

PROMPTS

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE HEIDELBERG THEATRE COMPANY



THE BUSINESS OF MURDER

by Richard Harris

directed by John Jenkins

21st April – 7th May, 2011

Evenings at 8.00pm

Matinees: Sundays April 24th & May 1st at 2pm

We hope you enjoyed the comfort of the new theatre seats during **Enchanted April**, expect to spend a lot of time on the edge of them at **The Business of Murder!**

Enjoy a play with lots of twists and turns, one that will have you sitting on the edge of your seat and hanging on to every word as the story unfolds? Well that's what HTC has in store for you with our next production, **The Business of Murder**

Author Richard Harris is a virtuoso of the psychological thriller genre with works comparable to Agatha Christie's **The Mousetrap** and Anthony Shaffer's **Sleuth**. Harris has created scripts for over twenty TV series including **The Avengers**, **The Saint**, **The Sweeney**, **A Touch of Frost** and **The Last Detective**.

For the stage Harris has written over 30 plays including the award winning comedy **Outside Edge**, which HTC presented in 1991, and **Stepping Out**, which he later adapted for the musical comedy film of the same name starring Liza Minnelli.

The Business of Murder is not your usual whodunit, it's more a play of cat and mouse, a psychological drama. A task I have no doubt will be accomplished by this very fine cast of three.

It's great to welcome back Ben Starick and Xavier Ryan to the Heidelberg stage and to introduce Jessica Hutchinson in her debut at HTC who, in their

roles as *Stone*, *Hallett* and *Dee Redmond* will have you believing so many lies that at times you'll think you're at the point of total confusion!

The Company is delighted to have John Jenkins directing the show. Whilst new to Heidelberg, John has been around theatre since high school. He has been involved in countless shows over the last 15 years and has relished the challenge that each role presented. In 2004 he established Shoestring Theatre Company which went on to produce many award winning shows such as **The Crucible** and **Murdered to Death**

Our great troupe of Set Builders; Owen, Paddy, Neville, Des, Paddy, Doug, and Dennis are already hard at work creating the set, the concept of John Jenkins and designed by Owen Evans, while Craig Pearcey is designing the lighting and George Bissett the sound. Lena Minto, who played the voluble *Spanish Maid* in **Glorious!** will display her virtuosity by Stage Managing the show.

Clear evidence of Harris's ability to delight audiences is seen in the nine-year run of **The Business of Murder** on London's West End. HTC brings **The Business of Murder** to Melbourne for a three week season, 21st May – 7th May, so book now, don't miss it!

IT'S HERE!! Our Online ticketing system for general ticket purchase, Gift Certificates and Group Bookings for 10 to 30 is available for everyone to use. To access it go to our website: www.htc.org.au and click the **Buy Tickets Here** button then follow the easy steps to select your preferred night and seats for all the shows in the 2011 Season. Visa and MasterCard accepted. You can print your tickets or select to collect them on the night at the Box Office.

If you don't have internet access call our Box Office on **9457 4117** and we'll do it for you.

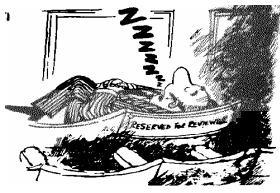
Or if you need to exchange tickets for another night, or you are a FlexiBook Subscriber wanting to reserve your seats please continue to call the Box Office.

Please call before Monday 11th April to ensure you get the best available seats.

P.O Box 141, Rosanna VIC 3084
Enquiries 9455 3039
Web www.htc.org.au
Email htc@htc.org.au
Inc. No. A008432X

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 – Online at www.htc.org.au or call 9457 4117



Review

Enchanted April by Matthew Barber
Directed by Maureen McInerney
Reviewed by Deborah Fabbro
for Theatrecraft, the VDL Newsletter,
Thursday, 18th February. 2011.



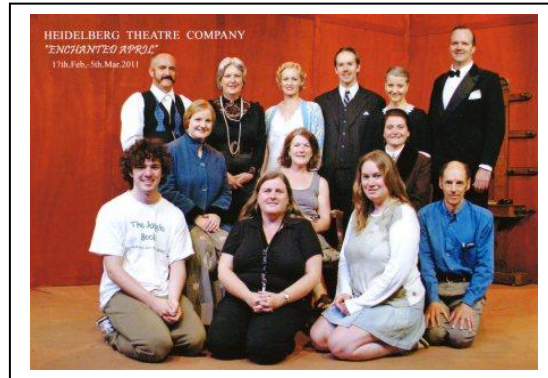
Heidelberg's first production of 2011 was the charming and delightful **Enchanted April**.

