



# BACKSTAGE

The Newsletter of Sunnybank Theatre Group Inc

June, 2009

[www.stg.org.au](http://www.stg.org.au)

## Yet another wonderful Musical wows our audiences! "The Best Little Whorehouse in Texas"



After the fabulous season & success of STG's recent Musical Comedy, let's hear from the Director, Deirdre Robinson pictured on the right with the two principle characters 'Miss Mona' & 'Sheriff Ed Earl Dodd', played by Lesley Davis and Marc James.



"Despite the fact that two whores were seen shopping at Carindale (obviously cast members in their t-shirts), "The Best Little Whorehouse in Texas" has been closed down!

February saw the start of rehearsals for our singers and musicians then after the final performance of 'The One Day of the Year' we were able to move onto the stage and start creating our whorehouse. Such a slick, modern play demanded a slick, workable set and Ben's ingenious idea of doors and steps was truly inspirational. Our doors and steps were duly constructed by Paul and John, under the direction of Mark and collectively we worked out just how we were going to make seventeen scene changes happen with a minimum of fuss and in double-quick time. Ashley's



lighting design ensured we were well lit & the whorehouse was ready to receive our patrons!

A fantastic cast and crew worked tirelessly for seven weeks on lines, harmonies, dancing (thanks Lesley and Ashley), and coordinating the organisation of set changes. Courtney controlled the back-

stage proceedings, and Joanne and Stuart kept a watchful eye from the lighting box. And those amazing costumes - thank you Linda.



You were truly an amazing, talented bunch of people and you all have my sincere thanks, with a very special thank you to John for his



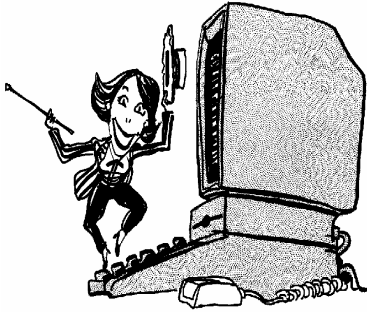
advice and support.



Most importantly, more than one thousand happy patrons, many who had never been to an STG show before, came along and thoroughly enjoyed



## From the President's Computer.



Hi to all our members and a warm welcome to our newcomers.

Again our Theatre has produced another bright and energetic show. "Best Little Whorehouse in Texas" was received extremely well with positive feedback. My congratulations to both Director Deirdre Robinson and Musical Director Matthew Bass and their hard-working cast and crew for a successful season.

The voice of our Patrons and members is stronger than you may think. Strange comment? Maybe. Last year the previous committee had to make a decision on either trying to restore the ageing seating or put something new in their place. Hence a number of black and red cube seats were purchased. The feedback started, and as you will notice that we are reverting to the same style of seating, only this time with storage underneath. The others will be sold on EBay. Thanks for your comments.

During "The One Day of the Year", Stephanie Ellis introduced her delicious home made biscuits for the matinee's afternoon teas. You can imagine how they were received with one patron in particular commenting how it was "bloody lovely having homemade biscuits". Again our life member Bob Gow has graced us with the return of his well known patty cakes with passionfruit icing. Mmmmm.

While trying to negotiate our car park (during shows) you will notice some bollards and tapes have been erected. While making it a little more orderly I am trying to allow more cars to fit in. An area has been left for emergency vehicles (hope we never have to use it) and I will ensure by next show we will have some parking areas for the Disabled.

As promised at a committee meeting, we finally gave the men's toilet a makeover just in time for the opening of the show. I am led to believe that many of our females cast members (after checking the men's toilet) want to know what we have planned for the Ladies. A special thanks to Cheryl Nunn for making the curtains and the canvas painting.

