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# october update

Want to work with us? Send an email!

1<sup>st</sup> October 2014

## It's been a while...

Our last e-update was August 2013, just over a year ago. It's a reflection of how busy we have been at Auslan Stage Left!

And what an exciting year it has been!

Auslan Stage Left continues to grow its pool of Interpreters and Language/ Cultural Consultants, increase the number of interpreted productions and raise awareness of deaf people's right to access the arts.

We won an ASLIA Victoria award, delivered training and revamped our website. We've extended our reach to all states of Australia and produced informative video resources. And guess what? All of this work has been on a volunteer basis. So we would like to take this opportunity to thank the deaf community and theatres for making our work so enjoyable and to everyone who has supported us along the way.



## Vacancy

Auslan Stage Left is seeking a volunteer administration officer. We are looking for someone with excellent written English, time management and multi-tasking skills and a passion for theatre and the deaf community. We need you to be pro-active and good at creating and maintaining business relationships. Is this you? Email us!

*p.s the role comes with perks!*



# Foundations of Theatre Interpreting With Della Goswell and Alex Jones

Auslan Stage Left has facilitated two workshops for Theatre Interpreters and Language/Cultural Consultants this year - Auckland in February and Sydney in June. A third workshop will take place in Melbourne in November. It has been wonderful to see commitment from so many interpreters, especially those who have, or are, travelling interstate for the training.

Feedback has been overwhelmingly positive with demand so high for the Melbourne workshop we have a waiting list – if you missed out, please be assured - Auslan Stage Left intends to provide training on different areas of theatre interpreting each year. Keep an eye out on our Facebook page, website, and sign up to our E-Newsletter for updates.

We would like to thank our partners in delivering the “Foundations of Theatre Interpreting” training: Accessible Arts and SLC NSW (NSW) and Echo Interpreting, Deafness Foundation and Malthouse Theatre (VIC), and the NZ partners as outlined by Alex in his article. And of course thank you to Della and Alex. For Sydney video highlights in Auslan, see:

Day One:

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CYytBNC0CsM&list=UUkLps91YbDwmBvUj\\_APHjHg](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CYytBNC0CsM&list=UUkLps91YbDwmBvUj_APHjHg)

Day Two:

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7ONDbpZhiYU&list=UUkLps91YbDwmBvUj\\_APHjHg](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7ONDbpZhiYU&list=UUkLps91YbDwmBvUj_APHjHg)



## Upcoming Shows *(there's even more on our website!)*

### SYDNEY

3 Dec. **Don't Dis My Ability**

### PERTH

16 Oct. **Dave Hughes @ Regal Theatre** w/ Adrian Priem.

### BRISBANE

4 Dec. **Celebrating a Musical Christmas @ St Johns**

Cathedral w/ Mike Webb & Leanne Beer.

### MELBOURNE

15 Oct. **Les Miserables @ Her Majesty's Theatre** w/ Karen Clare & Susan Emerson.

29 Nov. **Calpurnia Descending @ Malthouse Theatre.**

4 Dec. **Shirley Maclaine @ Hamer Hall** w/ Michelle Ashley & Cheryl Sandilands.

13 Dec. **The Wiggles Big Show @ Rod Laver Arena** w/ Michelle Ashley & Daniel Hatley.

22 Mar. **Strictly Ballroom @ Her Majesty's Theatre** w/ Alex Jones & Chevvy Sweeney.

# Foundations of Theatre Interpreting testimonials

## Alex Jones (trainer)

The Auslan Stage Left team had a phenomenal opportunity to spread their wings outside the borders of Australia to New Zealand. Along with co-director Medina Sumovic and co-facilitators Della Goswell and Alex Jones, Auslan Stage Left delivered their first Theatre Interpreting Workshop for New Zealand Sign Language Interpreters and Deaf Consultants in February 2014. This workshop was held at the prestigious theatre venue in the heart of Auckland city, The Edge Theatre. The venue met beyond the expectations of how this program can be delivered with the use of separated teaching spaces, the theatre for a near-real theatre interpreting experience and most importantly of all - *a theatre buzz*. The workshop would not have been possible without the support of the theatre and Deaf community: The Edge, iSign, Deaf Arts Network NZ, Stretch Productions, National Foundation of the Deaf, Odd Books Productions and Regional Facilities Auckland. With their contribution, it had brought participants as far as Dunedin (South Island) to the Whangarei area (Far North Island).

