

LITTLE MURDERS

by **Jules Feiffer**

directed by **Paul King**

"A dark comedy about survival in the modern urban landscape.
Funny to the extreme and a little frightening."

Season: 3rd to 19th July

Evenings at 8pm. Matinees: Sundays 6th & 13th July at 2pm

Ticket Prices: Adults: \$25 Concession Card Holders & Members \$22

Groups of 10+ \$20 per tkt, Preview & First Night Specials - Groups 50+ - \$10 per tkt

During the production there is minimal smoking of herbal cigarettes.

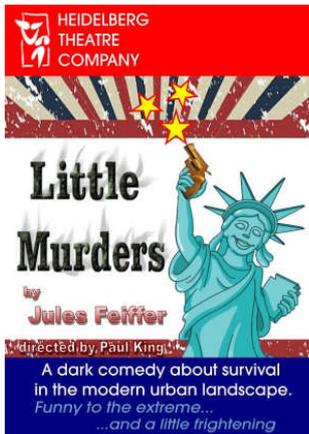
(Subscribers requiring to alter their chosen night or reserve their booking are asked to call

BEFORE Wednesday 18th June, 2014.)

PROMPTS

62nd Year

No. 3 June, 2014



Little Murders, written by Jules Feiffer in 1967, won that year's Obie and Outer Critics Circle Awards. The play is perhaps the darkest and possibly the funniest comedy ever written about what it was like to be alive and half-crazed in the urban American jungle of the late 1960s

Feiffer's archetypal sitcom family gone absurdist live in a New York whose daily plagues range from noise and air pollution, power failures, nuisance phone calls to random muggings and sniper fire. Yet it's their blithe acceptance of a world of increasing violence, alienation and the tearing down of the great middle-class verities (Family, God, Law and Order) which provides the play's black, nervous-breakdown comedy.

The targets that it satirizes in American city life are just as potent today as they were in 1967.

The Director and Set Designer of this great piece of theatre is Paul King, whose most recent shows at HTC were **Summer of the Seventeenth Doll**, **Glengarry Glen Ross**. The Company is pleased to welcome Paul back to direct **Little Murders**.

Many of the actors in the cast are well known to HTC audiences. The family patriarch, *Carol Newquist*, is played by Bruce Carboon, earlier shows with HTC include *Ralph Milan* in **The Pain Killer**, *Dexter* in **The Philadelphia Story**, and *Lt. Handcock* in **Breaker Morant**. *Marjorie*, his wife, is played by Julie Arnold. Juie previously appeared at HTC as *Her Ladyship* in **The Dresser**. Stephanie Gonelli is their daughter *Patsy*, she played *Shelby* in **Steel Magnolias** and *Jean* in **August: Osage County**. And Gavin Williams plays *Alfred Chamberlain*, her fiancé, he was *Roo* in **Summer of the Seventeenth Doll**.

Cameo performances are by Oleh Kowalyk as *Judge Stern*, previously Oleh played *Midge* in **I'm Not Rappaport**. John Cheshire as the *Rev. Henry Dupas*, his previous roles include *Norman* in **The Dresser**, *Rev Chasuble* in **The Importance of Being Earnest**, and the *Bellboy* in **The Pain Killer**. And Tony Costa as *Lt. Miles Practice*, his previous roles with HTC include *Mickey* in **Hurlyburly**, *George Aaronow* in **Glengarry Glen Ross**, *Steve Heidebrecht* in **August: Osage County** and *Cheswick* in **One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest**. The Newquist son, *Kenny*, is played by Casey Filips, a newcomer to HTC, as is David Tickner, one of the play's party of Wedding Guests, which includes debut performances by two HTC members, Sheelagh Belton, often working backstage for many of our productions, and her husband David, the Company's photographer. Other Guests include Jess Cook and Ella Di Marco, who have appeared in a number of HTC Youth productions.

