



BACKSTAGE

The Newsletter of Sunnybank Theatre Group Inc

August, 2009

www.stg.org.au

STG kept audiences guessing with the witty whodunit "SILHOUETTE" !



Insp Bruton (Greg Potter) seizes the murder weapon for forensic testing.



Martin (Mark Scott) delivers yet another tirade of abuse to wife Celia (Lesley Davis)



Celia Wallis endures more unbearable hard line questioning by Inspector Bruton



Neville Smallwood (Andrew Smith) has some serious explaining to do to try and establish his innocence.

Review by Chris Guylar.

Author Simon Brett's ingeniously structured and witty thriller set in the English house of Martin Powell and Celia Wallis, opens as Detective Insp. Bruton investigates the murder of Martin Powell a leading actor "past his prime", shot dead at close range with Celia's own rifle. Bruton must find the killer and questions Celia Wallis at length about the murder as she is naturally an initial suspect. Did Celia, Martin's estranged wife, murder her actor husband? But Celia clearly appears innocent after questioning! What about Neville Smallwood, a radio journalist obsessed with Celia, seemingly prepared to do anything for her? Neville interviews Celia and then stayed the night drunk in Celia's bed and has recently had a very unpleasant argument with Martin. Neville seems to have the perfect motive; but who is the mysterious stranger whose silhouette appeared at the door? Act Two takes us back in time to the events leading up to the murder. Only at the last minute did we find out who the murderer was!



The cast delivered a first class performance and worked extremely well together. Greg Potter and Lesley Davis were very convincing & focussed in the roles of Insp Bruton and Celia as Bruton relentlessly pursued a hard line of questioning that became unbearable for the clearly innocent Celia.

A good performance by Andrew Smith, the strange nervy character of Neville who was obviously infatuated with Celia and cuttingly dubbed by the Bruton as "knicker nicker" the oddball with a dubious past. Mark Scott, wonderfully obnoxious as the biting sarcastic, arrogant husband who everyone was quite happy to see 'put to rest' with a single bullet to the head! To the rest of the cast my hearty congratulations, you did a magnificent job at supporting the intrigue and guessing game for the audience to puzzle over during interval. Many quips kept the audience giggling, "married only once, first time I found my husband murdered"... "when it comes to men I shop at Harrods"... "you would look lovely to me even if you were dead".

Behind the scenes the production team did a fabulous job giving us a cleverly designed set and lighting and sound effects which all lent to the suspense and mood of the overall production. Well done. STG's very talented Director, Pam Cooper had this say.....

"The end of another of another season, the departing of another family, the closing of another door but what a wonderful time was had by all!!

"Silhouette" nearly didn't get off the ground but, after what seemed like a million telephone calls and emails, we found Insp Bruton (alias Greg) and Martin Powell (alias Mark). After three and a half weeks of really intensive rehearsal, we opened to our preview audience, all of whom received us very warmly. For me it was totally gratifying to see that the cast got the accolades they so richly deserved. The comments made by Stephanie (standing in for a very sick Kay) after the preview night made me so proud of the eight cast members to whom they were being directed, thanks Steph. Thanks also to Committee, Gold and Life members who were so positively vocal, I'm sure any actor will agree there is nothing like support from your peers.

To Frank, the set was excellent and we did it in time as you said but not without a lot of your valuable time at the theatre, thank you so much.

To Courtney, set builder extraordinaire, gifted S.M. (twice for me now & I sincerely hope it won't be the last) and all-round dependable person, you are a gem and a true friend. Thank you. To Loretta I can only say thank you, for your invaluable comments, for picking up on all the things I missed, for your tremendous support of cast members and their needs on stage and, most of all, your company beside me during all rehearsals and performances.

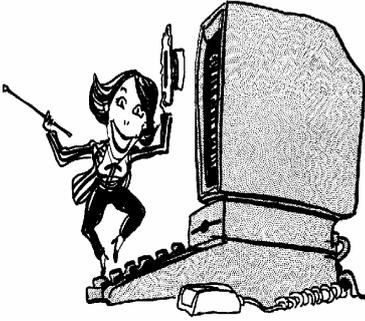
We did it together. Team, the audiences loved you and I am only sorry I couldn't conjure up a few more for you. I'm so proud of you all."

Pam Cooper



From the President's Computer.

Hi to all our members and a warm welcome to our newcomers.



