

# PROMPTS

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE HEIDELBERG THEATRE COMPANY



## cat on a hot tin roof

by Tennessee Williams  
directed by Geoff Hickey

**13<sup>th</sup> – 30<sup>th</sup> September, 2006**

Wednesday to Saturday at 8.15pm, Matinee Sunday 24<sup>th</sup> Sept. at 3pm

Subscribers requiring to alter their chosen night or reserve their booking are asked to call BEFORE Monday, 4<sup>th</sup> September, 2006.

by arrangement with Dominic Pty Ltd.

**Cat on a Hot Tin Roof**, Tennessee Williams' third significant play (following **The Glass Menagerie** [1944] and **A Streetcar Named Desire** [1947]), was a huge commercial success, running for 694 performances on Broadway. It won Williams his third New York Drama Critics' Circle Award and his second Pulitzer Prize (his first being for **Streetcar**).

It is the story of an affluent Southerner, *Big Daddy Pollitt*, who is dying of cancer. The family gathers at the Mississippi mansion for his birthday, aware that this may be his last. *Big Daddy* does not know, however, because the family doctor, eldest son *Gooper*, and his wife, *Mae*, decide to keep the fact concealed from him. Two other family members join the clan for the party, *Brick*, the youngest Pollitt, and his beautiful wife, *Maggie*.

*Gooper* and *Brick* are the only heirs to *Big Daddy's* enormous estate, and *Gooper* is well aware that *Brick* is the favorite son. In an effort to win *Big Daddy* over, *Gooper* and *Mae* make a display of themselves and their children, hoping the patriarch will notice that they will provide heirs for the estate and they are out to discredit *Brick* and *Maggie*, who do not have children.

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. It is ten years since he has directed at HTC, when he produced **M. Butterfly**

and before that in 1994 with **Take Me To The Five And Dime**, **Jimmy Dean**, **Jimmy Dean** and in 1992 he directed **Summer Of The Seventeenth Doll**. Geoff was last seen on stage at HTC much more recently when he played *Larry* in Eugene O'Neill's **The Iceman Cometh** in 2004, winning the VDL Best Actor Award for his performance.

Geoff has gathered together an experienced and enthusiastic cast for **Cat**. Faces well known to HTC audiences are Sandy Green, Leeann Cairnduff, Bob Crawford, Dan Purdey and Ron Chapman, and, newcomers to our stage are Deborah McKelvey and Angelo De Cata.

Behind the scenes is another great cast; Wayne Pearn is Production Co-Ordinator and the Set Building Team for the show is being lead by Dennis Pain with Leanne Cole doing Scenic Art. Lighting Design is by Kirsten Mander and Brian Marriner, with Bruce Parr designing the Audio, Rose Capuano is hunting out Properties for the production while Julie Hall is the Rehearsal Prompt and Wendy Drowley is designing and gathering together the costumes for the show.

**Cat on a Hot Tin Roof** has all of the earmarks of Williams's unique dramas, involving as it does emotionally biographical themes, disaffection, and difficulty in maintaining intimate relationships. So don't miss this opportunity to see a great production of this classic American drama.

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**BOOKINGS & SUBSCRIPTIONS 9457 4117**



# Review

## Art

by Yamina Reza

Directed by Wayne Pearn

Viewed Wednesday 5<sup>th</sup> July and Reviewed on Sunday, 9<sup>th</sup> July, 2006 by **Diana Burleigh** for

**3CR's CURTAIN UP** – Sundays at One (855 AM)

About 8 years ago a friend told me that her daughter had just returned from her first overseas trip to London. She mentioned the daughter had wanted to see a West End play but had been very disappointed at her choice of **Art**. I couldn't understand why, especially as I was just about to leave for an overseas trip of my own and **Art** was on my "to see" list.

As I walked down Charing Cross Road, I saw the theatre marquee which advertised **Art** and noted that the cast included Tom Courtney and Albert Finney and was impressed that two such luminaries would be together on stage. However for whatever reason I did not go then. A few weeks later I was in New York and did see the play, this time with Alan Alda in the cast.

