THE Artful DODGER

NOVEMBER:2011

1.n. roystering young pickpocket from Charles Dickens' *Oliver Twist*. 2.n. printed handbill full of tidings from the W.M.I.&A.A. with a closing date for contributions of 25th of each month to Alan Cornell on 98444111 or alan@commercialventure.com.au

Irving Reid in My Three Angels, 1962

IRVING REID LEAVES THE STAGE

The first play I appeared in was *School for Scandal*, directed, for those who remember him, by Bob Karl. My inexperience was quickly spotted by two company legends of the day, Tim Sherwood and Irving Reid, who generously took me under their wings. Sadly, Irving passed away last Monday, and Warrandyte lost one of its true gentlemen.

Irving was one of the pioneers of the drama group, appearing on stage and directing productions including *The American Dream, The Real Inspector Hound, Antigone, The Insect Comedy* and *The Merchant of Venice*.

His interests were broad - you may remember the painting he presented to Bud Tingwell at our 50th celebrations - and he was an elder of St. Stephens Church.

Irving died last Monday, and the Arts Association lost one of its greatest talents.

Yvonne and the family will miss him terribly. So will Warrandyte. The Arts Association sends our condolences to the family and would like them to know the high regard in which we held him.

I invite members to contribute any memories of Irving through the Dodger.

ALMOST, MAINE - ALMOST FINISHED

There is still time to see Almost, Maine. The good judges say it's one that mustn't be missed. One of them, Hazel Rice, gives us her response to Phyl Swindley's production:

The author, John Cariani advises directors not to make this play too cutesy. He goes on to say that these people of Maine (Mainers) are dignified, hard working and honest. They are also, in this play, very literal too. One carries pieces of a broken heart in a small green bag and others can't stand upright because they are falling in love. Another collects emotion in huge red bags of love while a young man writes lists of things that cause pain because he can't feel anything due to congenital neuralgia, which is miraculously cured when he begins to feel love. Such are the magical effects of a kiss!

Cariani has taken the ideas and words that we've all used to express feelings and turned them into a delightful series of 9 short vignettes to demonstrate how people feel about falling in and out of love. He has created a small literal world where these things really happen.

(cont'd page 2...)

Dates to Remember:

4, 5,11,12 Nov - Almost, Maine @ Hall (Tickets 0488 333 575)

5 Nov - Open Studio @ WAA Pottery & Landfall, Castles Road

Group reports.

Theatre

Almost Maine - Well the first weekend is over and the reports have all been very positive. Fabulous script, sensational set, beautiful lighting, wonderful music and even a snow machine!!! The cast and crew under the direction of Phyl and Bill are all having a terrific time and we are really appreciating the cooler weather as our costumes and backstage outfits are all for a Northern Maine winter. Audiences were a little small, which is not unusual for an opening weekend, but we hope the next two weekends can sellout. So please, if you haven't seen the show, book soon and if you have, please spread the word. Why not put it on Facebook. Dates are November 4th, 5th, 11th and 12th with a matinee on the 12th at 2pm. The bookings number is 0488 333 575. The lovely Marion will be waiting to take your call. With so much time and effort being put into a production like this, it would be great to sell out.

Follies 2012 - John M-C, Daryll M and a host of budding and not so budding writers are getting their creative juices flowing in preparation for next year's Follies - "Follies. A Space Oddity" With a few writing workshops already under their belts, there are even a few scripts completed! So book your seat on the hottest shuttle out of town for next year. Can't wait! The next writer's meeting is booked for Friday, November 18th. Bring your scripts if you have them and a plate to share.

Christmas Party - We are so organized, we have already booked a night for our Christmas shindig! So mark Saturday night, December 10th in your diaries and come along to the Hall for a night of Decking the Halls on the deck. More about this in next month's Dodger.

Lisa Upson 9844 1436

Painting

We had a very pleasant day yesterday, out painting at Everard Drive Reserve. The colours were vibrant bright greens, blues and mauves, it inspired those able to make it, we had a good day. Who spotted who? Our Webmaster Robert taking his three hounds for their morning exercise. He is on the job with his mobile camera catching us at work, straight home to post it on the site.

Our thoughts are with our member Gill Beddington, who is back in Hospital again. Speedy recovery Gill.

Pauline Cross 9439 1775

Pottery

Thank you to all the girls who so generously loaned me pots, made food and helped on the Studio Open Day. I'm thinking of keeping the pots - they looked so good nestled all over the garden.

Marj Beecham 9844 3206

Craft

Rosemary Climas 9844 2154

ALMOST, MAINE

(continuing Hazel Rice's review from page 1)

The play doesn't appear cute and over sentimental due to the skill of direction and the carefully underplayed but well defined characters. Though one does wonder if people really do call their children "Hope" or "Glory," not to mention the unfeasibly named "Villian?!"

This play will appeal to all who have fallen in and out of love and the audience members will feel that they can empathise with at least one of the characters, if not all of them.

The choice by the author is to portray the events of one cold night through the 9 short plays, enabling him to cram much more than a conventional format would have allowed. Using just 8 actors to portray the action meant them taking on multiple roles. This was well done and though we only met each character briefly they were well defined and mostly believable. There was humour, sorrow, pain, love, hope and joy.

The set was beautiful. Simple and effective with stark dark pines bathed in a cold blue light. The lighting created a feeling of a cold world capable of being warmed by its inhabitants. The sound, predominantly the specially created music also developed a sense of warmth and humanity. The snow on the set looked genuine and the snow that fell in the final scene looked very real too. This was a striking end to the evening with the emotive music, striking lighting and a truly happy ending which we had hoped for since the first scene.

The costumes contributed to the warmth and colour of the show, set against the sometimes stark appearance of the scenery. We saw competent and believable work from our acting regulars and it was great to see 3 new faces on stage who all gave assured and convincing performances.

< Before

The Pi Beecham Memorial Garden is looking so lush and gorgeous at the moment, we thought it worth recalling that it wasn't always so.

After
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