

AN INSPECTOR CALLS

a much awarded compelling and haunting thriller

by J.B. Priestley directed by John Jenkins

3rd May – 19th May, 2012

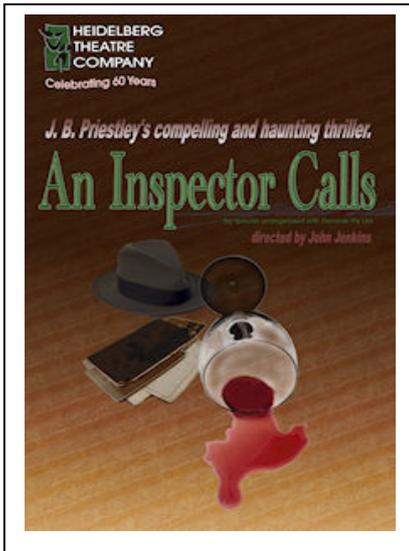
Evenings at 8.00pm

Matinees: Sundays 6th & 13th May at 2pm

Subscribers requiring to alter their chosen night or reserve their booking are asked to call BEFORE Wednesday, 18th April, 2012.

PROMPTS

No. 2 April, 2012



When Director, John Jenkins read **An Inspector Calls** he was 'blown away'. It is rare to find a play that leaves you wanting to read it again immediately after turning the last page, but that is just what our Director wanted to do with this little gem. A difficult show to stage as the action takes place entirely in the same room with not a lot of coming and going leaving the director and the cast the job of keeping an audience enthralled in what is essentially a dialogue driven piece. It is so well written though, that it makes the job somewhat easier. What drew him to this play however, was that it was a murder mystery without a murder (not really giving anything away there). The mystery is in how the events of the evening unfold as each character is systematically pulled apart by the cunningness of the *Inspector*. And just when you think it's all over, it twists.

This is John's fourth production with HTC and second as Director. He directed **The Business of Murder** last year and performed in **Glengarry Glen Ross** and **Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead**. John has a passion for theatre which comes from over 20 years of being involved. The role of directing has taken over that of actor of late as he relishes the challenge of not only bringing a character to life (which is a challenge in itself), but bringing every character and an entire story to life. John admits to being a bit of a control freak, so directing is a perfect fit for him. Although he does think the next show he does will have to be a comedy as Death seems to be a recurring theme in most of his shows of late.

It's great to welcome back Roderick Chappel to the Heidelberg stage and to introduce Linda Morgan, Nicole Gregurek, Alice Fitzgerald, Anders William Ross, Lyall Mabin and Chris Gaffney in their first roles at HTC.

Our great troupe of Set Builders; Owen, Paddy, Neville, Des, Mal, Doug, and Dennis are already hard at work creating the set, the

concept of John Jenkins and designed by Marie Mackrell, while Craig Pearcey is designing the lighting and George Bissett the sound. Melanie Belcher will again display her virtuosity by Stage Managing the show while Jim Thomson acts as Production Co-ordinator and Wendy Drowley dresses the actors and Brownwyn Parker, the stage. What a great team!

Clear evidence that **An Inspector Calls** retains the ability to delight audiences is seen in the number of times the play is revived not only on London's West End but throughout the English speaking world. It is a timeless play that just keep getting better with age.

HTC brings **An Inspector Calls** to Melbourne for a three week season, 3rd May – 19th May, so book now, don't miss it

**BIG BANG at the 2012 AGM on
SUNDAY 16th December.**

the Business will be brief and the Celebration long!

All Subscribers, Members and Friends
of the Company are invited to this
Very Special Annual General Meeting!

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

36 Turnham Avenue, Rosanna
P.O Box 141, Rosanna VIC 3084

Enquiries 9455 3039
Email htc@htc.org.au

web: htc.org.au
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REVIEW

A Lion In Winter by James Goldman
Directed by Karen Wakeman
Reviewed by Laura Hartnell, TheatrePeople
Thursday, 18th February. 2012.

