

Time for pantomime with *The Wizard of Oz*



Dorothy: Arianne Westcott-King



Scarecrow: Tim Prosser



Tin Man: Sarah Christiner



Cowardly Lion: Neil Cartmell

AN enchanting family pantomime version of *The Wizard of Oz* lands at the Old Mill Theatre in late November and December.

In this version from Limelight Scripts UK, Dorothy and Toto are joined by Aunt Em as they travel to Emerald City to gain the wizard's help to return to Kansas.

On the way, they are joined by Scarecrow, Cowardly Lion and Tin Man – and Elvis Presley, who has been touring Oz and can't find his way home.

Director Maree Grayden was inspired to direct *The Wizard of Oz* after a similar pantomime version of *Snow White and The Seven Dwarfs* was such a success at the Old Mill Theatre last year.

"It brought so many families into the theatre and it seemed imperative we repeat the opportunity," she said. "For some, it was their first visit to this theatre but it certainly wasn't their last."

Auditioning locally and across the broader Perth community, Maree has recruited some seasoned and talented professional performers while ensuring the show also has young cast members new to theatre.

"I have doubled the recommended number of munchkin and monkey roles to give as many opportunities as possible for young people to tread the boards," she said.

"I've been extremely fortunate in the breadth of theatre knowledge and talent within the adult cast – they have the skills and experience to really own their characters and have an absolute ball with the audience.

"They will bring to life all the much-loved interaction and conventions that define the pantomime form of theatre.

"I've also managed several coups with my production team, scoring Kylie Maree Bywaters as assistant director

for the younger chorus members, Bree Vreedenburgh as musical director and Mel Davies, choreographer of Bounce Funk Dance Company."

With a 25-year background as a performer and drama teacher, Maree created the Centre Stage South West Academy of Dramatic Arts in Bunbury and has also appeared on stage with the Old Mill, Melville, Groovy Boots and KADS Theatres and Graduate Dramatic Society.

She was recognised for her performance skills at the 2011 South West Drama Festival and Dramafest, the annual state drama festival, the same year.

Maree is also an experienced director, previously responsibly for numerous professional and corporate productions.

"I've had a break from directing shows like *The Wizard of Oz* but am now remembering how much fun it can be to have an agenda which is simply to entertain and engage an audience," she said.

"We want the story to be recognisable yet have some wow factors for a younger audience that will inspire them to see more theatre."

The Wizard of Oz plays at 7.30pm, November 28, 29, December 4, 5, 6, 10, 11 and 12 with 2pm matinees November 30, December 7 and 13 [ALL MATINEES SOLD OUT – SORRY!].

REMEMBER! Book for opening night and enjoy cheese and wine (if you're 18+) during interval then mingle with the cast after the show.

Tickets are \$30, \$25 conc, \$20 children, \$90 family (2 adults + 2 children) – book at <http://oldmilltheatre.com.au/tickets> or call 9367 8719.



Reviews: UNDER ANY OLD GUM TREE and OCTOBER

Extract by **GORDON THE OPTOM**

Source: www.ita.org.au

NOEL O'Neill is well-known for his rather risqué comedies but here his writing is in a different genre and at its very best. The first story is a tragically sad tale that was heard all too often when I was a young lad. The second is a dark comedy; again, many of us will know a similar family.

Under any Old Gum Tree is the true story of Martin O'Meara VC and only Kieran Garvey's second part on stage.

Not only does he have the challenge of a 50-minute monologue but it's also packed with every emotion. He is happy one minute, followed rapidly by severe depression. He relives the stench and horrors of his trench traumas.



Kieran, pictured above, has completely captured the fabulous depth of character created by Noel. It is a heart-rending performance that subtly packs a great deal of detail into the script and acting but without a feeling of being preached at. This is an exceptional performance.

In *October*, the front door slams and young Betty (Jayne-Louise O'Connell) enters her mum's kitchen yet again to catch her mother Shirley (Rachel Bartlett) smoking another cigarette.

Betty is angry because, despite her mother knowing she has cancer, she seems to be making little effort to help herself.

This is a dark comedy/drama. The basic storyline is one we all know, and may have had to deal with, but Noel has created two very recognisable characters, and added plenty of humour. Two very good performances.

Director Noel O'Neill has once again bravely given a chance to a couple of stage newcomers. He has skilfully guided them through the pitfalls and shown them some good stage techniques.

It is always wonderful to have someone who generously risks disaster by giving his new play to an inexperienced cast but, in both these plays, they have shown their appreciation by producing admirable performances.

Review: THE GLASS MENAGERIE "performance was something extraordinary"

Extract by **GORDON THE OPTOM**

Source: www.ita.org.au

The Glass Menagerie is Tennessee Williams' most commanding and poignant play, a triumph for a first play. The play is one of literature's best character studies and it has one of the most romantic and sensitive modern love scenes in print.

