

Beaumaris Theatre

TALBOT TATTLER

April 2008

'Night Mother

By Marsha Norman, Directed by Shane Ryan

I would firstly like to thank Beaumaris Theatre for inviting me back to direct another play. It is a pleasure to work with such a professional, friendly and well-organized team.

'Night Mother is a Pulitzer Prize (1983) winning play that ran for a year on Broadway and was nominated for a Tony award for best play. Originally performed with Kathy Bates and Anne Potoniak playing the roles of Jessie and her mother Thelma, the play focuses on an extraordinary 'Night in ordinary lives.

Jessie is a middle-aged woman who has returned to live with her mother after her divorce. Very early in the play Jessie tells her mother that she is going to kill herself. From there we watch a battle of wills in real time as Thelma pits her desperation and ingenuity against Jessie's determination to go through with her plan. A great modern play that has deservedly been revived on Broadway. It almost plays like a thriller as the action build to a stunning climax.

In Beaumaris Theatre's production I have been lucky to get a great cast and technical team together to provide a great Night of entertainment.

Janine Evans plays Jessie. Janine has earned a reputation as one of community theatre's great comic actors, primarily at Williamstown Little Theatre. So it has been a great change of pace to play the determined, subdued Jessie. However, from the moment she had me blinking back tears in audition I have been in no doubt that she will provide a memorable performance.

Many Beaumaris members will be familiar with Barb Stewart from performances in shows such as Blackadder, Steel Magnolias and the 2007 Review. Much of the play is

(Night Mother—continued on page 2)

Beaumaris Theatre

82 Wells Road, Beaumaris 3193

'Night Mother

Performances Fridays and Saturdays at 8 pm
From Friday 2nd May * To Saturday 17th May
Thursday 15th May at 8 pm and
Sunday 11th May at 5 pm.

Bookings:

Tel 9583 6896

Mail to:

PO Box 7230

Beaumaris 3193

eMail: beaumaristheatre@optusnet.com.au

* Gala Night—Friday 2nd May
Tickets \$2 extra—includes supper

What's inside Talbot Tattler...

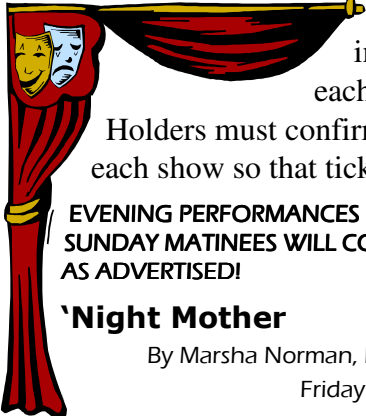
	<i>Page</i>
Show dates	2
The Day of the Triffids Revisited	2
Auditions—Anne of Green Gables	3
Social Events— Sound of Music	3
Social Events— Trivioke	3
Barbeque Donation thanks	3
Bowel Cancer info evening	3
The Prez Sez	4
Talbot Awards 2008	4
Talbot Adjudicator Profile	4
Dr Shakespeare	5
Did You Know?	5
Front of House and Box Office thanks	5
Working Bee thanks	5
Barbe's Bakery	6
D.K Productions	6
The Sound of Triffids	7
Chookas	7
As It Happened	7
Membership reminder	8
Theatre Craft Triffids Review	8
Raffle Results	8

Ticket Prices:

Adults	\$18 *\$20
Concessions	\$15 *\$17
Children	\$15 *\$17
Family	\$55 (2 adults & 2 children)
Subscribers	\$15 *\$17
Groups	\$15 (10 & over)
Season Ticket	\$60 (5 shows)

2008 – Another Year of Exciting Theatre!

Jot down these dates on your calendar now, so you don't miss out on anything!



Dates to be confirmed in newsletters prior to each show. Season Pass Holders must confirm their dates prior to each show so that tickets can be allocated.

EVENING PERFORMANCES WILL START AT 8PM SHARP, SUNDAY MATINEES WILL COMMENCE AT 5PM SHARP, AS ADVERTISED!