The Production Team for **Little Murders** includes Production Co-ordinator Jim Thomson, Stage Manager and Sound Designer Bruce Moorhouse and Assistant Stage Manager Melanie Belcher with Bobbie Parish as Rehearsal Prompt.

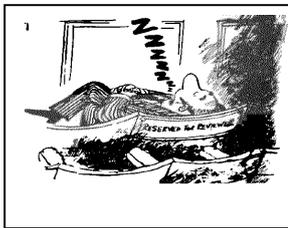
The Set Construction Team, comprising Paddy, Neville, Mal, Doug, Norm and Ian is again lead by Owen Evans and Scenic Artist and Decor is in the capable hands of Marie Mackrell.

The Lighting Designer is Deryk Hartwyck, Diane Brennan is managing Costumes, and Bronwyn Parker, in charge of Properties, is assisted by Theresa Schipano and Rhonda Huckle who, with great energy and enthusiasm, maintain the Company's Property Store. Rhonda also curates the foyer exhibitions and is an artist who has exhibited for us. For the show, David Belton wears his 'other hat' and is photographer for the show.

If you can withstand dysfunctional, eccentric but wildly funny characters, occasional blackouts, some non-PC language and loud gunshots when least expected, then **Little Murders** is just the play for you.



above: Members of the cast of **Little Murders** in rehearsal (photographer: David Belton)



REVIEW

The Dixie Swim Club

by **Jessie Jones, Nicholas Hope and Jamie Wooten**

Directed by **Gayle Poor**

Reviewed for the Victorian Drama League's newsletter, Theatrecraft by David Collins on Saturday, May 3, 2014

In **The Dixie Swim Club**, we have four scenes: three set five years apart, with the last set 20-odd years in the present.

At the opening, we're introduced to five former members of a college swim team on their annual catch-up at a beach house in North Carolina. From their banter, we quickly understand that these ladies are firm friends, a friendship that is treasured by all no matter what happens in their lives or between each other—a fact they remind us of at the end of the scene.

After a blackout, we've jumped ahead five years as the women arrive again. From their banter, we quickly understand that they're still firm friends and that, no matter what, they always will be, a fact they remind us of at the end of the scene.

After the interval, we've jumped ahead another five years. From the women's banter, we still understand that they've remained firm friends and—well, you get the idea at what was probably the biggest difficulty Heidelberg Theatre Company had to contend with in this otherwise great production.

There's some great character building at places in the script, but unfortunately little of it goes anywhere. No matter what happens in their regular lives, none of the characters really change. It's only *Lexie* and *Dinah* that exhibit any growth, and with *Dinah* we don't so much see that growth, we just see her decision to change. We won't get to see any of how that decision affects her as the next scene is set after her death. The themes were repeated and written with all the subtlety of a brick. You wished the playwrights trusted their audience more, something they could easily do with characters as rich and full of potential as these, let alone with actors of the calibre that Heidelberg cast to perform them.

The only thing that pulled me out of the story besides the script were some of the sound and lighting design elements during the third scene, set during a storm. Ignoring the fact *Dinah* and *Lexie* hang around for what seems like far too long, the thunder and lightning rumbled quietly in the background, with the lightning randomly flashing, until it reached the end of the scene when the volume of the thunder suddenly shot up. The bustling plants outside were a great touch, suggesting some darkness other than the weather was going to intrude on this usually friendly get-together. Similarly, a more organic approach with the storm effects could have worked here as well. An audience wants to be engaged by the performances on stage and not notice the hand of the production team keeping the storm unobtrusive, regardless of how the storm is being described, just so their actors can get their lines out effortlessly.

On the wide cottage set, designed well by George Tranter, director Gayle Poor and her cast have wrung an excellent show from what would be a mediocre production in lesser-capable hands.

A flawed script has to survive on the backs of the actors performing it, something **The Dixie Swim Club** does exceptionally. Dianne Mileo as the sweet-but-naive *Jeri*,



above: the Cast & Crew of **The Dixie Swim Club**
(photographer: David Belton)

Christine Muscat as practical, straight-laced *Sheree*,

Genevieve Ryan as the headstrong (not to mention bladder-weak) *Vernadette*, Jo Warr as motivated lawyer *Dinah*, and Annabel Mounsey as the libidinous *Lexie*.

