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IT'S THE 2014 PERI'S...

...AND THE WINNERS ARE:

Peridot's Annual End of the Year Celebration, the **Peri Awards Night**, was held at the Unicorn on Saturday December 6 and everyone who had contributed in some way to this year's presentations, the directors, production assistants, casts, backstage and technical crews, the sets, costumes and props people, those hardworking and lovely Front of House people and more, were invited to come along to celebrate another fine year of theatre.

The high point was the presentation of the Awards and, with four very varied productions, it was not an easy task for our three adjudicators **Carole Shelbourn, Richard Keown** and **David Briggs**, and our thanks go to them for their hard work.

As a reminder, the four plays this year were "**The Hallelujah Girls**" by Jessie Jones, Nicholas Hope and Jamie Wooten., directed by Annie Blood (February), "**Heroes**" by Gérald Sibleyras, directed by Geoff Hickey (April/May), "**House Guest**" by Francis Durbridge, directed by Cameron South (August) and "**Key for Two**" by John Chapman and Dave Freeman, directed by Bob Bramble (November).

And the Awards were:

**For the Graham Fletcher Award for Excellence from an Actor in a Leading Role, the nominations were:

Kirk Alexander (*Heroes*) John Keogh (*Heroes*), George Werther (*Heroes*), and Glenn Hunt (*House Guest*), and the Award went **Kirk Alexander**.

**For the Billie Russell Award for Excellence from an Actress in a Leading Role, the Nominations were:

Phillippa Adgemis (*The Hallelujah Girls*), Philippa Bain (*House Guest*), and Sarah Somers (*Key for Two*) and the Award went **Phillippa Adgemis**.

**For the Award for Excellence from an Actor in a Supporting Role, the nominations were:

Greg Barison (*The Hallelujah Girls*), Michael Redmond (*House Guest*) and Chris Shaw (*Key for Two*) and the Award went **Chris Shaw**.

**For the Award for Excellence from an Actress in a Supporting Role, the nominations were:

Tina Bono (*Key for Two*), Suzanne Gooding (*The Hallelujah Girls*) and Cathie Lee (*The Hallelujah Girls*) and the Award went to **Tina Bono**.

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ADJUDICATORS TECHNICAL AWARDS

The Adjudicators awarded three Awards:

***George Tranter** was awarded for designing, construction, dressing and décor for the fantastic Set for *Heroes*.

***Annie Blood** was awarded for the fine Sound Design and Music for *The Hallelujah Girls*.

* And a special award went to **Monique Venus** for the sheer exuberance she bubbled in playing her role in *The Hallelujah Girls*.

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The Award for Best Director went to **Geoff Hickey** for his work and vision for *Heroes*, and this fine production was also awarded the Peri Award for **Best Production**.

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For the first time, we included our mid-year One Act Play Season in the Peri Awards and our good friend, actor and director **John Bishop** was the Adjudicator for the three plays we presented, *In By the Half* by Jimmie Chin, directed by Alison Knight, *Peter Stone* by Alison Knight, which Bruce Cochrane directed for us, and *No Strings* by John Tilbrook, which was directed by Lisa McNiven.

There were three awards bestowed on these plays:

*Best Actor, which went to **Patricia McCracken** for her role as the Grande Dame in *In By the Half*

*Best Director, which went to **Alison Knight** for her fine work on *In By the Half*, and

*Best Cameo, which was awarded to **Warren Burford** for his small but very funny role of a drunk in *No Strings*.

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There were also four Awards for outstanding contribution in 2014: **Management Awards** went to **John Kelly** for six years hard work as Ticket Manager and **Lindsay Owen** for all her backstage work, the **Paragon Award** to **Warren Burford** for much organizational work and young **Jack Clews** who received the Billie Russell Encouragement Award.

So, another year at Peridot comes to an end. Next year will be our thirtieth (our first production was way back in August 1985) and we think we have put together a pretty good line-up to celebrate this milestone. Looking back over 2014, we really appreciate the support we have received from our lovely audiences and all the people who help with all the work involved in putting on a both full-scale and One Act productions. We thank all the actors, backstage set builders and bio box crew who give up so much time and their skills and enthusiasm for helping us put on all our plays.

