

April 2020

Ipswich Little Theatre Society Inc Newsletter



Ipswich Little Theatre
— SOCIETY ESTABLISHED 1946 —

Editor:

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COMMITTEE
MEETING
To be advised**

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Because of the uncertainty of the future, Selection Committee has extended the deadline for applications to direct for ILT in 2021 until 30 July.



All performances cancelled until further notice

Like the rest of the world, ILT is caught up in the current pandemic. Fortunately we are in a strong financial position and should be able to weather the crisis.

At the request of *Stage Whispers*, Secretary Helen Pullar wrote an article, which is re-printed here.

Cancelling the biggest show on earth!

Well, maybe not! But when you are a community theatre with a significant diversity of activities, that's what it seemed like to Ipswich Little Theatre Members. Our very first casualty was the pantomime production in rehearsal by our Daytime Theatre Troupe. This group, formed in 1983, has continuously entertained youngsters in Ipswich, most of whom see their first live theatre on our stage. With scripts specifically written by members, fabulous costumes and incredible sets, they hold their young audiences spell bound (and there are enough subtle asides to amuse the accompanying adults.) The production of "Wally Llama's Circus Adventures" would have been no exception, but the realisation that performances in June could be at the height of virus season, coupled with the unlikelihood of any preschool or early childhood excursions, made the decision to cancel inevitable.

There was a teary response from our Junior Theatre children when the curtain was brought down on their rehearsals of "A Ghost of a Second Chance" just a couple of weeks prior to performance. Fortunately, their parents and those of our even younger Little Players had a clearer understanding of why public performances were not viable. The cruel irony is that for these two primary school-aged groups, and a similarly affected group of high schoolers - our Young Theatricals - this is just the time when an interactive, creative activity would have been a godsend, but even normal classes are considered too risky. Hopefully, there is a second chance!

Continued next page

COVID – 19 ILT

It has been determined that the ILT Administration Committee will go into temporary recess until the future becomes clearer.

The rationale is that once we see any social distancing regulations lifted, we may need to make quick decisions and many of them. The regular monthly meetings will be too prescriptive.

By placing our affairs in the hands of Executive, a meeting can be called at a moment's notice with all Admin members invited to attend. This ensures a speedy response. Any Admin member may request such a meeting for consideration.



From the President

While we are in lockdown some work is continuing – ICC have made further efforts to rectify the issues surrounding Lake Burley Griffin forming every time it rains. Hopefully the new work will fix the problem finally. Thank you to them for their efforts.

I would like to thank all of the members of the Executive for their support and the hours of extra work done to help me and the Theatre through this difficult time. Hard decisions had to be made and with their support we worked to ensure that the safety of all members and patrons was the prime objective of any decision made.

Additionally a very special thank you to Shane Mallory who has worked tirelessly to ensure the smooth operation of refunds to patrons.

Remember the artwork in our gardens – the Phoenix rises from the ashes – and so will ILT rise from the ashes caused by this virus to become again a place of fun for all who are members and who visit as patrons.

Jim

Continued from page 1.

For nearly thirty years, Ipswich Little Theatre has fostered a unique group - S Troupe - which caters for people with special needs - or, as we say, special abilities. For many of them their Sunday afternoons at ILT are the highlight of the week. It was extremely difficult to explain to even those with a degree of cognitive understanding why their rehearsals for “Almost the Greatest Show on Earth” had to be suspended. Their performances are always uplifting and heart-warming and, even if no two performances are ever the same, always the greatest show on earth. We’ll all miss them. So, before we even considered our main house program, the activities of a nearly 100 ILT thespians had been axed. “Waiting for God”, the second major season for 2020, had just bumped in to the Incinerator after several weeks of rehearsal and were on target for the home run. However, instead of the impetus of working in the actual set with props, costumes, lighting and effects that normally kicks in at this point, rehearsals were quickly overshadowed by a suspicion that maybe the show was not going anywhere. Following a series of sell-out seasons, we opened bookings with a degree of uncertainty which rapidly escalated into the realisation that all our activities had to draw to a close. So, we have to ‘wait’ for a little longer and our set builder’s neighbours will wonder why he has a ready made coffin in his carport!

The decision had wider ramifications as the many organisations which book fundraising nights during our seasons have lost that source of revenue while the Probus Clubs, Seniors Groups, gardening clubs and the like who had booked lunches through our Tourific Troupers Luncheon packages are now confined to barracks. This latter activity has, for the past 15 years, allowed us to showcase our activities and share the wonderful story of our iconic Incinerator to a broader audience across south east Queensland and, inevitably, 2020 bookings were at capacity.

The final, and in some ways, the hardest realisation of all was that our one act play festival - the longest running drama competition in Australia - would not be able to go ahead. Since 1955, even floods have not stopped this wonderful event, but it looks like Covid-19 will see it cancelled, along with cultural ventures, not only locally, but world-wide. Even clairvoyant Madame Arcati from our most recent play, “Blithe Spirit” could not have predicted this catastrophe! Our own 2020 Festival entry had a somewhat prophetic title, “Passenger Xero”. Alas, instead, it is performance zero, audience zero. But, we have to think positively and assume that in the not too distant future, the show will go on.

Ghost Light

A ghost light is an electric light that is left energized on the stage when the theatre is unoccupied and would otherwise be completely dark. It is usually placed near centre stage. The practical use of a ghost light is mainly for safety as it enables one to navigate to find the lighting control console and to avoid accidents such as tripping over set pieces.

