



# BACKSTAGE

The Newsletter of Sunnybank Theatre Group Inc

April 2019

To all of STG's wonderful and valuable members and patrons  
"Backstage is back!"

It's been a while since we've published a newsletter and we know you've been missing it! Along with all the social media it's time we returned to this additional way of bringing our news to you, for those not able to get into the social media platforms! As Editor I promise I'll endeavour to make sure we have an edition of Backstage following each of our major productions to keep us up to date. A warm welcome back! *Editor, Chris Guylser*



## From the President's Pen



Our President Paul does a wonderful job with updates on email keeping us up to date but for those of you who aren't on email or linked into the social media networks, let's go back to the winding up of 2018 until now! After the End of Year party Paul thanked everyone for joining us at theatre and said ,,,,,,, *It would be remiss of me if I didn't thank the many people who have taken on more formal roles over the past twelve months – on the management and artistic committees, in box office and behind the bar, in the lighting box and back stage, in our youth and senior theatre and as actors and directors and loyal audience members. None of what we have achieved during the year would have been possible without you! He told us..... Even though we are "shut-down" over the Christmas - New Year period that doesn't mean that there aren't things happening. Our first show for 2019 is Marjorie Prime and the cast are already hard at work rehearsing. Paul reported that the AGM for 2019 would be held a little later on 4 March to give our auditors more time and after the AGM he said.... I wanted to say a quick thank you to everyone who turned out for the AGM tonight. Attendance is important because without a quorum we cannot do the things we need to do to stay registered as an Incorporated Association. Thank you to the following who will make up your Management Committee for 2019: Vice President - Trevor Nunn, Treasurer - Michelle Staunton & General Committee - Annette Page, Richard Williams, Melanie Pennisi, Jim Cliff, Andy Cosier. I will be continuing in the second year of my two year term. We received no nominations for role of Secretary so if you are interested please contact me. This was followed up fairly swiftly with another email from Paul with good news updates.... A quick update on a couple of things that are happening at STG at the moment. We have a new Secretary! Welcome to Venessa Kohl who was voted in to the vacancy at the Management Committee meeting last week and at the same meeting we formally welcomed 28 new members to our STG family. So if you see some new faces around the theatre make sure you introduce yourself and make them feel welcome. In an earlier email the Committee were calling for expressions of interest for new members to join the Artistic Sub committee which met with a positive response and Paul mentioned ... Our new artistic sub-committee is already hard at work. They will be holding an information evening on Tuesday April 9 for people who have expressed interest in directing at STG. Following that session the artistic sub-committee will be joining the management committee in an historic first joint meeting of both committees to formally start a process focused on developing a coherent strategy to spread the message about what we do and get more bums on seats. Thanks Paul for many regular email updates and we look forward to seeing more "From the President's Pen" in future editions of "Backstage"!*

# The 2019 Season in Review

What a fascinating start to our 2019 Season! In March we had our first production of Jordan Harrison's "Majorie Prime". What better way to wrap up this Production's successful season than to hear from our President Paul Marshall who Directed the show! If you did see this wonderful show I'm sure you'll find Paul's comments insightful and thought provoking!



Our talented cast, seated: Steve Tonks & Gail Payne with Jane Rapley & David Richardson



David and Gail



'Tess' visits Mum, Marjorie Prime!

I think we go to see theatre because at the very core of us is a need to engage with stories. Stories are how we learn about who we are, about the world around us and about how we might best make our way through it. We live in our stories, we hold tight to them and we tell them to other people to let them know who we are. For those of us who choose to perform the stories things get particularly fraught!

I am a firm believer that when we see a part of our own story told on stage it is life affirming and, when we do it well, it is healing. At one level Marjorie Prime was about dementia and the impact it can have on our lives. At another, it explored how we live in our stories, how we try to edit them if we can and how sometimes we cannot. Underneath all that is the question of just what it is that makes us "human" and is that something that the technology that we use and continue to develop might one day manage to acquire?

As a Director could you not choose that as a story to share? Of course a powerful story is best served with a powerful cast and I was doubly blessed. From the very first rehearsal I knew Marjorie Prime was in safe hands. It was a privilege to work with David, Gail, Jane and Steve and I want to thank them again for their hard work and dedication. They are the incredible human beings who brought the story (and its complement of almost-human beings) to life.

If I had to summarise the audience reaction overall I would say quietly thoughtful. There wasn't much in the way of applause between scenes and after the show there seemed to me to be a little more intensity to the conversation between patrons. For some it was too close to home because they had lived it themselves recently, for others it was something they could see coming into their lives very soon. Hopefully everyone went away thinking a little differently about the future that is coming for us all and how we might prepare now to best make our way through it.

