Heidelberg Theatre Company is proud to present A Skull In Connemara, a biting contemporary Irish comedy by Martin McDonagh. Mr McDonagh has won numerous awards in recent years, including the Evening Standard Award for Most Promising Playwright, and four Tony Awards for the Broadway production of The Beauty Queen of Leenane. In 2006, he won an Oscar for his short film Six Shooter and earned a Best Original Screenplay nomination in 2009 for his work on In Bruges.

Part thriller-whodunit, part pop-culture farce, part profound rumination on rural Irish character, A Skull in Connemara swings between mystery, mayhem and comic madness. The story unfolds as Mick Dowd is hired to exhume the bones in certain sections of the local cemetery to make room for new arrivals. This year promises to be problematic however, as he is assigned to dig up the bones of his late beloved wife, who died under increasingly suspicious circumstances.

We welcome first time director, Justin Stephens, who is best known for his acting roles. He has performed frequently at HTC in The Woman in Black, Angels In America, Dinner, and Noises Off. He was also assistant director to Geoff Hickey on last years production of Over the River and Through the Woods.

The talented and experienced cast that brings the crazy characters to life includes Paul Kennedy (Angels In America), Sandy Green (Over The River and Through The Woods) and two newcomers to HTC, Brian Farrell and Nick Walter. Brian has been performing in New Zealand and Nick is a very experienced actor and well known for his work with Mitcham and Brighton Theatre companies.

Behind the scenes is a hard working production team, headed by Production Coordinator Bruce Akers and includes Jason Bovaird on lighting design, Maureen McInerney on wardrobe and Siobhan Earley as Stage Manger. Scenic design is by Justin Stephens and Wendy Drowley who is also tasked with the complex role of set dressing. Chris McLean has been instrumental in turning the artistic vision of the set into a technical reality. Dennis Pain heads the set building team.

The production promises to be a hilarious night and tickets are already selling fast. Book now to avoid disappointment.

Winter in Banyule Festival at HTC

HTC is holding another wonderful
Open Day and Clothes and Costume Sale on Saturday 15th August
10.am to 4 pm.
have a tour of the theatre,
a coffee and chat and buy a treasure.
CLOUDSTREET by Nick Enright & Justin Monjo from the novel by Tim Winton, Directed by Chris Baldock
Reviewed by Nicky McFarlane, 3rd May, 2009 for 3CR’s CURTAIN UP Sundays at One (855 AM)

Tim Winton’s Cloudstreet is a big book. Nick Enright and Justin Monjo’s adaptation of the book for the stage is big – four and a half hours including two intervals. In that time we, the audience, live and work through thirty years of the lives of the two families - the Pickles and the Lambs – who occupy the aging, shabby house in Cloud Street, Perth. I emphasize “work” because concentration is needed, first to sort out who belongs to which family, and then to follow the threads of all their stories. It is worth the effort I assure you. By the end of the play you feel that you know these people as you know your neighbours, perhaps better.

Craig Blumeris, known only as The Man, is the unobtrusive narrator, watching silently from the wings, perched on a pile of boxes or following the characters as he tells us what we need to know to keep up with the story. At times he comments on the moral dilemmas and personal troubles as their stories unfold. His quiet compassionate speech and silent movements are in stark contrast to the exuberance, high energy, loud voices and constant activity of the youngsters of the families.

The Pickles: father Sam (Peter Prenga), mother Dolly (Kellie Bray), Ted (Andrew Mayes), Chubb (Matt Reynolds) and Rose (Rose Braybrook) own the house in Cloud Street, left to them by a relation; fortuitously when the family needed shelter after Sam was injured in a work accident and lost a hand. He makes not working a lifetime ambition, along with gambling. Sam is not a model father, and Dolly is no mother to her children, ignoring them while having her way with all the men in town and drinking to excess. The boys do their own thing and Rose, still a child, finds herself cook, bottle-washer and her mother’s nurse. Sam wants to sell the house, but the will says that it is not possible for 20 years, so he rents half the house to the Lambs.

The Lambs: father Lester (Bruce Akers) is a Bible basher of sorts, an upright man; mother Oriel (Anne Pagram) is quietly dominant in the family. The children are Quick (Tim Constantine), Fish (Chris Young), Lon (James Antonas), Hatty (Caroline Buckle), Elaine (Maree Barnett) and Red (Melanie Rowe). They come from the country after Fish, aged nine, almost drowned on a fishing trip. Under water for some time, he was resuscitated but left brain damaged, and Quick and his father blame themselves. Fish relates only to Quick who is his constant carer.

The story focuses mostly on Rose, Fish and Quick. We see Rose growing up, finding a job as soon as possible, falling for a student who writes poetry, but realising that he is a patronising snob she leaves and finally finds that Quick, someone she has known for most of her life, is the one for her. Rose Braybrook gives her a lovely child’s innocence, a teenager’s naivety, an attractive to men, including Lester in one of his foolish moments. By the time she wants Rose’s support she is looking bedraggled and very much the worst for wear.

Except for the principals all the actors play various people outside the families and manage the changes of costume and character very well.

Altogether, this is a powerful production, and everyone involved deserves a big round of applause. Thanks to Heidelberg.
AUDITION NOTICE
Heidelberg Theatre Company's production of

Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead

By Tom Stoppard
Directed by Chris McLean
Season – September 17 to October 3, 2009

AUDITION DATES
Sunday June 28, 2009 from 2:00 pm*
Audition venue – Scout Hall, De Winton Park, St James Rd, Rosanna – Melway 32 A2 A1
(The Scout Hall on the same side of the railway line as our theatre. It is at the end of St James Road and backs on to the railway line.