All gave good performances (the accents were fine, especially for Ryan and Warr, coming off last season's production of **Steel Magnolias**), with Mounsey particularly bringing something to the show that the authors seemed intent on writing out of it: nuance.

A SPEEDY RECOVERY

Your Editor recently received an email from Marie Ryan, Broadcaster with Inner FM, who is a great supporter of HTC, enthusiastically arranging interviews with our cast and crews to assist in publicising our shows. Marie also attends our productions and includes reviews of same on her program.

Marie's email began, "*Firstly may I wish HTC a magnificent theatrical journey for 2014 and I wish that I could have been part of the whole year's journey. But needs must and reality sometimes takes over the best laid plans of mice and men.*"

Unfortunately Marie's 'reality' is dealing with treatment for cancer.

The Company wishes Marie a speedy journey and looks forward to having her in the audience later in the year.

AMADEUS NOTICE

AMADEUS

by **Peter Shaffer**
Director: **Bruce Akers**

AUDITION DATES:

Sunday June 15 from 7:00 pm, Sunday June 22 from 7:00 pm,

Tuesday June 24 from 7:00 pm

SEASON DATES: September 11 to 27 – Weeknights and Saturdays at 8:00pm, Sundays at 2:00pm

AUDITION DETAILS:

• Auditions by appointment

• Location: Heidelberg Theatre Company

36 Turnham Ave, Rosanna, Vic (opp. Rosanna Stn. Melway ref: 32A1)

(Hurstbridge Line - Rosanna Station)

• Auditionees, please bring a recent headshot and brief CV of your recent stage experience

• Accents - The play is set in Vienna but English accents are required. They depict the various class and status of the characters.

• For audition appointment or for other queries contact Bruce Akers at bwakers27@hotmail.com or 0432 984 781

• Scripts will be available at the theatre 30 minutes prior to each audition.

PLAY SUMMARY:

When Peter Shaffer's **Amadeus** opened at the National Theatre in London in November 1979, it was received enthusiastically by audiences and critics alike. The play masterfully explores the rivalry between Antonio Salieri, the court composer for Emperor Joseph of Austria and the genius that was Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart. It focuses on Salieri who, tormented by jealousy and an intense dislike of Mozart, plots his downfall. Salieri believes Mozart's music to be truly divine but cannot fathom why God has favoured such a vulgar creature to be His creative instrument. This superb drama won the 1981 Tony Award for Best Play and the 1984 film version won eight Academy Awards including Best Film and Best Actor.

CHARACTER DETAILS

Principal Roles:

• **Antonio Salieri.** Aged 73 at the start and end of play, needs to be able to convincingly portray a man 30-40 for bulk of the play. Narrator of story. Court Composer to the Emperor Joseph II. Ambitious, polished, urbane and witty but takes on God Himself in his fight against Mozart. This part requires an experienced actor who is able to react with the audience. A very large part.

• **Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart.** Age 25-35. His controversial personality is based primarily on his surviving letters. Childish, arrogant and foul-mouthed. A child-man, remarkably self-assured with a love for scatological language. Aware of his own genius. Actor needs to be able to switch moods readily. Demanding and energetic part.

• **Constanze Mozart.** Age 25-35. Loves her husband deeply and stands by his side through every hardship and humiliation. Acts as a substitute mother for her boyish husband but can be flirtatious, sensual and charming. A practical woman. Written in such a way that a Cockney/East End London accent is often used.

• **Emperor Joseph II of Austria.** Age 30-50. The Musical King. Good natured, not exceptionally bright and easily influenced. Relishes his role and the power that comes with it. A fun part. Requires comic timing and imposing nature.

