

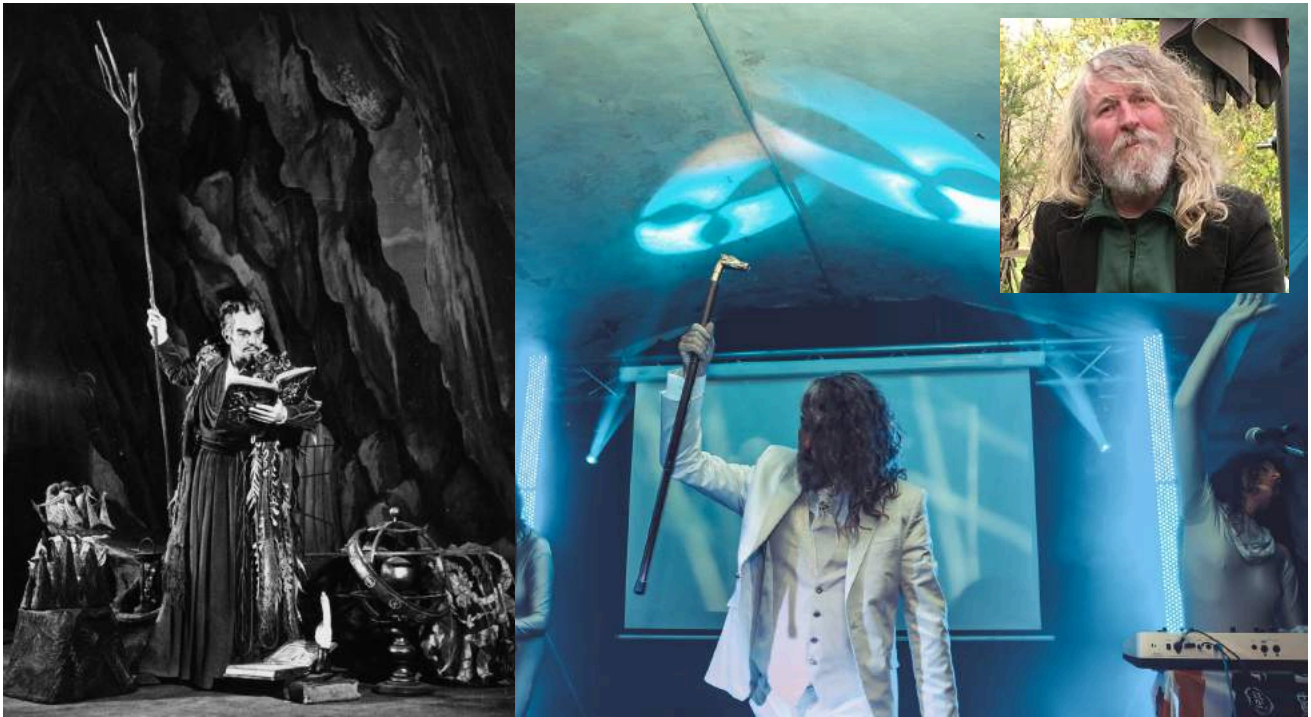


Image by Clare Shamier with painting 'Miranda' by John William Waterhouse, 1916

The Tempest

Auditions: Sunday 14 March

We have hit the ground running for 2021 here at the CTC. We don't care what happens, we are doing a show! Aaaaand....all that podcasting last year gave me an idea, inspired by an interview I heard on Radio National's The Stage Show. Michael Cathcart was interviewing Saheem Ali, director of a production of Shakespeare's Richard II produced by New York's Public Theatre Company. The production was created for radio broadcast in four episodes. What a perfect COVID-proof project for our first production out of lockdown! A serialised Shakespeare for radio. I have always found *The Tempest* an intriguing story. Shakespeare's final work, it was first performed in 1611 – my favourite century. It doesn't fit into the usual classifications of Tragedy (everyone dies) or Comedy (everyone gets married). Yes, it ends with a wedding, but it has none of the other classic Shakespearian comedic tropes of mistaken identity and cross-dressing. Along with *The Winter's Tale*, it's often classified as a 'Romance'. Described as Shakespeare's 'most musical' play, it is full of magic and mystery, sprites and monsters, illusions and allusions. It's a grand circle dance around an enchanted island...shades of Neverland, while I wait to direct Peter Panto in 2022.



