Hungarian playwright, Ferenc Molnar’s *Play At The Castle* was written in 1926. This has been freely adapted by the prolific playwright Tom Stoppard and first performed in 1984 in London as *Rough Crossing* a clever, witty, comedy set in 1930 on the high seas.

Stoppard is quoted as saying, “For someone like me who enjoys writing dialogue, but has a terrible time writing plays, adaptation is joy time. You go around with a bag of tools doing jobs between personal plays.” from an interview with Mel Gussow in the New York Times, July 1979.

Wendy Drowley is directing the show, after recovering from *I’m Not Rappaport* last year. A great cast has been assembled, three oldies and three newies.

Chris Maclean and John Keogh, as *Turai* and *Gal*, the Playwrights, played in *Imaginary Invalid* together in 2003. Chris also appeared in *Kindertransport* and John as *Doolittle* in *Pygmalion*. Barry James as *Ivor*, the leading actor, also played in *Imaginary Invalid* and *The Cherry Orchard*.

We welcome Diana Mazaris as *Natasha*, the leading lady, who has worked at Moreland T.C. Ian Frost as *Adam*, the composer has worked with the Savoy Opera Company and Joshua Parnell as *Dvornichek*, the slightly sozzled waiter, has worked at Hartwell T.C.

Anne Smith is Co-ordinator Extraordinaire, Tim McLaughlan is designing sound, Stelios Karagiannis is designing lighting.

Wendy and Ted Drowley are designing the set with Ted undertaking the role of chief organiser of the usual great team of set builders. Lois Connor will costume in the 1930’s style and Ed Hassell will take the role of Musical Director. Yes, we have songs in this, the music is by André Previn. So don’t this miss this one!

**ROUGH CROSSING**

by Tom Stoppard
directed by Wendy Drowley

**28th April. – 15th May, 2004**

Wednesday to Saturday at 8.15pm
Matinee Sunday May 9th at 3pm

**BOOKINGS – 9457 4117**

Subscribers requiring to alter their chosen night or reserve their booking are asked to call BEFORE Monday, 19th April, 2004


When I auditioned for Tom Stoppard’s *Rough Crossing*, and read that it was freely adapted from Ferenc Molnar’s *The Play At The Castle*, bells rang in the recesses of my memory. I had been in a play by Ferenc Molnar back in 1961 but it had been called *The Play’s The Thing*.

I rummaged for forty minutes or so and came up with an old folder containing the script, which was half typescript on the old foolscap size, and half very early and fading photocopy. It was *The Play’s The Thing* and though it was set in a castle, the story line was the same as that in *Rough Crossing* as were the characters, even down to the same names being used.

I have enclosed a cutting from The Age of 29/9/61. In those days The Age and The Herald used to review if not all, then some amateur productions and some readers will remember that the Russell Street Theatre was for hire when the Melbourne Theatre Company weren’t using it.

The G & T Dramatic Society mentioned in the cutting was the Green and Tan Dramatic Society which was run by ex students of University High School. I was not one of these but in the late 50’s and early 60’s I was very heavily involved in the amateur theatre scene and the director, Lindsay Moore, who also played Sundor *Turai* in the play asked me to play the role of the ham actor (typecasting) *Almady*. In Stoppard’s version, directed by Wendy, he is *Ivor Fish* and is played by Barry James.

I was a little put out that Wendy wouldn’t even let me audition for the ‘old ham’ as I thought I was the right age for it now. In 1961 I was 25 and had had to grey my hair for the role. Forty-three years later I don’t have to do that and there is much less hair anyway.

**John Keogh**

Molnar Play at Russell Street *The Age 9/9/61*

After a rather flat 1st Act, Ferenc Molnar’s high-spirited comedy begins to snap and crackle. This production needed the lift brought in the 2nd Act by John Keogh and Carole Donnelly. Their perfectly matched teamwork as the “old hat” ham and the young, impressionable prima donna took advantage of the brilliant lines provided them.

It was a performance which justified the author’s merry-making mixture of melodrama and sophistication.
DINNER WITH FRIENDS by Donald Margulies
directed by Brian Moroney. Reviewed by Graeme Cope for 3CR’s Curtain Up – Sundays at One (855AM).

