The Mount Players

StageStruck

October 2013

The sound of music

Nov 1

Dec 8

SOLD OUT
Coming Up . . .

2013

**NOVEMBER**

*The Sound of Music*
Fri 8th—Sat 1st December
*Sold out. Please see website for waiting list information*

Writers’ Workshop
Mon 11th & Mon 25th
7.30pm-9.00pm

**DECEMBER**

*The Sound of Music*
Closes Sat 1st

MPYT: *Quiet Backstage*
Fri 13th—Sun 15th

TMP Christmas Barbecue
Mid-Dec TBC

2014

**MARCH—APRIL**

*A Few Good Men*
Fri 14th March—Sat 5th April
Welcome everyone to the October edition of StageStruck. The Mount Players has achieved the rare feat of completely selling out a show several weeks before opening night. *The Sound of Music* is looking and sounding really great and on behalf of the company I’d like to wish Tony, Terri, musical director Wade and their talented cast, musicians and crew every success with their run. As I said, tickets are no longer available, however there is a waiting list, and if you haven’t been able to secure a seat yet then please feel free to apply for the list via our website (www.themountplayers.com). It’s set to be a fantastic production, with two casts of Von Trapp children sharing the workload with the experienced leads and supporting cast over the fifteen performances and dress rehearsal. There is obviously an enormous amount of work being done to prepare twin casts, for which Tony and Terri are due considerable extra credit, and it will also be an interesting challenge for the leads working with alternating groups of actors each night.

An issue that has arisen during preparation for the show—caused in part by the extra demands of rehearsing twin casts—has been the full availability of the theatre to the show in rehearsal. The company does have a policy of encouraging outside groups to use our venue, not merely for revenue purposes but to expose The Mount Players to as many community groups as possible, as well as to participate as fully as possible in the Macedon Ranges community. Unfortunately this year there have been some occasions when we have either had to turn groups away or our production teams have themselves been required to rearrange rehearsals to accommodate external hirers. I’d like to take this opportunity to apologise to Natasha Boyd and to Tony and Terri Fox for any inconveniences this has caused and to assure them, and all future production teams, that a review of the hiring process is being undertaken. For larger external events we will be looking to involve the Production Committee to roster them into each year’s calendar where possible. If anybody does have any interest in using the Mountview Theatre next year in a non-company production they will need to discuss this with Ben Lawrance, who is now the theatre bookings secretary, and whose number is listed at the back of *StageStruck* (only in the Members’ edition; otherwise please enquire via our website—Ed).

Having mentioned that, one of the highlights of the year for me was the recent production of *Grease*, staged at the theatre by the Sunbury-Macedon Ranges Specialist School. Russell has written a review of the show, having been involved with the sound for it, and his sentiments are widely shared. It was a truly moving and joyous event, and it was a privilege to have been able to welcome the students and school to our theatre. Congratulations must especially be given to Leo Vandervalk and Joanna Mattox for directing and producing a truly special event.

After *The Sound of Music* closes on 1st December the Mount Players Youth Theatre will stage, I believe, four performances of another self-penned show, *Quiet Backstage* (weekend of 13-15 Dec; see previous page—Ed). It’s always a highlight for me for the company to finish off the year with a display of our up and coming talent, and I urge the membership to make the effort to come along and see this show too.

...cont
Sunday 29th September saw the Official Opening of the Extension and the naming of the Vandervalk and Garner-Slattery Rooms. This was followed by the 2014 Season Launch, which Mike De Jong kindly hosted at very short notice. A large crowd of around 80 moved from the opening to the launch and enjoyed a champagne and chicken supper and the opportunity to mingle with members old and new. Thank you to our local State representative Joanne Duncan for attending, and for being such an enthusiastic patron of many of our shows. Thanks especially to Cherry, Niki, Zoe, Neil and Russell for their wonderful work in organising and running this highly successful event, and to Rob Coulson for organising the drinks as always. The Marketing Committee has done some terrific work this year and the group was immediately back at it after the launch in finalising plans for the recent Trivia Night at the Norma Richardson Hall in Woodend. While there was room for a couple more tables, this event was also a great success and a great deal of fun, with over a thousand dollars being raised towards refurbishment of the auditorium—which, as it turns out, more than covered the necessary work. Thanks also to Gareth Rowlands for his fantastic work as emcee. We know who to call on for future events, Gareth!

