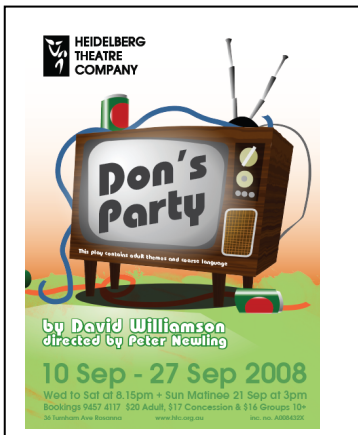


PROMPTS

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE HEIDELBERG THEATRE COMPANY



Don's Party

by David Williamson
directed by Peter Newling

10th – 27th September, 2008

Wednesday to Saturday at 8.15pm,

Matinee Sunday 21st September at 3pm

Subscribers requiring to alter their chosen night or reserve their booking are asked to call BEFORE Monday, 1st September, 2008.

This play contains adult themes and course language

Our fourth season is the Australian comedy classic **Don's Party**, by David Williamson. Written in 1971 and first performed in 1972, it follows the fortunes of 11 people at a party thrown by *Don Henderson* on the night of the 1969 federal election. An ALP tragic, *Don* and his friends are expecting Gough Whitlam to overthrow the Gorton Government - but as the night goes on, the chances of a Labor victory sink, as does the party. The play was famously made into a film by Bruce Beresford in 1976, starring Graham Kennedy, Ray Barrett and John Hargreaves amongst others

Set just up the road from HTC - in Lower Plenty - it's almost unbelievable that it's taken us this long to stage **Don's Party**. The play has been described as "a boozy, brawly romp" and was both praised and reviled by the critics at the time of its release. With very little in the way of storyline, it's a wonderful snapshot of Melbourne life at the end of the 60s. Its language is coarse, and it's characters unattractive - but it's absolutely absorbing and biting funny.

We welcome Peter Newling in his first directing gig with HTC. Those with a long memory may remember Peter from a couple of on-stage roles with us - in **Flea In Her Ear** and **The Cherry Orchard**. Peter has directed at many of Melbourne's leading non-professional theatre companies, including Williamstown, Peridot, Malvern, Brighton, Mitcham and Waverley. Some of his favourites have included **Gross Indecency** (the Three Trials of Oscar Wilde), **Steel Magnolias**, **Crimes of the Heart**, 'Allo 'Allo, **The Anniversary**, **The Cemetery Club** and **One Flew Over The Cuckoos Nest**.

Peter has assembled a classy cast for this production. We welcome back the versatile Cameron South (Actor and Stage Manager for **Angels in America**) in the role of *Don*. His wife, *Kath*, will be played by a Heidelberg first-timer, Janine Evans. *Kath's* Liberal voting friends *Simon* and *Jody* will be played by two familiar faces - Simon Fenn (**Iceman Cometh** and **Memory of Water**) and Melissa New (**Caravan**). We welcome two new comers to the roles of *Mal* and *Jenny* - Matthew Ray and Chris Perkins - both very experienced

performers from around the traps. David Miller (**Caravan**) makes a welcome return as the brooding dentist *Evan*, accompanied by Vanessa Alpins, making her Heidelberg debut. Damian Coffey will join us for the first time in the role of *Mack* (made famous by Graham Kennedy in the film - no pressure, Damian!!). It's great to have Craig Blumeris (**The Cherry Orchard**) back with us in the pivotal role of *Cooley*, alongside Ali Hooper as *Susan*.

Equally classy is the list of people in the off-stage roles. The evergreen Bruce Akers has recovered sufficiently from **Angels** to be the Production Coordinator. A big welcome to Stage Manager Connie Bram, who joins us for the first time. Another Heidelberg first timer is our lighting designer Craig Pearcey who, like Connie, brings years of experience to HTC. Old hands George Bissett and Tim McLaughlan will be helping out with the sound design, and Wendy Drowley and Lois Connor coordinating the 60s costumes (we're hoping for at least one safari suit) with Maureen McInerney sourcing the furnishings and props. The set design duties were handled by George Tranter (who recently popped in from Thailand to see how it was shaping up!), and construction is under the sure hand of Dennis Pain.

