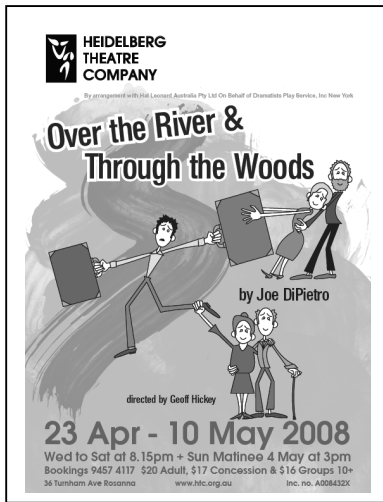


PROMPTS

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE HEIDELBERG THEATRE COMPANY



Over The River And Through The Woods

by Joe DiPietro

directed by Geoff Hickey

23rd April – 10th May, 2008

Wednesday to Saturday at 8.15pm,

Matinee Sunday 4th May at 3pm

Subscribers requiring to alter their chosen night or reserve their booking are asked to call BEFORE Monday, 7th April, 2008.

Over the River and Through the Woods is shaping up to be a stunner! It was a long running hit show with audiences Off Broadway and later in community theatres in the States. The Company is certain it will prove to be as popular with HTC audiences. DiPietro is applauded for writing whip-smart, comic dialogue that emanates from a host of intelligent characters, all adding up to great theatre. His other works include the long running Off Broadway musical revue **I Love You, You're Perfect, Now Change** (1996) and **The Thing About Men** (2003).

The Company is delighted to welcome Geoff Hickey back to direct the show. Geoff has a fine reputation as a Director in the Melbourne non-professional scene. Last year he directed **Doubt** for Malvern while his last production for HTC was **Cat On A Hot Tin Roof** in 2006. Geoff was last seen on stage at HTC in 2004 when he played *Larry* in Eugene O'Neill's **The Iceman Cometh**, winning the VDL Best Actor Award for his performance.

Geoff has gathered together an experienced and enthusiastic cast for **Over the River and Through the Woods**. Faces well known to HTC audiences are Sandy Green, Lena Minto and John Keogh, and, newcomers to our stage are Aimee Sanderson, Chris Hodson and Paul Mercuri.

Behind the scenes is another great cast; Joan Moriarty is Production Co-Ordinator, with Justin Stephens Assistant to the Director. Trish Condon is the Stage Manager, Olive Aumann is Assistant Stage Manager

the Set Building Team for the show is being lead by Dennis Pain. Lighting Design is by Kirsten Mander and Brian Marriner, with Bruce Parr designing the Audio, Julie Hall, is Rehearsal Prompt and is also hunting out Properties for the production. Accent Coach is Beth Barclay and Maureen McInerney is responsible for Costumes.

Critics have said of **Over the River and Through the Woods** that it clings to realism without leaving behind sheer entertainment. The dialogue is eminently quotable. (*"I want to see you married before I die," Emma tells Nick. He replies, "Let me know when you think you're going, and I'll see who I can dig up."*) and is delivered by lovable characters, including the four grandparents who are loosely based on members of DiPietro's own family.

So don't miss a fun night of theatre at HTC.

HTC Youth presents

Shakespeare's Shorts

A selection of excerpts from Shakespeare's better known works.

on Friday 16th May at 8pm at HTC

Come along and support HTC's young talent in this one off extravaganza.

If you're keen to be involved or would like more information on what we do, contact Jessica Cole on **9459 4378**.

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Review

BAZAAR & RUMMAGE

by Sue Townsend

Directed by Kris Weber.

Reviewed by Jill Watson
on Thursday 31st February, 2008
for 3 CR's **Curtain Up**
Sundays at One 855AM.



My only knowledge of Sue Townsend's work is the Adrian Mole diaries, so I was interested to see something else. The subject matter is confronting as it centres around three ladies suffering from agoraphobia – the fear of going out of one's house. Location is Acton, London. The ladies have agreed, at the instigation of their carer, *Gwenda*, to set up a one-day bazaar and rummage sale in the local Catholic Church Hall. The set took up the whole stage, with double doors centre upstage from the street with a not very well painted stone wall showing. A dominant Christ on the Cross above the doors and religious paintings either side. The only furniture was some chairs and trestle tables for the sale articles. There was a lot of conversation exchanged from stage left to right, resulting in shouting which reached shrieking point too many times. There was a distinct, disconcerting echo, possibly deliberate but more likely because of the size of Heidelberg's stage. There was also a problem in that the stained glass windows either side of the doors showed no light, but when the doors opened it was bright daylight – a trifle distracting.

