



# Lieder Theatre Company

## NEWSLETTER

Number 47

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### Presidents Report

**Away** Directed by **Chrisjohn Hancock** was a great success and everyone that watched it enjoyed it. The cast worked well together, the set was simple and effective, and the lighting, sound and costumes were harmonious and creative.

Chrisjohn as always, gave us a thought provoking play that made you laugh one minute and cry the next; the cast worked well together and grew with every performance. It is very rewarding to see an ensemble at work and the theatre is very proud of everyone involved.

**Alison Ashley** is into rehearsal, with the cast working well together, I'm sure this play, although not really thought provoking, will be enjoyed by everyone in the family. It has already sold a full house to a school daytime performance and we are grateful to the cast and crew for enabling us to do this.

**The Trial of Maryanne Brownlow**, which is being written jointly by **John Spicer and David Cole**, has had its first read through at the theatre. It went down very well. With

### Hating Alison Ashley

**Hating Alison Ashley** opens on **Wednesday 5<sup>th</sup> May** and runs every **Friday Saturday and Sunday until May 22<sup>nd</sup>**. The evening performances start at 8pm and the Sunday performances start at 4.30 PM. As the first Sunday is May 9<sup>th</sup> and is Mothers Day, we are having a special on ticket prices. If you buy two children's tickets mum will get in free. Dad can come along to enjoy the show as well; we think everyone in the family will enjoy this show. So put the dates in your diary now.

The cast of seven play fourteen roles, **Bethany James, Rebecca Christian, Jenny Hart, Melissa Hillyar, Joshua Waters and Blair Woodcock**, all are enjoying the rehearsals and are having many laughs along the way.

### Youth Theatre

**After school drama classes** will recommence IN WEEK THREE of Term 2 for 8-10 yr olds on Tuesdays between 4 – 5pm and 11 – 12yr olds on Tuesdays between 5 – 6pm. For

more details and registration contact Chrisjohn at the Lieder

**Youth week activities** – The Lieder stilt walkers were out and about wandering Auburn Street and Belmore

everyone that heard it. It was interesting and informative and we are really looking forward to seeing and hearing the final draft. The theatre is hoping to perform this in the courthouse in Goulburn and the first tentative steps to achieving this objective have already been put into action, we are awaiting the outcome. Watch this space.

During July and August the management committee are really hoping to make a green room/dressing room. This will only be achieved if we get lots of help from members in clearing the back room and wardrobe department into the auditorium. We are calling now for help, even if you can only give us one day we would be grateful. Please help, this will benefit everyone that works in the theatre, think how wonderful it would be to be able to change in comfort, and have somewhere to party after the show, a room to enjoy, unwind be proud of. Please ring me, Judith on **48410077** or Chrisjohn on **48215066**. Let us know when you can help. It won't happen overnight but it will happen. That's all for this month I hope to see you all at Alison Ashley.

**Judith Boyd**

The play has already attracted a lot of ticket sales so get in fast and book now. Ring the theatre on **48215066**, or pop into **Michael Connolly Chemmart**, 312 Auburn Street, Goulburn from 29<sup>th</sup> April to book your tickets.

### Opening Night Fundraiser for HAA.

Wed. 5th May 2004 7pm for an 8pm curtain

Charity: **St. Joseph's Primary School**

Tickets: **\$18.00**

Tickets in person from **RAW EDGE**, Auburn St. Goulburn or by phoning **Greg Allen on 48219746**

Supper of scrumptious pre show nibbles and drinks with coffee and sweets served at interval.

Park throughout National Youth Week – 28<sup>th</sup> March – 3<sup>rd</sup> April.

Great work guys adding some colour, comedy and life to the street.

## The Genesis of The Ballad of Mary Ann Brownlow

By David Cole

I first thought about writing a script of the **Mary Ann Brownlow** case when I was studying Professional Writing at the University of Canberra. I had read about the case some years before in **Wyatt's History of Goulburn**. Something about her story touched me. The tragic waste of young life, the injustice of the death sentence, the pathos of her supposedly feeding her

infant on the gallows in the moments before she was hanged.