For shows, all volunteers can be seen wearing traditional Front of House colours with name tags which makes them easily identifiable. The Duty Manager Janet Noack trialed the concept of Pre-paid Interval Drinks and your feedback would be appreciated. The result of our raffle will be in the next edition of our Newsletter. Please watch this space to find out where the raffle money is going. Until next time, **Kay Halford**

## *Audition Call for . . . . .*



## *"Rebecca"*

**Daphne du Maurier's 'Classic Masterpiece'**

**Director — Anne Ross**

**Assistant Director — Kay Halford**

**AUDITION DATE — Sunday, July 5, 2009 at 3:00pm**

**AUDITION TIME BY APPOINTMENT—PLEASE CALL Anne Ross 3273 6107**

**WHERE: At STG Theatre, cnr Mains & Beenleigh Rd Sunnybank, Brisbane.**

**SEASON RUNS: 11 - 26 September 2009**

### **Characters:**

**Maxim de Winter the husband 35-45**

**Mrs. De Winter the young bride 25-30**

**Frank Crawley the estate manager & friend of Maxims 35-50**

**Mrs. Danvers the obsessive, destructive housekeeper. 45-55**

**Frith the butler 45-60**

**Beatrice Lacey Maxim's older sister 45-55**

**Giles Lacey husband of Beatrice 45-55**

**Jack Favell Rebecca's mischief making cousin 35-55**

**Colonel Julyan the Chief Constable 45-55**

**Robert the footman & William the boatman played by the same person 25-45**

**More details on [www.stg.org.au/stg/web/page/auditions](http://www.stg.org.au/stg/web/page/auditions)**

## *"Rebecca" . . . . . a brief synopsis. . . .*

Set in the 1930's in Manderlay, Maxim de Winter's country house in Cornwall. A romantic and intriguing story of Maxim's second wife as she slowly pieces together her husband's tragic and unhappy past when married to the beautiful, but willfully treacherous Rebecca. It is as moving and exciting as the book upon which it is based & Daphne du Maurier's strongly drawn characters, including the obsessed, malicious housekeeper Mrs. Danvers are still as powerful, engaging and true as when it was first written. It is a truly epic Gothic Romance.



A scene from the 'Alfred Hitchcock' 1940 Movie of "Rebecca"



Our **Patron** and Councillor for MacGregor Ward, Graham Quirk, holds the position of Chairman for Infrastructure and is also responsible for International Relations and Multicultural Affairs. He also holds the Office of Deputy Mayor.

He continues to support Sunnybank Theatre Group and recently sent the theatre this lovely letter confirming that support.

“The Sunnybank Theatre Group has a long and proud history of entertaining Brisbane audiences.

Built around a passion for the Arts, the group targets productions with broad appeal. From thrillers to musicals and scenes that tear your sides apart with laughter, this is a theatre group that loves to give their

all to satisfy an audience. At a budget price these productions represent the best value for money in town.

For those of you who are first time visitors to a Sunnybank Theatre Group production, I am sure it won't be your last. For members and regular theatre goers it is good to see you just keep coming back. Local theatre for local people is where Brisbane entertainment is at. The players deserve your support and encouragement as they play their part in enriching Brisbane's fine arts and culture.

So sit back, relax and enjoy as the curtain opens on Act1.

Best wishes to you all,

Graham Quirk



## *Some trivia - Arts and Theatre... "Quotes"*



*From Actors, Playwrights, Poets and Critics!*

**I think I love and reverence all arts equally, only putting my own just above the others; because in it I recognize the union and culmination of my own. To me it seems as if when God conceived the world, that was Poetry; He formed it, and that was Sculpture; He colored it, and that was Painting; He peopled it with living beings, and that was the grand, divine, eternal Drama.**— very profound, by Edmund Vance Cooke, a 20th Century Poet who died in 1932.

Oliver Goldsmith writes, **"On the stage he was natural, simple, affecting 'Twas only that when he was off, he was acting'.** Some sound advice from famous actors: British Actor Kenneth Haigh, **"You need three things in the theatre--the play, the actors and the audience,--and each must give something."**

Actress Kate Reid, **"Acting is not being emotional, but being able to express emotion."**

Actor Paul Newman, **"Acting is a question of absorbing other people's personalities and adding some of your own experience."**

Renowned British actor Sir Alec Guinness, **"Acting is happy agony."**

And early film actor and comedian W.C. Fields, **"Start every day off with a smile and get it over with!"**

George Burns the infamous American comedy actor in film and TV, who died just after his 100th birthday, said **"You can't help getting older, but you don't have to get old"**. And..... **"Too bad that all the people who know how to run the country are busy driving taxicabs and cutting hair."**

The French dramatist, Jean Anouilh said, **"A good actor must never be in love with anyone but himself"**.

