

HEADLINER

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THE OFFICIAL CTC NEWSLETTER
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L-R, Tiffany Naughton, Donna Steven, Kate Stones, Bridget Haylock, Photo by Christine Sayer

PLAYHOUSE CREATURES, Tickets on sale NOW

Tickets are now on sale for the new CTC Production *Playhouse Creatures*. Tickets are \$25 full price, \$20 concession, and \$18 per head for groups of 5 or more. Tickets are available at Maine Shoes and Accessories, 174 Barker Street, 5472 1136, or trybooking.com/EJJG (you can also find a link to the trybooking page at our website, www.castlemainetheatrecompany.com)

Playhouse Creatures will play at the Old Castlemaine Gaol on Bowden Street 24 April - 10 May 2014, Thursday to Saturday at 8pm. Tickets are limited so book ahead to avoid disappointment.





" 'tis as hard a matter for a pretty woman to keep herself honest in the Theatre, as 'tis for an apothecary to keep his treacle from the flies in hot weather – for every Libertine in the audience will be buzzing about her Honey-Pot."
Thomas Brown, 17th Century writer

London, 1669 – Bon vivant and culture vulture Charles II has restored the monarchy to England after decades of puritanical Commonwealth

April Bevin and Kate Stones explore the atmosphere at the Old Gaol

rule under Oliver Cromwell. He ushers in an era of unprecedented religious tolerance, artistic freedom and cultural enlightenment. One of his first bold moves is to permit women to tread the boards of London's theatres for the very first time.

Join us backstage at the King's Theatre, to witness the precarious lives of four of London's most famous early actresses, as their trajectory rises from the gutter to the stars and back again. The most notorious amongst them is the riotous Nelly Gwyn who goes on to become the King's favourite mistress...but sadly not all are as fortunate as she....



Bridget Haylock and Tiffany Naughton contemplate the script with director, Kenneth MacLeod, photo by Christine Sayer

Rehearsals for Playhouse Creatures have been fascinating. Working with a small cast has

been a new thing for the CTC. It means a lot more work for the actors, and a more intense process for the director. The script has thrown up some interesting challenges for the actors including sword fights, frantic costume changes, an ever-changing emotional landscape, and even an improvised jig! The atmosphere of the Old Gaol brings it's own unique presence to the show, and rehearsing there has been a privilege. It's a sunlit, echo filled space, almost church-like, but we never forget those who've been there before us...and we've made friends with the ghosts – I think they approve of the play – it's about risk takers and fortune hunters after all! We've been joined by a fantastic production team for this show, newcomers Bruce Berg, Deborah Firth, Leonie Elford and Morgan Herzer have been helping with sets, hair and make-up, and costume. Nikki Sutterley and Deborah Cowen are crewing, and we are thrilled to have Lindsay Tucker back on the crew and Neil Harrison on lights with help from Kirstie Babbage. Costumes by the fantastic Louise Angwin. We also have a mix of new (to the CTC) and experienced actors in the cast. CTC veterans Kate Stones, Tiffany Naughton and Donna Steven are joined by newcomers April Bevin and Bridget Haylock.

Here are some comments from Tiffany about the challenges of playing her character, Mrs Farley. *"My main challenge in the role of Mrs Farley was accurately portraying the dramatic and rapid demise of her character. At the beginning of the play we are introduced to an extremely conservative woman from a strict, puritanical background. The daughter of a preacher, she is shocked, yet strangely curious and fascinated by the seemingly glamorous lives of the actresses working at The Playhouse. After entering this world herself, she embraces the glamorous side of this existence, but also discovers there is a much darker side. Trying to capture such a swift and sudden change in a character in such a relatively short time frame has proven to be extremely challenging."*

About her character Doll Common, Kate Stones says:

"Doll is the only character in the play who is fictional, interestingly she first appears as a young prostitute in the 1602 play The Alchemist, by Ben Johnson. In Playhouse Creatures we meet her as an old lady with a mysterious past. Doll is different to all the other characters in the play – she is like a narrator, or a witness to the extreme trajectories of the other characters. She's a cynic with a bone dry comment for every occasion. She sums up her role in the theatre succinctly with the immortal line: "I'm always the dead one under the cloak, else I'm sweeping." In a sense, I feel like Doll belongs to the theatre building itself, she's been there since she was a little girl, when her father ran it as a bear pit. Her destiny has been to witness the anguish of incarcerated animals, and this forms the central metaphor for the play itself. Are the actresses capable of truly breaking the chains that bind them? Come along and find out!"

April Bevin, who plays Nell Gwyn comments:

"Though I first stepped in to the Playhouse Creatures audition with zero knowledge of the play, from the moment I read an excerpt of Nellie's, I loved her. She bursts with life, determinedly and with great success. Words that come to mind when I think of her are rambunctious, real, raw, eager, charming & clever. With Nellie, what you see is what you get. I've enjoyed learning about her; from her beginnings as a child raised in her mother's bar, selling oysters with her sister, then selling oranges to theatre-goers, making her way onto stage & into the audience's heart - and that of King Charles II. Renowned for being his favourite mistress, I was thoroughly delighted & unsurprised to read that Nell apparently taught the King how to fish. I would have loved to have met her, and am very much enjoying playing April de Angelis' version of her. There is such joy and liveliness to Nell, and I hope to deliver that wholehearted fun to our audience, as I'm sure Nellie did for hers."



CTC Annual General Meeting

This years AGM was extremely well attended, with a total of sixteen members joining us for the meeting at the West End Hall. The committee remained relatively unchanged with Ken MacLeod as President for another year, and Kate Stones continuing in her role of Secretary. Newcomer Ron Moore took on the role of Vice President for the year, and Laura Hall-Levetan remains as Treasurer. Ordinary members are Donna Steven, Kirstie Babbage and Deborah Cowen. We were pleased to welcome some old faces like Eddie Holland, Kath Waugh, Phil McDonald and Ramon Angeloni, CTC actress Maree Pisani and newcomer Karen Denholm. We were also honoured to be joined by life members Mary Edwards and Cecile Weerts. Richard Johnston ably over saw the appointment of the 2014 committee.

Ken reported on a busy year in 2013, beginning with Aftershocks, the launch of our new website, Burqa and Embers - small scale shows staged as part of the mid-year Artfields Festival, the renewal of the CTC constitution, and ending with the wonderful Cinderella with The Lot by our CTC kids. Laura reported on a healthy financial year. Thanks very much for everyone who came along to support the CTC.

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Please send me articles for Headliner, if you have been involved in a recent show I'd love to hear your story - or you could review a local production, or let us know about other things going on in the world of local theatre. Photos to accompany your articles are much appreciated. The next Headliner will be going out in July, and I'd like it to reflect the many diverse voices of the Castlemaine Theatre Company. Send your articles to castlemainetheatreco@gmail.com

That's all for now...enjoy the golden autumn...like us on facebook, check out the website, support local theatre...see you there!