



Essendon Theatre Company

9 - 11 Bradshaw Street, Essendon

For bookings SMS 0422 029 483

or

Online www.essendontheatrecompany.com

IN THIS ISSUE

Presidents Report

Private Lives

**The Freedom of the City
Review**

2015 Playbill

Sponsors

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

We're off to a great start this year with "The Freedom of the City" a huge success. Audiences were treated to live music on arrival to get them into the mood and an interactive performance with the soldiers encircling the room to intimidate the audience and actors moving in amongst them making them feel that they were part of the action.

The three leads; Stephanie King, Mark Briggs and Christian Dell'Olio did a superb job of bringing the story of these three innocent victims to life and had the audience sympathising with them – some people to the point of tears.

Steph Morrell took the audience on a psychological journey of the presumed reasons for the rebellion on "Bloody Sunday" with the added burden of a power point presentation to contend with and handled both beautifully. David Runnalls and Michele Haywood expertly moved from character to character changing their accents and mannerisms to suit with a single prop that denoted their new identity.

Anna-Mai Hoek had the audience feeling like they were in an Irish pub one minute and part of a funeral procession the next. Josh Wolter, Bianca McMurray and Damien McMurray entertained the crowd with their musical expertise. Kyle Roberts was suitably excitable as the soldier as Chris Gaffney was suitably solemn as the judge. Hayley D'Ath's beautiful piano playing and singing rounded out the cast.

Travis Handcock did an amazing job directing such a huge play with multiple elements to co-ordinate and his choice of music was inspiring. Meika Clark had her hands full with having to light various sections of the hall and the stage and she moved through the lighting cues seamlessly. Likewise, Jasmine Tolentino had a number of sound cues which were flawless.

Rosalin Shafik-Eid and Lauren Ielo handled the multitude of props well and had the cast well trained to return their props to the appropriate box (I don't think anyone got whacked with Ros' stick in the end). Costumes and Front of House were in Christine Nilsson's capable hands as usual and we had numerous helpers with the set construction led by Colin Burchall, Travis Handcock and Mathew Jodell. The audiences raved about the play and Andrew Gemmell gave us a very nice review in TheatreCraft. Well done to everyone concerned.

"Private Lives" is our next venture and rehearsals are going smashingly, don't you know. Joshua Wolter has assembled an amazing cast with Zoran Babic as Elyot, Kirsten Page as Sybil, Leanne Savage as Amanda, Brendan Allan as Victor and Rosalin Shafik-Eid as Louise. The set's been a massive project with moving flats and loads of painting but it has come up a treat. Please get some friends together and book a table ASAP! See you at "Private Lives",

Love to all, Dawn

UPCOMING AUDITIONS

A PANTOMIME

Tuesday, 30th June

Sunday, 5th July

BOEING BOEING

Tuesday, 15th September

Sunday, 20th September



PRIVATE LIVES
By Noel Coward
Directed by Joshua Wolter

With the year almost half over Essendon's second production of the Year 'Private Lives' has arrived very quickly following 'Freedom of the City'. It has been a tightly scheduled production from start to finish with actors learning the script quickly and some elaborate set construction; there has been little time to spare. However, less than two weeks from opening, everything is coming together well.

'Private Lives' is Coward's finest comedy and sparkles with wit and sophistication. Divorced couple Amanda and Elyot Chase discover they are both on honeymoon in adjacent rooms with their new spouses in France. Despite their separation because of a stormy relationship, they retain feeling for one another and find the urge to leave their new partners and run away together too strong. However, they soon discover why they divorced in the first place with original tensions resurfacing after a few days.

Zoran Babic brings a restrained but irreverent charm to the cynical Elyot while Leanne Savage plays Amanda with a cool sophistication and smouldering contempt. They are ably supported by Brendan Allan as the pompous Victor, Kirsten Page as the flighty and emotional Sybil and Rosalin Shafik-Eid as the short-tempered French maid.

All cast and crew have worked hard to deliver this show and it promises to be a sharp, funny and biting antidote to the winter chill setting in upon us. It is an opportunity to glimpse what goes on in our private lives beneath the thin veneer of civil society. We hope to see you there.

