DECEMBER:2012

THE Artful DODGER

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 98444995 or alan@commercialventure.com.au

CHECK THE HALLS

The Mechanics' Institutes of Victoria recently hosted a conference entitled, "Mechanics' Worldwide 2012: Buildings, Books and Blackboards", which included a pre-conference bus tour of the suburbs and hills to the north east of Melbourne. Warrandyte MI was chosen as the first stop and so during a downpour on Tuesday, 27th November, a coach-load of delegates splashed their way across Yarra Street to see our lovely hall from without and within.

Graeme had the hall in tip top condition and Noelle and Marjorie had tidied up the garden, so in spite of the rain, everything looked great. Pat gave the visitors a brief history of the hall, explained how the members of WAA had saved the hall and I detailed all the improvements we have made over the last twenty years through grants and our own activities.

While our local institute is not a library, it is certainly a valuable community facility and a centre for promoting the arts and our specific set up is a good model for the on-going viability of such a hall and various people commented on its appearance and success.

DECK THE HALL

This year's Christmas party will be held at the hall next Saturday 8 December from 8pm and all WAA members are warmly invited. Bring stuff.

Thanks to all the group co-ordinators and committee members who kept the kiln burning, the paint flowing, the boards trodden and the arts crafted.

In 2013 we're looking for help from anyone with basic graphic skills willing to help with programs and publicity. And a new editor for *The Artful Dodger*. Then I'll really think it's Christmas.

...and John David lands another beauty!

DATES TO REMEMBER:
Saturday 8 December, 8pm
Christmas Party @ the Hall
Thursday, 13 December, 7:30pm
Follies Writers @ the Hall
Thursday 17 & Sunday 20 January
Follies Auditions @ Hall

Group reports.

Pottery

Congratulations to John. He certainly is a great fish man. His latest creation is spectacular. Thanks also for his tracking down of a new urn. Our coffee is all the more delicious since it arrived.

Every good wish to all WAA members for Christmas and the New Year and especially thankyou to all the Potters for making 2012 such a happy and memorable year.

Marj Beecham 9844 3206

Painting

We had a Happy Christmas break up luncheon at the Grand Hotel for our last meeting of the year, it was fun. It was great to have Gill Beddington with us for the occasion.

We will be meeting on Wednesday 13th of February for our first paint out day of the New Year, location to be advised.

MERRY CHRISTMAS AND THE BEST FOR THE NEW YEAR TO YOU ALL.

Pauline Cross 94391775

Craft

Rosemary Climas 9844 2154

Theatre

Bombshells

And so we say farewell to another successful season of community theatre. What a show! Audiences loved it. Radio critics loved it and hopefully you all got to see it. It always amazes me how much a small community theatre group can achieve when we pool our talents and put in the time and energy. A huge thank you to Adrian, Ruth, Tony and Hazel and the whole technical, backstage and front of house crew. The cast all felt very well taken care of and we appreciate your dedication and expertise. It was Adrian's brilliant idea to stage this play and he made it happen. I know 'The Shellies' have thoroughly enjoyed the whole experience and working with Adrian to bring the 6 characters to life.

2013 Fantasy Follies

The Follies is well under way for next year. Caroline Shaw will direct assisted by me (on a steep learning curve). Dick Pengelley has signed to be the Musical Director. We are still looking for a Producer for the show. If you are interested, please let me know. There is another writer's meeting/workshop on Thursday, December 13th at 7:30pm at the Hall. Caroline and I will be there and it will be a great opportunity to try out your sketch, get ideas for improving it or start writing down the ideas in your head. Audition dates are Thursday, January, 17th at 8pm and Sunday, January 20th at 4pm.

Jack Stringer

I would like to take this opportunity to thank Jack Stringer for his 16 years of service to the role of Musical Director. Having a musician of his calibre has been such a treat and we have all benefited from his extraordinary talents. I'm sure all of us who have participated in a Follies can remember a favourite song written or arranged by Jack from the opening numbers to duets, madrigals, Gilbert and Sullivan tunes and closing numbers that brought the house down. Thanks Jack. So many of your contributions live on in our collective memories.

Christmas Party

Don't forget to bring your good cheer and a plate to share to help us celebrate another fantastic year. I hope to see everyone on Saturday, December the 8th at 8pm at the Hall.

As this is the last Dodger for the year, may I take this opportunity to wish everyone a very Merry Christmas. I have enjoyed your company and support over the past year and I am looking forward to another year of spectacular productions in 2013.

Lisa Upson 9844 1436

2013 (January - December)

SUBSCRIPTIONS Cheques payable to ***WMI&AA Inc.*** Post to ***Treasurer, WMI&AA, PO Box 150, Warrandyte 3113***.

Name:.....

Address:.....

Phone:.....Email:.....

❑ **Single $20** ❑ **Family $30** Would you like your newsletter sent by email? ❑ **Yes** ❑ **No**

That was the year that was 2012.

FEBRUARY

...the new stage completed and officially opened in time for afternoon tea with the families of Christie Lawrence and Luke Mayall, whose Trust Fund have made it all possible....

MARCH

...There *is* life in space, Jim, but not as we know it, as Daryll and John play among the stars in *2011:A Space Oddity*....

...the Potters start collecting parking tickets and Marjorie pays out big time on the Council...

MAY

....Painters get more than they bargained for...

