

But even at the time of the Nimrod Street show she was not entirely sure that she wanted acting and the theatre to play a large part in her life. "I went into it", she says, "with the purpose of substituting my job and also to keep the public aware of the black community. I was pretty involved in the Black Theatre at this stage. But as for myself being an actress, I didn't think of it that way."

The Nimrod Street production and its attendant publicity were followed by the not wholly successful attempt to take the show on a tour of towns and reserves in Queensland. "Other experiences aside from the show made the whole tour worthwhile", she says.

Stimulate racial confidence

"It was in Queensland and Townsville that I had hostile discrimination administered to me and I reacted in a way I never thought I would—I was particularly violent on one occasion. I had always thought I'd just walk away proudly if ever I ran into that sort of thing. But on this occasion I picked up a bottle and smashed a plate".

Since returning from the Queensland tour Aileen has committed herself to the theatre and to acting. She appeared in the ABC television version of the Nimrod Street show, which she described as "much better theatrically-speaking as well as entertainment-wise. The political tone is still there, but toned down a lot and not so blatant".

She won a role in an ABC TV feature film "which I agreed to do purely for the experience of working with a white cast and creating contacts, which it did." She played a maid in the film which deals with two white families who come out to Australia in the early settling days and the problems they encounter with the other settlers and with the Aborigines.

She has also appeared in a BBC documentary and in "Spinifex Breed", a television film which will be distributed overseas and which may provide the pilot for a television series.

Next in line are feature films. One of them, to be made in Darwin, is based on the Larry Boy case of 1968. Named "Man Alone", it is "about a black man who found his wife in bed with a white man, killed his wife and attempted to kill the man. It caused the biggest manhunt in the history of the Northern Territory". The famous Australian actor, Peter Finch, has been mentioned for the leading role.

"But", says Aileen, "I'm more interested in the Black Theatre than just acting to a white audience. I'd hate to see Black Theatre go back to what it

was at Nimrod—blacks acting to white audiences. The grassroots blacks of Redfern couldn't identify with it. It was a show that was definitely for educated whites.

"I think we've got to forget about whites at this stage and start stimulating some sort of racial confidence in our people".

Letters and Penfriends

Dear Sir,

I am an Aboriginal boy and I come from Cabbage Tree Island, but I am now living in Lismore. I am 22 years of age. I am a bit lonely and would like some penfriends. Most of my friends know me as "Spacey".

Clarrie Ferguson,
Guridurimbia Road, Lismore, N.S.W. 2480.

Dear Sir,

My name is John Albert and I'm a student at Daru High School. I am interested in learning something about the Aborigines. I am looking for penfriends. My age is 15 and my hobbies are collecting old stamps and writing letters. I am a Papuan-New Guinean.

John Albert,
Daru High School, Box 93, Daru,
Papua-New Guinea.

Dear Sir,

I thought you may be interested to know that a group from the Salvation Army League of Mercy and Ladies Home League carried out a button day on behalf of the Foundation for Aboriginal Affairs. This day was quite successful and we raised the total of \$165.66 and sold out of our buttons. We also conducted a street stall in early May and raised \$55. It was a pleasure to be able to assist in the work being done by the Aboriginal people as they work to help each other. May God bless you.

Mrs Melva Mills,
Mayfield Street, Cessnock, N.S.W. 2325.



Clarrie Ferguson of
Lismore