



# The Dresser

a play about theatre, friendship and the human spirit  
by Ronald Harwood directed by Karen Wakeham

21st Feb – 9<sup>th</sup> March, 2013

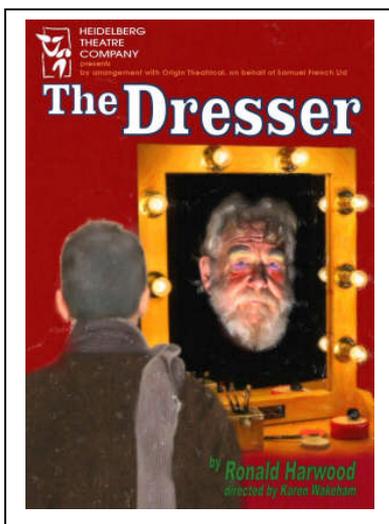
Evenings at 8.00pm

Matinees: Sundays 24<sup>th</sup> Feb & 3<sup>rd</sup> March at 2pm

Subscribers requiring to alter their chosen night or reserve their booking are asked to call BEFORE Wednesday, 6<sup>th</sup> February, 2013.

## PROMPTS

No. 1 February, 2013



Playwright Ronald Harwood was himself dresser to the great Shakespeare actor-manager Donald Wolfit for several years, and though he strenuously denies it, has clearly made great use of this experience in creating **The Dresser**.

It tells of *Sir*, whose company is to perform his 277<sup>th</sup> Lear against the backdrop of a 1940s England reduced to rubble by Hitler's bombs. He is supported by his faithful dresser *Norman*, stage manager *Madge*, and a small troupe of actors, including his long-suffering wife. The many hardships of war and the strain of constantly performing taxing roles has exhausted the aging *Sir*, but *Norman* is able, with valiant struggle, to hold things together; the show must, of course, go on.

Sometimes funny, sometimes poignant, this powerful, beautifully-written play focuses on the complex relationship between *Sir* and *Norman*, and their passionate love for the stage. It was successful on both the West End and on Broadway, and in 1983 a memorable film version was made starring Albert Finney and Tom Courtenay.

Our company comprises Laurie Jezard as *Sir*, John Cheshire as *Norman* and Julie Arnold as *Her Ladyship*, with Maureen McInerney as *Madge*, while

Basileia Paras plays *Irene*, David Dodd, *Geoffrey Thornton*, and Gavin Baker, *Mr Oxenby*.

On the production side, the play is directed by Karen Wakeham who directed our first show in 2012, **The Lion In Winter**, and before joining Heidelberg directed for many non-professional companies in Melbourne. Since joining the Company, Karen has not had time to work anywhere else. When not directing she has been active in many roles behind the scenes here at HTC, including as a Committee Member. The Company is delighted to again have Melanie Belcher as Stage Manager and is, assisted by Bobbie Parish and Shelagh Belton, with Bruce Moorhouse and Christian Dell'Olio attending to sound. Lighting operators Sam Gilbert and Beck Neson will be working with a design by Deryk Hartwick.

Di Brennan is costume designer, while set design by Lisa McVilly is being constructed by Owen Evans and his wonderful team: Neville, Paddy, Doug, Des, Mal, Sam, Steph and Lou.

So don't miss our first production for 2013, **The Dresser**, it is going to be stunner!

Thanks to all our Subscribers who renewed their Subscriptions this year and welcome to all our new Subscribers.

There is still time to get your subscription in for our 5 Play Season. To subscribe either complete the Order Form in the 2013 Playbill or call the Box Office, leave your name and contact number, and we will get back to you and organise your subscription over the phone. *Subscriptions can't be completed by you online.*

If you choose to complete the Order Form and are paying with a credit card, please include the CCV - 3 digit number - on the back of your card! Our Box Office want to thank everyone who had to be rung and sent scrabbling for their credit card to pass on the details of their CCV over the phone, we'll make sure the field is included on next year's Subscription Form!

If you don't have a Playbill handy, you can download a copy from our website -or call the Box Office, leave your name and address, and we will post one out to you.

Our online ticketing system is now available for general ticket purchases and Group Bookings or if you prefer you can book through the Box Office.

