NEW FARM NASH THEATRE INC
2017 Laughter is the Best Medicine

THE TAMING OF THE SHREW

By William Shakespeare
Directed by Jason Nash

The Brunswick Room @ Merthyr Road Uniting Church
52 Merthyr Rd, New Farm

BOOKINGS
NASHTHEATRE.COM

Preview / Final Dress Rehearsal Friday May 12 at 7.30pm
All seats $10

Opening Night (including supper) Saturday May 13 at 7.30pm
Adult $25, Concession $20, Member/Child $17

*Matinee Sunday May 21 at 2pm
*Evening Performances May 19, 20, 26, 27, June 2, 3 at 7.30pm
*Adult $20, Concession $15, Member/Child $12

Bookings: Online: www.trybooking.com/248505 or www.nashtheatre.com
Phone: 3379 4775 Email: nashtheatre4@bigpond.com
A Note from the President

Well, what an interesting time I have had over the past six weeks in my work life; this has necessitated me devoting my awake time (plus more) to my career. 

Never the less, what a great production we are about to welcome to the stage in the next couple of weeks. Look for the YouTube clip (from Thursday 27 April) on the Nash Facebook page, and you will get some idea of the hard work that the team has been up to. If you have previously said that Shakespeare is not your cup of tea, then this version of The Taming of The Shrew might be for you…. think leather, think drinking bars…. and motor bikes …. “What is this?” you say. Well, come along and see for yourself.

Whilst I was not able to attend, I hear that Shakespeare’s birthday celebration went off very well and winners were grinners. (See more about this below.)

Not forgetting the great organisational skills of Brenda White and organising a short Shakespeare excerpt that was performed last weekend at the botanical gardens as part of the ‘Shakespeare in the Gardens’ day.

Hope to see you around. Please remember that Nash is a community based theatre company; we only survive by the patronage that you provide in attending the productions we stage. Please encourage your friends to attend a performance of The Taming of the Shrew.

• Phil Carney

Dates for your diary:

Social evenings at Nash:
Saturday 1st July - Play readings – Do you have a play to submit for a rehearsed reading?
Saturday 21st October - Trivia Night

Quizzes about all things Will, fun prizes for the winners, yummy food to share, a chance to concoct Shakespearean sayings, the Taming of the Shrew soundtrack playing in the background. We did the Bard proud on his birthday.

Time to take photos of the partygoers: “Strike a Shakespearean pose!” exclaimed the photographer. So, we did.
Thank you, Hazel Mepham, for organising Will’s birthday celebration.
WHAT TO DO WHEN DIRECTING THE SHREW?

“[Taming of the Shrew] is one vile insult to womanhood and manhood from the first word to the last.” – George Bernard Shaw

When the Nash Theatre Committee first broached with me directing Taming of the Shrew I can remember the initial panic. The theme of the season is ‘Laughter is the best medicine’. My brief was to ensure the play was funny. Yet Shrew is a play that I, and many others, find extremely problematic.

Why problematic? Well. Petruchio’s “reign” looks an awful lot like domestic abuse. Kat’s “shrewdom” consists of a couple of temper tantrums, and the response to them feels frighteningly out of proportion. Dowry negotiations make up a longer word count than most of the wooing and romance scenes. The ending rings of defeat and tragedy, not triumph – a group of men placing bets over who has the most obedient wife, and openly mocking them. The whole play viewed without any irony in a contemporary context can be cold, dark, and misogynistic. That’s not just a modern reading! Even historically it has caused consternation. Shakespeare’s own successor as playwright for the King’s Men, John Fletcher, in 1611 wrote his own sequel to the play called The Tamer Tamed. In it, Petruchio remarries after Katharina dies – and is in term “tamed” by his new wife. Shakespeare wasn’t even dead and the critics were circling!

The thing is, despite the problems, Shrew actually is funny. Shakespeare’s dialogue crackles in the scenes of wooing, the wordplay is phenomenal, and the disguise comedy is on point. The chemistry between Kat and Petruchio in their first encounter is palpable – it’s one of Shakespeare’s greatest comic duologues. The problematic ending of the play is offset by a portrayal of romantic equals in the early phases. So the great challenge of the director then, is to find the balance. Forget the shrew – how do you tame the misogyny?

For me, it started with a few core considerations. For a play about gender and femininity, there are only three female roles in it. I wanted to recast certain roles as women in order to bring gender parity to the cast. I started with Baptista, traditionally the doddering father, unable to deal with his independent daughter and eager to marry her off. This automatically meant that some traditional patriarchal notions took on a matriarchal tone, and raised more questions.

Why would a mother be so eager to sell off her daughters? Besides the historical context, where else might we find a culture that would require such a careful navigation of partnerships and alliances?