Rehearsals are going very well - and indications are that it's going to be a great production.

When it was written, Williamson was lauded for his ability to accurately capture the mood, the attitudes and the language of the era. Now, thirty-seven years later, it's an interesting insight into how Australian/Melbourne culture has changed. The people in the play have never heard of microwaves, personal computers, the internet, email, random breath testing, political correctness, colour TV, global warming the list goes on.

To many who remember the time, it's a bit scary that this is now seen as a period piece! Surely it wasn't THAT long ago!

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BOOKINGS & SUBSCRIPTIONS 9457 4117



Review

Angels In America

A Gay Fantasia on National Themes

Part One: Millennium Approaches

by Tony Kushner

Directed by Bruce Akers.

Reviewed by John Gunn

Performance: Thursday, 10 July 2008 for
3CR's *Curtain Up* Sundays at One 855AM

I suppose most thespians know what Tony Kushner's **Angels in America** is about but for anyone who doesn't: the plot deals – both realistically and fantasmagorically – with the emergence of the AIDS epidemic in America against a background of increasing social conservatism represented by the Reagan administration. There are two separate but counterpointed and ultimately interlinked stories. On the one hand, we have the troubled tale of *Prior, Louis* and their openly gay friends; on the other, the contortions of the closeted attorney *Roy Cohn* and his equally closeted married protégé *Joe*.

Champion curmudgeon that I am, I'll take some convincing that this overwrought, overwritten, overlong and perhaps now even dated extravaganza is the "masterpiece of the American theatre" director Bruce Akers' program note reckons. But that's in the bye and bye because I basically enjoyed the production as a production – and that's what a review's supposed to be about, isn't it?

On the second night performance I saw **Angels**, the players' attack wasn't perhaps as full-blooded and all-guns-blazing as it might have been. The momentum, especially towards the end - this is a three-hour, two-interval escapade – seemed to flag a little and the peaks and valleys both within and between some of the many scenes became just undulating territory populated by characters sometimes saying lines without quite enough of the feeling that gives meaning. And, yes, I know the gender-neutral casting of the minor characters is according to the script but it needed a bit more refinement. Accents, too, sometimes blurred clarity, particularly among the doubled characters. Scene changes tended to the flaccid and a goodly ration of the humor of the piece (and there's quite a bit of it, despite the theme) often seemed to have slipped below the radar.

Yet don't get me wrong because, reservations aside, the core of the production's adamant solid. And that's because of the strength, commitment and intensity of its six not inconsiderably experienced principals: Tim Constantine, Justin Stevens and Peter Tedford on the one (liberal) side; Paul Kennedy, Angelo De Cata and Rhiannon Leach on the (conservative) other. A powerful and persuasive sextet that had the ability to breathe life into characters that are, in varying degrees, essentially just skeletal representations of ideological positions. And how often do we see "names" such as Juliet Hayday and Kate Bowers content to do the walk-ons!

Requiring, as it does, many locations and, more ingeniously, walls to part to allow for a heavenly presence in its last few moments, **Angels** represents quite a challenge to its designer. George Tranter's setting was one of those that looked simple but clearly would not have been the easiest to build and finish, so I'll pay tribute to scenic artist Leanne Cole and Denis



Pain and his construction team as well as to the creative imagination behind them.

Jason Bovaird's lighting's nothing short of splendid: some of the best I've seen in a long time in the straight theatre. Clearly delineating the five main acting areas and giving each a mood appropriate to its place in the action (bedroom, hospital ward, park, office, mind-space and so on), the lights hugely enhanced the action - even if the haze essential to the spots' atmospheric impact occasionally fudged facial expressions on the upstage rostra and made it difficult to discern exactly what was pictured on the rear wall! The climactic arrival of the otherworldly messenger was every bit as stunning as it must be.

