



Lieder Theatre Company

NEWSLETTER

Number 55

November 2005



Presidents Report

Hi, for those of you who don't know me, my name is Brian Hill and I am the new President of the Lieder Board of

Management. The other committee members and non-committee officers are Secretary Kathy Campbell, Treasurer Keith Brill, Vice President Kathy Campbell, Public Officer / Wardrobe Coordinator / Correspondence Secretary / Production Manager Pauline J Mullen, Opening Night Coordinator / Fundraising Liaison Fiona Churchill, Membership Officer Elizabeth McMahan, Committee Member John Knops, Non-committee officer bearers Front of House Manager Colin Simson and Newsletter Editor Brian Hill. Many of those elected (unopposed) to the committee have held positions for the past few years and deserve the thanks and support of the company for their on-going commitment and work. Thank you all, thanks also to Judith Boyd for her sterling effort as President. Judith is currently directing the *Odd Couple* and running drama classes on Friday afternoons for members of the Youth theatre.

I also edit the newsletter (as stated above), act, clean toilets, paint sets, lift heavy stuff, assist with wardrobe, lights, and Youth Theatre productions including fire marshalling and first aid supervisor, stage management, open the theatre for various functions, get

as much publicity as I can from radio and local press (please buy the Goulburn Post and help keep me employed) and generally make myself useful when required. I don't climb ladders. I have been a member of the board of management for the last two years.

My involvement with the Lieder goes way back to my youth when I worked with John Spicer in various productions in the 1970s before I left Goulburn for Sydney.

While living in Sydney I worked for the multimedia section of the Open Training and Education Network (OTEN) campus of TAFENSW. At OTEN I participated as an actor for various training videos, multimedia products and satellite broadcasts as well as voice over work for the school of the air and their new initiatives such as the internet broadcast trailed to replace the traditional radio-based School of the Air program. I worked as Assistant Stage Manager for the Volunteer Training for the Sydney Olympics and TAFE Quality awards. In 2003 I was commissioned to work with the Sydney Theatre Company as a graphic artist (multimedia) to create a series of background graphics and simple animations for use as backdrops to a series of short sketches for the Wharf Revue.

The last few months at the theatre have been very demanding with committee obligations *Treasure Island*, the 2nd gathering and more

recently *Fire Face*. I acted in both productions and assisted with 2nd gathering.

Workmates, family and friends often ask why I do so much at the theatre, my answer is simple ñ we have a core group of people who work very hard and are often at the point of giving up due to the seeming lack of interest from the rest of our membership, and if those of us who are doing the work stop, then the Theatre will close or be very diminished in the projects and the standard of work we produce. We as a company rely too much on the good will of Chrisjohn, Pauline and John Knops and need to rally and participate in the day to day operations of the Theatre and assist with productions in what ever way we can. A couple of hours from a few individuals equals a days less work for others. It's your theatre so come along and help, be involved, it's fun and very rewarding. We are, after all, the oldest continuously running community theatre in Australia and in order to maintain that claim we all have to participate actively.

That's me, my potted version of my CV and my call to action to the membership. More next time Ò

Cheers

Brian

PS I will have a better picture for the next newsletter.

The Odd Couple - Female Version

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This would be a great play to bring a group of friends for a Christmas party.

The tickets can be booked at discount prices for more than ten people. The

Charity is being hosted by The Goulburn and district Cystic Fibrosis Appeal Committee Trish Rose 48210321, sue burgess 48215219 (AH) Edna Gallagher 48218030 (AH). Tickets are \$20 drinks and nibbles

from 7:00pm (8:00pm curtain) supper at interval

Ring The Lieder Theatre on 48215066 to book your tickets or purchase from Michael Connelly Chemmart Auburn Street Goulburn



The cast of the *Odd Couple* L-R: Kathy Campbell, Fiona Churchill, Melissa Chandler, Miranda Lean, Jennifer Hart

