

World premiere of Greek comedy set in '60s London

TYPICALLY used to highlight not understanding, the phrase "it's all Greek to me" now lends itself to the title of a play premiering at the Old Mill Theatre in May.

Written by WA playwright Noel O'Neill and directed by Valerie Dragojevic, hilarity turns to disaster in a comedy of errors set in 1960s London when a man makes a promise he cannot keep.

It's All Greek To Me is the story of Nicolous Pilankous who celebrates with a bottle of ouzo one night and suddenly gets a call from his lonely cousin Stavros in Greece.

In his drunken state, "Nicky" promises him a wife – leading to hilarious and sometimes disastrous results.

"My inspiration for the play came from the Greeks I grew up with in London in the late '50s and '60s," Noel said. "*It's All Greek To Me* is a tribute to the era.

"I was – and still am – a huge fan of Anthony Quinn who I saw play *Zorba The Greek* at the movies.

"I fell in love with how passionate it all seemed and how passionate these Greeks were with their music and dancing."

Noel is well-known to the Old Mill Theatre, directing the most recent season of *Dinner With Friends*, writing and performing in *Snow and Ash*, directing *Born Yesterday* and writing and directing *No Bed of Roses*.

Perhaps not surprisingly, the Old Mill Theatre board recognised him with a special Milly Award in January for going above and beyond the call of duty.

Since moving to Perth 12 years ago, Noel has also worked with KADS Theatre, Graduate Dramatic Society and Irish Theatre Players.

He's won numerous awards for his work and currently lectures for the Perth Actors' Collective and WA Academy of Performing Arts.

"The most interesting aspect of *It's All Greek To Me* is watching



None-too-bright Dimitri (Cameron Leese), father Nicky (Kim Taylor) and pregnant daughter Jenna (Valerie Dragojevic) at odds.

characters gradually change as the play develops," he said.

"There are lessons to be learnt through their mistakes – the rest is up to the gods."

Director Valerie Dragojevic (who also plays Jenna) brought Noel's *Snow and Ash* to life last year, winning several awards at Dramafest.

"*It's All Greek To Me* is a slice of high comedy from life," she said. "It has a philandering husband with a suicidal wife and a son who's one olive short of a Greek salad.

"I haven't directed comedy before and was keen to try it out. It's so much fun, compared to dark drama, and inspires laughter – we all need to laugh more."

Valerie said the main challenge lies in finding the truth in each character and ensuring it is expressed.

"I don't believe in playing for laughs," she said. "Leave the laughing to the audience – the actor needs to give an honest performance."

It's All Greek To Me plays at 8pm, May 2, 3, 8, 9, 10, 14, 15, 16 and 17 with a 2pm matinee May 11.

The cast features Kim Taylor, Valerie Dragojevic, Vivienne Marshall, Nada Dilevska, Emilio Evans, Cameron Leese, Jess Stenglein and Rex Gray.

REMEMBER!

Book for opening night and enjoy cheese and wine during interval, then mingle with the cast after the show

Tickets are \$25, \$20 concession – book at <http://oldmilltheatre.com.au/tickets> or call 9367 8719.



Nicky (Kim Taylor, left) tries to resist the flirtatious charms of Circe (Nada Dilevska).



PLAY READINGS

PLAY readings are back for 2014 with the first one of the year held on April 9.

Members and friends got together for the drama *Terminus* by Melbourne playwright Daniel Keane.

The next play reading will be held on June 11 with a one-act play from John Lewington.

People who have other one-act plays they would like to read should get in touch.

Other play readings will be held on August 13 and November 12. Suggestions for plays are welcome – please contact Siobhán O’Gara with your ideas on 0409 374 731 or email siobhanog@westnet.com.au.

CHAMPAGNE BREAKFAST



THE annual champagne breakfast is on again for members and friends, so get those diaries out!

Mark down Sunday, April 27 (Anzac long weekend), and get ready for champers (of course), a cooked breakfast (bacon, eggs, toast etc), fruit salad, orange juice, tea and coffee to fill-your-bell-eh!

It all starts 9am with the hard work of brekky done for you in a relaxed atmosphere.

Just \$6 per person – reply to oldmilltheatre@iinet.net.au or 9367 8719 by April 22 so we know how much food to stock.

Reviews: DINNER WITH FRIENDS

“...a meticulous and realistic assessment of the dynamics of divorce...”

Review by SHREEJA RAJAN

Extract from www.colosoul.com.au

THE Old Mill Theatre’s first production of 2014 is the Pulitzer Prize-winning *Dinner With Friends*, directed by the award-winning and highly acclaimed Noel O’Neill.

It is a meticulous and realistic assessment of the dynamics of divorce and the effect it has on the lives of those around the separating couple.

The story begins with Beth (portrayed by the excellent Maree Grayden) opening up to the serenely married Gabe and Karen about splitting up with her husband.

Over the course of the play we see them at various stages of their lives; from the day the newly married Gabe and Karen introduced Beth to her future husband Tom, to a few months after their divorce when they have supposedly found bliss in new relationships.