Left: Ralph Richardson as Prospero in a 1952 production. Right: David Thrussell performs with his band Snog. A 21st Century Prospero? Insert: as you might see David down at the Theatre Royal of an evening.

For an entirely audio based production I was determined to work with a top-notch composer, and I dared to dream of David Thrussell. David is a Castlemaine local, co-creator of The Castlemaine Local and International Film Festival along with partner Nikki Valentini and Bradley Dawson. But Thrussell is also an internationally renowned electronic composer, and leader of the band Snog, he also works under the moniker of Black Lung. Thrussell has been described as “an outlier, provocateur and enigma. An artist that challenges, inspires and transforms. We’re lucky to have him.” We are certainly very lucky to have him working with us at the CTC, and we partly have COVID to thank, as David’s 2021 international touring schedule has been curtailed due to travel restrictions. Canada’s loss is Castlemaine’s gain. Check out Snog’s new album *Lullabies for the Lithium Age* here:

<https://schmerkindustries.bandcamp.com/album/lullabies-for-the-lithium-age> I absolutely love it!

The Tempest will be aired on Castlemaine’s very own 94.9MainFM around June this year, and will be available to listen to on our website.

If you are interested in auditioning, I would recommend watching some of the many film versions available. An accessible contemporary version is the 2010 version directed by Julie Taymor, with Helen Mirren in the lead role, feminised to ‘Prospera’. It also features Russel Brand, as Trinculo, the drunken jester. Although the film not perfect as a film, it will give you a feel for the narrative, before reading the script itself, which is widely available. The Arden Shakespeare version has extensive notes explaining the



more obscure meanings of the text. Other film versions include *Forbidden Planet* (1956); *The Tempest*, a 1980 version with Michael Horden; *Tempest*, a 1982 comedy version; *Ex Machina* (2014) is loosely based on the play; Peter Greenaway’s *Prospero’s Books* (1991 – not for the faint hearted film buff!); *Yellow Sky*, a 1948 Western version among others.

Helen Mirren as ‘Prospera’ in Julie Taymor’s 2010 adaptation.

We will be casting gender and race 'blind', meaning we will select the cast according to the right feel they have for the part, regardless of whether they are male or female. If we have a 'Prospera' there will be a little script adaptation required. The characters as written are overwhelmingly male, but don't let that get in the way, if you want to be involved. Here's a list of the characters:

- Alonso, King of Naples
- Sebastian, his brother
- Prospero, the rightful Duke of Milan
- Antonio, his brother, the usurping Duke of Milan
- Ferdinand, son of the King of Naples
- Gonzalo, an honest old councillor
- Adrian and Francisco, Lords
- Caliban, a 'savage and deformed' slave (to Prospero)
- Trinculo, a jester
- Stephano, a drunken butler
- Master Boatswain
- Mariners
- Miranda, daughter of Prospero
- Ariel, an airy spirit (will involve some singing)
- Iris, Juno and Ceres, Goddesses (we may cut their scene if it makes the play too long)

Call Kate Stones on 0431 998 707 for an audition time.



All our podcasts are now available on the CTC website

During the 2020 lockdown we had so much fun recording some blasts from the past, some we recorded at Eddy Street, when restrictions were lighter, and some were done at the actors homes. We also had some post-production fun adding music and even some SFX. A huge CTC thank you to all the actors who participated; to Suzanne Donisthorpe and Glenn Williams for broadcasting the clips on 94.9MainFM; and especially to CTC Committee Member Toby Heydon for recording and mixing the tracks. You can listen to clips from As You Like It, Aftershocks, Frankenstein's Children and Playhouse Creatures on our Screen and Sound page here: <https://www.castlemaintheatrecompany.com/whats-on/screen-and-sound/>

Some amazing photos of us!