'Night Mother
By Marsha Norman, Directed by Shane Ryan
Friday 2nd May to Saturday 17th May

Bedside Manners: Anonymous Theatre
By Derek Benfield, Directed by Brian Uniacke
Saturday 28th June

Bedside Manners: Ensemble Rehearsed
Friday 4th and Saturday 5th July

Anne of Green Gables
Adaptated by Joseph Robinette, Directed by Debbie Keyte
Friday 29th Aug to Saturday 13th September

The Farndale Avenue Housing Estate Townswomen's Guild Dramatic Society's Production of A Christmas Carol
By David McGillivray and Walter Zerlin Jnr,
Directed by Robyn Morris
Friday 21st November to Saturday 6th December

(Night Mother—Continued from page 1)

experienced from Thelma's point of view, and Barb's great sense of comic timing (there are more laughs than you might expect) and intuitive style mean that she is perfectly suited to the role.

Every show presents technical difficulties and with 'Night Mother it is the set. The show requires a space that gives a feeling of home. It also requires a functioning kitchen and an attic (which can be tricky in a one story building). The design and construction is being led by Stephen Shinkfield. Stephen may be familiar to you from his award winning performances on stage. Although there remains a great deal of work to do, we are on track and I hope the set may get its own applause.

I would like to single out the production co-ordinator Deb Keyte. Deb's calm, good humoured can-do attitude is a God send and ultimately lifts all aspects of the production.

As I write, we are at the middling stage of rehearsal. We have blocked the scenes and are now introducing the light and shade of the piece. It can be a frustrating time for actors as the script and moves are familiar but not locked into the memory. The fact that I keep on making changes doesn't help either. But already, each rehearsal has us laughing and in tears. It bodes well for the production.

The topics covered in 'Night Mother are obviously not suited to all audiences. There is smoking on stage and the material may upset some audience members. However it is an exceptionally well written, and uplifting play that I hope you will enjoy.

Shane Ryan—Director

The Day of the Triffids Revisited

The idea for doing *Triffids* was proposed over three years ago, so this project certainly took longer than the usual few months. Coupled with the extended rehearsal time that spanned the Xmas break, I seem to have been reading, thinking about, preparing for and directing *Triffids* forever! But it was a very enjoyable project, and I am glad that it came to fruition as well as it did.

We were disappointed that more people did not come to see the show. It was a gamble to stage something so identified with science fiction. The majority remember the 1950's film which of course was very far from the book and our stage play. We did aim to keep to the spirit of the book, and I think we did that very well.

I had a great cast who were a pleasure to work with, and a wonderful crew who gave their all to ensure the production was everything I wanted it to be. I thank them all most sincerely, especially Pietro Giordano who came up with yet another innovative set design that reflected the mood of the play so well; Carson Cunningham who spent hours doing an excellent job with the lighting; Alistaire Bowler who also contributed hours of time in selecting the music and sound effects (more on this elsewhere in this newsletter); Rhonda Vaughan, stage manager, who organized *such* an efficient band of back stage workers to manage the *unbelievable* number of scene changes so smoothly; Lucy Bashfield and Michael Watson who did a terrific job operating lighting and sound respectively – both mammoth tasks integral to the success of the show. There were 20 actors in the cast so I will not name them all here – suffice to say that every one of them was terrific and I thank you all sincerely. Some of the cast were well known to Beaumaris audiences, but others were new to us. I hope they all enjoyed being associated with the show as much as I did, and that they all come back to be in other shows with us.

There were several others who assisted in numerous ways – Brian and Ljerka Kelly who lent their creativity to such good effect, Neil Barnett who made the beautiful 1950's couch for the show, Chris Churchward who came up with innovative ideas and donated hours of his time, and Brian Uniacke who helped so much with the sound effects – and so many others, particularly the Beaumaris Theatre Committee.

And I hope that all who saw the show came away thinking about the issues raised in it – about the way human beings react in times of crisis, how they struggle to survive against terrible odds, and that perhaps we can do things a little better than we currently do by learning from the past to make a better future for our children.

Janine Chugg, Director.