Well "*Silhouette*" has come to an end and many comments from those who attended were all complimentary. While most thought the murderer seemed to be the policewoman, we were all kept guessing to the very end as to who done it!! Congratulations must go to Pam Cooper, her crew and cast for staging such a top show in such a limited time. What an outstanding effort, you did us proud.

Currently, rehearsals for "*Rebecca*" are in full swing with Anne Ross at the helm. The box office will open this Saturday on the August 15 with the show running from September 11 to 26. There will be no Wednesday night performances however - we have instead included a Sunday matinee on September 20.

I am pleased to announce that the profit from the raffle money (over the last three shows) has allowed for the installation of a hot water system to provide showers in both the men's and ladies toilets. This is so beneficial to the cast, crew and front of house staff particularly between matinees and night performances when there is insufficient time to return home to freshen up. Thank you all for your wonderful support.

We hope to continue with the raffles as the money helps provide for incidentals without using the Theatre funding. I'll be announcing the next project soon.

If you've enjoyed your Sunnybank Theatre experience, don't forget to tell your friends.

Until next time
Kay Halford

Audition Call for



“Out of Order”

Ray Cooney's Award winning Farce

Director — Chris Guyler

Assistant Director — Colin Robinson

AUDITION DATE – Sunday, Sept 13, 2009 at 1pm

WHERE: At STG Theatre cnr Mains & Beenleigh Rd Sunnybank, Brisbane.

SEASON RUNS: 20 Nov—5 Dec 2009

Characters:

Richard Willey, suave and successful Junior Minister in the Government 35-50

The Hotel Manager, stern efficient type 45-60

The Waiter, a nimble wily older 'servant' 45-60

The Maid, a smaller role of a 'plump' Italian woman in her fifties

Jane Worthington, an attractive but dizzy young lady, late 20's to early 40's

A 'Body' a fairly nondescript middle aged man 30-40

George Pigden, an upright pleasant man highly strung of nervous disposition 30-45

Ronnie, an angry young man husband of Jane

Pamela attractive sophisticated lady in her late thirties - early forties

Gladys, a nurse and a bossy but attractive woman late thirties – early forties

More details on www.stg.org.au/stg/web/page/auditions

or please call Chris Guyler on 3279 4503 or 0414481506

“Out of Order”... a brief synopsis....

Richard Willey, a Junior Minister of Parliament, plans, under the cover of an all-night Commons sitting, to spend the night in Suite 648 at the four star Westminster Hotel London, with mistress Jane Worthington, one of the junior secretaries of the opposition party. The seeds are sown until things start to go disastrously wrong early on; when expecting only to handle Jane's body, Richard (or Dickie as he likes Jane to call him) discovers the body of a man trapped in the suite's unreliable sash window.

Desperately trying to get out of what has suddenly become an extremely sticky situation, he summons his trusty Parliamentary Private Secretary, George Pigden, who through Richard's lies sinks further into trouble with everybody and ends up going through an identity crisis!

The play boasts a typical variety of stereotypical farce characters, such as a pompous interfering Hotel Manager, a sly crafty old hotel waiter, who's seen it all before and knows exactly how to earn hush money, and a Maid of suspect Mediterranean origin who has little command of the English Language. With their help and a few other surprises, things go from bad to worse. To quote a critique....."It's a very silly, very funny script and it's a little bit naughty. But mostly it's British farce, so it's just big, silly fun."



A friendly reminder.....you might remember in our March issue of "BACKSTAGE" we made an appeal to you all to ".....get involved.....". STG's Box Office Manager, Deon Spann, made mention of needing members to volunteer to help in all aspects of Box Office and Front of House duties.

Well now's your chance to join the friendly team and become another member helping to make Sunnybank Theatre the success that it is! The more people we can get to help with things like Box Office, the Bar, Ushering, selling programs and all those really important jobs that happen behind the scenes, then the easier it is to run the roster with volunteers just doing maybe a couple of evenings or part of a day at the theatre at the Box Office. If you're able to help in any way please do call Deon on 3345 3964 or by email...deon@stg.org



Some trivia - Arts and Theatre... "Quotes"



From Actors, Playwrights, Poets and Critics!

My only regret in the theatre is that I could never sit out front and watch me. By Unknown author, but how true!

