

## Summer of the Seventeenth Doll

by Ray Lawler

directed by Paul King

13<sup>th</sup> – 29<sup>th</sup> September, 2012

Evenings at 8.00pm

Matinees: Sundays 16<sup>th</sup> & 23<sup>rd</sup> Sept. at 2pm

Subscribers requiring to alter their chosen night or reserve their booking are asked to call BEFORE Wednesday, 29<sup>th</sup> August, 2012.

# PROMPTS

No. 4. August, 2012



**Summer of the Seventeenth Doll**, what a great Australian play to include in our 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Season! First produced in Melbourne in 1955 when Ray Lawler was in the cast, the play proved to be an instant success and it toured abroad to international acclaim. HTC first produced the show in 1992, our 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary year, and the play has withstood the trial of time, and is still entertaining and evocative theatre. Its humour and compassion are as relevant today as ever they were.

Directing the production for us is Paul King, a director whose work is well known to HTC audiences and the greater Melbourne non-professional theatre world. His last production at HTC was in 2010 when he directed **Glengarry Glen Ross** by David Mamet.

HTC will set "the Doll" in its original period (it was a contemporary piece in 1955) and the setting, costumes and hairstyles will be historically accurate, a step back in time.

Paul is meticulous in his casting and has assembled a group of fine actors to fill the roles. An actor well known to the HTC audiences is Lena Minto who plays *Emma* and the Company is delighted to welcome six newcomers to the HTC stage: Anna Rodway as *Bubba*, Tina Bono as *Pearl*, Jodie Symes as *Olive*, Dan Haberfield as *Barney*, Gavin Williams as *Roo* and Joel Evans as *Johnnie*.

The Crew for the show is already hard at work. Set Builders Dennis, Paddy, Des, Neville, Malcolm, Sam, Ian and Christian are again led by Owen Evans as this time they construct a rather tired Carlton terrace boarding house in the 1950s.

Karen Wakeham and Anne Smith are the Production Coordinators and Bruce Moorhouse is the Stage Manager with Melanie Belcher as his ASM. Deryk Hartwick is designing the Lighting and George Bissett the Sound.

The Set Design is by the director, Paul King and the Décor Manager is Marie Mackrell. Bronwyn Parker is taking care of properties and Bobbie Parish is dressing all those kewpie dolls, can't wait to see them. Wendy Drowley, assisted by Dianne Brennan and Laura Cortis, are having a fun time in Wardrobe digging out all those '50s numbers that have been waiting in the wings for an airing.

The Company regrets that so many of our patrons missed out on seeing our last show, **The Importance of Being Earnest**, and the bookings for **Summer of the Seventeenth Doll** are proving to be very strong. The first matinee is a sell-out already and the Friday nights are moving very well. So please book early; online at [htc.org.au](http://htc.org.au) or give the Box Office a call on 9457 4117 to secure your seats.

And Subscribers, please call the Box Office early if you need to exchange your tickets. Flexibook Subscribers, please make your booking early so we can ensure your preferred option.

*We keep on reminding you,  
because we want you to be there!  
at the -*

**Very Special 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Party**  
*following the Annual General Meeting on*

**SUNDAY 16<sup>th</sup> December from 2pm**

*the Business will be brief and the  
Celebration long!*

All Subscribers, Members and Friends  
of the Company are invited!

**BOOKINGS – Online at [www.htc.org.au](http://www.htc.org.au) or call 9457 4117**

36 Turnham Avenue, Rosanna  
P.O Box 141, Rosanna VIC 3084

Enquiries 9455 3039  
Email [htc@htc.org.au](mailto:htc@htc.org.au)

web: [htc.org.au](http://htc.org.au)  
Inc. No. A008432X



# Review

## The Importance of Being Earnest

by Oscar Wilde

Directed by Wendy Drowley

Reviewed by Joan McGrory - July 15, 2012 for Theatrecraft..

