



# NEWS

March 2004



## Moreland to Stage a Pastel-Pink Bombshell!

Rehearsals for Moreland's next production, *A Doll's House* by Henrik Ibsen, are shaping up well. Director Karim Shaker is pleased with the cast and crew he has assembled and is excited by the terrific ensemble work they are producing.

*A Doll's House* was first performed in Copenhagen in 1879. The play was controversial from the outset, with one critic comparing the opening of the play to the dropping of "a bomb into contemporary life," and "a death sentence on accepted social ethics". Another described Nora's exit from her house and her gender-roles at the end of Act V as "a door slam heard round the world."

Theatre historians report that the furore made Ibsen "a household word even among those Englishmen who never went to the theatre or opened a book."

"It was then it dawned upon me that for eight years I had been living here with a strange man, and had borne him three children. Oh, I can't bear to think of it! I could tear myself into little bits!"

These famous words uttered by Nora as she resolves to leave her loveless marriage were welcomed by George Bernard Shaw and the Suffragettes, while those who thought his plays "written by a vulgar and evil mind" joined the Anti-Ibsen League and lobbied to have him banned.

Karim has taken the play out of the dour and straitlaced world of late-19<sup>th</sup> century Norway and set it in the 1950s. During the 1950s, women were told that the freedoms they had enjoyed during World War II were at an end: their place was now in their shiny new kitchens, with lots of exciting gadgets to keep them amused, just as in this play the ideal woman's place is represented as a doll's house, with Nora being Torvald's doll, to use as he pleases.

The bright pastel green and pink 1950s may seem quite divorced from drab Calvinistic 1880s Scandinavia, but there is an underlying similarity in that women's roles in both these eras were circumscribed and restricted by convention – as was keenly observed by Noel Coward in his *Brief Encounter*. This move in time



and place has also allowed a greater degree of licence to designer Michelle Dorian.

In contrast to the last show that he directed, which was a comedy, Karim says he is having to approach this serious drama in a very serious manner, and is putting more emphasis on character development and dialogue during the rehearsal process.

*A Doll's House* revolves around the married life of Nora, played by Crystal Evans, and Torvald, played

by Aaron Rowlands. When acts from her past come back to haunt her, Nora must reconsider her life, her family and her place in the world. The plot is complex and dramatic – we wouldn't want to give it all away here!

☆ *A Doll's House* by Henrik Ibsen, directed by Karim Shaker, May 6, 7, 8, 13, 14, 15 at 8pm with a matinee on May 9 at 2pm

☆ Mechanics Institute Performing Arts Centre, corner of Sydney Road and Glenlyon Road, Brunswick (Melways 29 G8)

☆ Tickets: \$15 Full and \$10 Concession, bookings: 9388 1942

## Sunday Play Readings

**We shall be holding our first one-act play-reading of the year on Sunday 21 March, from 2.15 pm – 4.30 pm in the Meeting Room at the Coburg Library.**

The previous play-reading, held late last year, was great fun, and everyone who came was keen to make such readings a regular activity at Moreland.

We have two play-sets to read from so far: *The Reading Room* by Faye Weldon and *Cup Final* by Charles Mander, but anyone who has a play or extract they would like to read, please bring it along. This includes your own work – but bring copies enough for all the parts!

We are planning to stage a one-act play season later in the year, and perhaps enter some festivals, if there is sufficient interest. We are expecting that the play-reading group will act as a springboard for directors and actors for the productions. So if you want to have some fun, you've always wanted to direct, or if you just want to have a say in what plays we perform, come along on Sunday, and start carving out a place for yourself in the annals of theatre!

The entrance to the Library Meeting Room is from Victoria Street Mall, Coburg.

For enquiries, please ring Glenys Lewis on 9386-0048, or if lost and can't find your way into the building on Sunday, call Steve Gagen on his mobile phone, 0401-009097.



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## Publication details

### Editorial independence

The views expressed in this Newsletter are not necessarily those of Moreland Theatre Company Inc.

### Articles and advertising

All material for publication in the Moreland Theatre Company News should be marked for the attention of the Editor, and sent to the Moreland Theatre Company PO Box address shown below. Articles may also be emailed directly to secretary@moreland.org.au, or faxed to 9309-1828. Any photos or drawings will also be gratefully accepted.

### Publishing dates

Moreland Theatre Company News is published quarterly, usually in February, May, August and November, but these dates may be varied somewhat to fit in with productions. The next newsletter will appear in June, the deadline is 10 June 2004.

