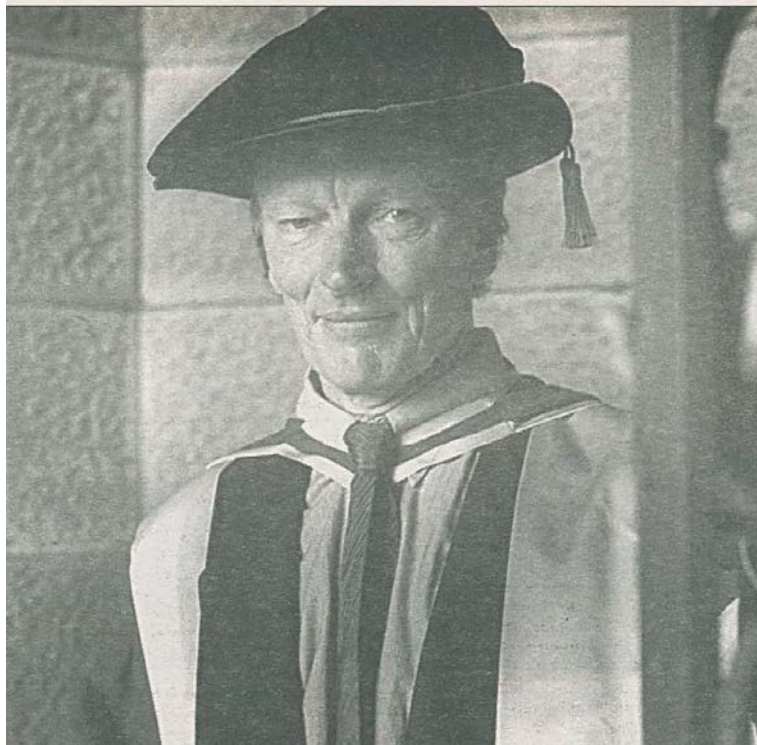




Mr John Anthony Bell OBE AM

The honorary degree of Doctor of Letters was conferred upon John Anthony Bell OBE AM by the Chancellor Dame Leonie Kramer AC DBE at the Faculty of Arts graduation ceremony held at 9.30am on 15 March 1996.



John Bell OBE AM, photo, 'The University of Sydney News', 24 April 1996.

Citation

Presented by the Vice-Chancellor and Principal Professor D J Anderson

Chancellor,

I have the honour to present Mr John Anthony Bell OBE AM for admission to the degree of Doctor of Letters (honoris causa).

During his undergraduate career at the University of Sydney, he acted in a number of student productions and in 1962, his final honours year, he presented a one-man Shakespeare show at the Genesis Theatre. Through his career in theatre and drama, he has made - and continues to make - outstanding contributions to the cultural and artistic life of Australia. As actor, producer and director, he pursues his life-long ambition to present Shakespeare's plays sympathetically to Australian audiences.

In 1970 he was appointed as Head of Acting at the National Institute of Dramatic Art. On 2 December 1970, John Bell directed the first production of the Nimrod Theatre Company. The Nimrod became a catalyst for change in the theatrical life of Sydney, influencing both repertoire and styles of production and providing opportunities for emerging actors, playwrights, designers and production staff. During his fifteen year association with the Nimrod, John Bell acted in plays by Shakespeare, Brecht and Chekhov.

His productions ranged from Aeschylus, Shakespeare, and Moliere, to works by contemporary Australians like David Williamson and Nick Enright. He both acted in and produced plays for the Sydney Theatre Company and the Old Tote Theatre Company.

In 1991, the Bell Shakespeare Company was founded, of which John Bell is the Artistic Director. Through this national touring company, his work has concentrated on making Shakespeare accessible to audiences in diverse locations.

A small company drawn from the Bell Shakespeare Company, "Actors at work", takes lively Shakespeare workshops into Sydney schools, Canberra and regional NSW, as well as Adelaide, Brisbane and Melbourne.

John Bell has enriched the cultural life of Australia and contributed much to foster an active interest in the dramatic arts in Australia.

Chancellor, I have great pleasure in presenting John Bell, OBE AM, for admission to the degree of Doctor of Letters (honoris causa).