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Helen – our splendid new Life Member



At the Peri Awards Night on Saturday December 6 we were pleased to induct Helen McIntosh as Life member of Peridot theatre in recognition of the outstanding contribution she has made to our company over so many years.

Helen has an abundance of qualities which make her so deserving of this honour. She is extremely hard working and incredibly well organised. She has a mastery of things practical, being as adept with a hammer as she is with a spreadsheet. Most importantly, she is passionate about theatre, frequently attending performances both at Peridot and at many other local companies.

With such a range of qualities, it's hardly surprising that Helen has turned her hand to so many different aspects of theatre. She has held many portfolios on the Board of Management and is currently in charge of Productions, Crewing and database. She oversees the set builds, delegating jobs to all the volunteers to keep them productively occupied and finding practical solutions to the inevitable problems that arise. She has organized both the storage under the school and the storage of props and costumes at Fleigner Hall so that we can find what we want when we need it.

Helen's talent with costuming is well known in the world of non-professional theatre and she has often been asked to work for other theatre companies. And that's on top of sewing innumerable tutus for her daughter's ballet school!

If all the above were not enough, Helen is also a very competent sound and light operator, and has been known to strut her stuff upon the stage, appearing most recently in the One Act Play *The Odd Fib*.

In short, Helen can turn her hand to just about anything in the theatre and I'm sure we'd all like to congratulate her on being elevated to become Peridot's fourteenth Life Member, an award she so richly deserves.

Alison Knight.

Peri Awards continued from page one...

And of course we thank all our lovely Front of House volunteers who look after and make everyone so welcome all with a smile!

See you in 2015, we've got some good stuff coming.

We'll have some photos from the Peri awards Night in next month's Gems

Peridot at the 2014 VDL's.

The 2014 Victorian Drama League's Awards were held on Sunday December 7, in which Peridot's entry (each Company only gets one) was *Heroes*, in the Comedy Section (there are two Sections, Comedy and Drama). We didn't win any Awards but we did get three Nominations which, given the size and quality of the 28 entries this year, wasn't at all bad. Kirk Alexander was nominated for Best Lead Actor in a Comedy, Geoff Hickey for Best Director, and the production was nominated in the Best Comedy category.

Somewhat amazingly, George Tranter didn't at least get a Nomination for his wonderful set, though he did get one for his design for *Amadeus* at Heidelberg Theatre, so congratulations to our old mate for that.



Something to enjoy with the children in January.

How about some pleasant light relief after all the fuss and bustle of Christmas and the New Year? Our friends the Hartwell Players are presenting *The Snow Queen*, from the classic fairy tale by that old

favourite, Hans Christian Anderson. An adventure of good and evil, Gerda must travel far, meeting many people, to rescue her beloved Kay. You can join the Crow, the Princess and the Robber girl as they sing and dance their way to help Gerda to finally confront the Snow Queen herself!

There's quite a strong Peridot influence in this charming production: Peridot Committee Member, actor and playwright David Lawson-Smith wrote this play with his wife Hayley; David is also directing, with assistance from two more Peridot Members Lisa and Grace McNiven.

The Snow Queen will run January 16-24 at Hartwell's usual home at the Performing Arts Centre, Ashwood College, Vannam Drive, Ashwood. Tickets are \$18 Adults, \$12 Concession and \$40 for a family ticket. Bookings can be made either on 9513 9581 or on www.hartwellplayers.org.au.

Review: "Key for Two"

Congratulations to all involved

Reviewed for the VDL's "Theatrecraft" by Deborah Fabbro

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Peridot's latest offering *Key for Two* ended their 2014 on a real high.

Farce is real people in unreal situations and director Bob Bramble's complete grasp of this genre was very evident in this production. He had chosen his cast well and had his actors completely owning their characters. The first part of Act One was somewhat under-paced but then the action took off and continued at a superbly frenetic but controlled speed for the rest of the play.