Another intriguing COVID safe project we did last year was a photography thing! Photography student Steve Womersley asked us if we would like to be subjects in his folio submission. Well, never ones to shy away from the rigours of frocking up and getting into character, we decided to help him out. Over to Steve to tell the story:

"In late 2020 I had to develop a 'client folio' as part of my third year of an Advanced Diploma of Photography at Photography Studies College, Melbourne. COVID-19 precluded many potential clients for a portrait photographer. However, and fortunately for me, Castlemaine Theatre Company was game.

Although COVID-19 put the moz on my first location choice, we worked around the restrictions by shooting at Castlemaine Railway Station (careful nonetheless to maintain social distancing etc.). The actors were asked to come in character, and the rest was up to me. I had little or no forewarning about their character or costume. In some cases, they brought props. In others, I threw in something from left field. The results were largely unpredictable, which allowed for the possibility of creative spark and collaboration. The CTC crew threw themselves into the process, and at the end of the day I think we got some good shots out of it. At the very least we had a lot of fun, and I'm grateful to CTC for their enthusiasm and patience. Particular thanks go to Clare Shamier who handled the liaison between me and the cast, and to my daughter Freya who helped with lighting."

Steve Womersley
www.steviewphotos.com
@steviewphotos

Thanks Steve! Here's some of the gorgeous resulting folio shots (I have cropped them for the newsletter, apologies to Steve) We will be adding them to our website soon:



Mark Penzak



Rocco with his human Clare Shamier



Elaine Matheson



Delwyn Hopkins



Clare Shamier and Andrée Cozens, photo by Leonie Van Eyke

Festival time is upon us: Watch out for Mark and Clare in Café Cantata

It's Castlemaine State Festival time again, and I've been working on the Festival for the second time over the last 14 months. It's been a wild ride as we try to navigate staging an arts festival during a global pandemic. The team have worked very hard to bring a COVID-safe Festival to fruition. We have some beautiful productions in store, and you can check out the program here: <https://castlemainefestival.com.au/>

Watch out for CTC Vice President Clare Shamier and Committee Member Mark Penzak who will be performing alongside Andrée Cozens and Kiara Nickson in *Café Cantata* at The Botanical Gardens on **Friday 2nd and Saturday 3rd April**. *Café Cantata* has been rehearsing at our Etty St Rehearsal Studio. Here's Project Instigator Mark's take on the piece:

