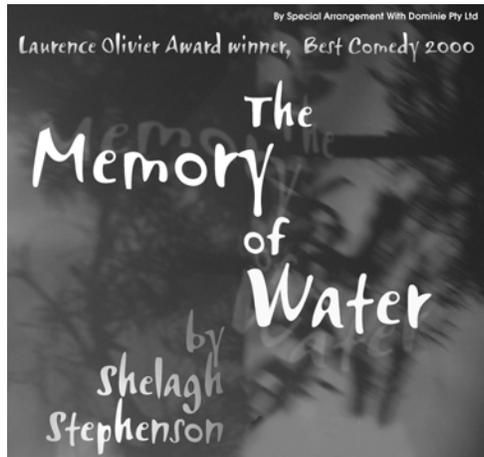


PROMPTS

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE HEIDELBERG THEATRE COMPANY



the Memory of Water

by Shelagh Stephenson
directed by Chris McLean

12 – 29 September, 2007

**Wednesday to Saturday at 8.15pm,
Matinee Sunday 23 September at 3pm**

Subscribers requiring to alter their chosen night or reserve their booking are asked to call 9457 4117 BEFORE Monday 3 September, 2007

Shelagh Stephenson's play **The Memory of Water** is keen, comical and contemporary – much like its writer and also in this instance the show's director, Chris McLean. Chris last directed at HTC in 2005 with an hilarious production of the Michael Frayn comedy, **Noises Off** and the Company is delighted to have him back doing what he does so well.

The London Sunday Times described Shelagh Stephenson's writing as "barbed, lyrical, witty and full of a rare emotional intelligence." Another of her plays, **Enlightenment**, concluded a successful season at MTC in June this year.

The Memory of Water has been described as "wickedly funny and moving" [The Independent] and was first presented in London in 1998, where it received unqualified rave reviews. It then moved to the West End for an extended run and has subsequently been produced all over the world from Japan to America. Across the board it has been received with unqualified approval.

Though contemporary in style, the underlying themes in *Memory* are universal. On the surface this tale of three sisters coming to terms with the death of their mother seems simple and ordinary enough. However, when you look beyond the sometimes black humour and the mundaneness of the suburban setting you will see a play that brims with the deeper concerns of life.

And take a look at the cast! Lots of faces well known to HTC audiences over the years and in many instances not seen on our stage since the last time an Irish lilt was heard there; Laurel Gourlay, Rhonda Chung, Venetia Macken, Rhiannon Leach, Simon Fenn and Paul Farrell.

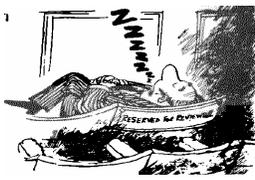
A great team on stage and supporting them behind the scenes are an equally talented group; Production Coordinator - Joan Moriarty, Prompt - Julie Hall, Properties - Rose Capuano, Shelley McKemish is the Stage Manager and Assistant SM is David Dodd. **The Memory of Water** has Dennis Pain as Set Construction Coordinator with Paddy Moriarty, Ted Drowley, Ron Young, Des Harris and Jim Thomson making up the Team. Set Realisation is in the talented hands of Leanne Cole who as well as researching the period 1960s-1970s when the mother's bedroom was most likely decked out (and where the scene for the play is set) has also been busy arranging purchases of appropriate furnishings - bedroom suite (comprising bed with matching side tables, wardrobes and dresser), lounge chair, carpet and wallpaper. Lighting Design is by Maureen White with Campbell Black as Operator, George Bissett has designed the Sound with Struan McGregor operating and Costumes are in the capable hands of Maureen McInerney.

So a great play, a great cast and a great production team all come together at HTC for your enjoyment. Don't miss it!

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BOOKINGS & SUBSCRIPTIONS 94574117



Review

GRAPES OF WRATH

Adapted by Frank Galati from the novel by John Steinbeck. Directed by Chris Baldock.

Reviewed by Frances Devlin-Glass for 3 CR's **Curtain Up** Sundays at One 855AM.