The wonderful actor Henry Fonda who only won one Oscar at the Academy for his brilliant performance in "On Golden Pond" once said, **The best actors do not let the wheels show.**

Robert Holman, English playwright and author of many books writes: **The novel is more of a whisper, whereas the stage is a shout.**

Gwyneth Paltrow who is often dubbed....."that English actress that used to be engaged to Brad Pitt" was actually born in in Los Angeles but loves living in England, once said about her mother, actress Blythe Danner.....**My playground was the theatre. I'd sit and watch my mother pretend for a living. As a young girl, that's pretty seductive.**

Famous American theatrical critic and playwright, Robert Brustein makes a couple of meaningful, interesting comments saying.....**The primary function of a theatre is not to please itself, or even to please its audience. It is to serve talent.** And again an observation that....**Theatre going is a communal act, movie going a solitary one!**

Tallulah Bankhead, an American actress who started in theatre in the early 20's and 30's became better known for her offstage outrageous and promiscuous behaviour in the entertainment world. Her biography reads like a "who's who" of affairs; she once made the comment that.....**It's one of the tragic ironies of the theatre that only one man in it can count on steady work -- the night watchman.** Though Tallulah did make big money later on in both films and TV and died in 1968 at the age of 66.

Howard Barker, the British playwright has coined the term "Theatre of Catastrophe" to describe his work. His plays often explore violence, sexuality, the desire for power and human motivation and he claims.....**I submit all my plays to the National Theatre for rejection. To assure myself I am seeing clearly!**

Finally, the film actor known for his talent in comedy roles, Steve Martin, may well have got some of his success from this comment he made.....**Chaos in the midst of chaos isn't funny, but chaos in the midst of order is.** Hope you enjoyed those tit-bits!

STG PHOTOGRAPHY by Kayleen Gibson



Our wonderful Front of House photography in the Green Room and excellent quality of pictures for this newsletter wouldn't be possible without the talents of STG's photographer, Kayleen! She supplies us with all our photographic needs in the theatre and here in the newsletter. Copies of the box office poster, Green Room collage and many other photographs are available for purchase.

Just give Kayleen a call or email her: Ph: 0411 867 377 kaymar@me.com

A true 'Classic Masterpiece' of Theatre
from the Daphne du Maurier novel.
It's time to book your seats!



Season runs from 11 - 26 September 2009

Bookings open this Saturday 15 August

Box Office lines will open 10am

Tickets also available at the Theatre's Box Office

Based on Daphne du Maurier's famous 1938 novel, *Rebecca* is set in the 1930's in Manderlay, Maxim de Winter's country house in Cornwall, England. The romantic, intriguing story of Maxim's second wife as she slowly pieces together her husband's tragic and unhappy past when married to the beautiful, but willfully treacherous Rebecca.

Daphne du Maurier's strongly-drawn characters in this moving and exciting piece, including the obsessed malicious housekeeper Mrs. Danvers, are as powerful and true as when the book was first written. An entertaining masterpiece of theatre not to be missed, an epic Gothic Romance directed by Anne Ross.

Having decided to buy your tickets for this masterpiece, let's tell you a little more.

"Rebecca" based on the classic novel of the same name by Daphne du Maurier is directed by Anne Ross.

"Last night I dreamt I went to Manderley again" is the book's opening line, and from here its unnamed narrator recalls her past, recalling the story of her transition into womanhood. While working as the companion to an upper-class woman vacationing on the French Riviera, she becomes involved with a wealthy Englishman, Maxim de Winter. She agrees to marry him, and follows him to his mansion, the beautiful Cornish estate, Manderley. Only after their return to Manderley does the new bride realise how difficult it will be to lay to rest the memory of her husband's first wife, Rebecca. Rebecca drowned off the coast near the mansion; however her aura seems to pervade the estate and all its inhabitants, especially its domineering housekeeper, Mrs. Danvers, one of English literature's most infamous female villains. Mrs. Danvers, who was profoundly devoted to Rebecca, does her best to undermine the second Mrs. de Winter, suggesting to her that she will never attain the urbanity and charm that Rebecca possessed. Lacking self-confidence and overwhelmed by her new life, the protagonist commits one faux pas after another, until she is convinced that Maxim regrets his impetuous decision to marry her and is still deeply in love with the seemingly perfect Rebecca.

The play's haunting plot is renowned for similarities in Du Maurier's own life married to a man who had previously been engaged to a beautiful socialite who tragically committed suicide during the war. Daphne du Maurier was acquainted with the feelings of jealousy aroused by a mate's former love. Although Daphne's own marriage did not include the darker aspects of her novel 'Rebecca', she did identify with the psychology of her narrator. She too created in her mind the image of another woman who had shared a past with her husband. Like her narrator, du Maurier often wondered what had kept her husband and his former fiancée from enjoying a blissful wedded life together. We hope you enjoy this classic masterpiece of literature brought to the stage.

