



# THE PLATFORM

Volume 13  
Issue 2

[www.speechanddrama.co.za](http://www.speechanddrama.co.za)

Second Term 2012

**SPEECH AND DRAMA ASSOCIATION OF SOUTH AFRICA  
SIXTY-NINTH ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING  
MONDAY 5 MARCH 2012  
RHUMBELOW THEATRE**

**CHAIRMAN'S REPORT**

For the past ten years I have presented my annual report for the Speech and Drama Association of South Africa with a sense of immense pride in our achievements, and this year is no different.

During that decade I have structured my report around a relevant idea or image, and for this, the sixty-ninth annual report of the Association, I chose a quotation that has always provoked me. Picasso said: "Every child is an artist. The problem is how to remain an artist once the child grows up."

In responding to that challenge, and looking back over the content of my previous reports, I found a number of answers contained within them, answers that are worth repeating.

What happens to every child that prevents them from remaining an artist? Usually, at the onset of adolescence, young people begin the stage in art development known as "the crisis period". For many it marks the end of their artistic development, because they become extremely critical of their work and frustrated at not being able to create what they feel are realistic representations, and so they give up original creation and personal expression. Further development of their powers to visualize and even their capacity for original thought and for relating themselves through personal feelings to their environment, could become blocked at this age. It is a crucial stage beyond which many adults have not advanced. As a significant aside, approximately 80% of our festivals take place in Primary Schools; to rephrase Picasso: "Every child is an actor, in the widest sense of the word. The problem is how to remain an actor once the child grows up."

At about the same time, young people are compelled to make decisions about subject choices which will affect their career choices, influenced by their parents and their guidance counsellors. We know the sorts of questions parents and pupils ask: "Why should my daughter – or son - study Art, when there aren't many career prospects?", and "What use is Art to me when I intend to become an accountant or an engineer or a lawyer?" We know that the Minister of Education places stress on and demands improvement in the gateway subjects such as Mathematics and Science and Technology. Such vocational and technicist attitudes are widespread. So much so that young people are advised against studying the arts. Careers supplements in local newspapers aimed at prospective students advise them

This issue contains feedback from the Annual General Meeting and Festival Convenors' Get-together that were held last term.

The Minutes of the AGM, the Chairman's Report, always the highlight of the meeting, and photographs of the evening, fill the following pages.

In addition, an item of particular interest to Pre-Primary and Primary schools, can be found on page 6.

**FOUNDER**  
Professor Elizabeth Sneddon

**HONORARY LIFE  
VICE-PRESIDENT**  
Professor Pieter Scholtz

**EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**  
Professor Mervyn McMurtry  
(Chairman)  
Eleanor Stewart  
(Vice-Chairman)  
Roslyn Glen  
Rosanne Hurly-Coyne  
Andrea Nel  
Helana Olivier  
Loshani Puymann  
David Spiteri  
Dean Unger  
Jean van Elden  
Charli Wiggill

**FESTIVAL DIRECTOR**  
Vyvienne Ball

to “Forget Shakespeare and study shareholder value, ditch classical literature and concentrate on corporate culture.”

But we also know that our country needs a society that is literate *and* imaginative, skilled *and* creative. Without the arts – all the arts, the visual, literary and performing - to foster the insights, empathy and communicative abilities of young people, they are likely to become culturally and socially disabled adults, as ignorant of the plight of others as they are of the necessity for theatres and galleries and orchestras and dance companies. We know that the arts do not prepare young people for any thing, they prepare them for everything, at school, at university, and in their future lives. We know the value of the arts remains unchanged; in fact, I maintain that their value is even more necessary now than ever before.

Why do I say that? Because I believe that every one, no matter what race or gender or age or place of birth, has an abiding need for meaning, meaning that is derived from connecting time and space, experience and event, body and spirit, intellect and emotion. People create art to make these connections, and thereby make meaning of existence. By doing so, the arts become one of humanity’s most profound and necessary means of continuity. They connect each new generation to those who have gone before, assisting the new generation on their own journey to find answers to the abiding questions that extend beyond career choices: Who am I? What must I do? Where am I going?

In parts of Africa the interconnectedness and continuity between different generations happens every time a storyteller comes to the end of their tale - they place the palm of their hand on the ground and say: “I put down my story here,” and then they add: “So that someone else may take it up another day.”

At the same time that the arts connect us, they are often a very important impetus for change, challenging old perspectives from fresh viewpoints, or offering original interpretations of familiar ideas. The arts have been a preoccupation of every generation and every society precisely because they bring us face to face with ourselves, and with what we sense lies beyond ourselves. We need that as much as we need the arts as a unique source of enjoyment and pleasure.

