



## Newsletter

**Wishing you all the very best wishes for the festive season...**

What a year 2015 has been for Dural Musical Society. Both our productions were highly successful, with each receiving rave reviews. It was a year where the younger members of the Society had an opportunity to shine. **“West Side Story”** was a great show for teenagers and young adults – supported by only four adult roles. It was also an opportunity to put together a ‘larger than usual’ musical ensemble, something essential for a show of this calibre. Leo Dent did an absolutely marvellous job pulling together the small orchestra. Kate and Chrissy O’Neill were at their usual high standard when it came to the choreography, and Phil O’Connor staged the fight sequences. As Director I couldn’t have been more proud of the whole team! Casting the show saw the Society gain a significant number of new members – with a lot of them taking on major roles in the production. To quote the review by Neil Litchfield of Stage Whispers:

*“If you’re into trendy theatre-speak you might well call Dural Musical Society’s West Side Story ‘Immersive’ theatre... The thrust staging gives immediacy to this classic musical based on Shakespeare’s Romeo and Juliet, reset amidst 1950s raced-based gang conflicts on New York’s West Side.... Dural Musical Society punches above its weight, displaying inventiveness and originality within their budgetary and venue limitations.”*

DMS then put together the delightful children’s story **“Snow White and the Seven Dwarves”** for our October season. This was a pantomime enjoyed by all the family, relatives and friends as well as a lot of the general public, including a large group from one of the retirement villages. Again, of interest, was that “Snow White” strongly featured the Junior DMS young members in the cast - the show was also directed, choreographed and musically directed by a team of young adults – all experienced DMS performers themselves, yet all in their early twenties. Casting the show was very difficult, with a very large number of people turning up to audition for a limited number of roles. After extensive deliberation by the audition panel we came up with a highly motivated cast who delighted audiences. The double casting of the seven dwarfs and the trainee fairy produced two teams of motivated and talented young people.

*“Snow White and the Seven Dwarves” is simply delightful. For me, the parents and grandparents around me and especially for the little ones, it was the best of what community theatre can be. Energetic, well-rehearsed, happy ... and friendly from the moment you meet the Box Office staff on the way in. The ushers could give the big city venues a lesson in how to help patrons. Their compassion and helpful attitude for parents with strollers, the elderly and excitable fairy princesses gives that rare, elusive atmosphere of being in a community that cares.” (Review: Judith, Sydney Arts Guide)*

In November, we ran auditions for our May 2016 show, the hilarious musical **“A Funny Thing Happened on the way to the Forum”**. We welcome Phil O’Connor back to DMS as Director – some of you may remember when Phil last directed a show for us, the highly acclaimed production of **“Guys & Dolls”**. He is joined by Chrissy O’Neill as Choreographer and Julieanne Patmore who will be our Musical Director and pianist. **“Forum”**, as it is commonly known, is a delightfully funny musical with music and lyrics by Stephen Sondheim, and book by Burt Shevelove and Larry Gelbart. Inspired by the farces of the ancient Roman playwright Plautus (251–183 BC), this musical tells the story of a slave named Pseudolus and his attempts to win his freedom by helping his young master woo the girl next door. The plot displays many classic elements of farce, including puns, the slamming of doors, cases of mistaken identity (frequently involving characters disguising themselves as one another), and satirical comments on social class. The musical’s original 1962 Broadway run won several Tony Awards, including Best Musical and Best Author (Musical). Rehearsals commence early in February, so keep an eye out on our website for details of performances.

Also in November, the DMS Christmas party was organised along with a showing of the **“Snow White”** video for the cast and crew, and gave us a chance to catch up a few weeks after the show’s final curtain. We finished the year with a group of us singing carols at a retirement village at Kenthurst. A special ‘thank you’ must go to Kate O’Neill for organising the event, Julieanne Patmore for pulling together the carols and Christmas songs, and also playing the piano, and, of course, the carol singers – Stephanie Quaglia, Natasha Markham, Rebecca Dare, Evelyn Kiefel, Chelsea Widdicombe, Judy Clarke, Julie Scargill, Angela Williams and Daryl Osborne.

In the coming year we are looking at something new - running a One Act Play festival between our May and October productions – the details will be posted on our website over the Christmas/New Year break. Also for your calendar is the comedy we will stage in October – a very funny play titled **“Nana’s Naughty Knickers”**. This year the committee has worked hard to deliver two quality shows, and they should be congratulated on the work they have done. Their commitment to the Society goes without saying. In closing I would like to say one further ‘thank you’ - to our sponsors and audiences – you are the lifeblood of the Society and without you the Society would not exist.

We can all look forward to an exciting 2016, so please join us.

Eddie Bruce, President  
Dural Musical Society