Williams has created four very complex characters. It is easy to watch this play and think what a simple storyline, hardly worth seeing, but when you get a good cast, the show lifts.

Then with an excellent cast, the whole depth of the story and the complexity of the characters suddenly awaken and the play becomes something special.

Here we have three excellent actors and Maree Grayden, whom I have admired for years, gives a stunningly rich portrayal of the mother from hell. This performance was something extraordinary.

Although Aisling McGrogan is a WAAPA girl with quite a bit of experience, I understand this is actually her first major stage performance. Her acting will make you reach for the tissue box.

Yad Sand, who has only been acting for about a year, plays Jim "the only man to have ever kissed Laura". His performance was admirable, considering the massive emotional demand of the part.

Joe Tareha conquered Tom's depth of instability: the battles with his mother, his soft-heartedness to his sister and his surprising fear of leaving home. Will he ever leave? Or is he co-dependent on the matriarch?

The wonderful original score by Fiona Davidson has been played on the Scottish fiddle. It is beautifully haunting and perfect for the memory theme.

Susie Conte, as director, has understood this wonderful play perfectly and demonstrated the numerous personality traits in each.

It is clear the costumes by Jenny Prosser are not simply about "we need an evening dress" - the colours, styles and de-

...AWARDS...

GIVEN the review of *Under Any Old Gum Tree* on the left, is it any surprise it picked up a **swag of awards at this year's Dramafest?**

Noel O'Neill picked up the Jenny McNae Adjudicator's for his script and also won the People's Choice Award.

Kieran Garvey received the award for Best Actor.



Maree Grayden and Aisling McGrogan in *The Glass Menagerie*.

sign say so much about the people wearing them. The lighting by Ben Davis is subtle and moves around the areas of the stage, creating little worlds within the drab house.

Like the director, this is one of my favourite plays. It takes a huge amount of skill to display all the facets but Susie Conte and her superb cast captured much more than one could reasonably expect from a community theatre.

If you go to see this play, and you MUST, please do not just let it skim over you. Examine each character and everything they say. A little work by you will repay you enormously. A fine production of which to be very proud.

Norma "knee-ds" to say thank you



"I thank everyone for the good wishes passed on to me from many theatre folk and audience members who wondered where I was following my recent knee replacement," Norma says.

"I can assure you all that I am fit and well and, while not yet quite ready to 'run' upstairs, I can certainly walk unaided!"

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

Up and Adam! Meet the Jigsaws director



ADAM Salathiel, left, has been involved in theatre for more years than he can remember.

Having covered every aspect of production, from acting, backstage, lighting and sound, front-of-house through to choreography, direction, and even producing shows, he

is extremely versatile and able to adapt to change at a moment's notice. Working with various theatre groups all over Perth from Roleystone to Playlovers to the Mandurah Performing Arts Centre and

Kwinana's Koorliny Arts Centre, Adam also finds time to be artistic director of nomadic theatre company Laughing Horse Productions. While this is Adam's first role as a director for the Old Mill Theatre, he is no stranger to its walls and stage, having performed as the judge in *The Hatpin*.

He also directed a one-act play for Laughing Horse Productions that appeared on the Old Mill stage as part of the 2013 Dramafest.

Adam says he is looking forward to bringing *Jigsaws* to life and says it deals with sensitive issues for mature audiences.

• *More details on the play itself are on the back page.*

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Seasons for 2015

OKAY, you want to know what's planned at the Old Mill for 2015?

As noted elsewhere, it's an all-Australian year (in honour of the Gallipoli centenary):

- February 6-21: *Jigsaws* by Jennifer Rogers, directed by Adam Salathiel.
- April 3-18: *Hail Mary*, an irreverent comedy written and directed by Noel O'Neill.
- June 5-20: *Summer of the 17th Doll* by Ray Lawler, directed by Trevor Dhu.
- July 31-August 15: *Wolf Lullaby* by Hilary Bell, directed by Alida Chaney.
- October 2-17: *The One Day of the Year* by Alan Seymour, directed by Graeme Johnson.
- November 27-December 12: *No Names, No Packdrill* by Bob Herbert, directed by Tim Prosser.

Please note: the above are possibly subject to change.

There may also be a one-act play season in July or August, although details are still to be confirmed.

Play reading



DRAFTED deadlines may get in the way but, all being well, you're hopefully reading this ***before*** the event in question.

The next play reading is being held in the theatre's Constance Ord Room on Wednesday, November 12.

Organiser Siobhán O'Gara says "come along and be

surprised" – so you will find out which script will be read on the night.

All other details are as per the norm: it's a 6.30pm for a 7pm start and supper will be provided so please RSVP for catering purposes.

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

ITA events

WITH 2015 looming ever-so-quickly, you know it will soon be the month for awards.

We're talking about January of course and kicking off the year is the Finley Award nomination evening.