Bookings can be made at essendontheatrecompany.com

Josh

CAST



Elyot -
Amanda -
Victor -
Sybil -
Louise -

Zoran Babic
Leanne Savage
Brendan Allan
Kirsten Page
Rosalin Shafik-Eid

The Freedom of the City Review

Published in Theatrecraft by the Victorian Drama League

THE FREEDOM OF THE CITY

By Brian Friel

Essendon Theatre Company

Directed by Travis Handcock

Reviewed by Andrew Gemmell - April 11, 2015

Essendon's April offering appears to be a political play about the troubles in Northern Ireland in the '70s but it is more than that. *The Freedom of the City* is a play by Irish playwright Brian Friel, first produced in 1973. It is set in 1970, in the aftermath of a civil rights march and follows three protestors who mistakenly find themselves in the mayor's parlour in the Guildhall. This is before "bloody Sunday" in 1972 but the author rewrote several scenes to incorporate the events of that awful day. The plight of the protestors is that their mistaken circumstance is interpreted as an occupation. The play illustrates their final hours, their failed escape and the tribunal into their deaths.

The play opens on the flat floor of the hall in which the Essendon Theatre Company operates. The black curtains at the back open onto a scene of mayhem where an official speaks loudly and bodies are

dragged across the ground. There was not yet any understanding on my part of what was going on. We are a long way from the action at the front. The director, in the program notes, speaks of the popularity of this text in schools and perhaps assumed that we all knew the play so well that we needed no further introduction. Things became clearer when the real play began.

The real play is a treat. Travis Handcock is relatively inexperienced but is already skilled in the direction of actors. Their Irish accents were accurate and added greatly to the reality of the situation. Most of the action revolves around the unwinding personal stories of the three as they attempt to wait out the violence, so they can go home: Lily, a 43-year-old mother of eleven, Michael, a 22-year-old unemployed man, and Skinner, 21, also unemployed.

Michael is engaged to be married, and has plans for an education and a career. He is serious, even humourless, as he fears contamination of the movement by radicals.

Christian Dell'Olio portrayed him with just the right degree of sensitivity and awareness. Lily is a cleaning woman but she is sensible and still imaginative. Stephanie King's performance really moved us as she revealed how life had eluded her. Her poignant performance was unforgettable. Skinner is a restless, keen-witted young man who has no home and is often in trouble with the police. He is the one who correctly assesses the situation and knows that the military will react violently. Mark Briggs did a wonderful job convincing us that his apparent flippancy masked a clearer understanding and a deeper compassion.

Brian Friel has cunningly allowed the story of what is happening outside the building to be told by other people. Foremost among them is the judge (Chris Gaffney) who was in charge of the official inquiry into the shootings. The actor needed to convey an imperious presence but his strange wig and slightly blurry diction made this harder. Also present, amongst others, are a

balladeer (Anna-Mai Hoek), who described the three as "Irish Heroes", and a smug American sociologist with a PowerPoint presentation, played effectively by Steph Morrell.

The stage and props, managed by Rosalin Shafik-Eid, were effective in conveying the false pomp of local government but much of the action, including the music, took place on the floor where the closer you were the more understanding you achieved. The lighting by the director and Meika Clark was appropriate, and the sound by Jasmine Tolentino was loud but exciting.

This is an ambitious project by Essendon. To their credit they involved a very large number of people and they are seriously working to promote the learning and engagement of younger theatre people.

2015 ETC PLAYBILL

THE FREEDOM OF THE CITY

By Brian Friel

Directed by Travis Handcock

Production Dates: April 9 - 18

PRIVATE LIVES

By Noel Coward

Directed by Joshua Wolter

Auditions: ****CLOSED****

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

Audition Bookings Contact

Joshua 0415 896 700 or jbwolter@gmail.com

A PANTOMIME

Directed by Michele Haywood

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

Production Dates: September 18 - 27

Audition Bookings Contact

Michele Haywood 0413 692 283

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



bookbonding

**read
learn
indulge**



Bendigo Bank

Keilor East Branch

BarryPlant
The red carpet
experience



megagraphics photography

At Megagraphics Photography
we create heirlooms not just
photographs. We pride ourselves on
providing all our clients with timeless
images that will be treasured forever.

P: 9379 6636 www.mega.com.au



**North Essendon Uniting Church
Helping Hands
Mission**

130 Keilor Road, North Essendon
9374 4236
www.helpinghandsmission.org.au