

EG Arts & Culture

TALKING POINT

Conversation booth

IF YOU have wandered down a city laneway recently and wondered what's going on inside a contraption that resembles a cross between a photo booth and a set from *Doctor Who*, the answer is good old-fashioned conversation. For almost five weeks, CITYtalking has been roving the backstreets of Melbourne inviting people to take part in a conversation with its creator, Astra Howard.

"The booth has one side in which

I'm sitting and a member of the public is encouraged to enter and sit on the other side," Howard says. "We talk via an intercom but we can't see one another."

As the conversations ensue, Howard taps some of the main points into a laptop. The text is then displayed on an LED screen outside the booth. "I've been building up a narrative of the entire city," Howard enthuses. "I hear stories from business people, the shopping crew, the cafe set, tourists, everyone."

The stories have ranged from five-minute chats to hour-long



conversations. Howard believes the booth offers a chance for those whose voices are not heard in the city to have a say, such as the young or the homeless.

CITYtalking is the final in the

City of Melbourne's 2006 Laneway Commissions. For Howard, the initial concept was about creating a private space in public. The idea of stepping into a small booth and discussing yourself with someone

Astra Howard is encouraging the art of conversation in her booth, which is then displayed on an LED screen outside.

whose face you cannot see might sound like going to confession but Howard is quick to dispel that. "It's not about confessing your sins, it's about confessing your stories." When CITYtalking winds up on Sunday, Howard will begin the task of tackling her PhD on the subject of how we can explore an individual's experience of cities and how we can enhance public interaction. CITYtalking will be on the move around the city until Sunday from 10am to 4pm. To take part you might want to try Bourke Street Mall, Centre Place or Degraives Street.

ROHAN TROLLOPE

www.melbourne.vic.gov.au

Arts Directory

Phone: Wendy Howell (03) 9604 1662



AN ARTS DIRECTORY PROMOTION

The end of the world

Ah! seedy suburban motel rooms, crackling neon signs with just one functional bulb, faded technicolour carpets with unidentified stains, dusty bibles dog-eared to the naughty bits, charge by the hour rates and creaking beds. Naturally I have not spent a night (or any part thereof) in such a place, but I imagine that if I ever find myself

Auditions

AMERICAN AUDITIONS

This Wednesday, Acting in America is coming back to Melbourne for one evening. Learn inside tips into getting work as an actor in LA and in NY. Many Aussie actors have been succeeding in Films, TV and in Theatre after attending this 3 hour event. Register online now!
 * Seats are extremely limited *
 Register now at: www.tvstudios.com/melbourne

EXPLORATION SEASON

LA MAMA

205 Faraday St, Carlton
 PLAIN AIR
 By Noble Park AMES
 Today 2pm & 7.30pm
 Carlton Courthouse
 349 Drummond St
 THE REUNION by Neil Cole
 Last Week
 Tonight-Sat 8pm
 9347 6142 www.lamama.com.au

The University of Ballarat
 Arts Academy presents

KILLING GAME

Peninsula Music Society

STEFAN CASSOMENOS

In the inaugural John Tallis
 Peppercorn Piano Recital.
 Program features Haydn,
 Chopin, Liszt, Kerry, Prokofiev.
 Peninsula Community Theatre
 Wilsons Rd, Mornington, 3931
 Sunday 5 November at 2.30pm
 Tix: \$20 / \$15 at the door.
 Ph. (03) 5976 4160

RACHMANINOV

OPERALAB presents

Xenia Hanusiak in

THE DIARY OF ANNE FRANK

Music Director: Brett Dean
 Staging & Design: Helen
 Herbertson & Ben Cobham
 8-11 Nov Strictly limited season
 Beckett Theatre, The Malthouse
 Bookings: 9685 5111 or
www.malthousetheatre.com.au

Special

Phoenix Theatre Company Inc presents

JOSEPH AND THE AMAZING TECHNICOLOUR DREAMCOAT

3 & 4 November
 Renaissance Theatre. Enter via
 High St, Kew, Ph 9012 6897

MLOC presents Lerner & Loewe's

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Nov 12-18 Bkgs: 9570 4052
 Phoenix Theatre Elwood

THE GREAT ESCAPE