I set about researching the case, reading the accounts in the **Goulburn Herald** of the day and also visiting the **State Archives** in Sydney. The more I found out, the less I knew. The information conflicted. Her life and crime was an enigma. The quick verdict of the court conflicted with the feelings of the townsfolk, who petitioned the Governor General for mercy on her behalf.

I wrote a film script of the story, which was my major assignment for University that year. The lecturer wrote something like "good idea, but needs a lot of work" in red pen across it. I agreed and the script sat in a drawer gathering dust for some years.

In 2003, Lieder

Artistic Director Chrisjohn Hancock approached me about the script and it was exhumed.

At that point I mentioned to Chrisjohn the difficulties I had encountered in researching the script. He told me that ex-Lieder Artistic Director John Spicer had thought of doing something with the story on and off for some years and put me in touch with him.

John read my script and a lot of the research notes I had made and we discussed how to make a play out of it. John was able to visualise the story for the stage, but agreed that the historical records left us baffled on some points of character.

We co-wrote the first draft of the play and showed it to Chrisjohn, who was concerned about not having enough male actors to play all of the parts, so we re-wrote parts of it and simplified it a lot more.

The script was read by a bunch of wonderful actors on March 15. From this reading, John and I realised that the script needed further simplification. We are still working on it as this newsletter goes to press.



John Spicer and David Cole hard at work on the script for **The Ballad Of Mary Ann Brownlow**

## The Ballad of Mary Ann Brownlow

At 4pm on the 11<sup>th</sup> October 1855 a young woman was hanged at Goulburn gaol for the murder of her husband.

**Mary Ann Brownlow** was twenty-three, the mother of three including a baby born in gaol a few weeks before the execution was carried out despite a petition and protests from the citizens of Goulburn.

What sort of woman was **Mary Ann Brownlow** who could behave like a demon and go to her death like a saint?

That will be left for audiences to decide when they see the Lieder Theatre Company's forthcoming production – **The Ballad Of Mary Ann Brownlow**

Co-authors **John Spicer** and **David Cole** have sifted through eye-witness reports of the trial and execution from

### Letter to the Editor

Your recent interesting newsletter has made me want to write and congratulate the Lieder on the exciting things they do, for example the Poetry Splurge and the Fire Show. And of course the main stage productions

My husband and I are keen supporters of your work and particularly "A Month of Sundays".

However, the last performance we saw was Music Hall.

Here a small criticism. We found the opening gambit and the section after interval with piano and instruments just too quiet

the Goulburn Herald and several later, often fanciful reconstructions of the crime, and with a few speculations of their own, have come up with a new play sticking as close to the facts as possible.

Audiences will be able to experience part of Goulburn's history when **The Ballad of Mary Ann Brownlow** directed by **Chrisjohn Hancock** is presented on Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays between the 18<sup>th</sup> and 26<sup>th</sup> of June 2004. For more information or to express your interest to perform in this unique production contact the theatre on 48215066

**John Spicer**

and undramatic. This was exacerbated by the fact that only one person seated near us knew any of the words to the songs.

Once the intro was over the performance was excellent and we loved the skits and the magnificent costumes. Maybe next time some stooges who know the words (and the lighting if words are to be read, must be strong enough) could be planted throughout the audience.

**Wendy Rose & Julian Woods.**

### Have your say...

The Lieder Newsletter is for all members and supporters. If you want to contribute to the newsletter please email me at [brianhill1@compuserve.com](mailto:brianhill1@compuserve.com) or [lieder@goulburn.net.au](mailto:lieder@goulburn.net.au) or if you are not yet web savvy, snail-mail (post) your contribution to the Lieder Theatre marked The Editor, Lieder Newsletter, PO Box 786, Goulburn NSW 2580.

