



Essendon Theatre Company

9 - 11 Bradshaw Street, Essendon

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or

Online www.essendontheatrecompany.com

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PRESIDENT'S REPORT

We come to the end of another highly successful year for ETC. Our four productions, *Freedom of the City*, *Private Lives*, *Aladdin* and *Boeing Boeing* were all well attended and well received.

Thank you to our four Directors, Travis Handcock, Joshua Wolter, Michele Haywood and Tess Maurici Ryan for all of their hard work and congratulations to them and their respective casts and crew on putting together such amazing productions.

Special congratulations to Trav and the gang from *Freedom of the City* for all of the well-deserved nominations at the VDLs and for the Adjudicators award.

2015 has seen vast improvements in our lighting system thanks to Michael Bond, Travis Handcock and Steph Morrell. Thank you to you all for making the improvements, testing and tagging and tidying up the lighting in general. I know you have plans for more, much needed, improvements in 2016 and I look forward to them. We're very keen to expand our Tech team in 2016.

Although not officially on the Committee, a big thank you has to go to Colin Burchall who has been involved in the set building for every production. Set construction is one of the hardest areas to get people to help so we're on a mission to get more people on board in 2016 (maybe the Village people LOL?)

The company couldn't run without the dedication Committee and I sincerely want to thank Christine Nilsson, Rosalin Shafik-Eid, Michele Maywood, Travis Handcock and Stephanie Morrell for their never ending support and enthusiasm. Thanks also go to Joshua Wolter and Steph Gonelli who were only on the Committee for a short time but their efforts are still appreciated.

We will be having our AGM on Monday 1st February 2016 and we invite anyone who would like to become part of our team to come to Bradshaw Street at 7.30pm. After January, our regular meetings will be on the 2nd Tuesday of each month.

A big THANK YOU to all of our members and audience for their support throughout 2015. I hope you all have a wonderful and safe Christmas and New Year and that we see you during 2016. Make a note in your calendar that our 40th Anniversary celebrations are on Saturday 15th October 2016. Hope to see you all there.

Cheers,
Dawn

2015 VDL AWARDS

The play we put forward for the Victorian Drama League Awards for 2015 was *The Freedom of the City* directed by Travis Handcock. Congratulations to everyone involved.

WIN

VDL Adjudicators Award for **Creative Space Use** in staging *The Freedom of the City*

NOMINATION

Meika Clarke & Travis Handcock for Best Lighting Design in a Comedy or a Drama

Jasmine Tolentino for Best Sound Design in a Comedy or a Drama

Christine Nilsson for Best Costume Design in a Comedy or a Drama

Rosalin Shafik-Eid for Best Hand and Set Properties in a Comedy or a Drama

David Runnalls for Best Actor in a Minor Role in a Comedy or a Drama

Stephanie Morrell for Best Supporting Actress in a Drama

Travis Handcock for Best Director of a Drama Production

The Freedom of the City for Best Drama Production



(top) Stephanie Morrell and David Runnalls with their Nomination certificates for Best Supporting Actress in a Drama and Best Actor in a Minor Role in a Drama or Comedy.

(bottom) Travis Handcock with his Nominations for Best Director and Best Drama Production.



(top) Group photo before the ceremony

(bottom) Christine Nilsson (Best costume design), Rosalyn Shafik-Eid (Best Hand and Set Properties), Jasmine Tolentino (Best Sound Design) & Travis Handcock (Best Lighting Design) with their Nomination Certificates



(left) Julie Arnold, winner of the Eileen Bentley Perpetual Trophy for Best Supporting Actress in a Comedy



(right) Travis Handcock with the VDL Adjudicator award for Creative Space Use in staging The Freedom of the City

Aladdin Review

Published in Theatrecraft by the Victorian Drama League

ALADDIN

By Michael Bentley

Essendon Theatre Company

Directed by Michele Haywood

Reviewed by Alison Campbell Rate -
September 25, 2015

Essendon Theatre Company's school holiday pantomime provided a great afternoon of entertainment for an excited audience of young children and their captive adults. Michael Bentley's pantomime scripts tend to go off in many and varied directions and director Michele Haywood pulled all the threads together to create a successful, engaging production. Her task was made more complex by the varied ages and skill levels of the cast. There were some inevitable lapses in volume, clarity and pace which in the overall scheme of things didn't detract from the spirit of the performance. The backstage support given by stage manager Lauren Brown and assistant Maria Kostezky would have been vital to bringing it all together.