AUDITIONS

Anne of Green Gables

Our 2008 family show is the delightfully charming story of "Anne of Green Gables", based on the novel by Lucy Maud Montgomery. The play has been adapted to the stage by Joseph Robinette, who also adapted "Charlotte's Web" and "The Lion, The Witch and The Wardrobe".

Auditions will be held in June and will be staged from 29th August – 13th September.

There will be a cast of 23 (14 teenage and 9 adult roles). Minimum age for performers is 13.

For an information sheet outlining character descriptions, audition, rehearsal and performance details, please contact the director Debbie Keyt on 0401 450979 or debbiek_27@hotmail.com.

Donation of Barbeque

Sincere thanks to Sue McGrath for the donation of the lovely BBQ to Beaumaris Theatre.

Those who come along to the set builds have already benefited from its use – it certainly cooks the sausages beautifully! And thank you to Neil Barnett for thinking of us and organising the donation.



SOCIAL EVENTS

In addition to the five fabulous productions we stage each year at Beaumaris, we also like to hold various social functions for our members and friends throughout the year. We have two such events planned in the coming months:

Sound of Music

Nun's and Nazi's Night!

Saturday 2nd August 7.30pm

Come dressed as your one of your "favourite things" from the movie – nun's, Nazi's, the children or even a brown paper package tied up with string!

There will be show bags, prizes and of course a song, or two, or three (maybe even more)!!!!!!

The cost will just be \$15 per head – BYO Drinks and nibbles

The evening will be hosted by Debbie "Maria Von Trapp" Keyt

(a gig she's waited her whole life for!!)

Pre bookings will be taken by contacting Deb on 0401 450 979

More information next newsletter

The hills in Beaumaris will be alive that night!!

Trivioke Night

After the success of last year's event it's back – bigger and better than ever.

What is Trivioke you ask?

It's a combination of trivia and karaoke (and a bit of improv thrown in for good measure!). Trivia questions for all you enthusiasts (perhaps even with a spring cup and sporting flavour this year) and karaoke to finish the night off in a highly entertaining fashion!

Saturday 18th October at 7.30pm

Watch this space for more information over the next few editions.

Bowel Cancer Comes to Beaumaris Theatre

82 Wells Rd Beaumaris.

Wednesday April 30th at 7.45pm.

In the interests of public health, Beaumaris Theatre is pleased to be hosting a presentation on bowel cancer detection and prevention, by one of our well-known members, Mark Stewart.



Mark was recently seen on stage with us in *The Day of the Triffids*, giving a wonderful performance as the landlord in the hotel scene.

In "real life" Mark is a highly qualified nurse who works in the field of bowel cancer, and has offered to conduct this presentation.

There is a lot of press on breast, cervical and even prostate cancer, while bowel cancer - which remains one of the most prevalent cancers in Australia - gets very little coverage. Apparently more women die each year from bowel cancer than breast cancer, and women still believe that it is predominantly a male disease. It does remain one of the few preventable cancers. The presentation will be a little bit about what bowel cancer is, signs and symptoms, early detection and what can contribute to its prevention.

If you have any queries about this, or would like to come along, please phone the booking line on 9583 6896.

Entry is free and a light supper will be served.

Dear Dr Shakespeare,

Every time we have a working bee at the theatre we find there are no Phillips Head screwdrivers. Every time I have to go to the hardware store and buy more. I have tried to make sure they are returned to the cupboard after use, but to no avail – they just keep disappearing! What on earth can someone want with all those Phillips Head screwdrivers? Many suggestions have already been made but they are not fit to print. In any case, I am more interested in your ideas for stopping the screw drivers from disappearing. Can you help?

Signed,

Perplexed and Screw(driver)less.



Dear Perplexed and Screw (driver) less,

What an odd coincidence! You ask where the Phillips Head screwdrivers are and this very letter has lain unanswered for a number of months...purely due to a lack of such a screw driver! Let me explain - you may not be aware all my Dr Shakespeare correspondence, due to its highly controversial and sensitive nature, arrives in a locked container.... and I have the only key. Several months ago at an awards ceremony I became somewhat unsettled and emotional after consuming what must have been contaminated ice in my tequila sunrise or perhaps a less than fresh strawberry in my daiquirior it might have been the slice of lime in my corona....I'm not sure, I lost track.....anyway as well as losing track...I lost the Key...to the box. Luckily, the box can be opened in absence of key by removing a small screw at the base of the box. Unfortunately this required, you guessed it, a Phillips Head screwdriver! After several weeks of fruitless (obviously - as I suspect I'm allergic) searching, and not having found the screw driver, I came upon the novel solution of using a hammer. Effective and deeply satisfying.

