

# PROMPTS

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE HEIDELBERG THEATRE COMPANY

## Emma Celebrazione

directed by Gayle Poor

by Graham Pitts

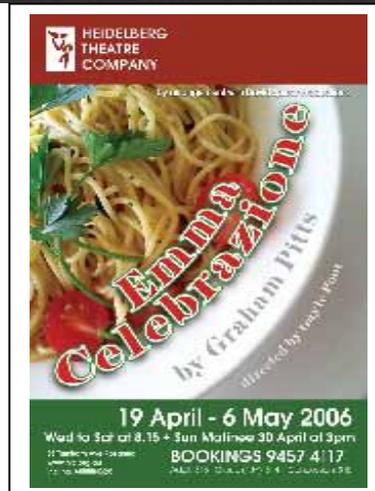
19<sup>th</sup> April – 6<sup>th</sup> May, 2006

Wednesday to Saturday at 8.15pm

Matinee Sunday 30<sup>th</sup> April. 3pm

Subscribers requiring to alter their chosen night or reserve their booking are asked to call BEFORE Monday, 10<sup>th</sup> April, 2006.

by arrangement with David Spicer Productions



The Company is delighted to have Gayle Poor return to HTC to direct **Emma Celebrazione**.

The play has been described as, "...a passionate feast. It mixes heart, head and uplifting spirit in finely balanced proportions." However Gayle doesn't want to "give too much away about the play itself but the whole Italian thing is going to be great!"

What can be said about the play is a little of the background of the story. In 1939, when she was still a teenager, Emma Ciccotosto migrated to Australia from Italy. Now her granddaughter is getting married and Emma is preparing the wedding feast. In this life-affirming play she relives her memories of Australia and Italy while cooking up home-style pasta, mixing recipes and family disasters into a concoction containing the joys, triumphs and disasters of life for Italian-Australians.

The cast is made up of faces well known at HTC; Catherine Christensen, Cheryl Ballantine, Carmel Behan, and Simon Fenn.

David Dodd is Stage Manager and Phil Carroll is the Musical Director. The Choir's ladies (twenty each night) are lovely, and very enthusiastic at the opportunity to be a part of the play and to be singing Traditional Italian Women's Folk Songs in Italian.

At the time of writing, Cast and Choir were rehearsing separately, and expecting it to all come

together in the end (a bit like the opening ceremony for the Commonwealth Games).

Marie Mackrell, having returned from a great trip overseas, is working with Gayle on the set design and the Set Building Team of Ted Drowley, Paddy Moriarty and Mick Poor is led for this production by Dennis Pain.

Maureen McInerney is the Production Co-ordinator for the show, Wendy Drowley is doing the costuming, George Bissett is designing the sound and Simon Dixon the lighting plot and Struan McGregor will operate sound.

Productions of **Emma Celebrazione** have played to sell out houses all around Australia and HTC's production is certain to continue this trend, so don't miss this one, it is going to be great!

HTC Youth presents

### BLACKROCK

by Nick Enright

directed by Vlady T

Season: 12<sup>th</sup> – 13<sup>th</sup> & 17<sup>th</sup> – 20<sup>th</sup> May

at 8:00pm

at Heidelberg Theatre Company

Turnham Avenue Rosanna

Tickets: \$10

Bookings – 9457 4117

Suitable for audiences 15+



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## BOOKINGS & SUBSCRIPTIONS 9457 4117



# Review

## THE KNACKER'S ABC

by Boris Vian

Directed by Morgan Dowsett

Reviewed Friday 24<sup>th</sup> February, 2006 by **Carolyn Gunn** for  
**3CR's CURTAIN UP** – Sundays at One (855 AM)

Before coming to grips with Heidelberg Theatre Company's production of the challenging play, **The Knacker's ABC**, let's look at its playwright, Boris Vian, to try and see where he is coming from.

Born in France in 1920 to an upper middle-class and wealthy family, he died in 1959 of a heart attack in a French cinema when viewing a film version of his controversial novel (English title) "I Spit On Your Grave" which he felt did not do justice to this, his most famous novel, written under the name of Vernon Sullivan in 1947. This deals with a light skinned Negro who has a morbidly sexual, revengeful desire to dominate white women (he actually kills two of them), due to the white violence his darker skinned brother had suffered in the past. This novel saw Boris Vian prosecuted for obscenity, the first such trial of a French novel since that of Madame Bovary in 1857.