Donald Margulies’ Dinner With Friends won a Pulitzer prize in 2000. But it’s hard to see why! Must have been a bad year or tells us something about the eccentricities of judges! Such tripe - even tho the program tells us the author’s a consummate playwright! Reminds me of Marsha Norman’s two-hander ‘Night, Mother that did the same some twenty years ago. But we’re not here to crit the play as a script, are we? What did director Brian Moroney and his quartet of actors make of it? Perhaps not a mountain from the molehill but certainly a fine fist of extracting what little point the whole thing really has.

If pushed and comparing, for instance, the Act II scenes where each gender works in isolation from the other - the two boys at a bar, the two girls lunching - I’d give the acting honors to the women over the men by a short length of Max Factor no.5 but there’s really no doubt that all four performers work very nicely together to give this piece its only real interest. They’re burdened by the fact that their yuppie New York metro cum Connecticut characters are just so bland and the “meaningful” crises they face so monumentally insignificant in the larger scale of things that we basically couldn’t care a proverbial tinker’s about what they do and say about the angsts of the stale marriage and the separation that are the engines driving the plot. So, it’s to everyone’s credit that they’re as successful as they are with material that’s frankly so unengaging and, I reckon, gets even more so as the evening passes. Something’s surely amiss when the recipes, for instance, for the flourless almond and lemon polenta cake, are more tempting than sure amiss when the recipes, for instance, for the flourless almond and lemon polenta cake, are more tempting than

As you’ve no doubt gathered, many more marks than for the production than for the play.

A footnote: since Dinner With Friends makes such a thing of cooking, was that really a shallot I saw the hapless Beth trying to slice or what Americans call a green onion, a spring onion to us.

DINNER WITH FRIENDS – from the DIRECTOR
Dinner with Friends concluded with over booked performances due to an accomplished and dedicated cast and crew. One intangible but decisive measure of the success of a play is the sense of confidence, satisfaction and achievement that is imbued in its performance. I sensed this to be very powerfully present with Dinner with Friends. All concerned were most acutely aware that they had brought the play to its full potential.

This was clearly articulated whilst the play was "on stage" and reinforced by the remarks of John Gilbert, Maureen McInerney, Kim Wattie and the cast at the aft:

My thanks and congrats. to all concerned.

DINNER MUSIC - There proved to be much interest in the music used for Dinner With Friends so here is a list of the music played:

Before the Play - The Spagetti Opera’s: Mozart - Overture Marriage of Figaro, Bellini – Son vergin vezzosa, Cimarosa – Il Matrimonio Segreto, Rossini – Largo Al Factotum Della Ciria.

Act I - Scene 2 – Alone: Humperdinck – Hansel & Gretel.
Scene 3 – None Shall Sleep: Puccini – Nessum Dorma.


Act II – Scene 2 - Another Day in the Sun: Gluck – Cet asile aimable et tranquille,
Scene 3 – Off to the bar: Bach – Preludio.
Scene 4 – Meditative: Pucini – Signore, ascolta.

End – Mozart – Ach, ich fiehts, Catalani – La Wally

LIGHTING & SOUND WORKSHOPS A GREAT SUCCESS

Thanks to Joan Moriarty and Genevieve Meehan for organising the Workshops held at the Theatre and attended by interested HTC Youth members as well subscribers and members who ‘ticked the box’ on the 2004 Playbill indicating these were areas of interest to them.

And of course a great big thankyou to the leaders at the Workshops: George Bissett and Tim McLaughlan, Sound and Maureen White and Brian Marriner, Lighting.

HTC YOUTH AT THE BANYULE FESTIVAL

On Sunday 21 March the Company, in conjunction with HTC Youth, conducted a stall as part of this years Banyule Festival. The day was very successful in gaining publicity for the Company. A good time was had by all, (except those poor unfortunates who lost their keys!! Sorry, Anne)

Many thanks to all those who helped out on the day, in particular Anne Smith and Maureen McInerney for all their help setting up, Thanks too to Wendy Drowley, Dennis Pain, Joan and Paddy Moriarty, Jim Thomson and Luke Dixon and to HTC Youth members who helped on the day, including Natalie Lynch, Megan Burke and Carlie Dole. Here’s to making this an annual event!

HTC YOUTH THEATRE SPORTS & WORKSHOPS

HTC Youth are about to embark on a series of workshops, theatre sports and related activities. If you would like to come along or want to know more, please call Luke Dixon - on 0417 996 108.
WHAT’S THE GOSS

WHO, WHAT WHERE.....?