This production of Oscar Wilde's much-loved classic was a very pretty one. The set was elegant and simple, the costuming was wonderful and the props looked to be very much of the period. The set consisted of floor to "ceiling" panels, grey with an elegant design in black. There were two angled on each side of the stage with a central front panel that divided into two.

The revolve was well utilised to provide the actual setting once the panels were moved. There were rose arbours, and the various scenes: Algernon's apartment, the garden in Woolton, and the drawing room at the Manor House. The settings were beautiful and detailed. Algernon's apartment, for instance, had as its backdrop a black folding screen that took up the back wall and looking like a large lacquered screen with an oriental type motif of birds and vegetation. I particularly liked the touch of the two "flower" cranes that were either side of the double window in the Manor House. The set design was by Wendy Drowley and the set decor by Marie Mackrell. Bronwyn Parker was in charge of the props. Congratulations for a stunning effect.

With the convenience of the revolve, the change of scenes and props was swift and efficient, although there did seem to be a bit of a lag between the second and third acts. Sound design and operation was by George Bissett and Christian Dell'Olio. Lighting design was by Derek Hartwick, with operation by Eugene Dolgikh and Bruce Moorhouse.

The costuming of both the male and female roles was also delightful and Dianne Brennan and her helpers did a sterling job. Lady Bracknell was suitably imposing and the hats were wonderful. Gwendolen's costumes were sophisticated and very apt for a "gel" in her position and her last outfit was a stunner. Her costumes contrasted beautifully with that of Cecily who wore a very pretty soft floral dress, well in keeping with Lady Bracknell's comment of being "sadly simple"! I don't know about the "sadly", because Cecily looked lovely. Miss Prism's garb consisted of a plain skirt and blouse with a big lace "dickie" front; it was so suitable for that lady's character!

The gentlemen's attire was equally appropriate. Algernon's suits, waistcoats and cravats were evocative of his character. I would have liked to see Jack Worthing's town attire reflect, in some small way, the escape from his country responsibilities. His mourning garb was wonderful!

Performances on the whole were good but the pace was, in parts a little slow. I was a bit concerned at the number of pauses, not being sure whether they were deliberate, in which case some sort of body language would have been appropriate, or whether some of the characters were having problems with their lines. I did feel that more attention could have been paid to reactions. Had other members of the cast followed Lady Bracknell's example, when she reacted superbly to the mention of Miss Prism, a more lively interplay between the characters would have been evident. I was surprised that John Worthing did not react to Algernon's first mention of Cecily, and likewise to Miss Prism's first mention of placing a baby in a handbag.

Frances Hutson as Lady Bracknell had a problem with her voice and I suspect that she was unwell, as she was unable in the First Act to refrain from coughing. Her voice was a little light and this could well be because she was trying to maintain it. Her characterization was as it should be; of a privileged member of the Society, having the arrogance and bearing of her class. Well done, Frances.

As Gwendolen Fairfax, Aimee Sanderson portrayed quite correctly the daughter of Lady Bracknell. I always have loved Algernon's line, "All women become like their mothers..." and Aimee's characterization reflected this very well.

As Cecily, Taryn Eva was a delight, being perfectly in character and using Wilde's language beautifully. Lovely work, Taryn. Miss Prism was played by Judi Clarke, and what a lovely performance, too.

from left: James Jackson as Algernon, Aimee Sanderson as Gwendolen & Francis Hutson as Lady Bracknell.



The gentle Scots accent was a nice contrast to all the clipped English. John Cheshire played the Reverend Chasuble a little over the top but with great fun. Lane and Merriman were played well by Ian Robertson and Tom Hall.

As John Worthing, Ian McGregor seemed, in the first act, a bit hesitant, but his performance picked up in the two later acts and he seemed more assured. However, a small footnote: both Ian and Aimee need to open up their arm gestures. James Jackson played Algernon Moncrieff. It was a beautiful performance, taking over the stage from his first entrance to his last. James had a naturalness and aplomb that was a delight to see. Body language, pace, nuance and movement all came together in his characterization and we will look forward to him again. Congratulations! Well done, Heidelberg.