Whilst another French author, Alfred Jarry writes, **"The virtue of dress rehearsals is that they are a free show for a select group of artists and friends of the author, and where for a unique evening the audience is almost expurgated of idiots"**.

Playwright, Alan Jay Lerner writes, **"Coughing in the theatre is not a respiratory ailment. It is a criticism"**.

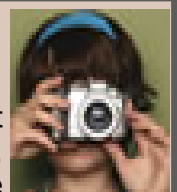
And to finish off, a few from the famous Irish playwright Oscar Wilde! **"All that I desire to point out is the general principle that life imitates art far more than art imitates life"**. **"The stage is not merely the meeting place of all the arts, but is also the return of art to life"**. And.....**"The play was a great success but the audience was a disaster"**.

All sound advice!



## **STG PHOTOGRAPHY by Kayleen Gibson**

The quality of STG's newsletters depends so much on the wonderful pictures that are included which wouldn't be possible without STG's fabulous photographer, Kayleen! She supplies us with all STG's photographic needs that are used in the theatre and here in the newsletter. Copies of the box office poster, green room collage & many other photographs are available for purchase.



Just call Kayleen or email her: Ph: 0411 867 377 [kaymar@me.com](mailto:kaymar@me.com)

Who loves a great thriller?  
Well now's the time to book your seats!



*Season runs from 3 - 18 July 2009*

*Bookings open this Saturday 6 June*

*Box Office lines will open 10.00am*

*Tickets also available at the Theatre's Box Office*

**Nothing like a good witty thriller! A who-dun-it where the investigation happens in Act 1 and by the interval we know who-dun-it.....or do we? Act 2 reconstructs the events leading up to the murder and the twist! You can't afford to miss English author, Simon Brett's play, directed by Pam Cooper which promises to be very entertaining!**

## Now that you've decided to buy your tickets, you'd like to know a bit more?

"**SILHOUETTE**" was written by Simon Brett and STG's Director for this production is Pam Cooper.

"*Silhouette*" was first presented in Guildford, the main Town in the southern county of Surrey, England back in 1997 and is one of many works by a prolific writer of whodunits, the popular English TV and mystery writer Simon Brett.

Set somewhere in the South of England, a middle-aged actress Celia Wallis, estranged from her Shakespearean actor husband Martin, is questioned by Inspector Bruton in relation to Martin's murder. Suspicion points in many directions including a young drunken journalist who is asleep in Celia's bed and argued with Martin shortly before the murder.

The solution to the initial puzzle seems simple. However, during Act 2, we're taken back before the murder took place and all our expectations, of the characters as well as the plot, are turned on their heads!

Like many of Simon Brett's plays and novels it is a witty and ingeniously-structured modern thriller with a totally unexpected twist; this play breathes new life into the murder mystery genre, an absolute 'must see'!

Opening Friday, July 3, "*Silhouette*" will run until July 18 and is sure to have you on the edge of your seat!

Once again, as mentioned in the ad, tickets are on sale from 10am June 6, 2009. Call 3345 3964 with any enquiries. **Don't forget show times are 2:00 PM for matinees and 8:00 PM for evenings. See you there!**

### *Who was voted on to the Artistic Committee? Well, here they are, let's introduce them to you!*



#### **Anne Ross**

Anne has had many years experience in live theatre, initially as a ballet dancer with Ballet Victoria and the Borovansky Ballet Co. She went on to appear in more than 35 musicals as well as TV dramas, films and cabaret shows in Melbourne. She has a keen interest in set design and costumes and has won many awards, among them the prestigious 1st prize for set design at Ballarat's South St. Eisteddfod. Since 1989, she has appeared in more than twenty-five STG productions including such favourites as *Arsenic & Old Lace*, *Stepping Out* and *The Reluctant Debutante*. For the last 13 years Anne has been directing our very successful Musical Comedies as well as two straight plays, Noel Coward's *Blythe Spirit* & J.B. Priestley's *When We are Married*. Anne is also getting ready to direct the upcoming production of Daphne du Maurier's *Rebecca* in September.

