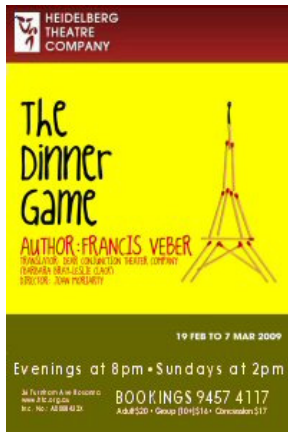


PROMPTS

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE HEIDELBERG THEATRE COMPANY



The Dinner Game

a modern French farce by Francis Veber

Translator: Dear Conjunction Theatre Company (Barbara Bray-Leslie Clack)

directed by Joan Moriarty

19th Feb – 7th March, 2009

Evenings at 8.00pm

Matinees: Sundays 22nd Feb & 1st March 2pm

Subscribers requiring to alter their chosen night or reserve their booking are asked to call BEFORE Monday, 9th February, 2009.

PLEASE NOTE:

HTC's 2009 Season will feature the following changes:-

Starting Times:

Evenings 8:00pm

Matinees 2:00pm Sundays only

(Exception – Cloudstreet

performances commence at

Evenings 7:30pm;

Sundays 2:00pm)

Performances:

Week 1 –

Thursday/Friday/Saturday/Sunday

Week 2 –

Thursday/Friday/Saturday/Sunday

Week 3 –

Wednesday/Thursday/Friday/Saturday

Prices: no change

Tickets are to be paid for at time of booking.

(more information is available in the 2009 Playbill or call the Theatre Booking Office on 9457 4117)

WINNER OF THE 2008 XMAS HAMPER

Congratulations to HTC Subscriber, Mrs Barbara Ubert, the very delighted winner of the much coveted Heidelberg Theatre Company Xmas Hamper.

The Dinner Game began life a few years ago as a film written by Francis Veber but more recently translated from the French into an hilarious stage play. Set in an "up market" apartment in Paris over one evening – the mayhem – comings and goings of this modern farce make a great start to our theatrical year.

Joan Moriarty is directing – fresh from her 2007 offering **Dinner**, and has engaged the very talented Leanne Cole as Designer. Leanne also designed the set for **Dinner**. And it's terrific to have Siobhan Earley as Stage Manager and Lena Minto as Production Coordinator. Our Set Building Team is led by Dennis Pain, and others doing great work on the show are Kirsten Mander, Campbell Black, Tim McLaughlan, Laura Imbesi and Basileia Paras.

The cast is mostly well known at HTC. Laurie Jezard plays the hapless *Francois* and will evince all our sympathy – Chris McLean the arrogant *Pierre* – Jim Thomson the elegant *Juset Leblanc* – John Cheshire the wily *Cheval* and George Bissett the distinguished osteopath, *Archambaud*.

Last but not least Cathy Ryan Christensen plays *Pierre's* long suffering wife, *Christine* (and will also look after Costumes) and Kylie Bell plays mistress *Marlene* after a long absence from the HTC stage.

Rehearsals are going so well Joan assures us of a quality show and would like to thank the cast and all the unsung heroes that go into making a show a success and an enjoyable one at that. Book early.

Subscribe and Save

Like to SAVE MONEY and secure your seat? Then subscribe **NOW** to 3, 4 or 5 great shows in the Heidelberg Theatre Company's 2009 Season of Plays. Subscription forms available from the Theatre or call June or Julie on 9457 4117

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EMAIL PROMPTS CAMPAIGN: Like to join HTC's email list and receive *Prompts* in digital format? It also saves us money on printing and postage. If so please send an email to prompts@htc.org.au and include your name, address & phone number

BOOKINGS & SUBSCRIPTIONS 9457 4117



Review

The Woman in Black by Stephen Mallatratt
from the novel by Susan Hill. Directed by Shane Ryan
Reviewed by John Gunn, 20th November, 2008 for
3CR's CURTAIN UP Sundays at One (855 AM)

This must be one of the most successful plays of all time since its first production in 1987 and we have seen many local and professional productions here in Australia, I know that this is the fifth production that I have seen in the last 10 or so years.