So my advice to you.....let go of the screw driver and embrace the hammer. **People always put them back.**

Yours enchantingly

Dr Shakespeare.

Do you have a problem for Dr. Shakespeare? Ask him anything and the benefit of his sensitivity, wisdom and experience will be yours.

Write to Dr. Shakespeare,

c/o PO Box 7230 Beaumaris 3193.

Did You Know....

.....that our extraordinarily talented Danny Forward is rehearsal pianist for and playing keyboard in CLOC'S May Production of "The Boy From Oz"! CLOC have an outstanding reputation (as does Danny!) and you simply must not miss this production. To book your seats, check out www.cloc.org.au

Did You Know....

...that Trudi Sheppard, who was our lovely *Shelby* in *Steel Magnolias* and performed in our '06 Revue, is currently rehearsing for The Wedding Singer in Williamstown Musical Theatre Company's May production! You can find out more by going to www.wmtc.org.au

Did You Know....

...Bernie Kinsella (our very own delightful, charming and efficient committee secretary) has been cast as the housekeeper in MLOC's production of *Oliver!* Along with Bernie, other Beaumaris regulars include Michael Young, Garry Bertrand and D.K Productions' students Nick Lever and Stuart Anderson. We will keep you posted when bookings open.

Did You Know....

...ASPECT are producing *The Pajama Game* in July/August starring a few familiar Beaumaris Theatre faces such as Michael and Katrina Lever, Chris Churchward and Colin Prosser! We'll let you know more as we find out more.

Did You Know....

...that the very scary and convincing *Torrence and Leader of the drunken men* in *Triffids*, Geoff Arnold, is rehearsing for *Another Antigone* for Williamstown Little Theatre. It runs from 24th April – 10th May. For more details go to www.wlt.org.au

Front of House and Box Office thanks

Once again, our sincere thanks go to our friendly front of house and box office volunteers who help make our audience's visits to our theatre so pleasurable and memorable.

Many thanks to the following:

Kevin Custerson; Carrie Blockley; Andrew Bashfield; Elfie Weiss; Elisabeth Riggs; Todd Buckley, Angela Mosley; Mike Hickling; Doone Gillespie; Barb Atkison; Jenni and Trevor Osburn; Salva Crusca; Sue Hand; Debbie Key; Stacey Stewart; Lorraine Ellis; Danny Forward; Bernie Kinsella and Malcolm Flitman.

WORKING BEE THANKS

On Saturday the 15th of March, the *Triffids* set was dismantled and the "Night Mother" set went up. Steve Shinkfield, Chris Churchward and Alan Crispin worked tirelessly to build *Thelma and Jessie's* house while Kim Ryan, Janine Chugg; Bob Trail; Bernie Kinsella; Lucy and Andrea Bashfield; Stacey Stewart; Brian Uniacke; Jacinta, Daniel, Lachlan and Nicholas McEniry; Elizabeth Riggs; Rosie Renye; Rita Crispin; Debbie and Justin Keyt gathered props, tidied the wardrobe, did some general housekeeping and tackled the mammoth task of sorting the props room and finding a new home for our "stage" furniture. A lot was accomplished and it was a very satisfying day! Thank you to everyone involved for working diligently all day long.

BARB'S BAKERY

Well, rehearsals for *'Night, Mother'* are under way. Directed by the lovely Shane Ryan; assisted by the even lovelier Kim Ryan. Not quite as many actors in this play as the last production. I believe *'Triffids'* had 20 in the cast, we have two... Janine Evans and myself.

Anyhow, the reason I mention our play, apart from reminding you to book your tickets, is because it has inspired this edition of 'Barb's Bakery'. The character I play loves her treats, she's a sugar junkie! So I thought a sugar-laden delicacy would be just the thing!! Excuse me while I go and surf the net... Hi, I'm back. Don't ya just love the internet!!

