

SUMMER 2019

THE OFFICIAL CTC NEWSLETTER

HAPPY 60th BIRTHDAY TO US! What's on for 2019..?



Yes that's right, the Castlemaine Theatre Company will be turning 60 in July 2019. So we will be celebrating all year with a daring and delicious program of productions, and a of course, a party. It's a bit special for me as well, as my first CTC production was the 50th anniversary show, My Fair Lady in which I played a 'flar' girl, and a maid. So I'm chalking up my first decade. Phew!

We kick off the year with auditions for our next production **Frankenstein's Children**, a dark and dangerously funny tale about Body Snatchers in early 19th Century London, directed by Stephen Mitchell. Frankenstein's Children will be performed at the Phee Broadway Theatre in May. All the production and audition details can be found in the proceeding article.

We will be partying in July to coincide with the CTC's first committee meeting held on July 15 1959. You can read all about the history of the CTC on our website here:
<https://www.castlemainetheatrecompany.com/who-we-are/history/>

The second production will be a Christmas Pantomime of the story of Peter Pan, but messed about with quite considerably by me (Kate Stones). I'll be adapting and directing the production which will be performed at the Phee Broadway in November/December. It will have all the Christmas Panto trimmings including a Dame, plenty of audience shouting, and the odd song or two. It's also traditional panto etiquette to mash up different stories and story characters...I'm thinking of calling it **Peter Panto, or One Flew Over the Second Star on the Right**, so you might get the idea that it could be a bit twisted!



Frankenstein's Children Auditions coming SOON!

Auditions for *Frankenstein's Children* will be held on Sunday 27 January, call director Stephen Mitchell to make a time, on 0412 489 236. Character descriptions can be found at the end of this article.

It's 1832 and 'bodysnatching' is the new black

A black comedy set in Regency London, where our cross-dressing heroine negotiates a venal world of Bodysnatchers, villainous Surgeons, dishonest Undertakers, drunk Prostitutes and the occasional Solemn Angel and Foul Demon. Accompanied by the raucous songs of street balladeer Penny Dreadful, *Frankenstein's Children* dives into bizarre gothic history with blood-curdling horror and lashings of gallows humour.

Story Synopsis

England 1832. The Industrial Revolution is at its peak. London's population swells on an influx of poor people looking for factory jobs. Crime flourishes. Science and superstition walk hand in hand. Experimental surgical medicine creates a whole new economy for the desperate and opportunistic....a thriving black market in human remains robbed from freshly dug graves.

Young and well-to-do, Anne Sheridan is buzzing with the enthusiasm of scientific enquiry. Rebelling against her mother's ambitions to marry her off, she disguises herself as a man, James Selfridge, and enrolls at London's School of Anatomy. There, James' scientific ideals are corrupted by an elite order that traffics in human bodies with no moral qualms. Caught up in the commerce of flesh between the surgeons and street folk, s/he falls in love with prostitute Polly Chapman who has enterprisingly sold her body to science many times over. As 19th century science marches on with the successful passing of the 'Anatomy Act', can James save Polly from the mercenary surgeons under the leadership of the arrogant Sir Astley Cooper?



Thomas Eakins, 'The Gross Clinic', 1875



Stephen Mitchell performing as Jaques in *As You Like It*, photo by Diana Domonkos

Director, Stephen Mitchell

After studying Community Theatre at the University of Tasmania in the 1980s, Stephen worked as an actor in Hobart and Adelaide, as well as in numerous backstage roles including stage manager, lighting designer/operator/rigger. As a scriptwriter, he has had plays staged in Melbourne and Sydney and a radio drama produced by ABC Radio National. In 2001, he won an AWGIE for his SBS teleplay 'Wee Jimmy'. After a 20 year hiatus he returned to acting in 2010. In 2012 he directed and performed in 'The Local Stigmatic' for Castlemaine Theatre Company, and appeared in the 2016 production of 'The Ghost Train' and 2018's 'As You Like It'.

Stephen comments:

I saw Frankenstein's Children at the 1990 Adelaide Festival. An original work by Red Shed Company, its inclusion in the main festival program was a thrilling coup for a small, local theatre collective. I knew many of the people involved and it was not without a degree of jealousy that I attended a performance in the authentic period surroundings of the East End market. Whatever envy I brought with me was obliterated by the marvellous, funny, poetic, intriguing theatrical work that they produced. I loved it.

To the best of my knowledge, the play has only ever been performed in Australia one other time. When I tracked down a copy of the script 28 years later, I wondered whether it would live up to my memory...It was better. Indeed, I find it extraordinary that writer David Carlin delivered such a wonderfully resonant, moving, astute work in his debut full-length play. The story brims with rich characters full of humanity and subtlety. The writing is an actor's dream, mixing well-observed vernacular with passages of simply beautiful prose, moving from hilarious comic interludes to heart-breaking romance, combining classic gothic horror with incisive political commentary. And it frames it all with a succession of traditional ballads sung by the show's one-woman chorus, the oh-so-fittingly named Penny Dreadful. I am very excited to bring it all to life (perhaps with a bolt of lightning!) on the Phee Broadway stage with Castlemaine Theatre Company.

