



CONVENOR'S CORNER

Welcome

The Winter months always signal fresh activity in theatres - Broadway opens its new show seasons, the West End prepares for its final year shows and the Gold Coast, S.E. Qld and Northern NSW companies/schools are all busy with a big selection of new productions! The Awards Judges this year are busier than ever with several new participants presenting a terrific collection of shows - as usual, we urge all participants to visit their colleagues out of town to see what they are doing...

Judges have noticed of late that many companies are using digital programs - this is fine but our judges really need to have something in their hands at the time of attendance. We are including a request with all confirmations of judges' attendance now, for a black and white program, printed, to be given to judges before the show starts.

We are also seeing that some companies are using double casts/alternative actors in some roles. Our policy has always been that judges must all see the same actors (otherwise actors are being assessed against each other in the same role.) We would respectfully request that companies using double or alternative casts let us know in advance so that judges will see the same actors - it is up to companies to let us know when their "main" casts are performing. Where an actor is being replaced due to illness judges should be told.

We have been fortunate to have the Australian touring production of ELVIS at HOTA on the Gold Coast this month - it's great to see another big show on that stage, particularly when the actor playing Colonel Tom Parker is IAN STENLAKE, who has been the Awards Presentation Night Compere many times! I also caught SUNSET BOULEVARD in Melbourne a couple of weeks ago with SYLVIE PALADINO (instead of Sarah Brightman) in the lead. She was fantastic, the show is highly recommended. TINA is coming to Brisbane soon so we have much to look forward to as the year gallops on. See you in a foyer soon!

Kate Peters Convenor and Founder - Gold Palm Theatre Awards



Friends of the Arts Foundation Education Grant Recipient

Meet 16 year old dancer, Kadelle Smith.

"It was my dream to attend this wonderful school and Friends of the Arts Foundation has helped to make this dream a reality for me. I am very grateful for the support of the Foundation and as the only Australian at Académie Princesse Grace in Monaco, I continue to strive to be a wonderful ambassador for the Gold Coast and Australia."

Kadelle will train for the next 3-4 years before she hopes to join a company in Europe or USA.

2024 - What we have already seen!

DECEMBER 2023

Included in 2024 judging

Brisbane Arts Theatre
EBENEZER

JANUARY

Ballina Players
THE LION KING Jnr.

MATES Theatre Genesis
FARMER WILL SWAP
COMBINE HARVESTER FOR WIFE

FEBRUARY

ROAR Academy Redcliffe
SHREK

Gold Coast Little Theatre
THE GRADUATE

Spotlight Theatrical Company
SOUND OF MUSIC

Brisbane Arts Theatre
WHEN THE RAIN STOPS FALLING

MARCH

Ballina Players
ARE YOU BEING SERVED?

ROAR Academy Redcliffe
JOSEPH & HIS AMAZING
TECHNICOLOR DREAMCOAT

Palm Beach Currumbin State High School
THE WEDDING SINGER

Lindisfarne Anglican College
MAMMA MIA!

APRIL

Lindisfarne Anglican Grammar School
MAMMA MIA

Gold Coast Little Theatre
WAIT UNTIL DARK

Ghostlight Theatre Co.
BLOOD BROTHERS

ROAR Academy Redcliffe
FINDING NEMO Jnr.

Spotlight Theatrical Company
BURN

Bangalow Theatre Company
SPEAKING IN TONGUES

Brisbane Arts Theatre
FRANKENSTEIN

Redland Museum and Theatre Redlands
SNOWED UP WITH A DUCHESS

MAY

Ipswich Musical Theatre
LEND ME A TENOR

ROAR Academy Redcliffe
THE LOVELY BONES

Spotlight Theatrical Company
DOG FIGHT

Tugun Theatre Company
THE HAUNTING

Emmanuel Anglican College Ballina
MARY POPPINS

Village Hall Players
37 POSTCARDS

Sky Productions
FROZEN Jnr.



To find out more - Click on the company name to visit their website.
2024 - and What is Still to Come

JUNE

[Ballina Players](#)
THE ADDAMS FAMILY

[Gold Coast Little Theatre](#)
HAIR

[Ghostlight Theatre Co.](#)
[Redcliffe Musical Theatre](#)
THE EXORCIST

[Spotlight Theatrical Company](#)
PETER PAN

[Theatre Redlands](#)
MOTHER AND SON

[Drill Hall Theatre](#)
SECRET BRIDESMAID'S BUSINESS

[Queensland Musical Theatre](#)
MY FAIR LADY

JULY

[Coorparoo Secondary College](#)
THE BUTLER DID IT!