### REVIEW OF THE IMPORTANCE OF BEING EARNEST FROM STAFF REPORTER, MELINDA ALLEN

Bunburying. We've all done at one time or another. In case you're not familiar with the term, it refers to inventing an excuse order to escape a tiresome social obligation. The phrase was coined by Oscar Wilde in one of his most popular comedies, *The Importance of Being Earnest*. In the play, the character Algernon creates a fictitious invalid friend in the country called Bunbury whom he decides to 'visit' every time he wishes to avoid a tedious social engagement. It's a situation most of us can probably relate to, and this just one of the reasons why *The Importance of Being Earnest* is as engaging and hilarious today as it was when first performed one hundred years ago. So, during the Heidelberg Theatre Company's recent production of *The Importance of Being Earnest*, when Algernon (played with cheeky relish by James Jackson) waxed lyrical about the art of Bunburying, the laughter that came from the audience was boisterous.

The HTC's production of *The Importance of Being Earnest* coincides with the Company's sixtieth anniversary, and what better way to celebrate such a milestone than by staging one of the most beloved and enduring comedies ever performed.

Ian McGregor's understated, dignified John Worthing anchored the play and provided a fabulous springboard for the outstanding comedic timing of James Jackson as Algernon. Jackson's delightful performance captured the character's charming rakishness and flippant disregard for the rules of society.

Taryn Eva's portrayal of Cecily Cardew emphasised the youthful innocence and endearing foolishness of the character, and Aimee Sanderson's Gwendolyn Fairfax was simultaneously a fool in love and a perfectly poised snob in the making. Gwendolyn's indignant reactions to John's baffling behaviour evoked hearty laughter from the audience, and the sparring match turned declaration of sisterhood between the warring women (they believe they're both engaged to the same 'Ernest') was as every bit as hilarious as the rampant exchanges of witticisms between John and Algernon. It would have been great though, to have seen more chemistry between John and Gwendolyn.

The wickedly sardonic Lady Bracknell was brought to life by Frances Hutson, and Hutson's spot-on performance didn't disappoint as she stormed the stage spouting motherly advice and putting the men in their place.

Adding another layer to the comedy of errors was an ongoing misunderstanding between the doddering Reverend Chasuble, played by John Cheshire and Judi Clark's wonderfully oblivious Miss Prism. And, during the earlier scenes in London, Tom Hall's deadpan butler delivered some wonderfully wry observations.

Wendy Drowley's gorgeous sets, constructed by Owen Evans and the set building team and decorated by Marie Mackrell, Bronwyn Parker and helpers, showcased the luxury of Victorian

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# AUDITION NOTICE

Heidelberg Theatre Company's production of

## *Arsenic and Old Lace*

by **Joseph Kesselring**

Director: **Bruce Akers**

Auditions will be held at the Theatre

36 Turnham Avenue Rosanna (Melway ref: 32 A1)

**Sunday September 16 at 6.30 pm  
& Monday September 17 at 7.00pm**

Season Dates: 22<sup>nd</sup> November to 8<sup>th</sup> December, 2012  
Weeknights and Saturdays at 8:00pm Sundays at 2:00pm

### AUDITION DETAILS:

- 2 females: 1 x 20s-30s; 1 x 55-70
- 11 males: 1 lead role 30s; others 20s- 80s
- **Enquiries:** Please email the director Bruce Akers: [bwakers27@hotmail.com](mailto:bwakers27@hotmail.com)
  - or call 0432 984 781.

### ABOUT THE PLAY

What happens when an alcoholic surgeon, two crazy spinsters, twenty four dead bodies and deadly drinks cross paths.

Chaos ensues when nephew Mortimer, on a visit to his sweet maiden aunts, discovers they are offering 'elderberry wine' to lonely old men to quicken their passing to everlasting peace. 'Skeletons in the closet' isn't the half of it!

This madcap black comedy brilliantly combines the farcical and the macabre, and has been a fan with audiences since 1941.

