

Repertoire

APRIL 2013

Newsletter of Adelaide's oldest theatre group



The DINNER Party from Hell

The knives are out at this dinner party from hell!

Moira Buffini taps into the subconscious and draws out all the negative and tortuous thoughts that lurk beneath the surface in this play set in an isolated country house. It's a foggy night, and there's a chill in the air.

There are hidden agendas, an uninvited guest, a mysterious waiter who says nothing but sees everything and of course the most unappetising menu you could think of! As each course is served, caustic comments fly like poisonous darts across the dinner table leaving a trail of emotional carnage.

Paige, a self-confessed 'rich bitch' and hostess extraordinaire has invited an erotic artist, a scientist and a newsreader sexpot to dinner under the guise of celebrating her husband's bestseller.

Playing the hostess Paige, is the superb actress, Helen Geoffreys, who returns to The Rep after her brilliant performance in *The Beauty Queen of Lenane*. She is joined by Peter Davies, who played her lover in *Beauty Queen*, and appeared in the lead role of *A Skull in Connemara*, this time playing Paige's husband, Lars. Director, Dave Simms is delighted to be working again with Helen. The last time they worked together was in *The Italians*.

The action of the play takes place at a dinner party which delivers some unexpected shocks. It's not that the marital warfare presented is necessarily new, nor is the unexpected inclusion of a stranger to the table, but the food served by the inscrutable hired waiter (played by Geoff Dawes) is a challenge to politeness itself, and is as utterly bizarre as it is revolting. So waiters, all of you who have ever waited or been waited upon, come along and be celebrated.

Paige, is not simply the hostess from hell, but something much more complex. She mixes upper-class snobbery with a revenge agenda that makes Lady Macbeth look like an amateur. Her lines simply drip with acid wit but in tones of such perfect civility that Lady Bracknell is brought irresistibly to mind.

Lars, has just published a new book, one that purports to have the philosophical answer to life's problems, even that of death, all worked out. He has invited his mistress Wynne (played by Nicole Ruddy, fresh from her successful Fringe production of *Agnes of God*).



Helen Geoffreys and Geoff Dawes in a scene from *Dinner*

Clearly Lars is about to celebrate the end of his marriage, further signalled by the presence of his friend Hal (played by Steve Marzanec, last seen at The Rep as Don in *Don's Party*) and his new trophy wife, the newsreader Sian (played by Olivia Eblen). Their small-fire sniping, however, that eventually blows up into full-scale battle, signals that trading in the old partner for a newer and younger one is not necessarily going to be a success.

The unexpected interruption of working-class Mike who has crashed his van in the foggy lane outside (played by Alan Fitzpatrick following his debut for The Rep in *Star Quality*) into this seething circle of marital discord serves to remind them, and us, of just what an unattractive bunch they are.

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Neville's Island: A comedy in thick fog

Neville's Island is seriously funny play and was nominated for the 1992 *Olivier Award* for Best Comedy.

This hilarious story of four out-of-condition, middle-aged, middle-managers who set off on a corporate team building exercise and succeed in being the first people ever to get shipwrecked on an island in the Lakes District will make you shake your head in wonder.

Bound in fog, menaced by wildlife and cut off from the world, this perfunctory middle-class activity turns into a carnival of recriminations, French cricket and sausages.

What should have been a bonding process for Gordon, Angus, Roy and Neville turns into a muddy, bloody fight for survival. Because when night settles in, strange things happen out in the wilds. What takes place on Neville's Island during this foggy weekend none of this particular middle-management team will ever forget...

The director, Michael Eustice has assembled a cast which includes four of Adelaide's best community theatre actors.

Paul Davies as Neville uses his questionable cryptic crossword skills to set up this 'lord of the flies' misadventure. Paul was last seen in Mixed Salad's *Feelgood* and for the Therry Society as the "man of the moment" in the play of the same name.

