

Repertoire

SEPTEMBER 2013

Newsletter of Adelaide's oldest theatre group



Vanity! Vanity! Vanity! in Vanity Fair

Vanity Fair is based on William Makepeace Thackeray's classic novel on the morality and hypocrisy of wealthy British society during the Regency period. The demands of class, the trials and tribulations of wealth, and the desire for social prestige are set against the harsh backdrop of the Napoleonic wars. Britain is nearly at the height of its powers as the Empire is expanding and the East India Company is providing new opportunities for many. In Regency London, as in many other eras, young women are preoccupied with thoughts of marriage. A husband is crucial, and a rich one preferred!

With Napoleon never far from anyone's mind, it was also a time of military pomp and ceremony. Wellington would become a national hero, but the uniforms of the military were also great for posing and preening in front of impressionable young women! The Regency was a period of extravagance in architecture, clothing and food. Men were peacocks in silks while fashionable Dandies were squeezing themselves into a range of "corsets and stays" to improve their figure before the ladies. Vanity, vanity; thy name is not solely woman.

In this adaptation of "a novel without a hero", Miss Becky Sharp (played by Belinda Knott) is almost an "anti-heroine", a precursor of the fiercely independent Scarlett O'Hara in *Gone With The Wind*. At Miss Pinkerton's Academy for Young Ladies she has befriended the completely amiable Miss Amelia Sedley (Abi Devries) who takes Miss Becky home with her where opportunities for scheming and match-making begin. Miss Amelia's unmarried brother, Joseph Sedley (played by Keith Mason) is one of those who are becoming wealthy, working for the East India Company!

Belinda Knott has said that her character Becky is "a wicked, deceitful creature who is very much the anti-heroine in *Vanity Fair*... and yet there is something so endearing about her, her ability to laugh at herself and how even when she hits rock bottom she just picks herself back up to start again, as another re-invention of herself. She is very much so an unsavoury character but there is something about this little social climbing adventuress that is not only captivating but highly seductive."

Thackeray's great tome, has been adapted for television and film, usually with a focus upon the broad sweep of the novel.



Abi Devries as Amelia Sedley and Mason Willis as Captain George Osborne

Declan Donnelly's version for his British Company, "Cheek by Jowl", puts more focus on Thackeray's constant criticism and use of irony and frequent sarcasm. Cheek by Jowl was established in the early 1980s by Donnelly and Nick Ormerod with an aim to re-examine classical texts, avoiding directorial and design concepts, and to focus on the actor's art. So, in this production, 7 very clever actors play 32 different characters!

The Mystery of the Hansom Cab

21 - 30 November
at the Arts Theatre

The origins of this title lay with the well-known mystery, published in Australia in 1886. The novel was by an Englishman, Fergus Hume who had made Melbourne his home.

The novel focuses on the investigation of a homicide involving a body discovered in a hansom cab. It was immensely popular as the novel was published at a time when the mystery and detective genres were gripping the world. In Australia it was one of the first home-grown best-sellers and it went on to sell over 500 000 copies worldwide.

But it was not long before the first parody of this great tale appeared. *The Mystery of a Wheelbarrow* was published in 1888 and soon appeared on stage. From then on there have been many permutations of the tale – some serious, some far from serious! It is a classic tale which has endeared audiences over the years and there have been many depictions in film, television serials and mini-series, most recently with the ABC production in 2012 starring John Waters.

The Rep's production should not to be confused with the latest popular rendition. This adaptation by Barry Creyton and devised by Phyl Skinner, is only very loosely based on the original. Pam O'Grady will direct *The Mystery of a Hansom Cab* for The Rep in the grand tradition of the melodrama. Pam is a familiar face to audiences and last directed *Love Rides the Rails* for the Rep in 2010 – which people are still talking about!

The cast will include a who's who of Adelaide theatre! Barry Hill is relishing the opportunity to play the dastardly villain, and will be joined onstage by Christopher Meegan, David Sinclair, Chris Evans, Penni Hamilton-Smith, Lindy Le Cornu, Shelly Hampton and some new faces. Gary Anderson will play the irrepressible Master of Ceremonies.

