

# THE *Artful* DODGER

NOVEMBER:2008

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



## REMEMBERING CHRISTIE AND LUKE

Christie Lawrence turned up to auditions for *Open Season*, the musical I'd written with Mark Leehy, Kevin O'Mara and their team, that replaced the Follies in 1994. She was seventeen, gorgeous and blessed with an infectious laugh that stays with you forever. She'd loved the Warrandyte High musicals she and her soulmate Luke Mayall performed in, and Robyn Bonthorne persuaded her to give the Theatre group a try. In *Open Season* she played the part of Marjorie Daws, the reluctant product of Sue Dyring's relentless stage mothering. Christie belted out her part and hoofed her way through it all like an absolute pro. That was the start of an all too brief association with us that included a couple of Follies, *Bowl 'em Over* and *Costi*. Christie was coming back from Yea with Luke for a *Costi* rehearsal one Sunday afternoon in June 1998, when a huge gum tree collapsed across the Melba Highway, crushing their car and robbing us of two of the most loveable young people you could ever wish to meet. I remember Ken Virtue giving me

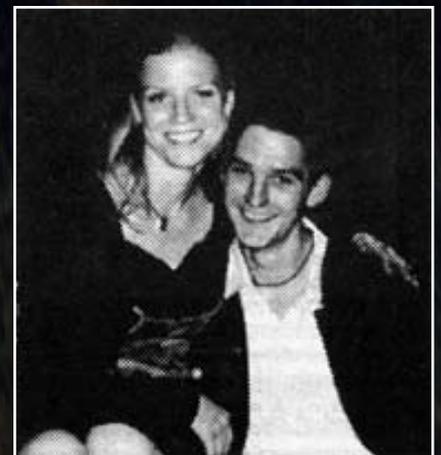
the news – we were at the pub for some reason – and it was simply beyond belief.

In an attempt to make something positive of such tragic misadventure, the Christie Lawrence and Luke Mayall Memorial Trust was formed and for ten years has helped a succession of young local people realise their dreams in the performing arts or hospitality, Christie and Lukes' passions. There were some great stories – like last year, when a brilliant young violinist who had made it to the VCA with a home-made violin was able to purchase the instrument she needed to take the next step. Josh Mitchell, David Frazer and Mat Moran from the Theatre Company all benefited from the award.

It's been a magnificent and emotional enterprise that has now reached the end of its journey. In a final act of generosity, the families have offered us the considerable remaining funds, and a suitable project is being discussed to keep Christie and Lukes' memories

alive for the rest of us whenever we tread our beloved stage.

Our Hall has been filled with so much laughter over the years, and not a few pretty outstanding laughers – Denise Farran and Lisa Upson come immediately to mind. As does the irrepressible Christie Lawrence. Unforgettable.



Warrandyte Mechanics Institute & Arts Association Inc 0009153X  
<http://warrandytehallarts.asn.au>

# Group reports.

So don't forget! They will be held on both the 9th and 16th November at the Hall. They will run from 1 pm to 5.30 pm approx - please be punctual.

## 3. Follies Writers Workshops - Workshop 3 rescheduled

Alan has conducted 2 of the 3 planned workshops, and the final one has yet to be rescheduled. We'll circulate the date, and if you were at the first and/or second and have done your homework then bring it along but even if you were not there and would like to learn about the art of writing and re-writing then please come along. The aim is to have some fairly final scripts by Follies auditions in early December - so please spend some time on these soon!

## 4. Christmas Party

Don't forget that we have a Christmas party to celebrate all our successes and excesses in 2008. It is planned for Friday 12/12 - stay tuned for more info, but please put the date in your diary now!

David Tynan 9844 5727

Rosemary Climas 9844 2154

Craft



## FROM CENTRAL COMMITTEE

With the October production behind us, work will be undertaken in the Supper room to repair some flooring and install a corner shelf.

The Potter's Folly had been repaired, hopefully in a way that will resist further damage. Many thanks to Doug Smidt for all his efforts.

Last month's Art Sale was a bit quiet, but of those who came, fourteen walked away pretty pleased to have snapped up a bargain!

## DEBORAH HALPERN EXHIBITION

A range of new work is featured at the Christine Abrahams Gallery, 27 Gipps Street, Richmond, till 8 November!



## Pottery



glasses cases etc.

The day I spent at federation Square attending the U3A Potters was a fascinating day. I met people from all over the state - there were no other pots though.

Marj Beecham 9844 3206

## Painting



We had a pleasant day last Wednesday painting at Warranglen Nurseries, all the Spring colours to inspire us. The previous weeks we painted indoors at Gill's and Bev's homes, thank you for your hospitality ladies.