An accomplished trumpet player, Vian's taste in music was inseparable from an interest in the social conditions in which black people lived, particularly in the American South and he also wrote about the introduction of anti-lynching laws in the Southern states that did not have them. He was inspired by black jazzman Duke Ellington and white Bix Beiderbecke, was a jazz critic for several French journals and played in the Left Bank underground nightclubs but refused to play the popular jazz or swing so often requested by the hordes of American G.I.s. It is said that the liberation of Paris in 1945 ended the so-called 'golden era' of the artificially isolated jazz scene of that time.

Boris Vian wrote novels, poems and songs, plays and operas, pot-boilers, along with impossible film scripts, he had an interest in science fiction and even wrote an artistic and pseudo-mathematical examination of the nature of God. Critics have ranked him among the pioneers of the Theatre of the Absurd and his works were frequently banned. Vian translated Strindberg, Pirandello, Brendan Behan and also the hardboiled American fiction of Raymond Chandler.

His French literary contemporaries and associates were Simone de Beauvoir, Jean Cocteau and Jean Paul Sartre. Boris Vian was an individualist, his writing 'misbehaved' and he relished in disobedience as opposed to obedience.

His 1946 absurdist play **The Knacker's ABC** (described as 'paramilitary vaudeville') is set in Normandy on D-Day 6<sup>th</sup> June 1944 during the landing of the Allied Forces in World War II. In the midst of heavy fighting, the priority of the local knacker (or bone man) is whether he should marry his daughter off to a young German billeted in their house with whom she has had a *liaison* for some four years, obviously no problem with collaboration here.

Germans, Americans, a Soviet female soldier, Free French, Salvation Army and even a Japanese parachutist burst in and out of the knacker's house (always accompanied by rapid gunfire or battle noises) but most of these persons seem to go (well, almost) the way of Sweeney Todd.



### The Committee's Review of The Knacker's ABC.

Why **The Knacker's ABC**? Well it was an opportunity for the Company to adventure into an area of theatre that had not been attempted before at Heidelberg. From our initial reading of the script it looked like a fun production to start the year with, but as we all know such a challenge can either be a great success or be prone to mixed results.

Whilst we received some very positive feedback, there were also a number of complaints from various audience members. The general dislikes were primarily the level of noise from the stage and the inconsistent diction from some of the actors. Some audience members enjoyed individual performances but did not care for the play itself. There were even some people who said it was great initiative for HTC to attempt such a different and challenging play. So reactions were certainly quite mixed.

Whilst the production was not to everybody's liking, we do acknowledge the enormous effort from the Director, cast and crew to deliver an honest performance in what was a very difficult production.

John Gilbert, President, Heidelberg Theatre Company.

Finally the 'Ministry of Reconstruction' explains to the knacker that his house must be destroyed as it is blocking their 're-alignment' project. I did wonder here if this reference or inclusion stemmed from Vian's two years employment in the sinecure of the 'Professional Office of the Paper and Cardboard Industries'.

The action is frenetic, the characters mostly well-drawn and energetically played but the play is difficult to follow and I struggled (despite reading up on Boris Vian) to find a metaphor for all the shenanigans and I wondered what drove the 26 year old Vian to make his key character a 'knacker', a class of person presumably well below that of the usually much maligned 'bourgeoisie' – also the French accents with rapid vocal delivery made it hard to catch the point in a lot of the dialogue.

In fairness, I think Director Morgan Dowsett (currently Artistic Director for the Melbourne French Theatre) was faced with a 'Catch-22' situation in that, does he hold true to the absurdist style of the play or does he measure or pace it to make it more comprehensible to an audience, quite a few of whom did not connect with the play on the night I saw the production. I'm also wondering who did the translation.

The very able cast comprised - Alexandros Christopoulos, Adrian Valenta, Christian Gabriel, Hano Kotevski, Christina Walls, Romain Hermelin, Jordon Lee, Tara Daniel, Curtis Farrell, Olivia Crang, Joshua Parnell, Florence Riviere, and Oliver Trew. I especially enjoyed the performance of Melanie Rowe as the *Mother* and the excellent characterisation by Chris Baldock as the *Father*, the tunnel visioned 'knacker' who kept his head when all about him appeared to be losing theirs ..... well at least until almost the final curtain.