Cue the Godfather theme. I teach and study film and television, and crime cinema is a passion of mine. The concept of Baptista as a criminal matriarch quickly became the centre of the show. And if there’s an area of the criminal underworld where matriarchal values are on display, it’s in Biker gangs. Women are empowered in a unique way, and traditional notions of femininity are recast. Alongside the crime films, I also found inspiration in the biker exploitation films of the 1960’s. Tales of
revenge, violence, and strong women. Movies like *She-Devils on Wheels, Hellicats, and Hell’s Belles* provided a look and feel for some of the action and publicity. Following this, I systematically reviewed every character and found multiple instances where characters could easily be female. We finished with complete gender parity.

So we have a biker bar, strong women who run it, and competing criminals hoping to make an alliance by marrying the more pleasant, amiable daughter Bianca. Yet there was still the ending of the script, and of course the continuing problem of "consent". If I’m setting the play in a modern context, Kat and Bianca must be able to give some form of consent; otherwise we undermine one of the simplest and most fundamental forms of respect that women deserve. I ensured we saw our characters making their own choices, but in order to give them a motivation for making them…

Here finally we reach my concept for the ending of the show. You may find it controversial. Certainly, it’s a twist on the traditional ending of *Taming of the Shrew*. We eschewed the “Christopher Sly” prologue in favour of a non-verbal one of our own devising, and gave our own ending. Interestingly, when viewed holistically, the play is now really Baptista’s tale. Our twist on the ending is far from a feminist rewriting of the text, but borrows more from the influences I previously mentioned. Indeed, none of Shakespeare’s text has been altered. Love it or hate it, be sure to let me know at the bar after the show!

So, there you have it. Our production of *Taming of the Shrew* is part criminal fable, part biker exploitation, part screwball comedy, and all Shakespeare. We’ve worked hard to make it really funny, and prove that laughter is indeed the best medicine – or at least second to a good shot of bad whisky.

Along the journey we’ve had amazing rehearsals; the cast are doing an incredible job bringing the show to life. As the whole show will be set inside The Black Widows Bar (minus a few side-trips to Petruchio’s house), we’ve been getting accustomed to a box set with some fantastic work on an actual bar set piece, put together by the brilliant Alan Whyte. We’ve got a cracking soundtrack in the show as well! Lots of great rock tracks from the 70s and 80s. We took some time to perform a few excerpts on the 23rd of April at the Mt Coot-tha Botanic Gardens ‘Shakespeare in the Gardens’ festival, and received great feedback from an enraptured audience. And then there was our photo shoot at Victory and Indian Motorcycles Brisbane, where the wonderful staff there welcomed us in on a Saturday morning to sit on some of the beautiful machines, and get photographed by Nash regular and general wunderkind Stuart Crisp.

In the meanwhile, have a look at our video trailer, and be sure to book your tickets now!

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Hz1dwJxWyac&feature=youtube

• Jason Nash
CAST REQUIRED

Female Roles
Lady Windermere: 20s – early 30s, strong comedic and dramatic actress for this lead role
The Duchess of Berwick: 50s, largely comic role, a society gossip
Mrs Erlynne: 40s, wronged woman seeking a path back into society
Parker, the house keeper: any age, must be able to carry a tray...
Agatha Carlisle: 18 – 25yo single debutante, perhaps a little past her best
Lady Plymdale, Lady Stutfield, Lady Jedburgh, Mrs Cowper-Cowper: 40s to 70s, socialites
Rosalie, the maid: 18 - 25

Male Roles
Lord Windermere: 40s, strong dramatic role
Lord Darlington: 25 – 35, a friend of Lady Windermere
Augustus Lorton, Mr Dumby, Mr Cecil Graham, Mr Hopper: 40s to 70s, well to do gentlemen

NB. Auditions will be conducted at 10 minute intervals and by appointment only.

Preparation:
Prepare a 2 minute monologue of your choice; you may also be asked to complete a cold read.
Please note – no accent is required for the audition.

Date: Saturday 20th May
Time: 11am – 1pm and 1.30pm – 4.00pm
Place: The Play Shed
The Play Shed is next to the car park behind Merthyr Road Uniting Church, 52 Merthyr Rd New Farm.
Access is via the path next to the church or via Amity Street

Season: July 14th – August 5th 2017

Rehearsals: Usually two weeknights and one weekend rehearsal each week; additional for tech/production week.

To REGISTER for an audition please EMAIL nashtheatre4@bigpond.com with the subject ‘Lady W’s Fan Audition’ and containing your NAME, CONTACT DETAILS, ROLE you are auditioning for and whether you wish to audition in the morning or the afternoon. You will be notified by email of the time of your audition.