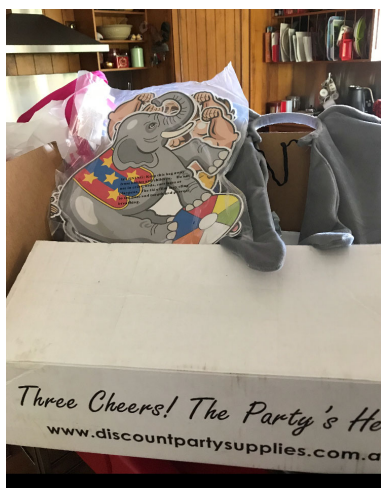
Aside from its obvious practical purpose, there are a number of superstitions associated with the origin and purpose of ghost lights. One popular theatrical superstition holds that every theatre has a ghost, and some theatres have traditions to appease ghosts that reach far back into their history. For example, the Palace Theatre, London keeps two seats in their balcony permanently bolted open to provide seating for their ghosts. Similar superstitions hold that ghost lights provide opportunities for ghosts to perform onstage, thus appeasing them and preventing them from cursing the theatre or sabotaging the production. Other superstitions claim that the ghost light is in place to scare away ghosts, not to appease them.

Some claim that the Incinerator Theatre has a ghost. Just in case, but particularly to signify that we’ll be back, we are symbolically turning on our Ghost Light here.



Daytime Theatre Troupe

“Wally Llama’s Circus Adventure” rehearsals had been progressing well, but sadly, the cancellation/postponement of the production became a necessary consequence of the social isolation measures required to combat the Covid-19 global pandemic. All our circus animals are now in hibernation as we wait and watch how events unfold. The production is at a stage which would be easy to revive, perhaps with some cast changes, when the timing is right.



Kay McAllan provided this photo of the props that had been acquired for both circus shows and which she is storing until the show must go on.

S-Troupe

With the unprecedented decision to cease all classes because of the current health pandemic, S-Troupers will certainly struggle as for some it is their only social outlet. The most frustrating part of course is not knowing when classes will resume and the circus troupe recommence.

Director Di Johnston has spoken with quite a few parents and also been in contact with all the helpers to see how each are faring without the Sunday afternoon fix of S-Troupe!

Administrative Committee

The April Administrative Committee meeting was held via Zoom (hosted by Shane Mallory) from the “comfort” of their homes (see photos below). Unfortunately, four of our members were unable to attend but the others were there looking resplendent.

While this experiment with technology was highly successful – we got through all the business – and quite enjoyable, we will not be holding monthly meetings for the sake of holding meetings while there are extreme constraints on our activities. We will resume, either via Zoom, or in person once there is a need and a clear future.



Future Newsletters

With all Theatre productions suspended until further notice, no further Newsletters will be issued until there are activities to be reported and/or advertised.

DIARY DATES

Making the Most of the Situation

During this hiatus, we have at least been able to get on with some improvements. The entire backstage area – kitchen, Green Room and dressing rooms have had new carpet tiles installed. Anyone viewing the pile of replaced tiles would be in no doubt that the update was well and truly due.

In addition these areas have received a brand-new coat of paint and a thorough clean. The Green Room, though, is not green (nor the chartreuse that Chris suggested).

Our raffle table and screens have new protective covers (no virus can reach them).

Overall, backstage is looking very smart and ready to welcome our performers and tour groups when they are allowed back.

TO BE ADVISED

Foretelling the Future

Colonel Charles Gray was Police Magistrate in Ipswich for many years in the mid-19th century, and therefore had the ultimate say on all civic matters. In 1857 two men made an application to build a theatre in Ipswich. Gray reacted with indignant disapproval. "It is to be feared that to meet the tastes of the lower classes, to whose support the Licensees must look



COLONEL CHARLES GEORGE GRAY,
First Police Magistrate of Ipswich.

almost wholly for remuneration, the performances would degenerate into low buffoonery if not into actual licentiousness and thus poison and unsettle the minds of the working class and domestic Servants of the Town as also of the youth of the Community."

A mere 99 years later, our Theatre Company was established. Was his prophecy true?

2019 EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE CONTACT DETAILS

President	Jim Orr	0402 377 258
Vice President	Ann Collyer	3288 7053/ 0400 997 365
Past President	David Austin	3812 9431 / 0413 636 249
Secretary	Helen Pullar	3281 4437/0400 801 443
Treasurer	Chris Greenhill	0427 977 007

CONTACT DETAILS FOR OTHER IMPORTANT POSITIONS

Front of House Management Coordinator	Courtney Murrin	0457 734 433
Subscription Secretary	Di Johnston	0447 191 954
Group Liaison/ Publicity Co-Coordination	Robyn Flashman/ Robyn Harm	3812 3450/ 3812 3516
Building Bookings	Desley Cronon	3288 8754 / 0435 309 352
Junior Theatre/Little Players	Deirdre Lowe	0409 202 380
Young Theatricals	Kyle Breese Samantha Johnson	0423 278 833 0415 453 952
S-Troupe	Di Johnston	0447 191 954
Daytime Theatre Troupe	Kay McAllan	5464 3965/0439 305 658
Tourific Troupers	Helen Pullar or Jane Sheppard	H 3281 4437 .J 5464 5363
Theatre number	NB: Only during rehearsals or meetings	3812 2389