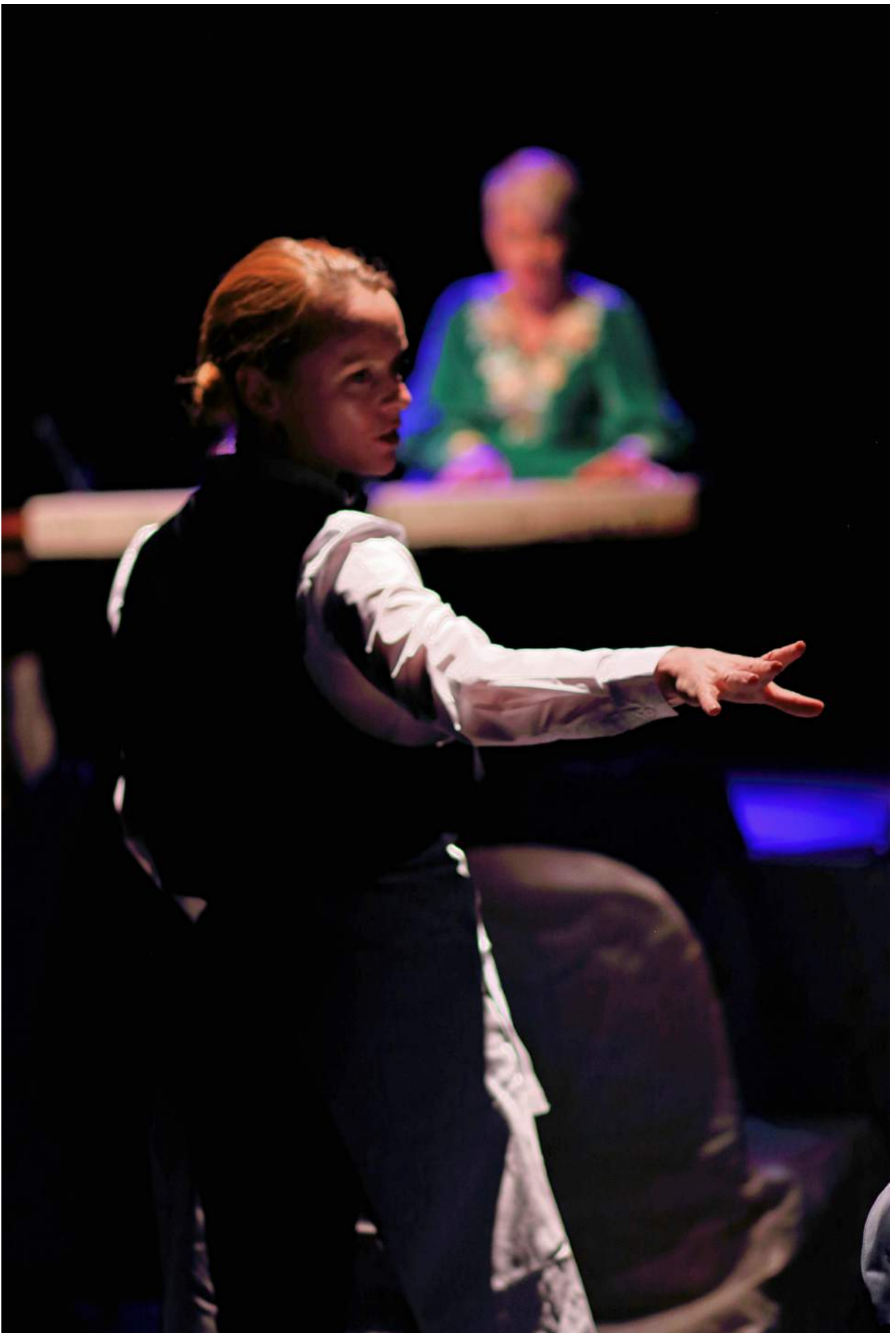
"*Cafe Cantata* is a musical theatre performance or maybe a theatre performance with music? I wonder if there's a legal minimal amount of music in 'musical theatre'? For the record then, *Cafe Cantata* has 4 songs and 6 recitatives. A 'recitative' is that moment in an opera where they half sing and half talk. It's the only word you need to use for opera. 'What did you think of *Madam Butterfly*?' You reply, 'Lovely recitatives.'

The story follows a character Lieschen, a 60 year old disgruntled pianist who's given the chance to achieve her life long dream of singing in Paris – except it falls on the same day her daughter Ann is due to have her baby. She must decide – for-fill her dream or disappoint her daughter? The play is influenced by Sophocles' *King Oedipus* which is also known as *Oedipus Rex* (not to be confused with *Oedipus Wrecks*) in that it presents an argument and asks the audience to make up their mind. Another influence is J.S.Bach who wrote a comic operetta, *Coffee Cantata* around 1735. Interestingly it was originally performed in a cafe – so if some youngster ever talks about some brilliant *new* idea of repurposing a space, shake your head and say, '1735.'

On the 'road of life' it's easy to spot crossroads where life -hanging decisions are made. Harder to spot are the side paths we step on, often without realizing, that carry us gradually but irresistibly from our intentions. In *Cafe Cantata*, this is exactly what's happened to our Lieschen. A decision she made casually in her youth diverted her from her dreams. Now at the age of retirement, she's given the opportunity to try again. However, is the road we selected in our youth still best for someone past their youth? Is it foolish to clutch to old dreams, or more foolish to let them go?