The Woman in Black was one of the most successful plays to hit London's West End having been first staged in Scarborough in 1987 – it was adapted by the late Stephen Mallatratt from the novel by Susan Hill and is a Gothic/horror story told in flash back. It is the tale of a young solicitor named *Arthur Kipps* and the disturbing and frightening experiences that he went through in the early 1900s when sent to settle the affairs of a deceased woman's estate in a remote and bleak part of England, yep marshes, fens, etc and at high tide on the Causeway the old house is completely cut off. Then there's his encounter with the mysterious *Woman in Black*. As the play unfolds we learn about her and the sinister effects she has on the local villagers and their reluctance to talk about her. *Kipps*, many years later, hires a young actor to help him exorcise the ghost of this woman, which allows us, the audience, to find out the truth behind the *Woman in Black*. The setting is the bare stage of a small theatre in (as I understand it) 1936 with its dusty drapes and shadows where the story unfolds about the *Woman in Black* and the isolated locale of the tale.

Now this is a tour de force for two actors and in Heidelberg's production under the direction of Shane Ryan we saw two very good performances from Keith Hutton playing *Kipps* and the many other characters, with Justin Stephens as *The Actor*, both worked so well together – it's great to be in the audience when two good actors are really plying their craft, then there's the *Woman in Black* herself, a ghostly figure that appears intermittently throughout the performance.

If I didn't get quite all the same chills and thrills, it is possibly that it has become all too familiar to me as knowing the story so well so I knew what was coming.

The production under Shane Ryan's direction was quite commendable, it can be a static piece and blocking is tricky, in this instance I felt it was on occasion a little contrived and repetitive and the setting by George Tranter (a designer whose work I admire) just seemed to lack a little atmosphere. It was just a bit too tidy and clean looking and could have done (notwithstanding the closed upstairs nursery of the old house behind the scrim) with a few more old flats and dusty back-stage stuff hanging around – also a few non-practical black tabs or flimsy drapes... the latter could have been used to swirl around at key times to increase the spookiness of the atmosphere and even a bit of dry ice could have heightened the tension and terror. After all this is a bit of a Gothic type story and the director must work this point to get the very best from the ghostly story.

Having said that, costumes and props were of Heidelberg's usual high standard as were the very busy lighting design and the demanding sound effects. Good stuff.

To sum up, a very enjoyable production with quality performances and Thursday night's attentive audience gave a positive response for this very popular play.

The Woman in Black continues at Heidelberg until the 6th December and is well worth a visit and if like me you enjoy mysteries of this type you will find much to enjoy.



Left: Cast & Crew of *The Woman in Black*.
Right – HTC Youth's *A Midsummer Nights Dream*



Review – HTC Youth - by Suzannah Rowley

A Midsummer Night's Dream by William Shakespeare

Directed by Douglas Montgomery

From December 11th to December 20th HTC Youth dazzled audiences with a haunting and vivacious rendition of a Shakespearean classic — but with an African twist. Director Douglas Montgomery infused the cheeky and humorous **A Midsummer Night's Dream** with the rawness of African Tribal dance!

Upon entering the theatre we were greeted by an authentic tribal scene: white mist floated across the stage between huge yellow walls painted with dancing black flames. Ferns and totem poles dotted the set and a rhythmic thump of bongos mingled with a soft whirring of cicadas and pan flutes.

With the original script spoken across an African set, we were immediately drawn into a new and enchanting interpretation of a Shakespearean classic. The play kicked off with a spectacular tribal dance and a complex love triangle began to unfold between lovers *Hermia* (Phoebe Appleton), *Lysander* (Keiren King), *Demetrius* (Tony Cocking) and *Helena* (Juliana Clements.)

Costumes and makeup were spectacular: the actors wore vibrant layers of metallic green, pinks, purples and leopard prints with black swirls and shapes painted around their faces and bodies. The brilliant choreography swept the audience into a whirlwind of dancing and chanting that continued sporadically throughout the night, setting a rhythmic beat to the scene changes with the sounds and movement of traditional African culture. A wonderful use of lighting cast a haunting red and orange hue upon the actors as they crawled and danced across the stage.