The range of emotions and situations that Gabe and Karen watch their friends go through makes them reflect over



Director Noel O’Neill, right, with the cast of *Dinner With Friends*.

their own marriage and also their friendships with Beth and Tom.

While every cast member provides a fine, intense performance, the star of the show is Michael Dornan, who plays Gabe.

He balances emotional gravity and comic relief remarkably.

Phil Barnett and Laila Gampfer follow up their terrific performances in last year’s *No Exit* with another amazing effort.

Maree Grayden puts in an utterly convincing performance as the wronged wife-turned-liberated divorcee.

“...wonderful blend of hilarity and character study...”

Review by GORDON THE OPTOM

Extract from www.ita.org.au



Michael Dornan

THIS wonderful blend of hilarity and character study is now being presented at the Old Mill Theatre.

The curtain-less stage is divided into Karen and Gabe’s dining area in one flat and Tom and Beth’s bedroom in another Connecticut flat.

The bedroom is built on a rotating stage with “interesting” art work by Tim Prosser.

Middle-aged Gabe (Michael Dornan) and Karen (Laila Gampfer) are happily married with kids and have invited their friends of many years around for a meal.

They understand Tom (Phil Barnett) is away on business and so only Beth (Maree

Grayden) has arrived.

Effervescent and wearisome Karen is relating to Beth every second of her recent Italian holiday with a few prompts and corrections from Gabe.

Suddenly Beth bursts into tears and explains that Tom is not “on business” but she has, in fact, asked her manipulating, two-timing husband to leave their home.

The four characters meet two at a time, trying to win each other’s support. It is these private and outspoken meetings – along with a flashback to a decade earlier – that gives us a real insight into the situation.

Skilfully and delicately directed by WAAPA lecturer and well-known scriptwriter Noel O’Neill, the play opens with an extremely funny first scene before swinging around to an intriguing glimpse of the true depth of the couples.

The American accents were well-matched and thankfully not overpowering.

A cleverly constructed story with well thought-out and fascinating dialogue.

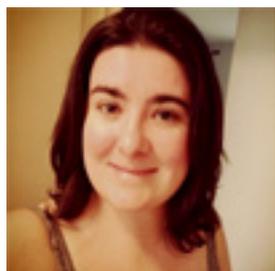
The cast had a full understanding of the mood changes, humour and understated acerbic attitudes. Their delivery was perfect whether it was passion, hate or confusion.

An excellent, very well-presented play by any standard. Highly recommended.

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

Meet your new board members

WE'VE got a bit of space this issue so thought we'd introduce a couple of the Old Mill's new board members for 2014.



MARY WOLFLA

I HAVE been involved with theatre since I was in high school in Boise, Idaho, USA, but I did not get serious about it until I was in university.

In 2005, I graduated from Butler University in Indianapolis with a Bachelor of Arts in Drama and Speech Education.

I moved to Sydney in late 2006 and started working as a stage manager for various companies.

In 2010, I was able to combine my love of education and stage management when I took up my current position as the Education and Administration Officer at Buzz Dance Theatre here in Perth.

I love working in the arts in Perth and as a newcomer to WA I was extremely impressed with the rich arts and culture scene this State continues to grow and support.

In recent years, I have worked at the Old Mill Theatre on shows with Sue Lynch (*Shape of Things*, 2009) and (*Daisy Pulls it Off*, 2011).

In May 2012, I worked with Siobhan O'Gara on *Parramatta Girls* before directing *Secret Bridesmaids' Business* in February 2013 [winner of various Milly Award and Finley Award nominations].

TIM PROSSER

I'VE been involved in theatre for more than 25 years in my work as a scenic artist and in latter years also as an actor.



I drifted into acting on stage after seven years spent as a volunteer narrator of audiobooks for the blind and have either painted stage sets or appeared in

productions (usually both) for Harbour Theatre, Stirling Players, Old Mill Theatre, Phoenix Theatre, Playlovers, Garrick Theatre and Darlington Theatre Players.

I've been lucky enough to receive Finley nominations for either best actor or best supporting actor and have received several actual awards along the way.

These include: Best Character Performance, (South West Drama Festival, 2006); Adjudicator's Certificate for Impressive Commitment to Set Design (2007 Finley Awards); Best Supporting Actor and Impressive Overall Accomplishment in Set Painting (2010 Milly Awards); Kay Duncalf Award for Best Supporting Actor (Marloo Theatre, 2011); Adjudicator's Certificate for Set Art Work on *Born Yesterday* and *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* (2013 Milly Awards) [there's probably more but you get the idea].

AUDITIONS: THE GLASS MENAGERIE

AUDITIONS are fast approaching for Tennessee Williams' *The Glass Menagerie*, directed by Susie Conte. She was responsible for the multi-award-winning *The Dumb Waiter* last year.

The season is September 5-20 and auditions will be held from **2pm Saturday, May 31**, with callbacks June 1 (if needed).

Characters required (ages given are stage ages):

- Laura Wingfield, mother, middle-aged
- Tom, her son, 20+
- Laura, her daughter, 20+
- Jim O'Connor, gentleman caller, 30+

Auditionees should prepare a short monologue in a similar style to the play, followed by a reading. To book an audition time, please contact director Susie Conte at susie.conte@googlemail.com or call 0425 866 894.



