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### ***Some Laughs on a Very Wet Afternoon!***

*Phyll Freeman reviewed our June One Act Play Season for the VDL's "Theatrecraft".*

Peridot's theatre had the usual black flats surrounding the acting area with various furnishings etc., placed for each production.

*"In By The Half" by Jimmie Chin, directed by Alison Knight.*

The experienced Patricia McCracken gave us a deliciously overdrawn portrait of a once-great actress still living her past roles. The rounded vowels matched the flowing peignoir, which she changed from into a floral frock. Her sharp commands to the long-suffering housekeeper-cum-ex-stage-dresser, Doris were well contrasted by Cheryl Ballantine-Richards, who gave as good as she got.

Into this household strode the Doctor, Damian Jones, to attend to Madam's health needs. Madam's one pupil, Sylvia, ebulliently played by Asja Sarajlic, arrived for her lesson; she wanted to be an actress like Madam. When Madam's estranged daughter Ursula, nicely played by Stephanie King, arrived, the atmosphere changed. On hearing that her daughter had a serious illness, Madam dropped her posing and became almost normal. The shock literally stripped away the layers of artifice. Well done, all.

*"Peter Stone" by Alison Knight, directed by Bruce Cochrane.*

Set in Melbourne, we see what seems to be a normal family. Not so furtive phone calls by the new partner, Peter Stone, played by David Lawson-Smith, upset Martha Jones, fiercely played by Susan Rundle.

Her mother, Rose Matthews (Lynne Elphinston-Gray), pokes her nose into everything with relish, much to the annoyance of everyone except her grandson Kane (Robert Warburton). He is not able to accept Peter into the household and shows it. The main problem seems to be the reticence of Peter to discuss his English family. After another phone call, Peter quickly flies to England, leaving behind a mystified family. On his return the truth is revealed, showing his long-held anguish. David's accent was clear and nicely balanced against the Australian speeches. This was quite a poignant play.

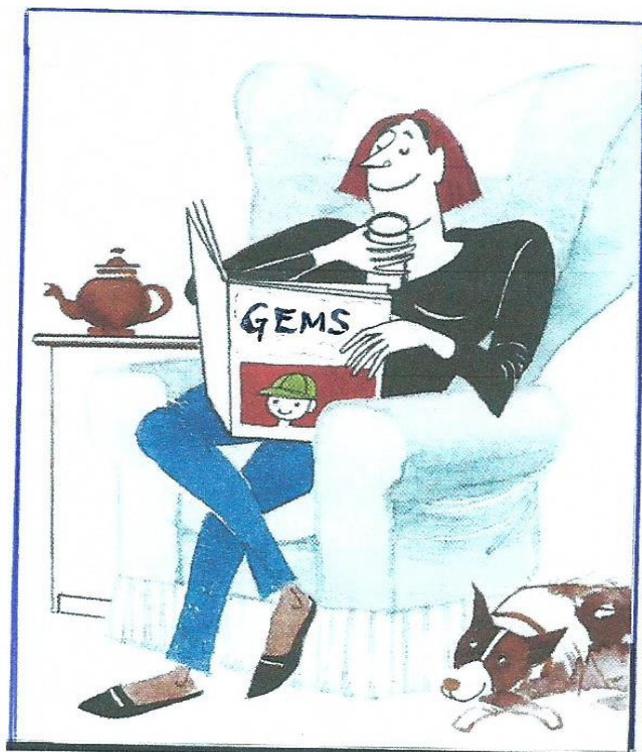
*"No Strings" by John Tilbrook, directed by Lisa McNiven.*

Set in a restaurant, we see the ensuing mayhem caused by an internet dating site. Jenny (internet name Delia), played by Cathie Lee, decides to meet the man, calling himself Jason, she found on the internet. Her marriage appears to be 'on the rocks' so she thought to look further afield.

Unbeknown to her, her spouse Glenn had a similar idea. We see the hilarious consequences played out in very ribald

dialogue. The actors appeared to enjoy their roles. Oh, and there was a well-inebriated diner, Warren Burford, lurching around to add to the fun. The moral of the story? Be careful what you wish for!

Thank you all at Peridot for some laughs on a very wet afternoon!