The workshop was designed to complement the upcoming Auckland's stage production of *Mamma Mia* as part of the training program. The purpose of the workshop was to also give participants a taste of theatre interpreting for skill development – not to certify interpreters as theatre interpreters. Della and Alex can only share their wealth of knowledge in theatre interpreting and provide them guidance on how best to approach theatre interpreting. This was also a great opportunity to engage Deaf consultants to work with interpreters in a most comfortable and positive environment.

It began with the interpreters on the first day with an overview of theatre interpreting and unpacking the process of translation, characterisation and timing. As many were novice learners of theatre interpreting, it was a wonderful experience to share knowledge and skills with the New Zealand interpreting community. This was also the same for Deaf Consultants where many have never worked with interpreters with a “Deaf-eye” providing constructive feedback. Pairing up consultants with interpreters can be confronting for some but this journey of working together and understanding its purpose was invaluable. Each team were able to present their craft after working with Deaf consultants in the theatre with lighting and sound - like a true performance. It was a goose bump-like experience for many.



New Zealand sign language interpreters and Deaf consultants were craving for more and wanted more time for development and further training. The clock is never our friend and as much as Auslan Stage Left would love to have stayed back for more time with the community, we had to return back home. Auslan Stage Left is proud to have had a positive influence on the New Zealand community to introduce more interpreted performances with a new pool of aspiring theatre interpreters. After this, and the training in Sydney, the team at Auslan Stage Left is looking forward to bringing this workshop to Melbourne this November. Each workshop will be tailored to meet the needs of each cohort to provide participants further confidence and capability to work in future productions.

Continued

### **Kelly Hodgins (Auckland participant)**

The vibe in the room on Day One was that of apprehension as the task of learning how to interpret for the theatre can seem daunting but we were quickly put at ease by Della and Alex. It is common knowledge that interpreters are their own worst critics, so not only performing in front of peers, but being analysed by Deaf consultants (who were trained on Day two) was a scary thought. However the way in which this workshop was conducted meant the experience was really positive and dare I say enjoyable! A true sense of collegiality was formed within the group thus creating a safe zone for constructive feedback and in-depth discussions on the translation and performance work that occurred during the weekend. We also gained a great number of resources which included helpful information on; theatre interpreting checklists, determining character allocation and tips and terminology to use when dealing with theatre companies/venues who want their shows interpreted. A weekend well spent and definitely worth it!

### **Katie Joynton-Smith (Sydney participant)**

My registration to this workshop was the result of my fascination of theatre interpreting and my unquenchable thirst for interpreting education. On day one, Della and Alex presented a background of theatre interpreting. This was as enlightening in content as it was interesting in delivery. As I am not yet 3 “interpreting years old”, I have not had much experience in this interpreting genre.

I learnt that we, as interpreters, are not tasked to create deaf theatre. Instead we must provide a window to hearing theatre. Not everything will translate perfectly cross culturally and that’s ok. I learnt that theatre interpreting is not really interpreting. Nor is it really translation. Instead it is a hybrid of the two. I reconfirmed that it really is better to give across the key points clearly than put every crumb of information out and for it to not make sense.

Before lunch, we were given a challenge. Our mission was to work in pairs to translate a script given to us. This script was accompanied by a video clip of the scenes. By the afternoon of day two, we would be standing on a real stage, in a real theatre with an audience of our peers and we would be performing our interpretation of the script. YIKES!

On day two our workshop group grew as the deaf consultants joined us. Our morning started with a brief overview of the day and a quick recap of the previous day’s learnings. The consultants were then kicked out to work with Alex whilst the interpreters got back to the script. After bashing out the rest of our rough translation, our consultant joined us. The experience of working with a consultant was great! Deaf eyes can be really valuable for creative work. I would like to shrink our consultant down and carry her around in my pocket for day to day assignments.

