Heidelberg Theatre Company

Celebrating 60 Years

Season 2012

# SUMMER OF THE SEVENTEENTH DOLL

HEIDELBERG THEATRE COMPANY (HTC)
BOOKINGS 03 9457 4117
ENQUIRIES 03 9455 3039
EMAIL htc@htc.org.au
WEB www.htc.org.au
HTC is a member of the Victorian Drama League.
HTC acknowledges financial assistance from the City of Banyule.

## HTC Artspace Exhibition

*This year the Artspace celebrates the 60th Anniversary of the Heidelberg Theatre Company, featuring archival posters, programmes, photos and newspaper articles, mapping the history of the theatre and highlighting the wonderful plays presented over the years - as well as a display of interesting and beautiful costumes on the Mezzanine. The display, including costumes, has attracted great interest and comment.*

*The display for our fourth play of 2012 covers the fifth decade of the Company, the 1990s. These documents have been collected by various members of the theatre over many years and we thank them for being aware of the importance of preserving our history.*

*We hope you enjoy the journey with us through the sixty memorable years of Heidelberg Theatre Company*

HTC 2012 - CELEBRATING 60 YEARS
And to send off the year...
★ Arsenic & Old Lace
☎ 9457-4117 www.htc.org.au

HEIDELBERG
THEATRE
COMPANY

Celebrating 60 Years

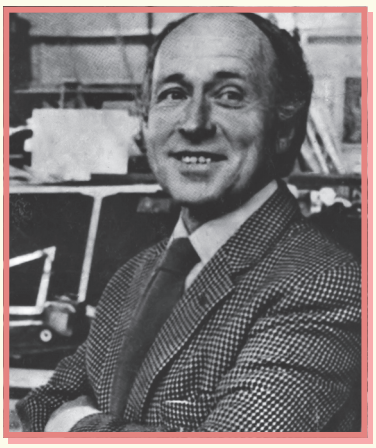
# Summer of the Seventeenth Doll



by **Ray Lawler**

*directed by Paul King*

## About the author



RAY LAWLER was born in Footscray, Melbourne, in 1921, second of eight children of a council worker. He left school at thirteen to work in a factory and attended evening acting classes. He wrote his first play at the age of nineteen; 'Summer of the Seventeenth Doll' was his tenth play.

After 'Summer of the Seventeenth Doll' drew first prize in the Playwrights Advisory Board Competition, Lawler played the role of Barney Ibbot in the Australian production then went to London with the cast and subsequently lived in Denmark, England and then Ireland. 'The Doll' was followed by 'The Piccadilly Bushman' (1959), presented in Australia by J.C. Williamson's Ltd; 'The Unshaven Cheek', presented at the 1963 Edinburgh Festival; and 'A Breach in the Wall', about St Thomas a Becket (televised in 1967, produced at Canterbury in 1970).

In 1972 Lawler visited Australia for the Melbourne Theatre Company's production of 'The Man Who Shot the Albatross', a version of the Governor Bligh story; and then in 1975 returned to settle in Australia as associate director of the Melbourne Theatre Company, with an agreement to complete a trilogy based on 'Summer of the Seventeenth Doll'. The first play, 'Kid Stakes', opened in December 1975 and the second, 'Other Times', in December 1976. The Doll Trilogy had its first full performances at the Russell Street Theatre, Melbourne, on 12th February 1977.

## How it all began

In 1955, 'Summer of the Seventeenth Doll' won the Playwrights Advisory Board Competition for full length stage plays, including the Board's undertaking to have the play produced. The newly-formed Elizabethan Theatre Trust was approached for financial support.

After much lobbying Melbourne University's Union Theatre was settled on as the venue for the premiere with John Sumner as director. 'The Doll' opened on 28th November 1955 to an enthusiastic audience reaction and very favourable reviews.

However, success in Melbourne might not translate to success in the rest of Australia. The true test of the play's worth would be in Sydney. The Trust had a small theatre in the inner Sydney suburb of Newtown, at the time an industrial area that was rarely visited by theatregoers. There was a three-week gap in January 1956 when the theatre was available. January was traditionally a slow month for theatre activity but hopes were high.

The Melbourne cast would reprise their roles in the Sydney production. *June Jago* as *Olive*, *Madge Ryan* as *Pearl*, *Lloyd Berrell* as *Roo* and *Ray Lawler* as *Barney*.

Lawler and the cast were duly nervous before the opening, mindful that many traditional first-nighters had refused to attend, dismissing 'The Doll' as "just an Australian play". But opening night, January 10th 1956 was to become recognised as an event unique in Australian theatre. For decades the industry had been dominated by foreign plays and foreign actors. In 'Summer of the Seventeenth Doll', the Australian theatre-going public were presented with an Australian situation in Australian accents with Australian references. The play was not a shallow appeal to patriotism or a presentation of stereotypes. It was a solid work of art that dealt with universal concerns in the Australian context.

