

No Names, No Pack Drill: quintessential Australian play delivers wartime romance

LOYALTY, honour and love are explored in the Old Mill Theatre's latest offering, the quintessential Australian play *No Names, No Pack Drill*.

Written by Bob Herbert and directed by Kristen Twynam-Perkins, it's been described as a romantic drama based, in part, on an incident involving Herbert's sister and an American soldier at Kings Cross.

No Names, No Pack Drill is set in the Sydney summer of 1942 and looks at the effect of the so-called "Yankee invasion" during World War II.

The story focuses on Kathy, a young married woman who lives in Kings Cross, who wakes up the morning after a party to find a US marine asleep on her couch.

He is absent-without-leave, looking for a way back to the US – and what happens next changes the trajectory of both their lives.

The play was later adapted into the 1985 film *Rebel*, featuring Matt Dillon, Bryan Brown and Debra Byrne, winning five AFI (Australian Film Institute) awards.

"I'd heard the Old Mill Theatre was looking for a new director for its season of *No Names, No Pack Drill* and, having previously directed the play 13 years ago at Roleystone Theatre, I put my hand up," Kristen said.

"I have always loved the story and the characters in this play – for me, it is about the characters, context and story more than anything else."

With more than 20 years' experience as a performer, director and choreographer, Kristen has more than 70 productions to her credit, working with Playlovers, Roleystone, Stirling, Garrick, Marloo, Limelight and KADS Theatres on *Working*, *Curtains*, *Bare*, *Eurobeat*, *The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee*, *Spamalot*, *Grotesque Playground Injuries* and *My Fair Lady*.



No Names, No Pack Drill is set in Sydney during World War II and features Joel Sammels, left, Sjaan Lucas, Melissa Merchant and Cameron Leese.

In 2008, *Bare* was named best musical at the annual Finley Awards with Kristen also nominated for best choreographer and best director while, most recently, she appeared in *Graceland*, winner of the Jenny McNae Adjudicator's Award at the 2015 Dramafest.

Her work as a drama teacher at Helena College has also kept her busy, directing *The Laramie Project*, *The Laramie Project: 10 Years Later*, *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead*, *Cloudstreet*, *The Importance of Being Earnest*, *Seussical*, *Honk*, *The Seussification of Romeo and Juliet* and *Peter Pan*.

"The main challenge with *No Names, No Pack Drill* is the dated language," Kristen said.

"It can come across as being quite dry at times and this creates a bit of a static feel to the piece. To overcome this, we have focused on the characterisations."

The cast features Melissa Merchant, Sjaan Lucas, Sam Barnett, Cameron Leese, Paul Treasure, Joel Sammels, James Smith, Caelan Steedman and Norma Davis.

No Names, No Pack Drill plays at 8pm December 4, 5, 10, 11, 12, 16, 17, 18 and 19 with a special 4pm matinee December 13 (matinee includes free Christmas refreshments and complimentary glass of champagne).

It is the seventh and final show in a year of all-Australian plays at the Old Mill Theatre to commemorate the centenary of the Gallipoli landing in 2015.

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



Mrs Palmer (Norma Davis, left) is a no-nonsense landlady in *No Names, No Pack Drill*, suspicious about what Kathy (Melissa Merchant) and the two-faced Tiger (Sam Barnett) get up to.



Milly Awards: new judge



WE'RE sure you've kept Friday, January 22, free to attend the annual Milly Awards.

Keep an eye on www.oldmilltheatre.com.au and the Old Mill Theatre Facebook group for more details as the event gets closer.

But looking ahead to 2016, we're pleased to confirm the judges for the year will again be Jarrod Buttery and Meredith Hunter, who will be joined by experienced drama teacher and award-winning director Vanessa Jensen.

Sundowner success

AS A start to the festive season, a champagne sundowner was held on November 15 at the theatre for members involved in front-of-house duties.

Thanks to Madeleine (Rennie) and daughter Robyn who produced a wonderful assortment of finger foods to accompany the champagne and perfect weather.