Characters

(M = man W = woman Y = younger O = older)

PENNY DREADFUL: Street-wise balladeer and champion of the poor. Courageous, independent & loud. (W, Y/O)

ANNE SHERIDAN / JAMES SELFRIDGE: A young, wealthy idealist and aspiring surgeon. Clumsy, energetic and guileless. (W, Y)

SIR ASTLEY COOPER: Senior surgeon at London's School of Anatomy. Arrogant and aloof, but not entirely heartless. (M, O)

BRANSBY COOPER: Surgeon, political aspirant and son of Sir Astley. Ambitious, perceptive & ideological. (M, Y)

ELISABETH HARE: A poor woman and guilt-ridden grave-robber. Resourceful, honest & caring. (W, O)

WILLIAM HARE: Elisabeth's entrepreneurial son. Greedy & opportunistic. (M, Y)

POLLY CHAPMAN: A dying, alcoholic prostitute and expert exploiter of surgeons. Sharp, world-weary & self-aware. (W, Y)

LADY PORTER: A wealthy woman. Complacent but repressed & frustrated. (W, Y/O)

MRS. SHERIDAN: Mother of Anne/James. Timid, judgemental. (W, O)

ANGEL: A visiting entity from above. Sanctimonious. (M/W, Y/O)

DEMON: A visiting entity from below. Unforgiving. (M/W, Y/O)

WEASEL: A dishonest undertaker. Unctuous. (M/W, Y/O)

SEXTON: A venal employee of the Church. Duplicitous. (M/W, Y/O)

MARTHA & JANE: Suspicious graveyard mourners. (M/W, Y/O)

EDWINA PLACE: Bombastic chairwoman of Methodist Progress Society. (W, Y/O)

IMPORTER OF BODIES: An auctioneer of dead human flesh. A real salesman. (M/W, Y/O)

GUTHRIE, KNOX & SPARKS: Nitwit surgeons. (M, Y/O)

MIDWIVES: Superstitious death attendants. (M/W, Y/O)

Audition Prep detailed on the CTC website:
<https://www.castlemainetheatrecompany.com/>

CTC Needs Your Help!

Love all things theatre but the thought of getting on stage gives you the heebie jeebies? Well! Did You Know that the CTC is always on the lookout for talented peeps to help us with set building, costuming and stage production?!

Do you fancy turning your hand to building cool sets? Creating costumes? Or perhaps giving a helping hand backstage? While we often focus on the finished product as audiences, there is so much “behind the scenes” help that is needed to bring these wonderful plays to life. And it can be such a rewarding experience! Not only do we bring theatre to audiences, we also get to grow our own community. As newcomer to our company, Stephen McMahon recently wrote:

"Found my tribe tonight. I have had the absolute pleasure of helping to make sure props are in place for actors, for the last several weeks, the last 3 of performances. I've done enough acting and directing myself, to appreciate what each and every one brings to the stage. I've watched them work together; making something (real, and important) every night."

If this sounds like something you might be interested in, then send us a message! We'd love to have you on board and show you the ropes of all things Theatre Production!

Message us on Facebook, or email castlemainetheatreco@gmail.com

Are you our new COSTUME MANAGER?

We are looking for a special person to be our new costume manager. You don't need to be a brilliant dressmaker, but you need to have a flair for putting clothes together and have enough sewing skills to make adjustments and additions to existing costumes. We are looking for someone who can commit to a number of shows and look after our fantastic costume collection. It's a fun, rewarding and creative position, and core to our activities. As costume manager we'd love you to be a part of our committee, but that's not essential.



The fondly remembered Costume Drama, Playhouse Creatures, 2014



Simeon Roberts backstage at As You Like It

AGM 2019

Yes, it's that time again...again. The 201 Castlemaine Theatre Company AGM will take place at **7pm on Wednesday 13 March at Castlemaine Hospital Auditorium**. Any paid up member of the CTC is welcome to attend the AGM and vote on any motions that arise including the election of the 2016 Committee. If you are not a member and would like to join in advance of the meeting, please fill in the attached membership form and send along with a cheque to:



The Secretary (membership)
Castlemaine Theatre Company
PO Box 12
Castlemaine 3450

Membership is \$25 full price and \$15 concession for one year, from March to March. You are also welcome to join on the night of the AGM, as a new member, or renewing an existing membership. Our Treasurer will be available from **6.45pm** to process new memberships and renewals.

If you would like to nominate to join the CTC Committee, **please let us know via email in advance of the meeting.**

HEADLINER'S FAVOURITE TYPEFACE

Headliner's favourite typeface has been featured in **Machete Maidens Unleashed**, a documentary about the 1970s Exploitation Film industry in the Philippines. We've been featuring the classic Hobo Standard since 2014 (maybe we should refresh!!).....if you've been reading Headliner for a while you may remember the heady days of Cooper Black....my second favourite vintage typeface.



That's all for now...don't sweat the heat...stay cool in an air-conditioned black box...or like The Malthouse! Find us on facebook, instagram and at www.castlemainetheatrecompany.com Support local theatre...see you there!