

President's report



Well, we're now in the middle of winter and it's certainly rather nippy in the theatre! However, we at Stirling Players are made of tough stuff and a bit of frost would never be enough to stop us moving forward with our next production.

Rehearsals have now begun for October's *Collaborators*, with a brief update later in the newsletter. All signs point to it being a fantastic show (though I may be a little biased in that regard...).

We're also delighted that celebrations are in order once again. The nominees for the Adelaide Theatre Guide Awards were recently announced and we're extremely excited that both *The Lady in the Van* and *Inheritance* were amongst them. Happily, this year each show is up for a different award, with *The Lady in the Van* nominated for "Best Show (Comedy)" and *Inheritance* for "Best Show (Drama)".

Well done to the casts, crews and committee for this recognition of all the hard work that went into these productions. Special congratulations must also go to "Denis Peach" (better known as Denis Noble) for the additional nomination for "Best Technical", for the set design of *The Lady in the Van*.

The committee has been diligently reading scripts in consideration for the programming of our 2015 season. We're very pleased to announce that our first show will be *The Beaux' Stratagem*, by George Farquhar. This script was the focus of our 2013 play reading afternoon and we were very excited that it was submitted to us by Dave Simms. See later in the newsletter for information regarding auditions.

Finally, we must say farewell to our wonderful secretary (and actor), Gayle, as she moves to South Korea for a couple of years. We thank her for all her efforts and look forward to hearing the stories from overseas. *Bon Voyage!*

Stay warm all. Cheers.

Miriam

THE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

President - Miriam Keane **Vice President** - Kevin Burrett

Secretary - Gayle Hammond **Treasurer** - Maurice Kneen

Members - Jane Bleby, Viki Burrett, Mo Johnson, Heather Jones,
Lori Nielsen, Glenys Newel, Debbie Tester

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www.stirlingplayers.sct.org.au

Find us on Facebook! Just search for "The Stirling Players, Adelaide".

The odd couple – Stalin and Bulgakov

Moscow, 1938. Life is governed by Stalinist ideals. Food is short, housing is cramped, work is hard, and any misplaced word could lead to your disappearance. It's hardly surprising that playwright, Mikhail Bulgakov, is coming up against some obstacles to his artistic endeavours. What is unexpected though, is that when the NKVD (the secret police) knock on his door, it is not to arrest him but rather to engage his services to pen a piece to celebrate the great leader's sixtieth birthday. What follows is at once a biting commentary on the politics involved, an exploration of the influence of fear, and a witty and amusing satire highlighting the resilience of the human spirit to find humour in even the most dire circumstances.

The large cast are enthusiastically throwing themselves into rehearsals, enjoying the challenge of walking the fine line between tragedy and comedy. After a cracking first read through, the group enjoyed delving into the real history woven throughout the play. An afternoon learning more about the lives of the common people in Soviet Russia, and the political ideals of the Bolsheviks, was topped off with a short tutorial on the pronunciation of Russian names. A fun and challenging exercise and a great foundation for what is sure to be a top-notch production!



Bookings open September 1st. Follow the links from our website, www.stirlingplayers.sct.org.au, or phone Pam on 0414 075 413.

Re-Pete offender

If you're thinking that Joseph Stalin looks a bit familiar, chances are that it's because you saw actor Peter Davies in our February production of *Inheritance*. If you also frequent productions by companies down in the city, you may be further acquainted with his work. Peter's talent is in high demand in the wider Adelaide amateur theatre scene, thanks to his ability to tackle both comedic and dramatic roles with aplomb. In the last twelve months alone, he has appeared on stage in *Inheritance*, as the inspector in *Corpse* with The Adelaide Rep, and as Stanley in *Richard III* for Adelaide University Theatre Guild. It is always a joy to work with Peter and we are spoilt to have the opportunity again so soon.

Would you like to help out Front of House during the run of our production of *Collaborators*? We're always looking for keen volunteers to sell refreshments, programmes and raffle tickets. In return, you'll get the opportunity to see the show before anyone else, at our special preview performance the night before we open. Contact stirlingplayerssecretary@gmail.com for more information.

Auditions – The Beaux' Stratagem

Written By: George Farquhar

Directed By: Dave Simms

The Beaux' Stratagem, is one of the most popular and accessible Restoration comedies in the UK. This 2006 adaptation is an Australian premiere: an hilarious romp with bright clear dialogue that's accessible to a modern audience.

Two handsome young playboys have squandered their fortunes in London on wine, gambling and women. They decide to fund their vices by travelling the countryside, seducing rich young women to con them out of their cash. Not everything goes to plan as they meet a colourful collection of rogues, other thieves, and women who turn out to be smarter than they expected. The boys' plan goes completely awry when they fall in love with the very women they're supposed to be swindling.

The Beaux' Stratagem is the original Dirty Rotten Scoundrels; a fast, happy-ending caper which is laugh-out loud fun, bursting with energetic physical comedy.