For all these reasons, the arts have been an inseparable part of the human journey. And because we value them as a part of ourselves, we believe that knowing and practicing them is fundamental to the healthy development of our young people’s minds and spirits. That is why, in any society, the arts are inseparable from the very meaning of the word ‘education’. No one can claim to be truly educated who lacks some knowledge and skills in the arts. If our country is to grow, to be both dynamic and nurturing in its journey forward, its success will ultimately depend on how well we foster the capacities of our young people, not simply to earn a living in a vastly complex world, but to have a life rich in meaning.

You will understand, then, why I say that the ongoing mission of the Speech and Drama Association has not and must not change. Implicit within that mission, from our inception in 1943, is the belief of our founder, Professor Sneddon, that speech is the integration of audible and visible movement to externalise what one thinks and feels, and that the physical control of one’s power to communicate is vital to life in terms of acquiring knowledge, in terms of creativity and in terms of health. In our endeavours, then, we do not teach young people to speak, but to think, to feel and to live.

In what I have said so far in my report I have stressed ‘our’ – our Association, our country, our young people, and I must pay tribute to those who connect those ‘ours’, who make it possible for us to implement what we believe in, and ensure the value of the Speech and Drama Festival.

We are indebted to the principals who display the foresight and vision to include the Festival in the life of their schools, and the heads of the studios who likewise want their pupils to enter. During 2011, 119 Festivals took place, 92 in primary schools, 11 in high schools, and 10 colleges and 6 studios, 22 more than the previous year, with 9 new member schools and 2 studios participating for the first time. Equally, the teachers need our thanks. We are all aware of the increasing demands placed on educators today, and we are also sensitive to the difficult times in which they perform their professional duties. By entering their pupils in the festival they willingly take on the additional creative and administrative demands that participation in the festival involves. We appreciate very much, too, the great deal of (almost wholly positive) feedback we received from teachers, headmasters and parents.

Then there are our adjudicators, a total of 29 last year, to whom we extend our gratitude for the professional manner in which they travelled far and wide to assess and encourage the thousands of pupils who entered Festivals in Durban and Pietermaritzburg, up and down the North and South coasts, in the Midlands, and in Northern

KwaZulu-Natal. Welcome, too, to our 7 new adjudicators, in Durban, Pietermaritzburg and Ladysmith; we hope your association with our Association proves as mutually beneficial as it is to our stalwarts.

Finally, there are the young people themselves, who are the purpose of the Festival, and who participate with such expectation and enthusiasm. To all these many thousands, we are deeply grateful for their commitment to what is ultimately a cause that connects us, each and every person.

It is customary to review the events of the year just past in a report at an Annual General Meeting, and as I was preparing the report for 2011-2012, I was struck once again by the way in which these connections are vital to our continuity.

The last Annual General Meeting and Get-together with teachers and adjudicators was held, once again, at the Rhumbelow Theatre on Monday 14 March, and everyone responded with great enthusiasm to the entertainment provided by Rory Rootenberg. Not only was the event a support of Roland Stansell and his charming theatre, but a means to express our gratitude to and sustain our connections with schools and teachers.

During the same month, a very worthwhile Adjudicator's Meeting, organised by Vyvienne Ball, took place at Clarence Primary School, attended by 15 adjudicators, who assessed and discussed presentations of work prepared by the pupils. We thank the pupils and staff of Clarence Primary for hosting and participating in the event and for making the members of the Association feel very welcome. Events such as this, along with the 16 Workshops for staff held in schools (7 more than in 2010), conducted by our adjudicators, are a means of connection: maintaining and improving the entire assessment process, and assisting and encouraging staff to participate in the festival in new and exciting ways, and ultimately to foster our mission in a personal and individual way by connecting with the thousands of young people eager to display their skills in communication.

2011 was the first year of our latest syllabus, with a new category that reflects our awareness that we must consider a variety of forms of communication - PowerPoint Presentation. All three Syllabi (English, Afrikaans and isiZulu) have been well received by schools and adjudicators, who are enjoying the poems.

These connections were as evident by the proud introduction of our own Website, which proved useful from the outset, as a number of contacts have been made from it, and schools and studios have taken advantage of the opportunity to have free listing, with their contact details and school badge or studio logo. We must likewise congratulate Vyvienne Ball for "The Platform", the most recent issue of which is, would you believe it, the first of Volume 13; the 4 issues a year, entirely collated and designed by Vyvienne, continue to extend those connections to include news about us, the syllabus, our members, upcoming theatre productions, events and workshops, creative writing by pupils, etc., etc. "The Platform" now appears also on the website, and so can be viewed online.