In Eltham’s last production, Coward’s Present Laughter, not Sing On, as your Editor wrote in Prompts – and apologises for any confusion caused – you would have seen our own Jim Thomson in the lead being very ably supported by Luke Dixon, one of the dynamos behind HTC Youth and David Macrea, another HTC regular. Well done guys!

Equally Divided, 29 April – 15 May is ETC’s next show featuring actors from HTC’s This Old Man; David Hunt, Cheryl Ballantine and Diane Deeming, Mick Poor, also well known at HTC, is directing. Bookings on 9437 1574.

Our great lighting and sound team, David Meagher and Struan McGregor are currently working at Waverley T.C. on The Cripple Of Inishmaan, and no doubt doing as great a job there as they do at HTC.

Congratulations to James and Fiona Hutson, on the birth of Charlotte, and for making Marie Mackrell a first time grandmother. Congratulations also to Tamasin Tunny who played Toinette in The Invalid on the birth of her daughter. Thea and best wishes for a speedy recovery from the Company to Val Pagram following her recent accident.

HTC POPPING UP EVERYWHERE

“On Heidelberg Station” will be the cry. That’s the latest spot where HTC will advertise its shows. Look out for our display – great work from Lena, Doug and James. So, what with that and the wonderful pic from The Imaginary Invalid in the 2004 Banyule Calendar, and Jenny Mikakos, Member for Jika Jika, offering to display our posters on her Community Notice board, the Company is certainly ‘raising its profile’ in the community, let’s hope that soon there won’t be an empty seat in the house. And there almost wasn’t for our first show, so a reminder for subscribers to please book early and if you need to change nights, please get in quick!

While on the subject of seats, June, our Ticket Secretary, urges subscribers who, for whatever reason, cannot attend a show to pass on their ticket to a friend or relation and introduce them to the pleasures of a night out at HTC, they may become subscribers too.

Speaking of which, it is not too late to subscribe for this year’s season, the option for 4 or 3 plays is still available, if you would like more details call June on 9457 4117.

ART IN THE FOYER

There was much interest and praise for the collages, quilts and ceramics in the foyer display for Friends, thanks and congratulations to Jan Howe for organising and setting up the exhibition.

SECRETARY NEEDED AT HTC

The HTC Committee needs a person to fill the position of Secretary. If you feel you would like to be a part of the team and would like more details or would like to volunteer, please contact our President, John Gilbert on 9521 5877.

TATA TERMITES!

Everyone will be relieved to know that the termites have been eradicated from the Theatre. The Company’s grateful thanks to Banyule Council for dealing with this problem, which proved to be a bit out of range for your average amateur actor!

(continued from page 1 - The Age 29/9/61)

Good work was also was done by Lindsay Moore as Sandor Turai the dramatist. He was not quite audible at times, but his movements and dialogue were well-timed.

He would have been more appreciated if he had been given stronger support from Wallace Smith, who never seemed to enter his character completely.”
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For more information contact:-
Julie Hall 0417 398 670
email: julihall@alphalink.com.au

2004

Don’t miss it!
Season: 28th April until 15th May

BOOKINGS 9457 4117

COMING EVENTS AT HTC

APRIL
Saturday 17th 10.30am  Working Bee with Lunch
Saturday 24th 10.30am  Working Bee with Lunch
Wednesday 28th 8.15pm  FIRST NIGHT – ROUGH CROSSING.
       Tuesday 20th 7.30pm  Heidelberg Film Society – The Diplomat

MAY
Sunday 9th 3.00pm  MATINEE - ROUGH CROSSING.
Saturday 15th 8.15pm  FINAL NIGHT – ROUGH CROSSING.
Tuesday 18th 7.30pm  Heidelberg Film Society – Where Danger Lives
Thursday 20th 8.15pm  HTC YOUTH – X-Stacy
Friday 21st 8.15pm  HTC YOUTH – X-Stacy
Saturday 22nd 8.15pm  HTC YOUTH – X-Stacy

JUNE
Tuesday 15th 7.30pm  Heidelberg Film Society – Sumo Do Sumo Don’t

HELP!!!

needed at the WORKING BEES for ROUGH CROSSING
Saturdays 17th & 24th April from 10.30am
Lunch is provided
A great chance to begin, resume or continue YOUR involvement with HTC and have lots of enjoyment into the bargain!
or
Working Bees not your style? How about backstage or foH for ROUGH CROSSING
Like to know more – call Anne at the Theatre on 9455 3039