Need to exchange your tickets or book seats if you have chosen our Flexibook Subscription option, or for any ticketing queries call the Box Office or send an email.

We hope you enjoy this great year of Theatre at HTC which includes four plays that have proved very popular over the years but somehow in the past have never made it to the HTC stage, together with a great new play, **August: Osage County** by Tracy Letts. And please, do help spread the word. Bring your friends and neighbours along to a show; they will thank you!!

Online - [htc.org.au](http://htc.org.au)

Box Office - 9457 4117

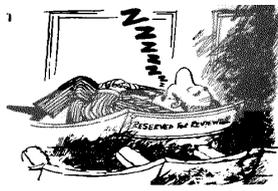
Email- [htc@htc.org.au](mailto:htc@htc.org.au)

## BOOKINGS – Online at [www.htc.org.au](http://www.htc.org.au) or call 9457 4117

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P.O Box 141, Rosanna VIC 3084

Enquiries 9455 3039  
Email [htc@htc.org.au](mailto:htc@htc.org.au)

web: [htc.org.au](http://htc.org.au)  
Inc. No. A008432X



# Review



**Arsenic & Old Lace** by Joseph Kesselring  
Directed by Bruce Akers. Reviewed by Caleb Garfinkel  
of Theatre People on Thurs 22<sup>nd</sup> December, 2012.

**Arsenic and Old Lace** is a ferocious and cheeky comedy presented by Heidelberg Theatre Company and directed by Bruce Akers. Set in Brooklyn in 1941, the play twists issues such as family values, mental disabilities and morality into a part-comedy, part-crime drama.

We are introduced to *Abby* and *Martha Brewster* (Paula MacDonald and Wendy Drowley), two seemingly-innocent spinsters who take tremendous pleasure in assisting lonely, elderly men to move on with their lives - by way of poisoned elderberry wine. Along for the ride is delusional nephew *Teddy* (Chris Baldock), who believes he is actually Theodore Roosevelt, and helps keep their desires a secret by disposing of the departed gentlemen in a ceremonial war-time fashion underneath the family home.

On the night we observe, second nephew *Mortimer* (Andrew Pennycuick), newly engaged to *Elaine* (Theodora Neave), stumbles upon his aunts' malicious temptations through a gently discarded body, and much to the confusion of *Elaine* takes drastic measures to cover up the evidence; a task his aunts feel is rather unnecessary. When the third, estranged Brewster nephew *Jonathan* reenters his family's lives (Andrew Van de Gumster) with his alcoholic plastic surgeon *Dr Einstein* (Alastair Rice) and the announcement of another slew of bodies, the cacophony of chaos churns and swirls.

**Arsenic and Old Lace** is a very well put together performance, showcasing a talented cast who all demonstrated impeccable comic and commitment to characters and scenes. Director Akers has assembled a complicated and specific show which relies on minute details and steady pacing, which he has achieved with fantastic results. The entirety of the play takes place in a single set, the Brewster's lounge room, and all involved must accept tremendous acclaim for using the space to its maximum, especially to George Tranter's set design, and lighting by Craig Pearcey. The set contains many levels and degrees of depth, and characters frequently direct attention to different areas, retaining focus and excitement.

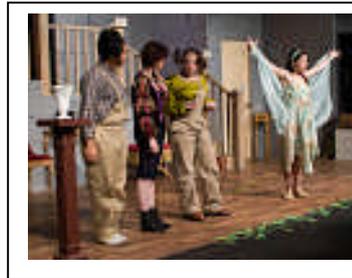
In a play where nearly all of the main characters are guilty of committing or covering up crimes, a wonderful ebb and flow of morality emerges, where each character seems to take turns at playing protagonist and antagonist. MacDonald and Drowley are delights as the two Brewster spinsters, creating characters who exude warmth and affection that I found myself questioning whether their sins were really that heinous. Similarly, Pennycuick's *Mortimer* commanded the stage with a mixture of film noir detective-type slyness and lovable slapstick comedic confidence. The interaction between all the Brewster family and associates was sincere and connected, especially in dealings with the outcast Van de Gumster. I thoroughly enjoyed watching the characters develop over the depicted evening, and seeing each personality face their own outcomes with a unique sense of morality and responsibility - or lack of.

