



## Essendon Theatre Company

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or

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## PRESIDENT'S REPORT

The time has just flown this year. We're nearly up to our 3<sup>rd</sup> production already.

The 1 act play season "Something with a Twist" went extremely well. The audiences were consistent and seemed to enjoy the shows and the cast and crew had a great time performing. Thank you to everyone involved in the production, on and off the stage, another great team effort. Congratulations to my two co directors – Sonia Zabala and Joshua Wolter on two great plays as well as their own performances. It was a pleasure working with you both.

Congratulations to all of the participants in the 1 act play festivals at Gembrook and Macedon. Everyone performed admirably and represented ETC well. Special congratulations to those who picked up awards – Sonia Zabala, Rosalin Shafik-Eid, and Leon Kuhlman. We also got a number of nominations at Gemco but, unfortunately, the adjudicator at Macedon didn't name nominations, which was a bit disappointing. We still have 1 more performance of "A Formal Tradition" to go so Chookas to the cast for their participation at Peridot in September.

But there's "no rest for the wicked" as we're straight into "Jack and the Beanstalk" now which is capably directed by Michele Haywood. The kids are extremely excited and enthusiastic, as are the adults involved. I think it will turn out to be a great production so you need to get your bookings in today. It's great to see that most of the kids who participated in the junior workshops are in the cast. Rehearsals for acting and dancing are going well and it's great to see everyone having so much fun. Michael Bentley and Colin Burchall have the enormous task of making the beanstalk grow and strong enough to climb on so that should be interesting.

Travis Handcock has already got both of our audition days booked up for "The Faculty Room" and has had to add another audition day on the Sunday morning 21st September. He's so organised that I wouldn't be surprised if he was secretly building a set somewhere ready to bump in as soon as the panto finishes. Christine's already getting costumes together because she'll be overseas for much of the play. I'm sure Trav will assemble a fabulous cast.

August 11 marked the 3<sup>rd</sup> anniversary of the passing of Eileen Bentley, our past President and my mum. Mum would be very happy with the way the company has continued and grown and the number of new people who have been involved. She would be especially pleased with the involvement of so many young people as she was very active in getting the kids involved in theatre and assuring the future of the company, as am I. I also appreciate the people who knew mum and remember her fondly and who have helped me cope over the last few years and have supported me as President. There are a lot of good people in this company and I hope that continues to be the case.

Love to all, Dawn

### UPCOMING AUDITIONS

#### THE FACULTY ROOM

Tuesday 16th September

Sunday 21st September

Thursday 25th September

#### THE FREEDOM OF THE CITY

Tuesday 9th September

Thursday 11th September



**Jack and the Beanstalk**  
**By Michael Bentley**  
**Directed by Michele Haywood**

It's pantomime season in Essendon. Michael Bentley has written a really funny script for Jack and the Beanstalk and it's being performed by a hugely enthusiastic and talented cast ranging in age from 4 - 34. We have a pantomime cow, a pantomime dame, an endearing if somewhat dim hero, a feisty heroine, two villains, the evil landowner Baron Waste and, of course, the Giant.

The most wonderful thing about pantomimes is that we can introduce new generations to the joy of participating in theatre. We want the audience to join in the singing and dancing, cheering the heroes and booing the villains.

The young cast have been working incredibly hard to become villagers and Giant's lackeys supported by indefatigable adult support from experienced ETC older cast members Ros, Travis, Leon, Tiffany, Kyle and Stephanie. You'll be delighted by our Fairy God Mother Marina who has huge attitude and presence. We have first and second and even third generation performers in the cast, which is a testament to ETC's inclusivity and encouragement of people of all ages.