Each performance of the Sydney season was booked out. In the subsequent three months the play toured through sixty country towns in New South Wales and Queensland. Before year's end, the play had been offered a London production by Laurence Olivier.

'The Doll' opened in London in March 1957. The Australian cast and John Sumner remained with the play and the sets were exported directly to the New Theatre in St Martins Lane. It was greeted with cheers, stomping and several curtain calls. Finally, 'The Doll' had received the imprimatur of overseas success. The critics in Australia were silenced as English approval guaranteed that the play would succeed. It won the Evening Standard award for the best new play on the London stage in 1957. It was also produced in New York. Since then it has been translated into many languages and performed in many countries.

'The Doll' continues to be produced in Australia, and its essential themes remain relevant today. The language is Australian and the terrace house setting is still one with which many Australians identify. 'The Doll', the first play to present Australians with themselves on stage in a realistic manner, will continue to be considered a watershed in Australian theatre history and a classic of Australian literature.



*London Production: Ray Lawler, Ethel Gabriel and June Jago*

# CAST

*in order of appearance*

KATHIE ("BUBBA") RYAN .....Anna Rodway

PEARL CUNNINGHAM .....Tina Bono

OLIVE LEECH.....Jodie Symes

EMMA LEECH, *her mother*.....Joan Moriarty

BARNEY IBBOT.....Dan Haberfield

ROO WEBBER .....Gavin Williams

JOHNNIE DOWD.....Joel Evans

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'Summer of the Seventeenth Doll' was first performed by the Union Theatre Repertory Company at the Union Theatre, Melbourne, on 28th November 1955 .

The action takes place in the living room of a double-storeyed terrace house in Carlton.

ACT 1

Scene 1: Sunday afternoon, about five, early December 1952

Scene 2: The following morning

ACT 2

Scene 1: New Year's Eve, about eleven thirty

Scene 2: Evening, the following Friday

ACT 3

The next morning

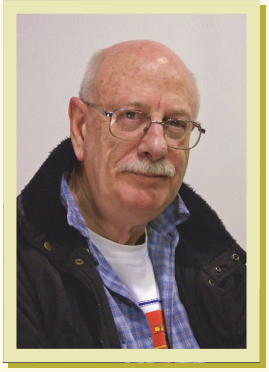
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Refreshments are available in the interval following Act I.

There is a brief interval after Act II;
no refreshments will be served.

## Production Team

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|---|---|
| Director | Paul King |
| Production Coordination | Karen Wakeham, Anne Smith |
| Stage Manager | Bruce Moorhouse |
| Assistant Stage Manager | Melanie Belcher |
| Stage Crew | Sheelagh Belton, Dana Drage, Monica Christou |
| Set Design | Paul King |
| Set Construction | Owen Evans, Dennis Pain, Neville Wilkie, Doug McNaughton, Paddy Moriarty, Christian Dell'Olio, Des Harris, Stephanie Gonelli |
| Set Decorators | Sheelagh Belton, David Belton, Malcolm Cother, Marie Mackrell |
| Scenic Artist | Marie Mackrell |
| Properties | Bronwyn Parker |
| Kewpie Dolls | Bobbie Parish |
| Wardrobe | Wendy Drowley, Dianne Brennan, Lois Connor |
| Lighting Design | Deryk Hartwick |
| Sound Design | George Bissett |
| Sound Operation | Christian Dell'Olio |
| Photography | Patricia Tyler |
| Programme & Poster | Chris McLean |
| Publicity | Bruce Akers, Toni Tyers, Chris McLean |
| Box Office | Toni Tyers, June Cherrey, Linda Coutts, Jenni Purdey |
| Front of House | Patricia Tyler and HTC members |



**DIRECTOR: PAUL KING**

'Summer of the Seventeenth Doll' marks Paul's ninth production as Director and Set Designer with Heidelberg Theatre Company, his most recent previous productions being David Mamet's 'Glengarry Glen Ross' in 2010 and Alan Seymour's 'The One Day of the Year' in 2005.

Since then Paul has directed and designed productions of Tom Stoppard's 'Arcadia' for Malvern Theatre, Michael Frayn's 'Copenhagen' for Williamstown Little Theatre and Briony Lavery's 'Frozen' and Fin Kennedy's 'How to Disappear Completely and Never be Found' for Hoy Polloy Theatre, for whom he was also Set Designer for 'Boston Marriage' in 2007.