This play was written by Matthew Barber and was first presented on Broadway in 2003. Based on the 1922 novel by Elizabeth Von Arnim, it traces the physical and more importantly psychic journey of the women as they move from sad lives in London to discover themselves in sun-drenched Italy.

The play opens in grey wintery London and while the special effects of the lighting flashes were excellent, a dimmer feel overall would have contributed more to the excellent setting. The set for Act 1 was lovely timber panelling and minimal furniture successfully created the various locations required as the two wives, *Lottie Wilton* and *Rose Arnott*, plan their escape from their unfulfilled and disappointed lives with their respective spouses. We briefly meet the two husbands, *Mellersh*, *Lottie's* spouse, a pompous solicitor concerned only with expanding his business and contacts, and *Frederick*, *Rose's* husband, a philandering writer.

The opening soliloquy by *Lottie* sets the scene for the play and explains how the renting of the castle in Italy came about. This was beautifully and expressively delivered by Rachel Negus; she conveyed the character's feelings and her vivacity was excellent. This was well maintained throughout the play though, at times, in Act 2 she became a little OTT and unbelievable. This is more the fault of the writing than either the actress or the director. Nicely balanced opposite her was Michelle Tanner's portrayal of *Rose Arnott*. Reserved and sad in the first act, Michelle ably depicted the character's blossoming in sunny Italy. To help meet the costs of the rent of the castle the two women, only recently acquainted themselves, advertise for two travelling companions. *Lady Caroline*, a jaded and troubled socialite, was well played by Gabby Llewelyn Salter. She imbued the aloof character with an ethereal quality which gained the sympathy of the audience. The fourth lady, the imperious dowager, *Mrs Graves* was commandingly played by Margaret Rawlinson. It was great to see her arrogant façade dissipate under the warmth of the Italian sun.

Act 1 is mainly setting up the action of Act 2 and does tend to drag a little but scene setting such as this is required and was achieved. The final scene of the act with *Lottie* and *Rose* in the train in Italy was well staged with innovative lighting creating the flashing of lights into the train windows as it passed



above:
In the castle
grounds

left:
Cast & Crew
of *Enchanted
April*.

stations, etc and the lurching of the two actresses was well created.

The curtain opens on Act 2 and we are transported to Italy and the terrace of the castle with the lovely wisteria. It is not often than an audience so obviously shows its appreciation of a set so designer, Owen Evans, must have been quite chuffed that Friday night's audience gasped and then actually applauded the excellent setting.

The pace of this act, as each of the women relaxes and unwinds and finds new meaning in their lives, moved well. During this act we are introduced to *Costanza*, the housekeeper at the castle. Sarina Cassino made the most of the comedic aspects of this role as she contended with the English guests who spoke no Italian, or at least, no comprehensible Italian. The arrival of the two husbands *Mellersh* (Bevan Uren) and *Frederick* (Donal Taylor) continued the comedy and the exploding boiler and subsequent, almost, nude scene was superbly handled by Bevan Uren. We also re-meet the charming landlord Antony Wilding (Andrew McNess). While each of these actors was adequate something more was needed to really engage the audience. However as the play really is about the women's story, the cast and director did capture this.

The costume team of Wendy Drowley, Lois Connor and Dianne Brennan did a great job of taking the characters from drab to light, and reserved to demonstrative feelings.

I did appreciate the choice of music, very English for the start of Act 1 and bright Italian tunes for Act 2.

Maureen McInerney's sure and certain hand was evident in this production, infusing the right balance of lightness with the underlying tensions that are resolved.

An engaging start for 2011 from Heidelberg.

