

Born again: fresh take on 1940s comedy about Washington corruption

COMEDY, corruption and sexy 1940s charm come to the Old Mill Theatre this June in the play *Born Yesterday*. Noel would be familiar to Old Mill Theatre audiences after writing and directing last season's *No Bed of Roses*.

Written by Garson Kanin – responsible for many Spencer Tracy and Katherine Hepburn films – it follows the uncouth, corrupt and rich junk dealer Harry Brock and what happens when he brings his showgirl mistress Billie Dawn (Britni Leslie, pictured right) to Washington DC.

After realising it was a mistake, Brock hires a journalist to educate Billie so she stays out of the way, which proves to be another misstep.

Billie becomes aware of Brock's corruption and interferes with his plans to bribe a congressman into passing legislation that would allow his business to make more money.

After being a major Broadway success, *Born Yesterday* was adapted into a 1950 film with Judy Holliday who scored an Academy Award for playing Billie.

The play experienced successful Broadway revivals in 1989 and 2011 and was again made into a film in 1993 with Melanie Griffith, John Goodman and Don Johnson.

Director Noel O'Neill said *Born Yesterday* appealed to him because of its themes of corruption within a comedy.

"I like the comedic brute force and ignorance of the Harry Brock character and the *Pygmalion*-esque quality of Billie Dawn," he said.

"She has a similar Eliza Doolittle transformation."



"The main challenge with *Born Yesterday* is taking the actors back to the 1940s and early 1950s because the characters are the sort we rarely see today and the dialogue is different," he said.

"The play also demands lots of energy from the actors because they are all very well-written character roles."

The cast of *Born Yesterday* features Adam Petersen, Britni Leslie, Robert Ross, Jack Wimhurst, Rodney Greaves, Norma Davis, Rex Gray, Carmen Mackay, Valerie Dragojevic, Neel Goodwin, Tony McLeod and Clare Roszak.

Robert and Britni were both seen together last year at the Old Mill in *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?*, Rex was in *The Beast and The Beauty*, Rodney did many plays at the theatre in the 1970s and Norma – yes, our very own theatre manager – steps up to the stage as well.

REMEMBER!

Book for opening night and enjoy cheese and wine after the show... and also meet and mingle with the cast.

***Born Yesterday* plays at 8pm, May 31, June 1, 6, 7, 8, 12, 13, 14 and 15 with a 2pm matinee June 9.**

Tickets are \$25, \$20 concession – book on 9367 8719, oldmilltheatre@iinet.net.au or online at www.oldmilltheatre.com.au.



AUDITIONS

The Dumb Waiter

By Harold Pinter

Directed by Susie Conte

Audition: July 13 (TBC)

Season: September 13, 14, 15, October 3, 4, 5 and 6

[likely performances also at Dramafest (at the Old Mill Theatre), Hills Festival of Theatre and South West Drama Festival]

The Dumb Waiter is a one-act play by 2005 Nobel Laureate Harold Pinter, written in 1957.

There's Gus and Ben. A basement in Birmingham. Two men await instructions for the next job. Gus needs matches. Ben has a newspaper. Both men have revolvers.

Harold Pinter's
The Dumb Waiter



Director Susie Conte is looking for men in their 30s and 40s.

Gus will need to have some physical humour. Ben is the strong silent type.

CHARACTER DESCRIPTIONS

GUS: Gus is a submissive, junior hit man constantly bossed around by Ben. Both Gus and Ben are protagonists of the play but the audience, also limited in knowledge, sees the play from Gus' point-of-view and empathises more with him.

Gus is more sensitive, has a conscience about his job and is bored by the stale routine of his lower-class life. He also questions the inner workings of their job more, especially with regards to the mysterious Wilson.

BEN: Ben is the senior hit man, the dominant foil to his submissive partner Gus. He runs their outfit but pays strict attention to the demands of Wilson, their boss.

He often broods silently, reads the newspaper, doesn't question their job and evades Gus' probing questions.

Please email susie.conte@gmail.com for more information.

Review: NO BED OF ROSES

"...makes Mrs Brown's Boys look like Play School"

Review by **GORDON THE OPTOM**
Extract from www.theatre.asn.au

No Bed of Roses is a very black, adult comedy, written and directed by Irish-born, multi-award-winning WA playwright Noel O'Neill.

The storyline is semi-autobiographical, based on his teen years spent in London.

[Noel's] writing skills are well-respected and he is renowned for his uncanny knack of bringing out the full depth of his characters.

The scene is the East End of London in the early '60s. The venue is a dirty, dingy kitchen-cum-dining room-cum sitting room - the kind of room where you would want to wipe your feet on the way out rather than on the way in.

Retired council street cleaner Sid (Tom Rees) and his brassy, foul-mouthed wife Sadie (Trish Farrell) have been together for more than 30 years and now simply tolerate each other.

...the front door flies open and Sadie enters accompanied by a tall, young man, carrying two suitcases.

"This is Georgie (Joe Tareha)," Sadie purrs as she strokes his broad shoulders.

Matriarchal Sadie explains they are in love and that husband Sid now has to sleep in the spare room - Georgie and she will share the marital double bed.



I saw this play two years ago in Kalamunda where this daring script came as an eye-opener.

Their cast was wonderful but here the ages of some cast members have



Nicola Chapman, Trish Farrell and Tom Rees in No Bed of Roses

been modified and the script tidied up.

This revelation of family life is very demanding and relies on the actors getting right into their sordid personalities.

