



Essendon Theatre Company

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or

Online www.essendontheatrecompany.com

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PRESIDENT'S REPORT

What a great year of theatre we have in store for you in 2015!

First up we have "The Freedom of the City" which opens next Thursday 9th April. Director Travis Handcock has been working tirelessly to put together a very ambitious production, which includes live music and a huge cast. I was privileged to be at a rehearsal last weekend and I can assure you that you will be thoroughly entertained by this production, which has an extremely talented cast and crew. This is a play that Travis has dreamt of doing since studying it at school so his heart and soul has been in put into the production.

Unfortunately Rachael Holt had to resign as co-Director, for personal reasons, but I'd like to thank Rachael for all her efforts and wish her well.

A big welcome to our new Committee members Michele Haywood, Steph Morrell, Marzena Ciszak, Bella Marco-Newlan, Josh Wolter and last but certainly not least, Steph Gonelli. Welcome back to Christine Nilsson, Ros Shafik-Eid and Travis Handcock. Also a big welcome back to Life Member Colin Burchall who is our Set Captain.

The Committee (and anyone else we could drag in) put in a huge effort at the beginning of the year to clean up the costume room, the tech room, the green room and the shed with great success. Thank you to everyone who helped to organise these areas it's looking fabulous. We easily filled a 6 cubic metre bin as well as countless wheelie bins but it was worth it.

On top of our four productions this year, we are embarking on two youth workshops, one for the teens and one for the pre-teens. The Teenage workshops are underway with Dean and Abby Crowley, Bella Marco-Newlan, Delaney Tite, Marina Labib and Lauren Ielo as the very talented participants. The aim of the workshop is to arm the participants with some skills for performance and direction and we hope to put together one or two One Act Plays in July. The participants are fast learners and were treated to a preview performance of "The Freedom of the City" after which they posed some very intelligent questions of the cast and got some great advice in return.

Anyone who saw "The Faculty Room" will know what a fabulous job Trav does in putting a show together so I hope to see you all there. For those who missed "The Faculty Room", don't miss out again. Get your table booked today.

Love to all,

Dawn

UPCOMING AUDITIONS

PRIVATE LIVES
Tuesday 14th April
Sunday 19th April

TBA
Tuesday, 30th June
Sunday, 5th July

BOEING BOEING
Tuesday, 15th September
Sunday, 20th September



The Freedom of the City

By Brian Friel

Directed by Travis Handcock

It is an exciting time for Essendon Theatre Company as we move into the final week before our VDL entry show, 'The Freedom of the City,' opens. Set in Northern Ireland, three common people, who were involved in a civil rights march, stumble into the Mayor's parlour trying to avoid being shot by British troops. As we learn about each of the characters inside the Guildhall, rumours are running riot outside about the 'terrorists' that have seized it.

The play is based on Bloody Sunday and demands a strong and large cast. The cast of thirteen, not only take on some demanding roles, but minor characters have also spent rehearsals learning to play music in order for the whole show (including pre-show) is live. Mark Briggs brings a fireball of energy to the stage as the likeable larrikin, Skinner, Stephanie King plays Lily with an eloquent beauty that pulls at the audiences heartstrings and Christian Dell'Olio plays the uptight and reserved Michael, with a refined certainty.

The supporting cast provides a huge range of different characters including a crooked judge, humble police officer, a slightly sadistic professor, a 21st century sociologists, a sharp no-nonsense brigadier and many more.

This thought provoking production will bring the audience on the rollercoaster of emotions as the characters in the Guildhall experience shock, excitement, joy and fear. This is not one to be missed.

Pre-Show entertainment from the Derry Heirs starts at 7:30pm

Bookings can be made at essendontheatrecompany.com

Trav

CAST



Skinner -	Mark Briggs
Lily -	Stephanie King
Michael -	Christian Dell'Olio
Judge -	Chris Gaffney
Dodds -	Stephanie Morrell
O'Kelly/Brigadier -	Michele Haywood
Winbourne/Cuppley/Press Officer -	David Runnalls
Priest/Balladeer -	Anna-Mai Hoek
Soldier/Voice/Pressman -	Kyle Roberts
Soldier/Voice/Pressman -	Joshua Wolter
Soldier/Voice -	Bianca McMurray
Police Officer -	Damian McMurray
Piano -	Hayley D'Ath

The Faculty Room Review

Published in Theatrecraft by the Victorian Drama League

THE FACULTY ROOM

By Bridget Carpenter

Essendon Theatre Company

Directed by Travis Handcock

Reviewed by Ewen Crockett -

December 6, 2014

Have you ever wondered, during your school days, what actually happens in the faculty room? Actually, in Australia that would be the staff room or something similar. However, the play is set in the USA so we're stuck with "faculty room". The machinations that go on in there are hard to believe... pray to all gods that your kids don't attend a school where the staff compete for the affections of the students, referring to them as girlfriends or boyfriends and also bring their "dirty linen" for all to inspect.

