

Gems

The logo for 'peridot' is enclosed in a green, multi-sided geometric shape that resembles a gemstone facet. The word 'peridot' is written in a lowercase, sans-serif font inside the shape.

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Issue 344 February 2017

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Dear Friend

President's Prattle



After the summer break, we're very much looking forward to the first production of the 2017 Season, *The 39 Steps*, which opens on February 3rd. We can promise you action in planes, trains and automobiles, along with sinister doings and a good dash of romance. Director Bob Bramble and his cast and crew have been hard at work adding the final touches to this riotous comedy so please come along and enjoy the ride.

We are happy to report that the redevelopment of the car park is complete. The area has been resurfaced and the result is a considerable improvement: no more traipsing over gravel to get inside the theatre!

Photos from our wonderful Season One Production, *The 39 Steps*, featuring Katie Macfie, Mark Briggs, Aimee Short and Brett Hyland.



Becky's New Car Review

Reviewed by Richard Burman – December 2, 2016

In this play the central character, Becky, has many direct asides and conversations with the audience, breaching the usual convention of the fourth wall. Members of the audience are even asked to help Becky complete her work

or to come onto the stage to assist while she continues to move the plot along. In one of these conversations she says 'When a woman says she wants a new car, it means she wants a new life'.

And here is the kernel of the play. Becky has a good, comfortable but unchanging life, a solid supportive husband, a job as a car sales administrator which is at times

overwhelming and a philosophising son who always categorises everything and everybody. A steady life for nearly thirty years which is upended when a millionaire,

whose wife has recently died, comes in to buy new car. New cars for him. A new life

for Becky?

The role of Becky is a large one, continually the centre of attention and on stage for nearly all the play. Helen Ellis, the director, chose well when she cast Lisa Upson for this role. Lisa led the audience through the changing moods of the play, from screwball comedy at the beginning through Becky's emotional yearnings to her final reconciliation, with a surety that never faltered. She guided the audience through the

unexpected breaches of the fourth wall so that they never felt uncomfortable. This was a confident performance which was the rock on which this play rested.

Peter Newling played Joe, Becky's steady, loving, ordinary husband and Chris McLean was Walter, the flamboyant millionaire, who thinking Becky is a widow offers her a new life, a life in total contrast to the one she is living. These two actors clearly portrayed the two ends of the rope that was Becky in this emotional tug-of-war.

The supporting cast was well chosen and well drilled so that they all held their own against the leading actors. Charlie Collopy-White was cast as Becky's son, Chris, and created a clear comedy picture as the somewhat pretentious psychology student who swans through life, leaving his mother to pick up everything behind him.

Walter's daughter, Kensington, happens to become Chris's girlfriend, and in this role,

which in many ways is the most difficult in the play to make an impression with, Reschelle O'Connor gave a confident and contrasting performance.

As well as being about love and yearning the play is about loss and lack of love.

The cast is completed with two more roles, here played by Alastair Rice, as Steve, and Julie Arnold, as Ginger. Steve is a recent widower and is continually looking for comfort, sympathy and attention. Alastair played this role well, not just giving us a

comic character but, while playing comedy, let us see at times the sad man underneath. Ginger is also looking for something, and after a wealthy life is facing hard times. Julie Arnold cleverly played her not just as a woman moving past the

time of life of being attractive and seductive but as a woman in an awkward situation trying to find a way out. A well-chosen cast directed with skill by Helen Ellis.

The play has three main locations, Becky and Joe's living room, the car yard where Becky works and a room in Walter's luxurious home. Peridot chose to have three acting areas. The set designed by George Tranter had the left half of the stage the living room, the right half downstage the car yard and upstage Walter's room.

The action moved effortlessly between the three areas although I felt that the upstage right room could have been larger and the car yard a little smaller, as the actors seemed very crowded in the upstage area. The changes in lighting, right on cue, were effective. Costumes and props were suitable.

This was an enjoyable night at the theatre. Well done, Peridot.

Play Reading Night

Play Reading date: *The Female of the Species* by Joanna Murray-Smith on Wednesday the 22nd of February at 7.30pm. Contact

a8knight@bigpond.net.au

Theatre Tales

Back in year ten I was performing as Jocasta for a for a high school production of *Oedipus Rex*. It was in the middle of a very emotive monologue when my dress fell down to my waist ... but I carried on! There was a short gasp but weirdly no laughter from the audience. I guess you can say, if that didn't dampen my enthusiasm for theatre, I guess not much will! And that is the strength of Sophocles.
- Vidya T. Rajan, Perth Theatre Maker

What's On?

Geelong Repertory Theatre Co.
3rd February 2017 to 18th February 2017
Quartet

Williamstown Little Theatre Inc.
9th February 2017 to 25th February 2017
Bad Jews

Brighton Theatre Co.
16th February 2017 to 4th March 2017

Face to Face

Mordialloc Theatre Co. Inc.

17th Feb-2017 to 04-Mar-2017

Outside Mullingar

Malvern Theatre Company Inc.

17th February 2017 to 4th March 2017

Counting Sparrows

Heidelberg Theatre Co.

17th February 2017 to 4th March 2017

Australia Day

The 1812 Theatre

23rd February 2017 to 18th March 2017

Steptoe and Son

The Mount Players

24th February 2017 to 11th March 2017

Little Gem

The Basin Theatre Group

24th February 2017 to 18th March 2017

Outside Edge

Quote of the Month

'Drama is life with the dull bits cut out.'
– Alfred Hitchcock

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