

TheatreMobile is the professional theatre company attached to the Victorian Artists' Association. It was set up in 1970 because of the lack of professional theatre in the Midlands region and the company's aim is to stimulate an interest for theatre in areas which would otherwise be left to stagnation. The professional theatre, TheatreMobile's productions are based regularly in the districts which are the home of the Victorian Artists' Association. TheatreMobile has no theatre premises of its own and all productions are staged to be performed in venues which are not theatre buildings. The venues chosen take place in the facilities which exist for public entertainment, town halls, schools, etc. Occasionally short tours outside the area are arranged, usually as part of a Festival. TheatreMobile has also been seen at the Experimenters' Young Peoples' Theatre Festival held in Frankfurt (June 1975) and toured Bulgaria (October 1975).



# THEATREMOBILE

**TheatreMobile** is the professional theatre company attached to the Mid-Pennine Association for the Arts. It was set up in 1970 because of the lack of professional theatre in the Mid-Pennine region and the company's brief is to stimulate an interest for theatre in an area which would otherwise be deprived of experiencing 'live' professional theatre. TheatreMobile's productions are toured regularly to the districts which are members of the Mid-Pennine Association. TheatreMobile has no theatre premises of its own and all productions are designed to be performed in venues which are not theatre buildings. The performances take place in the facilities which exist for public entertainment; town halls, schools, civic centres. Occasionally short visits outside the area are arranged, usually as part of a Festival. TheatreMobile has also been seen at the 'Experimenta 5' young peoples theatre festival held in Frankfurt (June 1975) and toured Bulgaria (October 1975).

The company consists of five actors, three actress/dancers, a musician/composer, a designer, a costume designer, four technicians, an administrative assistant and the Artistic Director. The Resident Musician also runs the band 'Tobias





Wolfe' which works with TheatreMobile on rock musical productions as well as performing completely independently of the theatre company.

When on the road TheatreMobile is a self-contained unit carrying its own performing structures, sound and lighting equipment. The equipment is transported in a 3 ton Mercedes wagon and the personnel travel separately in a mini bus. The company has office facilities in the MPAA premises in Burnley. At present TheatreMobile has a rehearsal base in a disused church where conditions are rather primitive. However, both the church and the separate Sunday School building have been granted planning permission following an application by TheatreMobile, for conversion into a permanent rehearsal base and community centre.

TheatreMobile's work covers all age ranges from 5 – 105's. The company works with children as performers, not as a theatre-in-education group. The children's programmes are devised by the Artistic Director with the company and include a large amount of audience participation. This season the programme for the older age ranges reflect the development of the company over the last three years. Material of the highest quality is being especially written to suit the requirements of the area and of this young, highly skilled company. In addition there are more 'informal' programmes compiled for specific venues and occasions, fairs, fetes, local festivals, pubs, old peoples homes, centres for the handicapped.

The programme from April 1975 to 1976 includes performances of:

*The Punch and Judy Show*

*Hedda Gabler* by Hendrik Ibsen

*Carnival* a children's circus entertainment

*What You Will* an original rock musical, loosely based on Shakespeare's *Twelfth Night*



*The Jesse James Show* a wild west extravaganza  
Also there will be a new play based on a local  
theme and a new children's production.

This wide ranging programme makes heavy demands on the versatility of the company. Without a theatre building, or the usual form of set decor the impact of the company relies on the talents of its members. Simply to be a good conventional actor is not enough. Therefore, a pool of specialists, mainly from our locale, has been built up. These people give generously of their time and knowledge and include a judo expert, an acrobatics teacher, a clog and tap dancing teacher, three magicians and a voice specialist.

The majority of the company have been together for some time. This has developed the consistency and standard of the work.

TheatreMobile is one of several peripatetic companies operating in the areas of England where no other professional theatre activity is readily accessible. These companies are an important development in theatre in recent years and provide an exciting alternative to the more formal system of repertory theatres.