The set, designed by Mr. Bramble, took full advantage of Peridot's wide stage and, although dressed a little plainly, contained all the elements required in this play and gave the actors plenty of space in which to work. As in all good farces there were plenty of doors for the comings and goings of this play. One into the main bedroom which is on a raised area upstage with cutaway walls, there were doors off to the kitchen, into an implied second bedroom upstage left and front door stage right, and yet another door downstage right. Action was set well and the business skillfully orchestrated.

This is a play that demands spot-on timing and the cast excelled and extracted the best out of the witty lines. Sarah Somers plays the wild and daring Harriet, who solves her financial problems and pays for her living costs by simultaneously dating two married men (neither of whom know about the other) and we get the impression Harriet is running to a tight schedule, jotting in her diary: "Eggs away five-thirty. Fish arrives at six". She uses the character of "Mummy" as an excuse for why her two lovers can never spend more than their allotted time in her house. However, her timetable goes awry when Gordon (Eggs) sprains his ankle slipping on one of Alec's (Fish) halibut on the kitchen floor and has to stay in Harriet's bed. Her long-lost friend Anne turns up unannounced from New Zealand having left her husband, Richard, and then Alec arrives! Harriet creates a fantastic, almost plausible story to explain away each person to the other. Ms Somers leads the mayhem of the increasingly-complicated plot with aplomb and manages to make it seem easy. Her timing and interactions with her fellow performers are spot on, particularly the scenes between her and Anne. Tina Bono as Anne is an absolute delight. Her timing, facial expressions and mastery of the 'business' are excellent.

The interactions between Michael Knowles as Gordon and Glenn Baker as Alec are very funny and both actors do a tremendous job in making this production so comic. Their confusion at the whole situation, but willingness to go along with all the absurdity, is hilarious.

The arrival of Anne's husband Richard, who is inebriated, takes the already complex plot to another level. Chris Shaw is brilliant in this role. His ability to stagger and slur convincingly whilst maintaining the integrity of his character is a 'tour de force'. Again mastery of 'business', the tumbling across the bed and administering of CPR to a fox fur, is a sight to behold.

The further inevitable arrival of Gordon's wife Magda and Alec's wife Mildred adds to the fun as Harriet convinces them that the flat is a nursing home. Sue Rosenwax as Magda strikes the right balance as concerned wife, confused and somewhat disbelieving that she is in a nursing home. Through Alison Knight's portrayal of Mildred we sense the character's suspicion and disdain.

I must congratulate Jennifer Hunt and Helen McIntosh for the fabulous selection of the 1980s costumes. Those peplums and big shoulders were fabulous and took me right back to the era! I thank and congratulate all involved with this production; you've raised my opinion of farce to a higher level of appreciation.



Gordon (Michael Knowles) and Harriet (Sarah Somers) getting into a dodgy situation in "Key for Two"...



...but Alec (Glenn Baker) looks more comfortable...



...and Richard (Chris Shaw) seems to have hit the jackpot

Two little thoughts on Christmas:

* "I stopped believing in Santa Clause when I was six. Mother took me to see him in a department store and he asked me for my autograph". – Shirley Temple.

* "Santa Claus has the right idea. Visit people only once a year". – Victor Borge.

Briefly...

Sad news from the Gays.

We were recently saddened to learn that our great friend Grant Gay's brother died in November. Our thoughts go out to Grant, Gay and their family at this sad loss.

Our Special Non-Audition notice!

In case you are wondering why we haven't yet published details about Auditions for our Season One play next February, *Six Dance Lessons in Six Weeks*, well, it's because there isn't going to be any. The play was staged so successfully at Williamstown Little Theatre last June that everyone thought they would like to do it all over again at our place. So, the whole production is coming to Peridot with the same two actors, Colin Morley as Michael and Christine Andrew as Lily and under the fine direction of Alan Burrows and all with the total support of our Williamstown friends, for which we are very grateful.

You'll love this terrific play!

A Nice Theatrical Christmas Present Idea?