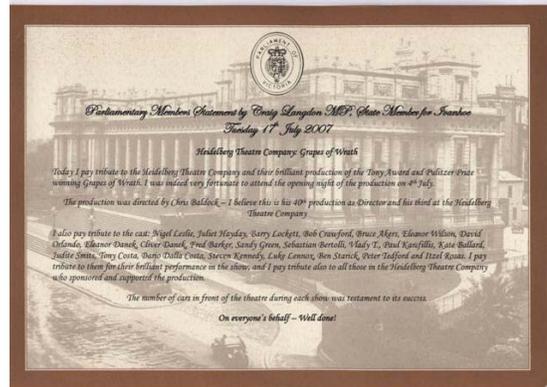
This adaptation by Frank Galati from the Steinbeck novel is frankly epic in aspiration, and Heidelberg, under Chris Baldock's direction and with the assistance of David Dare's moody set, delivered up a thoughtful and moving piece of theatre. The intimacy of the HTC theatre and the expansiveness of the stage lend themselves to special experiences of this kind.

The play is set initially in the Oklahoma dustbowl of the 30s and tells the story of a family's eviction during the depression and their forced march west in a dodgy car to find non-existent work in California. Rather spookily, it seems quite contemporary and quite relevant to our own circumstances – right down to its socialist agendas about work, and not allowing the market to default on a living wage. Steinbeck is not above politicking and philosophizing and using the characters to do so, and in the 30s this play, despite its humanity, was a very subversive work altogether. What interested me were the ideas of egalitarianism under God, of the connectedness between humans and the earth, and the notion that the malaises that the *Joads* had to surmount were better done collectively, by the family unit, or through cooperation. There's much melodrama in the piece, but it was played for its inherent pathos, and I found audience around me very moved by it, to the extent that they worried at interval that it couldn't end well, and of course, it doesn't, but there were no vacant seats. The play has a lot of integrity, and has to be admired for that.

The casting was wonderful, and again expansive. I counted 22 cast members and a muso, and all of them seemed to work like clockwork. I would not like to have been organising that rehearsal schedule! Wendy Drowley and Lois Connor's costumes were terrific and added a lot – rope belts, shabby and torn country clobber, kids' gear that looked right. Another detail that worked extremely well were accents. Although not always decipherable because of the broadness of the accent, this was not a huge problem, except in the case of one minor actor with a defective ear.

The two middle generation *Joads*, played by Bob Crawford and Juliet Hayday, were stunning. They did not miss a beat, and played in a way that suggested deep immersion in roles. I loved Ma's ability to take the role slowly when required, her bearing and purposive walk. She was the axis around which the whole family moved, though *Pa Joad* was also four-square and superbly cast, down to his rather weather-beaten nose. The good-hearted but volatile son, *Tom*, was a nice foil for his mum and dad, and did a lot to keep the narrative moving. There's not a lot of forward momentum in the play except that provided by dread for the family's future, and the play depends on its tonal qualities, and its ability to draw one into the emotional lives of the characters. Bruce Akers as *Uncle John* played his melancholy well, especially in the scene where he confesses to the preacher, played by Barry Lockett. It was easy to relate to the latter's angst, his religious doubts, honesty, and to his ultimate sacrifice for the *Joads*. Eleanor Wilson, as *Rose of Sharon*, was always good to watch especially in the last scenes of the play where the director seemed to be going for a *Pieta* look, which really did help build up the climax, which was in some ways an

A Parliamentary "Well Done!" from Craig Langdon MP to HTC for The Grapes of Wrath



anti-climax. Sandy Green was a very entertaining *Granma Joad* though her role was a cameo. The ensemble was strong, with lots of doubling of roles, and much use of the auditorium for entrances that were often quite dramatic. *Frances Devlin-Glass*

And still they come, another rave Review for the Show – this time from Reviewer, **Sue Rochford**, Magazine Editor.