I look forward to seeing many of you at *The Sound of Music*.

Yours in Theatre,

Tony Old

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Front of House Help Required

Attention all Members, Friends & Enthusiasts: It takes many people to bring a show such as this to the stage—apart from the obvious stars, musicians and production team who have been putting in many hours—we also need ushers/supper makers and bar staff to be on hand for every performance. The season is completely sold out and we need teams of at least 2 to do front of house duties.

For those who haven't helped out before, it very easy and you will be matched with someone who has. Wear black & white (gentlemen please wear a bow tie if possible). Bring a clean tea towel and be there 40 minutes before the show starts.

Ruth DeJong is coordinating the roster. Please contact Ruth on 5427 1460 or 0417 324 600 or email her at ruthdejong@optusnet.com.au as soon as possible.

Sunday performances are 2pm matinees, all other shows commence at 8pm. The season runs Friday 8th November—Saturday 1st December. Helpers are needed on the following dates:

Sat 9th / Sun 10th
Thurs 14th / Fri 15th / Sat 16th / Sun 17th
Thurs 21st / Fri 22nd / Sat 23rd / Sun 24th
Thurs 28th / Fri 29th / Sat 23th / Sun 1st

Thank you in anticipation — Ruth deJong
BUSHFIRE SAFETY FILM

On Tuesday 17th September, a CFA / MRSC bushfire readiness short film, made in conjunction with The Mount Players, was presented at the Mountview Theatre. The high-quality 12-minute documentary features informative interviews with, among others, Life Members Tony and Terri Fox and Chris Finch, all survivors of the Ash Wednesday fires in February 1983. The theatre’s chief warden Andrew Hamilton, a key figure behind the film project, describes it as “A great piece of risk/preparedness communication. Made for residents, by residents, starring residents—a tremendous effort and a great result.”

The film provides some potentially life-saving advice and should be watched by all residents, members and friends of the company living in fire-prone areas. Copy any paste the link below to watch, and feel free to share it with family and friends:


VOLUNTEERS REQUIRED (ACTORS)
Macedon Ranges Municipal Emergency Exercise
Thursday 14th November 2013, 12pm—4pm

The emergency exercise will involve Macedon Ranges Shire Council, CFA, SES, Police, Red Cross, Ambulance Victoria, Victorian Council of Churches and other organisations. It will involve the opening of a Relief Centre (probably in Gisborne) and a number of volunteers are sought (and pets if they would like to bring them along) to act as people evacuated from a bushfire. A full briefing will be conducted prior to the exercise for their role plays.

If you are interested in helping out, please contact Andrew Hamilton
(Emergency Management Coordinator, MRSC)
Phone: T 03 54219605 I M 0417 742 138 I F 03 5422 3623
Have you ever fancied yourself a modern day Shakespeare? Or perhaps you find Noël Coward’s work something you could have written in your sleep? Or have you had an idea for a script that you would love to see on stage, but you just don’t quite know where to go from there?

The Mount Players is organising a play script writing workshop, that will take place over two Monday nights in November. A professional playwright and teacher, Ned Manning, will be running the workshops on Monday 11th and 25th. from 7:30-9:30pm. There is also a potential follow up in January or February next year.

The intention is to develop and cultivate local scripts that can potentially be used by The Mount Players in One Act Play Festivals. This will also tie in with our new award that we will be launching at the 2014 One Act Play Festival, a home-grown writers award.

There are limited places available for this professional training.

Ticket Price:

- Members of The Mount Players - $10*
- Non-Members of The Mount Players - $25

Tickets are available from Trybooking, www.trybooking.com/DQAG

*To take advantage of this membership discount you MUST contact Neil Coulson PRIOR to purchasing a ticket. Any member, who purchases a ticket at full price, will not be able to be ‘reimbursed’ afterwards.

