & Arts, 2002-5
- Member, Research Committee, Faculty of Arts & Social Science, 1995-1997, 2007
- Head, Department of Drama, 1992-1994

Memberships of Networks & Professional Associations

- Foundation Member, Australasian Drama Studies Association

- Member, International Federation of Theatre Research
- Member NSW Community Arts Network
- Member Community Arts Network of South Australia
- Institutional Member, International Brecht Society
- Institutional Member, American Society for Theatre Research
- Institutional Member, 19th Century Studies Association
- Institutional Member, Australian Cinema & Theatre Society