### Characters:

- (**Abby Brewster** role has been precast.)
- **Martha Brewster:** A sweet elderly woman with Victorian charm, Martha is the sister of Abby and an aunt to Teddy, Jonathan, and Mortimer. More straight forward and direct than her sister, Abby. Age late 50s- 70. Major role.
- **Elaine Harper:** An attractive girl in her 20s and Mortimer's fiancée, Elaine is the daughter of the Rev. Dr. Harper.
- **Mortimer Brewster:** Nephew of Abby and Martha, Mortimer is a drama critic who is engaged to Elaine. Aged late twenties-thirties. Fast talking and manic when under pressure. Tries to keep on top of an unravelling situation. He drives the pace of the play. Major role requiring experienced actor.
- **Jonathan Brewster:** Nephew of Abby and Martha, Jonathan is a wanted man and much lacking in scruples. Age 40s. The villain of the piece bears an uncanny similarity to Boris Karloff. Major role.
- **Teddy Brewster:** Nephew of Abby and Martha, Teddy is a man in his forties who thinks that he is Theodore Roosevelt.
- **Dr Einstein:** A plastic surgeon in his fifties, Dr. Einstein has changed Jonathan's face three times. Think Peter Lorre.
- **Rev. Dr. Harper:** Minister and father of Elaine.
- **Officer O'Hara:** A police officer in his 30s, O'Hara is a would-be playwright who pesters Mortimer to read his play. Good natured and unaware of the chaos unfolding around him.
- **Officer Brophy:** A flatfoot cop with the usual charm of a police officer.
- **Lieutenant Rooney:** A tough and dominating police officer.
- **Officer Klein:** A rookie in his 20s.
- **Mr Gibbs:** An elderly man who wishes to rent a room from the Brewster sisters.
- **Mr Witherspoon:** Superintendent of Happy Dale Sanitarium.

*(cont. from previous page)*

High Society without taking anything away from the performances. A striking oriental screen created a dramatic backdrop for Act 1 and evoked a London of a different era. The bright, cheerful country mansion was a picturesque setting that complemented the play's upbeat subject matter, as did George Bissett's jaunty piano music. Deryk Hartwick's lighting design captured the feeling of a summer afternoon by creating the illusion of sunshine dappled on the patio.

Algernon's penchant for cucumber sandwiches and the men's sparring match over a muffin ensured that the silverware was often a focal point, and fittingly, it was polished to absolute perfection.

From Cecily's floral country frock to Gwendolyn's stunning structured Victorian gowns, Dianne Brennan's marvellous costumes were perfectly tailored to each character. Worthing's sensible, dignified suits captured his gentlemanly ways and Algernon's eye-catching waistcoats were the colourful garb of a man-about-town.

The uproarious laughter and boisterous applause from the audience signified that a great evening was had by all. The conclusion of the play saw all strings beautifully tied up and it was great to see John Worthing break his stoic exterior and burst into life, embracing Algernon as his brother and declaring that it is indeed important to be 'Ernest'.



**SHELLEY DODD (nee McKemmish)**  
**by Bruce Akers, HTC Life Member & Honorary Treasurer**

"We were all saddened to hear of the passing of Shelley Dodd (nee McKemmish) on July 26<sup>th</sup> after a long illness at the too early age of 48.

Shelley had been a prominent member of the HTC family from 1985 to 2007 and was an integral part of 33 HTC productions during that time. Shelley worked primarily as Stage Manager but she also took on the tasks of Director's Assistant, Production Assistant, and Prompt on many occasions. She worked with most of the directors working at HTC during that period – Gordon Dunlop (20 times in all, both at HTC and elsewhere), Bruce Akers, Geoff Hickey, Bob Tuttleby, Wendy Drowley, Alice Bugge, Joan Moriarty, Chris McLean, David Small, David

Ashton and Maureen McInerney.

It was working with Maureen on "The Front Page" she met David Dodd who was to become her husband and carer during her illness.

She worked with me six times and was due to join "Angels in America" when she became unwell. I used to call her "no shit shell" because she wouldn't put up with bad behaviour from anyone. She was always in the wings to help people suffering night blindness off the stage. She was dependable, loyal and always supportive.

