

Repertoire

MARCH 2016

Newsletter of Adelaide's oldest theatre group



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by Bernard Pomerance

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The Elephant Man marks mammoth start to The Rep's 2016 season



After a 2015 Broadway and West-End revival that broke box office records, Tony award-winning classic **THE ELEPHANT MAN** will open at Adelaide's Arts Theatre in April in a stunning start to The Rep's 2016 season.

The play tells the true story of Joseph Merrick, famously known as "*The Elephant Man*" for his hideous physical deformities, who rose from sideshow squalor to become the unlikely toast of 1880s London society.

Taken in by young surgeon Sir Frederick Treves, Merrick was instantly transported to a life of gentility. Introduced to the "who's who" of London society, he quickly became something of a celebrity, living the gentleman's life he'd always dreamed of.

But as the play examines: is a "normal" existence something the Elephant Man can really achieve, or even want?



Above: Steve Marvanek
(Treves) and Robert Bell
(John Merrick)

With its deliberate lack of special prosthetics or make-up, the play requires a formidable performance from its lead actor to portray Merrick simply by manipulating body and voice, a challenge taken on in The Rep's production by **Robert Bell** (2015 Adelaide Theatre Guide Best Actor).

Director **Megan Dansie** says the play is a moving look at a real life character that challenges perceptions of normality and difference.

Wonderful, moving and gloriously triumphant, **THE ELEPHANT MAN** is a poignant and powerful look at difference, disability and the cult of celebrity.



Right: Georgia
Stockham
(Mrs Kendall)

The Elephant Man
by Bernard Pomerance
The Arts Theatre, 53 Angas St, Adelaide

April 14-16 and 20-23 at 8.00pm,
matinee Saturday April 23 at 2.00pm.
Tickets: \$22 adult, \$17 conc.,
plus special discounts for groups of 10+

Book at adelaiderep.com or call 8212 5777

Directed by: Megan Dansie
Robert Bell as Joseph Merrick, **Steve Marvanek**
as Treves and **Georgia Stockham** as Mrs Kendall,
with
Tony Busch, Thorin Cupit, Philip Lineton,
Patrick Marlin, Sharon Malujlo, Nicole Rutty,
Jon Scholten and Jamie Wright.

**BOOK
ONLINE**

It's so simple

Never queue at the box office again

Go to our website at www.adelaiderep.com
(add it to favourites while you're there).

Click on the "book now" button and simply follow the steps.

Choose your preferred session and seats, pay online and print your tickets.....It really is that simple!

Bring your tickets with you, giving you extra time to catch up with friends in the foyer with a drink from the bar or coffee shop.

Note: Subscribers can't print their tickets from the onlinebooking site - but we're working on it!



A word from the Chair, March 2016

Penni Hamilton-Smith, Chairman



I can't believe another quarter has gone by so quickly, and here we are at the start of a new season of wonderful drama and comedy.

We had a fantastic season with our final show for 2015 - the melodrama *"Only An Orphan Girl"*. If you missed it, you missed a treat; full of singing, dancing, and ham acting. Director Pam O'Grady together with Rose

Vallen choreographed and taught the dance routines, Sandi McMenamin's spirited piano playing got everyone singing along and Josh Caldwell as Master of Ceremonies kept everything under control (well, almost). The rest of the young (and the not so young) cast had a barrel of laughs and so did the audience. The next melodrama will be the final show for the 2017 season, so don't miss it.

Our first show for 2016 is a marvellous production of *"The Elephant Man"*. Robert Bell, a talented and award winning young actor takes on the challenging role of Joseph Merrick. I know his performance will be outstanding.

Just as soon as you've booked your favourite seat for *"The Elephant Man"*, be sure to support our June production of *"Cat On A Hot Tin Roof"* with Russell Starke OAM as Big Daddy. You can book now for all 4 productions if you like.

Thanks to our life member Norm Caddick for everything he does for us including taking the wonderful photographs of the current production used in this newsletter and in the foyer of the theatre.