Set and lighting were appropriate for the production, the sound was excellent and great fun and I particularly compliment stage management and wardrobe.

**The Knacker's ABC** is a show that for me could have had more impact on a second viewing it plays at Heidelberg Theatre Company until 4<sup>th</sup> March.

# AUDITION NOTICE

Sunday 23<sup>rd</sup> April  
from 2pm

at Heidelberg Theatre Company, 36 Turnham Avenue, Rosanna

## ART

by Yasmina Reza  
Directed by Wayne Pearn

Season: Wednesday 5<sup>th</sup> – Saturday 22<sup>nd</sup> July, 2006  
Matinee - Sunday 16<sup>th</sup> July.

Serge has paid plenty for a white minimalist painting and craves validation from his friends, Marc and Yvan. to feel good about it. Marc loathes it. Yvan is ambivalent. However, Serge endeavours to placate his friends as they use their point of difference over the art to attack each other intellectually and personally.

In this witty, sophisticated multi-award winning play, Reza's examination of male relationships poses the question: "What is friendship?"

### CHARACTERS

**Serge, Marc and Yvan**  
(age range - late thirties to mid-fifties)

Interested parties can call the Director,  
**Wayne Pearn on 0409 541 039** to arrange an audition

### FAREWELLS

It is with great regret that the Company acknowledges the death of two of its long time supporters.

Mabel Long died on the 2<sup>nd</sup> January this year after a short illness. Mabel is remembered as a great supporter of the Heidelberg Film Society who use the Theatre for their monthly film showings and through her work with the Society was well known to both the HTC Committee and members.

Will Semler from the Film Society wrote movingly of her work for the group in their recent newsletter and in her association with our Company his words also apply, "she knew everyone, welcoming all with a friendly smile and was always there ever willing to help".

Lady Elizabeth Young, known to HTC audiences as Elizabeth Twinning, died on the 30<sup>th</sup> January this year.

Her involvement with the Company goes back to 1966 when she first appeared on the Heidelberg stage in **Night of the Iguana**. Many more roles followed; Elizabeth appeared in twelve productions with the Company, and in the 1987 production of **The Life and Times of Nicholas Nickleby**, she played three roles, including that of a Yorkshire boy in the Children's Home. She last appeared on the HTC stage in 1989 as one of the Aunts in the hugely successful production of **Arsenic and Old Lace**.

The Company extends its condolences to the families of Mabel and Elizabeth.

### APOLOGIES AND THANKS from your Editor

Thanks to Ron Chapman, one of our 2005 Adjudicators who fortunately picked up that in our Awards 2005 article in the last issue of *Prompts*, an "Excellence" which was given to Adrian Boyce as *John Hale* in the Youth Production of **The Crucible** was not included.

Ron went on to write that Adrian richly deserved a mention, which of course he does. So congratulations to Adrian and my apologies to him for the omission and again thanks to Ron for his diligence and care.

# What's the Goss?

## BLACKROCK

by Nick Enright

**Blackrock** is the first production for 2006 by HTC Youth. Production dates are 12 – 13 May and 17 – 20 May at 8.00pm at the Theatre.

**Blackrock** by Australian playwright Nick Enright explores a real life event that took place in 1991 in a seaside town when a girl was raped and murdered. The play explores the psychological reasons why the crime was committed, focusing on the issues of peer group pressure and the social standing in the town of the perpetrators.

*Vlady T, who has been a member of HTC Youth since its inception and is well known to HTC Youth production audiences as an actor is welcomed in his directorial debut at HTC.*

This is a large cast production; there are twenty-two characters in the play. Casting has been completed, with some doubling up of parts by a number of the cast.

If you are in the 15-25 year age group and would like to work behind the scenes on the show, then give Vlady a call on **0413 224 707**.

And to all HTC supporters, remember to note the production dates on your calendar and be there to support HTC Youth's production of this challenging and relevant work.

## GOSSIP FROM THE GAMES

Word is that Tim McLaughlin was much more comfortable playing *Dick Tracey* on the end of a walky-talky during the opening ceremony of the Games than in the role he was originally allotted; that of *Jonah*, tucked away in the stomach of one of the fish swimming along the Yarra but that was maybe marginally better than his current condition, a bout of pneumonia.