An absolute treasure and I adored working with her. A beautiful person."

**HTC YOUTH WOW THE CROWDS AT WINTER IN WATSONIA**

The Heidelberg Theatre Company Youth turned the streets of Watsonia into a winter wonderland filled with puppets, balloons and enchanting characters at the annual Winter in Watsonia Festival on July 21<sup>st</sup>.

The Youth were thrilled to be a part of the festival which allowed them to showcase their creative talents and connect with the local community. It took the hard-working bunch a week to construct the hand-made puppets for an original show that taught children all about the weather and the changing seasons in keeping with the Winter Wonderland theme. After three weeks of rehearsals, the Youth unveiled the show to a delighted audience who braved the chilly morning to join in the festivities. Enhanced by eye-catching costumes and curtains provided by the Heidelberg Theatre Company, the colourful show was a hit with children and adults alike.

"It was amazing to see how engaged the children were with the characters we presented them," said director Monica Christou. And the audience weren't the only ones enjoying themselves. "It was also rewarding to see the performers fully immersed in the festivities of the day," said Ms Christou. The enraptured audience visibly took time to interpret the meanings conveyed through the puppet show, and the young performers were thrilled to have succeeded presenting a show that was educational as well as entertaining.

Performers and puppeteers Christian Dell'Olio, Zac Smith and Monica Christou had a great time interacting with the audience during the street performance they held between shows. Dressed as a snowman and an Ice Fairy, the performers mingled with the delighted crowd, handing out balloons and treating onlookers to some improvised skits. Some lucky children were even treated to a hug with the Snowman while others had their faces painted courtesy of the artistic skills of Marzi Banilohi and Jarrod Fry.

HTC Youth have put on many plays over the years for the Youth of Banyule. Though assistance is given by senior members of the company, the Youth run the shows autonomously, taking on roles such as stage management, set design, directing, technical support and acting. Some of their past efforts have included performances of **Peter Pan**, **A Midsummer Night's Dream**, **Ruby Moon**, **Alice in Wonderland**, and **The Wizard of Oz**. After a brief hiatus in 2011 during which older members moved on to bigger and better things, a new generation stepped in and this talented group have again become staple of the local theatre community.

The Youth have declared their contribution to the Winter in Watsonia Festival a success. Not only did they get the chance to unleash their creativity and give the local community a taste of their talent, but a number of young audience members expressed interest in joining HTC Youth. Winning second place in the competition for the Best Dressed Window was simply the icing on the cake of an all-round fantastic event.

*HTC Youth are currently searching for new Members aged 14-25 with a lot or little to no theatrical experience. No one is excluded, and there is much to be gained through joining this vibrant group of kids in the friendly, yet very dramatic environment of Heidelberg Theatre Company! Call Monica or Christian on 9455 3039 and leave your name and contact number..*



*The Actors take a well-earned break between shows.*



*Face Painting was a winner too!*



*Puppeteers, Snowman & Ice Princess, HTC Youth work the crowd at Winter in Watsonia*

**HELP!!!**

Needed at the  
**WORKING BEES**  
 for

*Summer of the  
 Seventeenth Doll*

**Saturdays**  
**1<sup>st</sup> & 8<sup>th</sup> 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 front of house.

**Like to know more – call the Theatre on 9455 3039**

**SEPTEMBER**

- Saturday 1<sup>st</sup> 10.30am **Working Bee** with Lunch.
- Saturday 8<sup>th</sup> 10.30am **Working Bee** with Lunch.
- Thursday 13<sup>th</sup> 8.00pm **FIRST NIGHT** – Summer of the Seventeenth Doll
- Sunday 16<sup>th</sup> 6.30pm **Audition** – Arsenic & Old Lace
- Monday 17<sup>th</sup> 7.00pm **Audition** – Arsenic & Old Lace
- Tuesday 21<sup>st</sup> 7.30pm Heidelberg Film Society.
- Saturday 29<sup>th</sup> 8.00pm **FINAL NIGHT** – Summer of the Seventeenth Doll