Some opening night jitters overshadowed the performance at first, and I was worried about the actors' characterisation and pacing at the end of the first act, which was slow to build momentum. However, I soon felt ashamed for thinking such critical words, as the second act erupted in full swing as the cast settled into their roles and delivered authentic and defined characters, demonstrating impeccable comedic timing and confidence. By the conclusion of the second act, laughs bellowed strongly throughout the audience and moments of comedic brilliance came quick and solid. Overall the play conjured a remarkable surreal feeling, where the audience is whisked away from notions of right and wrong, good and evil, and sanity. I was consistently engrossed in the story being told, and each time I was jolted back to awareness I remarked at how deeply I was involved. I did feel however that the overall performance could be slightly tightened, as occasional interactions seemed to linger between punchlines and drama. Gentle tweaking

would surely enhance the already vibrant and strong piece and keep the plot moving steadily.

It is rare that I feel a play has a sincere and direct impact on me individually, and this play certainly achieved far beyond that. From the reactions to startles and jokes from those around me, the audience were engrossed and impressed also. I also rather enjoyed the irony of reviewing a scene in which an actor is playing a theatre reviewer, and describes the play he had seen that evening - in which a man is tied up and killed using household objects, and remains oblivious to his plight until too late - all the while himself oblivious to the same scenario afflicting him. I nervously found myself checking I too was not in danger of such duress!

**Arsenic and Old Lace** is a wonderful piece of theatre, and all who are attending the sold out season will be delighted as the play tightens and further enhances. It's a little like a cross between *The Golden Girls* and *Underbelly*, and is as bizarre and as splendid as that sounds. All involved perform a marvelous job at introducing the audience to elements of the seedy 1940s Brooklyn underworld, and then washing them away with tea and biscuits. And of course, a little elderberry wine.



**Snow White – The Untold Story** by Karl B. Peterson  
presented by HTC Youth, directed by Christian Dell'Olio.  
Reviewed by Suzanne Sandow on 19<sup>th</sup> December, 2012.

The production is opened strongly with the *Queen*, played boldly by Elizabeth Dingle, in conference with the *Magic Mirror*, a fabulously costumed and glitzy character well interpreted by Ian Robertson.

Natassja Lindrea, as a strikingly attractive and particularly vain *Snow White*, is well paired with Zac Smith's handsome *Prince Charming*, an equally self-satisfied individual. Amusingly he is on the lookout for his second wife, since divorcing the apparently mouse and pumpkin obsessed Cinderella.

There is a moral somewhere in this story, if a little muted. It is most clearly expressed through the *Huntsman's* character, played by Ben Richardson. As a loyal servant he is unaffected by fleeting youthful beauty. He is steadfast in his deep love for his mistress, the aging *Queen*, regardless of her mean, jealous and murderous tendencies.

There are even some strange little moments of gay frippery when the *Prince* and the *Huntsman* dress in drag to scatter clothes everywhere as segue into the next scene of chaos at the Dwarf's house. It leaves in its wake a poignant reminder of the rich history of how camped up and over the top Christmas Pantos can be.

The four Dwarves are unexpected in number as well as in names and natures. As *Dummy*, Taylah-Jayd Sofele fulfills her role with appropriate vagueness, but is a little too hidden below a largish hat. *Bossy*, played by Silvi Van-Wall with strong focus, is alive, alert and always ready to move the action forward. *Trekky*, played by Ella DiMarco, is a clear and sustained 'out there' character. And Jess Cook's *Smelly* is so convincing one can almost smell her. (ctd. p. 4)



## Highlights from the President's Report at the 2012 Heidelberg Theatre Company AGM held 16<sup>th</sup> December 2012

(text of President's address)

This has been a great and memorable 60<sup>th</sup> year for the Company both on and off stage as we proudly total 392 plays performed since our inception.

We have enjoyed strong subscriber numbers this year and full or near full audience attendances for all of the plays. Our audiences have enjoyed a playbill that was a carefully chosen collection of favourites from our 60 year history. The productions were certainly memorable and showcased both some of our best well known talent and several new members to the HTC Family. As a result our financial position is healthy once again and we are in a strong position to enable the Company to face the next 60 years.

We are also pleased that the HTC Youth has reformed this year and will present Snow White – the Untold Story later in December. As well, many of the group also worked on the productions of the main playbill during the year.