Don't forget, as mentioned in our ad, tickets are on sale from 10am August 15, 2009. Call 3345 3964 with enquiries. **A reminder that show times are 2pm for matinees and 8pm for evening performances. See you there!**

Silhouette Raffle Winner



Congratulations to the First Prize winner of the 'Silhouette' raffle, Eileen Halford.



Eileen won the fabulous gift basket for a great and "mysterious" night in with friends complete with the game of Cluedo, coffee plunger, chocolates and yummy nibbles.

"I was absolutely thrilled when Kay told me I'd won the raffle. Unfortunately I haven't been too well this year and have missed the shows. However, I always give her \$5 to buy some tickets as I know the

money is going to a good cause.

The prize was lovely and I especially enjoyed Pam's shortbread".



Some News from the Committee

The Management Committee met on June 9 and July 14, and some of the outcomes from the meetings included:

- The Committee made the decision that after the box office opens for each of the shows, a roster of volunteers would be created to ensure there is full coverage of the box office with someone always looking after the bookings. There are six volunteers currently who work the roster during the booking period to ensure the box office is always "manned". Thank you for your support
- The Committee passed changes to the Subscribers package for the theatre. Please see the next page for more information.
- The new seating in the Green Room has been completed, and the red and black cubes sold on Ebay.



'Have your say we're listening!'

Please don't forget we have extended the invitation before to have your say in the newsletter! If there is anything you'd like to see featured in **BACKSTAGE**, comments you'd like to make, let us know! Also, if you have any 'talents' in any area, that would be fabulous for us to know about, such as a builder who can lend a hand with set building, we'd love to hear from you! Just call us at the theatre on 3345 3964 or maybe drop an email to Fiona Tainton, our Marketing Manager, on.....fiona@stg.org.au

A new Subscribers Package

The Management Committee decided at the July meeting that changes would be made to Subscriptions for the 2010 season.

The price of a subscription has remained the same this year whilst ticket prices for all other shows have increased. This is something the management committee has had to take into consideration. Our subscribers are of vital importance to the theatre, and the committee wanted to ensure that both their needs and the theatre's were being met sufficiently.

As such, Subscriptions will be changed for the 2010 season, and will include one class of subscriber:

The package will be \$95 a year **(a saving of up to 20%)**

- Tickets to 5 out of 6 shows
- A choice of seats
- A program for each show
- Newsletters

A ticket to the 6th show can also be purchased, and if it's bought at the same time as the subscription, there will be a discount on the ticket price.

Additionally, a drinks package can also be purchased for each show. The details of this are still being finalised by the committee.

Keep an eye out for details of the launch of the 2010 season later in the year! The night will include more details about subscriptions and will showcase all the shows for next year.

'SPOTLIGHT WAS ON..'



**Courtney
Kiernan**



We caught up with Courtney at interval during one of the shows of "Silhouette"

Where did you grow up? "In Rockhampton. I went to North Rocky High, and Uni at CQ Uni in Rocky. I moved to Brisbane about six years ago".

How did you start in theatre? "I guess it was from starting dancing lessons at age three."

How long have you been a member of STG?

"I first came to STG working on the stage crew with Michael Devon (Vicky's brother) on *Call Me Madam* about twelve months ago. I really enjoyed that, and told David Gemmell I was interested in doing some stage managing work. Since then, I've been SM for *Aladdin*, *One Act Plays*, *The One Day of the Year*, *Best Little Whorehouse in Texas* and *Silhouette*."

What prompted you to get involved in *Silhouette*?

"I really enjoy organising things, and seeing the performances happen from the other side of the curtain."

What was your favourite part of the show? "Seeing Martin Powell being really nasty. He was sooo mean that I actually enjoyed the part where he got shot ... ☺!"

Do you go to live theatre regularly and if so where? "Not as often as I'd like to. When I get a chance, I really enjoy seeing shows at QPAC."

How are you involved in the theatre? "I like doing set construction. I guess it's my engineering side. I want to learn about lighting next."

Of the wide variety of theatre that we have available here at Sunnybank, what sort of shows would be your favourite? And Why? "I love being involved in musicals, because I get to sing and dance offstage.... ☺!"

Apart from theatre, what other interests do you have?

"My main love is intensive retail therapy!"



**STG invites
members and their
families to the**

TRIVIA NIGHT!