I was not disappointed but did understand what my friend's daughter may have felt was lacking. The play is one of talking heads. Nothing very much happens, no plot as such, it is about an intellectual debate ranging over a number of topics the catalyst for which is a painting, a piece of art.

I relate this because it brought home to me that this play is not an easy one for either the actor or the audience. This may be why star actors were cast in the West End and Broadway; to bring in the punters but also because it maybe takes an actor above the average to undertake presenting the play and the ideas within.

The play is written by French dramatist, Yamina Reza and has been played round the world in over thirty countries. It is about a friendship which is threatened when one of the three companions has bought a painting which is basically just a blank canvas – white on white! The English translation is by noted British writer, Christopher Hampton.

Parenthetically, Heidelberg always has an exhibition in the foyer during its plays, sometimes sculpture, often paintings. I noticed with amusement that those for this play were all entirely white and wondered how they managed to obtain them so serendipitously. Did they contact artists and ask if they had any white-only pieces or did they just happen to know someone who had these? Whichever, a very clever cross-reference.

Anyway, one of the friends *Serge*, a dermatologist with obviously a large and profitable practice, has bought a painting which cost two hundred thousand francs (even if we don't know what the now-obsolete franc to dollar ratio is, we know that is a hell of a lot of money). *Marc* (played by Bruce Akers) is outraged. All he sees is a white canvas. He is not only convinced that it cannot be worth that much but also that no one would buy it for its aesthetic value. This purchase has to be motivated by something else, perhaps a form of hubris, or a desire to pretend to be more learned in art than his fellows or a number of other possibilities. The third friend, *Yvan*, (Barry Lockett) is a more pliable personality; if *Serge* values the painting, then he is prepared to admire it too, to please him. *Marc* believes this is just a desire to ingratiate and a flaw in this man's character.



*Serge, Yvan and Marc, Art's "talking heads" captured doing what they did so well.*



The men meet together or in pairs to hold discussions, they also speak directly to the audience in monologue. There is little chance for action, as I said at the top of the review, a play of talking heads. It was a bold choice for an amateur company and one that possibly only Heidelberg and a couple of other local groups could get away with. They know their audience can accept the challenge.

The actors are well-cast, Chris McLean as the art-owner, suitably superior in attitude, Bruce Akers belligerence comes from his bewilderment at the motivation of his friend and Barry Lockett is wonderfully neurotic. Bruce, I think, has the more difficult role as it is *Marc's* angst which pushes along the subtext of the play and he copes admirably.

Wayne Pearn's direction is crisp and keeps the central themes in focus. He uses the stage in a play without much movement, in a well-thought out manner. I admire George Tranter's set design, giving the contrasting styles of the 3 men in their own spaces and bringing the angular modernity of *Serge's* taste to the fore.

I went to this play last Wednesday, the opening night, and am a bit constrained in making some of my criticisms because I detected a "first nightish" feeling several times. The cast did not seem to have eased into their roles; something which may well have happened by the time anyone listening goes to the play. I did not believe in the fight scene, it wasn't sufficiently motivated. It worried me that most of the lines were delivered with the same intensity; more variety would have made the play easier to follow. I also would have liked some variations of pace – at times it was slow but it was consistently even, which is not a compliment. Nevertheless the humour of the dialogue was well-brought out, the audience were obviously listening with involvement and although the running time is nearly an hour and a half without interval, it never dragged.

Once again, Heidelberg has produced something of worth and worth-seeing. Diana Burleigh

### Play Reading of **The Front Page** – All Welcome Sunday 27th August at 6pm at the Theatre

This play reading is an opportunity for anyone who is interested in a sneak preview of **The Front Page**. Actors interested in auditioning can come along and take part, but we will need audience as well! A great opportunity to enjoy a classic piece of theatre and have a get together afterwards.

Snacks will be provided and the bar will be open. Hope to see lots of people there.