I went into Heidelberg Theatre Company's production of **A Lion in Winter** knowing nothing about the play or the 1968 film, and I was surprised to be taken on such a funny, dramatic and shocking rollercoaster of a journey.

The word 'dysfunctional' barely begins to describe the family of King Henry II and his wife Eleanor of Aquitaine. The play takes the audience through a historically fictional and bizarre power struggle between the royal family - Henry, Eleanor, their three sons Richard, Geoffrey and John - to secure the throne after Henry's death. Also along for the ride is the family's Christmas guest, Phillip II of France, and his half-sister Alais, who is betrothed to Richard but is Henry's mistress.

Heidelberg Theatre Company's production was an admirable attempt at this classic play, and while there were many impressive elements, unfortunately these elements failed to culminate into a fantastic show. Having said that, it seems a tricky show to pull off and the cast did quite well. The script comprises both extreme comedic and dramatic scenes; this combined with the demands of understanding, interpreting and expressing a literary text that falls somewhere between Shakespeare and modern English, makes the play a challenge for any actor.

The most impressive performance of the show came from Juliet Hayday, playing *Eleanor*. An obviously experienced and talented actor, Hayday managed to bring emotional nuance and compassion to a complicated and unlikeable character. The best aspect of Hayday's performance was her ability to listen and respond to the others on the stage. In doing this, she ensured the text remained modern, relevant and interesting instead of stale and out-of-date, which I felt the script to be at times.

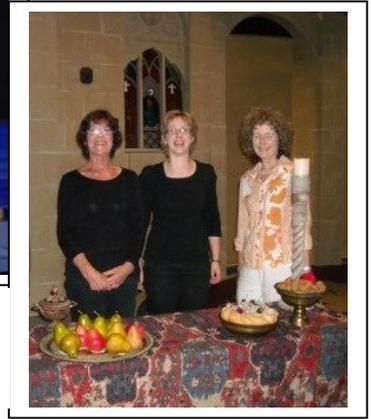
Another stand-out performance was Chris McLean as *Henry II*, and when he was onstage with Hayday, the show shone. A highlight of the play for me was their scene together in the second act; the two actors knew what they were doing and delivered the scene with such assurance and attention to detail that it was a pleasure to witness. Julia Christensen made a lovely *Alais*: fiery, charming and beautiful, she had the audience cheering for her at the end and it was a pleasure to watch her character's transformation throughout the play. The scene between her and Hayday in the second act was another highlight: the two actresses listened to one another and worked brilliantly together in a very touching scene.

Tom Stammers' *Richard* was appropriately intense, Tim Camilleri was a wonderfully manipulative *Geoffrey* and John Murphy's *John* was delightfully boyish and whiny. Kieran Tracey handled his role as *Philip* very well; I often wished he had more to do in the play. The young men thrived in comedy but tended to err on the side of melodrama when playing out the family conflicts. Stammers, in particular, had a tendency to depict anger by merely yelling; this unfortunately made *Richard*, his character, almost farcical in some scenes.

While the cast members all worked well in their roles, there was a lack of unity and understanding whenever there was more than two or three actors in a scene. This became particularly apparent when scenes were not in the hands of



left:- Juliet Hayday as Eleanor & Chris McLean as Henry II.

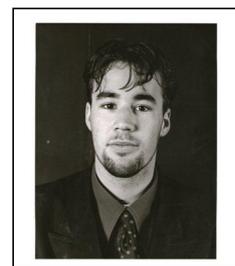


far right:- Director Karen Wakeham with centre:- Stage Manager Melanie Belcher and on the left:- Stage Assistant Bobbie Parish.

Hayday or McLean; often the younger actors seemed to be floundering around trying get the lay of the land. The swordfight at the end of the play, which is the culmination of all the hatred and anger amongst father and sons, seemed clumsy and unrehearsed, which is a shame considering it should have been the climax of the final act.