## A 'boy's' point-of-view



Bethany James (right, in Girl's clothes) and Josh Philips (in Boy's clothes) in *Away*

As you may or may not know, the Lieder Theatre recently got a grant for me to work there for 5 hours a week as a mentorship - and I'm having an absolute ball. I've learnt so much already and am still learning things everyday that I never would have got the chance to anywhere else - and it's not just limited to acting. I'm learning about sets, lighting, sound, costumes and more!

Chrisjohn has been absolutely amazing in helping me to understand everything (and sometimes explaining things 2 or 3 times!) and I cannot express my gratitude for what he has done for me. Thanks to him and the Lieder I'm now looking to pursue a career in the Performing Arts. Goulburn is so lucky to have such a wonderful theatre with such wonderful people running it, and I am just so proud and grateful to be a part of it ... even if they do always make me the boy!

**Bethany James**

## THEA 307 - The Actor's Craft

People have recently asked me about the eleven day theatre summer school I attended in January at **UNE-Armidale** as part of my BA studies. This was the first time the school had been run externally, having been a successful part of the internal theatre studies curriculum for some years.

**Sue Fell**, the co-coordinator, invited 30 theatre studies students from all over Australia, including one student from Tahiti, to attend. I was privileged to be included as one of the thirty.

As you may appreciate, I looked forward to this opportunity with both excitement and trepidation, not knowing the performance calibre of the other students or how I'd fare in their company, my main experience in practical theatre having only started at the Lieder in 1996.

Other attendees of the course included some professional actors, actors in community theatre such as me, directors, public speakers, drama teachers and theatre academics. I had

a fantastic time working with such a great bunch of people for the eleven days. I felt quite self indulgent having 'lived' theatre for that time with no other responsibilities (thanks to my fantastic family, **Allan, Katrina and Mark**, who always support me in these ventures) felt very exhausted having 'worked my butt off' to achieve and learn as much as I could and came home feeling that I had made some



The thirty students chosen to participate in *The Actor's Craft* 11 day summer school at UNE

life long friends, was a better person and had learnt so much.

It's amazing the friendships, tolerance and understanding that develops when emotions are stripped to the bone,

you're fatigued, you leave your persona, history and hang-ups at the doorway to the training space and just trust the other 29 human beings who in your ordinary life you may or may not have even been inclined to meet, work with or even like. Anyway, I digress really.

What I want to express to you is that after a few days up there, I realised just how fortunate I was to have happened across the Lieder Theatre in 1996. Not only did I feel pleasantly relieved that I was prepared for the challenge of the school because of my involvement with the Lieder but I also realised that many of the training techniques, exercises and scripts that we worked with were familiar to me due to Chrisjohn's generous mentorship and the advice of guest directors including **Judith Boyd, John Spicer**

**and Stan Henderson**. Thanks to Chrisjohn, Judith and Stan for being so giving of your knowledge and for always fuelling my passion for theatre.

I urge you, if you have ever had even the most remote interest in learning about the 'Craft' or any other aspect of theatre; please visit us at the theatre. We are always looking for new people to become involved, even if you just want to become involved on an occasional basis or are only really interested in the social aspects of theatre performance. There's always something wonderful for you to try or do. If you are interested in learning as much as you can about 'theatre', as I am, and are interested in

contemporary techniques, cutting edge performance skills and mentorship then please, please join us. You will be receiving, in exchange for your time and commitment, theatre training that is on par with that is offered through universities. How many community theatre companies can offer you that?

Oh, if you are interested in furthering your studies in theatre or anything for that matter, I can thoroughly recommend the University of New England. Their external studies

program is the best in Australia in my view, but nothing is quite like the Lieder.

Cheers for now and sorry to chew your ear but.... like 'Big Kev' says...*I'm excited!!!!*

**Fiona Churchill**

([www.une.edu.au/news/releases2004/January/005-04.html](http://www.une.edu.au/news/releases2004/January/005-04.html) visit this web site for more on this story. **Ed.**)

## Chrisjohn's Notes ...

**The Ballad of Mary Ann Brownlow** is funded from the Commonwealth Regional Arts Fund and Goulburn City Council. It will be performed for two weeks only between 18<sup>th</sup> and 26<sup>th</sup> June with times and venue to be confirmed. Anyone interested in being involved in the production either on stage or behind the scenes please contact us at the Theatre.