Mercy of the Elements

We left the theatre wondering where the name **Grapes of Wrath** came from. Evidently Steinbeck had trouble thinking of a title and the name was suggested by his wife and taken from the familiar *Battle Hymn of the Republic* by Julia W. Howe and it goes:

"Mine eyes have seen the glory of the coming of the Lord: He is trampling out the vintage where the grapes of wrath are stored; He hath loosed the fateful lightning of His terrible swift sword: His truth is marching on".

This originally came from an appeal to divine justice and deliverance found in the *Bible*, Revelation 14:19-20. It goes like this: *"And the angel thrust in his sickle into the earth, and gathered the vine of the earth, and cast it into the great winepress of the wrath of God. And the winepress was trodden without the city, and blood came out of the winepress, even unto the horse bridles, by the space of a thousand and six hundred furlongs".*

So here we are in 2007 battling horrendous droughts and floods which seem every bit as devastating as back in 1938, the time of this epic story of one family forced to leave the land they loved. The glimmer of hope where seemingly there is none and a strong family ethic are ever important in tough times. Someone is probably out there writing this same story right now—our own landowners leaving the land in droves as we speak—times predictably unpredictable.

HTC brought it all indoors for us in this performance. Eerie howling wind, rolling dust, melancholic harmonica and guitar, long journeys across night and day (brilliant use of the mega lazy susan in the floor), screaming convincing childbirth with an in-your-face violent storm - water pouring out of the heavens in torrents, literally! So much could have gone wrong. (ctd. p.3)

AUDITION NOTICE

THE LADY IN THE VAN

Sunday 16th September from 1.30pm

Monday 17th September from 7.30pm

at Heidelberg Theatre Company, 36 Turnham Avenue, Rosanna. (Melway 32 A1)

Season: 14th November – 1st December

(Monday – Wednesday, Matinee Sunday 23rd November)

It would be an advantage to have read the play prior to auditioning.

Scripts of **The Lady In The Van** are available from the Theatre
or by phoning the Director.

Those auditioning should also be clear about the character they wish to audition for.

Please note that many of the ensemble characters may be doubled.

They are also of a variety of age ranges. It is important to indicate if you are auditioning for a major role, and if you would also like to be considered for an ensemble part.

The auditions may be booked with other Characters,
e.g. the characters of Alan Bennett, Alan Bennett 2 and Miss Shepherd.

These are central characters and need to establish a strong rapport, also age
and body types need to be considered.

English accents are required and will vary according to the character.

For the purpose of the audition it will be necessary to attempt an accent.

Rehearsals will be mainly Tuesday and Thursday nights

from 7.30pm to 10.00pm and Sunday afternoons from 2.00 - 5.00pm.

A Rehearsal Schedule will be issued after casting the play.

Cast Required:

Miss Shepherd - about 65

Alan Bennett - the author's public persona

Alan Bennett 2 - his inner person

Mam - Alan Bennett's mother 60s.

Rufus - Alan Bennett's neighbour.

Pauline - Rufus' wife.

Social Worker – female

Underwood - a dilapidated figure

Mam's Doctor

Leo Fairchild - Miss Shepherd's brother

Lout

Ambulance Driver

Miss Shepherd's Doctor

Interviewer

Priest

Council workmen, Undertakers, etc.

The action of the play takes place in Alan Bennett's house and garden and the street outside,
in Camden, London. **Time** - 1974 - 1989.

Auditions by appointment.

those intending to audition need to book a time by phoning
the **Director - David Dare** on **98859678**.

Heidelberg performances are usually high quality but this was the first time I've seen such an impressively cohesive production alongside the stellar talent, choreography and brilliant direction! Chris Baldock (do it again!). Astounding production coordination, music, technical management and set design - use of the whole theatre's full potential. No small detail was overlooked to give us the full impression. The deluge - the final curtain! Many audience members rushed down to the front of the stage, to see how it was done.

I was not troubled by accents (coaching?) and no actors appeared to carry others. Supporting actors, well supported. A large cast of some of our finest experienced actors and some up-and-coming young talent (thank goodness it was mostly school holidays), made for an engrossing performance. Almost the whole cast were not afraid to get a little (well, more than a little) wet! Aside from thinking that *Grandma Joad* had been re-incarnated (watch that hat) and concern that *Grandpa Joad* was actually in that body bag, quietly suffocating (convincing acting?), I have little to complain about.