• **Two Venticelli.** Age 20-50. The Little Winds. Purveyors of information, gossip and rumour to Salieri. Fleeting, shadowy characters. Quick of foot and tongue. They also play Two Gallants at the party in Act One Other Roles:

• **Court Officials** - all aged 40-70 • Count Johann Kilian Von Strack. Royal Chamberlain. Officious, humourless • Baron Gottfried Van Swieten. Prefect of the Imperial Library. Completely humourless. Old fashioned. A Mason.

• **Count Franz Orsini-Rosenberg.** Director of the Imperial Opera. A trusted follower of Salieri.

Non-speaking Roles

• **Teresa Salieri.** Wife of Salieri. Dour, upright.

• **Katherina Cavalieri.** Salieri's pupil. A well-known singer of her day.

• **Kapellmeister Bono.** Court Composer before Salieri. In his 70's. • Salieri's Valet

• Salieri's Cook

• A Major-domo

• Citizens of Vienna.

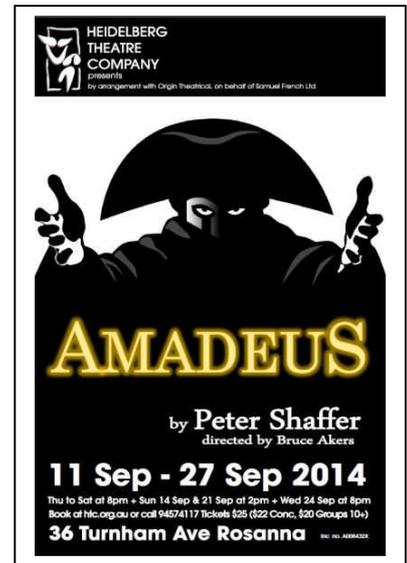
There will be necessary doubling of non-speaking roles.

A perfect opportunity for newcomers to the stage to get a taste for live theatre.

REHEARSALS

• Rehearsals:

Reading of the play and preliminary rehearsals to be conducted ASAP after casting. Rehearsals will commence in full from mid-July. Sunday afternoons from 1:00pm. Two weeknight rehearsals- possibly Monday and Thursday from 7:30 pm. (To be confirmed). Additional rehearsals when and if required.



HTC NEEDS AN EDITOR FOR PROMPTS

Now is your chance to become

EDITOR of HTC's Prompts in 2015

Like to know more?

Call 049 550 444
or email: htc@htc.org.au

EDITING NOT YOUR THING?

THEN HOW ABOUT JOINING THE HTC BOX OFFICE TEAM?

There are a number of roles to fill;

- *managing calls to the Box Office,*
- *using the online ticketing system*
- *and at the Box Office*

If you can assist with some or all of these roles
it would great.

Like to know more?
Call the Theatre on
94574117

or email htc@htc.org.au

PLEASE HELP at the **WORKING BEES**



for

Little Murders **Saturdays** **21st & 28th** **June** **from 10.00am**

lunch is provided

So 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

COMING EVENTS AT HTC

JUNE

Sunday 15th 7.00pm
Saturday 21st 10.00am
Sunday 22nd 7.00pm
Tuesday 24th 7.00pm
Saturday 28th 10.00am

Audition – Amadeus
Working Bee with Lunch
Audition – Amadeus
Audition – Amadeus
Working Bee with Lunch

JULY

Thursday 3rd 8.00pm
Saturday 19th 8.00pm

OPENING NIGHT – Little Murders
FINAL NIGHT – Little Murders

Heidelberg Theatre Company Inc
36 Turnham Avenue, Rosanna, Vic, 3084
Box Office: 03 94574117 Melway Ref. 32 A1
Hurstbridge line – Rosanna Station
Inc. No. A008432X ABN: 70 112 958 020

web bookings: www.htc.org.au
General Enquiries: 9455 3039
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website: www.htc.org.au
P.O. Box 141, Rosanna, 3084

HEIDELBERG THEATRE COMPANY is a proud member of the VICTORIAN DRAMA LEAGUE