I mentioned that we are still connected to and connected to each other by the legacy of Elizabeth Sneddon. The Bruce Piper Award Monologue Competition was first held in 2003, created in memory of Bruce, as Chairman of the Speech and Drama Association for 21 years. Last year, on 5 November 2011, 12 contestants from 4 high schools participated, Grosvenor Girls' High School, Kingsway High School, Northlands Girls High School and Port Shepstone High School. The joint winners were Sithokizile Gumede and Stephanie Jenkins (both from Grosvenor). The wisdom, courage and inspiration of Elizabeth Sneddon and Bruce Piper continue to enrich us all.

We are fortunate that enrichment of a different kind has extended to actual monies as well to ensure our survival. Imagine if we had the resources to mount festivals in every school in the country, and that every pupil not only participated, but also was sponsored to enter by financial corporations, because they recognise that investing in the arts is an imperative societal need. We are most grateful for the funding we received from the National Lotteries Distribution Trust Fund, which has been distributed in 3 tranches, the final amount of R162 468 being received on 21 February 2012, too late to reflect on our financial statements for 2011. The funding was used to subsidise entry fees, travel costs and workshops, to pay for bursaries and the Monologue Competition, and to subsidise the cost of the Get-together and the Adjudicators' Workshop, besides covering the cost of the new syllabus and stationery. It has enabled us to keep entry and workshop fees down despite continual rising costs. To give you an idea of the value of such support: during 2011, 17 schools received subsidies, to a total value of R10 653; 287 free entries (for candidates entering more than 3 individual items), amounted to R4 300, were granted; and 21 pupils were awarded bursaries for a total amount of R12 000, of which R9 000 was donated by 12 schools.

Unfortunately, our application to the National Lotteries Distribution Trust Fund for further funding for 2013 - 2015 has been turned down. Nevertheless, I know that Vyvienne will continue to spend many, many hours completing application forms and composing requests for grants and subsidies.

I have spoken of the people and the organisations that we are connected to in fulfilling our mission. A very much smaller number holds all those connections together, however.

As Chairman I pay tribute to my colleagues on the Executive Committee for their loyalty and support, not only to me as Chairman, but also to the Association, in so many ways. During their two-year term of office, each person has brought some unique quality and perspective to make it an excellent team. I thank you, each and every one, for your expertise, your dedication, and the sacrifice of your time: Eleanor Stewart, who is so willing to assist and offer the benefits of her wisdom, and, alphabetically by surname, Gillian Brunings (who, regrettably, given her input over the last two years, will not be standing for re-election), Roslyn Glen, Rosanne Hurly-Coyne, Andrea Nel, Helana Olivier, Loshani Puymann, David Spiteri, Dean Unger, Jean van Elden and Charli Wiggill.

Vital as these contributions have been, it is true to say that the Speech and Drama Association owes its present existence and continuity to two people in particular. Firstly, Martie Hildyard, thank you so very, very much, for so meticulously overseeing our financial affairs for 13 years, since January 2000, when you were originally employed as secretary/bookkeeper. In the then current issue of "The Platform", Bruce wished you "a long and happy stay with the Association", and we hope that has been the case as much for you as it has been for us. In April 2002, when we moved from our premises in Ferguson Road in order to cut back on costs, Martie resigned her position as secretary/bookkeeper, but offered to stay on as our part-time bookkeeper, which she has done ever since, despite having a fulltime job elsewhere. Now, most unfortunately, due to an increased workload in her fulltime position, she has had to resign. Martie, as always, we greatly appreciate the precious time you have devoted to us and the way you have always offered such well-reasoned and sensible advice with your perpetual good humour and warmth. We would not have survived without you, and will miss you and Gordon deeply.

The second special person we must pay tribute to is, of course, Vyvienne Ball. You connect us all, Chairman, Executive Committee, adjudicators, correspondents, and every entrant. You are not only our Festival Director, but also our public relations officer, ambassador, diplomat, editor, applications-for-funding writer, and confidante. Every year we place more responsibility on you, and you have never, ever complained. Everything you do, you accomplish with absolute commitment, elegance, and generosity of spirit. I have said it before, and must repeat that I am exceptionally fortunate, by virtue of my position, to have the pleasure to work very closely with you. I know how much the Association is indebted to you, so personally and on behalf of everyone you connect with, I extend our sincerest appreciation.

And thank you, too, to you for your very kind attention. May our devotion to the arts continue to connect us all, and assist us in fostering the arts, and the artist in every person.

Professor Mervyn McMurtry

5 March 2012



Professor McMurtry presents Martie Hildyard with a bouquet of flowers (left) and "Platform Jazz" (above) performs at the Get-together.

MINUTES OF THE SIXTY-NINTH ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF THE SPEECH AND DRAMA  
ASSOCIATION OF SOUTH AFRICA, HELD ON MONDAY, 5 MARCH 2012, AT 17H30,  
AT THE RHUMBELOW THEATRE, CUNNINGHAM AVENUE, UMBILO, DURBAN.