The Independent Theatre Association is holding the event at the Old Mill Theatre on Saturday, January 3.

Interested members are invited to attend and see which community theatre productions have been nominated for best of the year.

Entertainment will accompany the various nominations, supper will be served and the bar will be open – dress is smart casual for the occasion.

Please reply to the theatre on 9367 8719 or oldmilltheatre@iinet.net.au if interested in attending, as numbers are limited.

The Finley Award night itself will be held on Saturday, January 17, at the Heath Ledger Theatre in Northbridge.

Tickets will be available from Ticketek shortly. "Dress to impress" is the order of the night. Speaking of award nights, that leads us to...

Milly Awards



YES, the Old Mill Theatre's own night of nights, the Milly Awards, is being held on Friday, January 23.

To be held at the theatre (where else?), all members are cordially invited to attend. Supper will be served and the bar will be open.

WHAT'S ON ELSEWHERE?

WIFE AFTER DEATH
Melville Theatre



A secret life is exposed at a funeral and causes tempers to fly.
8pm Nov 21, 22, 27, 28, 29, Dec 4, 5, 6; 2pm Nov 30. Book on 9330 4565 or at www.meltheco.org.au.

A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM
Phoenix Theatre, Hamilton Hill



50-minute version featuring students from The Drama Club.
7.30pm, Nov 28, 29, Dec 5, 6; 2pm Nov 30, Dec 7.
Book on 9255 3336 or at www.TAZTix.com.au

MIRANDA
Garrick Theatre, Guildford



Comedy about a mermaid in fish-out-of-water tale.
8pm, Nov 27, 28, 29, Dec 4, 5, 6, 10, 11, 12 & 13;
2pm Nov 30 & Dec 7.
Book on 9378 1990.

ANYTHING GOES
Limelight Theatre, Wanneroo



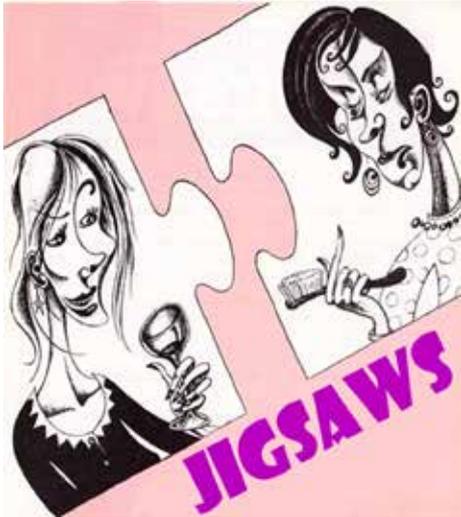
The all-singing, all-dancing Cole Porter favourite.
8pm, Nov 27, 28, 29, Dec 3, 4, 5, 6, 11, 12, 13; 2pm Dec 6, 13.
Book at www.limelighttheatre.com

THIS IS CHRISTMAS
Latvian Centre, Belmont



A madcap comedy dash through the silly season
8pm, Dec 11, 12, 13, 18, 19, 20; 5pm Dec 14, 21. Book at www.trybooking.com/FUUJ

First show of 2015: JIGSAWS



THE Old Mill Theatre's first season of 2015 is *Jigsaws* by Jennifer Rogers.

Directed by Adam Salathiel, the show opens in February and is the first in a year of all-Australian plays to commemorate the centenary of the Galipolli landing.

Jigsaws is an incisive and witty play concerning three generations of women in the same family where life seems like a jigsaw puzzle.

The puzzle is often incomplete; it's great when all the pieces fit and infuriating when they don't.

As the play opens, a Christmas visit has been taking place and the reunion is not exactly fulfilling the spirit of the season.

Revelations of their past and present surface, matched with the characters' changing attitudes and circumstances and coming to

terms with each other.

Set in the mid-1980s, the play deals with sensitive issues and is a fresh, bold and rewarding look at life.

The cast features Andrea von Bertouch as Pat, Hayley Currie as Alex, Beryl Francis as Emma, Danni Close as Monica and Judi Johnson as Sylvia.

Jigsaws plays on February 6, 7, 12, 13, 14, 15, 18, 19, 20 and 21.

Advance bookings on 9367 8719 or oldmilltheatre@iinet.net.au. Updates at www.oldmilltheatre.com.au.

• **As Adam Salathiel is a new director at the Old Mill, we thought we'd give you an introduction to him inside. Go to page 3 to find out more.**

The Old Mill Times
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AGM: December 8 Have your say!



THE Old Mill Theatre's annual general meeting will be held on Monday, December 8 – please start arriving from 7.30pm for an 8pm start.

This is your chance to have your say about how the theatre is run and also nominate for a place on the board (we'd love to have you!).

Membership renewals will also be taken. And yes, refreshments will be served after the meeting.

For enquiries, call 9367 8719 or email oldmilltheatre@iinet.net.au.

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