The three women are of varying ages – *Katrina*, the youngest, is a well-spoken 20 something ex club singer of sorts, who suffered a nasty incident whilst singing in a Leicester club and hasn't been out for about 5 years; *Katrina* is done up in a very fussy, girlish outfit – *Margaret* describes her as looking like Shirley Temple, so you get the picture. Ciara McKenna had some good moments with this character, showing a dumb, self-absorbed exterior who understands more than she is letting on. The next oldest, 30 something Bell Bell or *Isabel*, is a Scottish widow, still pining for her husband and exhibiting a cleaning mania – she has been house bound for quite a while. She is dressed very primly in a plaid skirt and sensible blouse – Freda Mitris conveyed an uptight woman, quietly spoken, who is trying to throw off the memories of her husband. This was a good, controlled performance but I felt that it might have been better to have dropped the Scottish accent, as it did not come over too well. The oldest, 40 something *Margaret*, is a coarsely spoken cockney woman, who reminded me a little of the British comedienne, Catherine Tait's older

woman in her program of sketches. *Margaret* Moloney certainly lifted the action on her entrance half way through the first act, and she gave us quite a few laughs. She did go a bit over the top in the second half, which became arduous at times.

Gwenda, the carer, is the first on stage and was well portrayed by Michelle Tanner as an uptight, bossy individual, with the belief she can do hands on healing, and is absolutely indispensable to all around her. (Michelle also played the small part of a policewoman with work problems who comes in at the end). *Gwenda*'s companion is *Fliss*, a trainee social worker, well played by Kate Ballard. I really liked Kate's ironic air, who has more sense and idea of dealing with agoraphobic folk than *Gwenda* has in one finger!

The action is interspersed with fantasy situations, with songs. The singing was very atonal – perhaps deliberate, but to listen to a minimum of 3 verses of a song was agonising. When a well known song was used, it was pretty excruciating to hear a good melody sung flat. The only one that worked was the World Cup scene with all the cast. There were some obscure songs used, and I am wondering if this music was chosen by the director or part of the script – no acknowledgement is given in the program. Each actor is also given a soliloquy under spotlight, to tell their story, which at times was very touching, especially *Margaret*'s unfortunate path to giving birth to her now delinquent son. But again, these pieces for the most part went on too long. So in conclusion, I have to say that I did not like the construction of the play too much with all this fantasy stuff but again, I can see that to just deal with the women organising their rummage sale would not give you a whole play – perhaps it would be better as a one-acter. Notes say that Sue Townsend herself suffered at one point from agoraphobia, so one appreciates she is writing from experience, and while she was about it, she popped in her opinions on religion, politics and society, and also observed that agoraphobia is only an outward symptom of other deeper problems. I wanted to enjoy the evening, but I found it too disjointed, uneven and long.

THERE ARE LOTS OF ROLES FOR YOU AT HTC

ACTORS NEED NOT APPLY – *but we'd love to have you as well!*

VOLUNTEERS WANTED FOR OUR SET BUILDING TEAM!!!

Can you hammer a nail and handle power tools? If you can then come and join our Set Building Team, if you can't and would like to learn, then come along too!

We want to attract new people to join our team of Set Builders. Members of the Team can be found at the Theatre on Saturdays and occasional weekdays, preparing for productions, de-constructing sets, or just having a chinwag.

If you have thought of coming along to be a part of the team but have not quite got around to it this is the time to get in touch! Do come and have some fun with like minded people who love being part of Show Biz!!

Call the Theatre on **9455 3039** and Dennis Pain will be able to answer any queries and sign you up!



Come along and share the load, the friendships, the satisfactions and the applause when you Set Build at HTC.

ASSISTING WITH TICKET SALES

During the run of our shows would you like to join our team of Ticket Secretaries and take a turn at the box office? You'd be handling bookings and queries and get to greet our lovely audiences.

If you can assist or would like more information, please call June on **9457 4117** and leave your details.



SET PAINTERS – A ROLL(er) AWAITS YOU AT HTC



"I have in mind here a sweeping panorama of Venice and the beautiful Ponte Di Rialto."

The Company would like to hear from you if can assist with painting the sets for our productions.

HTC is known for its wonderful sets and in order to maintain our standard we need to enlist the aid of experienced artists/painters to work with our talented team.

If you have the skills or know of someone who does, then please call the Theatre on **9455 3039**.

WANTED - WARDROBE CUSTODIANS



Our Wardrobe needs more custodians, the rumour that there are actually lots of people in Wardrobe but they just can't be found, lost forever behind the racks of costumes, mislaid in the mountains of shoes, hidden under the hats or flaked out behind the fans is blatantly untrue and is vehemently denied by Wendy Drowley our Wardrobe Manager.

So if you enjoy fooling with fans, hate throwing anything out – (it will come in handy one day), hyperventilate at the sight of a roll of satin, can sew a seam or mend a glove, would love to dress a show and enjoy the company of others who share your passion, then Wendy would love to have you join Wardrobe. Call her on **9455 3039**.



A very pleasant surprise awaited our Secretary, Brett Hunt when he cleared the Company's mail early in the new year. Amongst the bills and brochures was a letter and a very generous cheque from Life Member, Fern Mathews. Fern's generosity is greatly appreciated by the Committee and the donation will be used to assist in the costs associated with transforming the area in front of the Theatre into the Alice Bugge Memorial Garden. This is thought to be particularly appropriate as Alice and Fern were friends even before HTC began. They were both members of the Pos-tel Institute Drama Group and later worked at the CSIRO, Alice in the film unit and Fern in accounts. Both were involved with HTC from its earliest days, Fern was a *Servant Girl* in the first show, **Liliom**,

the production had been 'borrowed' from the CAE Drama Group, in 1952 to 'kick-off' the Company.

