



## **IGNATIUS JONES**

Ignatius Jones is one of Australia's leading major event directors. He personally directed the three largest live events in Australian history: the City of Sydney's Millennium Celebrations, the Harbour Spectacular of the Closing Ceremonies of the Sydney Olympics, and the City of Sydney's New Year's Eve and Centenary of Federation Celebrations 2000-2001. He is also one of the few directors ever to direct the "opening night of a country", when he staged the Independence Ceremonies of East Timor in May 2002, at the invitation of Nobel Laureate José Ramos-Horta and President Xanana Gusmão. This ceremony, to mark the birth of the world's newest nation, was attended by 200,000 people and over 40 world leaders, including Kofi Annan, John Howard, Megawati Sukarnoputri, former president Bill Clinton, and the presidents of Portugal, Angola, Cape Verde and Mozambique.

On his return from East Timor Ignatius plunged into another large and innovative project: *Man From Snowy River —The Arena Spectacular*, which he wrote, devised and directed with his Olympic colleague David Atkins. *Snowy* achieved several "firsts": with a cast of over 250, 47 horses and two dogs, it was the largest commercial theatre event in Australian history — and the first such 'arena' event to be entirely Australian in conception, execution and content. (It was also a resounding commercial success, playing return seasons in all the major capital cities, while the soundtrack received an ARIA for Best Soundtrack Album 2002.

- David and Ignatius received the 2003 Green Room Award for Best Director of a Musical for *Man From Snowy River*.

Almost simultaneously Ignatius also directed the Opening and Closing Ceremonies of the Sydney 2002 Gay Games, the sixth international Gay Games and the biggest sporting event in Australia since the Olympics. The Opening Ceremony, featuring international artists KD Lang and Jimmy Somerville, 14,000 athletes and 2,500 volunteer performers — and was described by the *Sydney Morning Herald's* Bryce Hallett as "...a triumph... thoughtful, historic, stylish and jubilant... an absolutely fabulous night."

- Ignatius received the 2003 Sydney Star Observer Pride Week Award for Best Event for the Sydney 2002 Gay Games Opening Ceremony. He was also awarded the Sydney Gay & Lesbian Business Association's inaugural award for Eminent Businessperson for Services to the Community.

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In 2003 Ignatius directed Offenbach's *Orpheus In The Underworld* for Opera Australia, which the *Sydney Morning Herald's* Peter McCallum described as "... with its non-stop invention, ubiquitous fireworks and every trick post-millennial Sydney could throw at it... It triumphantly came together..."

- Ignatius was nominated for Best Direction – Opera for the 2003 the Green Room Awards and has received a nomination for 2004 AWGIE Awards for Best Musical Theatre.

At present Ignatius is producing New Year's Eve Celebrations for the City of Auckland, and is Creative Director of the City of Perth's *Skyworks*, the nation's largest Australia Day Celebrations. Ignatius is also advising the government of Qatar on the Ceremonies of the 2006 Asian Games.

In 2000, Ignatius directed the beginning of the Opening Ceremony of the Sydney Olympics, the spectacular *Man From Snowy River* charge of 121 horses into the stadium and the performance of the Australian Anthem by the Sydney Symphony Orchestra conducted by Simone Young, a swing big band, 40 fanfare trumpets, national icons Julie Anthony and James Morrison, pop group Human Nature and a 1400-piece choir. With an estimated viewing audience of 3 billion, the Opening Ceremony of the Sydney Olympics was the biggest television event of all time, while the pyrotechnic display that climaxed the Closing Ceremony – a display stretching sixteen-and-a-half kilometres from Homebush Bay to the eastern edge of Sydney Harbour and featuring fireworks' companies from five continents – was one of the biggest pyrotechnic displays in history.

- The Opening & Closing Ceremonies of the 2000 Olympics were awarded the inaugural Helpmann Award for Best Event in 2001.

In creating these events, Ignatius devised three grand effects which still resonate with millions of viewers: the giant *Eternity* on the Sydney Harbour Bridge, which so touched Australians that many demanded the vast light-sculpture be permanently left in place; the Closing Ceremony finale – the 'blowing up' of the Olympic Rings on the Bridge, which received front-page coverage from *The New York Times* as "*Aussie Olympics go out with a bang!*" and from *The Melbourne Age* as "*The perfect end*"; and of course, the huge light-sculpture on the Harbour bridge, (bigger than two football fields), at the centre of Sydney's tribute to Australia's 100<sup>th</sup> birthday, the indigenous Rainbow Serpent circling the Federation Star. And for the Sydney's 2001 NYE celebrations he created the largest light sculpture ever attempted, a spectacular, animated vision of Uluru surmounted by the Dove of Peace, a light sculpture which used more than 11kms of rope light.

As Artistic Director of the City of Sydney's New Year's Eve Celebrations from 1997 to 2002, Ignatius was responsible for coordinating six free concerts spanning a gamut of genres including pop, jazz, country, classical and children's music, as well as one of the biggest television broadcasts of the year. He was also closely involved in seeking and managing the corporate and government sponsorship that makes the event possible.

Ignatius is no stranger to the Australian entertainment industry, where he has been a well-known fixture for over 20 years. After training in classical ballet, he branched out into fields as varied as rock music, jazz, journalism, theatre, television and now major event production. He is a singer, dancer, director and writer whose credits include several Gold Album Awards, two best selling books and a Platinum Record for his work on the soundtrack of *Strictly Ballroom*. As a television director he has achieved two Platinum Awards for the children's videos *Monica's House* and *Monica's Seaside Adventure*, and in 1998 completed *The Magic Toyshop*, the first Australian production of the Disney Corporation. His most recent children's video, *Monica's Trip to the Moon*, was nominated for an ARIA award.

As an Artistic Director, Ignatius has worked extensively with Olympic impresario Ric Birch's Spectak Productions, starting in 1994 when he was employed by Ric to devise direct the opening spectacular for the Crown Casino Galleria. Birch then brought him to the USA to devise and direct shows for the *Dixie Stampede*, Dolly Parton's chain of rodeo theatres across the southern United States. Two of these shows achieved Best Entertainment of the Year Awards.

On his return he researched and devised the *Olympic Journey Begins* for the Sydney Organising Committee of the Olympic Games, before going to Melbourne to direct the huge production numbers for the multimillion dollar Opening of the Crown Entertainment Complex - which featured the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra, Anthony Warlow, Ray Charles, John Farnham, Kylie Minogue and 120 dancers. Other major events he has directed for Spectak include everything from the launch of the Australian Navy's newest warships to the creation of the largest-ever Barbie doll for the 40th birthday celebrations of the world's most popular toy.

Ignatius became the Artistic Director of the City of Sydney's New Year's Eve Celebrations in 1997, and in 1999 was responsible for the artistic concepts behind the Sydney Millennium Celebrations - which CNN described as "Wow!" and "The best in the world". Together with designer Peter England, he devised the Harbour of Light Marine Lantern Parade, a cavalcade of giant lanterns each the size of a three-and-a-half storey terrace house and representing the creatures of Sydney Harbour. And, of course, he was a guiding spirit for the giant Eternity sign on the Sydney Harbour Bridge which struck such a chord with the city and the world. Anthony Dennis of the *Sydney Morning Herald* described Eternity as "the word of the millennium ..."

**Ignatius Jones is represented exclusively by HLA Management PTY LTD**