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#### **A Special Message:**

***Your "Gems" only comes out once a month but you can keep up with all that's happening at Peridot by having a look at our website on***

***www.peridot.com.au***

***and on our Facebook by Googling***

***"Peridot Theatre Facebook"***

***whenever you want!***

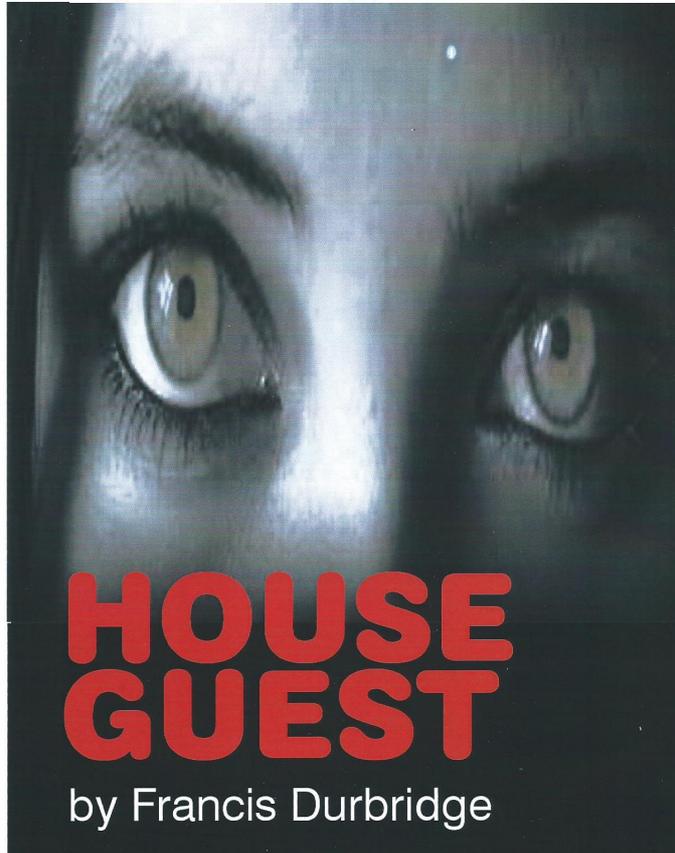
***(You don't have to be on Facebook to go into this)***

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"I did a theatrical performance about puns.  
It was a Play on Words"



Peridot Theatre presents



Directed by Cameron South

Robert and Stella learn that their son has been kidnapped - not for ransom, but to force them to allow one of the kidnappers to remain in their house. Two other men, supposedly police officers, arrive and reveal that one of the kidnappers has been murdered. Soon, however, it is clear that these two are far from what they seem. Typical of Francis Durbridge's work, this bloodier-than-average thriller is packed with convoluted twists which carry enough surprises for a ten-part television serial. A kidnapped child, distraught parents, assorted villains and a quirky plot well armoured with lethal weapons and the inevitable drinks trolley make for notable tension.

This is the basis of Francis Durbridge's taut drama which Peridot is delighted to present as our third production for 2014, a complete opposite, we reckon, to our first two plays this year!

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*Francis Durbridge was a prolific playwright and author (he died in 1998 aged 85) who had his first radio play, Promotion, broadcast on the BBC in 1933 when he was just 21. His most famous creation for radio was twenty seven series of Paul Temple, a fictitious crime novelist and detective who, with his trusty female companion Stevie, solved numerous crimes in the glamorous world of*

*the leisured middle classes. He also wrote ten other radio series. Hugely popular, they were for many the high point of radio listening for many years. When television came along he wrote twenty two series, many about Temple, and in addition, he wrote nine plays for theatre, nine film scripts (four about Paul Temple) and thirty seven novels (ten of which, of course, were involving Temple). House Guest was one of his most popular plays, written late in his life; it had its premiere and a successful run at London's Savoy Theatre in 1982 with Gerald Harper and Susan Hampshire.*

\*

Our Director Cameron South has gathered a fine cast of eight for this excellent play, with Glenn Hunt and Philippa Bain in the lead roles of the stricken parents, backed up by Michael Redmond, Brendan Allan, Marcus Ingleby, Janna Wright, Jean Millward and Leanne Savage. We welcome back those who have been here before, especially Glenn, who has been in numerous Peridot productions in the past, and extend a warm welcome to those who will be treading our boards for the first time. We hope they all enjoy their time at our theatre.

***We must warn you that there will be a gun used in House Guest and that there will be several shots fired that will sound similar to real gunshots (we promise they will be blanks!)***

\*

*House Guest opens on August 8 and will run until August 23. Bookings can be made by ringing our Ticket Manager John Kelly from 10am to 3pm, on 9898 9090, Monday to Friday, and, during the season performances only, on Saturdays from 10am to 3pm.*



## *Our Stage Management Workshop Report*

On Saturday 21st June a small group attended the Peridot Theatre Company Stage Management Workshop presented by the very experienced Marion Egerton.

Within the group there was a mix from the inexperienced to the seasoned veteran, which enabled the sharing of combined knowledge as well as some unforgettable anecdotal tales. As a fairly experienced stage manager myself, I found the workshop to be a great forum to exchange ideas, confirm that my practices were the on the same track as everyone else, and to engage with members of other local companies. Over lunch, we sat down with Peridot's busy set builders and had a unique opportunity to discuss our thoughts on Melbourne's theatre community and share our respective struggles and challenges in keeping a theatre company running in today's economic and social climate. This lent itself for some community brain storming and analysis, while further cementing inter-company relationships. We also managed to solve a few prop issues amongst us for respective upcoming productions. Nothing like a bit of networking over lunch!