Thanks Paul, a very interesting & thought provoking summing up! I was delighted to be able to attend the Preview show before opening and also watched the closing night and must add my congratulations to a very talented cast under Paul's masterful direction, well done! Finally, Jane Rapley who played 'Tess' kindly put pen to paper for me and here's her comments as to how she enjoyed playing the role! *After speaking to Paul, it appealed to me immediately to be involved in this 'dramady' (drama/comedy combined). I've always liked the idea of a comedy that goes a little bit deeper, mostly funny, but some parts that just make you want to cry. Marjorie Prime was perhaps more poignant moments and fewer laughs, but still a very interesting mix. After a few musicals it was time to give my singing voice a rest and hone my acting skills and playing 'Tess' gave me a wide range of emotions that you don't often get to portray in Musicals or English farce. However, the best part about doing Marjorie Prime was the opportunity to work with Paul. He is one of the most patient and generous directors I have worked with. He trusts his actors to bring the characters to life, while at the same time being prepared to offer alternative interpretations, or to hash out parts that are not working. Playing Tess was a wonderful experience; to be part of a show that, while the audience might not leave humming a tune, they left with questions about their own experiences, and hopefully, a deeper understanding of themselves that will have stayed with them long after the curtain has fallen.*

Jane Rapley

## So what's coming next?

# “Done to Death”

Our next production a Comedy written by Fred Carmichael and Directed by Dierdre Robinson and John Mordacz opens in about three weeks, Friday 26 April at 7.30pm with the usual two shows Saturday 27 April at 2pm and 7.30pm. Don't forget the following weekend routine has changed a little with no show on the Friday and two shows on Saturday 4 May at 2pm & 7.30 with a further matinee at 2pm on the Sunday 5 May. Then the last weekend as normal Friday 10 May at 7.30pm and the two shows on Saturday 11 May at 2pm & 7.30pm, don't miss it. Tickets available on line or give us a call 3345 3964. I asked Dierdre to give me a progress report on rehearsals and here's her summing up!

*Twelve very diverse actors are presently laughing their way through rehearsals of Done to Death to bring this ? to life. We're not sure if ? is a who-dun-it, a farce, a comedy, a thriller or a melodrama, so we've decided that it will be all of these. We have some very enthusiastic newcomers to STG in the cast, together with some very experienced and talented actors. The set is going to be absolutely amazing; our lighting designer is already hard at work creating magic; and John and I are*



*cracking the whip and encouraging our great cast. Done to Death is about five famous thriller writers – though they are all really past it – who come together to write collaboratively, a series of TV dramas. They are taken off to an island in the Caribbean where they are set up in an old house in order to 'create' – the butler looks like Dracula, the maid is always hysterical, people keep dying, bodies everywhere, everybody suspects everybody else – in short, total mayhem. Sounds like fun? It is. Definitely a date for your diary. Now you definitely can't miss this one! We asked one of the cast Greg Johnson playing Rodney Duckton to give us his thoughts! .....*

*As someone who has been on and off stages for over 50 years, I guess I have to confess to being the oldest member of this cast of “Done to Death” and to be creating the oldest character in the play. In the first production, this character was played by the author, Fred Carmichael, so I have the opportunity to say some great lines he wrote for himself. What a delight it is to be in the company of a talented and hard working cast with incisive and creative directors. The play is a beauty because it is so full of surprises and colourful characters and we are being encouraged to be “over the top” in this crazy romp. We are so lucky at STG to be able to rehearse in the theatre on the actual set so early in the rehearsal period; a luxury enjoyed by very few community theatre groups. Many thanks Dierdre and Greg for your input and rest assured you'll recognise many other experienced and talented actors you've seen before in this big cast apart from Greg, including Lesley Davis, Chris O'Leary, Joanne Oliver, Nathaniel Young and Richard Williams! It'll be a hoot, that's for sure and as we all say to cast and crew.....break a leg!*

**We invite you to join us for an 18+ night of comedy and improvisation!  
Saturday 18 May, 6.30pm for a 7pm start**

Have you heard of Theatresports? (Think...."Who's Line is it Anyway?")