The set, lighting and sound worked well together to assist the ever-changing moods of the play. Special mentions to lighting designer Deryk Hartwick and operator Jennifer Jackson, and stage manager Melanie Belcher. Despite a couple of lengthy scene changes, the play moved smoothly from scene to scene and the lighting was exceptional, adding to the show without being distracting and assisting with changes in mood when other elements of the show were lacking. Also congratulations to Wendy Drowley and Cathy Christensen, whose period costumes were very impressive, especially *Eleanor's* dresses and wig.

Overall, the cast and crew should be commended for this production. The play is a difficult one to pull off, and while this production didn't succeed in all aspects, there was much to like about the show. It's also worth mentioning that Heidelberg Theatre Company is celebrating its 60th anniversary this year - congratulations to all involved in the company; it is quite a feat.



JUSTIN FOSTER

We were all saddened to learn of the sudden passing of actor Justin Foster on the 3rd January this year at the too early age of 40.

Justin will always be fondly remembered at HTC for his wonderful, energetic performance as *Eugene Jerome* in the Neil Simon trilogy of plays (commonly known as the Eugene trilogy) - **Brighton Beach Memoirs** produced at HTC in 1988; **Biloxi Blues** 1990 and **Broadway Bound** in 1992. He would have been one of the few actors in the world to have played *Eugene* in all three productions.

He was such a talent. Although we had not seen him at HTC for a number of years, those who had worked with him will remember him fondly as a gentle and unassuming young man. Our deepest sympathy is extended to his family and friends.

AUDITION NOTICE

Heidelberg Theatre Company's production of

The Importance of Being Earnest

by **Oscar Wilde**

"the perfect English Comedy"

Directed by Wendy Drowley

Auditions will be held at the Theatre

36 Turnham Avenue Rosanna (Melway ref: 32 A1)

Sunday May 6 from 6.30pm

& Monday May 7 from 7.30pm

Play Season: 12th – 28th July 2012

Weeknights and Saturdays at 8:00pm

Sundays at 2:00pm

First performed to the London public in 1895, this classic comedy of manners needs little introduction today. It tells of two flippant young men who, in order to impress their respective fiancées, pretend their names are "Ernest". Both their ladies believe this essential to their happiness.

The rapid-fire wit and wonderfully eccentric characters, including the unique Lady Bracknell, have made it the delight of audiences for decades.

Cast

John Worthing JP - aged 29 years. An urbane, conservative English gentleman - with a secret!

Algernon Moncrieff - aged 25 years - a younger rakish gentleman about town
- also with a secret!

Hon. Gwendolen Fairfax - 19/20 years of age - upper class English debutante.
An aloof perfectionist.

Cecily Cardew - aged 18 years - John Worthing's ward. A simple but feisty young lady,
well able to hold her own in verbal sparring.

Lady Bracknell - aged 50 years - Gwendolen's formidable Mother, very aware of social standing.

Miss Prism - aged 60 years - Cecily's Governess - an aged 60 years – Cecily's Governess
- an eccentric, fussy old maid, who also has a secret!

Rev Canon Chasuble DD - aged 60 - 70 years - a pedantic, doddering, minister.

Lane - Algernon's manservant - age- not too young or too mature.

Merriman - John Worthing's Butler - age - not too young or too mature.

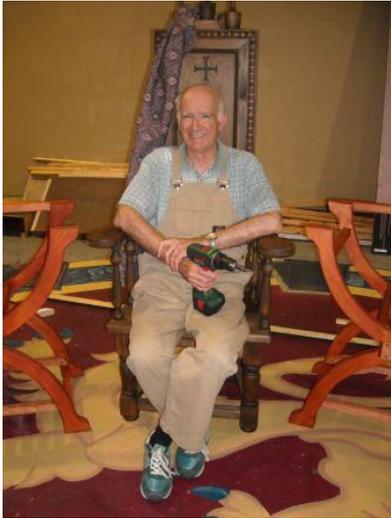
(all ages specified are the age of the character as appearing on stage)

All characters require good posture, movement and diction as well as upper class English accents and all these will be developed during rehearsals.