Thank you so much to Marion for her time, both on the day and for her work in preparation for the workshop. I have no doubt that all of us, no matter how experienced, took something away from her vast knowledge and expertise. Thanks also to Alison Knight for her organisation and catering and thank you to Peridot for providing this opportunity for the benefit of those within the greater theatre community.

Emma Barber  
Sherbrooke Theatre Company

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*We have in recent times held several Workshops, covering Stage Management, Acting and Direction which have all seemed to have gone well so we will try and organize more in the future. We are planning a Technical Workshop soon and will let you know if and when it will take place.*

*Our sincere thanks go to the wonderful Marion for her time, knowledge and enthusiasm.*

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## *Peridot's Bits and Pieces*

Our Peridot contingent had a most enjoyable weekend at the Dandenong Ranges One Act Play Festival hosted by the Gemco Players in Emerald over the July 18-20 weekend. We entered two of the three plays we staged in our June One Act play season, and *"In By The Half"* received one award: Actor with the Most Potential - Asja Sarajlic.

We also got 6 other nominations for Best Ensemble, Best Supporting Actor (Damian Jones), Best Supporting Actress (Stephanie King), Best Actress (Patricia McCracken), Best Director (Alison Knight) and Best Production.

*"Peter Stone"* also did very well, with 6 nominations, including Best Production, Director, (Bruce Cochrane), Best Actor (David Lawson- Smith), Best Actress (Susan Rundle) and Best Supporting Actress (Lynne Elphinston - Gray).

Our third June play, *No Strings*, has been entered in the South Gippsland One Act Play Festival in Foster over the August 9-10 weekend. *Continued in the next column...*

## *Peridot's Bits and Pieces continued...*

We are also delighted that one of our Committee members, Kate Deavin, was also nominated at this Festival for Best Supporting Actress in Essendon Theatre Company's production of "A Formal Tradition."

\*

Your beloved "Gems" Editor received this nice letter recently:

*"Hi David,*

*Could you please remove us from your email list as we have moved to Port Macquarie NSW and will no longer be able to attend shows.*

*Many thanks for a wonderful fourteen years of shows we will always remember.*

*Joan and John Bull.*

\*

Our Artistic Director Robyn Kelly reports that we have received several entries already plus indications from several Companies that they will be coming along for the Monash One Act Play Festival that we are hosting at our place from September 19-21.

We'll have lots of information about it for you about this popular Festival in next month's "Gems".

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*We've got a terrific murder/mystery drama coming up in August, the sort of play that needs close attention – and the sort of play that does not need a running commentary from someone behind. Let's hope the following doesn't happen at "House Guest", as A. P. Herbert forlornly described many years in this anguished little poem...*

### **To the Lady Behind Me at the Theatre**

Dear Madam, you have seen this play,

I never saw it till today.

You know the details of the plot,

But, let me tell you, I do not.

The author seeks to keep from me

The murderer's identity.

And you are not a friend of his

If you keep shouting who it is.

The actors in their funny way

Have several funny things to say,

But they do not amuse me more

If you have said them just before:

The merit of the drama lies,

I understand, in some surprise;

But the surprise will now be small

Since you have just foretold it all.

The lady you have brought with you

Is, I infer, a half-wit too,

And I can understand the piece

Without assistance from your niece.

In short, dear lady, it would suit

Me just as well if you were mute

In fact, to make my meaning plain

I trust you will not speak again.

And, just another little touch,

Please don't breathe on my neck so much!

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## **WhatsOn\*WhatsOn\*WhatsOn\*WhatsOn\***

August is always a busy month in the non-professional theatre scene in our neck of the woods so, as well as coming to see our *House Guest*, you might fancy one or more of these:

**Frankston Theatre Group** is offering *Our Man in Havana*, adapted by Clive Francis from Graham Greene's novel, from August 1-9. Bookings on 1300 665 377 or through the Monash Booking Office on 9905 1111.

**1812 Theatre** is presenting a stage version of that wonderful BBC TV comedy series *Dad's Army* by David Croft and Jimmy Perry. Set during World War 2 the series recounted the misadventures of the Walmington-on-Sea Home Guard, manned by a group of blokes too old or unfit for military service. One of the greats! This total confusion will run from August 7-30; book on 9758 3964.

**Sherbrooke Theatre Company** is staging *My Three Angels* by Samuel and Bella Spewack, a funny and unusual play which was filmed as *We're No Angels* back in 1955 with Humphrey Bogart (in a rare comedy for him), Peter Ustinov and Aldo Ray. It will run from August 8-23 and you can book on 1300 650 209. An added bonus for this play – Peridot's President Damian Jones is in it!

