

It's All Greek To Me Too!: world premiere of sequel to award-winning comedy smash

FOLLOWING the smash hit comedy *It's All Greek To Me* at the Old Mill Theatre in 2014, Perth playwright Noel O'Neill has penned a sequel for even greater hilarity-matched-with-disaster.

The Planks, a Greek-English family living in '60s London, return in *It's All Greek To Me Too!* with family patriarch Nicky finding himself in all sorts of bother.

After becoming matchmaker for his former girlfriend Circe and cousin Stavros, the couple went off to live in Greece – but, after a few months, Nicky soon learns the marriage is a disaster.

Circe is completely disappointed by the domestic conditions in Greece with no hot water, no TV and a house occupied by a goat and chicken, so she returns to London and puts a curse on Nicky.

With Christmas coming, little money coming in, a pregnant daughter, a son about to get engaged, a suicidal wife, a crooked seer and an eye on the girls in his life, Nicky must find a way to get the curse lifted...

Noel, who co-directs the show with Valerie Dragojevic (also on stage as Jenna), said the sequel was simply a result of the fun experienced by the cast and crew during the original *It's All Greek To Me*.

"They literally asked me to write the sequel so we could all work together again and I just felt there could always be more," he said.

"The hardest thing to write is comedy and to keep it fresh – writing drama is so much easier because everyone gets



In *It's All Greek To Me Too!*, Stavros (Andre Balzelli, left) doesn't know what to make of Cassandra (Berti Moso) much to the bafflement of Andronikus (Rex Gray) and Nicky (Kim Taylor).

to say great dramatic speeches they never get to say in real life.

"But comedy is different because the responsibility to make it funny is greater and I want the audience and cast alike to appreciate the humour and enjoy it."

Involved in theatre for more than three decades, Noel is currently a lecturer at the WA Academy of Performing Arts and has received a plethora of awards over the years for writing, directing and acting.

It's All Greek To Me was no exception, picking up Milly Awards for best production, best director, best actor, best supporting actor and outstanding comedy performance, as well as two Finley Award nominations.

Despite *It's All Greek To Me Too!* being a sequel, Noel said prior knowledge of the first play isn't required.

"The character Nicky speaks to the audience throughout the play so the audience will pick up where the last play left off," he said. "But this play also stands up by itself."

The cast features Kim Taylor, Rex Gray, Valerie Dragojevic, Cameron Leese, Nada Dilevska, Vivienne Marshall, Berti Moso, Andre Balzelli, Aimee Nicholls, Sofie Reidy-Crofts and Charlotte Weber.

It's All Greek To Me Too! plays at 8pm February 12, 13, 18, 19, 20, 25, 26 and 27 with a 2pm matinee February 14 and 3pm matinee February 21.

All proceeds from the 3pm matinee on February 21 will be going to the South West Bushfire Appeal. A donation box will also be on hand for people wishing to donate more to the appeal.

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



A proposal is on the cards in *It's All Greek To Me Too!* with Dimitri (Cameron Leese, left) and Katarina (Aimee Nicholls).



AUDITION: The Habit of Art

Director: Tony Howes

Auditions: 2pm-5pm, February 6

Call backs: 2pm-5pm, February 13

Location: Old Mill Theatre

Season: April 8-23

Actors are rehearsing a play called *Caliban's Day* at the Royal National Theatre and Benjamin Britten, sailing uncomfortably close to the wind with his new opera *Death in Venice*, seeks advice from his former collaborator and friend WH Auden. During this imagined meeting in 1973, their first for 25 years, they are observed and interrupted by, among others, their future biographer and a young man from the local bus station.

For ALL enquiries, contact director Tony Howes on kathowen@bigpond.net.au.

CAST REQUIRED (all stage ages):

The accents throughout should be "educated English" but definitely not upper-class aristocratic. Stuart may have a slight Cockney/southern London accent.

FITZ (plays WH Auden in the play-within-the-play): a physical resemblance to WH Auden is not required – just an actor who might be believed to be 60 or thereabouts. He needs to be able to play the "real actor" and the "play character" so we understand the difference.

HENRY (who plays Benjamin Britten): no physical resemblance needed. To be played as if in his 50s – a sensitive type.

