



**PRESIDENT
JAN FARR**

THE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE 2011

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www.stirlingplayers.sct.org.au

Email correspondence to stirlingplayerssecretary@gmail.com

Or post to PO Box 455 STIRLING 5152

As we draw to the end of The Stirling Players 39th year I would like to say a big thank you to everyone who helped out with our 2 productions for the year. Next year we will be celebrating our 40th Anniversary and the committee have been thinking of ways to mark this achievement. We are planning a celebratory lunch – see further on in the newsletter for information if you are interested in being involved.

We have already started working on preparations for our first production next year – Jeffery Hatcher's "The Compleat Female Stage Beauty". Megan Dansie and the panel have cast 16 great actors who are already learning lines and Viki Burrett and a team of helpers are planning the costumes.

The AGM will be held on the 5th February and the agenda is at the end of the newsletter. Please try to come along. As you will see on the agenda there will be some discussion regarding membership and members views are welcome. Please consider nominating to be on the committee – there is plenty of work for all different talents and lots of fun to be had too. This is the end of my stint as president and it has been a very valuable experience for me and an honour to be involved with such a friendly, creative and productive group of people.

In the last newsletter we reported that Tom Dyster had died. We recently heard that his wife Lois has also passed on. Lois also worked very hard for the Players and her kindness, intelligence and wit are remembered. Our thoughts are with Jenny and the rest of the family.

That just leaves me to wish you all a Merry Christmas

Jan Farr



A double celebration!

Our March 2012 production, *Compleat Female Stage Beauty*, by American playwright, Jeffrey Hatcher, is a doubly exciting one for us. It will be our 40th Anniversary production AND an Australian premiere, to be directed by Megan Dansie (left). Yes, we are the first theatre company, amateur or professional, to gain the rights to produce it Down Here!

It's an uproarious, bawdy, and poignant costume drama set during the Restoration period at the time when women first began acting on the English stage, taking the roles that men had traditionally played. Director Megan Dansie is passionate about the period and has great vision for the production. Auditions were held in August to secure a great cast and our creative crew is already hard at work on costumes, set, lighting and music.

Jeffrey Hatcher, who also wrote the screenplay for the 2004 film adaptation, *Stage Beauty*, was inspired to write the play after reading in Samuel Pepy's diary the story of Edward Kynaston, the toast of 17th Century London as the most talented actor of female roles, best known for playing Shakespeare's tragic heroine, Desdemona. When an unknown actress, Margaret Hughes plays the role one night in an illegal theatre, King Charles II, instead of stopping the show,

changes the law to let women act. Overnight, Kynaston's world is turned upside down. He loses his livelihood, his lover and his sense of self. As his former dresser, Maria, and even the king's mistress, Nell Gwynn, become stars, he is reduced to singing bawdy songs in drag in music halls.....until fate and his desire for revenge give him the chance to take the stage again!

Compleat Female Stage Beauty will have its gala opening on 16th March, 2012, and run Fridays and Saturdays at 8pm and Sundays at 4pm until 31st March. Ticket sales from 6th February online at www.stirlingplayers.sct.org.au or at Matilda Bookshop, 8 Mt Barker Rd, Stirling 83393931. See the website for more information.

Santa Claus Is Coming!

Yes, the traditionally-built guy in the red suit will appear again this Christmas, direct from the North Pole, but it'll be at a top-secret location.

We can't say where because it's someone's private address, but you can find out by ringing **Viki and/or Kevin on 8388 1852**. We'd like to tell Santa how many will be there so that he can make sure to have enough goodies on the sleigh. So there are 2 reasons to make the phone call. It'll be on Sunday December 11th, from midday onwards, and you'll need to Bring-Your-Own everything, including we'd suggest, a chair and/or cushion.

All Stirling Players members, friends and family are welcome to attend. Looking forward to sharing a Merry Christmas party with you all!



Our archives show Santa way-laid by props-lady Heather in 2010. Poor Santa's still recovering, but promises to be his old self by Christmas.

We're Turning 40!



In 2012 The Stirling Players will celebrate Forty Years of producing wonderful plays in our splendid Stirling Community Theatre.

Such a milestone deserves a celebration, and there's going to be one on Sunday May 6th, 2012, at Tranquilo's restaurant, close by the Theatre and the Steamroller Park, in Stirling's main street. Tranquilo's proprietor Matt will reserve the whole restaurant for us on the day, with capacity for around 50. You'll find superb dining at reasonable prices from an a-la-carte menu, and the usual excellent range of drinks.