When I read the name of this recipe my reaction was probably the same as yours will be... Ew, yuck!! But then I thought... let's live on the edge!!! Are ya game? Are ya up for it? Do it!! Just do it!! And since I was supposed to get this to Janine three days ago I won't have time to try it myself... so let me know, save me a piece!! Cos I'm sure you all make all the recipes I put in this newsletter.... don't ya? Hmmm?!?

The person who put this recipe on the web also wrote this...

Yes, you read it right! This is a recipe for Avocado Truffles. You absolutely won't believe how delicious these truffles are until you have tried this very easy-to-make recipe. The texture of the avocados mixes wonderfully with the chocolate. But, beware - these truffles are very rich!

... so they must be okay!!

Avocado Chocolate Truffles

1 large very ripe avocado, peeled and pit removed *

½ cup butter

1 ½ teaspoons
pure vanilla
extract

1 ¼ cup unsweet-
ened cocoa

3 cups icing
sugar

Extra icing sugar
for rolling



*If an avocado is ripe, it will yield to gentle pressure.
(Won't we all)*

Melt butter in a large saucepan over low heat. Remove from heat and set aside.

Puree the avocado in a food processor or blender until a smooth consistency. NOTE: If you add a little of the melted butter to the avocado, it helps the process. Be sure there are no chunks of avocado left.

Put the avocado puree, vanilla extract, cocoa, and icing sugar into the saucepan with the melted butter. Mix until well combined.

Place the chocolate mixture into the refrigerator until it hardens.

When chocolate mixture has hardened, remove from refrigerator. Line a baking sheet with waxed paper or parchment.

Using a cold metal teaspoon or a melon baller and your hands, roll the chocolate into small balls about ¾ inch diameter and arrange them on the baking sheet. If the mixture gets too soft to mould easily, put it back in the freezer for a few minutes. Place the baking sheet of chocolate balls in the refrigerator until firm.

Once the truffles have hardened, remove from the refrigerator and shape into balls by rolling between the palms of your hands. Roll in icing sugar (*I think they mean the chocolate, not you. But hey, whatever floats your boat*) to coat the outside.

Place the finished truffles in the refrigerator until they are set. They should be stored in a covered container in the refrigerator until ready to serve. Bring to room temperature when ready to serve.

(I would suggest not mentioning that they have avocado in them...)

D.K. Productions

D.K Productions

We are very pleased to announce that the delightful and talented Leah Osburn will join the team in term two to run a children's song and dance class for interested young performers.

Most of you will remember Leah as "Snug – the joiner" in our 2007 production of "A Midsummer Night's Dream". Leah is studying a Bachelor of Arts/Education (Drama) at Deakin University and has an impressive performance CV! She has performed with numerous companies in a multitude of roles in productions such as High School Musical, Sweet Charity, The Pirates of Penzance and The Mikado. Leah has been studying dance since 1994, singing since 2000 and has choreographed many productions. She has also appeared on television and taught both children and adults. She has also participated in many concerts, competitions and recitals in her amazing theatrical career so far.

We welcome Leah and know her classes will be energetic, entertaining and above all fun!

Please call Debbie on 0401 450979 to book or for further information and also to find out more about our established children's drama classes.

BEHIND THE SCENES

The Sound Of Triffids

From the beginning, sound was to be a major feature of *The Day of the Triffids*. The spec was to provide a surround-sound experience. A brief investigation into doing a surround sound mix quickly proved to be too costly and complicated so it was decided to follow a traditional approach.

Two new speakers were purchased for the rear of the auditorium to create a quadraphonic set up. A new amp was also purchased for the front speakers. Vince Vaughan created a set-up with the mixer so we can now send a single sound source device (such as a CD) to any of the four speakers.

However, Triffids posed a unique scenario as we only had one person (Michael Watson) doing the job of two people. To operate the action-triggered sounds such as Triffids, guns, car, etc, a keyboard was enlisted. A unique sound would be assigned a piano key and could be sent to a specific speaker. Groups of four Triffid sounds had to be created for each speaker. The electrified fence was assigned to the front right speaker to place it in proximity of the offstage action. Guns, cars and CD were preset to Front Left/Right speakers.