*Great prizes up
for grabs!*

Date: Friday, August 14

Time: 7pm

Place: STG Theatre

RSVP: By August 8 to Fiona Tainton at fiona@stg.org.au, or on 3255 5800

Light snacks provided

**Members,
here's a
reminder,
let's not
forget!**

**Everyone
received this
invitation in
your emails!
Have you
called to
accept the
invitation?
It'll be a
fabulous
night and a
chance for
us to all
get together
and have a
hoot! A lot
of fun and
a great
chance to
socialise!**



Theatre Craft

brings you some material that we hope you find useful



In our last issue we brought you an interesting read taken from theatre material. The extract was from **"The Audition Book"** written by Ed Hooks in which several aspects of Auditioning for stage are covered. It was:

"What the Director is looking for....."

Now we bring you the other part of the article "Helpful Hints".....Here are some suggestions for auditions for the stage, some things to try and a few to avoid:

- Use the entire stage. If you have a reason to move, do so. Don't stay rooted to the spot. It's visually interesting to see actors turn their backs and cross to the upstage wall. Just be sure the move is motivated. I'm not encouraging nervous pacing. Try sitting on the apron of the stage. Sit down and lean against a wall. Remember that words are just part of what is going into the director's brain; what they're seeing is vitally important. Try to be visually interesting.
- Hang your hat on relationship and conflict. Conflict is the heart of drama, remember. And comedy, too. If in doubt about the relationship between your character and the one you are playing with in a scene, choose love. Actors are warriors of the heart. Act from the heart, not the head.
- Get the words off the script. It drives me crazy to watch an actor following along in his script while the S.M. or actor reads the other characters. **Listen** to what is being said to you. **React**. Then look in the script for the next line.
- Learn how to deal with physicality in auditions. Kissing scenes and fighting scenes lead actors right down the road to ruin. What you have to learn how to do is "mark" through extreme action. If a scene calls for a tender kiss, try a tender touch on the cheek instead. If it calls for a roundhouse right, try a gentle shove and allow the S.M. to recoil on their own. I have watched actors practically destroy S.M.'s, scratching and clawing and slugging. The general rule is don't get entangled in any way at an audition. You can't deal with the stage manager, your lines, a script, and a fist fight all at the same time.
- Keep the script in your hand and refer to it from time to time, even if you have received a script in advance and have memorized the scene. If the director sees you without the script, he or she might think this is as good as you get, that this is a final performance.

There is strength in keeping a physical distance between the S.M. and yourself. For some reason, actors just love to close in dramatically, to get right up in their scene partner's face. They will invariably do it in a fit of anger, as they rush threateningly toward their partner. Then you can see it flash through their brain that they somehow have to get out of the S.M.'s face so they can continue the scene. Try looking at it this way: rushing up in your partner's face is equivalent to an exclamation point, so use it sparingly. Anyway, it creates a far stronger visual image and increases tension to play from the side of the stage opposite your partner.

More of Ed Hooks articles, look out for **"Theatre Craft"**.

Another interesting bit of 'Sunnybank Theatre Trivia' DID YOU KNOW.....

In the late '80's we did a show called "Move Over Mrs Markham" by Ray Cooney & 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; she volunteered that amount to help fund the production. Another SVG member had a brother who was a builder who built the set for us. It consisted of a raised floor, which represented the bedroom, with an oval bed in it, a louver door, essential to the plot, and doors and windows relevant to the comings and goings of the characters. Remember it's a farce, there are always 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 themselves, furniture came from member's 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.....How far we have come!



What's
on
around
town?



What's
coming
up soon?

Apart from our upcoming productions at STG take a look at what's on elsewhere!

Brisbane Arts Theatre

"Man of La Mancha" opened 24 July Season finishes this weekend 15th August
Children's "James and the Giant Peach"
12 Sept until 3 Oct

Centenary Theatre Group

Ben Elton's "Popcorn" opens 12 Sept – 3 Oct

Savoyards

"Paris" Trojan War in Ancient Greece opens on 26 Sept — 11 Oct

St Luke Theatre Society

"Lord Arthur Savile's Crime" by Oscar Wilde opens 11 — 19 Sept

Harvest Rain Return Season

"Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat" at QPAC Playhouse 9 — 30 Aug

Ignatians Musical Theatre

"Les Miserables" Schonell UQ 18Sept-16 Oct

A timely reminder, don't forget to book your tickets for "Rebecca" right now. Also, put the audition date in your diaries for "Out of Order" on Sunday 13th Sept! Give Chris Guyler a call, 0414481506!