Featuring a large cast of both genders and varying ages (20s to 60s), there are several juicy main roles, as well as a number of smaller, incredibly fun characters.

If you fancy the most fun you've had on stage in years, with costumes, swordfights, dancing, highwaymen, wine, women and song, then sign up to audition now!

Auditions, in small groups, will be held at the Stirling Community Theatre on Sunday July 27th from 5:30pm. Please learn a limerick and a knock-knock joke to tell on stage. Auditionees will also workshop a small section of the script which will be provided on the night. Bring energy, a smile and great voice projection!

Call Dave on 0409 255 181 to arrange a timeslot.

Further information about the roles available can be found on our website www.stirlingplayers.sct.org.au

Committee Spotlight - Debbie Tester

Born in Lancashire in the north west of England, Debbie moved to Adelaide in 2008 having met and married Adelaide-born husband, John, when he worked in London.

“He wanted to bring back a souvenir from his time in the UK but I don’t think he figured on getting a wife!”

Debbie had a latent desire to be involved in theatre since she was a little girl but extensive business travel in the UK meant that she couldn’t give enough commitment to any regular scheduled interests and activities. “Life in the Adelaide Hills finally provided the time and opportunity to explore my bucket list and that’s when I first got involved with the Stirling Players”. Debbie says she was blissfully ignorant of the amazing talent in SA’s amateur theatre scene, when she went along for an audition for the Stirling Players production of *Compleat Female Stage Beauty*. She was expecting to meet a group of enthusiastic beginners like herself, with little or no acting experience. It was a blessing in disguise! Had she had a clearer sense of the calibre and experience of actors on the amateur theatre scene, she doubts she would have been brave enough to audition.

Cast in the minor, but larger than life, character role of a bawdy tavern owner, Debbie says she felt privileged to work with the most amazing director, cast and crew, which was terrific fun, albeit a steep learning curve. It wasn’t completely smooth sailing. In her first ever live performance, she got over zealous and removed a prop from stage that she thought had been forgotten. Whilst watching the monitor in the dressing room, she realised the actors on stage were ad-libbing and expressed surprise, not realising that the prop she had removed included a piece of paper the actors were supposed to read – hence the frantic ad-libbing.



Debbie in her role in her debut stage role

Eighteen months later she was, once again, delighted to get a role in the cast of *The Lady in the Van*. Still considering herself a novice at this point, she was getting to grips with lots of the basics such as ‘upstage and downstage’ and states that she will be forever indebted to the patience and coaching skill of Director David Simms.

Having participated in two extremely successful productions, and feeling like one of the Stirling Players ‘family’, Debbie joined the committee and was immediately thrust into the role of Production Manager for Collaborators. Another very steep learning curve, but she says she feels highly supported and is finding it to be a valuable and enjoyable

Committee Spotlight - Debbie Tester

experience. Having had a taste of both onstage and backstage as crew, she can honestly say she loves both; whatever the future brings, she hopes to be a part of SP for many years to come.

Debbie states that some of her highlights are:

- The thrill of playing to lots of full houses in Stage Beauty and The Lady in the Van
- Watching productions come to life from read through to live performance
 - The great social life and lovely friends that come with the SP family
 - Needing three helpers to tie her into a whalebone corset for Stage Beauty
 - Making her own 'suggestive stick' by shaping a phallus with play-doh

Outside of theatre, she has a 'portfolio career' which sees her dividing her time between working as a freelance management consultant, labouring for her husband in his home maintenance business (complete with a Hard Yakka shirt and her own toolbelt!) and, as a Civil Celebrant, conducting weddings.

Debbie lives in Balhannah, in a cute log cabin with a garden that she and John created from scratch. She has been delighted to find that, after years of killing houseplants in the UK, she seems to have developed a green thumb. She loves to spend time gardening, cycling the Amy Gillet bikeway, and looking after their menagerie of dog, two cats, quail, chooks and canaries. She had her first piano lesson last week (another bucket list item) and loves to travel – she's proud to say that she has visited every Australian state during her five years here. Debbie says she feels very blessed to be living in one of the world's most beautiful places – "I call Australia home and will stay forever, but...I'll never lose my Lancashire accent – oh aye lass".

Play reading and mammoth bonfire

Our next members' social event will be on Saturday August 23rd at committee member Mo's property, Tier's View, in Woodside.

From 2pm, we will be reading "Don Parties On" the sequel to "Don's Party" (scripts will be provided). This will be followed by a huge bonfire and BBQ (BYO meat).

We will have do-it-yourself damper on sticks (dough provided) and baked spuds (bring any desired toppings). Also BYO drinks, with mulled wine on arrival.

Please bring a chair - although there will be some pine logs to sit on if you're so inclined.

Park on the flat area. There is a short flat walk to the pine forest for the bonfire and we recommend bringing gumboots and a torch, as it can get a little muddy and rather dark.

For more detailed directions, email stirlingplayerssecretary@gmail.com.