The Odd Couple Female Version

Directed by **Judith Boyd** and written by **Neil Simon**, *The Odd Couple (female version)* is coming to Goulburn. A remake of Neil Simon's long-running Broadway comedy, *The Odd Couple* centres around two divorced women who live together, but can't stand each other's habits. Simon himself rewrote the script in the mid '80s to an all female version. His update of this contemporary classic starts with a group of women friends playing their regular weekly game of Trivial Pursuit. This week, the women are meeting at the apartment of Olive Madison, a divorcee who freely admits to being a slob: "I leave a mess when I read a book." Late to arrive is Florence Unger, a stickler for detail who would try the patience of a saint and who has unfortunately just become separated from her husband. As life would have it, the slob and the fuss-pot decide to share the flat together -- with hilarious results!

Within days, Florence's obsessive habits start taking their toll on Olive and their friends. The only remedy Olive can

think of to divert Florence from her obsession (a pair of brothers from Barcelona living upstairs) backfires disastrously, and the two women are forced to agree on one thing -- even the best of friends sometimes make the worst of flat-mates.

The Lieder Theatre production has a very strong and experienced cast and will be certain to make you laugh. Simon has a wonderful way with words, his one liners being second to none

ì I can't even have dirty dreams; you come in and clean them up.î

Judith Boyd has placed the play in Australia to make it more relevant and the cast are having many laughs throughout the rehearsal period. The well known cast includes **Melissa Chandler, Pauline J Mullen, Fiona Churchill, Kathy Campbell, Jenny Hart, Miranda Lean, Greg Seckold and Jason Ansell.**

Networking and Work-shopping

Pauline Mullen, Fiona Churchill and I recently attended a luncheon at Kenmore to meet members of the film industry who were touring the Southern Region with the Minister for Regional Development looking at various towns and places as potential

filming locations. We were lucky to grab a table with the film industry people and the minister and his aide. Not very subtle hints about funding and ability of the Lieder to assist film crew and companies find actors; extras and get help with stuff were banded about

as well as our new postcards with all of our contact details.

Chris Berry from the Council also introduced us to the lunch guests and indicated to them that we are a valuable resource they could draw on.

Pauline and I attended a workshop at the Goulburn Regional Art gallery on fabric and costume preservation. Within the first ten minutes we felt like the naughty kids in class. We were told that you should never expose old fabrics and costumes to strong light, never ever wear them and store them in acid free tissue in dark, dry, humidity controlled environments. Oops.

We did learn how to properly store and document our collection, but we fear this knowledge is not of much use due to the lack of resources and people power to tackle such a huge job in our wardrobe. The best we can hope for at this stage is to sort the most ancient and valuable items from the collection and do the best we can ñ even if this means handing them over to a museum or other institute for preservation.

Brian

Pictured Right is Pauline preserving a beaded top from the Lieder collection



Artistic Director's Annual Report to the 112th AGM

Another busy year for our Company began in July with major building work continuing in the scene dock to relocate the Wardrobe and re structure the storeroom to allow for a rear door and backstage toilet. While this provided a well needed opportunity to sort and tidy this storage space it kept members busy and replaced opportunities for staging additional shows. The repairs, renovations and the addressing of OH&S issues for the building & Company continued throughout the year with funding from the NSW Ministry for the Arts matched generously by the Goulburn Mulwaree Council and local donations from members and the community.

Of the four mainstage productions, the delightfully improbable farce **Blithe Spirit** was capably and comically directed by Stan Henderson while I directed **Come Back to the Five and Dime Jimmy Dean, Jimmy Dean, Babes in the Wood** and Hannie Rayson's **Inheritance**. All plays were well received. **Inheritance** will remain

special as it facilitated a strong cast of local performers along with Lieder veteran John Spicer and indigenous actor Phillip Brown. Additional to these we staged a rehearsed reading of **Minfields and Miniskirts** on the fore stage in the auditorium and a return season of **The Ballad of Mary Ann Brownlow** this time in the Goulburn Court House. Both of these were very successful and could have survived longer runs. The Regional Arts Funded report on Mary Brownlow's audience development survey conducted during performances of the first season were developed into a project to increase local audiences with support from the Audience Development project officer from Regional Arts NSW.