On Monday 8th February I attended the AGM of the Theatre Association of South Australia where our 2015 production of *"The Cripple of Inishmaan"* was nominated for an award for Best Drama. Congratulations to the *"Beaux Strategem"* team for winning that award.

Also in February we bade a very sad farewell to our beloved set designer and builder Vinnie Eustace. Little did any of us dream that our melodrama would be his last show. I was honoured to officiate at his funeral ceremony which was held at the ARTS where for once Vinnie held centre stage to a

full house. He will be sadly missed but never forgotten.

Congratulations to former board member and Front of House manager Michelle Hickey who gave birth to little Archer (sooo cute) on Wednesday 20th January. Archer's very proud dad, Chris Evans is an actor of note whom you will remember from his hilarious rendition of The Balloon Dance in our melodrama *"The Mystery of the Hansom Cab"*. Welcome baby Archer to our Rep. family.



Archer Joseph Robin Hickey-Evans. Born 6.55pm Wednesday 20 January weighing 3.5kg (7lbs 11oz) and measuring 48cm (18.8")

Since Michelle is now busy with Archer, Julie Quick, whom you will all recognise from her vast contribution to theatre in Adelaide, has offered to take over as FOH Coordinator. Julie is a consummate and award winning actress and a lovely person to boot. She is always a joy to work with and we thank you Julie for taking time out for us yet again.

Congratulations too to young Benjamin Maio Mackay whom you will remember as the young boy in *"Cripple of Inishmaan"*. At just 16, Benjamin produced and directed an audio drama show during the Fringe Festival, receiving a coveted Four Star rating.

For more information about what's happening at the Rep. be sure to check our website at www.adelaiderep.com and please LIKE our facebook page or call in to the office on a Monday afternoon.

If you have any information you would like included in the newsletter then do contact us. We'd love to hear from you.

We have a great network of board members and dedicated volunteers. Every person is greatly valued and their support is very much appreciated. Without all these people we would not be able to present our wonderful season for your enjoyment. New volunteers to assist in the myriad tasks required to put on a show are always welcome.

The Rep AGM will be held on Monday, March 21st at 7.00pm at the theatre and I hope to see you there.

Save the date

**The 2016 Rep AGM
will be held on Monday 21st March
2016 at 7.00pm**

in the foyer of the Arts Theatre.

For catering purposes RSVP to adelaiderep.com
or call 8212 5777

This is your opportunity to nominate and / or vote for members of the Board of the Adelaide Rep.
To be eligible to vote you must be a Member or a Subscriber.

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Subscribers receive

- invitations to Opening Night suppers in the Thomas Nave Room
- Membership of the Rep - so you can vote at the AGM
- Subscribers can book for friends at concession rate of \$17/ticket

Sort out your 2016 diary now - lock in the dates for the shows you want to attend and save money at the same time.

What's not to love?



EIGHT PLAYS & A HOSPITAL

The Elephant Man director Megan Dansie writes about her theatrical adventures in London.

In January I was lucky enough to go on a grand Shakespearean folly for a week in London. It started with my husband's rather foolish promise that I could see David Tennant next time he was on stage. When the Royal Shakespeare Company announced a London season of history plays with David Tennant as "Richard II" and Sir Antony Sher as Falstaff we booked the trip.

The RSC then announced a weekend professional development Shakespeare Lab run by the season's resident Associate Director. I applied and was lucky enough to get a spot.

We decided that sleep was for wimps, so when some tickets were released for sold out performances of "Richard II" I grabbed them. Arriving Friday lunchtime, we pushed through and saw "Richard II" that night. It was Shakespeare at his finest. Tennant is a master of the verse, and rivetting to watch. The rest of the cast was the best of British acting. I was lucky enough to have a brief chat with David Tennant and get his autograph at the stage door after the performance. I met other cast members another night.