If you have any questions, or would like to discuss this further, please contact Neil Coulson 0447 003 760 or neil.e.j.coulson@gmail.com
**Sunday 29th September**

**Official Opening of the Extension**

1. Leo Vandervalk, of *Vandervalk Room* fame
2. Janet Slattery & Pauline Garner of *Garner-Slattery Room* fame
3. At the Opening
4. President Tony Old delivers his introductory speech
5. Zoe Di Camillo, one of TMP’s youngest members, cuts the ribbon with Leo
Directorial Philosophy at the Theatre

1. Neil Coulson expounds his “A Few Good Men” theory
2. Craig Lenaine-Smith explains the meaning of Harold and Maude
3. Frank Harvey wistfully contemplates his Love Letters

4. Margaret Cameron lectures on the Great War in her Oh, What a Lovely War! dissertation while producer Cherry Servis looks on, anxious for new from the Front (or the publisher . . .)

5. Kerry Turpie is possessed by Seussical the Musical

Sunday 29th September
2014 Season Launch

www.themountplayers.com
Sunbury-Macedon Ranges Specialist School
11th, 14th, 15th, 16th October at The Mountview Theatre

Earlier this month The Mount Players hosted the Sunbury-Macedon Ranges Specialist School’s production of ever-popular musical Grease at the Mountview Theatre. It was the second production staged by the school at our theatre, following 2011’s Hey Hey! It’s Bullengarook Spectacular.

Grease was by every account an outstanding success, with four full houses of students, parents, friends, faculty and theatre-going public cheering with, laughing with, and loving the performers’ sheer joy at putting on and pulling off this bright, loud, nostalgic musical.

Grease was directed by teacher Jo Mattox and Leo Vandervalk, who regularly assists with the school’s maintenance. A solid team of school staff helped behind the scenes with costumes and props, and Bullengarook Secondary Campus Principal Brendan Nolan and myself trained up a small group of students to run the audio and lights from the bio box. Leo had requested the help of Jarrod Catt and myself with lights and sound some time earlier, but we both had difficulty committing due to work; nonetheless Jarrod was able to help keep a watchful eye on proceedings in the evenings and I was able to compile the music and sound effects in time for dress rehearsals and get along to most performances. While Jarrod and I observed that some of the boys doing the tech were either heavily concentrating or totally over it, we loved every moment of each performance.

Jarrod, myself and many I spoke to found the show, for all its vigour and energy, a deeply moving and entirely humbling experience. As someone who does a lot of sound recording and determinedly fixes things that aren’t ‘right’ using various editing skills and tools to produce a precise job, I was brought heavily back to Earth in recording Hannah, whom those who saw the show would remember as the girl in the wheelchair, with the electrifying smile, who played the “Beauty School Dropout”. Hannah speaks with great difficulty, but her patience and will to express herself and perform her line for broadcasting during the Second Act made the fussy editor in me dissolve. Children like Hannah leave a person with no room for ego; one is left only with perspective. I recorded Hannah as she spoke, and left it that way. Her smile again lit up the stage every performance when she heard her voice played back to the audience, and the audience applauded her in kind.
There were innumerable other highlights for me from the production, not the least being the occasion the lights came up for “Greased Lightning” and a girl who wasn’t supposed to be on stage was found sitting merrily behind the wheel of the ‘car’ the boys were about to work on. A sharp “Get out!” from one of the boys and the girl trotted away, having enjoyed her moment in charge of the 1955 Cadillac Cardboard DeVille.

Jarden Busuttil played Danny with focussed confidence, and was left to sing “Sandy” at the close of Act One (this was a shortened version for the school) alone in front of the curtain with spotlights on him. Jarden’s confidence never waivered and he quietly left the stage to huge applause each performance. When Jo explained that two years ago he was about the shyest boy in school who wouldn’t speak to anyone, it was obvious just how far he’d come, and how much theatre can do for a young person’s confidence. Rachael Spencer played Sandy with a charming shyness all the way through until she finally stepped out at the end (“You’re The One That I Want”), while Ryan Goforth clearly had a ball as Kenickie. I think most would agree, however, that Chelsea Mifsud stole the show every time she was on stage as Rizzo; from what I understand she wasn’t first choice for the part but she filled in and played it brilliantly, with a great voice and a fantastic stage presence that clearly showed she loved the crowd as much as it loved her. The rest of the cast was a mix of budding talent and kids who looked a little overwhelmed but pitched in for the team. Watching the show a number of times I couldn’t help but feel a unity and acceptance of differences among the cast. Maybe it was just the nature of a show about groups of friends, but no one appeared to be acting when they helped each other on and off stage or waited for the slower children or shrugged off some occasionally comical mistakes made by others. What I saw were children whose learning difficulties and disabilities were all but erased by theatre and friendship.