Throughout the day the consultants came in and out and watched our work progress. They offered advice, encouragement and support. I always thought consultancy was about being told what was wrong and how to fix it. This experience was instead a two-way dialogue and collaboration. After lunch it was curtain call! We walked across to the theatre together and each performed our work. This experience was exhilarating, empowering and fun!

Working through the challenge over the weekend taught me that, when stuck, another set of eyes can be just the perspective you needed.

**Coming soon - training in Brisbane, Qld – May 2015!**

## Alistair McEwin: Audience experience

In the arts, they say one shouldn't work with children and animals. Auslan Stage Left has done that recently with interpreted shows of King Kong and The Lion King. And they have well and truly shown you can work perfectly well with children and animals!

The interpreters for both of these shows, Daniel and Susan, clearly had spent a lot of time preparing and rehearsing for these shows; it was evident to me that they had put a lot of thought into how they would translate what could be seen as 'tricky' concepts for even hearing audience members, let alone deaf audience members, to grasp. After all, does African music sound the same to everyone? From Daniel's animated nuances of King Kong's feelings – was he angry, was he sad, was he hungry? - to Susan fluidly translating Nala's frustrations with Simba not wanting to become the king he really was, both of the interpreters showed real empathy for the characters they were portraying and delivered smooth translations of the dialogue and songs throughout the shows. Not once did either of them miss a beat and they often aligned themselves beautifully, such as when two characters were singing a love song to each other. And their translation of that classic song "Hakuna Matata – No Worries" went down a treat! Auslan Stage Left – take a bow!

**Is there a show you really want to see? Send a request to [auslanstageleft@gmail.com](mailto:auslanstageleft@gmail.com) AND make sure you leave a message on the show's Facebook page.**



### Theatre etiquette

Have you seen Auslan Stage Left's new **theatre etiquette video**?

It covers the entire do's and don'ts for when you visit a theatre. The video is accessible in Auslan, please share it with your friends and family.

Thank you to Alex Straub for producing this, Shane Mundy for presenting and to the wonderful actors.

### Check it out here:

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2CNh-42viOI&list=UUkLps91YbDwmBvUj\\_APHjHg](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2CNh-42viOI&list=UUkLps91YbDwmBvUj_APHjHg)

While you are there, our You Tube channel has a lot of videos – information about shows, feedback from deaf audiences and even some sneaky rehearsals. Have a look around!



## Language/ Cultural Consultants

Recently in Melbourne, Auslan Stage Left invited its Deaf Language/ Cultural Consultants to indulge in some wine and cheese at an orientation evening. This was for experienced and new consultants, as we discussed roles, expectations, how to negotiate with stage managers and even engaged in some role-plays. It was an informative evening and provided a good opportunity for networking. Since then, our pool of consultants has grown and they meet formally and informally to share ideas and experiences.





## Grease is the Word!

Mike Webb and Michelle Ashley teamed up to interpret two productions of this fantastic stage show for sell-out deaf audiences in Melbourne and Perth. It was the first time Auslan Stage Left paired interpreters that live in separate states, and here Michelle shares her thoughts on the experience.

Mikey and I were asked to interpret Grease at a similar time and when asked who would be our ideal partners, we both said the other. Based on a great working relationship, our trust in one another, a similar style in movement, and a mutual love for Grease, it was a team meant to be!

The major challenge was distance – myself in Melbourne, and Mikey in Brisbane. Scripts were delivered in late December and co-incidentally I was holidaying in Queensland, so Mikey and I met up to divide the characters and talk rehearsal tactics. We also played around with some signs just to get a vibe of the other's style.

From then on we made it work using technology. In our favour was that most of the dialogue was contained to either all males or all females at a time, and obviously that is how we split the roles. It meant that we didn't have to laboriously rehearse the timings of the dialogue together.

The most important thing for the dialogue was using consistent signs for recurring words. These, and character sign names, were quickly sorted out over our first Skype meeting as we watched the show's archive on my television,

which Mikey could see behind me through the computer.