### Moreland Theatre Company News

**Editor:** Steve Gagen

**Design & layout:** Steve Gagen (Imaginative Solutions, www.imagisol.com)

## Company details

**Address:** Moreland Theatre Company Inc. (A20748T), PO Box 117, Moreland, Victoria, Australia 3058.

**Telephone:** (03) 9386-0048

**Fax:** (03) 9309-1828

**Web:** www.moreland.org.au

**Email:** secretary@moreland.org.au

## Moreland Theatre Company Board of Management

**President:** Steve Gagen

**Vice President:** Albert Hudson

**Treasurer:** Glenys Lewis

**Secretary:** Glenys Lewis/Kath Harper

**Public Officer:** Glenys Lewis.

**Committee Members:** Karim Shaker, Gino Tomisich, Peter Davey, Cheryl Wilson.

## Next Committee Meeting

This will be held at The Brunswick Green, 313 Sydney Road, Brunswick (next to Curly Joes) on Wednesday 14th April, 7.30pm. All members are welcome to attend: this is where ideas are thrashed out, plans are formed and decisions made!

# More to do at Moreland

## Standing Up for Techos

**Technical and backstage crew are often the forgotten side of theatre – who ever gives the lighting operator or costume-designer a round of applause?**

Our own Angelo Gianchino and Max Mander of Malvern Theatre Company are trying to change this by setting up a new association, Theatre Technicians (Vic).

The aims of the group are to encourage social contact for people with interests in technical aspects of theatre, to exchange information and expertise, to improve standards, organise visits to places of interest, and to raise the status of backstage workers.

If you are interested, please contact Angelo on 9890-6557, email angelo.gianchino@daimlerchrysler.com, or Max on 9560-8991 or 0400-571965, email mander@maconline.com.au.

## Grant Proposals

**Applications for Moreland City Council Cultural grants are now open, and we are looking for proposals to put up for next year.**

This year we received a grant for *A Doll's House*, which helped to pay the expenses of the production.

We are looking for directors to propose a production for next year, to be supported by a similar grant. Closing date for applications is the end of May, but we ask that proposals be sent to acting Secretary Glenys Lewis as soon as possible – by the next Committee Meeting on 14 April, for preference.

## Annual General Meeting

**The Moreland AGM will be held on Thursday May 27 at the St Ambrose Hall, Dawson Street, Brunswick.**

This is not a formal Notice of Meeting – that will come later – but we ask that you put this date in your diary now, so you keep it free.

## Memberships Due

**Has your membership expired? If you haven't renewed so far this year, it will have, as all memberships expire at the end of February.**

It costs \$25, \$12 concession, to renew your membership for the year. If you haven't renewed so far, you should find a renewal form with this newsletter. Don't delay, send it off today!

## Coming Attractions

**After *A Doll's House* in May it'll be time for *Mulga Bill's Bicycle*.**

We have to be a little vague at the moment, as the Mechanics Institute will not take bookings for the second half of the year as yet, but we are hoping to stage the production in August or September.

Adapted by Steve Gagen from Banjo Paterson's poem of the same name, *Mulga Bill's Bicycle* is a sort of political pantomime with music, featuring a chorus-line of jingling bicycles!

The play features privatised bikeways, a dodgy used-bike salesman called Sam Snakeoil, a wicked stepmother and a corrupt local mayor. Banjo's Dead Man's Creek, where Bill crashes his bike, is re-invented as "Golden Lagoon" by Sam, and he sings a song of triumph "Where you see that merino we'll build a casino!" Anyone who has lived in Australia for the past few years will be right at home!

You'll be glad to know that Good triumphs in the end, though, and Bill gets the girl, too. After *Mulga Bill* we are proposing to have an end-of-year pantomime – any suggestions and proposals gratefully received!

## Moreland Community Raffle

**Every year the City of Moreland runs a Community Raffle for the benefit of local community groups such as ours.**

The great thing is, the council does all the organisation, all we have to do is sell the tickets! Community groups receive a cash payment from the Council in proportion to the numbers of tickets sold – so every ticket you buy goes to help your favourite theatre group, as well as giving you a chance to win a fantastic prize!

First prize is a Ford Focus, second is travel to the value of \$3000, while third prize is two bikes to the value of \$2000 – useful to those who want to audition for *Mulga Bill*!

Tickets are \$2 each, and books have been issued to all Committee Members. The final sell-by date is 18 April – contact Glenys Lewis on 9386-0048 if you would like to obtain some books to sell.