The HTC Youth worked as a fantastic ensemble: their expression of the play was brilliant and multi-layered with fantastic body language and voice projection and wonderful movement around the set. Their talented performances and an eclectic mix of dancing and chanting truly brought the characters to life.

There was an exciting chemistry between many of the characters which really depicted the cheeky and enchanting world of Shakespeare. The beautiful *Fairy Queen Titania* (Jessica Cole) captivated the audience with an erotic but hilarious Shakespearean love scene as she seduced *Bottom* (Charlie Ranger) upon her beautiful wooden throne draped in tangled vines and vibrant coloured flowers.

Brittany Goss played the mischievous *Puck*, who, eager to please master *Oberon* (Matt Hammond), crept amongst the lovers dousing them with ill-fated love potions. Her fantastic expression, wide-eyes, cheeky grin and slithery body movement really depicted the magic and mayhem of Shakespeare's work.

In the final scenes, the audience was drawn further into a tangled web of spells, games and desperate love when the tension hit a climax in a fervour of fighting and betrayal. As the lovers were eventually reunited, an eerie smoke blew into the theatre and the stage suddenly erupted in a fierce tribal African dance.

The HTC Youth cast and crew are applauded for their innovative and enthralling rendition of a Shakespearean classic!



HTC Setbuilders Owen, Doug, Des & Paddy
Our 2008 Adjudicators, Joan, Ian, Judi & Barb.



left:
President John Gilbert presents Lois Connor with the Bill Cherrey Award for 2008.



HTC 2008

In House Awards

Adjudicators, Barbara Hughes, Judi Clark, Joan Moriarty and Ian Robinson presented the Annual HTC In House Awards for the 2008 Season under the following headings:

WINNERS:

Acting:

Over the River and Through the Woods

Lena Minto: for *Emma*.

Angels in America.

Tim Constantine: for *Louis*.

Angelo de Cata: for *Joe*.

Justin Stephens: for *Prior*.

The Woman in Black.

Justin Stephens for *Actor*.

Keith Hutton: for *Kipps*.

Don's Party.

Damian Coffey: for *Mack*.

Jason Bovaird: Lighting Design award for **Angels in America.**

Jeff Saliba: Sound Design award for **The Woman in Black.**

Bruce Akers: Production/Director award for **Angels in America.**

Special Adjudicator's Award for Set

Building: Dennis, Des, Jim, Paddy, Owen and Doug.

Victorian Drama League Awards

Our VDL-nominated play for 2008 was **Angels in America Part One: Millennium Approaches**. Congratulations to the following nominees.

Glen Barton - Best Actor in a Minor Role. *Juliet Hayday* and *Rhiannon Leach* - Best Supporting Actress in a Drama. *Tim Constantine* and *Justin Stephens* - Best Actor in a Drama. *Paul Kennedy* - Best Supporting Actor in a Drama. *Bruce Akers* - Best Director of a Drama Production. *George Tranter* - Best Set Design. *Sebastian Bertoli* - Best Sound Design. *Jason Bovaird* - Best Lighting Design. Heidelberg Theatre Company - Best Drama Production.

And special mentions go to: *Jason Bovaird* who took out the **Silver Award** for his work on **Angels** and shared the **Gold Award** for Best Lighting Design with *Colin Mortley* for **The Freedom of the City** at Lilydale Athenaeum Theatre. Other familiar HTC names who were Award winners in 2008: *Brett Turner* and *Doug Bennett* for their **Gold Awards** for directing, *Juliet Hayday* a **Gold Award** for Costumes and *Anne Smith* for her Best Actress nomination.

BILL CHERREY AWARD 2008

This year's recipient was made a Life Member in 2002, the 50th Anniversary year of Heidelberg Theatre Company, in recognition of the wonderful early contribution she had made to the Company. She is an excellent Actress and returned to the stage in 1992 for **Charley's Aunt** and since then in a number of other roles – **The Weekend; Pygmalion; Moon Over Buffalo** and **Uncle Vanya** – winning many awards.