DONALD (who plays Humphrey Carpenter): The "actor" is nervous and insecure; the "character" he plays is intelligent and forthright.

TIM (who plays Stuart): a young actor (20s) with an obviously good physique and confident manner.

AUTHOR (Neil): any age. Frustrated by the interference in his writing. Energetic.

KAY: the stage manager in the play. 50s/60s. Strong, phlegmatic, personable.

CHARLIE: a young boy soprano (act one).

GEORGE/GEORGINA: assistant stage manager. A 20s male in the original but could be female.

JOAN: boy soprano's chaperone. Matronly, small role.

MATT/MATTY: does sound for the play. A 20s male or female (as for George). Small role.

TOM/THOMASINA: rehearsal pianist. Plays the music on keyboard.

RALPH: dresser. Small role (possibly one of the crew).

BRIAN: walk-on only (possibly one of the crew).

Review: NO NAMES, NO PACK DRILL "...a pleasure to watch..."

By **KIMBERLEY SHAW**

Source: www.stagewhispers.com.au

No Names, No Pack Drill is the final production in Old Mill Theatre's 2015 season of Australian plays. This Bob Herbert play is set in Sydney, during World War II.

Central character Kathy is brilliantly played by Melissa Merchant, who captures this no-nonsense single girl beautifully, with whom the audience quickly bond.

Like all of the ladies in this production, she looks like she has stepped out of a 1942 *Women's Weekly* with outstanding wartime costuming, hair and makeup.

Catalyst for action, Henry 'Rebel' Potter, is played with depth by Cameron Leese. Very convincing, his southern American accent is perhaps a little too accurate, as it is sometimes difficult to catch all of his dialogue.

Sjaan Lucas is sweet as flibbertigibbet Joycie while Norma Davis revels in the busybody bitchiness of nasty landlady Mrs Palmer.

Sam Barnett is every inch the larrikin Aussie conman and looks perfect as 'Tiger' Kelly while Paul Treasure gives a beautifully nuanced and complete performance as Detective Sergeant Browning.

The remaining men were all in desperate need of haircuts but, despite this distraction,



Director Kristen Twynam-Perkins, third from right with some of the *No Names, No Pack Drill* cast.

Joel Sammels plays Bernie well and promising stage debuts were made by Caelan Steedman and James Smith.

The single set was solidly constructed and properties were generally accurate to the period, with no glaring anomalies.

John Woolrych's no-nonsense lighting plot was operated well by Catherine O'Donoghue and, although a nearby concert added some unplanned Kings Cross background noise, Simon Winton's sound design worked well.

A thoughtfully directed, well-performed show that was a pleasure to watch.

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

THE AGM on December 7 provided some changes to the board: Rex Gray is now chairman with Phil Barnett vice-chairman. Justin Freind has also joined as a board member.

The following is an edited extract of Phil Barnett's outgoing chairman's report. The full version can be found on the theatre's website:

This year has been a busy and productive one for the theatre. Our "year: started with another pantomime, *The Wizard of Oz*, directed by Maree Grayden with Kylie Bywaters and Bree Vreedenburgh. This production was extremely well-attended and was almost sold out before opening night. Once again, Tim Prosser's art work attracted many appreciative comments.

First in our all-Australian year came *Jigsaws* by WA writer Jennifer Rogers. This was directed by newcomer Adam Salathiel and was well-received with many of the audience relating to the family dynamics on stage.

Season two saw another new play by writer Noel O'Neill – *Hail Mary*, about a group of unconventional nuns determined to save their convent from threatened closure. This was so well-attended we scheduled an encore performance.

June saw an Australian classic, *Summer of the Seventeenth Doll*, directed by Trevor Dhu. Audiences supported this well-known play with a 95 per cent overall attendance rate.

In August, we had a somewhat controversial play, *Wolf Lullaby*, by WA writer Hilary Bell, based on a true story of child murder and directed by another newcomer, Alida Chaney. While this did not attract

large audiences, those who braved the subject were treated to some powerful and moving performances.

October saw *The One Day of The Year*, directed very ably by Brendan Ellis, a young director who stepped in after the original director was unable to proceed. He was ably supported by an experienced cast able to assist him with aspects of life in the decades before he was born.