\* Very strong occupancy rates for the Season. Ranging from 81.5% to 99.6%.

\* 518 Subscribers compared to 461 in 2011, 101 Members and 14 Life Members.

\* Turnover \$154,000 plus per annum with \$40,000 operating surplus compared with \$31,000 in 2011.

\* The Company thanks Fern Matthews for her generous donation towards our 60<sup>th</sup> celebrations.

\* Major capital expenditure; purchase of new lighting desk, dimmer rack and several new stage lights.

\* The President thanked the Committee, Administration Team, Set Building Team, Technical and Backstage Crews, In-House Appraisal Presenters and many individuals were named and thanked for their contribution to the Company during the year.

\* Thanks to Bruce Akers who took over direction of **Arsenic & Old Lace** and Paula McDonald, David Dodd and Bruce who took over various acting roles.

\* The Banyule City Council has not shown any concern or urgency to propose a new lease yet despite several meetings and we are still waiting for a draft lease document. Our current occupation agreement is due to expire on the 8<sup>th</sup> March 2013. We will endeavour to resolve this with Council in the New Year.



Left (from left): Brett Hunt, John Gilbert, Bruce Akers . Centre: "What did Jill say?" Whatever it was, Bruce stifles his mirth at the 2012 AGM. Right (from left): June Cherrey, Bill Cherrey Award winner Patricia Tyler and Pres. John Gilbert Below (from left) Jill Scott & Ann Holt



## 2012 BILL CHERREY AWARD

This Award is named after one of the Heidelberg Theatre Company's long serving past Presidents, the late Bill Cherrey. This Award is given each year to an individual member of HTC as recognition of their outstanding contribution and service to the Company.

This year's recipient joined the Committee in 2006 and was quick to become fully engaged with many activities at the Theatre. Whilst most of her involvement has been behind the scenes rather than on stage, this year's recipient is very well known to just about all the members of HTC, not only for her involvement serving on the committee, but also in her role as theatre photographer. In addition she has also been responsible for the coordination of the rostering for the Front of House Teams, always ensuring that every production has a team ready to take care of our audiences.

When a member contributes their talents and skills willingly and enthusiastically to the Company we are all the richer for their valuable contribution, as they add to the spirit that drives the Heidelberg Theatre Company.

I would now like to call on June Cherrey to come to the stage to present this year's Bill Cherrey Award to Patricia Tyler. (J. Gilbert/J. Cherrey)



## Appraisal of the 2012 Season

In the Company's 60<sup>th</sup> year, it was decided to forgo the In House Awards and instead the 5 plays in the 2012 season were appraised for members present at the AGM by Anne Holt and Jill Scott.

The Company thanks Ann and Jill for their interesting, perceptive and entertaining review of our 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Season.

## President's Report Highlights etc.

\* We are grateful to the Banyule Council for the loan of the Phonic Ear.

\* Local and national charities and non-profit organisations were supported.

\* After a very long association with HTC, and many years of monthly film screenings in our Theatre, The Heidelberg Film Society has decided to make 2012 their final year of operation with their last screening having taken place in November.

\* Vale. We said goodbye to following Heidelberg Theatre Company family members this year, Justin Foster, Shelley Dodd (nee McKemmish), Dennis Pain and, Pat Keegan.

2012 has been a successful and rewarding one for Heidelberg Theatre Company. As our 60<sup>th</sup> year celebrations come to a close and we prepare to enter our 61<sup>st</sup> year in 2013 we can safely report that the Theatre Company is in a sound financial position and is artistically ready to accept the challenges ahead.

We are always looking for talent and skills both on stage and behind the scenes. There will always be a need for people with administration, hospitality, accounting, marketing and handy man skills. Regardless of what level of experience you hold we will be able to make use of your offer. If you have ever considered or are thinking of becoming more involved, make your interest known to the Company so that we can organise a suitable introduction for you.

John Gilbert, President, 2011  
(a full transcript of the President's Report is available on the HTC website)

## Victorian Drama League Awards

Our VDL-nominated play for 2012 was **The Lion In Winter**.

The Production received Nominations for Lighting, Costume Design and Best Set.

We congratulate our VDL Award nominees and the Cast and Crew of **The Lion In Winter** for their success.