# AUDITION NOTICE

Sun 17<sup>th</sup> - 2pm – Scout Hall  
Mon 18<sup>th</sup> Sept – 7:30pm – at the Theatre  
Season: 15<sup>th</sup> November – 2<sup>nd</sup> December 2006

## The Front Page

by Ben Hecht and Charles Macarthur  
Director: Maureen McInerney

Auditions will be open due to the large cast required, but contact with the director to give an indication of time will be appreciated. Please ring the Director for details - **Maureen McInerney** on **9458 3358**.

### The Play

Set in the Press Room of the Criminal Court building, Chicago, in 1928.  
**American accents required. Rapid fire dialogue will be the order of the day.**

Hildy Johnson wants out of the newspaper business. He has come to the press room at the Criminal Court Building to bid one last farewell to the crew of barking newshounds and inkrats who have been his companions for many years, and escape the clutches of his ruthless and manipulative editor, Walter Burns. He is off to New York to marry his fiancée, but the nuptials are put on hold when the scoop of a lifetime presents itself in the person of escaped criminal Earl Williams.

### Characters

#### The Reporters

*Hildy Johnson, Reporter, Herald Examiner*

30s. Ace reporter, envied by other reporters.

Engaged to Peggy Grant, attempting to leave the sordid newspaper world.

*Wilson, Reporter, American*

40s. Once sold a piece to the "Mercury", and is thinking of trying a play.

*Endicott, Reporter, Post*

20s+. Recently married and inclined to complain about the job.

*Murphy, Reporter, Journal*

40s. Middle aged. Hardest of the hard-boiled.

Could have a bit of an Irish accent.

*McCue, Reporter, City Press*

30-40. Another hard case, a tough nut.

*Schwartz, Reporter, Daily*

40s. Has the worries of the world on his shoulders.

*Kruger, Journal of Commerce*

30s. Plays a banjo and is a chronic loafer.

*Bensinger, Reporter, Tribune*

40s. A hypochondriac, obsessed about germs and antiseptics.

*Walter Burns, Editor of the Herald Examiner,*

50+. Hildy's ruthless, manipulative boss of long standing. They have a love-hate relationship. Burns will not let Hildy escape. Burns will stop at nothing to prevent Hildy from leaving the *Herald Examiner*.

*The Mayor,*

60s. Self-serving, politically corrupt.

*Sheriff Hartman, known as Pinky*

60s. Again, self-serving, and politically corrupt, but a bit weak and manipulated by others more powerful.

*Woodenshoes*, some sort of court gopher.

40ish. Knows a bit of history and who's who.

Treated like a servant and a bit dumb, but has a lot of theories on psychology and the criminal mind.

*Earl Williams, convicted criminal*

30s. Slight build, terrified escapee.

*Mr Pincus, court worker/messenger, small man, delivers documents from the Governor.*

*Diamond Louis, Chicago gangster*

as the name suggests, a gangster.

*Mrs Schlosser*

30-40. Hard done by wife of a reporter who we never see, comes to look for him.

*Jennie, Scrub Woman,* 40-50 years.

*Mollie Malloy*

40s. Faded prostitute, not as young as she used to be, has taken pity on Earl Williams.

*Peggy Grant,*

20s. Hildy's fiancée. Anxious to take him away from all this to get married in New York, making plans to leave that night.

*Mrs Grant, Peggy's mother*

Suspicious of her daughter's choice of fiancée.

*Deputies, Carl and Frank*

20-30. Smaller support roles.

Plus 2 extra policemen.

#### Locations:

**Heidelberg Theatre Company** - 36 Turnham Ave Rosanna, (Melways ref: 32 A1 - Opposite Rosanna Station)

**Scout Hall** - DeWinton Park, St James Road Rosanna - round the corner from the Theatre - (Melways ref: 32 A2).

## HTC Committee Members

It's been sixteen years since we last ran a series of profiles of our Committee members, and yes, thankfully, many who served then are still serving now. But first up we want to introduce a relatively new member to the Committee, and that's our Secretary and Subscription Secretary, Brett Hunt.



