



Three Waiters serve up for the Three Tenors

WHEN British Prime Minister Tony Blair was undecided about which wine to choose at a gala dinner to mark a Commonwealth Heads of Government summit, he had help from an obliging waiter, writes Ian Jarrett.

In a thick French accent, the waiter offered, "Meester Blair, may I recommend ze Hunter Valley chardonnay, the wine is round and supple with ze hint of honey and butterscotch; or ze Margaret River semillon, aged in French oak and displaying characteristics of apricot and melon."

"I'll have the semillon," said the British PM, with a smile.

The waiter, Australian Mark Bradley, poured the wine and grinned. The Three Waiters, one of the world's best corporate entertainers, had pulled off another ruse.

"I'd just hoaxed the second most powerful person in the world. He didn't have a clue who we were," said Bradley.

The Three Waiters is a of talented performers many of them drawn from opera and music theatre. They infiltrate an event as "real" waiting staff, borrowing

their uniforms from the event's caterers so that they appear similar to the regular staff.

During an event, such as a gala dinner, the "waiters" reveal themselves as fine opera singers in the style of The Three Tenors.

Says Bradley, "We have performed for presidents, prime ministers and three Royal families — including the Duke of Edinburgh at Windsor Castle.

"It all began with three guys sitting in an apartment in Sydney and throwing ideas around. We never thought our idea of the Three Waiters would explode around the world."

The Three Waiters have 70 performers doing 80 shows per month. In 2003 in New York, the company behind the act was named Corporate Entertainer of the Year. A year earlier, in Miami, the Three Waiters was presented with the prestigious Spotlight 'Entertainer of the Year' award.

Clients have included Singapore Airlines, Coca-Cola, American Express, Mercedes-Benz, Microsoft, Toyota, Cartier and Tiffany & Co.

The 2000th show worldwide was held at the San Francisco City Hall when the Three Waiters performed over three nights for 1650 beautifully-attired Japanese businesswomen.

In Asia, the Three Waiters has performed in Singapore, Hong Kong, Phuket, Ho Chi Minh City, Phnom Penh and Shanghai.

Audiences across 45 countries have ranged from several hundred at a wedding to a dozen at a dinner party. One exclusive dinner performance was for an English lord and his guests on board a luxury yacht during the Monte Carlo Formula One Grand Prix.

"For something that began as a joke it has been an amazing ride," says Bradley.

The Three Waiters had one of their biggest moments when Dr Francis Yeoh, managing director of Malaysia's YTL Corporation, together with his wife Rose, arranged for them to perform at a VIP dinner for 140 guests following the final Three Tenors concert, held in Bath, England.

Jose Carreras, Placido Domingo and Luciano Pavarotti were in the audience as the Three Waiters went through their routine, culminating in the aria *Nessun Dorma*, made famous by Pavarotti.

"It was incredible," said Bradley. "A standing ovation from none other than the Three Tenors."

Other stand-out performances by the Three Waiters have been at the Picasso Museum in Barcelona; onboard the aircraft carrier USS Hornet in San Francisco; at the Singapore Children's Society gala dinner attended by the President of Singapore, Sellapan Rama Nathan; and during Ayers Rock's Sound of Silence dinner.

Darryl Lovegrove, who with Bradley is the creator of the Three Waiters, said it is essential to maintain worldwide quality control of performers.

"The Three Waiters is not a 'wacky waiters' show," he says. "It provides sophisticated, high quality entertainment made up of some of the best performers that opera and music theatre have to offer.

"We have a stringent audition process. Some who come to us are fantastic actors but can't hit the right notes. Others are magnificent singers but do not have the personality suitable for the job."

UK-based Rory Campbell, one of the Three Waiters to perform for the Three Tenors in Bath, said the experience had been exhilarating. "It was such a thrill to have the audience, including the Three Tenors, come to its feet at the end of our performance."

The company behind the Three Waiters, Mardar Management, has launched two new shows for the corporate hospitality market.

Fabulous Opera Dudes, dressed in gold lame jackets and dark glasses describe their show as "Opera goes Las Vegas" while The Leading Men uses some of the finest performers from the musical theatre.

To qualify for The Leading Men, a performer must have played at least two leading roles in opera or musical theatre. The line-up includes Derek Metzger, who spent three years in London in the hit musical, *42nd Street*; and Scott Irwin, whose recent credits include *The Full Monty* in Melbourne.



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