This Australian non-professional premiere season's definitely not one for folk squeamish about forthright language and some hot action but Heidelberg's certainly given us what's likely to be a rare opportunity to revisit a notable contribution to modern American theatre. Few companies would have made such a bold choice.

VALE – JOYCE WHITFIELD



In 1972, three 'originals' starred in HTC's 21st birthday, from left; foundation member Joyce Whitfield, first director Stella Dunn and founder Reg Rudd.

It is with sadness that we advise of the death of Life Member, Joyce Whitfield, the last of the founding members of HTC, (Heidelberg Repertory, 1952).

Joyce was a gracious and knowledgeable lady, whose dedication and vision helped steer the company to its high standing today. She acted in the first play presented in 1952, **A Lady Mismaid** then in **Harlequinade** and **Lace on her Petticoat**. Joyce directed **The Browning Version** in 1952 and **The Price of Perfection** in 1958. She was Artistic Director in the 70s and Stage Manager extraordinaire for 35 plays, setting a remarkable standard. Joyce then perfected the role of Front of House Manager for many years at the Rechabite Hall. She was a Committee member for decades, and one of the people who did everything in the early days, including properties, costumes and make-up.



Joyce holds the can while Pat Thraves, fellow foundation member, makes some last minute touches to the scenery for *Dear Charles* in 1960.

Joyce encouraged the move to Rosanna, a huge step, and until last year, saw every Matinee in seat A 11 - a valued and irreplaceable presence. (fondly remembered as my *Mum* in *Lace*)

thank you Joyce.

from Wendy Drowley

Audition Notice

The Woman in Black

**Sunday 7th September from 11.30am – 1.30pm
and Monday 8th September from 7.30 pm.**

at the **1st Rosanna Scout Hall**

De Winton Park, St. James Rd, Rosanna. (Melway 32 A2)

(The Scout Hall is on the same side of the railway line as the Heidelberg Theatre Company and about 4 minutes walk from the Theatre via Station Rd and Grove Rd.

There is vehicle access opposite Manton Street)

Season: Wed 19th November – Sat. 6th December 2008
(Matinee Sunday 30th November.)

by appointment only –

Director – Shane Ryan – phone 0425 780 201

THE STORY: A junior solicitor Arthur Kipps, attends the funeral of Mrs Alice Drablow, somewhere on England's bleak East Coast. When he glimpses a wasted young woman, dressed all in black, at the funeral, a creeping sense of unease begins to take hold, None of the locals will talk of the woman in black nor of her terrible purpose.

Years later, as an old man, he recounts his experiences to an actor in a desperate attempt to exorcise the ghosts of the past. The shadowy, half heard and sometimes only half-seen action builds to a chilling climax.

CHARACTER DESCRIPTIONS

All actors must project the ages listed for each character.

Older Kipps / Actor: Age - mid 40s – 60s. Initially playing the older Kipps, then a number of characters; this role requires a number of regional accents and physical styles. This is a challenging role for an experienced actor.

Young Kipps / Actor: Age - 20s. Initially plays the actor, then the young Kipps. This role requires the ability to play the pretentious Actor and the earnest Kipps who is eventually terrified by his experience. This is also a challenging role for an experienced actor.

The Woman: Age – 20s. This role is a non-speaking part but crucial to the play. Requiring composure and physical grace, the role uses makeup and costuming to create much of the tension in the play. The role would suit an inexperienced actor with a background in movement or dance.

Anyone interested in auditioning is welcome to contact the director to discuss the play or obtain soft copies of the script.

A Plea for FOH Volunteers

Would you like to become more involved with your theatre?