[Redcliffe Musical Theatre](#)
THE CURIOUS INCIDENT OF THE DOG
IN THE NIGHT TIME

[Spotlight Theatrical Company](#)
GHOST

[Top Hat Productions](#)
THE PICCADILLY OLDE TIME MUSIC HALL

[St Andrew's Lutheran College](#)
WE WILL ROCK YOU

[Switch Up Productions](#)
THE DROWSY CHAPERONE

[NAPA](#)
ROCK OF AGES

[Drill Hall Theatre](#)
20 MINUTES OF FAME

AUGUST

[Ballina Players](#)
JACK THE RIPPER

[Gold Coast Little Theatre](#)
LORD OF THE FLIES

[Ghostlight Theatre Co.](#)
LITTLE SHOP OF HORRORS

[Spotlight Theatrical Company](#)
A STREETCAR NAMED DESIRE

[Tugun Theatre Company](#)
THE CEMETERY CLUB

SEPTEMBER

[Ghostlight Theatre Co.](#)
THE GIRL ON THE TRAIN

[Ipswich Musical Theatre](#)
GUYS AND DOLLS

[Redcliffe Musical Theatre](#)
WEST SIDE STORY

[Spotlight Theatrical Company](#)
Senior Musical Theatre
CRY BABY

[Village Hall Players](#)
OLIVER

OCTOBER

[Spotlight Theatrical Company](#)
Senior Musical Theatre
CHARLIE AND THE CHOCOLATE FACTORY
Senior Drama
HOW TO VOTE

[Theatre Redlands](#)
PROPPING IT UP

**NOVEMBER -
up to final judging weekend**

[Ballina Players](#)
9 TO 5

[Gold Coast Little Theatre](#)
HONEYMOON IN VEGAS

[Ghostlight Theatre Co.](#)
THE NIGHT OF THE LIVING DEAD

[ROAR Academy Redcliffe](#)
RUDOLPH
THE RED-NOSED REINDEER

[Spotlight Theatrical Company](#)
A CHRISTMAS CAROL &
THE CURIOUS INCIDENT OF THE DOG
IN THE NIGHT TIME

[Tugun Theatre Company](#)
THE 39 STEPS

[Bangalow Theatre Company](#)
INTO THE WOODS

[Redcliffe Musical Theatre](#)
RUDOLPH THE RED-NOSED REINDEER

[Queensland Musical Theatre](#)
MARY POPPINS

NOVEMBER/ DECEMBER
Included in 2025 judging

In this edition of Stage Whispers, various Awards ceremonies from around Australia were featured, including **Gold Palm Theatre Awards**. Here's what they had to say: "Wicked leading lady **Courtney Monsma** was the special guest presenter at the Gold Palm Theatre Awards held at Dracula's Theatre Restaurant on the Gold Coast.

Convenor Kate Peters said, "Live theatre is indeed strong on the Gold Coast, even without many international performers who have returned overseas or to cruise ships. In 2023 we saw a lot of new work, much of which was excellent.

Musicals are perennially popular, with Spotlight Theatre Company's **Gypsy** a huge success."Spotlight was awarded the Gold Palm Award for earning the most nominations, from the field of candidates stretching from Brisbane to Northern NSW. "Schools and colleges are producing high quality entertainment, with many of the performers going on to courses at Brisbane's Conservatorium," Peters said.

The outstanding community theatre production of the year went to the Bangalow Theatre Company for their season of *The Beast* by Eddie Perfect.

Also in the same edition, Stage Whispers published a Director's Diary piece on *The Beast*.

THE BEAST | OCT 2023

Written by Eddie Perfect Directed by Anouska Gammon



The Bangalow Theatre Company in northern NSW recently won five Gold Coast Palm Awards, including best community theatre production, for their season of *The Beast* by Eddie Perfect. Director Anouska Gammon explains how cast and venue challenges were conquered to produce the play in six weeks.

Our little company usually produces musicals, but I had my sights on this brilliant piece which I knew would resonate with local crowds. The black comedy plonks itself in the middle of upper-middle class Australia. Three married couples living in Melbourne, all seeking a more holistic life, move to a tree change existence that centres itself in organic orgasm delight. Writer Eddie Perfect has a knack for poking his audience in just the right way, feeding them humour to shade the truthful and exposing themes, while building to a crescendo of unravelling chaos.

Continued...

The Bangalow theatre Company is run by a group of volunteers passionate about creating innovative, thought-provoking and engaging theatre. With sell-out shows for each season, and multiple awards, the company has survived the pandemic, and is thriving. We had only six weeks and twelve rehearsals to prepare for opening night due to cast reshuffling. Luckily the final cast took to the script like fish to water. We also had enough females audition to allow for a double cast. This meant we needed more rehearsal time but the double roles kept each male on their toes, as they needed to respond to each female differently. The females themselves were also constantly finding their version of the character, and this little bit of competitiveness was just the right energy for the work. No one felt safe, or too comfortable, which added to the discomfort within the writing.

