

Most significant play in Australian theatre history coming your way

Stirling Theatre Saturday, November 6th, 2021

AN AUSTRALIAN stage classic written by playwright Ray Lawler – who turned 100 this year – is coming to Stirling Theatre.

Directed by Tim Riessen, *Summer of the Seventeenth Doll* is considered by literary scholars to be the most significant play in Australian theatre history.

It provided a turning point where distinctly Australian life and characters were openly and authentically portrayed, signalling the maturity of a nation prepared to question its stereotypes and attitudes.

The story follows two itinerant cane cutters, Barney and Roo, who have spent the past 16 summers in the off-season with two barmaids in Melbourne.

Every year, Roo has brought a tinsel doll to his girl Olive, as a gift to symbolise their relationship – but this 17th summer is somehow different.

“*Summer of the Seventeenth Doll* is an iconic Australian play that highlights the unravelling of lives,” Tim said.

“It’s about the end of an era for the characters.

“One of the challenges is bringing to life the type of lifestyle portrayed, so younger audiences can gain an understanding of it.

“For the era, the idea of unmarried folk would have been quite controversial – this is less so today, so getting this across will be important.”

Originally performing as a teenager, Tim has returned to the stage in recent years, appearing in *Jesus Christ Superstar* and an end-of-year pantomime with the Albany Light Opera and Theatre Company and *The Phantom of the Opera*, *Pride and Prejudice*, *Anything Goes*, *Speaking in Tongues* and *The Darling Buds of May* with Limelight Theatre.

He has also performed in *You Can’t Have One* at Stirling Theatre and directed David Williamson’s *Let The Sunshine* at Limelight Theatre in 2017.

“*Summer of the Seventeenth Doll* appealed because it embodies the emergence of the Aussie spirit,” Tim said.

“It speaks to me of my parents and grandparents.”

Summer of the Seventeenth Doll plays at 8pm November 26, 27, December 2, 3, 4, 9, 10 and 11 with 2pm matinees November 28 and December 5. Tickets are \$22, \$20 concession – book at www.trybooking.com/BNVUO.

Stirling Theatre is on Morris Place, Innaloo.

CAPTIONS

summer1: Ben Small, left, Mark Dyer, Elias Cuzens and Fran Gordon, at back, and Kezia Daisy, Ellie Freeman and Danni Close in *Summer of the Seventeenth Doll*.

summer2: Olive (Danni Close, left), Roo (Mark Dyer), Barney (Ben Small), Emma (Fran Gordon) and Pearl (Kezia Daisy) in *Summer of the Seventeenth Doll*.

Contact Profile

Stirling Theatre

Stirling Theatre is a not-for-profit organisation that aims to promote and encourage drama and allied arts within the City of Stirling for cultural, educational and recreational purposes. The community theatre group based in the Innaloo Community Centre near Perth, Western Australia.

The group has been in existence since 1970 and prides itself on the quality of its productions, endeavouring to produce five or six seasons a year. Stirling Theatre also promotes youth theatre activities through workshops, youth musicals and one-act play seasons. It also offers opportunities for community groups to fundraise through charity nights held during a season.

Our history

Stirling Theatre began in 1970 with the amalgamation of Northbridge Repertory and The Intimate Players.

Our original home was in the Old Perth Roads Board on Main Street, Osborne Park, but we were soon moved to the Progress Hall in Gildercliffe Street, Scarborough. Our membership increased gradually and, in 1978, we were given the old Health Administrations Office in the City of Stirling precinct. After much renovation, this became the much-loved Stirling Theatre. Here we stayed, growing in strength and reputation, until Christmas 2000 when we were forced to move. The City of Stirling then gave us the use of the Innaloo Community Centre and equipped us with a new purpose-built stage, greenroom and bio-box, auditorium chairs and evaporative air-conditioning. The job was finished with the installation of theatre lights, sound equipment and stage curtains. We were also given sole use of the office and a storeroom, which became our props room, and a double-meeting room that was used to create a large wardrobe area.

We have been fortunate to receive valuable assistance from Lotterywest on two occasions. In the early days at the community centre, funding was made available for necessary lighting and sound equipment and, in 2008, we received another grant that enabled us to install retractable raked seating. The theatre now comfortably seats 118 people. There is wheelchair access and two seats reserved for wheelchairs in row A. There is also an accessible toilet. Stirling Theatre is happy to welcome all patrons with disability.

Tim Riessen

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summer3: Roo (Mark Dyer, left) and Barney (Ben Small) come to blows as the others watch on in horror.

summer4: *Summer of the Seventeenth Doll* features Danni Close, left, as Olive and Mark Dyer as Roo.

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