Thanks again HTC.

What's the Goss?

Winter in Banyule at HTC



HTC's contribution to the Banyule Winter Festival provided a fun night for audiences and cast alike at a Play Reading held at the Theatre on Saturday 11th August.

Ian Robinson introduced the three one act plays, the first a satire, **Press Cuttings** by George Bernard Shaw, followed by **Naomi In The Living Room** an absurdist piece by Christopher Durang and **The Fountain of Love** in the style of the Comedia dell'Arte written by Ian.

Joan Moriarity in inimitable style brought the event together as well as providing a delicious supper following the performances.

An enthusiastic cast comprising Maureen McInerney, Rose Capuano (*her first time on HTC's stage*), Lena Minto, Kylie Bell, Chris McLean, George Bissett, Justin Stephens and Luke Dixon played a variety of roles and were dressed to great effect from the extensive HTC wardrobe.



The gown worn by Maureen in **Naomi In The Living Room** (pictured above) was a real gem and managed not to be upstaged by *Naomi's* magenta coloured wig, a real feat, while George looked particularly fetching in his golden smock in **The Fountain of Love**. (*John Gilbert, HTC President, looks equally fetching in the costume as George's stand-in for the photo shoot, pictured at left*)

So a big thankyou to Ian Robinson, whose concept of presenting different styles of comedy in an evening of live theatre proved to be a great hit with the audience and players alike.

Open Days and a Costume Sale at HTC during the Banyule Winter Festival have become a regular highlight and this year was no exception. Many local residents took the opportunity to browse, buy and take a peak at the Theatre where the set building team were hard at work preparing the set for **The Memory of Water**.

Congratulations to the City of Banyule and HTC for a great Festival

Studio Space Wanted to Rent

Two local artists are looking for a studio to rent. The space must have power, running water and access to a toilet. **Phone Leanne 0409 405 314.**

Pictured are Cast Members from the Play Reading: *Rose Capuano, Lena Minto, Maureen McInerney and Luke Dixon*

WHO, WHAT, WHERE....?

Bruce Akers and Chris Baldock will appear on stage at WLT in **Gross Indecency: The Three Trials of Oscar Wilde** by Moises Kaufmanby directed by Peter Newling. The Season 13th - 29th September. Bookings on 9885 9678.

Hoy Polloy's next show, **Boston Marriage** by David Mamet - an incisive and witty satire is directed by Wayne Pearn and the cast and production crew includes lots of those recently involved in **The Grapes of Wrath** at HTC.

Eleanor Wilson is in the cast, with Set Design by Paul King, Backstage - Taryn Gater, Light Design - Stelios Karagiannis, Photography - Tim Williamson, Publicity - Ben Starick, Properties - Rose Capuano and Costumes - Wendy Drowley.

The Season, 21st September to 6th October. Bookings call **9016 3879** or hoypolloy@bigpond.com. And a note, visit Hoy Polloy's new blog at hoypolloytheatre.blogspot.com.

HELP!!! needed at the
WORKING BEES
for
the Memory of
Water

Saturdays
1st & 8th September
from 10.30am
lunch is provided

So do come along, it's a great experience and a fun time too!
Working Bees not your style?

How about assisting
backstage or foh

Like to know more - call the Theatre on
9455 3039

What's on at HTC

SEPTEMBER

Saturday 1st 10.30am
Saturday 8th 10.30am
Wednesday 12th 8.15pm
Sunday 16th 1.30pm
Monday 17th 7.30pm
Tuesday 18th 7.30pm
Saturday 29th 8.15pm

OCTOBER

Tuesday 16th 7.30pm

Working Bee with Lunch

Working Bee with Lunch

FIRST NIGHT - The Memory of Water

AUDITION: The Lady In The Van

AUDITION: The Lady In The Van

Heidelberg Film Society - Amelie

FINAL NIGHT - The Memory of Water

Heidelberg Film Society - The Birds