She has always been involved with costumes, sewing and sourcing garments, undertaking the huge commitment of coming down to the Theatre every Saturday between shows to dress the cast, plus the ongoing task of organising and cleaning our huge wardrobe resource. It can be a bit like moving the deck chairs on the Titanic, but all of this work is greatly appreciated and we suspect that she really enjoys it, including the Op Shop shopping bit.

This year's nominee has assisted with all the Open Days and sales, the foyer displays, hiring costumes, she attends countless rehearsals and Sunday clean ups after each production. She is one of those behind the scenes people that make the Theatre work smoothly and successfully.

This year's winner has an incredible knowledge of theatre. She does all this for love of the theatre, her dedication to Heidelberg Theatre Company and the vision of excellence that she holds for the Company.

I have pleasure in awarding the Bill Cherrey Award for 2008 to Lois Connor.

(John Gilbert and June Cherrey)

LIFE MEMBERSHIP NOMINATION

When announcing this year's Life Membership nominee, HTC President, John Gilbert told how she had first performed with Heidelberg Theatre Company in 1983 in **Dusa Fish Stas & Vi** and then continued in 1986 with **A Day in the Death of Joe Egg**, 1988 **Brighton Beach Memoirs** and 1994 **Passion Play**. She became more and more involved in wardrobe, props and décor. By the mid 90s she had become an integral part of our Company. She has directed six plays: **The Boys Next Door; The Two of Us; And a Nightingale Sang; Ten Times Table; The Castle and The Front Page**.

This year's Life Membership Nominee has been involved with costumes, props and décor for 20 plays and amazingly been Production Coordinator for another 20 plays. In addition she assists with the front of house supplies and all of the other bits and pieces that she picks up. Her contribution has been hundreds of hours of work and involvement over the years. In general, she is just a "I am here, I will do it" sort of person. A friendly and dedicated ambassador for HTC.

On behalf of the HTC Committee I am delighted to present Maureen McNerney with Life Membership of the Heidelberg Theatre Company.

(John Gilbert)

(Maureen is pictured above)

FEBRUARY

Saturday 7th 10.30am **Working Bee** with Lunch

Tuesday 10th 7.30pm Heidelberg Film Society – *Priscilla Queen of the Desert*

Saturday 14th 10.30am **Working Bee** with Lunch

Thursday 19th 8.00pm **FIRST NIGHT – The Dinner Game**

MARCH

Saturday 7th 8.00pm **FINAL NIGHT – The Dinner Game**

Tuesday 10th 7.30pm Heidelberg Film Society – *Death At A Funeral*

APRIL

Tuesday 14th 7.30pm Heidelberg Film Society – *Love Actually*

A Report on the 2008 Heidelberg Theatre Company AGM held at the Theatre on the 14th December, 2008

John Gilbert, President, presented a comprehensive and interesting report of the 56th season of the Company, reporting that since its inception the Company has presented 368 plays, including productions by the HTC Youth. Five plays were staged in 2008 with mixed occupancy rates; 60% for **Bazaar & Rummage**; 72.5% for **Over The River and Through the Woods**; 63.7% for **Angels in America Part 1**; 63.9% for **Don's Party**; and 66.6% for **The Woman in Black**, together with good attendances for the two HTC Youth productions.

Heidelberg Theatre Company enjoys the benefit of a strong membership and subscription base. Our support base has remained consistent over the past three years and this year we have 518 members, compared to 540 last year. In addition there are 58 general members, 16 Life Members, plus 41 people on our mailing list.

Whilst there have been mixed and varied opinions and views of our productions this year, we have maintained our capacity to attract some of the best theatre talent available in Melbourne. We have continued to deliver some of the most highly regarded productions for theatre excellence both on and off stage.

Expenditure not directly related to productions was kept to a minimum this year and there were no notable items of a major nature purchased. A generous donation of \$1,000 was received from Life Member, Fern Matthews and as per her wishes this money was allocated towards the expenses associated with the auditorium hand rail project.

