



MVDS Newsletter

August 2010

Hmmm ... significant August events? In 1870, the opening of the first part of the London Underground. In 1934 Adolf Hitler became Führer of Germany and in 1945 came the bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Bit pushed for space this month (but *thank you* to all those who contributed!). So, here we go.

Members' Evening

Wednesday, 11 August, saw a good gathering at the Madhouse for our members' evening. We kicked off with apologies – our chairperson and vice-chairperson were both involved in “Butler” rehearsals (more details to follow!), and our president and vice-president were both involved in rehearsals for a Constantiaberg production, so committee members were somewhat “thin on the ground”. To balance this, we had at least seven guests brought along by members. News of a champagne raffle was imparted – the tickets *flew* off the bar counter! Wendy Morling then supervised the serving of soup and breads which, judging by the very empty pots, went down very well. I love our s(o)uper-duper funky new soup mugs, Wendy! All then took their seats and were greatly entertained by *The little Heir*, a melodrama directed by Barbara Basel and featuring (in ABC order) Chris Bingham, Janice Budd, Gill Charman, June Edwards, Sandy Gee and Angela Lee Wright. Great job, guys – it was fab! We ended off having Barbara draw the first champagne draw ticket. She read out the number and ... no-one yelled! What? No-one's gone home yet! Barbara then said in a very small voice: “I'd better check *my* ticket.” Yeah, you guessed it, she drew her own! The five other lucky winners were drawn, and the “official” part of the evening was declared over. It was good to see a number of people lingering on over another drink or two (although Jane de Sousa did accuse me of trying to poison her with “off” red wine!).

Birthdays

We have a very small crop of birthdays in September so I thought I would try something a little different.

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| 16.08. | Patrick Jordi – | A guy called Shawn Mullins apparently has a song named “Patrick’s Song”. It doesn’t actually feature the name in the song tho’! |
| 20.08 | Aubrey Hindle – | I’m sure he remembers “Aubrey” by Bread. Sorry, Aubs, wrong sex I know! |
| 26.08. | Kathryn Luyt | and |
| 29.08. | Celia Musikanth | These two are slightly “out there” – sorry, ladies! And both by Simon and Garfunkel! “Kathy’s Song” for Kathryn and “Cecelia” for Celia Musikanth. |

30.08. Norman Murray A song called “My name is Norman Bates”, by a crowd called Landscape!

Hope you all have a wonderful day and an equally wonderful year!

Welcome!

A big “Hi” to new members **Jacqui Bloomer, Kelly Kowalski, Kathryn Luyt and Jane Rosenberg**. Hope to see a lot of you, both on and off stage!

Past Happenings

The Voice Power workshop was held on Sunday, 18 July, in the Masque Theatre. Thanks so much to Lynsey Milewski (nee Hochfelden) for teaching us to breathe properly and working on our projection. A real learning experience and a lot of fun too!

What a very different audition we had on Saturday, 07 August! Professor Ralph Yarrow had his 16 auditionees jumping, winking (yes, I said *winking!*), playing with fake fruit and loo rolls! And not one line from *What the Butler saw* was read! The following *just in*: the cast of *Butler* is ... (drum roll, please)

Dr Prentice	Alastair Duff
Mrs Prentice	Carin Bester
Dr Rance	Alan Jacobs
Nick	Gavin Gomes
Geraldine	Kelly Kowalski
Sgt Match	Philip Earle

Congrats guys – can’t wait to see this in rehearsal!

birga Thomas went to the Grahamstown festival, purely as a “spectator” rather than taking a show herself this time, and she shares her insights with us as at the end of this newsletter.

MEMBERS’ NEWS

As promised last month, Val Stephens shares highlights of her holiday with us.

My daughter and I recently returned from the Canadian Rockies. As well as spending extra days in both Vancouver and Calgary on either end of the trip, we also travelled for two days on the Rocky Mountaineer train from Vancouver to Banff and then spent another five days staying in the area before finishing in Calgary and flying home from there.