If you have a friend or a family member who likes good theatre and you're stumped for a present, how about giving a Peridot Gift Certificate. You can get them for a full year's subscription or just for an individual play. Give our Ticket Manager John Kelly a ring on 1300 138 645 or email him on peridotboxoffice@yahoo.com.au for more details

*WhatsOn*WhatsOn*WhatsOn*

Tangled Web Theatre Productions

Well, not a lot in December. Most companies have finished this year's programmes but one Company, the Tangled Web Theatre has their play we told you about last month, *Other People's Money* by Jerry Sterner, on at the Doncaster Playhouse, 679 Doncaster Road, Doncaster from December 10-13 at 8pm and December 13-14 at 2pm. Bookings on www.tangledweb.com.au or 9748 1468 and 0404 942 143



The cast of Key for Two plus the Production Coordinator Ian Carlsson having a nice Group moment.

...the last word

Back in the 1950s it was considered to be very advanced to broadcast radio programmes from locations outside the studios. They're known in the industry as OBs – Outside Broadcasts.

3XY was one of the principal stations in Melbourne and they had a fifteen-minute programme each week called 'Melbourne Speaks'. The broadcast came from the foyer of the Tivoli Theatre (now long gone, but there is still a Tivoli Arcade in Bourke Street, just up from Swanson Street where the theatre used to be). The announcer would nab passers-by and question them about the contentious issues of the day. Pretty heavy stuff it was too, with questions such as 'Should the Town Hall be cleaned of pigeon droppings' or 'Will Carlton win another game this season'. 3XY was known as 'the quality station' in those heady days of radio (no television then) and there were some big names on the announcing staff. But no one looked forward to this weekly broadcast from the Tivoli. It was to them time that could have been better spent in playing golf or lingering in the Radio Bar of Molina's Hotel.

And so, when a young, fresh-faced, good looking, intelligent 17-year-old junior announcer called Bert Newton joined the staff he was delighted and excited to be rostered for the first time on to 'Melbourne Speaks'. Bert did not realize that no one else wanted to do the programme and he saw it as perhaps a climb to fame.

There's something about a Melbourne winter's day that makes the city unique in an unpleasant sort of way. The wind seems to come from the South Pole through the Heads of Port Philip Bay and then increases speed as it funnels into the city via St Kilda Road. As it reaches the tall buildings it swirls into miniature hurricanes and often seemed to settle itself right slam bang in the Tivoli entrance. It was blowing like this on the day of Bert's first live OB. It was also raining heavily and was very, very cold. As Bert says, 'It would have made Noah turn back'. He must have looked like an Antarctic explorer as he fought his way to the Tivoli. It was, not surprisingly, deserted. The engineer was nowhere to be seen; he'd set up the equipment and headed for shelter (well, the Carlton Hotel was only a few steps away). There was no way of communicating with the announcer back in the studio, so Bert put on the headphones and listened. The programme was coming through loud and clear and to Bert's horror, the announcer highlighted the fact that 'in a few moments we'll be crossing to the Tivoli where Bert Newton is waiting to talk to Melbourne citizens'.

Bert looked up and down the street; there was not one person in sight. It's the sort of thing that announcers have nightmares about. He later described the next fifteen minutes as being equal to a lifetime in Alcatraz. There was no time for panic as he heard the station announcer making the cross. There was only one thing he could do – he went in boots and all.

He played the part of both interviewer and subject, changing his youthful voice to suit the imaginary person being interviewed. He switched from a bus driver to a policeman, a housewife, a visiting football team member, an aged pensioner and a teenager. He even called out to a policeman on point duty! They discussed Melbourne and its problems and eventually, thankfully, the long fifteen minutes were up.

An exhausted Bert returned to the 3XY studio. The manager wanted to see him immediately. This is it, thought Bert as he started to contemplate his next career.

'We've had a phone call about the programme', said the manager. (A phone call to the studio was quite significant in those days). A lady had rung to say that it was the best 'Melbourne Speaks' programme she'd heard. 'Good subjects, good questions and a first class cross section of the community. But why', she asked the management, 'entrust an important programme like this to some lad who obviously is not suited to this type of work?'