The Youth Theatre Company's major show for 2004 was the devised piece reflecting on death from a young person's perspective and called **Dead One Done**. Funding for the show was received from Regional Arts NSW through their Country Arts Support Program (CASP),

which employed local and regional designers, body percussionist visual artists and musicians to workshop with the youth theatre. The show deserved more work and more than three performances. Plans to tour it did not go ahead.

The after school program has been popular this year with Judith Boyd taking the high school students in acting and drama classes and Josh Phillips and Josh Waters running acrobatic classes all in addition to my primary school groups during school term. Holiday workshops in stilt walking and circus were also well attended.

The skilling up of acrobatics and physical skills was evident in this year's **Acrobatic Fire Show** for the Bluesí Festival performed twice in Belmore Park in February. This was by far the most successful fire show and maybe the best attended event at the Blues Festival with around 1500 spectators watching the 45-minute display of exhilarating and breathtaking fire manipulation and balance.

The regular bookings for street entertainers, stilt walkers, clowns and face painters continued to grow and this year with the main requests coming from Centro Goulburn to provide holiday entertainment in the Mall ñ this year the Easter Bunny was a new venture for the brave youth who donned the suit. This work was complimented by a request by the Goulburn Police Academy to open a Blue Light Conference with a show about youth and police relationships. **Cop This** was created with 12 members of the Youth Theatre and performed twice to much acclaim.

The Regional Arts funded mentorship begun at the beginning of 2004 concluded with mentoree Bethany James writing and directing her own short play called **Shatterproof**. This was presented for the Goulburn Friendship Club's Christmas dinner and for the Lieder Theatre's Christmas party in December. The success of this project prompted us to offer a mentorship program in 2005 and Elizabeth McMahon and Gosh

Waters have begun a six month period with the Company.

The only visiting show to be performed at the Lieder this year was **Men of Steel**, a wonderful evening of puppetry coordinated and presented by ex-Lieder member Sam Routledge who brought his colleagues from the VCA post graduate Puppetry Course to present two beautiful, but messy pieces in a studio space created on the Lieder stage for them and audience together. This was supported by our own up and coming circus performers, Josh Phillips, Idris Stanton and Gosh Waters calling themselves the 3 Incas.

Finding the time to juggle administration and the creative side of the work continues to challenge with less time to search for funding to undertake new projects.

Nevertheless this year saw a welcome increase of support from local government who offered funding to assist the Fire Show, employ an indigenous actor for **Inheritance**, re develop **The Ballad of Mary Ann Brownlow** for the Goulburn Court House and to host our regional youth forum.

Attending the biennial National Regional Arts Conference in Horsham in October was a rejuvenating and inspiring

opportunity to catch up with arts colleagues from across the country. I undertook this wearing two hats ñ Lieder's Artistic Director and as StArts board member. The Regional Arts Development Officer, Elizabeth Brown continues to provide welcome and important support to the Lieder in the form of advice and opportunities to work across the Southern Tableland Arts region.

The Speech and Drama section of the Goulburn Eisteddfod and a poetry evening for locals added to the variety on offer from the Lieder in September.

At last our web site is up and running with enormous thanks to John Knops who arrived at the Theatre last September as a volunteer to assist in day to day needs of the Company. His warm and friendly manner accompanying his offers to build sets, distribute posters, tidy, repair damaged seats assist with youth workshops and more have lightened the load. Like Colin Simson who freely gives his time to odd jobs as well as coordinating Front of House staff John is a volunteer member of our Company whose contribution is essential to the success of our group. If only there were a few more like him.

The lack of active membership is the major factor affecting our choice of plays and type of additional arts activities undertaken currently. There is a definite need to find more active members and encourage more involvement by parents of the Youth Theatre and members of the Company to assist in the running of the Theatre. We do need more active members to volunteer for jobs at the theatre.