What can I say about that part of the world that hasn’t already been said! Perhaps if I tell you that for the first time ever I felt no need to purchase postcards, you will get some idea of the beauty of the region. Everywhere you looked and photographed was like a postcard. The lakes are really that blue, the trees really are that green, the mountains are really that magnificent. A fabulous landscape inhabited by wonderfully friendly people. To mention everyone and everything we saw and experienced would take more space than Eve has allowed me. In a nutshell then (in no particular order): Our first glimpse of the Rockies, the quiet, slow train ride, Lake Louise, black bears alongside the freeways and railway tracks eating their spring delicacy (dandelions), Emerald Lake, two helicopter flights over the Rockies, visiting an ice field, eating lunch at a ranch, Vancouver (beautiful city), elk, spending three nights at the Fairmont Hotel at Lake Louise (height of luxury), great beer, gondola rides, suspension bridges, reflections on the water, glaciers, raging rivers, mountains, trees, Calgary and the cab driver who bought us an ice cream on the way to the airport on our last day. A holiday I will never forget.

Thanks, Val! Saw some of her photos which are terrific!

Bruce Edwards shares an hilarious anecdote with us which he entitled: “Don’t get screwed by the trolley”!

The *Lady Windermere’s Fan* set was up in all its glory, painted, decorated and very fine. The last thing – the stage floor had to be painted – it was almost 15:00, and the floor needed to dry before the evening rehearsal at seven. Clear the decks! Oh sh...oot! The screws trolley cupboard was still on the stage. We (Wendy Goddard, Vivienne Gray, Brenda Gray and I looked around us ... Oh my ... No exit big enough for it. It was trapped! Time was tight and after a quick brainstorm, the decision was that the only way was to tip it and lift it over the rostra. Weighing in at about 50 kg when empty and probably 500 kg when full, this rather bulky and unwieldy item would take at least two people and a lot of effort to lift it over the two-steps-tall rostra. As we well know, it houses many canisters and containers of screws, brackets and all sorts of metal fixtures. Tip, up, over, down and right it again – yes, definitely do-able. Action stations! Nope, it ain’t goin’ nowhere, too heavy. By then Wendy’s wrist watch was burning a hole in her arm so we very hurriedly started taking out some of the heavier items. So it went, sessions with Wendy and I trying to lift it and unpacking more and more to make it lighter. Eventually, with some of the canisters still in it, we could lift it. Ready, steady, go, with Wendy positioned on the one side of the rostra and I on the other. One of the many comments was: “There should not be glass jars in this cupboard, plastic won’t break and shatter should it fall.” One, two, three, heave ho and bump – up one step it went. Catch a breath and one, two, three, heave ho and bump – up another step it went. Then for the over, hah! – that was not too difficult. One, two, three, heave ho and bump – down a step it went. Another one, two, three, heave ho and bump – down a step it went and *CRASH*. A bad landing on one of the castors and there went the chipboard base, broken. The bottom had dropped out her world! Not to be tilted upright and pushed through to the green room. (Luckily the last of the contents was still in tact.) With due respect the old lady was carried into the green room and laid down on her back on the floor to await restoration to her former glory the next day. The tools’ trolley now sports a brand new, proper robust wooden base, although you might not find some things in quite the same place as they were before. Let this be a lesson to all inexperienced set builders *and even* old hands!

FUTURE HAPPENINGS

A taste of what’s to come a little later in the year. Constantiaberg Theatre Players are keen to get all the Masque societies involved in a barn dance as a fundraiser for our theatre! This is tentatively planned for some time in November, and we may have to forgo our planned Members’ Evening for that month – ‘cos this would give everybody the chance to catch up with all those people you only see once in a blue moon! More details to follow next month.

