

Hobart Repertory Theatre Society proudly presents

by arrangement with ORIGIN™ Theatrical, on behalf of
Samuel French Ltd. a Concord Theatricals Company.

Tennessee Williams
**The Glass
Menagerie**

directed by Jeff Kevin

13 - 28 October

Performances: Wednesday - Saturday 7.30pm
Weekend matinees scheduled - see website for details
The Playhouse Theatre Box Office: 6234 1536

Bookings at playhouse.org.au



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Rob
Valentine M.C.

in New
Sedley Hood

REPertoire OCTOBER 2023

President's Report October 2023

Welcome again Hobart Repertory Society members.

We come to the beginning of another Rep show for 2023, *The Glass Menagerie*, opening on Friday, 13 October and running until 28 October.

Director Jeff Kevin and the cast and crew have been working hard to bring life into this iconic play by Tennessee Williams. It is a play that set Tennessee onto fame and is somewhat autobiographical.

Jeff has assembled a great cast mixed with experience and new faces. Rehearsals have been going great. The creative team have bumped in preparing for opening night with the set completed.

I am looking forward to opening night. (I am biased as I am involved backstage). Please book early.

Our last play *Let's Kill Agatha Christie*, with Director Jenifa Dwyer and a great cast and creative team, was another great success. Again I had great feedback from the audience at opening night and I thoroughly enjoyed it. Thank you to all from us.

The One Act Festival on Friday night 25 August and Saturday 26 was another roaring success with a full program of plays. It was good to see so many original works. (Results: Page 6)

Thank you to Festival Director Ros Peck and her crew for a great run.

Thanks also to Ivano Del Pio as our adjudicator this year for what was a difficult task.

The productions for 2024 are being finalised and our 2024 program will be released on our Production Launch on 23 November, so keep that date free.

Also there will be details of an end of year function to be held on the 4 November coming up in the next 2 weeks, so keep that free.

As I have mentioned in the last report we have been actively looking to find a place to relocate our operations from Creek Road once our lease expires with the Salvation Army on 31 December 2023.

While as mentioned in the last newsletter, we can't go into specific details of a site we have been looking at for confidentiality reasons, I can say we have progressed in this direction but we do not have an active contract at the moment. When I have any further news I will announce it as soon as it happens.

I would like to thank all the members of the various Rep committees and the volunteers for their repeated hard work and dedication again. Don't forget to register for volunteering for upcoming events.

Please don't hesitate to contact me if you have any questions or suggestions moving forward.

Yours in Theatre

David Clements

President HRTS

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REP TRIVIA : Did you know HRTS has previously presented these Tennessee Williams plays ? (But not The Glass Menagerie)

1989 A Streetcar Named Desire 1991 Cat on a Hot Tin Roof 1997 Sweet Bird of Youth

THE GLASS MENAGERIE

A Q and A WITH DIRECTOR JEFF KEVIN

The Glass Menagerie was first performed in 1944 and is set in the 1930s. How does it resonate with today's audience?

While circumstances change from generation to generation, cost of living, inflation, paying the bills, family responsibility, relationships, love and hate - and everything in-between - dreams, ambition and finding your place in life are all a struggle.

The struggle within the Wingfield family, mother, son and daughter all have to deal with the reality of life. The Glass Menagerie holds a mirror up to society today just as it did in 1930's America.

It is a play often described as a tragedy, a comedy, melodrama and tragicomedy, it is an enduring drama that still resonates with contemporary audiences. It's very human.

It was a time *'when the huge middle class of America was matriculating in a school for the blind'*: Tom Wingfield whimsically describes it. A time of poverty, discontent, political and social unrest which gave Tennessee Williams a perception of a society desperately searching for that elusive something just out of reach. A time to hope, to dream, to run or stay.

Tom is a storyteller looking back on his life as a young man (the play is set in two time zones), and is caught in a trap of self-reproach. As he grows older, he realizes that the stifling environment meant that he must escape for his own survival. The play is semi-autobiographical; Laura is his sister, Rose, and Amanda is his mother.

It would be a mistake to think of it as a good drama. It has its moments that are very sad.

What do you bring to this

I would like to think I bring a perspective that, while I respect its traditional origins, it is about contemporary human behaviour, although I have set it in 1937, traditionally, has been a vehicle for the young to have reached a mature age. My research suggests she is younger otherwise it makes her children seem somewhat lacking in maturity, especially her son. The actor playing Tom has two roles, one as her adolescent son, the other as a man ten years older, he is the narrator.



an adolescent he recalls his restlessness and responsibility he felt towards a beloved sister from her, from his family and from St Louis. The Glass Menagerie is based on Tennessee's autobiographical. Tom Wingfield is his sister, Rose, and Amanda is his mother,

think the play is without humour. Like all moments that are very funny, conversely

particular production?

fresh and individual outlook to the play. A respect its traditional origins, it is about behaviour, although I have set it in 1937, traditionally, has been a vehicle for the young to have reached a mature age. My research suggests she is younger otherwise it makes her children seem somewhat lacking in maturity, especially her son. The actor playing Tom has two roles, one as her adolescent son, the other as a man ten years older, he is the narrator.

A deserted mother who loves her children; a son longing to escape his environment but held back by the love he feels for his sister; a daughter with dreams of her own despite a physical disability; she has the capacity to love if only the chance would come along and it does. A gentleman caller, one of Tom's friends suddenly visits.

Have you seen a staging of the play you especially liked? (When and where?)

I haven't seen any staged version of the play. Ever. Yet, it is a play with which I have been connected throughout my career.

e.g., I used a speech from the play to successfully audition for NIDA and I was involved in a student production at the University of Wollongong.