And we're told there'll be a special birthday cake, like this one maybe?

Or like this one?

Funny the birthday stuff people dream up!





Life After George, A Big Thankyou.

Here's the cast and crew, (well most of them) that brought you *"Life After George"*.

We counted 22 faces in this shot, not including the dummy in the casket. There were 3 or 4 more who couldn't be there when the shot was taken, and we haven't counted the many set builders, painters and front-of-house helpers who were in the foyer every night. By our reckoning, for every actor on stage, there were at least 6 to 8 others who contributed to your night out. Please join us in thanking them all!



Remembering George

Well, who could forget the scoundrel?

Top left, Duffy (Malcolm Walton) gives the eulogy, while the three wives Beatrix (Shona Benson), Lindsay (Shelley Hampton), Poppy (Angelique Houston) and Beatrix and George's daughter Ana (Miriam Keane) are suitably downcast.



Top right, Duffy and George (Ernie Tinesz) in Duffy's 'plane.



Lower left, Beatrix consoles Lindsay as Ana looks on.



Lower right, Lindsay discovers that Poppy's no pushover.

"I just don't know how you remember all those lines!"

If you're an actor you may have had people say it to you, or if not, you've probably thought it, or even said it to one of those weird actor-people.

Well, how do they do it? Is there some magic secret to learning lines? No. Do different actors have different techniques? Yes, but they have the same three things in common. Repetition, repetition, repetition. Oh all right, there are those freaks who can glance at a page of dialogue once and memorise it off pat, but they truly are freaks, and we "normal" actors loath them. They can skim a whole script in a couple of hours, glass of sauvignon-blanc in hand, and they've got it down, word-perfect.

We, on the other hand, have to spend hour after hour reading, reading, reading. One technique is to do it a page at a

time. You read each page twenty times, pacing up and down as you go. Then you cover the page with a folded sheet of paper, sliding it down line-by-line, and seeing how much you can recall. After twenty more times you're fed up. You do something more pleasant, like scrubbing the bathroom. It's the same every night, and after the first week you reckon you've got six or eight pages under the belt. Then comes rehearsal night. You get on stage, the home environment's gone and your mind has turned to soggy cotton wool. You stumble and fluff about like someone who's had too much sauvignon-blanc. Has all that homework been for nothing? Not entirely. The human brain has a limitless capacity to absorb stuff, provided you keep up the repetition, but it just takes a long time. Your logical mind says "Have faith, you'll get there in the end". Your artistic mind says "Where's the sauvignon-blanc?"

Others do it differently. Some work with another long-suffering person, someone with the patience of a saint. They read the lines back and forth between them. Some spend every spare moment with a tape recorder and an earphone. Whatever the method, it's repeat, repeat, repeat.

Gradually you notice that rehearsals have become easier. You can at last become your character because you're no longer chained to that confounded script. You're free at last, you can fly solo, you've lifted a massive weight from your own and from your director's shoulders. To paraphrase Henri Szeps (*the dentist brother in "Mother and Son"*), your lines have become so automatic that you only have to open your mouth and they just fall out, regardless of whatever else is going on around you. That's when it becomes really enjoyable. That's when it's great fun to be an actor, and you know that the slog has been worth it. That's when you smile inwardly as someone from the audience comes up after the show and says, "I just don't know how you....."

Annual General Meeting

The Annual General Meeting of The Stirling Players Inc.

Will be held on Sunday February 5th

At 5.00pm at the Stirling Community Theatre

AGENDA

1. PRESENT
2. APOLOGIES
3. CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES OF AGM 2011.
4. REPORTS
 - PRESIDENT
 - TREASURER
 - STIRLING COMMUNITY THEATRE
5. ELECTION OF OFFICERS AND COMMITTEE MEMBERS.
6. APPOINTMENT OF AUDITOR.
7. GENERAL BUSINESS
 - a) Membership (Kevin Burrett)
 - b) Ticket Prices (Lori Nielsen)
 - c) Stirling Players 40th anniversary celebrations

Following the Annual General Meeting there will be a shared dinner and drinks in the Rehearsal Room. All are invited. Please direct any enquiries to stirlingplayerssecretary@gmail.com or phone 8388 1852.

Farewell Lois

We're saddened to report that Lois Dyster, widow of the late Tom Dyster, died recently.

Lois, a teacher and a brilliant poet, was a strong supporter of The Stirling Players, particularly in the early days when she, Tom and others were getting the show on the road. That The Players are so successful today is due in part to the hard work and belief of Lois and Tom Dyster.