## WHAT THE PAPERS SAY

### *What You Will*

"...is very successful in capturing the mood of situation comedy and confusion which forms the basis of this well-loved play".

*Burnley Express*

"TheatreMobile's marvellously original and entertaining rock musical "What You Will" .... a wild extravaganza of music, movement, magic and comedy".

*Rossendale Free Press*

### *Hedda Gabler*

"Stylishly performed, with expert use of dramatic lighting....it seems most unlikely that TheatreMobile's new production of "Hedda Gabler" will draw forth anything but praise".

*Lancashire Evening Telegraph*

### *The Punch and Judy Show*

Over 700 people....their ages ranging from very young children to elderly citizens....were completely captivated with the most exciting clowning, mime and juggling, as well as a superb traditional Punch and Judy Show".

*Burnley Express*

### *Carnival*

"the best children's theatre I have ever seen".

*Rochdale Observer*

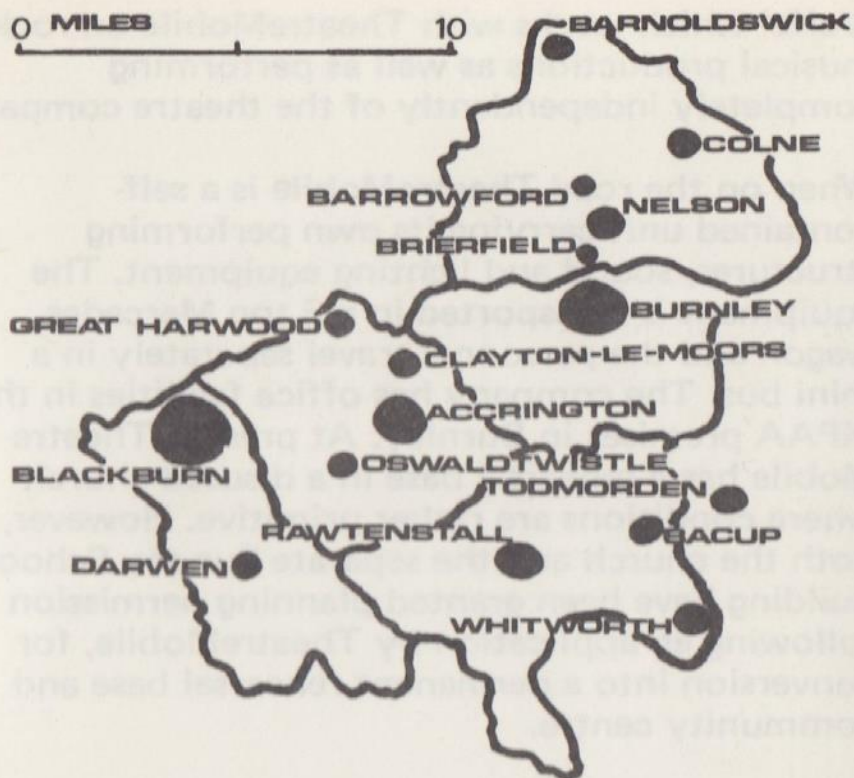
"a highly accomplished show of daft delights".

*Cumberland Times*

"If you see the gaily coloured TheatreMobile van, find out where the group is performing and go along and see exactly what its members have to offer. You will not be bored".

*Rossendale Free Press*





Districts which contribute to the Mid-Pennine Association for the Arts – Towns in which TheatreMobile regularly performs.

All requests for further information about TheatreMobile and enquiries about availability of productions should be addressed to:

*The Administrative Assistant,  
TheatreMobile,  
C/O Mid-Pennine Association for the Arts,  
28 Back Saint James Street,  
Burnley.  
Telephone: Burnley 29513.*

Photograph of the Punch & Judy show in Burnley Market place by courtesy of *The Burnley Express*. Photograph of What You Will by C.S. Mott.