Alistaire Bowler worked for hours on selecting and putting together the incidental "scene change" music and sound effects. The music was taken from a number of sources. Most of it was royalty free stuff from the net. Some of it was taken from dedicated 'background music' CDs that are produced for theatres, films and the like. Most of the sound effects were taken from the library that he has amassed over the years. The car driving noise was actually ripped from a video game. He did a lot of digital editing of sound effects, combining them etc. (eg. the nightmare sequence). The final musical sequence proved very hard to choose, as it had to reinforce the trials the family had been through, but not be too emotive or "corny". Brian Uniacke finally came up with the finale music from a well-known sci-fi horror movie.



'Chookas'

In the strine lingo, 'chook' means chicken.

During Music Hall / Vaudeville days, before refrigeration as we know it, chicken was an expensive meal. It had to be fresh and cooked and eaten on the same day. So it was a rarity for itinerant performers to be able to eat chicken. Therefore,, if the Stage Manager saw a full house, the call became 'Chookas!' meaning "We've got a full house: we'll all be eating chicken tonight'.

Today it's a term used in the industry to express both good luck and the hope of a full house.

(Extracted from a 2007 booklet on the history of Melbourne's Her Majesty's Theatre)

Steve Morris

There were many unique sound effects created for the play. The Triffid attack was a modified whip crack with some of them having a punch added. The Triffid gun was created by Brian Uniacke: "The script mentions it making a loud bang which was a great juxtaposition to the small gun. I thought it needed a pneumatic sound and it is always good to use a real gun shot. So it begins with a reversed thunder clap which mixes into a winchester rifle shot."

Some of the sound effects were done live. One of the best was the gunshots which were performed in rehearsal by Chris Churchward and it was so effective it stayed. It was achieved by slapping two bits of wood together. The crowd wailing during the apartment scene was performed by the cast from the back room. The clock chime in the final scene was a real chime that had been removed from a 1950's clock.

The end escape sequence was going to be impossible for one person to achieve so it was pre-recorded and action was choreographed to it.

The hardest sound to achieve was the Triffid atmosphere. Everyone had a crack at it. We ended up on a mix of a "jungle sound" which Brian lifted from Indiana Jones and a recording made by Pietro Giordano.

With the great assistance from Fred, Miranda and Lucinda, at the "Pezzimenti Sound Studios", we created a series of sounds (noises) by - tapping several pieces of wood of varied sizes and tempo.

- Grinding stones over tile surfaces at various speeds
- Scrunching plastic material in random movements

We recorded two versions which were overlaid and mixed together to abstract the overall sound.

So you can see that sound was a major feature of *The Day of the Triffids* with many hours of detailed work put into it. We hope it enhanced your enjoyment of the show.

Brian Uniacke, Alistaire Bowler & Pietro Giordano.

"As It Happened"

In our 1999 production of 'Bedroom Farce' our young lighting rigger was finishing his work as the cast waited in the clubrooms. We heard a scream and a large bang and all frantically ran to the stage. Our rigger had touched a live wire and given himself a shock, but was fine, and certainly a bit shaken. We were all most concerned, asking him if he was alright and checking his vital signs. We noticed our Director (who was also, we must add, very concerned) seemed a little pre-occupied. When falling, our young lighting rigger had landed on a piece of furniture to be used for the production, breaking it into bits, and the Director had just assembled it!!

On the final night of the same production, one of our actors went out to buy a packet of cigarettes just before the cast party...he never returned and we have never heard from him since.....

***Please note...we've had all our electrical cords and wiring checked since 1999, and it is all perfectly safe!*

2008 Membership Fees Now WAY OVERDUE!

In the last newsletter we reminded you that fees are now due – this is now your very last chance to stay on our mailing list! Individual membership is just \$15 per year, or \$20 per family (two adults and two children 16 & under). For this you get discounted tickets, five fantastic newsletters a year, the opportunity to do Front of House (for which you then get free tickets to see the show), and so much more!!!! So please – fill in the membership form below and post it to:

Beaumaris Theatre Inc, PO Box 7230, Beaumaris 3193 with your cheque or postal order.

