

PROMPTS

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE HEIDELBERG THEATRE COMPANY



Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead

by **Tom Stoppard**
directed by Chris McLean

17th September – 3rd October, 2009

Evenings at 8.00pm

Matinees - Sundays 20th & 27th September at 2pm

Subscribers requiring to alter their chosen night or reserve their booking are asked to call BEFORE Wednesday, 2nd September, 2009.

Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead is a play which, as it were, takes place in the wings of Shakespeare's play "Hamlet", and finds both humour and poignancy in the situation of the ill-fated attendant lords.

The play tells of the humorous misadventures of Rosencrantz and Guildenstern (Ros & Guil), two minor characters from Hamlet, focusing on their actions with the plot of Hamlet running in the background.

Stoppard's play can be seen as Shakespeare's play turned on its head; Ros and Guil now have leading roles, and Hamlet and Denmark's royal court play the minor parts. We get to see Ros and Guil when they are off-stage to the Bard's play, but also witness scenes in which the dramatic events of both plays intersect.

In "Rosencrantz & Guildenstern Are Dead" Stoppard takes two commoners, like most of us, and places them centre-stage to amuse us with their search for a meaning for their life and an understanding of death and to have us consider to what extent we can control our own destinies.

The National Theatre production in 1967 made Tom Stoppard's reputation virtually overnight. Its wit, stagecraft and verbal verve remain as exhilarating today as they were then and the play has become a contemporary classic.

In the roles of Guildenstern and Rosencrantz you'll find Tim Constantine playing one, and John Jenkins playing the other. Tim was last seen in Cloudstreet, and John is a newcomer to Heidelberg.

Barry Lockett is The Player, and he is surrounded by the Tragedians: David Paul, Anthony Quilty, Tim Camilleri, Paul Karafillis, Jim Thomson. Barry's last HTC appearance was in *The Grapes of Wrath*. David Paul and Anthony Quilty are new to HTC; Tim Camilleri was last seen in HTC Youth's *Ruby Moon*; Paul Karafillis composed the music for *Cloudstreet* and *Grapes of Wrath*, Jim Thomson and Laurie Jezard were last seen in *Dinner Game*.

Other players include Hamlet - James Antonas, Ophelia - Stephanie Evison Williams, Claudius- Cedric Williamson, Gertrude - Anne Smith, and Polonius - Bruce Akers.

Leanne Cole has designed the set, Bruce Akers is back stage, and we welcome back the regular set building crew of Dennis, Des, Owen, Paddy, Doug, Neville & Jim.

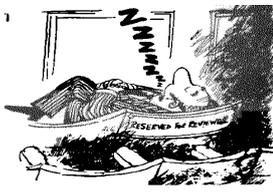
The costumes for Ros and Guil have been organised by Wendy Drowley and Lois Connor. Most of them had been made for other productions, namely *Romeo & Juliet*, *A Man for All Seasons*, *A Lion in Winter* and even that "Scottish play", all beautifully designed and made over the years by Deirdre Oliver, Bronwyn King, and Wendy and Lois.

Chris McLean is directing Ros and Guil – he was last on stage earlier this year in *The Dinner Game*.

P.O Box 141, Rosanna VIC 3084
Enquiries 9455 3039
Fax 9457 2078
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 & SUBSCRIPTIONS 9457 4117



Review

A Skull in Connemara, by Martin McDonagh

Directed by Justin Stephens

Reviewed by Frances Devlin Glass, 17 July, 2009

for 3CR's **CURTAIN UP** Sundays at One (855 AM)

Martin McDonagh is perhaps better known to listeners of this program as the writer of **Beauty Queen of Leenane**, which has done very well in both professional and non-professional networks. Some will perhaps have seen **The Pillowman** recently at the Malthouse. They are somewhat unsettling plays, with a streak of dark comedy. This one is no exception and for a high proportion of belly laughs at things one ought not laugh at, this play wins by a country mile. As I was watching it, I invented the term *rural noir*, but a modern version of the *gothic* would also serve to characterise this play, as would *putrefaction humour*. It's richly and darkly comic and puts him in the same transgressive playground as Synge, Joyce and Beckett.