Join us at the bar from 6.30 test your imagination on games at around 7pm. in the on-stage action and encouraging others and games, finishing at around

Ever wanted to try improv it's for you? It's **FREE** a designed for those who have never experienced improv or just want to have .....



for some liquid courage, then stage in some theatre sports Be prepared to get involved audience participation, suggesting scenes for our 8:30pm. Anyone can do it!

but not sure whether or not 2 hour intro to improvisation

**A fun night out!**

## A touch of Sunnybank Theatre Trivia that might interest you!

About 30 odd years ago in the mid 80's we did a production called “Move Over Mrs Markham” by Ray Cooney and John Chapman. At that time the Sunnybank Variety Group, as it was then known, had little or no money. An amount of \$45 was owed to one of the Committee members and she volunteered the amount to help fund the show. An SVG member had a brother who built the set for us consisting of a raised floor, representing the bedroom, with an oval bed in it, a louvre door, essential to the plot, and doors and windows relevant to the usual comings and goings of the characters. Let's face it, a farce always has windows and doors! The set was so solid everyone said that if the theatre had fallen down the set would have remained standing! Wardrobe was procured by the cast members themselves, furniture came from members homes, we even had a carpet but it was so moth eaten it was thrown out at the end of the show. The director typed up the program (I can assure you there were no photos or anything so grand) and printed it at work. The cast were all seasoned players who had been with SVG for many years, the play was a huge success, both cast and audience thoroughly enjoyed themselves and all for a budget of \$45.00.

**How far we have come!**

# We're always busy at our Theatre!

How many times have you driven past the theatre in the evening or a weekend and there are several cars in our car park even in between our Shows? That's because there could be as many as three casts rehearsing three different shows! That's a lot of people working hard to entertain you & right now having just finished show No.1, already there are two more productions on the go! Dierdre and John busy with their cast on stage for "Done to Death" opening in about three weeks and our next Director who you all know very well, Pam Cooper has just started rehearsals for "Chapter Two" in June! As you may have read in Greg Johnsons write up of his role in "Done to Death" .....we are so lucky at STG to be able to rehearse in the theatre on the actual set so early in the rehearsal period!

It's our 'home away from home' & we all love it, that's why we volunteer to entertain you! Here's a brief word from Pam about her auditions and success in casting our third production of the year "Chapter Two" by Neil Simon opening on June 14!



*Chapter Two*, our third play for the year (my, how time flies when you're having fun at the theatre) has now been cast and we are into the very early stages of rehearsal. I've managed to score a well-seasoned cast with faces that you'll recognise from many previous productions, Brad Oliver, Lesley Davis, Nathaniel Young and Melanie Pennisi, all very keen to bring the play to life. 'George' is a writer who has just lost his wife, 'Jennie' is a recent divorcee, 'Leo' is George's brother and 'Faye' is Jennie's best friend. Fay and Leo have made several attempts at matching George and Jennie up with various partners and disastrous outcomes but they feel these two are right for each other so they meet, to please Faye and Leo, and the story continues from there! This is a semi autobiographical of Neil Simon's life and according to Sheridan Morley, a prominent English author, biographer, critic and broadcaster, "This was in some ways the turning point for Simon, the moment when he started to use his own life as something more than an excuse for a gag-fest! It was written as a tribute to Marsha Mason, his second wife, and her tolerance with his long-lasting grief over the death of his first wife.....". In 1979 Simon adapted the play for a movie in which Marsha Mason played the character 'Jennie' along with James Caan as George. It's a funny, moving, poignant play, a couple of sad bits, but well worth a trip to the theatre to see it! Thanks Pam, being a Neil Simon fan I can't wait to see this great cast in the show!



Don't forget to join in the fun  
18 May at 6.30pm.  
You'll love it

See you in  
the next  
Edition of  
Backstage

**SUNNYBANK THEATRE GROUP**  
cnr Mains & Beenleigh Rds, Sunnybank  
**2019 PERFORMANCE CALENDAR**

*in association with ORIGIN Theatrical*

<b>Marjorie Prime</b> by Jordan Harrison director Paul Marshall February 15 - March 2	<b>Done to Death</b> by Tom Germinoel directed by Dierdre Robinson & John Mordacz April 26 - May 11
<b>Chapter Two</b> by Neil Simon director Pam Cooper June 14 - 29	<b>Tally Hall</b> Radio Plays director Chris O'Leary August 2 - 10
<b>2020 LAUNCH NITE</b> Nov 1 7pm performances evening matinee	<b>Shirley Valentine</b> by Willy Russell directed by Dierdre Robinson November 15 - 30 to book ph: 3345 3964 online at <a href="http://www.stg.org.au">www.stg.org.au</a>

*Showcasing New Talent*

**Shining Lights**  
directed by Herida Day  
August 16 - 24

**S.T.G.  
A.B.N.**  
12 040 875 864  
[www.stg.org.au](http://www.stg.org.au)

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**Theatre Phone:** (07) 3345 3964  
(Leave a message if not staffed)

**Email:** [boxoffice@stg.org.au](mailto:boxoffice@stg.org.au)

**Mailing List:** Call to register for email  
news & audition notices.

**Seat Bookings:** On line or call on the  
Theatre Phone above.