

Historical Note

In 1995, when *The Shoe-Horn Sonata* was first performed, the United Nations announced that more civilians now die in war than soldiers. They have no equivalent of Anzac Day. They are simply forgotten.

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After the sinking of the *Vyner Brooke* in February 1942, 12 of the 65 Australian Army nurses on board were drowned or killed in the water. The rest struggled ashore on Banka Island, some having been in the sea for more than 60 hours. Japanese soldiers captured one group of 22 nurses, ordered them into the sea and machine-gunned them. The only survivor, Sister Vivienne Bullwinkel, lay still in the shallow water until after the Japanese troops had gone. Days later, she was reunited with her surviving colleagues and interned at Muntok on Banka Island until the group was transferred by ship to Palembang in Sumatra.

Japanese attempts to persuade the nurses to join a brothel were resisted by the women and they were eventually put into bungalows with Dutch women and children at the other end of the town. The conditions were dreadful with inadequate sanitation, mosquitoes and scarce food. In 1943 the women were moved again, this time to a desolate spot in the jungle where they eked out an existence in leaking bamboo huts with mud floors and trench toilets.



During this period a Presbyterian missionary, **Margaret Dryburgh**, helped form a camp choir, writing down pages of music for the 'Voice Orchestra' to perform. Even the Japanese soldiers were said to be amazed at what they heard, inviting themselves to the concerts. Miss Dryburgh wrote the *Captives Hymn* (featured at the beginning of Act II), which was sung each Sunday during church services.

In October 1944, the Japanese moved their prisoners back to Muntok on Banka Island. Rations were worse than at Palembang and there were few medicines. Four of the nurses died in February and March 1945. Sister Pearl Mittelhauser died on 18 August 1945, three days after the Japanese surrender.



in association with Cameron's
Management Pty Ltd
proudly presents

The Shoe-Horn Sonata

by
John Misto

14th, 16th, 17th, 21st, 23rd and 24th
July 2010
starting 8pm
at the Kucom Playhouse on
Shakespeare Street



BOOKINGS: MECC 4961 9700
OTHER ENQUIRIES: 0408 980 022

The Shoe-Horn Sonata

DIRECTOR'S NOTE



HEATHER MACTAVISH

The Shoe-Horn Sonata by John Misto ended up with myself as Director by unexpected means, and I am thrilled that it did. If one has a well written script (and this is) and a talented cast and backstage crew, one can expect that the play will engage an audience—and that is what presenting a play is all about: entertaining you, the audience> *The Shoe-Horn Sonata* is truly a slice of history, filled with pathos, laughter and tears. Let us take you into the world of Bridie and Sheila.

There is no national memorial to the many Australian nurses who perished in the war. At the time this play was first performed, the government had rejected all requests for one in Canberra.

I do not have the power to build a memorial. So I wrote a play instead. Although the characters of Bridie and Sheila are fictional, every incident they describe is true and occurred between 1942 and 1995.

John Misto

THE PLAYWRIGHT



JOHN MISTO is a prolific and multi-award winning writer who has been writing for the theatre, film and television for almost two decades. Originally trained as a lawyer, he has been working as a full-time writer since 1981. *The Shoe-Horn Sonata*, first performed at Sydney's Ensemble Theatre in 1995, deals with the plight of Australian women captured by the Japanese during WW2. It has been performed throughout Australia and in London. It won both the NSW Premier's Literary Award and the Australia Remembers National Play Competition - the biggest playwriting prize ever offered in Australia. Misto donated this prize to the Australian Nurses' National Memorial Fund.

What's Next at Kucom?

September

Death in the Limelight, by Claire Carmichael
a Kucom Youth Theatre Production
Season dates: to be advised

September/October

Kucom Club Night (date to be advised)

November

It's My Party (And I'll Die If I Want To)
a comedy by Elizabeth Coleman
directed by Jim Kelly

Season dates: 10, 12, 13, 17, 19 & 20 November

Watch the Kucom website for audition dates and times

BOOKINGS: MECC 4961 9700
or book online through the Kucom website
<http://www.kucom.org.au/bookings.html>

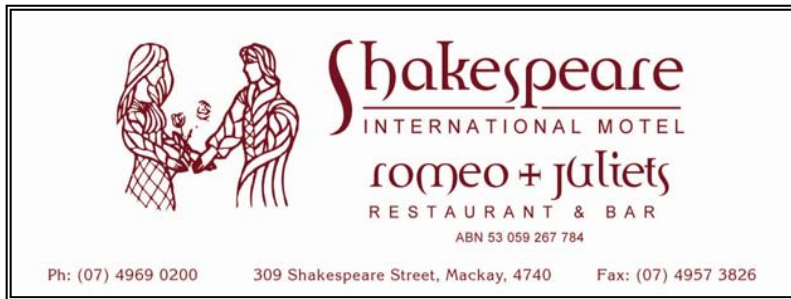
KUCOM COMMITTEE 2010

President	Sue Stock
Vice President	Jim Kelly
Secretary	Carolyn Thompson
Treasurer	John Atkinson
Committee	Sheryn Dempster Lucy Dobson Bronwyn Grannall Donna Kellion Russell Lowry
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The Shoe-Horn Sonata