WHAT'S ON ELSEWHERE?

THE DRESSER

Limelight Theatre, Wanneroo



An actor's life and backstage strife during WWII.

8pm April 23, 24, 26, 30, May 1, 2 and 3. Book on 9571 8591 or at www.limelighttheatre.com.

SO MUCH TO TELL YOU
Garrick Theatre, Guildford



The famous young adult novel, inspired by a true story.

8pm, May 1, 2, 3, 8, 9, 10, 14, 15, 16 & 17; 2pm May 4 & 11.

Book on 9378 1990.

TWELVE ANGRY MEN
Melville Theatre



The timeless courtroom classic.

8pm, May 2, 3, 8, 9, 10, 15, 16 & 17; 2pm May 11.

Book on 9330 4565 or at www.meltheco.org.au

COSI
Phoenix Theatre, Hamilton Hill



A director tries to stage *Cosi fan tutte* with patients in an asylum

8pm May 8, 9, 10, 15, 16 & 17; 2pm May 11. Book on 9255 3336

or at www.TAZTix.com.au

THE TRIP TO BOUNTIFUL
Roleystone Theatre



Poignant story of an ageing widow.

8pm May 9, 10, 14, 16 & 17; 2pm May 11. Book on 9397 5730 or at www.roleystonetheatre.com.au

www.roleystonetheatre.com.au



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PLENTY of bits and pieces for you to take note of and get involved in during the coming months.

For updates and more info on any of these items, head to www.oldmilltheatre.com.au.

A VERY short season of one-act plays will go ahead this year, presented as "club nights" over two or three evenings at the theatre.

It's part of the drive to help revitalise Dramafest, to be held at Playlovers in Floreat this year over the Queen's Birthday long weekend.

PLANS are also continuing apace for a year of all-Australian

plays at the Old Mill in 2015 as part of commemorating the 100th anniversary of the Gallipoli landing.

THE Independent Theatre Association has decided to re-introduce the Finley Award nomination night.

Guess who's hosting the event? That's right, the Old Mill Theatre - on Saturday, January 3, 2015.

It's a chance to find out who's been nominated for what in the lead-up to the big awards night.

KEEP an eye out for this year's Sunday Serenade concerts, presented by Bel Canto Productions.

The dates are May 25, August 10, October 19 and December 14 with each concert starting 2.30pm.

Performers this year include Jay Weston, Ron Macqueen and Justin and Katherine Freund. Afternoon tea is included.

Book on 0408 855 458 or email belcanto@westnet.com.au.

Please note: these dates are subject to change so check before booking. More details at www.belcantopromotions.com.

AND finally a wish of good fortune to Harbour Theatre as it says goodbye to its Port Cineaste home and sets up residence at Camelot Theatre in Mosman Park.



COMING SOON

COMING to the Old Mill Theatre this July is *The Hatpin*, a musical theatre production inspired by the true story of Amber Murray who in 1892 gave up her son to the Makin family in Sydney.

Amber advertised her baby in a newspaper trading column in the hope of saving his life. Baby farmers took the child in return for regular support payments but actually murdered the child.

Eventually, the evil couple were arrested and tried for the murder of several infants, leading to one of the most moving criminal trials in Australian history.

Using the moral support she gains from her friendship with the free-spirited Harriet Piper, Amber fights the injustices of

circumstance and tragedy to find hope and strength.

Written by James Miller (book and lyrics) and Peter Rutherford (composer), director Graeme Johnson and musical director Paul Lawrence are bringing this production to life.

The cast includes Sarah Cosstick, Judi Johnson, Angelino Schintu, Andrea Von Bertouch, Madeleine Shaw, Mitchell Crouch, Rex Gray, Adam Salathiel, Tim Prosser, AJ Lowe, Hayley Currie, Danni Close, Sarsi Elsberry, Luke Heath, Emily Lloyd and Cassie Stafford.

The Hatpin runs from July 11-26.

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

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The Wizard of Oz

THE Wizard of Oz has been chosen as the Old Mill Theatre's last season of 2014.



It's a pantomime version of the classic family favourite featuring the original well-loved characters of Dorothy, Scarecrow, Tin Man and the Cowardly Lion but some fun additions such as an Elvis-like character.

The audience can enjoy the familiar storyline with additional songs and chorus characters that form some fun relationships along the Yellow Brick Road.

It has all the popular elements of *The Wizard Of Oz* plus extra bonuses that follow the much-loved conventions of pantomime.

Directed by Maree Grayden with musical direction by Bree Vreedenburgh, the season will run from November 28 to December 13.

Auditions will be held in late August but to express an early interest, please email oldmilltheatre@iinet.net.au. There are parts for adults and children.

Old Mill Theatre 2014 Board of Management



Phil Barnett
Chairperson



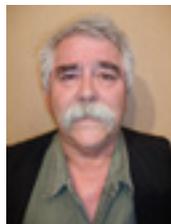
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