The pauper-to-prince story of Aladdin is well known but in this version we also had the addition of some random characters from other stories, plus some rap, the chicken dance, a skateboarding genie and some other odds and

ends. Danielle Biksha's set added to the storybook feel. She used a divided flat stretching the width of the stage which could be opened up like a dollhouse door, revealing the larger space behind. Downstage of the flat was for Aladdin's house and other smaller street scenes and behind was the genie's cave and the sultan's palace. Lots of colour in the set dressing and costumes brought the palace scenes to life. The cave scene was enhanced by effective blue lighting and a convincingly large pile of glittery treasure.

The big cast of adults, teenagers and children worked well as a team, giving the less experienced the chance to work on their stagecraft alongside more mature performers. Lessons to be learned include facing the front when speaking, picking up cues promptly, S-L-O-W-I-N-G down delivery and articulating clearly, especially as the audience was young, noisy and mobile.

Steph Morrell did a lovely job as the narrator, Scheherazade, seated on a big cushion by the stage in the midst of her assistants. Steph's animated face and clearly projected voice put us right into the story-telling zone. Congratulations to her

little helpers who did the all-important work of carrying the "boo" and "cheer" placards across the front and efficiently swinging the set open and shut for the scene changes. Kirsten Page played Aladdin with engaging swagger and confidence and interacted well with the young members of the audience. Keep the volume up; there was a tendency to drop the voice at the end of sentences.

Kyle Roberts brought a heap of energy and fun to the role of Aladdin's mother, the Widow Twankey. His projection was impeccable and his characterisation garnered lots of laughs. Marina Labib was a lovely Jasmine; she had a bit of attitude, used her face well and articulated clearly. Special praise for Jasmine's tiny attendant who stayed focused at all times. The evil Mustapha Wash (running gag: "Must-have-a-wash") was evilly played by Peter Sackett. Accompanied by appropriate evil red lighting and an evil belly laugh, Peter was very funny and interacted well with the audience. Again, keep the voice up.

Travis Handcock portrayed the Genie with flair and a fun laidback attitude. He and his mini genie assistant, Xavier Brown, played off each other well and were a slick team on and off the skateboard. Their makeup and costumes were great. Amongst a host of other characters was Clare Molony as the Slave of the Lamp (impressive rapping!), the imperious Sultan played by Mazz Ryan, Aladdin's annoying sister, Wishy Washee, played by Bianca McMurray, (voice up!!) and a couple of hapless rent collectors, Wentworth and Bloggs, played by Alex McMurray and Keith Isaac (a few pace issues).

There were too many cast members to comment on every one but all are to be congratulated, as is Essendon Theatre Company, for presenting an enjoyable and engaging piece of theatre which encourages and celebrates community involvement for all ages.

2016 PLAYBILL

FIVE WOMEN WEARING THE SAME DRESS

By Alan Ball

Directed by Natasha Boyd

Read-Through: **CLOSED**

Auditions: **CLOSED**

Production Dates: April 7 - 16

Audition Bookings Contact
Natasha info@bookbonding.com.au

SEMINAR

By Theresa Rebeck

Directed by Travis Handcock

Auditions: Sunday 9th April 6:00PM & Tuesday 12th April
7:30PM

Callbacks: Sunday 17th April 12:00PM

Production Dates: June 23 - July 2

Audition Bookings Contact
Travis Handcock 0424 494 829 or handycsu@hotmail.com

THE WEEKEND
By Michael Palin

Directed by Michael Bond

Auditions: Tuesday 28th June 7:30PM & Sunday 26th June 6:00PM

Production Dates: September 8 - 17

Audition Bookings Contact
Michael Bond 0400 887 900 or 11kinsale@gmail.com

40TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION
15th OCTOBER 2016

That's right! ETC is turning 40 and we'd love you to come and celebrate with us.

Venue: TBA

DRESS: Come as your favourite character that you have EITHER PLAYED at ETC or SEEN at ETC over the past 40 years

SAVE THE DATE - OCTOBER 15, 2016

WITNESS FOR THE PROSECUTION
By Agatha Christie

Directed by Michele Haywood

Auditions: Sunday 11th September 6:00PM & Tuesday 13th September 7:30PM & Sunday 18th September 2:00PM

Production Dates: November 24 - December 3

Audition Booking Contact
Michele Haywood 0413 692 283 or michwood@bigpond.com



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