**Present:**

Mervyn McMurtry (Chairman), Eleanor Stewart (Vice-Chairman), Andrea Nel, Roz Glen, Jean van Elden, Loshani Puymann, Rosanne Hurly-Coyne, Charli Wiggill, Dean Unger, Vyvienne Ball (Festival Director), Martie Hildyard (Treasurer). Helana Olivier present but delayed due to collecting the supper.

**1. Welcome:**

Professor McMurtry opened the meeting by welcoming everyone and expressing his gratitude to Roland Stansell and the Rhumbelow Theatre for the use of the venue for the fourth year. He thanked everyone who had helped to arrange the evening's activities.

**2. Notice of Meeting:**

The Notice of Meeting had been circulated and was taken as read.

**3. Apologies:**

Apologies were recorded from the following members: - Bluff Christian Academy, Crawford College North Coast, Cowan House, Darnall Primary School, Deutsche Schule Hermannsburg, Durban Girls' College, Grantleigh, Kainon, Holy Childhood School, Sagewood Preparatory School, Westville Junior Primary School, David Spiteri, Gillian Brunings, Ann Walmsley, Brett Beiles, Danita Kliem, Dawn Haynes, Denise Lord, Di Paterson, Jeananne Gunthorp, Jo Caro, John Harley, Pamela Tancsik, Sherlee Wade.

**4. The Minutes of the 2011 AGM:**

The Minutes had been circulated and were taken as read and adopted.

Proposed: Roz Glen

Seconded: Charli Wiggill

**Matters Arising:**

There were no matters arising.

**6. Chairman's Report**

The Chairman presented his Report for 2011, which was adopted.

Proposed: Eleanor Stewart

Seconded: Dean Unger

A suggestion by Charli Wiggill that the Chairman's Report is published to a wider audience was met with approval by all present and will be discussed at the next meeting of the Executive Committee.

**7. Financial Report**

Mrs Martie Hildyard presented the Financial Report for 2011 and the Income and Expenditure Statements were considered. The Financial Report was adopted.

Proposed: Charli Wiggill

Seconded: Dean Unger

Professor McMurtry thanked Martie for all she has done for the Association over the past 12 years and presented her with flowers and a card from the committee and members in appreciation of her services as bookkeeper.

**Appointment of Auditors**

It was unanimously agreed to retain the services of Baker Tilly Morrison Murray.

**Election of Executive Committee**

The following members were duly nominated and elected – Mervyn McMurtry, Eleanor Stewart, Helana Olivier, Dean Unger, Roslyn Glen, Andrea Nel, Jean van Elden, Rosanne Hurly-Coyne, Loshani Puymann, David Spiteri, Charli Wiggill.

**General**

Eleanor Stewart said that it is always her pleasure to thank Professor McMurtry for all he does for the Association during the year – his Chairman's Reports are inspirational, thought-provoking and contain pearls of wisdom that she personally treasures and re-reads from time to time. She said that the committee members join her in appreciation of what he shares with all. On behalf of the committee she thanked him for his loyalty, commitment, dedication and leadership in so many ways.

**Closure**

Professor McMurtry declared the meeting closed at 18h15 with an invitation to everyone to the Get-together.



Guests enjoying supper and the show at the Festival Convenors' Get-together at the Rhumbelow Theatre on 5 March.



## PRE-PRIMARY and PRIMARY SCHOOLS

The following production is for hire. To book or to find out more about it, phone 031 309 8738 or email [copydog@artslink.co.za](mailto:copydog@artslink.co.za)

### i-Puppeti

*i-Puppeti* is a fun and frolicking show for primary and pre-primary children, that explores the many types of puppets and puppetry, including sock, hand, stick, string, shadow and giant puppets.

Written by Clinton Marius (writer and creator of Lotus FM's hit daily comedy soapie, *Lollipop Lane*, and the multi-award-winning stage production, *The Fantastical Flea Circus*), this story teaches children the valuable lessons of self-acceptance, friendship, listening to parents, eating healthily, exercising, how damaging bullying can be, and that anything is possible if you put your mind to it.

*i-Puppeti* stars two of *Lollipop Lane's* much-loved performers, Shika Budhoo (*The Fantastical Flea Circus*, *Shika-land*, *Spice 'n Stuff*, *Jimbo*) and Mpume Mthombeni (*Tin Bucket Drum*, *Amagamma Amathathu*, *Rabbit & Friends*, *Godspell*).

*i-Puppeti* is directed by Clinton Marius.

BOOK NOW FOR THIS FUN-FILLED PRODUCTION!