We are looking for extra volunteers to supplement our list of Front of House helpers so, if you enjoy interacting with others and would like to help with FOH duties one evening during a show's run, (or even two if you enjoy it!) I would be only too happy to receive a call from you and to explain what it's all about – although I'm sure you will have a general idea through your past attendances at the theatre.

My name's Patricia; please call me on **9459 2235** and we'll have a chat.

WANTED: PEOPLE TO DO THEATRE MAINTENANCE

If you have basic handy-person skills and an hour or two to spare each week, we need your help to keep the Theatre ship-shape.

For details call Dennis on – 9455 3039

Audition Notice

GROUP AUDITIONS

for the **HTC Youth** production of

A Midsummer Night's Dream

will be held on

Monday 1st September
and Wednesday 3rd September
from 7.00 pm.

at **2C Staley Street, Brunswick, 3056**

We are looking for actors aged 15 to 25 to take part in this December production. The season runs between 7th and 21st December.

Actors are required to prepare one Shakespearean monologue and one non Shakespearean monologue, each approximately one minute long.

There are non-acting roles associated with the production to be filled, in both technical and artistic areas.

If you would like to be a part of the show in any capacity, or want further information, please email Doug Montgomery at

auditions@brokenmirror.com

AUGUST

Tuesday 19 th	1.30pm 7.30pm	Heidelberg Film Society	- Bedazzled - Bedazzled
Saturday 30 th	10.00am	Working Bee with Lunch	
SEPTEMBER			
Monday 1 st	7.00pm &	HTC Youth AUDITION -	
Wednesday 3 rd	7.00pm	A Midsummer Night's Dream	
Saturday 6 th	10.00am	Working Bee with Lunch	
Sunday 7 th	11.30am	AUDITION - The Woman In Black	
Monday 8 th	7.30pm	AUDITION - The Woman In Black	
Wednesday 10 th	8.15pm	FIRST NIGHT - Don's Party	
Tuesday 16 th	1.30pm 7.30pm	Heidelberg Film Society - Showboat - Rebel Without A Cause	
Saturday 27 th	8.15pm	FINAL NIGHT - Don's Party	
OCTOBER			
Tuesday 21 st	1.30pm 7.30pm	Heidelberg Film Society - (to be advised) - The Oyster Farmer	

What's the Goss?

WHO, WHAT, WHERE???

Dear Ed, I am so proud I had to drop a note to let HTC know of the activities of the next generation. James Christensen (son of Catherine Ryan Christensen) and Jackson Cairnduff (son of Leanne Marshall Cairnduff) have just finished a season with the children's chorus of Opera Australia, featuring in their production of **Carmen**.

The boys then shared the role of *Billy*, the autistic son of the family (they'll do alternate performances) at the Malthouse in the ChamberMade Opera's **the Children's Bach**". Jackson also appeared in an article on **the Children's Bach** in the Age on Sat 21st June. Jack and James sing together with the National Boys' Choir of Australia and heard of the auditions through them.

Maybe HTC will see them in a few years! *Regards to all at HTC, Cathy*

Another bit of news is that Joyce Sharpe has had her 90th birthday, with her son Alastair visiting from the USA. Joyce was Ticket Secretary for many years, and Alastair directed, acted and wrote some of our great pantomimes.

On election night in 1969 Don may have been having a party, but the cabinet display in the foyer shows what the girls were up to back in 1900s - winning the vote for women. HTC subscriber Bev Wright, is a member of the group that designed and crafted the items, the Doncaster & Templestowe Handweavers and Spinners, for the Woolcraft Show in Bendigo in 2001 to commemorate 100 years of Federation. Vida Goldstein, suffragist and political candidate, features in the display.

Highlights from her life were re-inacted in **The Immigrant's Friend and The Woman Campaigner**, presented by HTC for the Winter in Banyule Festival

HELP!!! needed at the
WORKING BEES

for

Don's Party

Saturdays

30th Aug & 6th Sept

from 10.00am

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