

Repertoire

NOVEMBER 2013

Newsletter of Adelaide's oldest theatre group



Vaudeville returns with The Mystery of the Hansom Cab

The origins of this musical melodrama lay with a well-known novel, published in Australia in 1886. The novel by Fergus Hume focuses on the investigation of a homicide involving a body discovered in a hansom cab. The novel was immensely popular as it was published at a time when the mystery and detective genres were gripping the world.

Fergus Hume's novel may be the basis of this stage musical parody, but a word of warning to those expecting serious murder mystery...this production is far from serious! It is only very loosely based on the original novel and is performed in the grand tradition of the melodrama.

The original tale of *The Mystery of a Hansom Cab* has been parodied almost ever since it was first published. Within a couple of years of the blockbuster novel, parodies were being performed on stage. This version was written by Barry Pree in 1961 for a stage show featuring Barry Creyton. The script has been modified over the years to add more contemporary references and a local flavour.

This melodramatic version of *The Mystery of the Hansom Cab* has not been seen in Adelaide for decades. It was a popular show in the 1960s and was first directed here by Adelaide's own Phyllis Skinner!

Phyl recalls that she came by the script quite by chance when it was brought to Adelaide by a friend who had visited Melbourne. The Adelaide premiere was directed by Phyl at Union Hall in the early 1960s, before she reprised the show at the Royalty Theatre and again at The Olde King's Music Hall in 1970, featuring none other than our own Penni Hamilton-Smith as the heroine with the villain played by Brian Wenzel.



For those unfamiliar with melodrama, there is a hero (in this case Ryan Dooley), a villain (Barry Hill) and of course, a damsel in distress (Hannah O'Grady). Audiences are encouraged to *hiss* the villain, *sigh* with the heroine and cheer the hero!

There are dramatic and colourful characters, local references, as well as a number of musical interludes by the ladies and gentlemen of the company. Director, Gary Anderson said "unlike the original tale, this version takes place amongst the leafy streets of Adelaide and includes a visit or two to the notorious Hindley St!!"

The Mystery of the Hansom Cab is sure to be a fun and entertaining night at the theatre for many. Those who grew up with melodramas, music halls and vaudevillian performers are in for a treat. There will be a chance for a sing-along with lots of old Music Hall classics. And for those with short memories, or who are perhaps too young to have known the Music Hall genre - the words will appear in the program.

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A word from the Chair



We have been very busy lately preparing for our 2014 season as well as our last production of the year, the melodrama and Music Hall tribute, *The Mystery of the Hansom Cab*.

Pam O'Grady reluctantly withdrew from directing our melodrama due to health problems, but handed over the baton to another very experienced Music Hall director and performer, Gary Anderson. Many long term supporters of the Rep will be familiar with Gary's work, and will recall he was a board member and former Chairperson.

There are a number of old faces involved in the show including a cameo appearance from the one and only Phyl Skinner, as well as a number of new faces for the Rep.

The Mystery of the Hansom Cab will be a great end of year production and is the perfect way to get together with social groups or friends. It's an interactive show and we are encouraging audiences to get involved with booing the villain and cheering the hero! Why not get a group together and re-live the golden age of Music Hall.

The Board recently held a strategic planning day and considered the artistic vision of the Rep. We hope to build audience numbers in coming years whilst continuing to provide quality productions. I'm very excited about the season we have put together for 2014 and I look forward to revealing all once the performance rights are confirmed.

In order to build on our current volunteer base, we are looking at improving the way we produce plays by having dedicated teams for wardrobe, construction etc. We will have teams of volunteers who will work together and meet regularly in order to come up with the sets, costumes etc for a play. The Rep is a volunteer organisation and we would like to streamline things so that jobs don't get left to one person all the time as a way of sharing knowledge and experience and providing mentoring opportunities for younger volunteers. So if you would like to volunteer in any capacity, please get in contact with us.

Lastly, you may have heard that the Rep was quite successful at the Curtain Call Awards in September. Our production last year of *All My Sons* won the award for best show in the amateur drama category and Helen Geoffreys won the award for best female performance in the amateur category for her portrayal of Paige in our production of *Dinner* earlier this year. Both productions were directed by the talented Dave Simms and we are immensely proud of all involved in both productions.

I hope to see you at *The Mystery of the Hansom Cab* later this month!

Penni Hamilton-Smith
Chair

Rehearsal Photos



The Mystery of the Hansom Cab

written by Barry Pree devised by Phyl Skinner
directed by Gary Anderson

21 - 30 November

Acclaimed director, actor, and professional music hall performer of years gone by, Gary Anderson has returned to the Rep to bring this ode to music hall and melodrama to life. Gary is "excited to be bringing this unique style of entertainment back for Adelaide audiences to enjoy."

Many younger theatre goers may not have had the chance to experience the music hall, vaudevillian style of theatre. "This is a show for everyone! It is a great end of year piece of light entertainment. There will be musical interludes, canny performances and most of all plenty of laughs!" Gary said.

Pam O'Grady who was to direct this production for the Rep, reluctantly withdrew due to health issues. But before doing so, Pam had assembled a talented team of performers and passed the reins of the production over to fellow music hall aficionado, Gary Anderson.

The Mystery of a Hanson Cab reunites a number of former professional music hall actors including the irrepressible Phyl Skinner in a cameo appearance, as well as Christopher Meegan, Penni Hamilton-Smith and Jude Hines.

