

# Curtain Call

## May 2010 Newsletter of the Highlands Theatre Group Inc The Highlands' Leading Amateur Theatre Group

### A CHORUS OF DISAPPROVAL

By Alan Ayckbourn

JUNE 2010

Mittagong Playhouse

Auditions were held on Sunday April 11, and the following people were successful in being selected as the Cast:

Andrew Forbes (Guy), David Furey (Dafydd), Alex Rapp (Hannah), Dean Farrow (Ian), Nicolle Bell (Fay), Norm Stanton (Jarvis), Jan Merriman (Rebecca), Fred Savill (Ted), Celine Healy (Enid), Tracey Poulter (Linda), Ted Andrade (Crispin), Ebony Hope (Bridget) and Jordan Worner (Mr Ames). Due to Jordan being unavailable opening night, Chris Anstiss will play Mr Ames for that performance, thanks Chris.

Many thanks to all those who auditioned for this Production

Thanks also to the Audition panel of Jim Cheesley (Director), Barbara Handley (Committee Rep), Jenny Smith (Campbelltown Theatre Group Inc) and Darrell Hope (Committee Rep). President Mark Davidson sat in during auditions and listened to the Panel discussions held afterwards, and was happy with the final decisions the Panel made, including the process that was worked through to reach said decisions..

Having a visiting director who has little or no prior knowledge of our local talent, discuss each auditionee and make decisions, whilst taking into account the roles, skills, matching up with players, etc, ensures we move ahead with the strongest possible cast to ensure a great show. We trust all who auditioned appreciate and understand this very open and fair process which HTG has now used for a number of years.

Rehearsals are well under way.

Synopsis:

A North-Country widower attempts to escape from his loneliness by joining the amateur light operatic society in the Welsh town to which he has been posted. By accident, rather than design, he advances from a one-line part to the lead. As the play progresses, Ayckbourn skilfully draws parallels between John Gay's *The Beggar's Opera* and the day to day activities of the society which is performing it, showing how painfully embarrassed are the British in the face of emotion and keeping us laughing in happy recognition. The National Theatre's production of the play starred Michael Gambon as the shambling, madcap producer with able support from Bob Peck Gemma Craven and Imelda Staunton. *The Guardian* said of this production "....symmetrically shaped, psychologically acute, and painfully, heartbreakingly funny."

For more information call Jim Cheesley 48898010

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### Performances:

June 18, 19, 25, 26 @ 8pm

June 20, 27 @ 2pm

July 2, 3 @ 8pm

From the Director.....Jim Cheesley

We soon move into the Playhouse for the final weeks of rehearsal. Unfortunately Ted Andrade and Lucinda Wilmot had to withdraw from the cast at the start of rehearsals, but we have been fortunate with Tracey Poulter joining us and Ted re-scheduling things and returning, to everyone's delight. From a CD of an original heavy operatic production of the *Beggars Opera*, John D'Arcy has "simplified" the songs, giving us sheet music and CD's with multiple tracks of the songs and accompaniment, we are very thankful for his time spent on this. Thank you to the cast for working through a sometimes somewhat erratic rehearsal period and everyone else involved in getting this play from page to stage



## REPORT ON THE PRODUCTION HOW TO SUCCEED IN BUSINESS WITHOUT REALLY TRYING

Following an uncertain and shaky start, 'Succeed' proved to be very popular with the audiences and just as important, with the performers as well. Not being as well known as some of the 'classic musicals', there was always the understanding that audience numbers might be lower than usual, however the response from those who attended was well above what was expected. The overall reaction from patrons that I personally overheard was ..... *'I didn't know much about this show, but I loved every minute of it'*. In fact the response was overwhelmingly positive, something I was only too happy to pass on to the cast at each performance. Having spent time listening to conversations in the foyer and noticing that there were a lot of new faces in the crowd, I can only hope that perhaps there may be some new supporters for our upcoming shows.

The cast as a whole worked above and beyond anything that I have seen in the HTG beforehand. Realising that we had a reduced rehearsal period, it was the cast in **full** that asked if they could do extra rehearsals, not only in dialogue but singing and dancing. *Thanks must go to Keith Nicholson for making his dance studio available for many weekend rehearsals which went on for up to 4 hours.* Over several weeks some of the cast were rehearsing four days a week. That sort of dedication was appreciated by me and the choreographer as well as the musical director. The results of those efforts were evident by the audience response particularly for the final dance and song sequences.

Eloise Knight's choreography brought a new perspective and style. We are well aware of the quality of music that Mike Butcher presents and this show was no different, but when Mike came to the green room to congratulate the cast on their performances and said that this show was one of the most enjoyable productions he had been involved in, the cast was greatly enheartened and responded with a superb performance that evening.

I would also like to thank the committee for its support, especially Mark Davidson who ended up being a 'quasi' production manager at very short notice. Once again I would like to stress the need for such a role, as our shows are getting bigger and better and this would lighten the load on the Director.