Most of our Skype meetings turned into discos, where we played around with the duets. We also watched and gave feedback on each other's solos. Then we would each go away and translate the duets, based on what we had formulated online together, and any other thoughts we had. We separately filmed ourselves and uploaded to YouTube. We, and our Language/Cultural Consultant, Medina, viewed the videos. We would meet online again to exchange feedback and ideas. And so on. It worked well.

Mikey travelled down to Melbourne two days before the show, and binge rehearsals ensued. Two full days and two long nights saw us practice and fine tune the duets and dialogue (and have a few lounge room discos!).

I would like to thank Auslan Stage Left for such a wonderful opportunity, and for trusting Mikey and I to work together over distance using technology.

I would also like to thank my new best friends, Skype, YouTube and Photobooth. And to Mikey - you were a great Danny and an even better Teen Angel!



See audience feedback here:

MEL:

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ky5yOSiePS4&list=UUkLps91YbDwmBvUj\\_APHjHg](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ky5yOSiePS4&list=UUkLps91YbDwmBvUj_APHjHg)

PER:

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aBujCKmVsDU&list=UUkLps91YbDwmBvUj\\_APHjHg](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aBujCKmVsDU&list=UUkLps91YbDwmBvUj_APHjHg)



Ash, Sandi & Melissa – 13 Storey Tree House



Sue – Sovereign Hill



Nic – Melbourne International Comedy Festival



James, Daniel & Susan – Mrs Browns Boys



Karen, Rachelle & Sandi – Guys and Dolls



Paula – Swamp Juice



*Mikey & Michelle – Grease*



*Michelle R and Christy – As You Like It*



*Bek & Chevoy – Sydney Writer's Festival*



*Paul – Connected Art Exhibition Launch*



*Susan & Julie - Wicked*



*Kirri, Melissa & Deb – Thomas and the Hidden Treasure*



Ramas, Nic & Angela – Night on Bald Mountain



Interpreters & cast – Mrs Browns Boys



Michelle – Deaf Kids Writing Workshop



Susan & Daniel – The Lion King



Bobbie, Mikey & Jasmine – Black Diggers



Nic, Erin & Shane – The Witches



*Adrian – Dave Hughes*



*Sandi & Karen – Guys and Dolls*



*Melissa, Marc & Jody – Walking into the Bigness*



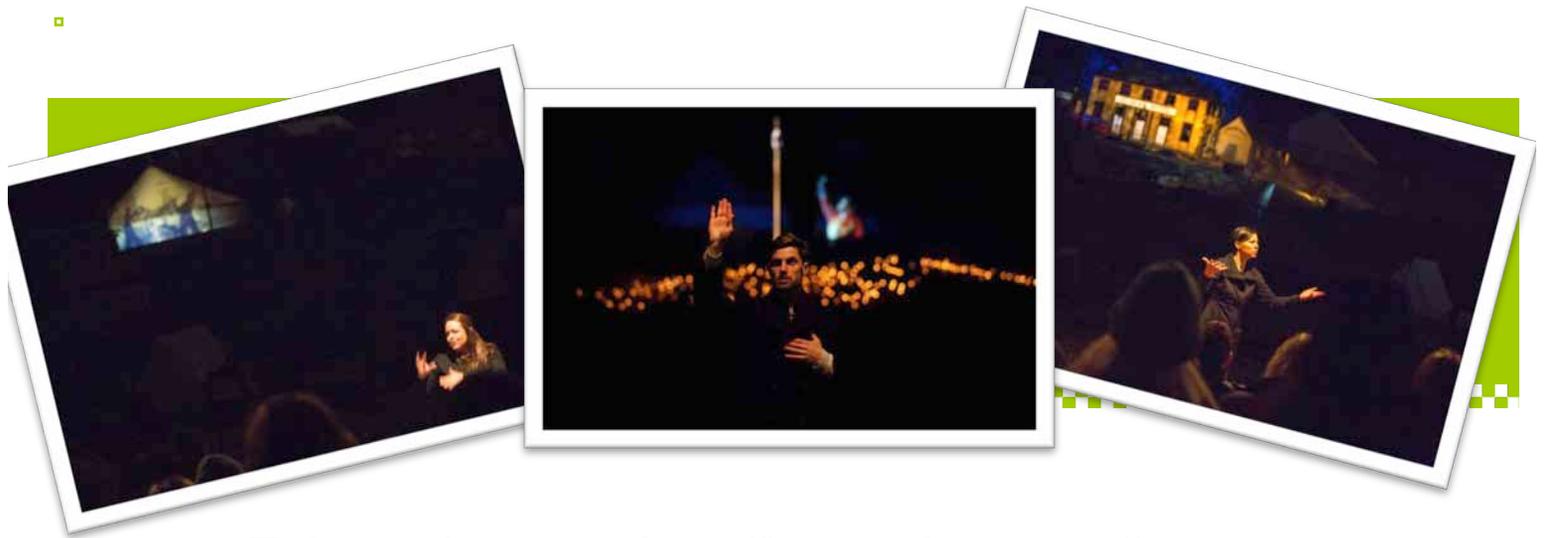
*Bek – Office Ink*



*Rosemary – Dante's Divine Comedy*



*Gerry & Ben – Rocky Horror Show*