Brett and his wife Jenny had been Subscribers for about 10 years when in 2004 Brett responded to an ad in *Prompts* for a Secretary. He wasn't long in the position when another ad was run in *Prompts*, this time for someone to take on the Committee position of Subscription Secretary. After nobody turned up for the Subscribers job, so Brett took that on too.

All these duties have meant "a very steep learning curve" – his words – especially in terms of computer software and ability, but he now thinks he's got both jobs under control. And we can attest to that as Brett recently had the horror experience of having to rebuild the Subscription database after it crashed! Brett's next challenge is to improve the physical layout and some of the process, involved in administration at the Theatre. He says he's happy lurking behind the scenes and has no ambition to act or direct.

In the rest of his life, he has a wonderful wife and two incredibly beautiful grown-up daughters. He is 59, lives in Rosanna and works as a GP in Reservoir, and also does a little medical teaching and examining.

It's a pleasure to introduce *Prompts* readers to Brett and to have the opportunity to say, "Thanks for a fine job Brett".

## What's the Goss?

### HTC CELEBRATES *Winter in Banyule*

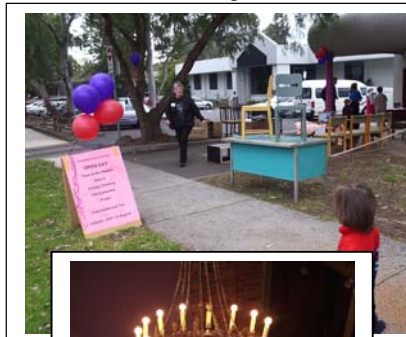
Winter in Banyule kicked off at the Theatre on Saturday 5<sup>th</sup> August with a very successful Reading of Anne Rutherford's new play, '**The More We Change**'. Anne introduced the play and set the scene for the audience, as well she sang a number of the songs during the Reading and other music was provided by HTC's own Sound Designer and Operator, Struan McGregor. Anne thanked Struan for the great job he did in arranging the music to support the Reading and the audience too showed their appreciation for his artistry.

The capable and committed cast of three women; Jillian Scott, Marisa Rowlands and Karen Wakeham played various roles, with the actors changing characters as well as ages as the drama unfolded. The play opens in 1939 and follows the lives of three generations of women until modern times.

Anne was pleased how enthusiastically the audience entered into question time following the Reading and appreciated the feedback relating to her work, particularly the suggestion to expand the roles of the three daughters in a scene that occurs later in the play. '**The More We Change**' will be produced in Bendigo next year.

And then on the 19<sup>th</sup> August it was off to the Theatre's Open Day, and really the photos below say it all. Except I was there early in the piece and I am sure that the racks and baskets of finery would be very much depleted come 4 o'clock.

All the action was not in foyer however, the set building team were hard at work on stage constructing the set for **Cat** as members of the Company took visitors on tours of the Theatre. Congratulations to the City of Banyule and HTC for another great Festival.



**HELP!!!** needed at the  
**WORKING BEES**

for  
**Cat On A Hot  
Tin Roof  
Saturdays**

**2<sup>nd</sup> & 9<sup>th</sup> September  
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**

### SEPTEMBER

Saturday 2<sup>nd</sup> 10.30am  
Saturday 9<sup>th</sup> 10.30am  
Wednesday 13<sup>th</sup> 8.15pm  
Sunday 17<sup>th</sup> 2.00pm

Monday 18<sup>th</sup> 7.30pm  
Tuesday 19<sup>th</sup> 7.30pm

Saturday 30<sup>th</sup> 8.15pm

### OCTOBER

Tuesday 17<sup>th</sup> 7.30pm

**Working Bee with Lunch**

**Working Bee with Lunch**

**FIRST NIGHT – Cat On A Hot Tin Roof**

**AUDITION: The Front Page**

(at 1<sup>st</sup> Rosanna Scout Hall, St James Road)

**AUDITION: The Front Page** – at the Theatre

Heidelberg Film Society –

Taming of the Shrew

**FINAL NIGHT – Cat On A Hot Tin Roof**

Heidelberg Film Society – It's Ruth &

The Absolutely Astonishing Ashtons