And did you recognise Anne Smith in her role as Dame Edna No. 456 in the closing ceremony, looking like the Real Thing in her Edna gear from yes, you guessed it, the wonderful HTC wardrobe. All agreed Anne looked more like Edna than the lady herself, possibly not something she ever really aspired to.

## AND A PAT ON THE BACK!

Brett Hunt our *hardworking* and *greatly appreciated* Secretary/Subscription Secretary was happy to pass on an email from a subscriber who receives her copy of *Prompts* electronically: "Thanks Brett.

Last time I was unable to open your attachments. This one was easy. I like the format of your first edition. Thankyou. keep up the good work."

## WHO, WHAT, WHERE?

Hoy Polloy Productions will present **Frozen** by Bryony Lavery in early June, to be directed by Paul King. For more information or enquiries please email the Company at [hoypolloy@bigpond.com](mailto:hoypolloy@bigpond.com).

Patricia Tyler and Dennis Pain have just returned from a cruise to the frozen North. A well deserved break for them both. No doubt they will

have some fabulous photos of the trip. Patricia is back just in time to take more photos; in her role as the Company's photographer, as well she is the FOH Co-ordinator, and it's certain there will be some set building tasks awaiting Dennis' expert touch.

Chris Baldock, the *Knacker*, in our last production, puts on his Director's hat for Malvern's next production, **Twelve Angry Men**. The cast, all male, includes some faces well known to HTC audiences including Laurie Jezard, Ian Grealey, Paul James, Paul Dineen, Bob Crawford, Will Houten and Damien Coffey. Bookings on **9530 8586**

Julie Hall played a special role recently, Mother of the Groom, when son Stephen was married in Sydney. The wedding was specially arranged so as not to interfere with her commitments behind the Ticket Secretary's desk. Congratulations to Stephen and his bride and of course to our Julie.

Great to have an email from Luke Dixon with an update on what he is up to. Currently Luke is living in Freemantle and studying to be a Drama Teacher. He sends his best to the Company, particularly HTC Youth, for a great 2006 Season and congratulations on the success of our 2005 program.

Another of our *hardworking* and *greatly appreciated* members, Bruce Akers, is currently enjoying a break from his 'real job' but keeping his hand in as our Treasurer. Bruce will spend the next few months travelling and relaxing, and so far he's loving it!

## HELP!!! needed at the WORKING BEES

for  
**Emma Celebrazione**  
**Saturdays**  
**8<sup>th</sup> & 15<sup>th</sup> April**  
**from 10.30am**  
**lunch is provided**

So do come along, it's a great experience and a fun time too!  
or

**Working Bees not your style?**  
**How about** assisting  
backstage **or** foh

**Like to know more – call Maureen on**  
**9455 3039**

## APRIL

Saturday 8<sup>th</sup> 10.30am  
Saturday 15<sup>th</sup> 10.30am  
Wednesday 19<sup>th</sup> 8.15pm  
Sunday 23<sup>rd</sup> 2.00pm  
Tuesday 25<sup>th</sup> 7.30pm

**Working Bee with Lunch**  
**Working Bee with Lunch**  
**FIRST NIGHT – Emma Celebrazione**  
**AUDITION: ART by Yasmina Reza**  
Heidelberg Film Society –  
The White Balloon (IRAN) Subtitles

## MAY

Saturday 5<sup>th</sup> 8.15pm  
Friday 12<sup>th</sup> to  
Saturday 13<sup>th</sup> 8.00pm  
Tuesday 16<sup>th</sup> 7.30pm

**FINAL NIGHT – Emma Celebrazione**  
HTC YOUTH PRODUCTION  
**BLACKROCK** by Nick Enright  
Heidelberg Film Society –  
The Company of Strangers (CANADA)  
HTC YOUTH PRODUCTION  
**BLACKROCK** by Nick Enright

Wednesday 17<sup>th</sup> to  
Saturday 20<sup>th</sup> 8.00pm

## JUNE

Tuesday 20<sup>th</sup> 7.30pm

Heidelberg Film Society –  
Rosencranz & Guildenstern (USA)