Although acting was not her forté, Fern excelled in backstage roles, often supporting productions directed by Alice. Their friendship was such that she allowed Alice to 'drag her in' and took a non speaking acting role in the one-act play **St Patrick's Day**, where she had to stand and hold a banner saying 'Publican', she must have done a great job as did Alice as director, the production won the Ballarat South Street Festival that year, it was 1967.

Fern has always been a keen supporter of the Company, a familiar face over the years at every opening night, in the early days riding her Vespa, plus pillion passenger, from her home in Hoddle Street to the Company's current venue. The sound of which George Bugge taped for another show. So that is Fern, staunch supporter and there when needed. Thanks Fern, from us all.

Personality Profiles

Lena Minto

HTC committee member and actress

by Suzannah Rowley



left: 2001 Lena in her first role, as Sarina in ELT's production of *Waiting In The Wings*.



Lena's involvement with HTC began as an audience member from the early days at the Rachabite Hall in Ivanhoe until in 2001 she became an integral part of Heidelberg Theatre Company, as a committee member, a stage manager and working on publicity. But she is also a talented actress.

In the late 90s, Lena launched into theatre life with a drama group in a "Life Activities" organisation that performed stand-up comedy routines and skits during scene changes for singing and dancing group "The All Stars."

Lena quickly discovered her passion for acting and in 2000 she undertook a nine month course called "Actors Showcase" where colleagues advised her to audition for professional theatre. Amongst some tough competition, Lena found an agent and accepted her first role in the Australian TV series "Stingers." At the end of her course Lena also uncovered a hidden talent for crying on stage! Tears flowed in a wonderful scene in *Anastasia* where she played a grand duchess of Russia embracing a child believed to be her late granddaughter.

This talent resurfaced again at Melbourne airport when, Lena played the improvised role of a distressed mother waiting for her son in a filmed recreation of the effects of a plane crash. Her characterisation was so lifelike, those tears again, that a policeman approached her and said, "*We know you're acting but the people here don't, and you've got them worried!*"

But it was the poignancy and raw emotion of theatre that triggered Lena's acting career and after gaining some experience in television her stage debut was as *Sarina* in *Waiting in the Wings* at Eltham Little Theatre for which she received enthusiastic reviews in the local papers.

Lena has worked for many groups: Malvern, Brighton, Eltham and Gaslight Theatre. At Heidelberg she played a *Maid*, a wonderful comic part, in *Born Yesterday* in 2005 and her current role *Emma* in *Over the River and Through the Woods*, is one she has acted before, at Malvern in 2005! Lena says she wanted to play the part again, "*Only because it is such a wonderful show!*" She says, "*I like everything about it. It is a very funny show and it also has a lot of poignancy in it – and I get to cry!*"

Heidelberg congratulates Lena on her outstanding career and we eagerly await her next performance in April!

Note: *Over the River And Through the Woods*, by Joe DiPietro and directed by Geoff Hickey, is showing April 23 to May 10, 2008.

APRIL

Saturday 12th 10.30am

Saturday 19th 10.30am

Wednesday 23rd 8.15pm

Tuesday 29th 7.30pm

MAY

Saturday 10th 8.15pm

Friday 16th 8.00pm

Tuesday 20th 7.30pm

JUNE

Tuesday 17th 7.30pm

Working Bee with Lunch

Working Bee with Lunch

FIRST NIGHT –

Over The River And Through the Woods

Heidelberg Film Society – Look Both Ways

FINAL NIGHT –

Over The River And Through the Woods

HTC Youth – **Shakespeare's Shorts**

Heidelberg Film Society – Dial M For Murder

Heidelberg Film Society-Gentleman Prefer Blondes

What's the Goss?

WHO, WHAT, WHERE???

That great Melbourne institution, the Comedy Festival is the showcase in 2008 for numbers of actors well known to HTC audiences.

Playing Upstairs at Dante's during the 2008 Carnival of the Damned Funny is **Everybody down! It's all going pear shaped**, directed by Wayne Pearn's Hoy Polloy Theatre. It features Rose Capuano, Julie-Anne Donnellan, Ben Starick, Wayne Pearn, James Thomson and Evin Bryant. The Season April 2nd – 5th (dress on April 1st!) Bookings call **0415 613 651**.

And you can see David McCrae in **Dimboola** at La Mama, from 26 March – 13 April. Bookings on **9347 6142**.

Jonne Finnemore is directing **Romeo and Juliet** for STAG, she appeared at HTC in **Front Page** in 2006 and in **Pygmalion** in 2002.

STAGE MANAGER WANTED

for **Angels in America**

Season 9th – 26 July

A terrific opportunity to work on a great play with a terrific team.

If you are interested or would like to talk to the Director,

Bruce Akers, contact him on

9375 2254.

HELP!!! needed at the WORKING BEES

for

Over The River And Through The Woods

Saturdays

12th & 19th April

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**