We decided to show a short season of one-act plays in September. Unfortunately, one could not proceed but we presented *Armistice Day* by Noel O'Neill and *Dolls From The Sky* by Yvette Wall. These were also shown at both local drama festivals and were well-received all round.

The series of bi-monthly play readings was unfortunately not able to be scheduled in 2015 but we hope to be able to re-instate this in coming months. Late April again saw our annual champagne breakfast, an event always enjoyed by all.

Justin Freind continued the *Sunday Serenade* series of afternoon concerts which are always very popular and these will continue in 2016.

We have not spent all of our energies on shows: a fair degree of re-painting is on the agenda, some of which has been started. Many thanks go to new member John Woolrych, who has spent many hours re-organising our new lighting system, ably assisted by John Spurling.

Many many people, too numerous to mention, help out with the theatre, mostly unseen and sometimes not acknowledged. They are the unseen part of the iceberg, the top of which you see on stage. A huge thank you to all of you.

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

MILLY AWARDS: RESULTS!



THE annual Milly Awards were announced on January 22; a full list of winners is below:

BEST PRODUCTION: *Wolf Lullaby* (Director Alida Chaney).

BEST DIRECTOR: Noel O'Neill (*Hail Mary*).

BEST ACTOR: Phil Barnett (*Summer of the Seventeenth Doll*).

BEST ACTRESS: Anna Head (*Summer of the Seventeenth Doll*).

BEST SUPPORTING ACTOR: Tom Rees (*The One Day of the Year*).

BEST SUPPORTING ACTRESS: Beryl Francis (*Jigsaws*).

BEST STAGE MANAGER: Ruhama Geiger (*The One Day of the Year*).

BEST SET: *Wolf Lullaby*.

BEST COSTUMES: *Hail Mary*.

MEMORABLE MILLY: Shirley Toohey for an outstanding performance in *Summer of the Seventeenth Doll*.

SILLY MILLY:

a) Rex Gray for wardrobe malfunctions in *Hail Mary*.

b) The annoying cupboard door in *The One Day of the Year*.

c) Phil Barnett for going down with food poisoning and arriving two minutes before curtain up at the matinee of *Summer of the Seventeenth Doll*.

MEMBER OF THE YEAR (joint): John Woolrych and John Spurling.

ADJUDICATORS' CERTIFICATES:

1. Val Henry for an outstanding dramatic performance in *The One Day of the Year*.

2. Melissa Merchant for an outstanding dramatic performance in *No Names, No Pack Drill*.

3. Paul Treasure for a cameo performance as Detective Browning in *No Names, No Pack Drill*.

4. Dale James for seamlessly taking over a part in *Hail Mary* at short notice.

5. Julia Hern for "suffering for one's art" in *Wolf Lullaby*.

6. Adjudicators' encouragement certificate to Flynn Vincent for his expertise in coping with the lighting in *Summer of the Seventeenth Doll* at short notice.

7. For "saving our bacon" to Brendan Ellis for stepping in to direct *The One Day of the Year*.

8. For "saving our bacon" to Kristen Twynam-Perkins for stepping in to direct *No Names, No Pack Drill*.

9. Caroline McDonnell for an outstanding comedy performance in *Hail Mary*.

10. Cassidy Bodenham for stage-managing *No Names, No Pack Drill*.

11. Emma Ketley for total commitment to backstage, props and cast in *Summer of the Seventeenth Doll*.

12. Alide Chaney for sensitive presentation of difficult subject matter (*Wolf Lullaby*).

All photos above by Sarah Christiner.

WHAT'S ON ELSEWHERE?

**DON'T SHOOT THE MESSENGER/
THE BROKEN SLIPPER**
Limelight Theatre, Wanneroo



A newspaper comedy and Cinderella like you've never seen.
8pm Feb 12, 13, 19, & 20.
Book on 0499 954 016 or at
www.limelighttheatre.com.

**SAUCY JACK AND THE
SPACE VIXENS**
Rigby's Bar, Perth CBD



Cheers meets Red Dwarf meets Rocky Horror in cult UK musical.
8pm Feb 18, 19 & 20. Book at
fringeworld.com.au

INSIDE JOB
Melville Theatre



Mystery thriller keeps 'em guessing with world of intrigue
8pm Feb 19, 20, 25, 26, 27,
March 3, 4 & 5; 2pm Feb 28.
Book on 9330 4565 or at
www.meltheco.org.au.