If you genuinely cannot get to the Saturday audition, please indicate your interest and we may be able to find an alternative time.
How long have you called Australia home, John? I arrived with my family in 1983; I've lived here in Brisbane ever since! I love Australia, Brisbane especially, for its wonderful climate and friends I have acquired or who have acquired me.

Your first experience of theatre? My first theatrical performance was in *Dido and Aeneas* at St Mary's College in Southampton, England. I played the part of a woman! I had a dress especially made. Borrowed "falsies" and a beautiful wig! I don't think my performance was great, but my appearance certainly was! All my school mates really fancied me, with testosterone powering them on! It actually scared the crap out of me!

You have an extensive CV in the performing arts. Can you tell us about some highlights? I have done Radio Theatre, which I love, but sadly Radio Drama seems to have sunk here in Australia. Radio Plays were my meat and drink in my early years and I think that millions of people are missing out on the wonderful presentations we used to listen to on "steam radio".

I returned to theatre some years ago, in *Sweet Road* at the Cement Box Theatre (now renamed after the great Geoffrey Rush). It was a wonderful play, and still is of course! From that time to the present I have been busy and turned my interest to Film and Movie Making, which I adore doing.

I have been in three major feature movies; the most exciting of these was *Pirates of The Caribbean ~ Dead Men Tell No Tales* in which I was lucky enough to act next to Johnny Depp (swoon!). As it is a Disney Production, we can all be safely assured that it will be a great movie (even if I don't make the final cut...)

I became deeply involved in Student Films at various Universities, some of which were really good productions. Three of them won National and International Awards. I have played at several theatres in and around Brisbane and had lots of fun, especially with many fine actors and actresses. Nash Theatre is pretty much my favourite space. I get excited by the high standards which Nash has set in the community - always with very imaginative programs. I finished off the last year in *The Fall and Rise of Mr Scrooge* at Nash, and it was one of the nicest shows I have been in.
Are there any experiences you’d rather forget?! I play harmonica reasonably well, and I was again on stage at St Mary’s College for the Annual School Concert. My favourite piece at that time was Trumpet Voluntary. I must have had a bout of "stage fright" because midway through the piece, I forgot how the rest of it went. So I played over and over the part that I had lost it on! I was shocked by the looks of boredom on the audience's faces, which were unhelpful to say the least! After what seemed an eternity, a large long hooked stick emerged from stage left, hooked around my neck and I was dragged off! That got the biggest applause of the night! Nowadays, my performances are pretty much the same I think!

In the photo above the cameraman was setting up one of the scenes in the movie Sleighing Santa. John was obviously Santa! This movie was a finalist in the Brisbane International Film Festival which featured David and Margaret of At the Movies fame on TV.

As for the clown shot, the movie was called Once Upon a Time; it was directed by Robbie Porter. John makes a pretty scary clown, doesn’t he?

Is there something about you we don’t know? I manufacture my own product, “The Tipper’s Chalkie”, the most advanced Lawn Bowls Chalk Spray Marker; I am the only manufacturer in the world who offers a colour choice. I market my Chalkie Products in Australia and, after an approach by an American distributor in 2016, exclusively in the USA and Canada.

So, John, what’s next for you? I am currently in final rehearsals for The Taming of The Shrew directed by Jason Nash for Nash. This play promises to be a massive hit with audiences! I am already pencilled in for Centenary Theatre’s production in June/July, so I will continue having fun!

Want to become a member of Nash Theatre?

The benefits include discounted tickets for shows and drinks at the bar. Membership for an Adult costs just $22 a year; there are also couples and concession memberships available.

To join or renew your membership: please find all contact details at the end of this newsletter.
Director Sharon White, Musical Director Stuart Crisp, cast and crew.

A popular show – The Philadelphia Story was yar alright!

The prize-winners of the The Philadelphia Story raffle:

1. David Ball of Moorooka – Black ticket D32
2. Deanna Dryer of Cashmere – Black ticket D85
3. Susan Hetherington – Black ticket D29 (our friendly drama critic)

Vale Harry Millner

Harry and his wife Nancy were among the first members of Nash Theatre at Merthyr Road. In fact, Nancy directed our first production in the new venue, a locally-written play, Bogey, Where are You? and Harry built the set and acted as Stage Manager. Whatever Nancy undertook, you would be sure to find Harry there to support her.

He was a valued and valuable member of the company and during his active time with us he wore several hats. For many years he served on the Committee.

He and Nancy regularly operated the bar and box office on opening nights.

Harry was also an artist and will always be remembered for creating memorable sets for plays such as Oedipus, Antigone, Macbeth, and The Fall of the House of Usher, using his artistry to paint beautiful backdrops.

Although Harry was no longer an active member behind the scenes in recent years, he was always a regular member of our audience, an activity just as valuable! Bums on seats always are!