Being shy or becoming embarrassed by the script would have killed the brilliantly-written effect.

Daring outfits

The girls have selected some daring outfits and Trish, an award-winning actor, has portrayed the foul-mouthed, trailer-trash mentality of Sadie perfectly.

It's an amazing depth of character that deserves an award nomination.

The chemistry and team work of the ENTIRE cast was superb, their interaction being completely natural and perfectly paced.

This is one of the most hilarious plays I have seen. It makes *Mrs Brown's Boys* look like *Play School*.

Congratulations to all concerned for a fun night out.

The laughs in this very dark, coarse and tasteless adult comedy flowed fast and furious.

Colour your world: check out the colour version of this edition at www.oldmilltheatre.com.au

STAGE DESTROYED!



But it's okay... we've built a new one!

IT'S been the star of many shows but we've finally had to bid it adieu.

And despite literally supporting many cast and crew through numerous plays and musicals over the years, the Old Mill Theatre stage is no more.

Bent, buckled and bowed, it was simply time to replace it.

As you can see from the pictures above, the old stage was taken apart bit by bit and a new stage (at right) was installed.

The new stage is much more level, which will help with set-building.



WHAT'S ON ELSEWHERE?

HE DIED WITH A FELAFEL IN HIS HAND
The Flying Scotman's Velvet Lounge



Share-house madness based on the classic 1990s cult novel.
8pm June 13, 15, 20, 22, 27 and 29 and 7pm June 16 and 23. Book on 9255 3336 or at www.TAZTix.com.au

Just Improvise's ZEITGEIST
Mount Lawley Bowling Club



An intimate evening of creepy cabaret.
7.30pm, June 21, 22 & 23. Book on 9255 3336 or at www.TAZTix.com.au

TWELFTH NIGHT
Melville Theatre



Shakespeare comedy about the separation of two twins.
8pm June 21, 22, 27, 28, 29, July 4, 5 & 6 and 2pm June 30. Book on 9330 4565 or at www.meltheco.org.au

UNWANTED WISHES
Roleystone Theatre



School holiday pantomime.
8pm July 5, 12, 13 & 19 and 2pm July 6, 7, 13, 14, 19 & 20. Book on 0409 296 939 or at www.roleystonetheatre.com.au

Andrew Lloyd Webber's CATS
Regal Theatre, Subiaco



"Purr-fect" musical hits Perth.
7.30pm, July 11, 12, 13, 16, 17, 18, 19 & 20, 2pm July 11, 13, 17 & 20 and 5pm July 14. Book on 132 849 or at www.ticketek.com.au

Breakfast sparkles with right kind of snags



THEY came, they saw, they drank, they ate.

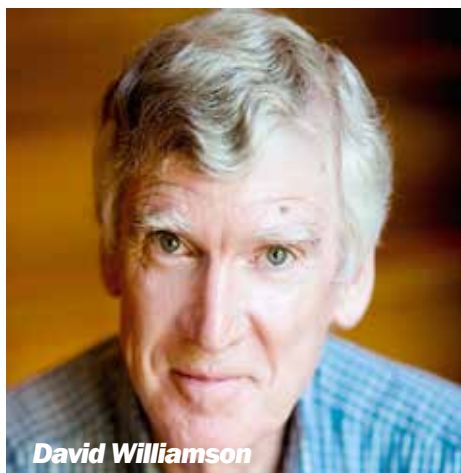
No, it wasn't ravishing hordes of Franks, Goths and Vandals or any other type of barbarian – much more civilised, thank you very much.

As you can see from the surrounding pictures, it was simply the Old Mill's annual champagne breakfast for members and friends.

The mid-April event brought them together for bottles of bubbly, sausages, eggs, bacon and more, not to mention Rex Gray's lurid green Hawaiian shirt.



COMING SOON



David Williamson

A CONFRONTING tale from the pen of legendary Australian playwright David Williamson comes to the Old Mill Theatre this August, directed by Brendan Ellis.

A Conversation explores "transformative justice" where victims and perpetrators of crime are brought together to help victims overcome their trauma while criminals face up to the real consequences of their actions.

When a single mother's son, Scott, is imprisoned for the rape and murder of a young woman, Coral arranges a meeting with the victim's upper-class parents and the prison psychologist who counselled Scott - and asks Jack Manning to mediate.

To support Coral are her brother Rob and Scott's siblings Mick and Gail. Are Coral's intentions of reconciliation pure or is there another motive?

This intense ensemble piece features Rhett Clarke, Katrina Murphy, Lis Hoffman, Gino Cataldo, Gail Lusted, Andrew Watson, Natasha Stiven and Brodie Masini.

Please note: the play is considered suitable for mature audiences.

David Williamson's *A Conversation* runs from August 2 to 17 at the Old Mill Theatre.

For updates, go to www.oldmilltheatre.com.au.

The Old Mill Times
PO Box 1390
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Registered by AUSTRALIA POST
PP 642409/00009

Play reading Wed, August 21



The Old Mill Theatre's next play reading on Wednesday, August 21, is the locally-written *Different Ways* by member John Lewington.

Supper is provided by the theatre so, for catering purposes, please let us know if you will be attending.

TIME: 7pm, Wednesday, August 21.

VENUE: Constance Ord Room, Old Mill Theatre, corner Mill Point Road and Mends Street, South Perth.

For more details, call Siobhán O'Gara on 0409 374 731 or email siobhanog@westnet.com.au.

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