SPONSORS

Kucom Theatre gratefully acknowledges the assistance and support of:



The Shoe-Horn Sonata

THE CAST

Bridie Cartwright
Sheila Richards
(Voice of) Rick

Bronwyn Grannall
Tessa King
Jim Kelly

The time: 1995

The place: A television studio; a motel room in Melbourne

There will be a 20-minute interval between Act I and Act II
The bar will be open and drinks are permitted into the theatre

THE PRODUCTION CREW

Director
Stage Manager
Sound and Lighting
Audiovisual compilations

Set Construction and Painting

Front of House Coordinators

Media Liaison
Program

Heather MacTavish
Maureen Coleman
Kristyn Everett
Bronwyn Grannall
Stan Hillard
Laurie King
Tessa King
Heather MacTavish
Bronwyn Grannall
Sue Stock
John Atkinson
Bronwyn Grannall
Taffy's Typing Service

SPECIAL THANKS TO:

Masaki Iida, Byron Kiernan, Arunya Olive,
Colin Hoy, John Irvine, Russell Lowry,
and The Shakespeare International Motel

**BRONWYN GRANNALL ('Bridie')**

Fresh from University, Bronwyn joined the Genesian Theatre in Sydney and later studied acting at the Ensemble and Independent Theatres. Her overseas experience ranges from fringe revue at the Edinburgh Festival to pantomime in Lae, Papua New Guinea. During a recent 7-year sojourn in Canberra, Bronwyn appeared in *The Winslow Boy*, *Men at Arms*, *Relatively Speaking*, *The Donahue Sisters*, *The Odd Couple*, *Steaming*, *Entertaining Mr Sloane*, *Red Peppers*, *Steel Magnolias*, *Hotel Sorrento*, *Fawlty Towers*, *Misery*, *My Three Angels*, *Beautiful Thing* (which won the Canberra Critics Circle Award in 2004), and *Barefoot in the Park*. She has twice received the Canberra Area Theatre (CAT) Award for Best Actress – in 2000 for Kath in *Entertaining Mr Sloane* and again in 2003 for her chilling portrayal of Annie Wilkes in Stephen King's *Misery*. Recent appearances for Kucom include *Shirley Valentine* (2005), *Beautiful Thing* and *Rumours* (2006), *The Exorcism* (2007), *Bazaar and Rummage* (2008), *The Fat Lady Sings in Little Grimley* (*Triple Treat*, 2009) and *Fallen Angels* (2009). In July 2007, with *Secret Bridesmaid's Business*, she finally gave in to a long-held ambition to explore the dark uncharted realms of directing. It was fun, but scary, and she's still getting up the courage to direct another one. Maybe next year ?

**TESSA KING ('Sheila')**

After many years in community and professional theatre in Adelaide, Tessa moved to Queensland to be nearer her grandchildren and vowed to give her love of the theatrical arts away. She also retired from the workforce at the same time. She was lured back to her former hobby when her interest was aroused by an advertisement for auditions for the 'Farndale' production of *The Mikado*, directed by Heather MacTavish. What followed was the renewal of her enthusiasm for all things theatrical, having subsequently been involved with Kucom as both director and actor in several productions over the past few years. Tessa admits that as you get older there are fewer suitable parts, so it was with great excitement she auditioned for this play. Since she has also returned to full time work it had to be something special to convince her to devote the time necessary to create a worthwhile performance. She was impressed by the subject matter and the way the play has been written and constructed. It is an honour and a privilege to be able to portray as honestly as possible a story based on real events and the history of other people—some of whom are still alive today. The icing on the cake was being able to work once again with Bronwyn and the accomplished directing skills of Heather MacTavish.

**JIM KELLY (voice of 'Rick')**

Currently Vice President of Kucom Theatre, Jim's production of *Lee* earlier this year won two awards at the North Queensland Festival of One-Act Plays in May. He will direct the last play of the season for Kucom this year, *It's My Party (and I'll Die if I Want To)*, but in the meantime is keeping a low profile as the *Australia Remembers* interviewer for the current production.

AND THE VOICES OF**MASAKI, BYRON, KRISTYN and ARUNYA**