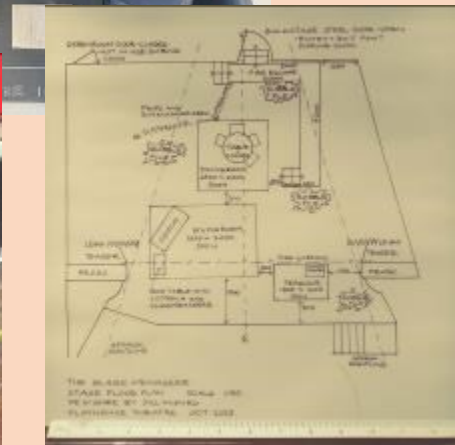
Do any of the movie versions capture the spirit of the play, do you think?

(1950 with Kirk Douglas and Jane Wyman , 1973 Katherine Hepburn and Sam Waterson and 1987 Joanne Woodward and John Malkovich)

I have not seen a movie version. I had always hoped that I may get the chance to direct it without being influenced.

Getting ready : Costume fittings and supplying props and furniture and the important aspect of the set and lighting design are all an essential part of any production.

Hobart Rep relies on volunteers to enable every production to be ready for Opening Night.



Hobart Rep is grateful to professional photographers such as Wayne Wagg who provide high quality images for the Program. Thanks to Moya Deigan for these photos.



REHEARSAL SHOTS



A FINAL WORD FROM DIRECTOR JEFF KEVIN

The production has been a joy to work on. I want to thank everyone involved.

Karen Kluss, Julius Lovell, Kate Choraziak and Will Norris have been inspirational; it is said, that by your 'students' you will be taught and I can't thank them enough.

Thanks also for the consummate skills of Production Manager, Moya Deigan; Jill Munro's imaginative Set Design; Jason James's atmospheric Light Design; Denise Alexandra's inspired Costume Design, skilfully assisted by Ann Harvey's detailed Costume Coordination; and, David Clement's calm, professional Stage Management.

As a director you can do just so much, after that it is up to the Company to 'tell the story'. I am thrilled to work with such a talented bunch of people. I would work with them all again in a heartbeat!



2023 Winners

Best Actor – Ian McQueen for *Impersonating an Egyptian*

Best Actor – Dana Suarez for *In the Shoes of a Man*

Best Original Work – Rosemary Cann for *The Appointment*

Best Original Work – Gabrielle Adkins for *Rory*

Adjudicator Award – Best Ensemble – *The Reunion*

Adjudicator Award – for experimentation and Creativity in writing – Noah Sargent

Best Director – Peter Orpin for *Impersonating an Egyptian*

Up & Coming Director – Jeremy Pyefinch & Bethany Denholm

Best Production – *Waiting* - Jeremy Pyefinch & Bethany Denholm

Thank you to everyone involved for making OneFest what it is.

That's all folks!

See you in 2024.



Congratulations to Ian McQueen for his Best Actor award in One Fest

From the Archives: More on “*Dream of a Wedding*” and 20 Years Ago

With thanks to Meredith McQueen

You may recall that the last newsletter included details of “*Dream of a Wedding*” performed on local television in 1965. We have been contacted by Bill Dowd with his memories of this production. Thanks so much Bill! (Pictured bottom left)

“I remember the year...1965. Still black & white transmission, videotape not even invented yet (I think?). So the play was not prerecorded, but we performed it LIVE to air! No, it was certainly not usual to film Rep productions. Most of the actors were Rep regulars, some of the older ones were very good if my memory serves.

Pat Clements, the writer, had written previously for Rep. The play was written for film or TV because - wait for it! - it had special effects and time period changes which perhaps couldn't be achieved on stage. It was very short in length, from memory less than an hour, and I'm pretty sure there were no commercial breaks. That would have been SO complicated in those days!

The set was designed by Dorothy Sherry, resident designer at TVT6, and married to Ray Sherry, also a radio & TV presenter there, and later an MP.

The story revolved around four married couples within one family, but each couple was set in a different time period from the Edwardian period to the 1960's. The set consisted of a balcony/terrace of the family home and one room inside. I'm vague about the plot, but I think each of the couple's marriages had ended in divorce/separation because each of the proposals had occurred on the terrace, which apparently made the spot 'cursed'!

Above the French doors onto the terrace was a sort of stone mask, (just painted, not very convincingly) as a grotesque. In the final scene I distinctly recall having to go down on bended knee to propose to Amanda, and then came the SPECIAL EFFECT!!

The camera focus changed to the mask above the door and lo! - the 'mask' expression dissolved into a radiant smile. The curse was broken somehow! I think the smile version was painted on a separate board or flat and a second camera shot that, and it was cross-faded in the control room. We were all SO impressed then, but I think in retrospect it was pretty awful!

So what was Hobart Rep up to twenty years ago – that is in September 2003? (To some of us it seems like only yesterday!) It was Aykbourn's “*Time of My Life*” directed by (then) Ann Lennon-George. Set in an Italian restaurant, this play included scenes set in the past, present and future, in typical Aykbourn fashion. The cast included the late, great Mike Edwards, Shirley Schlesinger, Leigh Faulkner, Anita Zelazo, Trevor Gallagher and Sarah Hodgetts. But the standout performance was from Ivano Del Pio in no less than FIVE roles as staff members in the restaurant. It seems fitting that Ivano was back in The Playhouse recently as adjudicator for our *OneFest* one-act play festival.



Bill Dowd



Ivano Del Pio

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