Other Australian plays Paul has directed are HTC's non-professional Victorian première of Patrick White's 'The Ham Funeral', Michael Gow's 'Away' for Malvern Theatre Company and, for Williamstown Little Theatre, Andrew Bovell's 'Speaking in Tongues', Aidan Fennessy's 'Chilling & Killing My Annabel Lee' and Stephen Sewell's 'Hate'.



**JODIE SYMES** (Olive Leach) A musical theatre 'tragic' at heart, Jodie most recently played the role of Velma von Tussle in PLOS' 'Hairspray'. Other highlights have included the roles of Dusty in 'Dusty - The Original Pop Diva' (Music Theatre Guild of Victoria award nomination for female performer in a leading role) and Marianne in Shout (both with CLOC). After more than 10 years of talking about auditioning for a straight play, Jodie has finally taken the plunge here at HTC. Having loved studying 'The Doll' at school, then seeing the MTC's wonderful production earlier this year, she is excited to be playing the role of Olive and would like to thank Paul and HTC for taking a chance on an unknown from the musical theatre 'dark side'!



**DAN HABERFIELD** (Barney Ibbot) As a very dedicated Melbourne based actor and writer, Dan delves deep into his varied professional and personal experiences to find the character within. 2012 has proven to be a busy time, with work on several film and stage productions. His lead role in 'No Chocolates by Request' (Peridot) was heralded by Ken Barnes in TheatreCraft as a "very fine performance." Dan's ten minute play 'Long Way Down' was performed in June, and a short film he has written will shoot later in the year. On the big screen Dan appears in the feature film 'Blinder' starring the legendary Jack Thompson, due for release in early-2013.



**TINA BONO** (Pearl Cunningham) After acquiring her love of acting in high school, Tina had an extended acting break, yet remained on the stage as a speaker for 8 years. Her adult debut was a mere 10 months ago in Lilydale's 'Allo Allo' as Yvette, where she was bitten by the acting bug. Following two further comedies in PEP Production's One Act Play season and Lilydale's 'M*A*S*H' production, Tina wanted to immerse herself into a dramatic role. Tina hopes you enjoy her performance as Pearl, just as much as she has enjoyed being a part of 'The Doll' at HTC.



**GAVIN WILLIAMS** (Roo Webber) Gavin Williams is a Melbourne-born actor, director, writer and producer. A graduate of Sydney Theatre School (STS), Gavin has wide -ranging theatre and film experience. As a teacher/ director at STS he wrote and directed 'Tea's Gone Cold' and also directed Olwyn Wymark's 'Find Me' and Shakespeare's 'The Comedy of Errors'. Since returning to Melbourne in 2011 Gavin has performed at the Malthouse Theatre and La Mama, and played a man with an acquired brain injury to rave reviews, in Candlelight Productions' 'Voices: The Carrical Project'. In 2010 Gavin co-founded Steam Productions which successfully launched in Melbourne this year with 'Ruby Moon'. This is Gavin's first production with Heidelberg Theatre Company. He is very much enjoying the challenge this wonderful play has presented.



**JOAN MORIARTY** (Emma) Joan and been involved with Heidelberg Theatre Company for many years, during which she has taken on just about every role involved in theatrical production. Notably, Joan has directed 21 plays for the Company, including 'Kindertransport' (2001), 'The Imaginary Invalid' (2003), 'Uncle Vanya' (2004), 'Wicked Sisters' (2005), 'Dinner' (2007), 'The Dinner Game' (2009) and 'The Pain Killer (2010). Joan's previous stage appearances at HTC were in 'The Ham Funeral' - also directed by Paul King, and 'The Lady In the Van'.



**ANNA RODWAY** (Bubba Ryan) Anna has recently been involved in Mordialloc Theatre Company's production of 'The Heiress', directed by Vicki Smith, playing the lead of Catherine Sloper. Previous roles include Titania in 'A Midsummer Night's Dream', Teiresias in 'Oedipus Rex' and Berenger in Ionesco's 'Rhinoceros'. She has completed various courses in theatre technique and received a Premier's Award for Theatre Studies in 2009. Anna has really enjoyed being part of this production, to observe and work with the rest of the cast, and to bring to life such a quintessentially Australian play.



**JOEL EVANS** (Johnnie Dowd) Joel completed a Bachelor of Contemporary Arts Majoring in Drama at Deakin University in 2010, and has since moved on to Post Graduate study at Melbourne University, specifically focusing on studying Shakespeare. This show is Joel's re -entry into the Theatre community, and he's excited to return to the stage. Over recent years Joel has amassed varied acting experiences, featuring in many Deakin University Plays, the Channel 31 television show 'Theatre Games Live' and in short films by Deakin students. Joel looks forward to many further opportunities to perform on stage.




**November 22 - December 8**

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Heidelberg Theatre Company ♦ Season 2012 ♦ Play 4