AUDITION NOTICE

Heidelberg Theatre Company's production of

THE HISTORY BOYS

by Alan Bennett

Directed by Bruce Akers

Auditions will be held at the Theatre
36 Turnham Avenue Rosanna (Melway ref: 31 A1)

**Sundays April 24 & May 1 from 6 pm
& Monday 25 April from 7.00pm**

**Play Season: 7th – 23rd July 2011
Weeknights and Saturdays at 8:00pm
Sundays at 2:00pm**

During the early 1980s, in Cutlers' Grammar School, a boys' grammar school in Sheffield, an unruly bunch of bright, funny senior boys are in pursuit of sex, sport and a coveted place at one of England's finest universities. In all their efforts they are helped, hindered, enlightened and bemused by a maverick English teacher who seeks to broaden their horizons; and by a young history teacher who questions his methods, as well as the aim, of their schooling. One of Alan Bennett's finest plays.

Accents required: British English

Age ranges: The pupils are aged 17 – 18; actors of this age or into their early twenties are invited to audition for these roles. For other roles see details below.

Cast

Headmaster (Felix Armstrong) – 50s to 60s.

Douglas Hector – English/General Studies teacher – 50+.

Irwin – History teacher; brought in as special coach – late 20s – 30s

Dorothy Lintott – History teacher – 50s.

Akthar – Pupil; Middle Eastern/Asian, Muslim.

Crowther – Pupil; does acting as a hobby.

Dakin – Pupil; handsome, canny flirtatious.

Lockwood – Pupil.

Posner – Pupil; youngest, Jewish, sings.

Rudge – Pupil; better with Athletic skills than studies.

Scripps – Pupil; Anglican, plays piano

Timms – Pupil, large build.

Auditions by appointment; call 0432984781.

For further enquiries, please email the Director, Bruce Akers,
bwakers27@hotmail.com or call 0432984781.

In 2012 Heidelberg Theatre Company turns 60!!

To mark this special birthday year the Play Selection Committee invite you to choose plays you'd like to see presented again at HTC from the list of plays below.

But don't stop there, if your favourites aren't on the list, include them too. We'd also welcome your suggestions for other ways you'd like to join us in celebrating this very special anniversary.

You can email your suggestions to htc@htc.org.au or bring your list to our next show and pop it in the Suggestion Box in the foyer or wait till you come to see **The Business of Murder** and make your selections then.

1952	The Browning Version/Harlequinade
1955	The Heiress
1957	Rebecca
1959	Sailor Beware
1961	An Ideal Husband
1961	Rookery Nook
1963	A View From The Bridge
1964	Our Town
1969	The Matchmaker
1972 & 1991	Hay Fever
1975	The Servant of Two Masters
1976	The Fantastics
1980	Hedda Gabler
1981	Death Of A Salesman
1982	Deathtrap
1983	The Lion in Winter
1983	Dusa, Fish, Stats and Vi
1987	The Importance of Being Ernest
1989	Arsenic And Old Lace

a full list of plays is available on the 'About HTC' page of the HTC website: www.htc.org.au

APRIL

Saturday 10 th	10.30am	Working Bee with Lunch
Saturday 17 th	10.30am	Working Bee with Lunch
Thursday 21 st	8.00pm	FIRST NIGHT – The Business of Murder
Sunday 24 th	6.00pm	Audition – The History Boys
Monday 25 st	7.00pm	Audition – The History Boys
Tuesday 26 th	7.30pm	Heidelberg Film Society

MAY

Sunday 1 st	6.00pm	Audition – The History Boys
Saturday 7 th	8.00pm	FINAL NIGHT – The Business of Murder
Tuesday 24 th	7.30pm	Heidelberg Film Society

TAKE A LOOK!!!

NEW BLOCK BOOKING OPTIONS

First Nighters Special

- Groups of 50 - \$10 per ticket.

(Always Thursday night).

Preview Night Special

- Groups of 100 or more
- \$10 per ticket.

(Always Wednesday night).

BOOK NOW

Email - htc@htc.org.au
or call our HTC Box Office on **9457 4117**.

& Groups of 10 or more
- any performance
- \$20 per tkt.

BOOK ONLINE or call the HTC Box Office.

WHO, WHAT, WHERE???

And Subscribers, if you can't remember that 'safe place' where you put your tickets, just call the Box Office and we'll issue you with replacements!

FM System Phonic Ear Headphones (no hearing aid needed) will be available again this Season at the Sunday Matinee performances only. Please reserve them when you book. The System is being trialled with assistance from the Banyule City Council.

HELP!!!

needed at the

WORKING BEES

for

The Business of Murder

Saturdays

10th & 17th April

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