The President thanked individual members and all those involved in the Company for their time, expertise and valuable contributions to the successful running of the Heidelberg Theatre Company and its role as an active and thriving community resource in Melbourne. As well the Company thanked our 2008 In-House Adjudicators: Barbara Hughes, Ian Robinson and Judi Clark.

John spoke of the valuable contribution Heidelberg Theatre Company made to local charities via fund raisers and ticket donation and also to community groups in 2008 and the Company's participation in the Banyule City Arts Festival.

The President described the outstanding work of committee members in 2008 and thanked Isabelle Mason, who resigned from the Committee in 2008. John confirmed the continuing lease of the 1st Rosanna Scout Hall and the progress, albeit slowly, towards the completion of the Garden Project which will be named in honor of the late Alice Bugge for her 50 years service to HTC.

The last surviving Founding Member of the Company, Joyce Whitfield passed away this year at the age of 89. Joyce was not only an actor, but was also a stage manager for some 35 plays, artistic director in the 70s, Front of House manager at the Rechabite Hall and a committee member for decades. Joyce was a gracious and knowledgeable lady whose dedication and vision helped steer the Company to the high standing today.

Sadly Life Member Bill Roberts also died this year. Bill was well known to many at the theatre through his involvement since 1979 as an actor, set builder and stage device maker. Bill was a fine man and a great supporter of the Company and he will be remembered with great affection by many.

Brian Mariner was also lost to us this year and many will remember his contribution to the lighting of many of our productions and as a valuable and friendly member of the Company. We were also informed of the passing of David Hawley who was a very active actor and director with the Company throughout the 60s and the 70s.

John went on to encourage involvement in the Company in order that it maintains its status as an active and thriving community resource, for not only the people of Banyule, but also for the greater theatre community of Melbourne. To do this more new members need to become involved. He spoke of the opportunities for those who are interested in theatre to become active participants in many roles associated with our productions and of the important tasks both on and off stage and how experience can be gained from working with the Company's established and talented members. He invited anyone thinking of becoming more involved, to make their interest known to the Company so that suitable introductions can be arranged. He described the broad choices of activities open to members; with maintenance, wardrobe, ticket sales, set building, Front of House, lighting, décor, just to highlight a few areas. It is probable we have a task to suit everyone and of course there are a number of stage roles that may be of interest.

His message was, "get involved with the Company now" and invited anyone with an interest, no matter how big or small, no matter what level of experience, to join. The Company needs active and committed members to work and run this great community asset. Friendships and memorable experiences are guaranteed.

John Gilbert, President, 2008

(a full transcript of the President's Report is available on the HTC website)

LOOKING TO RAISE MONEY FOR YOUR CLUB OR CHARITY IN 2009?

Why not organise a Group Booking to HTC

The price for Groups of 10
or more is

\$16 per ticket

(\$4 off the normal single ticket
price)

Group bookings can be made
for any night during the
Season.

Supper can be arranged for
groups of 20 or more for an
additional charge.

For more details contact June or
Julie, our Ticket Secretaries on

9457 4117

WHO, WHAT, WHERE???

And some "Outside" Awards for HTC regulars; the Williamstown Little Theatre production of **The Drawer Boys** - Chris Baldock - Best Production and Bruce Akers - Best Actor. Malvern Theatre Company show **Nuts**, Jim Thomson - Best Supporting Actor. Well done guys!

Plus Kate Bowers, Melissa New and Juliet Hayday are in **Rabbit Hole** at Mordialloc Theatre, Season: 24.4 - 9.5 Phone: 9587 5141 and Barry Lockett is in **Moonlight & Magnolias** at Peridot Season: 6.2 - 21.2. Phone: 9898 9090

HTC YOUTH

If you are in the 15 to 25 age group and would like to join the **HTC Youth** group in any capacity; actor, technician, behind the scenes or on set realisation call the Theatre on **9455 3039**.

HELP!!!

needed at the

WORKING BEES

for **The Dinner Game**

Saturdays

7th & 14th February

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