There will be a hero, a villain and of course, a damsel in distress! Witness the dastardly deeds undertaken in the charming streets of Adelaide. There will be musical interludes, canny performances and most of all plenty of laughs!

So join us for some end of year, light entertainment. Get a group together and be prepared to have some fun.

And remember : hiss the villain, sigh with the heroine and cheer the hero!

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

Meet our newest Board Members

Terry Smith

Terry has a business background and is married with three adult sons. He started his career in Accounting, moved to the family business in hospitality, when he sold this he established a consulting & accounting business. Having served on business & sporting committees for almost four decades and now having a little more time, he decided to contribute by joining the board and is looking forward to being involved with the Rep. Given Terry's accounting background, he was elected unopposed to the position of Treasurer for the Rep!



Therese Hornby

Therese is an Adelaide actor that has been on the theatre scene since 2000. Past performances have included *Are you being Served?* and *All my Sons* with the Rep and *The Wyrld Sisters* with Unseen Theatre Company. Therese has also been cast in some wonderful roles both with Foreign and Australian film, television and voice-over. Therese loves being a character actor and says "I have been in stocks, stalked an AFL football player, murdered and done *that* famous table scene from *WHEN HARRY MET SALLY* – just to name a few." Therese is honoured to be a Board Member for the Rep and is always happy to help wherever needed. Therese is married with 2 teenage children and lives her life like a typical episode of *MODERN FAMILY*.



Rhonda Somerford

Rhonda initially became involved in theatre through friends at Northern Light Theatre Company. Since then, she has explored backstage roles and has been Assistant Production Manager for the Rep before taking the role on herself in 2012. Since then she has been an active volunteer in many areas of the theatre environment including recruiting crew for a number of productions as well as managing schedules and budgets. Rhonda joined the Board in 2013 and is also a member of the production committee which oversees the Rep's productions. Her other interests include music, photography, architecture, history, socialising and meeting people.



Vanity Fair

by William Makepeace Thackeray
adapted by Declan Donnelly
directed by Brian Knott

5 - 14 September

The Rep's production of *Vanity Fair* will provide new audiences with an introduction to the literary classic, with perhaps a more humorous twist for those already familiar with the story.

Director Brian Knott said "I was quite taken by the idea when I heard of the Cheek by Jowl version; they have a reputation for shaking things up and taking a very physical approach with often a sharp sense of humour. Serious works often contains a sense of fun - remember The Rep's production of *The 39 Steps* - which was hilarious but stuck incredibly closely to the dialogue of the serious film version(s) of the story".

As a director, Brian has found that rehearsals have required a great deal of flexibility. "At the beginning, I said to the actors that we were going to have to play with things as we went" said Brian, "because directions in the script are so vague. We have had great fun!"

Once the action begins, the roller coaster never stops, so Connelly directs that props for *Vanity Fair* need to be limited, and everything relies upon the actors! (Although our costume, sound, and lighting crews, provide great assistance!)

This production introduces a number of young actors to the Rep, while seeing the return of a few older hands, including Lindy Le Cornu. Lindy says "I am loving the extra challenge of playing 5 characters in the one production. It is really interesting at rehearsals as we explore making each identity distinguishable from the others through physicality, vocal differences and minimal costume changes."

The cast features Abi Devries, Belinda Knott, Mason Willis, Alex King, James Whitrow, Lindy Le Cornu and Keith Manson.

Alex King as Mr Crawley, Belinda Knott as Becky, Abi Devries as Amelia and Mason Willis as George



Belinda Knott as Miss Becky Sharp

Booking Information

Adults \$22, Concession \$17
Special rates for group bookings apply
(contact us for more information)

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

Phone 8212 5777

Email enquiries@adelaiderep.com

PERFORMANCES

Thursday 5 September at 8pm
Friday 6 September at 8pm
Saturday 7 September at 8pm
Wednesday 11 September at 8pm
Thursday 12 September at 8pm
Friday 13 September at 8pm
Saturday 14 September at 2pm
matinee performance
Saturday 14 September at 8pm





Dracula

The Rep is excited to announce the first play for 2014 will be *Dracula*!

Bram Stoker's classic tale of vampires and Transylvania will come to life under the talented direction of Kerrin White. Liz Lochhead has adapted *Dracula* for the stage and Kerrin said "this version of *Dracula* avoids the camp and spoofy treatments that this vampire tale has suffered over the years."