MEMBERSHIP FORM 2008

Please fill out the form and return with your payment (made out to Beaumaris Theatre inc.) by post to:

Beaumaris Theatre
P.O Box 7230, Beaumaris 3193.

Name:

Address:

Phone Number(s):

Email address:

Additional Family members and ages (if under 16):

.....
.....

I enclose \$15 single

\$20 for family

I would like my newsletter posted or
emailed

I would like to be on the general emailing list, for up-to-date items of interest at Beaumaris Theatre, news of other theatre companies, etc.

Yes No

Raffle Results

Thank you to everyone who purchased raffle tickets when coming to see "Day of The Triffids". Congratulations to our three winners who walked away with their very own Triffid!

1st Prize- Betty Vaughan

2nd Prize- Mimi Giordano

3rd Prize- Rob Peirson

**The Victorian Drama League Inc
Theatrecraft, April 2008.**

THE DAY OF THE TRIFFIDS

Adapted by Shaun Prendergast
From the novel by John Wyndham
Beaumaris Theatre
Directed by Janine Chugg
Reviewed by Phyll Freeman – 2 March 2008.



I went along to Beaumaris in great anticipation of being accosted by the Triffids, but no, that wasn't to be. Instead, we were treated to a very smoky auditorium (which caused me to sneeze incessantly) and all we had of the Triffids was the sound, which was very authentic, and red lights off stage as they lurked in the bushes. What a disappointment! But of course, they were only the introduction to John Wyndham's real story of testing humans under diabolical circumstances to see how they behaved and/or survived. We saw the good, the bad and the downright ugly behaviour of large groups of disparate people and at the end there was hope, if we worked at it. A very sobering way to spend Sunday afternoon.

The stage was fairly stark as various props were brought on to provide colour in a blanket or costume. Downstage left was an attic roof where the Narrator sat for most of the performance. At times photos appeared on the side flats and backdrop. There were many scenes which necessitated lots of blackouts of varying lengths. The wonderful music, courtesy of Alastaire Bowler, helped fill in these breaks. Sound was excellent and lighting very imaginative. Beaumaris' technical staff are to be commended as too the hard-working backstage crew. As the production was set in the mid to late 1950's (as per the original novel), the clothing looked fine. I liked the way the main female character 'borrowed' smart outfits from the wardrobe of the owners of the apartment which was also 'borrowed'.

The Narrator, Masen, an experienced Brian Uniacke, kept the story progressing as we saw his character as a younger man in Matthew Coote as Bill, in hospital for treatment after being stung by a Triffid. After removing his bandages, Bill finds nearly everyone in London has been blinded by a so-called meteor shower. Matthew's lack of stage experience showed at first but he eventually warmed to the role. Rosie Renye played Josella Playton, a sighted girl, who meets Bill in his travels. Rosie gave her character a certain softness but will improve with further roles. Both the young leads needed more vocal projection.

As Bill and Josella move through London, via a very authentic-looking car, they find a sighted group who ask the young couple to join them. Another group, led by the idealist Croker, strongly played by Adam Gerard Taylor, kidnap the pair. Then another group arrive and the power-hungry leader, Torrence, well acted by Geoff Arnold, grab them as new recruits. There was a very poignant scene between Bill and a young blind girl beautifully enacted by Cate Spiker, as she offers herself to him in return for him choosing to stay with her and the group of young blind people who are dying from the plague.

Bill and Josella escape and meet a young teenager, Susan, Louise Griffen, and take her to the country for safety. There they meet a blind man with his blind pregnant wife. By this time the older Bill, (Brian Uniacke), had assumed the late 1950's character where he and Josella now have a son called David, for whom he had written the story of their travels. The two couples plus babies, have to flee again to find peace and hope for their families. The cast was large and many had to do multiple roles, so they were kept busy.

This was a slow-moving and gigantic task that Beaumaris produced and they all deserve full marks for their efforts.