Auditions by appointment

To make an appointment, please phone Wendy Drowley on 0413 580 650
or email edrowley@bigpond.com

PERSONALITY PROFILE – NEVILLE WILKIE



above: Our 'Great Blokes' – some members of the Set Building Team – waiting for their turn to test the seats,
from left: Paddy, Des & Mal.
seated from left: Dennis, Neville & Owen.

The photo above places Neville where he belongs – on the Throne he crafted for the set of **The Lion In Winter** – 'surrounded by his loyal subjects.' (He won't be allowed to forget that statement!).

He worked tirelessly on the set for **The Lion In Winter** – every Saturday for 6 weeks and at home he made the throne, three beautiful chairs and a gorgeous jewellery box. Now to confess – there was a dreadful omission in the program – Neville was not mentioned.

He is a man of many talents – a virtuoso cello player and part of the Preston Symphony Orchestra since 1952. After retiring as Manager and Operator of the AMP Theatre he became a crossing supervisor assisting Samantha and Natalie Gilbert across the road (Sam is now part of our set building team. He was also a Scout Group Leader when John Gilbert was a lad together with his dad, Vic, a volunteer with the Scout Group.)

Some years ago Neville's wife, Valmae, did catering for the Company's Supper Nights and John (our President) suggested to Neville in 2008 that he attend an open day and the rest is history.

Perhaps you will remember the retractable dagger in **The Dinner Game**, the rifle and guillotine window in **The Pain Killer** and the water pump in **Under Milk Wood**, all Neville's excellent craftsmanship.

He wants you all to know that he enjoys working with our set builders and regards them as 'Great Blokes'.

What stands out here is the word 'community' and all the positives it implies. Thank you Neville.

APRIL

Tuesday 17th 7.30pm Heidelberg Film Society – *The Man Who Sued God*
Saturday 21st 10.30am **Working Bee** with Lunch
Saturday 28th 10.30am **Working Bee** with Lunch

MAY

Thursday 3rd 8.00pm **FIRST NIGHT – An Inspector Calls**
Sunday 6th 6.30pm **Audition – The Importance of Being Earnest**
Monday 7th 7.30pm **Audition – The Importance of Being Earnest**
Saturday 19th 8.00pm **FINAL NIGHT – An Inspector Calls**
Tuesday 22nd 7.30pm Heidelberg Film Society - *Bicycle Thieves*

JUNE

Tuesday 22nd 7.30pm Heidelberg Film Society –
The Magnificent Men in their Flying Machines.

Another 60th Anniversary at HTC

Congratulations to Pat and Arthur Loughridge, their 60th Wedding Anniversary was on April 12. Pat and Arthur have been Subscribers to the Company for over 20 years as well as working on Front of House for just about every production since they joined the Company.

If you would like to join our FOH Team, Patricia would be only too delighted to slot you in! Give the Theatre a call on 9455 3039.

OMISSION

Your Editor apologises for omitting Margaret Rawlinson from the HTC In House Awards in the last issue of Prompts. Margaret received a Supporting Actor Award for her role as Mrs Graves in **Enchanted April**.

HTC's 60th ANNIVERSARY REMINISCENT SUPPERS

will be held after

Opening Nights

& after the

First Sunday Matinees

during our 60th Anniversary Season.

Cast and Crew from the original productions have been invited and if you were among the audience of the original production we'd love to see you there too, along with all our regular audience.

So if you would like to join us for these

Special Events - Book Now.

We're happy to exchange your tickets so you can join in the fun at the Reminiscent Suppers!!

HELP!!!

Needed at the

WORKING BEES

for

An Inspector Calls

Saturdays

21st & 28th 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 front of house.

Like to know more – call the

Theatre on **9455 3039**