

PROMPTS

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE HEIDELBERG THEATRE COMPANY

A SKULL IN CONNEMARA

by Martin McDonagh

directed by Justin Stephens

the play contains adult themes and smoking

By Special Arrangement with Dominie Pty Ltd

9th – 25th July, 2009

Evenings at 8.00pm

Matinees - Sundays 12th & 19th July at 2pm

Subscribers requiring to alter their chosen night or reserve their booking are asked to call BEFORE Wednesday, 1st July, 2009.

The talented and experienced cast that brings the crazy characters to life includes Paul Kennedy (**Angels In Amercia**), 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.



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**.

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BOOKINGS & SUBSCRIPTIONS 9457 4117



Review

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 adult's strength when she comes to understand that the mother she has hated for so long is the one who needs help.

Fish never grows up, remaining an ungainly child, unable to live a normal life. Chris Young's performance, the uncontrolled physical movement, the high-pitched giggle, the unselfconsciousness is very moving. Tim Constantine's Quick in contrast is tense, always feeling guilt. He runs off to live rough in the bush for some years, leaving Fish distraught. When he returns he decides to join the police, and when a serial killer is causing panic in the city he feels even more guilty because he cannot find the killer. This is a strong, controlled performance



from left: *Rose* (Rose Braybrook) *Fish* (Chris Young) and *The Man* (Craig Blumeris) in **Cloudstreet**

relaxed only when he and Rose come together, and even then there is tension. Fish wants to live with them and while Rose is willing, Quick is not happy

Bruce Akers gives a gentle persona to Lester, on occasions reminding us that he is a man of God, and at other times berating himself for being a fool. Anne Pagram is a calm, quiet presence, firm when necessary. She withdraws from the family altogether later on, living, bizarrely, in a tent in the yard.

Kellie Bray as Dolly is a vivid, brash, bold woman, a slut and a boozier, caring for no-one, certainly not her family, very 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.

David Dare's fine set gives us the front of the house upstage. It looks just like Como, posts and arches reaching up to the balcony which stretches the width of the stage, russet coloured railings. Under the balcony at the back wall are chairs where the actors sit when not on stage. Most of the action takes place on the bare downstage area. There is the minimum of furniture, a few chairs and a bare pine kitchen table which acts variously as table, car, boat, truck, shop front, bed. It is practically one of the actors, and is moved around as needed by the cast who also deal with the props as they come and go.

Jason Bovaird's lighting plot is intricate, dramatic and always appropriate, with some intriguing special effects. The director operates meticulously. Wendy Drowley and Lois Connor provide a wardrobe that goes from 40's to 60's, rough country outfits, bare feet or boots, pretty dresses for the girls as they grow up.

Paul Karafillis performs some of his own music, mostly I think guitar, setting the mood at times and highlighting moments well.

Altogether, this is a powerful production, and everyone involved deserves a big round of applause. Thanks to Heidelberg.

HTC has two types of Assistive Listening Devices.

1. Induction Loop System.

Permanently installed for Rows A - F Seats 1-10.

This can be accessed by switching on the T switch on your hearing aid.

2. F.M. System - Phonic Ear (no hearing aid needed)

Patrons will need to wear a headphone to access the sound. A limited number of headphones will be available at the Theatre for **Matinee performances only.**

Please reserve them when booking tickets.

(The FM System is being trialed with assistance from the Banyule City Council)

HELP NEEDED WITH TICKETS – BE PART OF THE TEAM

Contact June - 9457 4117

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**."

Review of HTC YOUTH's production of RUBY MOON by Matt Cameron, directed by Elise Dorian



This is a strange little piece – a child ostensibly goes missing and the parents are seemingly distraught. Originally there was a cast of only two – the parents in turn playing the neighbours who are called on to be quizzed as to their whereabouts on the night in question. Did Ruby go to visit Grandma? Did she ever arrive? Was there foul play or did Ruby ever exist? We will never know the answer but the journey was certainly worthwhile.

Jessica Cole as the bereft and slightly unbalanced wife/mother gave an intense fully focused performance. Eben Rojter as the husband/father was competent but less impressive. The neighbours – all seven of them – were Patrick White type burlesque

characters. They were well crafted caricatures and the performances were uniformly excellent.

The set from **Cloudstreet** was made to look a very effective doll's house. The lighting, sound and costumes were all appropriate. My congratulations to director Elise and her large talented cast and crew. It is high time they appeared with the grown-ups.

Review by Joan Moriarty.

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!

(Profile by Suzannah Rowley)



When not at the Theatre Leanne can be found hard at work in her studio.



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*)

JUNE

Saturday 27 th	10.30am	Working Bee with Lunch
Sunday 28 th	2.00pm	AUDITION: Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead
Tuesday 30 th	7.30pm	AUDITION: Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead

JULY

Saturday 4 th	10.30am	Working Bee with Lunch
Thursday 9 th	8.00pm	FIRST NIGHT – A Skull in Connemara
Saturday 25 th	8.00pm	FINAL NIGHT – A Skull in Connemara
Tuesday 28 th	7.30pm	Heidelberg Film Society – Oklahoma

AUGUST

Tuesday 18 th	7.30pm	Heidelberg Film Society – Rebecca
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HELP!!! needed at the **WORKING BEES**

for
A Skull In Connemara
Saturdays
27th June & 4th July
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