It will be two years before the next Sunbury-Macedon Ranges Specialist School production hits our stage. I urge everyone to try to get to see it when it finally happens. If it provides nothing more for you than an afternoon or evening of fun and laughter then you will have spent your time well. I suspect it will, however, provide you with a whole lot more.

Russell Servis, Ed
Around the Traps . . .

* * *

FIND OUT WHAT’S GOING ON AROUND THE MACEDON RANGES THROUGH THE MRSC ARTS & LEISURE WEBPAGE:


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October
12th (8pm), 13th (5pm)
18th (8pm), 19th (8pm), 20th (5pm)
25th (8pm), 26th (8pm), 27th (5pm)

November
1st (8pm), 2nd (8pm)

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THE GISBORNE SINGERS
& Ballarat Symphony Orchestra present
Mendelssohn’s “Elijah”
St Ambrose Hall (Cnr Templeton and Anslow Sts), Woodend,
Sunday 24th November, 2.30pm

“Elijah” is a major classic in the choral canon. Telling the very dramatic Old Testament story, its representation of that drama in music is something to behold. The Gisborne Singers are going to cram St Ambrose Hall with 120 performers, and—they hope—160 audience.

There is much of potential interest here for both the musically-inclined and the merely curious. The Gisborne Singers would really appreciate your support by attending and/or spreading the word. To make a booking, please phone Corinne on 5426 4649 or log onto:

JEM SHERWILL
ACCEPTED INTO VCA SECONDARY SCHOOL

The outstandingly talented Jem Sherwill, whom readers of this esteemed publication will be well aware of owing partly to editorial fandom and partly to legitimate coverage of, among other things, his show-stealing performance as “The Street Singer” in May’s production of The Threepenny Opera, will, as of next year, be a student of the Arts Secondary tough auditions, Jem, singer, pianist, and generally bloke, was accepted last month to study for his Campus. This Google the VCA entrance requirements for music and you’ll have to be an honours else to get into the place; the Secondary School standards cannot be far behind. VCA School is obviously a huge step on the way to a great career, and on behalf of The Mount Players, the understandably sycophantic editing team at StageStruck wishes Jem the very best in his schooling.
Whether you’re one of those readers who turns straight to this page to collect monthly pearls of editorial wisdom, and thus misses the show notices and everything else inside, or are an avid digester of everything StageStruck and have already got the point, allow me to finish off with a plug or two: go see *RENT* in Kyneton. I’m not just saying this because I’m in the band; it’s a brilliantly staged production, and if you have not seen it then you’ve missed out on some superb high-energy theatre (with a swag of TMP regulars in it, too).Same goes for *Barnum* at Boilerhouse, Sunbury—go see! Tickets for both shows are through trybooking.com. Do it. You’ll be supporting the things we local artists do, which are the things we love, which are the things everybody needs to bring entertainment, balance, creativity, laughter, music and wonder to their lives. You, me, us, them. It’s what we’re about. Join in. Pony up. Support us. It’s far cheaper than going to the city for a big show, and just as rewarding. No, strike that, it’s far more rewarding, for everybody.

Got something for *StageStruck*? Please submit it by 10th of the month to: mount.players@gmail.com

If you are interested in advertising in *StageStruck*, or in our show programs, or around the theatre, log onto our website and click on *Sponsor Packages* www.themountplayers.com

This newsletter was edited, printed and published by Russell Servis on behalf of Mountview Theatre: 56 Smith Street, Macedon. PO Box 216 Macedon 3440. Ph: 5426 1892
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