

Latrobe Theatre Company Inc.

Presidents Report 2009

When I first sat down to write my Presidents report I thought “Heck, what is there to talk about”. But as I warmed to the task I surprised myself just how much ground the company has covered in the last 12 months, whilst also realizing how much work still remains to be done.

In compiling this report I also realized how many hours I must have spent over the last 12 Months as President of the LTC, and I had to ask myself why I have been willing to spend so much time on company matters. The answer is simply that I have derived a tremendous amount of enjoyment and personal satisfaction since joining the club in 1994, and I want the company to survive and grow strong so it can continue to be an outstanding community asset in the foreseeable future for citizens living in the area of the Latrobe City. If company's like LTC should fold, I am convinced that such community assets will be lost forever, and that is a legacy I do not want to pass on from my Presidency!

The past year seems to have gone by very quickly and it is worth looking back over the year to identify some of the major issues which the company has had to deal with.

Financial planning:

Firstly I would like to discuss the financial situation the club has faced.

As at the close of our financial year for 2008 the club proudly boasted around \$28,000.00 in cash deposits. There was a comfortable feeling in the company that we were in a sound financial position. The company had decided to produce Who goes bare? a comical farce about the goings on in a decaying old health clinic, Disney's Beauty and the Beast a well know blockbuster of a musical which assured ourselves of getting "bums on seats" and also the two one act plays Lady of the English and Split Enz which both received rave reviews when performed at the Wings.

Unfortunately our balance sheet as at the end of 2009 reflected a very different picture financially. Cash currently sits at \$15,000.00 a reduction of \$13,000.00 in our cash reserves.

In defense of both the budgets for Who Goes Bare? and Beauty and the Beast it could be said that both Production teams were extremely prudent in administering the budgets set down by the finance committee keeping within the "guidelines" set. Our return at the Box Office for both productions was extremely disappointing with attendances being well below our anticipated expectations.

A number of factors contributing to the lack patronage have been identified including the short lead time we had to promote Who goes bare? early in 2009, the Global Economic Crisis which had swept the country and a misunderstanding between the company and the Warragul Arts Centre as to the inclusion of box office booking fee's and bank charges within the ticket prices of Beauty and the Beast which resulted in the company paying nearly \$11,000.00 in Fee's and charges which was on top of royalty payments. It should be noted that this particular factor had been previously identified

during the production of Fiddler on the Roof in 2008 with a directive given that the Box Office fee's should be paid for by the patrons however this was not correctly conveyed to the Warragul Arts Centre and as we had not obtained confirmation from the Arts Centre in writing that this was our intention there was no recourse to dispute the charge.

The Committee has since reviewed controls and given a directive that any potential show will not be given the green light until the Finance Sub-Committee is satisfied that a sound budget is in place and fee's and charges from any of the performing Arts Centre's are carefully reviewed and confirmed in writing before signing any agreements to stage a particular production.

2009 Productions:

On a brighter note all LTC Productions for 2009 were extremely successful from a production point of view.

Who Goes bare? was a return to performing a good old fashioned farce. We were particularly fortunate to have Richard Tyler join us to direct Who Goes bare? Richard came to us with a wealth of experience and enthusiasm and Dorette Van Breugel who had joined the company only a couple of years previously took on the arduous role of Production Manager. Both Richard and Dorette together took Who goes bare? by the horns and produced a fantastic show which resulted in many accolades from our acting fraternity culminating in the receipt of the following GAT awards.

James Evans - Most Outstanding Support Actor – Drama/Comedy (Male)

Kristina Creighton - Most Outstanding Actor – Drama/Comedy (Female)

Richard Tyler - Most Outstanding Director – Drama/Comedy

Most Outstanding Production - Drama/Comedy

Adjudicators award for "The professional way in which [the cast and crew] covered up the disastrous broken glass episode"

Adjudicators award for those who had to appear undressed during the course of the play.

It should be noted that James (Jim) Evans is one of our most recent recipients of life membership and has been associated with the LTC since 1964 when he appeared in Naughty Marietta. Congratulations Jim!

