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.
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 young man, so there is much mileage in the naiveté he displays.

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 skillful 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.

Congratulations 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.
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  04 01745 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, Celest 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**

**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.

**SEPTEMBER**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Saturday 5th</td>
<td>10.30am</td>
<td>Working Bee with Lunch</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saturday 12th</td>
<td>10.30am</td>
<td>Working Bee with Lunch</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thursday 17th</td>
<td>8.00pm</td>
<td><strong>FIRST NIGHT</strong> – Rosencrantz &amp; Guildenstern Are Dead</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sunday 20th</td>
<td>7.30pm</td>
<td><strong>AUDITION</strong>: The Philadelphia Story</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monday 21st</td>
<td>7.30pm</td>
<td><strong>AUDITION</strong>: The Philadelphia Story</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tuesday 8th</td>
<td>7.30pm</td>
<td>Heidelberg Film Society – <em>Malcolm</em></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**OCTOBER**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Saturday 3rd</td>
<td>8.00pm</td>
<td><strong>FINAL NIGHT</strong> – Rosencrantz &amp; Guildenstern Are Dead</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tuesday 13th</td>
<td>7.30pm</td>
<td>Heidelberg Film Society – <em>My Beautiful Laundrette</em></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**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

**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!