

Archive No. 138

Salon A-Muse

The very first Salon A-Muse was and was held at Book House, 199 Cardigan Street, Carlton on Thursday, 25 March, 1982. It was organised by a group of women who wanted to provide women-only entertainment in a Parisian salon-style environment on a monthly basis.

That first evening Sandra Shotlander, comedienne, Judith Rodriguez, poet, and the musician Chris Wheeler provided the entertainment with questions and discussion afterwards between the members of the audience and the entertainers. Coffee, port and cake were served as part of the entrance fee. It was a hot night, the venue was packed out and eventually women were turned away at the door.

By the following month a larger venue was found on the first floor of the Tsakpina Coffee Lounge, 185 Lonsdale Street, where the Salon A-Muse continued to be held on the last Monday of the month for the rest of the year. With cushions on the floor for the audience to lounge on and a wide range of entertainment from writers, singers, performers, artists and dancers who were willing to share their skills and be prepared to join in the lively and sometimes challenging discussions afterwards, these evenings were a welcome and popular addition to the women's community.

Salon A-Muse continued to entertain the women of Victoria on a regular monthly basis for the next three years and many dozens of talented women, including Barbara Creed, Jenny Pausacker, Ursula Harrison, Sue Ingleton, Magda Szubanski, Erica Gilchrist, Tracey Harvey, Lavender Blues and Peg Clarke, had the opportunity to provide some amazingly lively entertainment during that time. There were lots of interesting and informative discussions and every now and then there was a change of venue, including Rumpoles Theatre Restaurant, 16 Pigdon Street, Carlton, the Stage Door Theatre Restaurant, 1 Wynyard Street, South Melbourne and the Universal Theatre, Victoria Street, Fitzroy.

Salon A-Muse was so popular that for awhile it ran over two consecutive nights a month on Monday and Tuesday evenings to cater for the demand and tickets were sold at Shrew Women's Bookshop beforehand. Till eventually it was no longer a viable proposition and Salon A-Muse finally folded in 1985.