#### **Dale Holyoak**

Dale started singing along to Broadway Musical soundtracks during school years (records of course!) and by high school, was studying both piano and singing. After 'cutting her teeth' on school productions, Dale has played a variety of roles with the Xavier Players, Arts Theatre and La Boite's Theatre-in-the Round. However, Dale's greatest love was singing & dancing (a good choreographer helps!) and at La Boite was in both productions of Brisbane's first staging of *Grease* and its foray into the world of rock opera - the locally written *Macbeth*. Dale has also been a Front of House Manager, and Stage Manager.

Dale later trained as an Aerobics Instructor (a chance to wear 'costume' again) and taught fitness classes for close to 10 years. In 'real life', she has worked for the Australian Government including positions in the Tax Office & 15 years with the Australian Customs Service. Dale appreciates that being member of the Artistic Committee is a wonderful and exciting new opportunity for 2009.



#### **Artistic Committee Manager**

#### **Pam Cooper**

Pam's Association with STG goes back a long way and covers all sorts of everyday tasks. Perhaps the one members best know her for is as a Director. She started directing shows in Bundaberg and brought what she had learned from that very

successful theatre to Sunnybank Theatre. During the past 23 years she has directed/co-directed and assisted in over 30 productions consisting of murder mysteries, comedies, dramas, musicals and pantomimes. She was made a "Life Member" as a reward for her commitment. Pam has been on the Artistic Committee for the theatre for 13 years and hopes to be an active member of the organisation, in any capacity, for many years to come.

#### **Stephanie Ellis**

Stephanie has been involved in amateur theatre for many years in different capacities & has a wealth of theatrical knowledge. She has been a member of Beaudesert Amateur Musical Society for 20 years and has been involved both on and off stage as a director, assistant director, props assistant, backstage crew, committee member, front of house, caterer, costume designer and actor.

Stephanie has been a member of STG since 1999 in similar capacities and was interested in joining the Artistic Committee to research more of what is available for STG theatre to present to members and patrons.



James has been involved in both amateur and professional theatre for over 40 years. He started in the early days with Gowrie Hall, later known as the La Boite and from there he became a working member of the Twelfth Night Theatre. Later he moved on to what was then known as the Royal Queensland Theatre Company and is now called the Queensland Theatre Company.

James has been involved with STG since 1994 working as an active volunteer in all areas of the theatre, including the role of President, a position he held for 10 years. James brings to the Artistic Committee an incredible amount of knowledge, experience and creativity.



#### **Jim Cliff**

# As we go to print! Stop Press

We all know the old saying, "you can't please all the people all the time". Well, this was certainly the case on the night of 20<sup>th</sup> May when a performance of "Best Little Whorehouse in Texas" was cancelled.

The decision to cancel the performance did not come easily. As the roads were in such a hazardous condition, I felt it was vital to contact local authorities. The Weather Bureau were predicting heavy rain and high winds during the night, a senior police officer advised those that didn't have to be out on the roads, shouldn't go out and the BCC authorities suggested people keep off the roads as there were many closures and structural damage.

As President, my number one priority to the Theatre is to provide a 'duty of care' to our members and patrons and therefore did not want to put approximately 100 patrons and 30 cast, crew and front of house volunteers at risk. Consequently the decision was made and as you can imagine for the next two hours telephones ran hot to get the message out.

I was very appreciative that the cast and crew agreed to re-present the show on Wednesday 27<sup>th</sup> with majority of the original patrons attending. Those who couldn't make it were provided with a refund.

To those who felt this was the wrong decision, and have voiced it, that is your opinion. However, my role is to look outside the square and consider the big picture.

I would like say, it was extremely encouraging that while talking with so many of our patrons most appreciated the reasoning behind the decision. Quite a few had already decided not to go out, while others were expecting to be contacted. Thank you for your supportive emails.

A special thank you to our Treasurer David, who went to the Theatre that night and thankfully only had to turn four cars away.