## FEBRUARY

Saturday 9<sup>th</sup> 10.30am **Working Bee** with Lunch

Saturday 16<sup>th</sup> 10.30am **Working Bee** with Lunch

Thursday 21<sup>st</sup> 8.00pm **FIRST NIGHT – The Dresser**

Sunday 24<sup>th</sup> 6.30pm **Audition** – August: Osage County

Monday 25<sup>th</sup> 7.30pm **Audition** – August: Osage County

## MARCH

Saturday 9<sup>th</sup> 8.00pm **FINAL NIGHT – The Dresser**

# AUDITION NOTICE

Heidelberg Theatre Company's production of

## AUGUST: OSAGE COUNTY

by **Tracy Letts** directed by **Joan Moriarty**

**Auditions will be held at the Theatre**

**36 Turnham Avenue Rosanna** (Melways ref: 31 A1)

**Sunday 24<sup>th</sup> Feb from 6:30pm &  
Monday 25<sup>th</sup> Feb. from 7.30pm.**

**Play Season: 2nd – 19<sup>th</sup> May 2013**  
**Weeknights and Saturdays at 8:00pm**  
**Sundays at 2:00pm**

### Characters

**American accents required.**

**Beverly Weston** – about 70 – an alcoholic poet.

**Violet Weston** - 65 – 70 - Beverley's wife, a pill popper and very aggressive.

**Barbara Fordham** – about 46 – Bev & Violet's daughter.

**Bill Fordham** – 49 years old – Barbara's husband.

**Jean Fordham** - 14 years old – their daughter.

**Ivy Weston** - 44 years old – Bev & Violet's daughter.

**Karen Weston** - 40 years old – Bev & Violet's daughter.

**Mattie Fay Aiken** - 57 years old – Violet's siser.

**Charlie Aiken** - 60 years old – Mattie Fay's husband.

**Little Charles Aiken** - 37 years old – their son.

**Johuna Monevata-Cheyenne** - 26 years old – housekeeper.

**Steve Heidebrecht** - 50 years old – Karen's fiance.

**Sheriff Deon Gilbeau** - 47 years old.

### Place

A large country house outside Pawhuska – Oklahoma  
60 miles north west of Tulsa.

### Time

The present.

**Please contact the Director,  
Joan Moriarty on 9459 3495.**

*(continued from page 2)*

It is great to have a Christmas treat, in the tradition of the pantos of yesteryear, to take the kids to. I was able to indulge a 10 and an 8 year old. Due to a hefty drive we arrived in the nick of time to discover that HTC is very punctual in its show times. With the house being almost completely full, the children sat in front of the stage on the floor. As I kept my eye on them - they seemed to be fully engaged for the whole 80 minutes despite the acting and set changes dragging a little from time to time.

*What is the Phonic Ear John refers to in his President's Report?*

**It is a FM System Phonic Ear Headphone (no hearing aid needed)** and they are available for *all performances* during our 2013 Season. To make a reservation, please call the Box Office on **94574117**. The System is being trialled with assistance from the Banyule City Council.

**LOOKING TO RAISE  
MONEY FOR YOUR  
CLUB OR CHARITY IN  
2013?**

Why not organise a  
**Group Booking to HTC**  
**BLOCK BOOKING  
OPTIONS:**

**Preview & First Nighters'  
Specials**

**Groups of 50  
\$10 per ticket.**

*(only available thru the Box Office)*

**or**

**Groups of 10 or more  
any performance  
\$20 per ticket.**

**BOOK ONLINE** at: [htc.org.au](http://htc.org.au)  
or call the **HTC Box Office**  
**9457 4117**

### HTC'S XMAS HAMPER

The 2012 Winner of this coveted prize was Jessica Parker, who comes to a number of our shows. Congratulations from all at HTC.

### AUGUST: OSAGE COUNTY NEEDS A SOFABED!

We need a sofabed for the set of **August: Osage County**. If you can loan or hire one for the season plus rehearsals, so about 6 weeks in all, please call Joan at the Theatre on - **9455 3039**.

**HELP!!!**

needed at the

**WORKING BEES**

for **The Dresser**

**Saturdays**

**9<sup>th</sup> & 16<sup>th</sup> February**

**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**