Other members of the cast will be familiar to local audiences and includes Barry Hill, Christopher Evans, Lindy Le Cornu, Neville Phillis, Karin Marks, Joshua Coldwell, Ryan Dooley, Hannah O'Grady, Tamara Bennetts and Annie Hall.



Jude Hines and Christopher Meegan hamming it up at rehearsals.

For those who enjoyed the Rep's production of *Love Rides the Rails* in 2010, there is a special treat in store with one of the most talked about acts being reprised for *The Mystery of the Hansom Cab*.

There will be the chance for a sing along with plenty of well known songs from days gone by, such as *By the Light of the Silvery Moon*, *My Old Man Said Follow the Van*, *Champagne Charlie is My Name* and *Any Old Iron*. The words will be in the program, so make sure you buy one before the show starts!



Penni Hamilton-Smith watches over Loriel Smart as she works on costumes

Booking Information

Thursday 21 November at 8pm
Friday 22 November at 8pm
Saturday 23 November at 8pm
Wednesday 27 November at 8pm
Thursday 28 November at 8pm
Friday 29 November at 8pm
Saturday 30 November at 2pm *matinee*
Saturday 30 November at 8pm

Adults \$22 Concession \$17
Generous discounts apply for Groups 10+
contact us for details

Book online at www.adelaiderep.com
(small booking fee applies)

Phone 8212 5777



Season 2014

We look forward to bringing you a fantastic Season featuring some of the best drama and comedy around!

We will start the year with the delightfully gothic *Dracula* which will entertain and enthral audiences based on Bram Stoker's classic text. The play has been cast and production on this mammoth play has already begun.

The other shows in our 2014 Season will include the Adelaide premiere of a Broadway sensation which has drama by the bucket-loads. There will be a drama by an esteemed playwright, and a farcical comedy to finish the year.

Due to reasons beyond our control, we are unable to officially launch the season until January 2014. You will receive information in the new year about an official season launch event which will include lots of exciting news and opportunities!

Notice of AGM

The AGM will be held in March 2014 with several board positions becoming vacant.

The Adelaide Repertory Theatre will provide information to all members and subscribers in writing early in the new year, which will confirm the date and time of the AGM.

All subscribers and financial members are eligible to vote at the AGM and are also encouraged to nominate.

If you're interested in nominating for the Board or becoming a member, please contact our Secretary, Michelle Hickey on 0402 878 495 or by email to adelaiderep@gmail.com

Vale

Michael Noblet

Former President and Life Member



Michael gave decades to the theatre and was a renowned actor and director. He was made a Life Member of the Rep for his contributions over many years.

President of the Adelaide Repertory Theatre from 1991 – 93, Michael followed in the footsteps of his father Donald Noblet who was President from 1968-74.

Michael was involved in dozens of productions, too numerous to mention them all. He was a familiar face to audiences at the Arts Theatre from the mid 1960s until the early 1990s.

Unfortunately Michael became ill some years ago and was forced to retire as a District Court Judge, as well as giving up his passion of theatre.

Michael passed away in early October and our thoughts are with the Noblet family at this difficult time.

A special 25th anniversary Australian production of *Les Misérables* has been announced for 2014 following the success of the Hollywood film. Legendary West End producer and hit-maker Cameron Mackintosh is behind the revival and word is that the production will tour Australia. No word yet as to whether Adelaide will be graced with a season. *Les Mis* will open at Her Majesty's Theatre in Melbourne in July 2014.



Matt Smith (known to many as the most recent *Dr Who*) has been cast in the world premiere of *American Psycho*. The musical thriller will be based on the popular novel and will certainly give the off-West End crowd something to talk about during the chilly winter in London.

A number of well known faces will appear in the Olivier Award-winning play *Mojo* in the West End this month. Rupert Grint (Ron Weasley from *Harry Potter*) makes his stage debut alongside Brendan Coyle (*Downton Abbey*) and Colin Morgan (*Merlin*) to name just a few. *Mojo* is set in Soho and charts the story of aspiring rock 'n' roll star Johnny Silver whose manager and Atlantic Club owner Ezra is determined to keep him from the clutches of local gangster Sam Ross. Rickson's original production of *Mojo* premiered at the Royal Court in 1995, playing to critical acclaim and taking home the Olivier Award for Best Comedy.

A new play adapted from the works of P.G. Wodehouse, *Jeeves & Wooster* in *Perfect Nonsense* is set to premiere in London with moves afoot to take the show to the West End next year. Matthew Macfadyen and Stephen Mangan had been cast as P.G. Wodehouse's day-saving valet and aristocratic nincompoop, it felt as if the angels had arranged a slice of theatrical perfection. The characters were immortalised by Stephen Fry and Hugh Laurie in a television series which screened in the early 1990s.

Tony Robinson (*Blackadder*) has been cast as The Narrator in the Royal Opera House production of *The Wind In the Willows*, directed & choreographed by Will Tuckett. The show opens at the West End's Duchess Theatre in December and is said to be the first time a Royal Opera House production has transferred to the West End.

The Adelaide Repertory Theatre Inc.

Patron: His Excellency Rear Admiral Kevin Scarce AC CSC RANR, Governor of South Australia
 Vice patron: The Right Honourable The Lord Mayor of Adelaide, Stephen Yarwood

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