Farewell, Harry. We shall always have pictures to remember you.

• Brenda White
Vale Greg Larsen

A former Nash member for many years, Greg Larsen passed away on March 23 at St Vincent’s Hospital in Lismore, after battling cancer for about 12 months.

Greg joined Nash when it was first formed at Nash St, Rosalie. I convinced him to come and help build the set for Patrick Pearce Hotel, and he was hooked. From there he contributed to countless shows, in every possible capacity. He was a warm and kind guy, with a passion for motorcycles and punk rock, and a very strong sense of fun.

He made his acting debut in Tomb with a View, where I can remember him staggering on stage with a kitchen knife buried in his back, staggering around and collapsing dead on the sofa. Perhaps not the greatest acting in history, but hilarious and great fun.

He stayed with Nash as we made the move to Balfour St, New Farm, and helped in one way or another on just about every show for about 5 years through the late 1990’s and early 2000’s. He really found his niche in all the backstage roles, and he turned his hand to everything you can imagine. Stage management, lights, sound, props, set construction. In fact, if a job needed doing, Greg was always there and willing to help.

Greg was also one of the hardest workers when we made the move to the old Valley Twin Cinemas. That was a huge job and required massive effort from lots of people, and Greg was always in the middle of it.

But my best memories of Greg with Nash were always sitting on the back steps at Balfour St after a show, sharing a drink with the cast and crew, sharing his warmth and mischievous sense of humour with everyone.

- Cam MacDiarmid

Call out for Front of House Box Office and Bar staff…

Want to help Nash? Score FREE tickets to see our next play, The Taming of the Shrew? Be part of Nash’s exciting ‘Laughter is the best medicine’ season?

Then volunteer to be part of the Front of House Box Office or Bar team!

Box Office staff help set-up the box office, greet patrons, sell tickets, programs and raffle tickets. For less than an hour’s work, you get a FREE ticket to see the show on a night of your choice – even the night you do the Front of House!

Bar staff assist in the set-up and operation of the bar (serving patrons, making tea and coffee, pouring wine, selling chocolates, crisps and cake) before the show and during the interval. While your time commitment is around the same as Box Office, your duties are spread out over the night. And for your efforts, a FREE ticket to see the show on a night of your choice.

To offer your services for a night email Brian White at b.white@uq.edu.au

Situation Vacant

Nash needs an Auditor to make sure all our finances are in order at the end of our financial year.

Our Treasurer keeps good records, so it’s not a particularly onerous job, but it is pretty vital! Could you help us?
Remember to take advantage of our meal deal with award winning Arriva.

For Nash patrons who use www.trybooking.com to purchase their tickets to a show, or have SuperFlex tickets (see below for more info).

Just show your ticket at the restaurant to receive:

- A half price entrée with any pasta or pizza main meal
- 20% off all beverages
- Bookings are essential on 3254 1599

Arriva is a quirky, down-to-earth Italian Restaurant offering the best authentic Italian cuisine in Brisbane, with a slightly modern twist. Just a short stroll from the theatre at 84 Merthyr Road, Arriva is the ideal spot for a delicious dinner before the show. Website: arrivarestaurant.com.au

Wait! There’s more! Present your Arriva docket at the Box Office for a free programme!

Nash Theatre Season Tickets are now better than ever! And we call them SuperFlex tickets

5-for-the-price-of-4
4-for-the-price-of-3
3-for-the-price-of-2

So how do they work? You choose how to use them:

For example: buy a SuperFlex 4-for-the-price-of-3
- to see 4 different plays
- or to see 1 play with 3 friends
- or to see 2 different plays with 1 friend
- or etc.etc. Your choice!

You can buy any time, but please note all SuperFlex tickets for the 2017 season will expire on 31st December 2017.

How? Email nashtheatre4@bigpond.com

or phone (07) 3379 4775

or buy the tix at the Box Office

or buy online at www.trybooking.com/178316 or www.trybooking.com/KDUI

SuperFlex ticket holders can also take advantage of the meal deal at

Please see full details above.
2017 SEASON
Laughter is the best medicine

Lady Windermere’s Fan
By Oscar Wilde
Directed by Greg Scurr
14 July – 5 August

La Cage aux Folles
Book by Harvey Fierstein
Lyrics and Music by Jerry Herman
Directed by Leo Bradley
Musical Director Stuart Crisp
22 September – 14 October

Calendar Girls
By Tim Firth
Directed by Brenda White
17 November – 9 December

New Farm Nash Theatre Inc. Committee

President: Phil Carney
Vice-President: Brenda White
Treasurer: Brian White
Committee members:
Hazel Mepham
Jonathan Collins
Susie Williams
Brenda Keith-Walker

Patron: Cr Vicki Howard

Contacting Nash

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