The great lighting for that photo (below, by Jim Coad) was created by Neil Harrison. Sadly our show at the Castlemaine State Festival won't have any lights or rather it'll have one huge one. For covid reasons we will be performing outside. On the positive side, in addition to being able once again to enjoy live theatre, everyone in the audience will get their own chair and beach umbrella! So kickback, stretch out, and catch Greek drama meets musical theatre performed outdoors just like they did in the old times, but without the umbrellas and if you like, a good cup of coffee in hand."

Thanks Mark! Bookings for *Café Cantata* via the Castlemaine State Festival Website:
<https://castlemainefestival.com.au/event/cafe-cantata/>



Clare Shamier with Andrée Cozens in Café Cantatq, photo by Jim Coad

CTC YOUTH... WHERE ARE THEY NOW?

Brodie Murray is performing in Castlemaine State Festival

Another reason to check out the Castlemaine State Festival, is the amazing Brodie Murray. If you have been in Castlemaine for a while and have a good memory, you might remember Brodie when he played Prince Charming in the CTC production *Cinderella with the Lot*, way back in 2013. This incredible production, a contemporary re-imagining of the traditional fairy-tale, was created by the cast of young people of the CTC Youth Group, under the guidance and directorship of Kirstie Babbage. The team went on to form Castlemaine Youth Theatre. Brodie created a sensitive and misunderstood Prince Charming, a passionate foodie, who yearned to educate the limited palettes of his bogan family, who for their part didn't understand why he wasn't that keen on joining the family business and becoming a used car salesman. Brodie caught the theatre-making bug, and went on to study at WAAPA, The West Australian Academy of the Performing Arts. The Castlemaine-raised Wamba Wamba man now returns triumphant to deliver a rehearsed reading of his play *Soul of Possum*. In this play, Brodie takes on the more serious business of interrogating Australian history. Set on the River Murray in 1853, the story traces the journey of three Wamba Wamba men who must survive a cat-and-mouse chase across country to warn their people of the oncoming colonialists. Led by a loose-cannon captain, the settlers have their own internal power struggles to contend with.

Congratulations Brodie on your professional debut. We are so proud to have been part of your theatre journey.

Bookings for *Soul of Possum* are via the Castlemaine State Festival website:
<https://castlemainefestival.com.au/event/soul-of-possum-live-reading/>

*Brodie now...a proud Wamba Wamba man, debuting at
Castlemaine State Festival 2021*



Brodie then...as Prince Charming in Cinderella with the Lot in 2013 (with l-r Lily Betts, Joanna Muller and Hetty Moysen)



Meet a (Committee) Member!

Mark Penzak

How long have you lived in the Mount Alexander Shire area?

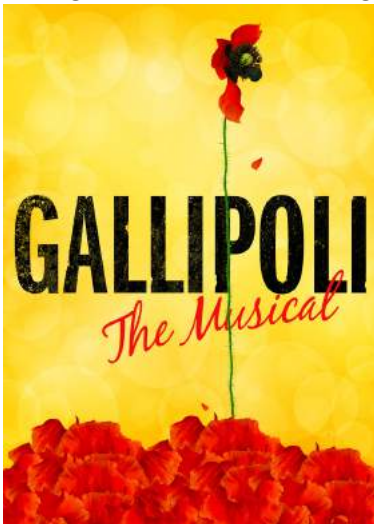
11 years now - longest I've ever lived at one address

Where are you from? My parents moved to Australia from USA when I was 7, so that's 52 years ago. If you heard me speak though you might think I just got off the plane – although you might not guess where I got on it. People have asked me if I'm from Germany, Scotland, South Africa, Sweden. The only time I get asked if I'm Australian is when I'm overseas. I also spent several years living in Scotland.

How long have you been involved with the CTC? On the committee for one year. Hanging around doing odds and ends, maybe 9 years?