Another hurdle the company came up against was our venue. The initial space for *The Beast* was a shed on a local farm, which seemed like a great idea at the time. Placing the work in the environment which the play is set felt like a bold, and cost-effective choice. However, as rehearsals began we realised that the shed would only allow for 50 patrons, we would need to bring in porta loos, there was lack of a back stage area, no food/bar options and if it rained, we would need a marquee. The shed itself was up a very long driveway, with little parking. We investigated having live cattle around the shed, and one live calf in the show, to submerge our audience in the play through natural sounds and realism, however this was not legally allowed.

So, we quickly needed to find another performance space four weeks out from the show. Luckily, we had found another venue option - the Newrybar Hall - great in-between shed and theatre option for us, with a toilet as well! Rehearsals continued (in a different hall space) and tickets went on sale. Things were coming together except for one last thing - the cow. The finale of the first act is a monumental moment of the play, where the three couples decide to celebrate their new lives in the countryside with a fabulous degustation lunch. They plan to met a local farmer to kill one of his cows, which the group will then prepare to eat. Head to tail eating it is called. So very sustainable. However, the farmer does not turn up, and so the couples take it on themselves to kill the cow. This, of course, goes horribly wrong, and ends up being a full-blown cow massacre leaving the characters traumatised. We considered a puppet cow, the use of silhouettes, projection, another performer, a fake toy cow and the list went on.

Finally, a more simplistic idea formed that did not involve the sight of a cow, but rather the blood of a cow. We went into full engineering mode to create our cow blood device. This took man trips to hardware stores, pool shops, conversations with many tradies and battery experts. We invested in a dog activated sprinkler, and tested other devices. Then, after many hours testing pressure and consistency for the blood, we made a device that was motorised and activated by the actors pressing a button. The blood (a concoction of red food colouring, chocolate sauce and water) was kept in a large tub on stage masked as a hay bale. Blood travelled through a hose with a spray nozzle, and hidden under fake grass. As the actors either tried to save or kill the cow, the button could be pushed, the blood would spray, and with the combination of horrific cow sounds and lighting, we had our scene. It was a triumph, and left each audience shocked, yet laughing.

The Beast, as meaty (pardon the pun) as it was, will be a difficult act to follow for BTC. there were times when it did feel all too difficult. Six weeks from first script read to opening night with a group of volunteers, a very low budget, and no home to rehearse/perform in.

There was also a massive job of cleaning up during each interval for our crew, and for our costume lady, who needed to continually wash blood ridden clothes for each show. *The Beast*, as meaty (pardon the pun) as it was, will be a difficult act to follow for BTC. There were times when it did feel all too difficult. Six weeks from first script read to opening night with a group of volunteers, a very low budget, and no home to rehearse/perform in. But perhaps there is something in this. Something in the restriction which aids creativity. Sometimes having too much time, and too much space creates more questions and allows for more opportunities to conflict. One thing is for sure, it is the work of a formidable team of passionate people, and the support of our local theatre loving community which does keep BTC moving forward.



Applications to our Gift Fund close 30 June 2024!

If you or someone you know is a young artist striving to reach new heights, we encourage you to apply for the 2024 Gift Fund. This is a wonderful opportunity to gain financial assistance to help you achieve higher levels of skill, whether in ballet, fine art, music, acting, writing etc.

About the Gift Fund

The Friends of the Arts Foundation Gift Fund was established to nurture emerging artists by providing them with the financial support they need to excel. Formally launched on December 18, 2006, the Fund has since been bolstered by private donations, including a generous bequest from Beverly and Jock McIlwain. Our dedicated Gift Fund Management Committee oversees the trust to ensure that annual grants are provided to deserving artists on the Gold Coast.

Why Apply?

Receiving a grant from the Gift Fund can be a transformative experience for young artists. Previous winners have reported significant advancements in their careers, thanks to the support of the Gift Fund.

What Previous Winners Say:

"This grant is enabling me to embark on an enriching journey to London to immerse myself in the world of Shakespeare, Musical Theatre and all things Arts." Chelsea

"It was my dream to attend this wonderful school and Friends of the Arts Foundation has helped to make this dream a reality for me." Kadelle

To apply, visit our [website](#) and complete the application form by 30 June 2024.

We look forward to reviewing your submissions and supporting the next generation of Gold Coast artists.

[CLICK HERE FOR MORE INFORMATION](#)

HOTA HOME OF THE ARTS

DRACULA'S



GOLD PALM JUDGES
2024



Mrs Kate Peters
Convener and Founder



Ms Kirri Adams



Ms Gai Byrne



Mrs Judy Gadloff



Ms Steffanie Gowland



Ms Del Halpin



Mr Chris Hawkins



Mr David Huddy



Ms Katrina Lardner



Ms Tracey Kriz



Ms Laney McLean



Mr Andrew Ross Graham



Mr Mark Turpin