

Gems

The logo for 'peridot' is enclosed in a green, irregular hexagonal shape with a white background. The word 'peridot' is written in a lowercase, sans-serif font.

Print Post Approved PP 333729/00013

Issue 336 May 2016

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Dear Friend

President's Prattle



The One Act Play season is done and dusted ... well almost! The cast and directors of the three plays are now planning to participate in one or more of the OAP festivals which are held all over Victoria from June to September. The Peridot entries will be in friendly competition with those from other theatre groups in what is a wonderful celebration of community theatre.

Meanwhile, rehearsals for our next full length play, *Ancient Lights*, have begun in earnest.

Nothing stands still, either in life or theatre. Two of our long term Board of Management members, Gail Brackley (Secretary) and Ian Carlsson (Front of House Manager) have decided to take a break from committee duties. Both Gail and Ian have worked tirelessly for Peridot, far beyond the scope of their portfolios. Their contribution has been greatly appreciated.

I'd like to extend a very warm welcome to our new Front of House Manager, John Holloway. John is widely experienced in the field, having been FOH Supervisor for Marriner Theatres (Princess, Regent, Comedy and Forum Theatres). He has also been involved with theatre administration for many years in Melbourne and Sydney, and worked for two years with The English National Opera in London. John has already embraced his new role – some of you would have seen him around the foyer during the One Act Play season.

The next Prattle will be winging its way to you from England or maybe Ireland, free wi-fi willing! I hope to report on a production of "Othello" at the Abbey Theatre in Dublin.

I also have a very exciting event in Brighton (the English one), but I'll sign off with an enigmatic smile on that one ...



John Holloway, our new Front of House Manager.

One Act Play Season - Victorian Drama League Review

Reviewed by Ken Barnes – April 16 2016 (matinee)

Peridot's one act play seasons have become popular with audiences of all ages partly because they bring to the stage a variety of themes by imaginative writers and directors and are performed to a generally high standard by gifted actors.

The 2016 season was no exception.

RAIN

by Jessica Messenger

Directed by Alastair Rice

Assistant Director Gill Collard

This was a story about a young man struggling to come to terms with the death of his father and attempting to handle relationships with his introspective mother and two young woman friends.

Jon Italiano did a good job in the lead role of Adam and was able to convey the young man's angst and fractured interpersonal reactions to the audience.

Leanne Jackson was equally convincing as Adam's mother, Karen.

It was a little more difficult to connect with the two young women (Fay and Sarah), played by Jessica Lawrence and Hailley Reynolds. While their movements and mannerisms were convincing, both actors could have delivered their lines with more clarity and projected their personalities more effectively to the audience.

Ben Edmunds played a social worker named Steve who appeared from time to time, one presumes at the invitation of Adam's mother, though this was not clear. The story was tightly compressed and it was a little difficult to come to grips with the characters partly because of the regular scene changes and this reviewer's unfamiliarity with the vocabulary and diction of today's young people. Despite these limitations, Rain was an interesting way to open proceedings at Peridot.

COMMITTED

Written and directed by Alison Knight

The second play lightened the mood as we were taken on a whimsical journey through the machinations of a Blackstone College's Parents and Teachers Association as it comes to grips with an attempt by the new vice principal to replace some of the school's traditional ways of doing things.

The laughs kicked off at the first committee meeting with the various participants expressing conflicting and often self-serving views to a gradually impatient chairman in response to the vice principal's ideas.

The fun continued as plans were set in place for speech night, leading to a straining of relationships and a final catastrophic outcome.

In a generally competent and well-balanced cast there were several stand-out performances. Committee chairman Frank was played with appropriate gravitas and restraint by Peter Fowler; Joe Fairhurst was well-cast as the equally grave and pedantic treasurer, Gordon; Susie Sparkes was a very appealing (but occasionally acerbic) Polly; Damian Jones was an imposing figure as Dave the VP; Sue Rosenwax was a very strident Heather; and Clare Hutton was a credibly flirty and briefly smitten, Di.