# Blood on the Southern Cross

## Sovereign Hill, Ballarat

Earlier this year in May, Sovereign Hill's sound and light show "Blood on the Southern Cross" was Auslan interpreted.

For the first time, an entire day at this cultural and tourist attraction was completely accessible to the deaf community. During the day activities and demonstrations were interpreted, such as the gold pour, musket firing, sweets and candle making. In the evening, the famous light and sound show was interpreted with four interpreters stepping inside of the recreated gold fields and Eureka Stockade. Over 80 deaf people and their families attended, in what was a great night for audiences, the local Ballarat deaf community and Sovereign Hill alike.

The event attracted much attention from Ballarat's local media, and we wish to thank the interpreters Daniel Hately, Sue Izard, Melissa O'Neill, Michelle Ashley, Language/ Cultural consultant Medina Sumovic, local Deaf Access Co-coordinator Ashley Heenan and Justin O'Gorman (see below) for their hard work on this event.

## Testimonials

### **Sue Izard (Interpreter)**

I was fortunate to interpret the day demonstrations as well as work as part of the interpreter team for the evening show "Blood on the Southern Cross". The management and staff at Sovereign Hill were very accommodating and supportive of our efforts to present the best interpreting possible. It was fantastic to see so many Deaf people and their families and friends during the day and the evening show (even though it

made me more than a little nervous). Thanks to all those involved in the organisation and I take my hat off to my fellow interpreters and Medina for all their support and incredible expertise.

### **Justin O'Gorman (Manager, Sovereign Hill customer relations)**

While we all agreed that interpreting an outdoor sound and light show over varying environments was going to be a

challenge, your team's expertise, passion and professionalism made this process a successful and most enjoyable one. The interpreters have a wonderful talent and despite the late rain, made the day and night come alive for our deaf visitors. It was clear to me that they love what they do and had spent a lot of their own time preparing for this event. I thank you again and look forward to working with Auslan Stage Left again in the very near future.

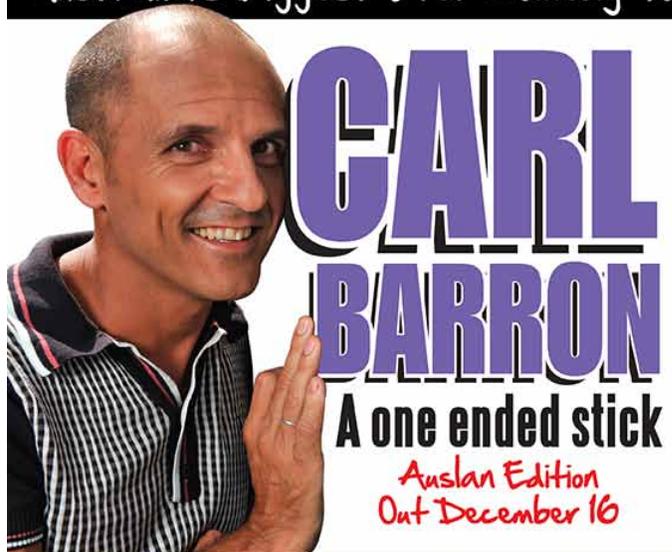
## Les Miserables: two weeks to go!