### Canberra youth theatre project

Some members of the Lieder Youth Theatre Company have spent 3 days at **The Capital Region Gathering** in Canberra organised by Canberra Youth Theatre and designed to bring together like-minded young people and arts practitioners working with youth to share their experiences and explore ways of working together in the future. The gathering was held at Gorman House between 14 – 16<sup>th</sup> April and involved workshops, discussions and presentations from all who participated including groups from Bateman's Bay, Bega, Bungendore, Cooma, Young, Canberra and Goulburn. The Lieder contingent included **Bethany James, Jai Joyce, Alexander Edwards** and **Matt Taylor**.

### Welcome

Welcome to the new **Regional Arts Development Officer (RADO) Elizabeth Brown** who has replaced **Lizz Murphy** at Southern Tablelands Regional Arts

**STARTS**. Elizabeth has relocated from Cairns and is in the process of acclimatising to Goulburn's autumn weather.

### Don't miss a fantastic one-woman show touring to Goulburn in May

**Footprints on the Wind** by Chrissie Shaw

The extraordinary tale of **Alexandra David-Néel (1868 – 1969)** "...adventure is my only reason for living..."

**Goulburn Regional Art Gallery** – Sunday 9<sup>th</sup> May 2pm – discount tickets if booked in advance on 48234443 or at the Gallery & **Lieder Theatre** – Monday 10<sup>th</sup> May 7.30pm – **phone bookings only 48215066**

This kaleidoscopic show takes us through a century of the adventurous life of Buddhist scholar, writer and traveller, **Alexandra David-Néel**. We see a fiercely independent child running away from indifferent parents, a wife running away from boredom, an opera singer turned journalist and travel writer living on the edge of danger. She treks through Tibetan mountain passes, dangles over raging torrents, sings **Carmen**, meets the 13<sup>th</sup> **Dalai Lama**, sends orders to a far-distant husband for money and socks, and becomes embroiled in mysticism and Asian politics.

Chrissie won the ACT MEAA Green Room award for this performance.

### Movement at the station

It was great to receive visits from old Lieder troopers, **Evan Bradhurst** (Sydney), **Emma Wilson** (Melb) and **Taren Cooper** (Adelaide) who is about to graduate from **NIDA**. All three played important roles in the formation of the Youth Theatre Company and took many roles on the main stage during the 90s.

At the same time its sad to see the departure of youth theatre members **Josh Phillips** to Brisbane with **Tim Foley** and **Renea Keys**, **Stephen Convery** has left for China to become a tour guide along the Silk Road to Russia, **Sayara Thurston** off to France to become a nanny and catch up with **Ellie McMahon** who is working in Sweden. **Caroline Bentley** is studying in Canberra, as is **Jess Shoppee**. While **Idris Stanton**, **Anthea Foley**, and **Beth Greenhalgh** are studying in Wollongong and keeping in touch with **Joe Manning** and **Thady O'Connor**.

The Theatre recently received a call from **Lucille Clifton** in Tasmania, to say hello and offer anyone involved in our production of **Under Milkwood** a chance to see a copy of her DVD of the movie with **Richard Burton** (*and of course the fabulous Miss Elizabeth Taylor – Ed.*). Interested? Call the theatre.

**Chrisjohn**

## Keep supporting the Lieder Theatre Sponsors in 2003

The Lieder Theatre is also grateful to **The NSW Ministry for the Arts, Southern Tablelands Arts (STARTS) Inc., Regional Arts NSW** and **Goulburn City Council / Greater Argyle** for financial assistance in 2004.



PHONE 4822 2970  
34 CLIFFORD ST GOULBURN