**The Basin Theatre Group** is presenting a drama, *The Other Place* by Sharr White, from August 15 to September 6. Bookings here are on 1300 784 668.

**Lilydale Athenaeum Theatre** will be presenting from August 20 to September 6 the wonderfully funny and moving play *The Rise and Fall of Little Voice* by Jim Cartwright. Later beautifully filmed with Brenda Blethyn, and Michael Caine, plus Jane Horrocks brilliant as Little Voice, it'll be well worth a look. Book on 9736 1777.

**Brighton Theatre Company** is offering *Chilling and Killing my Annabel Lee*, by Aiden Fennessy, which is loosely based on a poem by Edgar Allan Poe and which Brighton tells us is an ingenious play of mystery and murder. It will run from August 21 to September 6; bookings on 1300 752 126 or [www.brightontheatreco.com](http://www.brightontheatreco.com).

**Eltham Little Theatre** is staging the play we offered last year at Peridot, *The Wisdom of Eve* by Mary Orr; this will run from August 28-September 13 and you can book on 0411 713 095 or through [www.elthamlittletheatre.org.au](http://www.elthamlittletheatre.org.au)

### *...the last word*

*Last month, for a change, we had some little radio stories. Here's a few more...*

Live children's sessions are, of course, a thing of the past. The children featured in all sorts of games and quizzes and everyone had lots of fun and made lots of noise. One children's session was conducted by an 'Auntie' and an 'Uncle'. It was real 'big budget' stuff. The Auntie was a very young inexperienced announcer whom the much older Uncle John often set out to embarrass. One night the two compères were about to go on air when the innocent Auntie realised that she'd forgotten to find a question to ask the children at home to answer. Uncle John obligingly came to the rescue and quickly wrote one for her.

"And now, boys and girls", said Auntie, "it's time for our write-in quiz. Here's the question". With that, she unfolded the piece of paper upon which John had written the question and without reading it first, asked "Are you ready? Now, how many testicles has an octopus got?"

\*

Newsreader, Dick Heming on 3UZ Melbourne, got into a bit of strife when he read a special news bulletin aimed at women. The leading article was about a large country hospital maternity wing; officials had decided to close the wing but the locals were strongly objecting. "Local residents have taken out a survey", Heming read out gravely. "They have forecast that, over the next few months, the maternity wing will be bully fooked". "So will all the patients", whispered the announcer. It was not Heming's best news bulletin.

\*

The scene: a direct broadcast from the reception for the eminent English conductor, the late Sir Malcolm Sargent on the ABC. A well-known lady from Adelaide's Establishment was doing the radio introduction.

"When I was asked to introduce Sir Malcolm tonight", she said blithely on air, "I thought I'd better find out more about him. So looked up the Who's Who columns and was staggered to learn Sir Malcolm has over six inches!"

\*

When Greg Evans landed his first radio announcing job, it was in the station of a very small country town right out in the sticks, and when he drove into the town, he couldn't find the radio station. He eventually located it – in a private house. The manager's office was in the front lounge room, the general office was in the dining room and the studio was located in the main bedroom. Greg used to hate weekend shifts when he had to shout above the noise of neighbours mowing their lawns!

After a few weeks he moved to another country station, 3CS Colac, and immediately incurred the local dairy farmer's wrath by playing rock records in the early part of the breakfast session. "You can't do that sort of thing around here," said the station manager.

"Why not?" asked Greg.

"Those rock records upset the cows and they don't give as much milk!"

\*

Newsreaders dread medical items that contain long unpronounceable names. 'Anesthetic' is a trap for young players. It's a bit like the word Antarctic, which many announcers refer to as 'Antartic'.

An Adelaide newsreader must have been very pleased with himself when he managed to say 'amoebic meningitis' without a stumble. However, his triumph was short-lived. The item explained that the virus had been found in samples of water taken from a domestic swimming pool. The newsreader continued, "Scientists have proved that the virus was caused by an *orgasm* in a private swimming pool..."

\*

The smartest winner of a radio competition? A Queensland station was running one in connection with a new bridge that was due to be opened a couple of weeks later. The competition rules were simple: all the contestants had to do was to estimate the number of vehicles that would cross over the bridge on its first day of operation; the winner would get a trip for two to some far-away, destination. A man was in Queensland on holiday and happened to be listening to the local radio station and, as the prize was a trip for two to a far-away destination, he thought he'd have a go. The cunning fellow rang the appropriate government department in Queensland and asked if they could help him. He told them that he worked for an advertising agent (a lie!) and that one of the agency's clients was interested in placing a huge sign near the new bridge. Would the department, he asked innocently, have any projections of traffic flow when the bridge was opened? The official was very obliging and supplied the projections down to the last pushbike.

The fellow submitted his entry - and the prize was won!