The play is cleverly written and deals with a number of aspects of the private and public personas of the characters. It deals with many aspects of life including politics, teacher/student relationships, personal relationships and religious issues. Having just read a book (*Left Behind*, recommended reading) based on religious "rapture" I was most impressed with the way the author dealt with that aspect of the play. Certainly the author looks for laughs, but only to temper the more serious aspects into which he delves.

The whole story revolves around a central character, Adam Younger, and without a strong performance by that actor the whole thing would just fall into the category of "let's just bury it and forget it ever happened". Fortunately, the role as portrayed by Bruce Carboon brought to life all the aspects of a self-centred, egotistical and likeable rogue. In the early scenes of the play some language, which could be considered extremely offensive, is uttered, including the dreaded "c" word. With consummate ease Mr Carboon brought a humour to it that not only avoided the expected tsunami of gasps of horror and a rush to the exit, but instead elicited a laugh and a small, embarrassed ripple. In his role he performed with an energy that kept the play moving. His grasp of the character and his interaction with the other characters was excellent. Well done Bruce Carboon.

The same can be said for the others in the cast. Steph Morrell as Zoe Bartholomew captured the love/hate relationship with her ex-partner, Adam. Their constant bickering was just so real life that one has to hope that in the sequel they have settled their differences and have re-united as a couple. Steph played Zoe as self-centred, opinionated and feisty, the perfect foil for the other characters. It is from her that we learn the truth behind the apparently harmless

game of girlfriend/boyfriend, student/teacher relationships. Her comment "He's not my boyfriend, he's me", had a disturbing effect on the audience as the awful reality behind the comment sank in.

Robert Ruscitti as Carver Durand (there's a name that belongs in *Underbelly* or *Chopper*) gave us some of the highlights of the production. Robert's portrayal of Carver as an insightful and realistic person gave weight to his sometimes broad stroke opinions. As an example, after relating his dream of life and the failure to achieve that to which he aspired, he comments, "Now all I do is breathe!", which gave us a moment of real emotion. The ghost scene was most amusing, which means nothing to anyone who didn't see the production.

James O'Brien as Bill Dunn was a comic mime at his best. This character does not speak throughout most of the play but still manages to portray his disillusion with, and the futility of, his chosen profession. When he finally does speak it is with a quite chilling, quiet passion that comes from a lifetime of pent-up frustrations. I think every member of the audience identified with Bill Dunn; either they'd been there themselves, knew someone who had been there or were just waiting for the opportunity to assert themselves with a "And now I'll tell the world just exactly what I think of you!" kind of thing.

The cast was completed by the never-seen but frequently-heard-via-the-PA-system Hayley D'Ath as Principal Dennis. Hayley, with the assistance of clever sound design by Jasmine Tolentino, had just the right amount of jocular authority that one associates with school tannoy systems: "See, I'm really just one of you, but I'm your boss and don't you forget it". It's really hard to project a character that is invisible, but I saw a 50-something, plumpish, slightly uncertain but authoritarian career woman who brooks no nonsense, unless she is doing it. Probably married to a sports jock straight out of high school where she was a cheerleader before the calories added up... no kids.

I've already mentioned sound and it was well done, if a trifle overloud. Lighting was by Robert Wightwick, and the play required nothing more than a basic rig, but so often basic rigs leave lots of badly-lit areas. Not so here; actors were always visible, with no really bad shadows and a nice choice of colouration.

Congratulations to Essendon and thank you for a most enjoyable evening. However, now that I know what goes on in the faculty room I'm not sure I wanted to! Finally, congratulations to Nick Handcock who composed the theme music. So many talented folk in one place.

2015 ETC PLAYBILL

THE FREEDOM OF THE CITY

By Brian Friel

Directed by Travis Hancock

Auditions: Tuesday 9th & Thursday 11th December 2014, 7:30pm

Production Dates: April 9 - 18

PRIVATE LIVES

By Noel Coward

Directed by Joshua Wolter

Auditions: Tuesday 14th April 7:30pm & Sunday 19th April 2:00pm

Production Dates: June 25 - 28 & July 2 - 4

Audition Bookings Contact

Joshua 0415 896 700 or jbwolter@gmail.com

TBA

Directed by TBA

Auditions: Tuesday 30th June 7:30pm & Sunday 5th July 2:00pm

Production Dates: September 10 - 19

Audition Bookings Contact

TBA

BOEING BOEING

By Marc Camoletti

Directed by Terese Maurici Ryan

Auditions: Tuesday 15th September 7:30PM & Sunday 20th September 2:00PM

Production Dates: November 26- 29 & December 3 - 5

Audition bookings Contact

Tess 0449 932 921 or terese_m@hotmail.com



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