The weather should improve from now on, looking forward to more outdoor activity.

Pauline Cross 9439 1775 Gillian Beddington 98441203

## Theatre



### 1. Memory of Water

Thanks to all who came along to support our Sept/Oct production - the many and varied talents of our company were on show again. A great set, and some great performances by Lea, Jennifer, Lisa, Naomi, Jack and Nick. Also, many

thanks to Bill for his sublime direction once again - is he becoming the Sept/Oct specialist director! Congratulations to all concerned with this production, and special thanks to Lynne, Phyl, Noels, the two Johns, and Darren for all the off-stage help.

Unfortunately crowds were a little small relative to the previous two years, and the committee will be examining why this might have occurred - we owe it to ourselves to make improvements where we can. While on that topic, we would like your feedback - what do you think worked, didn't work - any constructive feedback is welcome! Note that a link to the on-line MOW feedback survey (takes about 5 minutes), has been circulated to the WTC mailing list. If you were involved with MOW, or even went to it, please take a little bit of time to help the committee improve future productions where needed.

### 2. Director Workshops (9/11 and 16/11)

Everyone ... and especially calling those who wish to develop their directing skills or begin to learn the art of directing. Two workshops have been organised with one of Melbourne's most accomplished Directors in Community Theatre - Helen Ellis.

Helen has worked independently and with Mitcham Theatre and has run her own production Co. Helen has been given a free-reign but asked to cover the major aspects of the Director's craft and to give participants the opportunity to analyse, develop and practice ideas.

We are keen to get as many people along as possible to these workshops and while it would be preferable to commit to both that is not essential.

## REVIEWING 'MEMORY OF WATER'

from Roxanne Viggiano:

WTC triumphs yet again!!

As someone who has just gone through the death of a mother I feared this play may be a bit close to the bone but I was pleasantly surprised that it had more of a therapeutic than negative effect. I realized that mine is not the only complex and crazy family.

It is a very well written expose on the many different reactions people have to grief and with some very well placed humour. It is also a time when many skeletons come out of the closet and the writer has used this to intriguing effect.

I was riveted from beginning to end which is quite a feat as the scenery does not change, which is no slight on the great set by Bill Mitchell. The acting and direction (by Bill Connolly) is consummate from all involved, especially the women. Lisa Upson is hilarious as the hysterical and vacuous sister. Lee Stringer tackles some very confronting material like a pro and Jennifer (insert surname) is hilarious as the zealous New Ager who is faltering in her puritanical habits. Naomi Oosting made us sympathise with the faded glamourpuss of a generation gone by and the blokes admirably provided the straight guy foundation for the femmes to play out all their secret women's business.

Like water the play reveals its multifaceted emotionality and subtle insights which are at their most powerful when the meaning of the title is revealed. Well worth seeing.

from Jan Cornell:

What a great combination for this audience member. A fun night out, followed by a morning of reflections. So much to enjoy. Laughs, pathos and fantastic theatre. The hard work of the actors and crew rewarded with a receptive audience. Well done everyone.

Water and love share many like qualities. Our survival and growth depend on them. When these resources are sparse, we have to adapt. This play brings us many things to think about. My morning reflection about "Memory of Water" was about the resource of parental love.

We watch this unfold as three sisters meet at their mother's house to prepare for her funeral.

We learn that the ghost-mother (Naomi Oosting) was invested in her own needs for survival, her identity seen through the mirrors of her dressing table. She preens her image to be a beautiful reflection for someone else, the lovers in her mind. She saw not her daughters, each of whom found their own, colourful ways of adapting to this lack of a healthy "child-reflecting mother".

The mother's beautiful dresses become her painful legacy. The parody unfurls as the sisters decide the fate of these parched relics. The dresses are fought over, played with, mocked, spurned, despised and loved as the girls try to draw some nourishment from the fabric of yesteryear. Searching for meaning they turn to their memories, only to discover that memories are unreliable. What was real, what was not?

Sister Catherine (Lisa Upson), the comedic hysteric, strongly identified with aspects of her mother. Like her, she needed the mirror for reflection, and the admiration of others to quench her need for love. Unlike her mother she developed a sense of the ridiculous satisfying the audience's need for a good laugh! Brilliant.

Sister Teresa (Jennifer Tully) has invested her soul into selling new age herbs, potions and rescue remedies, to heal everyone but herself. Her whisky breath monologue an absolute delight. Her partner Frank, (Jack Stringer), found through a lonely hearts advertisement, becomes the voice of truth.