Our One Act plays Lady of the English an original play written and directed by our own Aron Toman and Split Enz directed by Annette O'Shea were also extremely well received. They were great fun for those involved and introduced us to a number of new budding Actors and Actresses who we are certain you will see again in the future. Both plays were performed at the one act play festival hosted by FAMDA and also performed at the Wings where approximately 70 patrons laughed their way through both hilarious productions. The evening's performance at the Wings has also become the catalyst for renewed enthusiasm to perform more productions at the Wings in the future.

Our last production for 2009 was of course Disney's Beauty and the Beast. A lavish production which featured all the wizardry you would expect to see in any major production and one that we feel compared equally with many of our favorites performed over the years. A huge cast and crew were assembled to get this production off the ground. Of course the number involved is too numerous to acknowledge in this report however the LTC is indebted to each and everyone involved. From our seamstresses, make up artists and set decorators to sound and lighting technicians and of course our Pyrotechnicians! I would like to acknowledge the support of our Directing Team Michelle Carrigy, Rebekah King and Penny-Lee Tomkins together with our Production manager Keith Gibson-Williamson for the time given to make

Beauty and the Beast the magical feast of entertainment that our patrons enjoyed. Beauty and the Beast and the cast and crew also received several nominations from the GAT fraternity with GAT nominations being bestowed on the following members.

Most Outstanding Support Actor (Musical) - Male

Andrew Braniff ("Lefou")

Scott Millar ("Lumiere")

Most Outstanding Support Actor (Musical) - Female

Denise Twite ("Mrs Potts")

Most Outstanding Youth Performance (Musical) – Female

Kelsea Timmers ("Chip")

Most Outstanding Choreographer (Musical)

Penny-Lee Tomkins

Most Outstanding Director (Musical)

Michelle Carrigy

Most Outstanding Set Design

John Hall

Most Outstanding Costume Design

Geelong Lyric Theatre, Larissa Morey, Krissie Creighton and Kate Dougan

Most Outstanding Makeup And Hair Design

Sue Thompson

Most Outstanding Lighting Design

Russell Stewart

Most Outstanding Technical Achievement

Flash pots and Pyrotechnics

Most Outstanding Production (Musical)

I would like to particularly acknowledge the support of John Hall in the area of Set design. I am sure you would all agree that John excelled himself this year with the design and construction of the castle used in Beauty and the Beast. As this was Johns tenth year at the helm of Set design being a recipient of this years GAT for outstanding Set design stands as testament to John's skill and dedication. Congratulations John from all your friends at the LTC.

Recipients of GAT awards for Beauty and the Beast were:

Scott Miller - Most Outstanding Support Actor - Musical (Male)

Denise Twite - Most Outstanding Support Actor - Musical (Female)

John Hall - Most Outstanding Set Design

Flash pots and Pyrotechnics - Most Outstanding Technical Achievement

Future shows:

I guess it could be said that future shows is the life blood of the company and in 2009 the enthusiasm shown towards the selection of shows for 2010 by members of the Future shows team was no exception. We went through quite a lengthy consultation process culminating with the decision to stage Spamalot in 2010. Unfortunately the “theatre god’s” must have been once again against us. Following extensive advertising, pleading and coercion for members to come forward to be considered for the directing team positions we had one applicant. This fact and also initial reports from the Finance Sub-Committee that we were going to face a financial loss in 2009 had alarm bells ringing very loudly. The Committee was then faced with the agonizing decision of having to pull yet another show. To make matters worse we had all ready booked the Warragul Arts Centre for 2010 and the Arts centre was about to launch its 2010 season with pre-selling Theatre guides already printed with Spamalot advertising. “A most embarrassing position for all concerned.” Following discussions with the Warragul Arts centre with relation to how the ticket prices were set for 2010 and the fact that it was too late to allow us to charge the Box office booking fee of \$3.50 per ticket or the Credit card charge against the patrons booking, another meeting was convened and the decision made to “pull the show”. The LTC was not about to face another financial disaster.

In retrospect the Committee could now clearly see that even though the current selection criteria and processes as per our By Laws had served the LTC well it was time for us to review the By Laws and go back out to the members with a clear message that the LTC was open to suggestions from the Theatrical Community as to the types of shows we should be producing in the future. The review of our By Laws is mentioned elsewhere in this report however I am extremely pleased to report that since that point in time we have

been approached by 5 separate individuals with fantastic propositions for shows in 2010 and 2011.