Jack (Dean) is new to Essendon having come from the Northern Territory to the Melbourne Winter. Dean is an experienced performer and is a suitably clueless Jack, Jill, (Samantha) performed in last years pantomime and ensures that Jack wins out in the end. Many of the children were in last years pantomime - Fantasmagorical and it's been great to see Grace, Xavier, Holly and Mai take on larger speaking roles and carry them off with aplomb. It's been great to work with these children again and see how much they have grown and develop as people and as performers. Miles, Eva, Abbey, Andrea and Gillian are new this year and are fantastic additions to the cast as do our choreographers Tylah Michael and Tayla-Rene Latimer.

Come and see how we make a beanstalk grow, the cardboard house where Jack lives, Strawberry the cow and the land of the Giant, you may even win some of the Giant's treasure - or at least win the colouring competition.

I have no doubt that children and adults will have great fun and great holiday entertainment when they come to see Jack and the Beanstalk. I look forward to seeing you all there!

Michele

# *ONE ACT PLAY FESTIVAL RESULTS*

## **The Dandenong Ranges One Act Play Festival hosted by The Gemco Players:**

**Nomination** for Best Production to "A Formal Tradition" by Julie Johnstone and win as Runner Up Production

**Nomination and win** - Best Youth Actor - Leon Kuhlmann for Jacob in "A Family Tradition."

**Nominations** Best Supporting Actress to [Jeanette Coppolino](#) for "Alison" in "A Formal Tradition", Kate Deavin for "Grandma Edith" in "A Formal Tradition", [Isabelle Bertoli](#) for "Fay Blu" in "Your Guide" and [Rosalin Shafik-Eid](#) for "Kate" in "A Formal Tradition" with Rosalin winning Best Supporting Actress.

**Nominations** Best Supporting Actor to Joshua Wolter for "Andy" in "A Formal Tradition" and Anthony Condon for "Larry "The MP" Wick" in "Your Guide."

**Nomination** to [Sonia Zabala](#) to Best Director for "A Formal Tradition."

**Nomination** for "Best Original Play" for "Your Guide" by [Hayley Lawson-Smith](#)

## **Results of The Macedon One Act Play Festival hosted by the Mount Players:**

**Win** Best Supporting Female Actor - Sonia Zabala as "Rose" in Something Old, Something New.

# One Act Review

Published in Theatrecraft by the Victorian Drama League

## **SOMETHING WITH A TWIST: A SEASON OF ONE-ACT PLAYS.**

Essendon Theatre Company

Reviewed by David Collins - July 4,  
2014

It's not often I keep my scarf on for so long inside, but on a very crisp night at Essendon Theatre Company, we were treated to a trifecta of short plays bundled together under the heading *Something with a Twist*.

## **Something Old, Something New**

by Chris Hodson

Directed by Dawn Hinrichsen

Bride-to-be, Sarah (Isabelle Bertoli), is having lunch with her mum, Erica (Clare Howell). She's having doubts about the wedding, but their conversation would probably go smoother if not for the unasked-for advice from waitress, Rose (Sonia Zabala). Elsewhere, groom-to-be, Simon (Kyle Roberts), is having lunch with his dad, Paul (Kevin Janner). He shares Sarah's doubts, but has difficulty expressing them as they keep getting unsolicited advice from their waiter, Anton (Anthony Condon).

While Rose's appearance is noted cruelly by the ladies at lunch as "mutton dressed as lamb," her costume of one-part waitress, 'one-part burlesque certainly made you wonder just where their lunch was being served.

The performance of all the cast were fine enough, but unfortunately a lack of pace left things rather under-

cooked. A near-continuous series of slow cues meant there was little energy in the piece and much of the humour was left on the page.

## **Your Guide**

by Hayley Lawson-Smith

Directed by Joshua Wolter

*Your Guide* was a reimagining of the story of Pinocchio.

Opening with an infomercial (a nice way to begin, but the blip of music at the end of the scene needed to play throughout this introductory segment), the play literally pulls back the curtain and we're introduced to characters such as Marion Ette, Joe Petto, and, most importantly, Jack Crikite. Crikite has developed the technology to manifest a person's conscience as a physical being that never leaves their side. Successful on a few, Crikite has plans to petition the UN to make his system available worldwide. It's a surprise then, when he runs into some unexpected resistance in the form of Fay Blu. Blu would rather see society liberated from their consciences, not chained to them. However, she soon rethinks her belief in the utopia a conscience-free world would be when she frees Crikite from his own conscience and finds herself at the end of Crikite's bloody hands.