Why did you decide to nominate for the Committee? Back when I was fairly new to Castlemaine, I volunteered to help dismantle the set for a CTC production. I attended the final performance and after the audience left, was waiting to get on stage and start working. Normally in professional theatre, the curtain drops and two minutes later the set's being attacked. With CTC though the process was nothing like that. Kenneth MacLeod, who was the CTC president, stood up and gave a congratulatory speech, then he thanked each cast and crew by name, then cards and gifts were handed out and all the while I'm thinking, 'Can we just get on with it!' Then I had a second thought, 'Get on with what?' Bumping out the set isn't important. That's just a necessary job. Acknowledging people, recognising their humanity and accomplishments and making them feel good is the very function of theatre. It was that deeply rooted care for the people, and by extension the community, that made me want to nominate.



Mark wrote Gallipoli The Musical, which was produced by the CTC in 2017

Have you always been interested in theatre? Sketch out your theatre journey for us I didn't have a calling for theatre. I auditioned for an acting school when I was about 22 and got selected but that occasioned no great joy. I wasn't so much attracted to theatre but thought it was the best of a bad lot. (I was a twit. Believe me there's been many moments I've wanted a time machine so I could travel back, find that younger me, and give myself a good thrashing.) Over the three years of that course though, I fell in love with theatre. I enjoy the comradeship, the risk taking, the unpredictability and the strange contradictions. It's a field of infinite creativity and invention. After I finished school I started working, nearly always doing my own productions, and often touring work for children. I went to London and studied mime as well as various other courses, usually within the physical theatre genre. Presently I'm just beginning to rehearse Edgar Allan's Poe's 'The Black Cat' as a one man show as well as directing Cafe Cantata, a musical theatre performance co-created with Andrée Cozens, which is part of this year's Castlemaine State Festival.

What other vocations, pastimes or passions do you have? I like cycling. I keep bees. I like flowers (don't like gardening though). I play plonk and petanque with a group that dangerously mixes alcohol with metal ball throwing. I'm probably signposting myself as a bore, but the only activity I truly deeply enjoy, and the only thing I'm competent in, is making theatre. Holidays are OK, I guess, for a day or two.



Mark Penzak performing in his kids show "Journey to the Centre of the Earth"