The two actors that engaged my funny bone most effectively were Damian Vuleta as Nick, the exasperated organiser and Stephanie King – an absolute riot as the committee secretary and morally stringent, Zoe.

The pace was fast with seamless scene changes throughout what was a continuously mirth-provoking performance. Both the director and stage manager should join the actors in acknowledging the applause that followed.

A SUITCASE UNCLAIMED

by Chris Hodson

Directed by Lisa McNiven

There was another mood change after interval, this time introduced by very appropriate music which accompanied the poignant scene of an old lady seated on a park bench with a suitcase by her side.

In the scenes that followed we were taken on a roller-coaster of emotions as the old woman's story, and the lives of her son and daughter, were gradually revealed. While these revelations were unfolded very gradually, the audience was held captive every moment by the often sophisticated dialog between the principal actors.

The small cast was led by Cathie Lee who played the lead role of Sharon Arnold, and Steve Saul, her brother, Richard. Both actors were able to convey to the audience the wrenching emotional turmoil that developed between them as the story unfolded.

Cathie was particularly impressive in the way she gradually changed from high-spirited and confident to a rather shattered woman at the end.

Rick Heaney turned in another stand-out performance as Sharon's second husband, Glenn Arnold. He was totally convincing as the aggressively successful businessman doing deals on his mobile phone. In one of the few lighter moments in the play Sharon says, "You're always on the phone; it's like living in a call centre!"

The cast was completed by Grace McNiven as the nurse, and Patricia McCracken, the old lady who said very little but tore our hearts out with her expressions, pathetic movements and sense of despair.

GENERAL

Directors and actors were backed by a competent production crew headed by Bob Bramble and Helen McIntosh, with Kate Deavin as stage manager and Grace McNiven her assistant.

The costumes and props were appropriate with good attention to detail (for example in *A Suitcase Unclaimed* when Sharon returned from a shopping spree the bags clearly carried upmarket brands). Sound by Simon Ulrich and lighting by Kate Deavin were up to Peridot's usual standard. One final word: the music that accompanied the first and final scene in *A Suitcase Unclaimed* was absolutely perfect.

Fan Mail

Hello Alison and All at Peridot,

As usual, I attended the One Act Plays ... and once again, they were absolutely top class! My sister, her husband and I loved each play, they were so individual and beautifully balanced with the humour in the middle.

Congratulations Alison on *Committed*. We enjoyed many laughs, and chatting to Susie Sparkes afterwards I was amazed to learn that this was her first performance on stage. I will hope to see her again in future plays.

Peridot never fails us. Thank you all for your continued hard work and effort to entertain your audiences over so many years. We just love coming.

Paula Wigglesworth

Leonie Douglass

Kevin Douglass

Play Reading

You are cordially invited to join us for play readings in the Unicorn theatre foyer!

Becky's New Car by Steven Dietz on Monday, June 27th at 7.30pm

Please email David Lawson-Smith to reserve your place: dlawsonsmith@bigpond.com

Auditions

Becky's New Car, by Stephen Dietz, Directed by Helen Ellis

Monday 4th July and Wednesday 6th July.

AGM News:

After our Annual General Meeting on April 26th, we are pleased and proud to welcome two new members to the General Committee: Karim Ghantous and Alex O'Neill.

We look forward to working with both Kahirn and Alex in throughout the year and into the future

Alison Knight continues her role as President, Damian Jones is now Vice President, Wilf Seelig is our new Secretary, and Adam Kaali Nagy has taken on the role of Treasurer.

What's On?**Peridot Theatre, *Ancient Lights*, 10/6 - 25/6**

Encore Theatre, *The Dining Room*, 15/4 - 30/4

Mordialloc Theatre Co, *Role Play*, 22/4 - 7/5

Sherbrooke Theatre Co, *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof*, 22/4 - 7/5

Heidelberg Theatre Co, *Twelve Angry Men* 29/4 - 14/5

Gemco Players, *Measure for Measure*, 29/4 - 14/5

Quote of the Month

'Learn (from all you hear, see and feel, this will inform you on who you you can be).' - Richard J. Frankland

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