....Ken Virtue continues lifetime sentence as WMI&AA President...

AUGUST

.....two directors present four one act plays with a cast of thousands (well eleven, eight of whom were new) to hundreds of appreciative audience members...

...online ticketing is great success...

...the Painters keep the bargains coming...

SEPTEMBER

.....after a colourful year painting the Abbotsford Convent, Ceri in her kimono and Edendale Farm in Eltham, the painters get stuck into their greens at the community vegetable garden...

...and sadly lose a great friend in Barbara Prowse...

OCTOBER

...the future of theatre on display in Warrandyte Youth Theatre's first performance with three One Act Plays...

NOVEMBER/DECEMBER

...Theatre Company goes out with a bang with powerful production of Bombshells.

Explosive theatre

Ken Virtue reviews Bombshells.

I have often been proud of the hard work of our WTC, but their latest production of "Bombshells" has set higher benchmarks for acting, directing and staging in local theatre. It was quite simply, fabulous!

Contemporary Australian playwright Joanna Murray-Smith originally wrote her "women on the edge" work for the solo performance of actor, Caroline O'Connor. Director, Adrian Rice, however, chose to apply for the rights to stage this play with six women, and his thoughtful approach was clearly successful on a number of levels.

Firstly, it allowed him to showcase the talents of local as well as visiting actors. Secondly, it allowed him to undertake what I believe was a masterstroke of theatrical casting. I have often felt that the true test of good casting is trying to imagine if the actual roles could have been played by swapping any of the acting cast, or even by using other past known actors. This production of "Bombshells" was remarkable in that each actor seemed perfectly suited for her role, a completely natural choice for the challenge of each monologue. This was no mean feat, and the results were a real credit to them, their director and the assembled production crew.

The show opened with young mother, Meryl, played by Gemma Porter, waking to the sound of her crying baby. What followed was a frantic roller coaster ride of what was proposed as a typical multi-tasking, self-doubting maternal day - breast feeding, breakfasts & school lunches for her other two children, reminder lists, money juggling, drives to & from school, and the dizziness of domestic shopping choices. All under the stress of sleep deprivation and the addictive call for her first coffee!

Gemma deftly and credibly managed the punchy dialogue, the clever rotating set and imaginary others on stage to have us recognising the very real frenetic nature of modern motherhood. This was a monologue 'not for the faint-hearted', but Gemma delivered it with faultless precision.

Then a timid Tiggy Entwhistle , a member of the North Heatherton Cactus and Succulent League, stepped up to the rostrum to deliver her 'cactophile' slideshow presentation. The uncharted territory posed by this sort of character could have easily come unstuck if the actor was unable to hold the tension between the trusted reliability of her beloved plants and the hurtful small village actions of her unfaithful partner, Harry.

Happily, Simone Kiefer was at her brilliant best, demonstrating artful mannerisms and superb comic

(Continued next page)

timing in delivering a bittersweet rendition of the hapless Tiggy. We were squirming with her angst and laughing outright at her lovely humility!

In a lovely change of pace we next moved to a girls' school talent show piece where an earnest and determined young performer, Mary O'Donnell, was about to take the stage, Here Georgia Westgarth once again showed us her considerable abilities as a dancer who can very capably engage an audience. Georgia really grows her talent pool with each appearance on our stage and makes us look forward to more of her exuberance and enthusiasm in the future.

The fourth monologue was one of the highlights, both due to the author's abundant writing skills as well as this particular piece of acting. The result proved to be great entertainment, with some echoes of "Muriel's Wedding", nonetheless with a clever unravelling of an hilarious wedding day crisis. The slightly sozzled bride-to-be, Theresa McTerry, was stunningly portrayed by Gabby Llewelyn-Salter.

She looked radiant and professed to be "so f***king happy" as she dressed for her nuptials. Gabby moved beautifully from giddy hysterics to gloomy desperation as her character progressively realises that her long dreamed about wedding was really "all about the dress". The stage was simply and tastefully set in a vision of traditional flowers and champagne, and it was clear that most of the audience could identify with Theresa's life choice dilemma.

The next vignette was a poignant later-in-life story of Winsome Webster, a sophisticated widow played tastefully by Susan Rundle. This was indeed a 'class act', searing in many parts, and leaving us hanging on each word as Winsome's routine life unfolded. The pain about her lost husband, offset by her need to stoically live on, left us sharing her hope for the joy of the unexpected. Susan controlled her pace in a truly professional manner, delivering a lovely piece of theatre that moved seamlessly to a memorable and thought-provoking conclusion.

The final monologue was sung as much as it was spoken, allowing us to luxuriate in the silky smooth voice of Lisa Upson.

Lisa, dressed to wow any audience with 150% make-up and bling, played the ageing diva, Zoe Struthers. Another example of natural casting, Lisa made a difficult routine look easy. Supported effortlessly on piano by Jack Stringer, and on impressive high-tech sound operation by Lea Stringer, everyone could identify with Zoe's demons and her need to publicly cast them out of her cosseted yet troubled life.

A special mention for first-time Producer, Tony Clayton, and a solid "bravo!" to WTC newcomers Ruth Richter (Stage Manager) and David Rackham (backstage and sound design).

"Bombshells" has significantly added to our WTC's growing reputation for quality productions. Thanks to Adrian and his cast and crew for really raising the bar!