CALENDAR

- 13-21.08. *Lady Windermere’s Fan* by Oscar Wilde, directed by Brenda Gray for Claremont Dramatic Society at the Masque Theatre. Lady Windermere, about to celebrate her 21st birthday, hears a piece of gossip that has a ripple effect on her life. Her hasty decisions and actions lead to unexpected twists and turns in the plot. Written by one of the finest exponents of social comedy in the English language.
- 26-28.08. *Dance Diverse-It-Is* presented by Lourenza Pereira at the Masque Theatre. Promises entertainment from beginning to end for everyone with a passion for theatre. All shows R60 (R50 Theatre Club members). Bookings: 021-701 0795.
- 29.08., 15:00 *From Frank and Elvis with Love* at the Masque for one show only.. Our very own Aubrey Hindle is joined by Charlie Human (singing Elvis and playing guitar) and Lorraine Rothenberg on piano. Tickets R60 (R50).
- 02-04.09. A double bill from Blue Sky Productions: *The human Voice* (by Jean Cocteau, translated by Anthony Wood) and *Woman Alone* (by Dario Fo and Franca Rame, translated by Gillian Hanna, SA adaptation James Cairns). Both directed by Ingrid Wylde and starring Nina Lucy Wylde, a mother-

- and-daughter collaboration. *The human Voice* runs the gamut of female emotions. A woman is speaking to her long-time lover, invisible, inaudible, due to be married the next day. It is an act of love and farewell. This deeply moving play speaks to anyone who has ever loved. In complete contrast, *A Woman Alone*, written in 1991, is a colourful black comedy about a housewife held prisoner in her own home, driven to attempt suicide by her abusive relationship with a possessive husband, the drudgery of household chores, a passionate affair with a young boy and constant harassment from her wheelchair-bound brother-in-law. Please note an age restriction of 16. Thu. and Fri. at 20:00, Sat. 14:30 and 18:30. All shows R60 (R50).
- 10-12.09. *A Night on the Town* presented by Wynberg Boys High School. The steel band is known as the “party band” due to its light-hearted, foot-tapping repertoire which often inspires spontaneous dancing from the audience! In addition to this outstanding band, our audiences will be treated to an amazing programme which features the award-winning Wynberg Boy's Choir and the Vocal Ensemble. As if this is not enough you will also experience the popular WBHS Concert and Jazz Bands. The repertoire for this exciting programme includes such favourites as “Waka Waka”, “Seventy-Six Trombones”, “Mona Lisa”, “Sha-boom”, “For the longest Time”, “The Girl from Ipanema”, “All shook up”, “Stormy Weather”, “Paper Moon” and much, much more. Fri. at 20:00, Sat. at 18:30 and Sun. at 15:00. All shows R60 (R50).
- 17./18.09. Fish Hoek Dramatic Society presents *Natalia da Roche in Cabaret* (Fri. at 20:00 and Sat. at 18:30). Natalia is a pioneer in the entertainment industry and will be sharing some of her memories of being in the entertainment industry for over 30 years as well as singing some of her favourite songs! She runs the new theatre the Muze in Muizenberg with husband Kurt Egelhof.

Days, times and prices for Masque Theatre productions (unless otherwise stated) are Thu. and Fri. performances at 20:00, Sat. matinée at 14:30, Sat. evening at 18:30. Thu. evenings and Sat. matinées R50 (Theatre Club members R40), other nights R60 (Theatre Club members R50). Bookings on 021-788 1898 (office hours only).

Oh, and another thing about the month of August – it is the birthday of all horses in Australia!

This is *Eve* – signing off!

Our 2010 committee

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Grahamstown 2010 (written by birga Thomas)

Wolfgang and I went to Grahamstown again this year – but not taking a play there as well [although, admittedly, we missed “my” team some times ... especially when we attended productions at “our” venue, PJ’s].

The other big difference to last year was the extended festival: Fifteen days this year, because the organisers thought (mistakenly, of course!) they could catch some of the “soccer folk”! And hardly anybody was staying for the 15 days.

But the festival organisers are not the ones who suffered, they got (as usual) their rental from the venues and for table space from the crafters who were (again) unhappy about the “new” Village Green. As one couple told us, they had to spend R10 000 (in rental, accommodation and transport) before selling a single item ... and sales on the whole were quite poor (as the “visual” artists, who had good sales last year, also felt). On the upside: There was, naturally, lots of parking available, usually right in front of the venue, the traffic was more than manageable, and for most productions you got good seats even when you were not in front of the queue. Mind you, there were still sold-out performances ...

