

Summer Newsletter January 2022



And welcome to 2022

The Stirling Players 50th Anniversary Year!

We have put together an exciting program to celebrate this important milestone. And, although the year may be somewhat uncertain in terms of COVID restrictions, we aim to do all we can to stage our 2 productions for you to enjoy in a safe environment. We are especially pleased in this special year to present a rollicking physical comedy to be directed by Jethro Pidd, a former member/tutor of our 'sister' group The Hills Youth Theatre. We are keen to nurture the passion for theatre in the younger generation and particularly welcome and value their contribution to our group. Our other major production will be an award-winning drama, and Gala Day celebrations are planned for mid-year.

The SP 2022 Calendar!

- Our AGM on Sunday Feb 6
- Our First Production Mar25 – Apr9
Amy's View
Directed by Tim Williams & Jan Farr
- Our Gala Day celebrations – Aug 20
Radio Show Live on Stage
presented by some of our 'oldest' hacks
Followed by our *Anniversary Dinner*
- Our Second Production Sept 9-24
The Complete Works of William Shakespeare (abridged)
Directed by Jethro Pidd

See the attached
2022 SEASON FLYER for more detail

SP Highlights from 2021

We had a busy and very successful year in 2021. Our first production for the year was '*Cosi*' directed by Megan Dansie which was well received by audiences and received glowing reviews, thanks in no small way to a dedicated cast and crew, and a wonderful set built by Bob Peet, a new addition to our production team. In September we presented Moliere's classic satirical comedy, '*The Hypochondriac*' directed by Angela Short. Moliere's writing is timeless, and Angela got the most from her characters. The production was quirky, fun and full of energy with many references to the style and essence of *Commedia Dell'arte* and pantomime. And another very impressive set! Our audiences seemed to revel in the fun and enjoyed the opportunity to 'belly-laugh' and 'boo and hiss' at the 'pantoesque villain'.

It is two years ago now that strong support from a group of persistent people prevented the group from disbanding and a new committee was formed (14 strong!). Committee numbers have dwindled as might be expected, but there remains a 'core' group to support the group's 50th anniversary year productions and celebrations for 2022. Unfortunately we lost two of our long-serving members during 2021; Lori Nielsen, our Vice President, after spending many years ably handling TSP publicity, retired in June to allocate more care-time to her aging father. And at the end of September, President Mo Johnson took 'Leave of Absence' to plan a trip to the UK to visit aging relatives. We thank them both for the time and effort they have spent in serving The Stirling Players and wish them well. Committee member John Graham has stepped in as Acting President until the AGM and the remaining 'somewhat smaller group of committee members' has worked together to ensure that the 'shows go on'. Also unfortunately, our Treasurer, Rob Andrewartha, will not be nominating for the role in 2022 due to his increasing commitments elsewhere. We shall miss his measured and sound advice and support.

We are proud that The Stirling Players will be able to celebrate their 50th anniversary. From humble beginnings in 1972 when a group of persistent people saved the Stirling theatre building from demolition (and then formed the 'now TSP' drama group) to the 2020 threat of disbandment, there has been continuing community effort to ensure the group's future. Productions for 2022 are confirmed and Gala Day celebration plans are well under way. Five booklets, one for each of the decade's productions from 1972 to 2021, have been compiled with posters and cast/crew lists, and will be on display to peruse & purchase at the AGM and Gala Day. **And we even have exciting news about our 2023 plans!**



**WELCOME BOB PEET
SET DESIGNER
AND BUILDER**

Bob is *an alleged* retired theatre professional who, very fortuitously for The Stirling Players recently moved from Sydney to reside in Mount Barker. Bob rang the Stirling Community Theatre to express his interest in becoming involved in our local theatre and The Stirling Players contacted him to join our group. His CV and experience are stunningly impressive and tend to make the head swim. And oh, what a vast store of theatre stories he has, and what a pleasure to listen to them whilst assisting with painting the sets! Here's just a sample of what he has been involved in!

For a period of ten years Bob worked as a puppeteer with Peter Scriven's Tintookies and the Marionette Theatre of Australia, touring Australia and overseas with the company. Following this period of his theatre life, he ventured into venue management which led to him being instrumental in the establishment and management of six performing arts centres in regional cities across Australia. Bob then moved to commercial theatre management when he was engaged as Theatre Manager for the 2000 seat Lyric Theatre at Sydney's Star City Casino. He then ran away with the circus as Front of House Manager for the 2000 seat tent productions of *Cats*, *Grease* and *Shout! the Legend of the Wild One*, again touring Australia several times.

Throughout his professional working life, Bob has retained an active interest in community theatre. In this regard he has designed and/or directed over 60 productions. Since his alleged retirement in 2007 Bob has been resident designer for Sydney's Miranda Musical Society, designing some 40 productions including *Phantom of the Opera*, *Evita* and *Les Miserables*. As an acknowledgement of his contribution to community theatre, Bob was recently inducted into the Association of Community Theatre's Hall of Fame.

At Stirling Community Theatre, Bob designed and built the two sets for *Cosi* & *The Hypochondriac* in 2021 and the results were stunning. For *Cosi*, he worked with the 'Green Shed' Manager, Mark Anolak, to replace the existing 'old' flats with a complete set of new: a project that Mark advised he had been keen to do for some time. These are now able to be used by all resident groups for future productions. Bob cleverly used his expertise to make the brand new flats look suitably like an 'old & burnt-out shell of a theatre' for the production of *Cosi* and then sumptuously grand for the inside of a French bedroom for *The Hypochondriac* production. The brilliance of the sets did not go unnoticed by the critics!

We are very pleased to have Bob as part of our production team and appreciate the quiet and efficient way he goes about his business and actively involves others. We certainly value his passion and contribution.



**You are invited to our
Golden Anniversary Year
AGM**

The Agenda? We will initially deal with the business of the meeting before Malcolm Horton, president of the Stirling Community Theatre Committee, provides a short 'theatre' report and then takes the chair for election of the committee for 2022

Following this, our guest speaker will be Carole Dunstan who will entertain us with an overview of her career and her many years of experience as director of the 'Carolan School of Ballet' an integral contributor to the theatre's community activities

To end the afternoon, we invite you to sit and enjoy a cup of tea or coffee and a 'wrapped' biscuit or chocolate!

Unfortunately COVID restricts us from offering our usual 'spread'!

**'The Hypochondriac'
What the critics had to say!**



Fran Edwards, GlamAdelaide

Angela Short has directed this tongue-in-cheek script resulting in a fun, frothy production which elicited much merriment with a strong cast, some playing dual roles making the audience look twice as they appeared in their disguises.

Kym Clayton, TASA

Angela Short's experiment with mashing together different styles of theatre was bold, and the result clearly titillated the enthusiastic opening night audience. Bob Peet's set design was spot on, and for two hours we could have been in a seventeenth century Parisian gentleman's boudoir.

Ross Johnson, Adelaide Theatre Guide

If you want to have a good laugh, then definitely don't miss seeing "The Hypochondriac"!