It can sometimes be very patronising to say that this cast was one of the best to work with, or the hardest working or whatever, but the blend of seasoned and new performers in this show worked so well together that I hope many of them will have enjoyed the experience enough to give it another go, and be a regular part of the Highlands Theatre Group in the future.

Darrell Hope

Director

'How to Succeed in Business Without Really Trying'



**Brief Report of My First Theatre Participation  
in  
*How to Succeed in Business Without Really Trying* -  
2010**

***How did I get involved?***

The word went out in Church one Sunday that the theatre production was short of members for a chorus. I was asked to consider giving Darrell Hope a ring. I attended my first rehearsal in October 2009.

***How did my participation affect the balance of my life?***

As rehearsals progressed, walks across the stage were introduced...I was still coping. A short time later great excitement: Eloise Knight was to choreograph dance routines. DANCING! That brought on sleepless nights until my participation was adjusted. On the days of rehearsal, I didn't go to the gym, swim or mow the lawn, AND on days of performance...I HAD A GRANNY NAP before the 1 ½ hour hair preparation!

***How did I contribute to the production?***

The 60's was my era. I teased my hair into the style I actually wore when I was at university. My teasing skill resulted in helping four other heads for most performances.

***Negative Aspects:***

Self imposed fright increased with each rehearsal, increased with opening night and became more manageable with each performance.

At home, lawns were knee high by the time 'the season' finished, the rain stopped and I had the inclination to push the mower.

***Positive Aspects:***

Backstage was very dark and scenery was not always moved to the same position, so it was reassuring to have a steady hand (crew and actor's) reaching out to take mine and help me down the strategically placed step.

Meeting a very nice group of people across all age groups. (A social aspect missed since retirement from TAFE education.)

My family came together to see the production, including my granddaughters.

***I have been asked if I would consider being involved again:***

Not for stage work, but definitely for 'front of house' or in another supporting way.

Trish Cole  
March 2010



**HOW TO SUCCEED IN BUSINESS WITHOUT REALLY TRYING**

**Cast report:-** What a great experience we all had.

This was a Show that did not have a smooth path by any means. From the Audition day, I felt we had a potential for a good cast, but as rehearsals commenced we lacked a necessary number of vitally important chorus members.

Being aware of the Theatre Group's commitment financially to a Show, we were also aware the Show may have been in doubt. It is hard to ask busy people to commit 100% to something when its future is doubtful, & we were mindful of the short rehearsal period, interrupted by the holiday season.

Our great Musical Director, Mike Butcher was not well, and we were so grateful to any time Ann Clipsham, our rehearsal pianist, was able to give us in her busy schedule. To both these people thanks must be given, & to Mike, Hero of the Year Award.

With our originally appointed choreographer withdrawing due to illness, we welcomed Eloise Knight. Her belief in us, her enthusiasm & understanding, are beyond words, & thanks go to Keith Nicholson for making his studios available for those Sunday evening rehearsals. Our Director, Darrell Hope, due to his leadership, encouragement & belief in us, developed a cast that was not only a happy one, but one that was the most supportive to each member within it. This is a very special thing.

As I look back in this review, I feel that perhaps, when a Musical is staged at this early time in the year, ie. February, & with the difficulties faced by availability of Clubbe Hall, illness of other key directors in their speciality, resulting in last minute changes in rehearsal schedules, the appointment of an Assistant Director would allow would allow 2 rehearsal rooms to be working at the same time, giving needed relief to the Director & full usage of all cast members at each rehearsal.

This, for me, was the happiest Show in which I have participated, & I encourage anyone to come & enjoy the theatre experience, especially in a team, that is, cast, backstage, sound, lighting, & wardrobe, such as this one.

Jan McPhail

*VERY FUNNY FARCE AT PICTON*

**THIS PRODUCTION  
HAS BEEN  
RE-SCHEDULED  
TO MAY 2011**

# Some Enchanted Evening

Rodgers and Hammerstein

Mittagong Playhouse

Director Barbara Handley 46 555571

Some Enchanted Evening is a compilation of Rodgers and Hammerstein's music. There is no dialogue to learn. We are looking for **UP TO** 5 couples of a mixed age group to be part of this lovely show. You must be of

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***FELICITY PRESENTS.....***

~Our 7<sup>th</sup> HTG Profile~

**Amanda Aiken**

**Current Occupation-** Re-  
tail Assistant at Mathers  
Shoe Store

## **Loseby Park Youth Centre—your HTG at work in the Community**

Many of you may have seen a story recently in the Local paper re Loseby Park Youth centre seeking a new tv and sound system, with games for the use of the youth of the Shire.

HTG has been able to assist with the games component and along with the generous contributions from Harvey Norman Moss Vale the following has been purchased.:-

- a Wii console (comes with one game, one handset and one nunchuck.)
- \* 3 more handsets and 3 more nunchucks so 4 can the games at the same time.
- \* extended 2 yr warranty
-

# The Highlands School of Performing Arts

offers a range of classes which may be of  
interest to our members  
.....classes are available in  
Classical Ballet (RAD) / Tap /