Nigel Tripodi, an Adelaide Theatre Guide Best Actor award winner in 2011 and Adelaide Critics Circle nominee for his performance in the Theatre Guild's production of *A View from a Bridge* will play the infuriatingly arrogant Gordon.

Playing the hysterically obsessive Angus is Thorin Cupit. Thorin is a graduate of Flinders University Drama Department and well known to many Adelaide theatregoers. He returns to The Rep following his much loved performance in *Don's Party* in 2012.

Peter Smith last seen at The Rep playing the Vicar of Worcester in our 2010 production of *The Herbal Bed* will be playing the disconcertingly fundamentalist character of Roy who is at his happiest up a tree in his underpants getting closer to God.

Director, Michael Eustice last worked with The Rep in the late 80's, early 90's performing in productions of *Charley's Aunt*, *Loot* and the highly intellectual, *No Sex Please We're British*. Michael graduated with an MA in Theatre Studies from the University of London and directed the Theatre Guild's sell out production of *Macbeth* in 2011.

Michael believes that if you don't laugh at Neville's Island then you are probably dead.

Neville's Island opens at the ARTS Theatre on Thursday 20 June 2013.



Behind the Scenes



The cast of *Dinner* during Rehearsals in the Thomas Nave Room at the ARTS Theatre.

Dinner

by Moira Buffini

directed by Dave Simms



A word from the Chair



Dinner premiered at the Royal National Theatre's Loft space in November 2002 and premiered in Australia in 2004 at the Melbourne Theatre Company. The West End production was nominated for the *Olivier Award* for Best Comedy.

Moira Buffini is an award winning British playwright and has an extensive catalogue of works, including as a screen-writer and adaptor. She is a modern dramatist who has been promoting new works for large scale theatres.

Much of the enjoyment of *Dinner* comes from watching familiar social rituals, turn into tactics that subvert not only the expected personal disclosures, but the larger pattern of the play's literary and dramatic precursors.

And on a lighter note...

Five live lobsters are required for each performance so many have been auditioned and rejected. The winning five, chosen for their best acting of course, will be played by Sebastian Redshell, Beady-eyed McClaw, Crusty Asian, Thermidor L. Lobster and Sally.

The Theatre Association of South Australia (TASA) recently awarded The Rep's 2012 production *All My Sons* the Best Drama of the Year. We are delighted with this acknowledgment and congratulate director, Dave Simms and his amazingly talented cast and crew.

With this success, we here at The Rep are very excited about the year ahead of us. The variety and mix of locally made theatre with plays sourced from around the world, has given us an amazing array of interesting material and talent to showcase.

The development of our program and our continuing ventures into producing has significantly justified the need to take calculated risks in order to enhance our position in the theatrical marketplace.

We welcome our members and subscribers back to the theatre for our 2013 Season with a delightfully "bitchy" play, *Dinner*.

This play, launches a season of comedy. Forget your worries about the GFC, the upcoming elections and the civil wars in foreign countries. This year, come along to every show at the Rep and have a good laugh. Come and laugh with us not at us.

We think you will find this play an interesting addition to the other three comedies in our 2013 season, and one with a real twist. It's a funny play. It's a great "bitchy" comedy.

If you were one of the intelligent audience members who came to see our award winning production *All My Sons* you must return to see this comedy which hasn't been seen in Australia since its Melbourne Theatre Company production.

Just imagine, how wonderful it would be to have a dinner party and to invite everyone you care about and to tell them what you really think of them!

Penni Hamilton-Smith

Booking Information

Adults \$22, Concession \$17
Special rates for group bookings apply.

Book online
www.trybooking.com/43640
(small booking fee applies)

Phone 8212 5777
or

Email: adelaiderep@e-access.com.au

Performances

Thursday 18 April at 8pm
Friday 19 April at 8pm
Saturday 20 April at 8pm
Wednesday 24 April at 8pm
Thursday 25 April at 8pm
Friday 26 April at 8pm
Saturday 27 April at 2pm
Matinee performance
Saturday 27 April at 8pm





Welcome to our new Board Members

The Annual General Meeting (AGM) was held on Monday 25 March at the ARTS Theatre. There were 6 continuing members and 6 vacancies to be filled.