As usual, we booked some shows (esp. on the main) beforehand and then added more as we listened to other people and their experiences. We arrived late in the afternoon and immediately took in an unbooked evening show. Peter Hayes’ *I am here* (which birga rated as 12/10, thinking it couldn’t get better – but, of course, I was wrong!), a very moving, honest, autobiographical play – it should be prescribed viewing for young people.

We both saw more than 20 shows (Wolfgang a few more, because I was knocked out by medication and/or migraine a couple of times). Here follow some of the other highlights.

Karoo Moose which we were unable to see in Cape Town over the last two years (9/10). Go and see this wonderful story if it comes back to the Baxter, something quite unusual.

MaKwacha HipOpera, a Malawian production. We saw the opening, when the cast/crew had just arrived after thirty-something hours on the road! There were just a handful of people in the audience – such a pity, it deserved full houses. A brilliant adaptation/re-interpretation of Brecht/Weill’s *Three-Penny Opera* (which I would love to do one day in its original format!). Choreography needed a few more rehearsals, but I put that down to “jetlag”.

Mbeki and other Nitemares, a wonderful Wits student production, with “snapshots” of Mbeki’s personal and political life, actually all the way up to and including Malema (hilarious in places). You didn’t have to like Mbeki to enjoy this political satire. 10/10

Tin Drum Bucket, which I didn’t catch in the past either. (And “politics” again: Zuma’s second actress daughter – who looks just like dad, unfortunately – was the new performer. And she was wonderful.) We loved the innovations (set, acting, music/sound) and adored the drummer/sound person (only one). The only drawback, I felt, was the predictability of the story line. (7,5/10)

The Timekeepers, the absolute highlight for us (and many other people), no grading since it was “off the Richter scale/10”. An Israeli production which has toured the world. Would have liked to see it a second time, but there wasn’t a single ticket available ... The story evolves between three inmates of a concentration camp in the early 1940s, each fulfilling a different role (and having different reasons for being there). Every performance ended with a question-and-answer session; and really good discussions we had [I was most interested in how they had been perceived in Germany, and they told us that there the discussions lasted 2 ½ hours or more ... which made me happy!].

Ingrid Wylde (no, the “other one” is Oscar Wilde) directed her daughter in two one-acts: Jean Cocteau’s *The human Voice* and Dario Fo’s *A Woman alone*. Don’t miss it when it comes to the Masque later this year!

Andrew Buckland was a guest actor with a wonderful team of young people of all races in a very African story (and Africa seemed to be a dominant theme this year) *Breed*, including all the meanings of the word. 10/10 – See it, if it comes near you ...

Also 10/10 were Bach's *Goldberg Variations* (no, not harpsichord, but violin, viola and cello – world-class!). And the Rhodes Chapel being the most divine venue for this.

The festival closed (over two evenings) with *Angeli e Demon* – an unrate-able (there's nothing to compare it with) spectacle of fire and fireworks, enormous stilt-puppets and a big cast. Out in the open and free, no tickets.

But, "as usual" I'm tempted to say, the absolute top spot took (once again) Dada Masilo with her version of *Swan Lake*. You don't have to like ballet or modern dance to enjoy her productions. I liked very much last year's *Carmen* because it was not the often seen "romantic love" story, but did bring out the brutality of the story, with the rape portrayed just as what it is. *Swan Lake* on the other hand was very, very funny! I will never be able to see a conventional *S. L.* again, I think. The initial narration about "The Ballet" was extremely humorous, "explaining" among other things certain "ballet moves" to "ballet idiots", demonstrated by the company. When the swans come on in tutus as it is supposed to be, you first swallow for a split second and then ... yes, of course, in nature there are male and female swans, and they all look alike. It felt just right! And there were many more surprises to come ... And Siegfried not wanting to marry at all, his parents (esp. father) constantly running after him and getting him back on stage! You had to be there ... writing this I have laughing tears in my eyes again!

And, of course, there were low-lights too, as every year. The worst for us (and we seem to be alone with our opinion, because the reviews in G'town and here in the Cape were mostly raving) was a Stellenbosch student production *Woza Andries*. It's not that we didn't understand it – we both know the Afrikaner history of our country. But I sum it up as "Crude, rude – and symbolism overload". Avoid it.