Taking an active role in the Company is vital for the future of our work. While on the one hand we have grown enormously and provide a professional level of entertainment to the local community. Our doors are open 7 days a week offering performances, workshops and rehearsals and there is the continuing and growing need to secure administrative support and to find technicians, and production assistants, back stage crew, front of house staff as well as onstage actors.

I am constantly aware of the support received from my Board of Management who have the dual role of running our historic building that is unique and a theatre space in need of attention, as well as coordinating the longest running theatre company in Australia, The Lieder Theatre Company. Thankyou to Judith Boyd who has brought a wealth

of experience and knowledge to her role as Chair, to the inimitable and tireless Pauline J Mullen without whose day to day care and attention to the details of this Company we would not be here, to the generous treasurer Keith Brill, who has our Company operating so smoothly, to Kathy Campbell our secretary who offers so much enthusiasm and to our hard working Board members Fiona Churchill who works behind the scenes organising charity nights, operating lights and performing, our actor & newsletter editor Brian Hill and stage manager & membership officer Ellie McMahon. Thank you all for your generous time and hard work.

To our members and the general public who support and attend our shows, to our major sponsor, Hypercet Printing and advertisers, to our community link with Goulburn High School and to all the community & youth who use our facilities ñ we know we want to stay around to grow and continue to offer you a cultural opportunity that is innovative, educational, healing and fun ñ come inside and join the volunteers who make it all happen - get your hands dirty too.

Chrisjohn Hancock

Artistic Director
23 August 2005

Josh(u)a's contribution

Ahoy me hearties, it's Josh(ua) here writing for the Lieder newsletter for the first time ever! Over 5 years as an active member and this is the first contribution to the administration side of things. I think it's just to pad out the newsletter a bit, I'll try not to stuff it up. Okay, this year I started Uni in Canberra at the ANU School of Art

so I haven't had much time to do a lot of stuff at the Lieder. But I just couldn't resist the chance to play a pirate in Treasure Island. It hadn't been since Babes in the Wood last year that I'd worn makeup (well at least that's the story I'm sticking to). Lots of fun was had backstage with many a cabin boy jokes at Lachlan and Gosh's expense because Gosh can't grow his own facial

hair (he he he). An interesting fact about Treasure Island is that Chrisjohn made the entire cast change their scripts to omit the word seamen due to the fact that there was too much snickering backstage. But a few of us rebelled and said it anyway while laughing on the inside.

Before Treasure Island even finished a few of us already had scripts for the foyer production of Fireface. A very intimate rehearsal period was had with Ellie, Brian, Fiona, Gosh and myself with CJ at the helm again. Gosh was convincing as Kurt, the pyromaniac boy going through puberty. He has that baby face and as mentioned before - can't grow facial hair. It was a challenging play for the actors (and some audience members) but we had an overall good response with some people coming back to see it twice in the short four show season. I am disappointed in those people who judged the play on its warning of explicit material because I feel that many actors (and patrons) are being disadvantaged by the lack of support to new and experimental pieces of theatre. I am looking forward to the next production that will challenge my acting abilities which will hopefully be as early as January so I keep an eye open, ear cocked...!

Everything seemed to happen all at once because in the middle of the two aforementioned productions was the Second Gathering. This entailed another awesome fire show by the Lieder Youth Theatre Company which by my count was the tenth since the very first one which would have been in The Vision of Delight in 2001. I have had the pleasure (and adrenalin rush) of being in every one and have seen it evolve into the highly skilled show that it is now. It was great to meet other young people from around the region with an interest in the performing arts. I know that I've made some very good connections with some very talented people from Canberra and learnt some awesome new acro moves from Alexander Stephenson's workshop and it was great to meet Darren Gilshenan and see him in action. He is the resident clown of the Bell Shakespeare company if you didn't know and I suggest you acquaint yourself with his work. Measure for Measure is at the Playhouse at the Canberra Theatre until Nov 12, go see it.

Well that's it from me,

Josh(u) R. Phillips

Oh Gosh! (or an Intern muses...)