Kay  
President

## 'SPOTLIGHT WAS ON...'



Linda  
Hammond

**Q.** Where did you grow up?

**A.** In the north island of New Zealand – a small town called Palmerston North.

**Q.** How did you start in theatre?

**A.** I joined a theatre group in Martinborough in my 30's. That's another small town in NZ about 50km from Wellington.

**Q.** How long have you been a member of STG?

**A.** I think it's about 5 years now.

**Q.** What prompted you to audition for Best Little Whorehouse in Texas?

**A.** Well, they were short of women and I was doing the costumes anyway...

No - seriously, it sounded like a lot of fun!

**Q.** What was your favourite part of the show?

**A.** The party on the last night!

**Q.** Do you go to live theatre regularly and if so where?

**A.** As often as we can afford – We saw "Chicago" recently, and we're looking forward to seeing "The Boy from Oz"

**Q.** How are you involved in the theatre?

**A.** I look after the theatre wardrobe, and with a lot of help from other members, make any costumes needed for a lot of the shows we do

**Q.** Of the wide variety of theatre that we have available here at Sunnybank, what sort of shows would be your favourite? And Why?

**A.** My favourite shows are musicals. I really enjoy singing.

**Q.** Apart from theatre, what other interests do you have?

**A.** Sewing, and my grandchildren.....

Thanks for sharing that with us Linda and we all want to congratulate you on being awarded a Gold Membership at the last show, because of your extraordinary commitment in managing the wardrobe and providing costumes for the shows.



## Some News from the Committee

The Management Committee met on April 14 and May 12, some of the outcomes from the meetings included:

- A props bay has been built under the theatre to keep all props organised;
- Acknowledgement and thanks to the volunteers who helped with the renovations in the Men's Toilets;
- A new printer/photocopier has been installed in the Box Office to allow the theatre to print and photocopy promotional materials, newsletters and programs in-house to make significant cost savings;
- The sign at the front of the theatre has been updated with the theatre's box office number and correct website address;
- Installation of the new Green Room seating has started, with work to be finalised before the opening of the next play, *Silhouette*. The old seating will be auctioned on Ebay
- A member's night is currently being organised for late July, We will keep you posted with more details



# “DID YOU KNOW.....”?



Like all good shows, we all know that a lot of us will have experienced 'those moments' that can at the time be terrifying, but after the event make a great read and bring a few smiles to those who have.....been there done that!!  
During 'The Best Little Whorehouse in Texas'

**DID YOU KNOW** that in one of the last week's performances, at a truly poignant moment in the final scene, full of high emotion and with not an ounce of funniness at all, Lesley walked to front of stage right to take her seat on the step to start singing "The Bus from Amarillo", only to catch her boot on the hem of her skirt and started to fall forward off the stage! The front row of the audience gasped with concern and out of the corner of her eye Lesley saw, whilst desperately trying to rebalance herself, a couple of patrons start to get up and lend a hand, or catch her if she fell! Luckily she managed to regain composure and covered the moment beautifully with a reasonably well timed comment to the effect, "it's these skirts ladies.....", in the appropriate Texan accent, to which the audience laughed. Perhaps not the best place for a laugh, but at least 'Mona' didn't end up flat on her face missing a couple of teeth!



**DID YOU KNOW** that on another night, we heard tell of a story of a major line mishap! How many times has that happened to you? Our lovely Patrick Tiernan lost the plot momentarily, however, before anyone could come to the rescue and save him, he blurted out, again in his perfectly appropriate Texan accent, "well.....I'm supposed to say.....", until he was finally cut off with a 'save' from a fellow actor. That's called team work, a good theatrical 'save'!



**DID YOU KNOW** that on another night our Patrick had yet another bit of strife with a 'make-up malfunction'! The old, '*dried up spirit gum trick*', with a loss of his moustache during the café scene. However, it didn't just fall off, it hung half off! You can imagine it was hilariously funny from off stage where the rest of the cast were standing. Not the easiest thing to 'save' on stage!