You may be familiar with the story of Les Miserables from the recent blockbuster movie, but did you know....

- Les Misérables has been translated into 22 different languages
- Productions have played in 42 countries and over 319 cities
- The production has a total audience figure of more than 60 million people worldwide.
- It celebrated the 10,000th performance on 2 January 2010.
- There are approximately 101 cast and crew directly involved in every performance.
- Each performance entails some 392 costumes consisting of over 5000 items of clothing and 85 wigs.
- Les Misérables has won over 100 major theatre awards including an Olivier, Tony & Grammy.

**Karen & Susan have spent the last month translating almost three hours worth of songs. This is sign singing at its finest!**

## Australia's Biggest Ever Comedy Tour



- Australia's most popular stand-up comedian
- Carl has sold more comedy DVDs than anyone else in Australia
- Carl has played to 290,000 people on the 'A One Ended Stick' tour and now it is being released on DVD.

Australia's most popular comedian is back with his fourth DVD, *A One Ended Stick*, and it's his best yet!

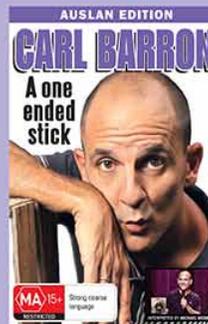
Filmed live in front of a packed house at the beautiful Lyric Theatre in Brisbane. Come on a journey with Carl in this intimate 90 minute performance as he explores his favourite subject: everyday life. Half man, half child this is Carl doing what he does best - talking about the things we all relate to and making them very, very funny.

*"an Aussie larrikin persona that has been polished to shine brighter than an opal"*

NZ Herald

★★★★★ *"Carl Barron is an awesome standup comedian... I had tears in my eyes..."*

The Age, Melbourne



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### Media Enquiries

Carl is available for very limited interviews please contact **Karen Laing** A-List Entertainment 02 95600 600 or [karen@alist.com.au](mailto:karen@alist.com.au)

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## SLC Victoria & Vicdeaf

Auslan Stage Left is proud to share a positive and collaborative relationship with SLC Victoria and Vicdeaf. Special thanks to Brent Phillips and his team for their support in what we do. Here is a picture of co-director, Medina Sumovic, being interviewed by Vicdeaf's Michael Parremore for their website.





## **Strictly Ballroom Lyric Theatre, Sydney**

**Chevoy Sweeney relays her experience working on Strictly Ballroom with deaf interpreter, Alex Jones:**

On September 18th, I had the privilege of working alongside Alex Jones as an interpreter for the musical Strictly Ballroom. If you have ever worked as a theatre interpreter, you will know the hard work involved, and the pure pleasure of being a part of making the arts accessible to the deaf community. There was a great audience there on the night, which also makes it a happy experience.

This is the second time that I have been able to work with Alex on theatre interpreting, and we work well together as a team. Being a team player, working together, helping each other and giving feedback to each other is paramount if you want to be successful. Our team is unique: as a hearing interpreter and deaf interpreter, we need to ensure that we work closely together and both bring a different skill set to the forefront of our work. We had to consider such things as positioning, sight lines, the chunking of information and cueing. Working closely with our consultant, Della Goswell, was very valuable too, as she provided a fresh perspective on our translation work.



## **Thanks Ilana!**

This is Ilana, Auslan Stage Left's intern, manning our stall at the recent Geelong Deaf & Hearing Loss Expo.

Ilana is responsible for updating our website and preparing the informative and colourful email updates you receive in your inbox, as well as many helpful administration tasks. She is currently studying Auslan at NMIT in Melbourne and is a valuable asset to our team. Thanks Ilana!



**Auslan Stage Left has over  
4000 likes on Facebook.  
Thanks for your support!**