



CURRENCY HOUSE

PLATFORM PAPERS
The performing arts opinion-maker

MEDIA RELEASE

Tuesday, 20 January 2015

Time is ripe for Great Australian Musical

If Australians love musicals so much, why are there so few big works telling our own stories with our own music? In this provocative new Platform Paper from Currency House, theatre designer, director and scholar John Senczuk dismisses each excuse and proposes a national development program to sustain new work right through to commercial readiness.

In *The Time is Ripe for the Great Australian Musical*, Senczuk argues that – despite audiences for musical and opera representing 30% of national market share – this special fusion of music, theatre and dance remains largely unsupported.

“As profits from yet another revival of *Les Mis* or *Wicked* flow out of the local economy to the originators and investors abroad, the local, original big time musical is virtually extinct. There’s no shortage of composers, performers and fledgling producers, but the logistics appear too complex, too risky and it’s easier to build a show around familiar hits.

“But the Australian TV and film industry, with our drama and dance companies, have found their own ‘voice’ through increased local production. Music theatre is poised to do the same.”

Senczuk explores Australia’s significant music theatre works last century and the surprising longevity of the jukebox musical. He’s critical of our flagship companies reviving overseas musicals in collaboration with commercial producers, but optimistically charts the recent appearance in Australia of both large and bijou venues appropriate for new music theatre.

“We need a concerted, coordinated ‘idea to opening night’ strategy. We need a structured development program, linked specifically to producer attachment and with performance outcomes. We also need an Australian Music Theatre Foundation to provide financial investment at crucial stages.”

Senczuk also makes a case for a smaller Australian capital to create a significant state-initiated commercial enterprise – a studio hub – to build musicals destined for touring Australia and overseas markets. He calls it the Perth Solution.

John Senczuk discusses his Platform Paper at the Australian Theatre Forum 2015

With musical highlights from singers and pianist/composer Tim Cunniffe

When: 5.30-6.45pm, Wednesday 21 February 2015
Where: Sound Lounge, Seymour Centre, Sydney
RSVP: Media welcome. Please contact Martin on 0401360806

Launch of Currency House Platform Paper No. 42

Introduced by Nancye Hayes, launched by Gale Edwards, with John Senczuk

When: 6pm, Monday 16 February 2015
Where: Hayes Theatre, 19 Greenknowe Avenue, Potts Point, Sydney
RSVP: Free, all welcome. Essential to book on info@currencyhouse.org.au

A PDF OF CURRENCY’S PLATFORM PAPER IS AVAILABLE FOR MEDIA ON REQUEST AND CAN BE PURCHASED NOW ONLINE. EXTRACTS MAY BE PUBLISHED FROM 31 JANUARY.

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Currency House is a national non profit publishing association devoted to promoting debate in the performing arts.

www.currencyhouse.org.au