It is an exciting play and will bring together a large cast of experienced actors. Kerrin said that "Liz Lochhead's play restores the gothic horror and barely suppressed sexuality of Bram Stoker's original novel and adds some striking modern touches."

Horror, sex and violence with a liberal dose of insanity for good measure.

Did you know?

Director of *Vanity Fair*, Brian Knott, searched high and low for the right Becky. He found her in Belinda Knott and was astounded by the fact they shared the same surname!

Brian assures us they are no relation, but we hear there has been some checking of the family tree!!

Happy 50th to the Arts Theatre!

The Arts Theatre is celebrating its half centenary this year.

The Rep fundraised for many years to purchase the land and build the theatre. The Arts Theatre was officially opened on 2 February 1963 by the Governor, Sir Edric Bastyan. It's been our home ever since. You may be interested to know that the word ARTS in the Arts Theatre name is actually an acronym of Adelaide Repertory Theatre.

A word from the Chair



I am very pleased to report that the Rep has been nominated for 5 awards at the 2013 Curtain Call Awards!! The Curtain Call awards are supported by the Adelaide Theatre Guide and their reviewers nominate, select and vote on the Awards.

Our nominations are:

- All My Sons* (Best Show: Drama)
- Helen Geoffreys, *Dinner* (Best Female Performance)
- Julie Quick, *All My Sons* (Best Female Performance)
- Brian Knott, *All My Sons* (Best Male Performance)
- Robert Webb, Toby Peart & Hugh Hunkin, Production Design, *All My Sons* (Best Technical)

We are thrilled that our production of *All My Sons* has been recognised with so many nominations, as well as Helen Geoffrey's performance as the hostess from hell in *Dinner*. It is great recognition of the Rep's work, both on and off stage. The Awards night is on Saturday 14 September, which is coincidentally the last night of our next show, *Vanity Fair*.

Vanity Fair is set to be a hoot! The rehearsals are going well, and the actors are working hard on their many characters! It's not easy playing 2 characters in a show, so I dread to think what it would be like playing 6 or 7!!

It will be a great play to see with friends. So why not bring a group along? Contact us for more information about our generous group booking rates.

See you there!

Penni Hamilton-Smith
Chair



Baz Luhrmann has announced that his popular *Strictly Ballroom* will tango, sashay and bogo pogo its way onto the Sydney stage next March. The original creative team behind the classic 1992 film are involved, including director and co-writer Baz Luhrmann, set and costume designer Catherine Martin and choreographer John "Cha Cha" O'Connell

The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time won a swag of Oliviers, including best new play and best director. The play is based on Mark Haddon's best-selling novel about a teenager with autism. The production won a record 7 Oliver Awards this year and has been extended until late 2014 at the Apollo Theatre in London's West End.

Matilda the Musical is rumoured to open in Melbourne in 2015. Winner of a number of Olivier Awards including Best Musical, *Matilda The Musical* is based on the beloved novel by best-selling author Roald Dahl. Details are still embargoed - but watch this space for more news!

The Trip to Bountiful, starring Tony winner Cicely Tyson, Cuba Gooding Jr and Vanessa Williams has been extended on Broadway until October. Directed by Michael Wilson, the Broadway revival of Horton Foote's classic drama was originally scheduled to play until September.

There were a number of SA winners at the Helpmann Awards in Sydney recently. The State Theatre Company's Alison Bell won the best actress in a play award for *Hedda Gabler*, Robyn Archer won best Cabaret Performer, and Windmill Theatre won best presentation for children with *School Dance* as well as Best Supporting Actress (Amber McMahon).

Another sign that the Rep is at the cutting edge of theatre - a professional production of *The 39 Steps* is touring across the eastern seaboard this year, including visiting many regional and remote theatre venues.

Also at the Olivier's...there were no surprises when Helen Mirren won Best Actress for her role as Queen Elizabeth II in *The Audience* at Gielgud Theatre.

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

Home venue: ARTS Theatre, 53 Angas Street, Adelaide 5000
Phone: 8212 5777 Website: www.adalaiderep.com
Email: adalaiderep@e-access.com.au

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