**DID YOU KNOW** that it's not just the cast members that have 'those moments' whilst on stage; what about the night that John sneezed whilst holding the spotlight on a character and in total oblivion, caused the spotlight to jump into nothingness and back again! Something he didn't even realise he'd done until he was informed by the somewhat hysterical lighting box techies, who were watching on with delight!



**AND FINALLY, DID YOU KNOW** that our Director recalls in the very early part of the proceedings, one of the worldly inhabitants of the our whorehouse was asking ..... 'what's copulation?' And also a certain sheriff had an aversion to saying "Miss Wulla Jean" (Mona's predecessor) - there has to be a story behind that one but she never got to the bottom of it!





# Theatrecraft



brings you some material that we hope you find useful

We mentioned in previous issues that occasionally we would bring you some interesting reading taken from theatre material. This is an extract from **“The Audition Book”** written by Ed Hooks in which several aspects of Auditioning for stage are covered. This one entitled: **“What the Director is looking for.....”**

Stage productions enjoy the luxury of rehearsal and that fact deeply colors what directors look for in auditions. He knows that, once the cast is set, there will be a some time of intense experimentation, an opportunity for all the actors to explore their roles in collaboration with the director. Therefore, the director doesn't want to see a final performance at audition. In fact, if directors think they are seeing a final performance, a frozen performance, they're likely not to cast you.

The image I am most fond of in this context is that of a race horse. The director knows there is going to be a race later on but right now just wants to see you go around the track a couple of times. He or she wants to learn something of your personality as well as your talent, and wants to see how physical you are, how agile, what kind of voice you have, how intelligent you are, how well you respond to direction and adjustments, what kind of “chemistry” you have with him or her. The director also wants to see if you have a sense of humor. In addition to casting actors for roles, the director is forming a family that will have to work closely together for a concentrated time, so when auditioning you, he or she is partly thinking of other members of the cast. This is very much in dramatic contrast to movies and television, where actors come in, do their thing and leave, having very little or no real involvement with the rest of the cast or the director. A stage play is an ensemble effort, a piece of art to which everybody contributes. It starts taking shape the first day of rehearsal, but the final form is unknown until it gets in front of an audience. Even then, it continues to evolve.

As with any audition, you should know what your character wants in a scene, where the scene takes place, and what the relationship is between you and the other characters. But on stage, you also want to show your potential. For that, your choices can be dangerously bold. Use humor any place you can. Don't play the obvious choices, play against them. It really does not matter if your audition choices are not appropriate to the character because the director figures you will find the character before opening. What you want to do is show off your moves, your style. You want the director to see as many of your strengths as possible.

In our next edition we'll bring you more of Ed Hooks book & his **“HELPFUL HINTS”** for auditions, look out for **“Theatrecraft”**.

Congratulations to the First Prize winner of the 'Best Little Whorehouse in Texas' raffle!



**Cassey Weeber of MacGregor.**

Cassey won a complimentary portrait sitting with Kayleen from Kaymar Kreations, the theatre's official photographer.

This was the first show Cassey had attended at our theatre, and was thrilled to win first prize. Cassey came along to the show to surprise one of her friends who was in the cast.

She really enjoyed the show and plans to attend more shows in the future.

**What's on around town?**



**What's coming up soon?**

Apart from our upcoming productions at STG take a look at what's on elsewhere!

**Brisbane Arts Theatre**

World Premiere Season - “A Hero's Funeral” by Ian Callinan. 22nd May - 17 June

“Man of La Mancha” opens 24 July

Children's “Princess and the Pea” until 13 June

**Centenary Theatre Group**

“Radio Waves” ‘theatre of the imagination’ opens 4 – 25 July

**Savoyards**

“The Boy from Oz” opened 30May until 28June

**St Luke Theatre Society**

“Over My Dead Body”, Derek Benfield comedy opens 5 - 13 June

**Harvest Rain and BCC**

“The Lord Mayor's New Works Festival” at Mina Parade Warehouse 4 - 20 June

***A timely reminder, don't forget to book your tickets for “Silhouette” right now and then put the audition date in your diaries for “Rebecca” on Sunday 5th July, give Anne Ross a call!***