The next day was the first of two workshop days. Thirty

actors, directors and acting students worked on getting iambic pentameter into our bodies and exploring verse and prose speaking. It was very rewarding, and I have new skills to bring to the rehearsal room. The course included a matinee of "Henry V". It was fun to see the play with the group who had just been working on some of the text. I had seen "Henry V" at the Royal Shakespeare Theatre in Stratford in September 2015, during previews. It was great to see it again in a difference theatre, and well into a long run. A piece of business that covered a slip in Stratford is now a slick, permanent part of the action.

Over the course of the week, I saw the "Winter's Tale" with Judy Dench and Kenneth Branagh, the whole cycle of history plays ("Richard II", "Henry IV Parts 1&2", "Henry V") once, and extra performances of others. A total of 3 Richards, 2 Henry V, 1 each Henry IV 1&2, and one Winter's Tale. It was fascinating to see how the plays varied from night to night, and how the actors played with the text and dealt with unexpected set problems.

We also squeezed in a visit to The London Hospital in Whitechapel, scene of "The Elephant Man". Some of the original buildings are still there, and we took a lot of photos for the cast and crew. The highlight was a visit to the hospital museum. It houses a cast of Merrick's skeleton. Out of respect, the original is no longer on display. It also has his hat and mask, the model church that he built, and the only sample of his handwriting. It was very moving to see the things he actually used. Seeing the cast of his skeleton brought home the enormity of his disabilities. He must have been in so much pain.

We packed in a lot in a week, and the whole trip was thoroughly worth it.

REP 2016 SEASON



CAT ON A HOT TIN ROOF

by Tennessee Williams

The iconic story of a southern American family in crisis

Director: Barry Hill



OSCAR AND FELIX

by Neil Simon

A New Look at The Odd Couple

Director: Brian Knott



DON'T DRESS FOR DINNER

by Marc Comoletti

A riotous comedy to finish off the year

Director: Norm Caddick





Vale Vincent (Vinnie) Eustace

Adelaide's amateur theatre community came together on Friday, 19th February at 11:00 am at the Arts Theatre, to celebrate the life of Vinnie Eustace.

Vinnie died in the Flinders Hospital on the 9th February, 10 days after his 63rd birthday, from a massive heart attack.

A civil celebrant, the Rep's chairperson Penni Hamilton-Smith conducted the ceremony. The following is an extract from of her words on the day.

'Looking at a photo of Vinnie Eustace, and you see a man full of presence and character.

I first met Vinnie when I joined the Adelaide Repertory Theatre board. Vinnie designed and built so many sets for Therry and also tried to help out The Rep. whenever he could. Only Vinnie knew everything- what was required, where it was stored and how to put it together.

For show after show, bumping out Therry on Saturday nights, and bumping in the Rep's show the next morning, often after only a few hours' sleep, there was Vinnie pulling everything together, planning, meeting, sketching, nailing, hammering, painting, sweating, soldering and cussing.

And always with a string of complaints and oaths, a cheery smile and a hug and a kiss and a "Hello Darlin".

Vinnie's strongest attachment was to the Therry Society.



The President of the Therry Society and Vinnie's dear friend Jill Bartlett said:

"Vinnie's connection with Therry goes back a very long way. While still in his cradle, Vinnie was babysat by none other than Therry's vice president, Claire Leahy; doubtless whispering in his ear 'Join Therry when you grow up – join Therry when you grow up.

I asked some of his theatre friends to use one word to describe Vinnie. It soon became obvious that one word wasn't enough to describe this larger than life man. My favourite, from Nick Spottiswoode: 'A gentleman playing the part of a larrikin'. Now there's an epitaph".

Once Vinnie had hugged and kissed you, you carried his scent of Old Spice and cigarettes with you.

Those who knew him as a friend knew you were respected, loved and appreciated.

He was a unique character and with his passing, a fascinating page of theatre history has closed.



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Printer:  Douglas Press 8268 7877