It's been a busy couple of months at the Theatre recently with Treasure Island, The 2nd Gathering, Fireface and the new up & coming production The Odd Couple (the female version). But it's nothing we can't handle.



In Treasure Island I played the handsome Pirate Israel Hands, who was unfortunately killed by a certain young cabin boy! Being a Pirate was fun, until you had to participate in the giant scene changes. Moving walls & boxes, setting up trees or boat-sides and raising and lowering the rigging. It may have looked really cool to the audience, but it quickly became quite exhausting for the cast.

After Treasure Island was over we had to organise the 2nd Gathering, which turned out to be a huge success. Youth groups and individuals from all over the region participated in the three and a half day event, which involved workshops from great tutors such as Mary Macrae (Stage Management), Eliza Logan (Acting), Annemaree Dalziel (Costume Design), Alexander Stevenson (Acrobatics), Darren Gilshenan (Comedy) and our very own and very lovely Judith Boyd.

I had a great time over the weekend and met lots of talented and interesting people. I can't wait for the next time we can all get together.

Once the 2nd Gathering was over we turned our focus to Fireface, the extremely out-there and crazy German thriller by Marius Von Mayenburg. It was a very challenging play for both the audiences and the actors. The play consists of 94 short scenes and was played without an interval - a marathon for all. I think the cast did a great job!

Gosh

Pictured Left Josh (Gosh) Waters Breaking and Destroying Things in a scene from Fireface

Eli's report

There have been a number of things going on at the theatre over the last few months keeping everyone busy. One of those things was the youth forum which the Lieder hosted, the 2nd Gathering - Exchange and Change in late September.

The forum ran over 3 days and we were joined by groups from the Southern Highlands, the South Coast, Canberra, and Yass. The aim of the weekend was for regional youth theatre groups to meet each other, find out what's going on in the area, attend workshops and also to share ideas and skills.

The weekend kicked off with a bbq on the Friday night to welcome the groups and register and the days that followed included workshops by industry professionals in areas like costume, stage management, physical theatre, fun in performance and the final workshop 'The Art of Comedy' run by Darren Gilshenan.

We also had Chairman Mao and yoga sessions run by Chrisjohn and Pauline, theatre-sports and games, and discussion about future forums and opportunities to work together on projects.

There was a chance at the end of the weekend to perform for the group in a variety show with acts varying from rehearsed pieces from previous

performances to spontaneous skits. It was great to see people using skills they'd learned over the weekend in these performances and see how many new friends had been made.

As interns, Gosh and I were involved in organising the show (Gosh stage managed and I was MC-something new for both of us) and the weekend altogether along with Pauline, Judith and Chrisjohn and though our role may at times have simply taken the form of comic relief, I found it good to get a better understanding of and play an active part in what goes on behind the scenes right from the first invitations to the final confirmations.

After the forum we were able to concentrate on rehearsing *Fireface* which was performed in the Lieder foyer over 4 nights in mid October. The show received very strong feedback which was great and I think we all felt the show grew a great deal from opening night.

Throughout November Gosh and I will be working on the *Odd Couple*, directed by Judith Boyd. Gosh is Stage Manager and I will be working as lighting and sound operator. This is the final mainstage show for the year and is already proving to be hilarious thanks to the great cast and direction.

There is not long to go now for Gosh and I with our mentorship program. Exactly what we'll be up to we're yet to know ourselves but our involvement with the theatre will continue.

Eli



The cast of *Fireface* in rehearsal

Josh(u)a Phillips,
Josh (Gosh) Waters,
Fiona Churchill
(seated front),
Brian Hill
(seated front),
Eli McMahon and
Chrisjohn Hancock.



Wedding Bells

The marriage of Louise Boyd and Justin Lowen took place on Saturday 8th October at the home of Judith and David Boyd in Tallong.

Louise had been a member of the Lieder Theatre for three years she has helped backstage in a few productions but is remembered for her performance of Sylvia the dog in "Sylvia".

The couple live and work in Canberra.



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