Tuesday June 30, 2009 from 7.30 pm*
Audition venue – Heidelberg Theatre, 36 Turnham Ave Rosanna - Melway 32.
Auditions are strictly by appointment only.
Contact the director via cfmclean@hotmail.com to book a time or for any queries

What's the play about? If you know the play you can skip this bit. Not familiar with Tom Stoppard’s works? Then you may find the first read of “Roz and Guil” a little bewildering – as is the world to many of Stoppard’s characters! If you enjoy the wit and banter of Oscar Wilde’s The Importance of Being Earnest then you’ll enjoy Stoppard’s comic wordplay also, as you get to know him. Stoppard, a theatre critic before becoming a playwright, was fascinated by the skills and styles of other noted dramatists such as Shakespeare - “Roz and Guil” takes its storyline from Hamlet, and indeed a lot of Hamlet text is included in this play – and Samuel Beckett – like the two main characters in Waiting For Godot Roz and Guil spend a good many moments ‘filling in time’ while waiting for something to happen. So, when first staged, “Roz and Guil” was acknowledged as combining other theatrical styles in a fresh, exciting and very amusing way.

Characters
• Hamlet – 20s early 30s, Prince of Denmark, fractious, moody and maybe mad, which – given his family history – may be not unreasonable.
• Horatio – friend of Hamlet (and the one who first alerted Hamlet that his father’s ghost was stalking Elsinore castle)
• Gertrude – Hamlet’s mother and Queen of Denmark, recently re-married – to Claudius
• Claudius – Hamlet’s uncle (brother to recently-deceased Hamlet senior) and King of Denmark
• Polonius – Senior advisor to King Claudius, full of wise counsel but apt to meddle where he shouldn’t
• Ophelia – 20s, attractive, daughter of Polonius, in love with Hamlet and not coping well with being spurned by him
• Laertes – 20s early 30s, brother of Ophelia, fights a ‘friendly’ duel with Hamlet (but that happens offstage in our play)
• Rosencrantz – 20s-early 30s, old schoolmate of Hamlet and pal of Guil, likes playing games, a little naïve but tries hard to understand, doesn’t like being confused.
• Guildenstern – 20s-early 30s, old schoolmate of Hamlet and pal of Ros, ponders energetically the world about him, despite his learned approach not giving many answers.
• The Player – 40s-mid 60s, a world-wise actor, knows how to play an audience, and to maintain dignity even while almost begging for coin.
• Tragedians – a group of versatile performers led by The Player
• Court attendants, guards, soldiers

Audition preparation:
• Prepare 2 short monologues, about one minute each will do, one from Shakespeare and one from a more recent English play.
• If Stoppard is new to you, read The Real Inspector Hound, written about the same time as “Roz and Guil.”
Personality Profile – LEANNE COLE: set artist/ curator of HTC’s Art Space/ ticket sales

Leanne Cole is one of Heidelberg Theatre Company’s talented set artists who discovered her passion for the arts in grade six! An initial interest in sketching at school later developed into a wonderful exploration of sculpture, painting, drawing and set design. Leanne completed a Bachelor of Fine Art at the Victorian College of the Arts in 2006 and has a portfolio of artwork that is conceptual, compelling and very striking.

In Leanne’s first solo show at the Dianne Tanzer Gallery in 2008, she created a series of sculptures called White Trash: plaster moulds of discarded items tumbling out of white wheelie bins and trash cans—a sobering depiction of mass consumerism “trashing” our planet. Her beautiful still life drawings of fruit, bottles, glasses and biscuits left sitting on tables, were deeply influenced by the Chernobyl disaster and evoke a haunting impression of the things we leave behind if we suddenly abandoned our homes.

In 1999, Leanne joined Heidelberg Theatre as a set builder and was a stage manager for three years! She began working as a set artist on Noises Off and designed her first set for Dinner in 2007. “Dinner was one of my favourites. It was just a fantastic experience,” Leanne says. “I loved the floor, it was so hard to paint and I sprained my ankle really badly while I was trying to paint and I was hobbling around everywhere!” The Dinner Game was also a highlight—the beautiful painting of the Parisian skyline took only 5 hours to complete and formed a delightful backdrop to the escapades of Pierre Brochant (Chris McLean) and François Pignon (Laurie Jezard).

Creating a set is a delicate art: it involves a close collaboration between the designer and the director who must strike a fine balance between designing an attractive and interesting set that does not detract from the play.” Leanne has worked on many plays at Heidelberg: Noises Off, Art, Cat on a Hot Tin Roof, Memory of Water, Dinner and The Dinner Game. She also assists in ticket sales and is the curator of the Heidelberg Theatre Art Space. Leanne is excited about working with Chris McLean on Heidelberg’s September production: Rosencrantz & Guildenstern Are Dead by Tom Stoppard. “This is the first time I’ve really designed a set for Chris. I’m excited, I can visualise it myself.” She says.

Heidelberg congratulates Leanne and all our artists on their fantastic work at the Theatre— they certainly know how to bring a play to life!

Vale Bud Tingwell.

Charles "Bud" Tingwell - Past President and Patron of the Victorian Drama League, was a staunch advocate and friend of Amateur Theatre in Victoria.

Members of HTC attended the very moving service at St. Paul's Cathedral. Bud was farwelled with a standing ovation. (photo: Bud at the VDL Awards, 1999)