



Not the Programme Notes

*Being sundry items of interest about our upcoming productions and the arts in general
April 2009*

Stop Press

The big question in my mind when I heard of Janine Oliver's ambition to perform *The Rise and Fall of Little Voice* was "Can Janine and Valley Artists pull it off?"

The answer is an unqualified YES THEY CAN.

By the time you read reviews of this production in OON, the production will be history, a comment on something that has happened.

Last week I attended a rehearsal of LV – I wanted some pre-show shots of the performance for this newsletter. I stayed longer than I had intended. This is outstanding theatre. It deserves a preview – so here it is.

It would be easy for an amateur production company to present this as an amusing comedy and let it go at that. The difference may well be in the character of Little Voice. Perhaps she could simply do impersonations of the singers she portrays, and that would work.. sort of. Personally I've had enough of Elvis impersonators and the like – every year we see that they are a dime a dozen. Little Voice delivers far more than this.

This is the story of a painfully shy young girl who has a passion for the famous singers in her father's record collection – singers whose stories have featured in previous newsletters. She doesn't imitate these singers – just for an instant, she becomes them. It doesn't really matter if she really sounds like them, or looks like them. What is important is that she projects that quality that made them stars. Then, on stage, you'll see them – and that's real theatre, and it's what happens in this production. Jodie Bawden is simply riveting.

The cast is outstanding. Emma Pogonoski, playing LV's awful mother, is just that - awful – (I mean that in the nicest way, Emma) – and very very funny. Craig Howe as her manipulative lover, probably underplays the role – which makes the role more sinister than it could be if over-acted. (Janine sees him as irrepressible and loveable – make up your own mind.) Fiona Burless (time to drop the Fi-Fi, this is serious), in her role as Sadie, is, as the script requires, a couple of sandwiches short of a picnic. As thick as two short planks – perhaps four, maybe even eight thick planks. That you will have to see. Mal Goudie is the owner and compere of the rather dodgy nightclub in which LV makes her debut – and is absolutely authentic in this role.

Now I only attended part of a rehearsal, so I can't comment on other roles (ie Tim Goudie). But these players had me captivated. I'm tempted to fill the page with clichés – you'll laugh, you'll cry and so on. You will. The stage crew, who must have seen this I don't know how many times, seemed to be as captivated as I was by what was happening on stage.

On the days following the premiere this Friday, LV will be the talk of the valley. People will want to see it again. I'll buy the DVD for sure, but that won't be the same. I plan to see it at least twice, because this production contains some magical moments that need to be seen live. If you miss it, you've missed it.

So my advice is to book now, and spread the word. Maybe every performance will not be sold out, but it should be.

For tickets, visit <http://valleyartists.org/index.php?page=tickets>, or Wollombi or Laguna stores. Now!

And to our sponsors: This would not, could not, happen without you. Enjoy the show, and what your support has allowed to happen. Thank you!

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Sponsorship enables us to bring you a level of performance which rivals the top theatre companies in Australia. Sponsorship allows us to send our youth and others on performing arts scholarships to NIDA or ATYP. It allows us to run educational workshops throughout the year for many locals. We also help by supplying lighting/sound gear and technicians for other community events.

We are a not-for-profit organisation where all funds from whatever source are committed to the administration of the organisation and the staging of productions. None of us is paid for our labour.

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