The play deals centrally with four Irish characters who are bored out of their brains and the one sustaining element in their lives is their story-telling ability, and that ability knows no bounds. The *craic* is fantastic. It is not a new theme, but it is a good one, and McDonagh is totally unconstrained by codes of politeness, morality, propriety or good taste, especially when old and longheld grudges come to the centre of the conversation. I don't often guffaw in the theatre, but this kind of humour really tickled me (I could be quite sick, of course). Some of the audience took a while to acclimatise to the humour. It ought not to have been as amusing as it was as the play depicts what is actually a sad world where drinking to excess and vomiting, and drink-driving are macho sports, and where pounding skeletons to smithereens is deemed more fun than hamster cooking.

The play began with some stylish multimedia black and white moving images of a car crash. They were in the style of Jack Yeats, and efficiently sketched out the prequel to the action of the play. It concerns a bereaved and angry husband who is very likely a murderer and whose job is to free up space in the graveyard. He must dig up a wife who has been the subject of a great deal of speculation and innuendo in the village.

The body jokes this activity provokes are gross in the extreme, and the playwright revels in transgression in a way I think of as peculiarly Irish. The Church is part of their lives, but seemingly a totally irrelevant part, unless you see the probing of the reasons a husband might kill his wife as some sort of legacy of the tradition of debating fine gradations of sin: could it be justifiable, for instance, to kill a wife because she couldn't make good scrambled egg? The comedy is body-focussed. Such questions arise as what the grave-exhumer does with the remains he excavates, and he is a tease on this subject. The scene in which we find out was seriously extravagant in its profligate destruction of superb props of skulls. Another set of questions relates to what happens to intimate bits, and the character who obsesses about this is a quite daft young man, so there is much mileage in the naiveté he displays.



from left: Mairtin Hanlon (Brian Farrell), *Guardh* (Nick Walter) and *Mick Dowd* (Paul Kennedy) in **Connemara**

There is a cast of four and three were simply outstanding and the fourth more than adequate. The standout performer is a young man, Brian Farrell, newly arrived from Ireland, who, though a handsome lad, was able to look gormless, and whose timing was impeccable. He's like a hyperactive kid, jumping about and quick to give and take offence. Sandy Green gave a very animated performance as the fearless old woman who will do anything for some poteen and talk. Nick Walter as the foolish guard was as skilful as Mairtin Hanlon in milking the comedy and had a wonderful line in comic business – tasting soil, fumbling with the skull. I was somewhat disappointed that Paul Kennedy in the central role wasn't as fluent in his part as his peers. I thought he could be having a bad night.

The set was brilliant and richly detailed. The revolve had a cottage on one side, and the graveyard on the other. I'm glad the grim-reaper scythe was not used - there was enough blood as it was. But what a wonderfully menacing prop in a play that held the threat of violence over our heads. The set was atmospheric with suggestion of peaty haze from the hearth fire, but I thought the lighting in the graveyard scene directed too much attention to itself, and might have been a lot subtler.

So, a superb production, and not to be missed. Congratulations to Director Justin Stephens and his crew.

Congratulation to Wendy Gower the winner of our '**Guess Which Play**' Quiz. Wendy has won two complimentary tickets to **Rosencrantz & Guildenstern Are Dead** and a bottle of champers! Thanks to all those who took part, a nice little brain teaser to set our audience up for **A Skull In Connemara**. And thanks to our Art Scape Exhibition Curator, Leanne Cole, for arranging the display and organizing the fun.

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.
Further information is available at the Ticket Box.

HELP NEEDED WITH TICKETS – BE PART OF THE TEAM
Contact June - 9457 4117

AUDITION NOTICE

Heidelberg Theatre Company's production of

The Philadelphia Story by Philip Barry

**Audition times: 7.30pm Sunday 20 September &
7.30pm Monday 21 September, 2009**
(Please let the director know which night you prefer.)

at Heidelberg Theatre Company - 36 Turnham Ave, Rosanna. Vic 3084. Melways Ref. 32 A1