An election was required and the following members were elected to the Board:

- Michael Eustice
- Penni Hamilton-Smith
- Therese Hornby
- Terry Smith
- Rhonda Somerford
- Ray Trowbridge

They join continuing board members Jude Brennan, Stephen Dean, Brian Knott, Michelle Hickey, and Allison Scharber. Board members are elected for a period of 2 years. Office bearer positions will be determined at the first Board meeting.

Seeking Volunteers

We are currently taking expressions of interest from anyone who is interested in becoming a front of house manager. Michelle Hickey has been undertaking these duties for a number of years now, ably assisted by Judith Manning who has now retired from the position.

Front of house managers are responsible for organising volunteer rosters, supplies for tea and coffee, as well as ensuring that audiences are seated in time for the beginning of performances. Front of house managers are required to stay in the foyer until the end of the performances and should be good at problem solving and working under pressure. Customer service skills are essential. Duties may be shared across performances and training will be provided.

If you are interested or would like more information, please have a chat to Michelle if you see her in the foyer during the season of Dinner. Or, call her on 0402878 495.

Vale

This year, Repertoire introduces a new column to acknowledge and farewell friends of The Rep.

If you would like to contribute to this column, please email adelaiderep@gmail.com with Vale in the subject line.

Phyllis Page

Lindy Le Cornu writes "The curtain has come down on my theatrical mentor. The woman who taught me so much, who showed many of us just how to grip an audience and hold their attention, to come back strong after faltering, to project to the very back of the theatre and to enunciate. You were my theatrical anchor! Vale Phyllis Page who we knew and loved as Phyl Burford."

Nancy Thorpe

Nancy Thorpe passed away on Saturday 5th January, aged 94. Nancy was a keen supporter of The Rep for over 60 years. Her involvement included acting in over 30 plays, as well as backstage as assistant stage manager and in latter years as an avid audience member. Nancy continued her involvement until the very end, attending her last Rep performance in September.

Bernie Bassett

Bernie Bassett passed away on Friday 4 January. Bernie was an important part of the Rep in the 1980s, as a board member and as a production manager and stage manager for many shows. She will be missed by many who worked with her.

Appearing on Broadway for the first time in 30 years, Tony and Grammy Award-winning superstar Bette Midler will play the legendary Hollywood agent Sue Mengers in the new, one-character play, *I'll Eat You Last*. The season opens on 24 April.

Meanwhile in the West End, the Society of London Theatre has announced a better year than expected for 2012. Shows such as *Top Hat*, *Sweeney Todd* and *The Bodyguard* helped boost London's theatre box office in 2012. Ticket sales rose slightly last year despite competition from the Olympics. More good news from the Society of London Theatre was that audiences for plays grew 9% for the year, with audiences for musicals falling 3%.



While previous attempts at staging *Breakfast at Tiffany's* have hit snags, the producers of the latest version are hoping for a better reaction from critics when the play premieres on Broadway. The Tony Award winning playwright, Richard Greenberg, has adapted Truman Capote's classic novella and reports are that it is the most accurate yet. their journey.

The 37th *Olivier Awards* will take place on the 28th of April at Covent Garden's stunning Royal Opera House. Theatre fans in Britain will be able to watch the highlights of the evening on ITV or follow the action live on BBC Radio 2.

The *Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-time*, based on Mark Haddon's popular novel, is receiving rave reviews in the West End since opening in March. The National Theatre production, has been extended until January 2014 – a vote of confidence in this era of short-runs!

Also announced is the transfer of *Private Lives* to the West End after a sell-out run at Chichester. Noel Coward's comedy stars Toby Stephens and Anna Chancellor as divorcees who rekindle old passions while honeymooning with their new spouses. It runs at the Gielgud Theatre from 22 June until 21 September.

Don't forget to let us know if you see anything interesting when you're overseas next!

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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