About 25 of our volunteers enjoyed an afternoon get-together to talk over the events of the year and discuss the forthcoming one.

It is intended to make this a regular event on the calendar to say thank you to all our front-of-house helpers who are an essential part of all productions.

Review: THE ONE DAY OF THE YEAR “...comes close to faultless...”

Extract by **GORDON THE OPTOM**

Source: www.ita.org.au

THE One Day of the Year was sensitively written in 1958 by a 31-year-old Fremantle lad, Alan Seymour. Alan had a very full life, living in several countries and writing extensively for radio and TV.

This is his most popular play and, unlike so many half-a-century-old scripts, it does not show signs of ageing.

The messages and visions of family life are still as relevant today. Sadly, aged 87, Alan died in March this year.

The 1958 scene is a lower-class, family home in a high-density housing area of Sydney.

At the rear of the stage is a rostrum with two sets, a kitchenette and Hughie's bedroom. At the front of the stage is the sitting room.

The construction and decoration of this first-rate set was by Phil Barnett, Travis McCurry, Calvin Munro, Michiel van Doorn and Sarah Christiner.

Sitting around the kitchen table, is the man of the house, bigoted and opinionated Alf (Chris Henderson) who is lecturing an old digger and lifetime friend Wacka (Tom Rees) about the bloody Poms and Italians that are pouring into the country.

After all, tomorrow will be Anzac Day, when Australia is solely for the Aussies! Wacka has heard it all before but tolerantly listens.

Alf's long-suffering wife, Dot (Valerie Henry) arrives home with the shopping, only to find that not a single chore has been done in the house.



Hughie (Matt Randall) and Jan (Carmen Miles) in *The One Day of the Year*.

The group chatting in the kitchen don't hear the arrival of university student, Hughie (Matt Randall), Dot and Alf's son, coming through the bay windows at the rear of the house.

Hughie is with a fellow student, his girlfriend Jan (Carmen Miles), a young lady from the posh North Shore, certainly not Alf's type.

The couple sit on the bed and discuss an



Chris Henderson, left, and Matt Randall in *The One Day of the Year*.

idea for a controversial newspaper article they have in mind, which is bound to cause family conflict.

The young, experienced director Brendan Ellis was very ably assisted by Hannah Moran. Every now and then there is a community play that comes close to faultless.

It is obvious this play has had a huge amount of work put into every aspect of the production.

Christine Ellis' set had genuine furniture of the era, as well as the paint colours – especially the arsenic green kitchen units, the old-fashioned radios, an old range cooker and an oak dining room dresser.

The lighting design by John Woolrych had just the correct hue to give that incandescent lamp feel to the settings; then there were small spots that just give a touch of isolation for certain brief monologues. The choice of music by Josh Lang had the audience quietly joining in with Pat Boone and Perry Como.

The tech operation was a little variable, with a couple of pre-empts and a missed light switch on. The costumes brought back memories and smiles, from Alf's ill-fitting double-breasted demob suit to the ladies immaculate cotton dresses. The whole production was smoothly supervised by stage manager Ruhama Geiger.

This whole production relied upon the subtlety of the acting showing a full grasp of the circumstances, along with the old-style family values.

The result was exceptional; the actors often had tears in their eyes as the conflict grew. Five good, solid and moving performances.

Chris was outstanding as the drunken father and the chemistry of the others created a truly believable group. Matt gave his best performance yet, superb as the son torn between his new love and misguided parents.

This is NOT yet another Anzac play, but a wonderful character study and a daring look at the Anzac day celebrations.

An excellent show by a dedicated and talented team – I hope Alan saw it from above.

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

Yes, we had the form last issue - but it's here again because some people haven't renewed their memberships yet



OLD MILL THEATRE
PO Box 1390, South Perth WA 6951
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Membership fees are due on October 1 each year. Please complete ALL areas of the form below and post to the above address to receive information on the interesting mix of plays and theatre activities planned for 2016.