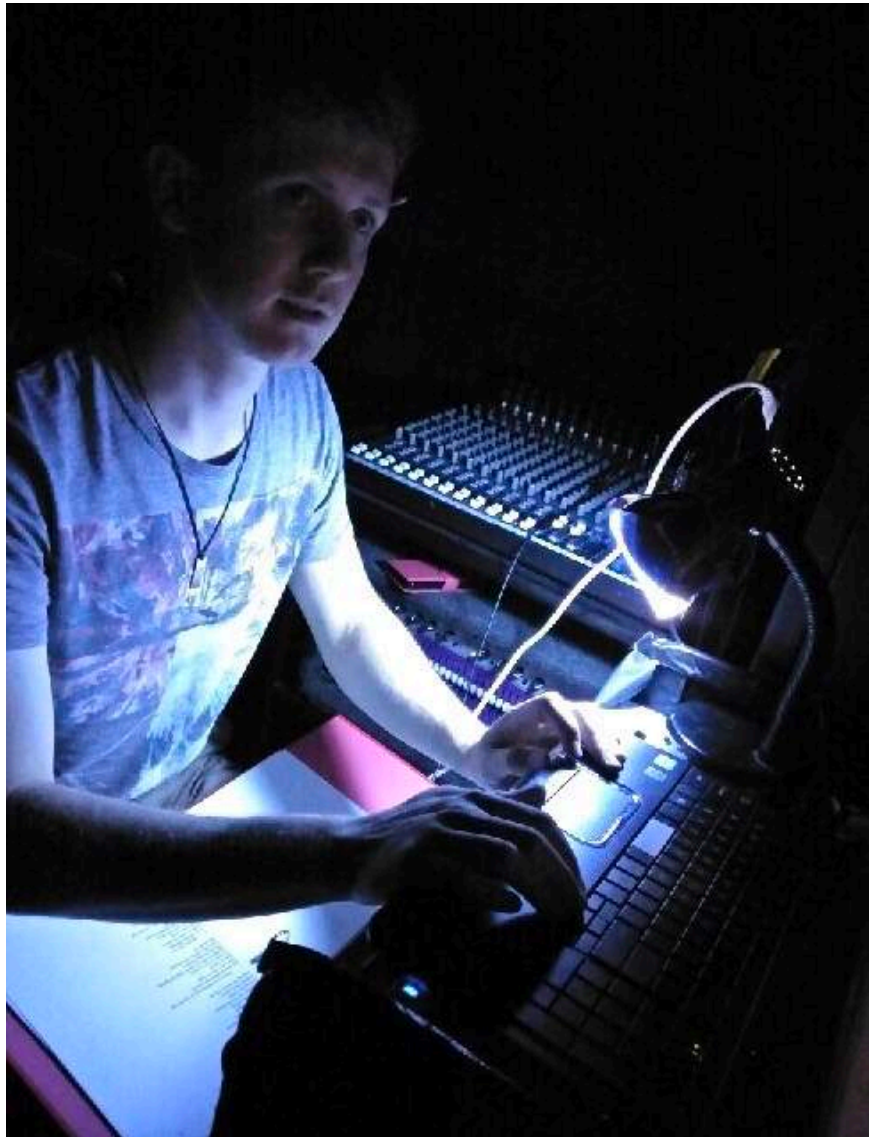
What unique things do you bring to the committee? Everyone who participates in CTC brings something unique however I suppose my viewpoint is framed by my making living from theatre. That makes me very conscious of which shows, or at least so I guess, have a fair chance of attracting an audience. That viewpoint does though come with dangers. It's easy to start seeing a performance as a 'product' and audience numbers as the best measurement of success. One of the things I love about CTC is that while audience numbers certainly matter, we all like a popular show, they have concurrent ambitions. Has the play furthered the company's social agenda for inclusion? Has it giving voice to the community, enabled participation and helped people feel good about themselves? If all CTC valued was audience numbers then we'd perform plays like, 'Kiss Cover Band versus Alien.' (I typed that as a joke but actually it kind of appeals. Picture an old van filled with a disgruntled, make-up wearing, middle-aged Kiss Cover band that breaks down in the remote outback. Suddenly there's a flash in the sky and....) You probably see why it's good I'm just one vote on the committee.

"Thanks Mark! I'm already prepping for my Kiss Cover Band versus Alien audition! It's great to have you on the team! xKate"

Etty St Update

We have been busy making a home for ourselves upstairs at Autoplex, in the Engineering Block of the old Castlemaine Secondary College Etty St. This year we are joined by 3's A Crowd, and our two companies will be sharing rehearsal and storage space. We have already successfully partnered with 3AC and Castlemaine Rotary to be awarded a Mount Alexander Shire Partnership Grant to appoint the rehearsal space with a new lighting rig, and black curtains. A big thank you to the Shire for that. We are going to have lots of fun shopping and installing the gear. Another big thank you to our techs Neil Harrison and Remy Brannon for sorting and testing all our existing lights.

*Remy Brannon being a tech.
We love techs!
Photo by Kate Stones*



AGM 2021



The 2021 Castlemaine Theatre Company AGM will take place at **7pm on Thursday 11 March at The Rehearsal Studio, Upstairs at Autoplex, 35 Etty Street (The Engineering Block of the old Castlemaine Secondary Senior Campus site)**. This year we are very happy to welcome MASC Cultural Development Officer, Vicki Anderson as our Guest Chair. 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 2021/22 Committee. If you are not a member and would like to join in advance of the meeting, please fill in the attached membership form, email back to us with confirmation of your EFT payment, or post 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. Membership is a great way to support our organisation, it also enables you to promote any (non CTC) local theatrical events you might be involved in, or performance workshops you might be running or promoting, via our 300 plus strong mailing list and Facebook page. You are 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 **Delwyn, the Secretary** know via email in advance of the meeting:
castlemainetheatreco@gmail.com

**That's all for now...enjoy these cool,
mellow late summer dayz...stay safe, stay
well, support local theatre. Follow us on
Facebook and Instagram,
www.castlemainetheatrecompany.com**