UNDER MILK WOOD
All Saints' College



Olivier Award-winning actor plays all 69 roles
7pm February 26. Book at
www.allsaints.wa.edu.au

AVENUE Q
Phoenix Theatre, Hamilton Hill



A naughty musical romp through the ABCs of life.
8pm March 3, 4, 5, 10, 11, 12,
17, 18 & 19; 2pm March 13.
Book at www.phoenixtheatreinc.com.au

Things you need to know...

FINLEY AWARDS: OLD MILL SUCCESS

CONGRATULATIONS to the winners announced at the 2015 Finley Awards presentation. The Old Mill Theatre received the following:

- Old Mill Theatre: Sheila Buchanan Achievement Award for presenting a year of Australian plays.
- *The One Day of the Year*: in the top 10 plays for 2015.

• Kath Carney: adjudicators' certificate for imaginative and effective lighting design for *Jigsaws*.

• *The One Day of the Year*: adjudicators' certificate for authentic costume, set and period atmosphere.

• Tessa Bevilacqua, *Wolf Lullaby*: Brian Maddox Award for Best Youth in a Play.

For a full rundown, go to www.ita.org.au.

AUSTRALIA DAY HONOURS

LONG-time members of the Old Mill, Dr David Goodall and Milton Fairclough, were named in the 2016 Australia Day honours.

Dr Goodall was named a Member of the Order of Australia for his lifelong service to science as an academic, researcher and author.

Mr Fairclough was also named a Member of the Order of Australia for his service to veterans. Congratulations to both.

LESS POSTAGE, MORE EMAIL

DUE to the recent increase in postage charges, we will now be sending as much information to everyone by email.

This particularly applies to the bi-monthly newsletters, *The Old Mill Times*, and we ask that as many people as possible agree to accept this method of receiving the theatre's information.

We will, of course, continue to send items by mail to people who do not have internet access, as well as to other community theatres.

WEBSITE PROBLEMS

YOU may have noticed we've had a few website problems over the past month.

The website was damaged due to a security vulnerability and has had to be restored from a backup. This has resulted in the website being unavailable at times and old content re-appearing.

We are hoping this will be resolved as soon as possible but, if for any reason, you cannot access the website, please call 9367 8719 or email oldmilltheatre@inet.net.au for all enquiries and bookings.

SUBMISSIONS FOR 2017

EXPRESSIONS of interest are sought from people interested in directing a production for 2017. Based on audience feedback, we are particularly looking for someone to submit a well-known musical. Call 9367 8719 or email oldmilltheatre@inet.net.au.

Play readings back for 2016



internationally-renowned Australian playwrights and plays written by Old Mill members and local writers.

And we hope to revive this tradition and present a varied and interesting selection of plays.

The board encourages members to suggest plays they would like to hear read in the comfort of the Constance Ord Room among friends and like-minded thespians.

It also welcomes submissions of locally written material. This is a wonderful opportunity for directors to hear a play read aloud with a view to producing it and a chance for local playwrights to workshop their scripts.

PLAY READING DATES (put them in your diary now):

- Wednesday, March 9.
- Wednesday, May 18.
- Wednesday, August 3.
- Wednesday, September 28.
- Wednesday November 16.

Time: 6:30pm for light refreshments and 7pm for the start of the play reading.

For enquiries, contact Siobhán O’Gara on 9361 1530, 0409 374 731 or siobhanog@westnet.com.au.

Keep an eye on the website and our Facebook group for play titles as they are confirmed.

AFTER a hiatus last year, the play reading program has returned to the Old Mill Theatre in 2016 by community demand.

Previous programs have included international stage hits, Greek classics, plays by

The Old Mill Times
PO Box 1390
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Champagne breakfast



EASTER is earlier this year so we need to think about the Old Mill Theatre’s annual champagne breakfast a bit earlier as well.

It’s looking like a date in April, to be confirmed, so keep an eye on our website and Facebook group to find out when it’s all happening. You don’t want to miss out on the champagne, now do you?

All members and friends welcome – once the date is confirmed, be sure to RSVP on 9367 8719 or oldmilltheatre@iinet.net.au for catering purposes.

Old Mill Theatre 2016 Board of Management



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