Sister Mary (Lea Stringer), the introvert and deep thinker of the sisters, is a doctor, again searching for meaning through healing others. Late in the play we learn of the painful loss of her baby son to adoption. Then we learn of his death. He held the hope of refreshing waters for Mary. Not to be. The strong doctor undone, as she grapples with his loss.

Well done Lea, a complex role whose mother-less pain was transparent, painful and real.

Her lover Mike (Nick Anning), like her mother, is a dam half dry. He will never undo her emotional drought.

Survive and adapt the sisters did, and here's cheers to them and their resilience when a mother's love left them thirsty.

Cheers also to Bill Connolly, great direction!

Trivia Bit: A catty throwaway line from Catherine to Teresa alerted us to St. Teresa of Avila, a sixteenth century Carmelite nun who wrote in her autobiography of the different stages of prayer using water as a metaphor.



vigilante

I'm a bit of  
a grammar  
VIGILANTE  
myself until I  
make my own  
mistakes not  
like Emmense  
westward view  
Grand Canyon  
corrected by  
grammar  
VIGILANTES  
charged with  
vandalism my  
guru Lynne Truss  
shared with  
ex Warrantdye  
friend did say  
don't get caught

epiphany

I like that  
word says Jean  
Chapman word  
smith of  
Warrantdye  
EPIPHANY  
agreeing with  
Leunig word  
smith of 'The Age'  
best Christmas  
cards variations of  
EPIPHANY  
The Three Wise Men  
Plenty Wise Women  
in Warrantdye  
EPIPHANY

last

kissin' don't  
LAST  
cookin' do  
inscribed  
delicately on  
a fine bone  
China mug  
LAST  
time I saw  
Paris even  
Warandye  
the first  
shall be  
LAST

LEUNIG: 'The Age' 11 October 2008

THE THREE WISE MEN: "Manifestation of Christ to The Magi (The Three Wise Men). Christian feast day 6th January celebrates the "shining forth" or revelation of God in human form." (Google Wikipedia - the free encyclopaedia)

EPIPHANY: Manifestation of a super human being. Old French EPIPHANIE from Greek EPIPHANEA Manifestation EPIPHANES Manifest. Greek "to manifest" or "to show" Google

VARIATIONS: "Nico held her as the baby appeared, her head covered with dark fuzz, followed by shoulders and the rest of her body, wet, slippery and streaked with blood, and once again I experienced the EPIPHANY I had the day Andrea was born." p.41 THE SUM OF OUR DAYS by Isabel Allende. Fourth Estate London 2008

MUG: for Cook Sue at Green Ridge Retirement Home from her husband

PARIS: "The last time I saw PARIS, my heart was yong and gay" composed by Oscar Hammerstein II and Jerome Kern, not really written for the 1954 MGM movie, loosely based on F. Scott Fitzgerald's short story BABYLON REVISITED; movie, THE LAST TIME I SAW PARIS, directed by Richard Brooks, starring Elizabeth Taylor, Van Johnson, Walter Pidgeon, Donna Reed, Eva Gabor, Knut Kaszma, Roger Moore. (Google)

FIRST/LAST: "So the LAST shall be first, and the first shall be LAST." Matthew 20:16 New International Version of The Bible

GRAMMAR VIGILANTES: "A campaign by two Grammar Vigilantes to correct spelling mistakes on signs across America; founders of the Typo Eradication Advancement League (TEAL)," email from Rosemary Joy: rosemary@aphids.net "Hi Mum. An article from today's Australian for you. Lots of love. R" August 25, 2008

VANDALISM: "Jeff Deck and Benjamin Herson, both 28, met in a creative writing class; charged with VANDALISM for trying to rectify a spelling error at the Grand Canyon, "EMMENSE westward view."

Oblivious to the grammar, the prosecutors pronounced the sign, "a unique historical object of irreplaceable value." email: Rosemary Joy

MISTAKES: "A little knowledge is a dangerous thing - especially when it comes to spelling. The English word most commonly misspelt in published documents and on the internet is SUPERSEDE, often ending in cede, based on intercede or precede, (from Latin CEDERE to yield). In truth SUPERSEDE comes from Latin SUPERSEDERE, meaning to desist from. email: "Hi Mum, Another article for you. Rosie"

GURU: LYNNE TRUSS "Eats, Shoots, and Leaves: The Zero Tolerance Approach to Punctuation" Profile Books 2005. First Published 2003. 3 million copies sold worldwide.

EX-WARRANTDYTE: friend Mairi Barkei, email: barkei@rzmil, uni-erlangen.de Once of Warrantdye Arts Association, Mairie has invented new ways of teaching English in Uttenreuth Germany for many years.

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Sooner, in colour, with 'extras'! Just email me at alan@commercialventure.com.au