Company web site: www.htc.org.au

SEASON: - Thursday 19th November, 2009 - Saturday 5th December, 2009

Director: John Keogh - Enquiries: jfk@netspace.net.au 040 1745 483 9827 6903

Characters as Mr. Barry describes them. (The director's comments in brackets):-

- Tracy Lord:** a strikingly lovely girl of twenty-four. (Attractive, 20s. Played by Katherine Hepburn in the film and by Grace Kelly in **High Society**. A major role.)
- Dinah Lord:** is all of fifteen years old. (Tracy's scheming little sister. Needs to look and act young)
- Margaret Lord:** Their Mother, is a young and smart forty-seven. (late 40s early 50s)
- Sandy Lord:** Twenty-six. (Bright son of the family, in his 20s)
- Uncle Willie:** Sixty-two. (Amusing, bit of a lad with an eye for the ladies, likes a drink, 60's)
- Mike Connor:** Thirty. (This is the Jimmy Stewart, Frank Sinatra role. Newspaper reporter – with all that goes with it. Early 30's, a major role.)
- Liz Imbrie:** Twenty-eight. (This is the Ruth Hussey, Celeste Holm role. Newspaper photographer - with all that goes with it. Late 20s-early 30s. a major role.)
- George Kittredge:** Aged thirty-two (engaged to Tracy, self-made, and self-important, a major role. 30s to early 40s)
- Dexter:** Twenty-eight. Pleasant and good-looking. (This is the Cary Grant, Bing Crosby role. Late 20's - mid 30's. Tracy's ex-husband. A major role.)
- Seth:** Tall, handsome, suave. Fifty (Tracy's somewhat wayward but wise father. Mid 50s to early 60's)
- Thomas:** (Servant - Butler type small part any age but not too young. Small role)
- Mac:** The night watchman (small role, 30's upwards to any age)
- Edward & Elsie** Servants (Any age very small roles)

Synopsis: This classic comedy, set in the 1930s, tells the tale of Tracy Lord, a socialite bride-to-be who reluctantly embarks on a voyage of self-discovery and in the process learns a few lessons about 'true love'. It has everything you'd expect in a 'blue chip' romantic comedy - a fast-fire witty script and all the trappings of affluent and engaging characters. When later transferred to the screen, it became a highly successful movie starring Katherine Hepburn, Cary Grant and Jimmy Stewart and later the movie-musical **High Society**, starring Grace Kelly, Frank Sinatra and Bing Crosby.

For further information Google "**The Philadelphia Story**" and follow your nose.

Other Information: Rehearsals will begin on Sunday 27th Sept. With a few unavoidable exceptions rehearsals will be on Tuesday and Thursday evenings at 7.30pm and Sunday afternoons at 2.00pm

Please ensure you have read the play before the auditions

Questions?

To the director on:--- jfk@netspace.net.au

Winter in Banyule at HTC



JOB VACANT

Want a sea-change? Wrong ad!

We need someone to manage our member data-base; to enter data, to convey cash to the Company's coffers, and to send out membership cards. Limited space requires a summary of this wonderful position:

Salary - nil.

Perks - nil. Pretty girls, hunky guys
(or vice-versa) - nil.

Computer skills - must be able to turn it on.

Travel - unlimited between home and the theatre at your expense.

Dental plan - teeth not required.

If you really think you can cope, send your CV, two referees and a box top from one of our products.

Or phone: 9457-4117 Bribes welcome!

HTC Capers

Saturday 22nd Aug

Many thanks go to Anne Smith for producing the delightful *HTC Capers* on Saturday 22nd Aug. We did find out about the "stage" side of the set builders and it was great to see the Horse (can we call him Troy?) taking Paddy for a ride.

The Ros and Guil team gave a superb interpretation of *Hamlet* in the short time they were allotted. We had a snapshot of Youth auditions, a dance class, a cello recital, and a bit of poetry.

Anne herself appeared in many guises, and with a jazz band, and it was all bound together by MC Laurie Jezard. A great night!



The Front Garden



Visitors to the Theatre on our Open Day & Costume Sale and for the *HTC Capers* evening, all part of Winter in Banyule, were delighted with the new front garden and entry, made possible through a grant from Banyule City Council, who commissioned Eltham Sculptor, Leigh Conkie to design the beautiful and grand new seating.

HTC thanks BCC and Leigh for this stunning landscape.

HELP!!! needed at the
WORKING BEES

for

**Rosencrantz &
Guildenstern
Are Dead**

Saturdays

**5th & 12th September
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

SEPTEMBER

Saturday 5 th	10.30am	Working Bee with Lunch
Saturday 12 th	10.30am	Working Bee with Lunch
Thursday 17 th	8.00pm	FIRST NIGHT – Rosencrantz & Guildenstern Are Dead
Sunday 20 th	7.30pm	AUDITION: The Philadelphia Story
Monday 21 st	7.30pm	AUDITION: The Philadelphia Story
Tuesday 8 th	7.30pm	Heidelberg Film Society – <i>Malcolm</i>

OCTOBER

Saturday 3 rd	8.00pm	FINAL NIGHT – Rosencrantz & Guildenstern Are Dead
Tuesday 13 th	7.30pm	Heidelberg Film Society – <i>My Beautiful Laundrette</i> .