APPLICATION or RENEWAL-NEWSLETTER/ACTIVE MEMBERSHIP 2015-2016
TAX INVOICE ABN 19250378001

NAME.....
ADDRESS.....
POSTCODE.....
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We appreciate people completing this form, even if you are a long-time member, because it helps us maintain up-to-date records. Please write email addresses LEGIBLY. If no change, write "as before". If you're a new member, welcome aboard!

SUBSCRIPTIONS from October 1, 2015, will be unchanged:
Newsletter only: \$12 per year, full membership: \$20 per year (double \$30)
[Full membership entitles you to act, direct and be an active member of the theatre. Our "membership year" runs from October 1 to September 30]

FOR ALL MEMBERS: If you would like to assist with front-of-house during a season, please tick this box and we will contact you. []

For active members: please tick your areas of special interest: ACTING [] SINGING []
DIRECTING [] STAGE MANAGEMENT [] SET BUILDING [] LIGHTING/SOUND []
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ANYTHING ELSE? [] (please indicate).....

Cheques should be made payable to the Old Mill Theatre and sent with this completed form to the address at the top of the page. Alternatively, you can pay by credit card:

VISAMASTERCARD number: Exp.....
Amount: \$

OFFICE USE: Date received Amount Cheque/credit card
Receipt Category

WHAT'S ON ELSEWHERE?

SILHOUETTE
Garrick Theatre, Guildford



Australian premiere of mystery thriller full of twists.
8pm Nov 27, 28, Dec 2, 3, 4 & 5; 2pm Nov 29. Book on 9378 1990 or bookings@garricktheatre.asn.au

LOOKING BACK
Melville Theatre



Magical medley of musicals.
8pm Nov 26, 27 & 28, Dec 3, 4, 5; 2pm Nov 28.
Book at www.meltheco.org.au or 9330 4565.

SAUCY JACK & THE SPACE VIXENS
Phoenix Theatre, Hamilton Hill



Cheers meets Red Dwarf meets Rocky Horror in cult UK musical.
8pm Nov 27; Dec 3, 4, & 5; 7pm & midnight Nov 28. Book at blakyak.com.au

SWEET CHARITY
Limelight Theatre, Wanneroo



The classic Neil Simon musical.
8pm Nov 27, 28, Dec 2, 3, 5, 9, 10, 11 & 12; 2pm Dec 5 & 12,
Book on 0499 954 016 or at www.limelighttheatre.com.

BABES IN THE WOOD
Roleystone Theatre



A family pantomime by GRADS.
8pm Dec 3, 4, 5, 9, 11, 12, 16, 18 & 19; 2pm Dec 5, 12 & 19
Book at www.roleystone-theatre.com.au





2016: looking ahead

THE Old Mill has almost finalised its seasons for 2016.

The schedule so far is outlined below:

- **February 12-27:** *It's All Greek to Me Two* by Noel O'Neill, a sequel to his popular 2014 play, pictured. Directed by Noel or Valerie Dragojevic.
- **April 8-23:** Play title still to be confirmed but directed by Tony Howes.
- **June 10 -25:** *Closer* by Patrick Marber, directed by Trevor Dhu.

- **September 12-18:** Season of one-act plays (to be confirmed).
- **October 14-29:** *Honour* by Joanna Murray-Smith, directed Dale James
- **December 2-17:** *Scrooge the Musical*, directed by Katherine and Justin Freind.



The Old Mill Times
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AGM

December 7

HERE'S your chance to have your say on what's going on at the Old Mill Theatre.

The annual general meeting will be held on Monday, December 7, with a 7.30pm for 8pm start.

Two vacant board positions need to be filled... so get your skates on and come along!

Plus we need members there so we reach official quorum for the meeting.

For all queries relating to the AGM, call Norma Davis on 9367 8719 or email oldmilltheatre@inet.net.au.

Old Mill Theatre 2015 Board of Management



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