We are extremely happy to announce tonight that the LTC will be producing the Noel Coward play Hay fever and is to be directed by Richard Tyler. We are planning on going into production in April with the show being produced in August.

Hay Fever is set in the hall of the Bliss family home. The eccentric Blisses— Judith, a recently retired stage actress, David, a self-absorbed novelist, and their two equally unconventional children— live in a world where reality slides easily into fiction. Upon entering this world, the unfortunate weekend guests— a proper diplomat, a shy flapper, an athletic boxer, and a fashionable sophisticate— are repeatedly thrown into melodramatic scenes wherein their hosts profess emotions and react to situations that do not really exist. The resulting comedic chaos ends only when the tortured visitors tip-toe out the door.

The LTC is planning to stage the show in the Wings and also take it on the road. John Hall has already commenced work on designing a set which we will be able to utilize in the Wings and modify for transport to other venues. As mentioned earlier with the success of staging our one act plays in the Wings we truly believe this to be an excellent way of being able to still bring quality Theatre to our citizens without the huge overheads that we would normally experience if the show was to be staged at the Arts Centre.

We can also announce tonight the commencement of “Play Group”. Play Group will be an informal play reading group which gets together once a month to read One Act Plays, excerpts from two act plays and possibly even touch on musicals. Krissie Creighton has generously agreed to donate her time towards coordinating the Play Group.

The Committee is also in negotiations with other members of the LTC with a view to staging another “Our Best Bits” type of cabaret show, an original musical written by one of our budding writers and an exciting two act comedy set in a provincial European setting. Unfortunately as we are still in negotiations I am unable to provide further details tonight so stay tuned to our web site for more exciting announcements.

Sponsorship:

The LTC was extremely fortunate to have been able to retain many of its long standing Sponsors for its 2009 season. Given that extreme financial pressure had been placed on all of our sponsors courtesy of the Global economic crisis it was humbling for us to be able to accept their generosity. I would like pass on our sincere thanks to all of our sponsors and of course particularly to our Corporate Patron Loy Yang Power who have stood by our side for many years.

Loy Yang Power

Valley Ford

Latrobe Valley Express

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Friends of the LTC (Have provided monetary and “in kind support”)

O'Halloran Davis - Solicitors - Moe

LSH Accounting – Morwell

Century Inn - Traralgon

Australian Paper - Maryvale

LV Printers - Traralgon

Wako Kwikform Limited - Scaffolding – Traralgon

Conclusion:

As President I wish to thank all of our committee members.

Special thanks should be made to the following committee members who have all given their time to the LTC throughout the year and will not be standing for re-election.

Kate Dougan our tireless Secretary, Kate comes to the end of her term as secretary this evening having spent the last 15 years on the Committee and a general member of the LTC since 1986. Kate's dedication to the LTC has been

born out of the sheer enjoyment she has gained, the friendships she has developed, and the challenges that have befallen her along the way. Our heartfelt congratulations for a job well done!

Craig Whitehead, Craig has been a company member for at least 10 years and has had five years on the Committee. His dedication and support to the LTC and constructive advice given to us has certainly endeared him to the Committee. We wish him well in the future and hope that he will continue to contribute whenever he can. Congratulations Craig!

On balance I believe the LTC has had a successful year. The committee meetings have been well attended by our Committee members however I am extremely disappointed by the lack of interest from our general members. The LTC is “your” Company and as such you are more than welcome to attend our monthly committee meetings share your thoughts and dreams for the LTC and volunteer for one of the many sub-committee’s which often need help. Our merry band of Committee members is only human and we can only expect so much out of each and every one of them. Yes it has been known that our committee meetings can be lengthy, however if you take into consideration the dynamics of our company and the work that we as a committee are expected to achieve it is only a small price to pay for our success. So I urge you to seriously consider your own positions within the company. We are grateful that some new faces have come forward to be nominated for positions on the committee and I wish each and every one of you the best of luck however should you be unsuccessful with your nomination please understand that you can still be an active member of the LTC committee whether it be by your attendance at our monthly meetings to assist in our deliberations or by volunteering to join a sub-committee. I will leave you all with that thought.

Simon Hemming

President