This was a promising play, but it did leave this reviewer with more than a few nagging questions. Does the tech manifest a person's inherent conscience or introduce one where none was previously? Are all the consciences supposed to be in positions of servitude? When Fay Blu is attempting to corrupt Crikite's



morality, shouldn't she be making her advances to his Crikite's conscience and ignore the host altogether? We're shown consciences able to interact with their environment, so why can't they intervene when their host is in peril? Why is Wick threatening people to promote the upcoming UN vote when Crikite is still supposedly good at this point? Better still, how can Wick enter the stage with smoke, suggesting an outside encounter, but then walk upstage and trash Crikite's office?

In some ways, the character of Wick (played with nice malice by Anthony Condon) was a curiosity all on his own. He references parts of the original Pinocchio tale, but the larger story didn't seem to be served by him at all.

Other standout performances were Rhys Jones doing an admirable Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde impression as Jack Crikite, and Isabelle Bertoli as Fay Blu, who wonderfully took the Blue Fairy in a more licentious shade of 'blue' direction.

Despite a completely unnecessary red wash when Crikite was at peak evil (when your main character is sneering and scowling, holding a knife, talking in a menacing tone about how much he relished butchering his family in the past leading to a subsequent diagnosis of psychopathy, bathing the stage in red light communicates little, other than disdain for the audience's intelligence), the piece was otherwise well directed by Joshua Wolter and easily the most entertaining of the three plays on offer.

## **A Formal Tradition**

**by Julie Johnston**

**Directed by Sonia Zabala**

It's a special night for this family. Mum (Rosalin Shafik-Eid) and Dad (Joshua Wolter) are helping their daughter, Alison (Jeanette Coppolino) celebrate her formal, along with Grandma (Kate Deavin) and an annoying little brother (Leon Kuhlman). As Alison battles her nerves while waiting for her date (Adam Haylock) to arrive, a prank with a bunch of condoms inadvertently unravels long-kept family secrets about just exactly when Alison and Alison's mum were conceived.

Despite the story kicking off with the pretty-tired cliché of parents being horrified when they discover condoms for the first time in their kid's possession (surely by 2014 it's more likely for parents to demand their child has condoms if they think they might be sexually active, rather than be horrified?), the audience found plenty to laugh about and enjoy as the play went on.

In her director's notes, director Sonia Zabala mentions the work done creating a sense of family amongst the actors and it showed. Regardless of what emotional hurdles needed jumping in the script, there was a definite feeling of familiarity and connection onstage, which is only possible with a committed cast.

After a languid beginning, followed by a dark middle, something light and funny was the perfect finish in this selection of short plays. In the end, a cold-but-rewarding night of theatre was had, thanks to the ETC.

# KID'S WORKSHOP



# WHAT'S ON?

## **ESSENDON THEATRE COMPANY**

Jack and the Beanstalk  
by Michael Bentley  
Directed by Michele Haywood

26th of September - 4th of October  
7:00PM / 2:00PM

Bookings  
[essendontheatrecompany.com](http://essendontheatrecompany.com)

## **SUNSHINE COMMUNITY THEATRE**

Shh! Don't Tell The Bride  
by Paul Rourke  
Directed by David Prince & Robert Wightwick

12th of September - 20th of September  
8:00PM

Bookings  
[trybooking.com](http://trybooking.com) or at the door

## **STRATHMORE THEATRICAL ARTS GROUP (STAG)**

And This Was Odd  
by Kenneth Horne  
Directed by Mel De Bono

13th of November - 23rd of November  
8:00PM / 2:00PM matinee

Bookings  
9382 6284





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*John Sturt*



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