



# Not the Programme Notes

*Being sundry items of interest about our upcoming productions and the arts in general  
October 2009 (2)*

Special preview...

## Ugly Duckling is a Winner!



It's an anxious moment, producing a show, knowing that you have a responsibility to maintain the very high standard that has become the norm for Valley Artists. Just ask Cordelia Howell, who is the director of *Ugly Duckling*, opening this Friday at Laguna Hall!

As the editor of this newsletter, I also feel a bit nervous - it's my job to help market the show, and I like to give our readers an honest idea of what the show is about. We get enough spin from other sources.

So both Cordelia and I were a little anxious. This show is a bit different to previous Valley Artists productions. With the exception of the *Barber Shop Boys*, this is a young and fairly inexperienced cast, and A A Milne, I know, is seen by many as an author of appeal only to children.

The big question - will our program be suitable for adults?

Last night I watched the dress rehearsal. The answer to the question is definitely YES!

*King Hilary* features a very young cast, and is an enactment of Milne's poem - you can find it in *Now We Are Six*. A fun piece, acted with surprising skill, and a great way to open the night.

Then the *Barber Shop Boys*. Modesty forbids me using too many superlatives, but... *Il Divo* - eat your hearts out. There are one or two well known local identities who may surprise you with what they do under a full moon.

But the night is about *The Ugly Duckling*, and I laughed till I cried. It's great credit to the young cast (pictured above) that they can play such a funny piece without overacting - their masterly restraint makes it all the funnier. Perhaps A A Milne is actually more an author for adults, and the cast don't realise how very funny it is!

Once the word gets around, this will be a sellout. Get in early, because you just might want to see it again.

Bookings at Wollombi and Laguna stores, or via our website at [www.valleyartists.org](http://www.valleyartists.org).

Coming up...

## Our Sponsor's Dinner

November 14

Yes, I know it's Prince Charles's birthday, but please consider your priorities. A toast to the Prince will be optional.

Isn't it true that throughout history, the arts have depended on sponsors? Valley Artists is no different.

Thanks to our sponsors, we have been able to develop a standard of excellence in our productions that keeps our ever expanding audiences coming back for more, and at the same time provide scholarships and workshops that have helped many aspiring and now successful artists. Have a look at *Ugly Duckling* and be proud. These fine young people are part of the artistic community that makes our Valley a special place.

Every year, to say thank you to our sponsors, we arrange a special night - the annual sponsors' dinner. And what a night it is!

Invitations will be in the mail this week. I'm not allowed to pre-empt the official invitation, but I can give you a clue on what to wear on the night. Go to <http://www.howtomakeatoga.info/>. If you scroll through the pictures, you might even get to glimpse the editor.

If you're not a sponsor, and would like to become one, it's not too late. Call Tim Williams on 4998 8244, and he'll provide the details.

We'll look forward to welcoming you all to a night of fine entertainment on November 14.

In the news...

### Council slammed for over-50s sex guide

Council officials in Manchester have been criticised for spending £8,000 of taxpayers' money on a sex guide for the over-50s.

The illustrated 47-page booklet offers tips for those seeking to spice up their marriage or looking for new love after divorce. It contains tips on how to use a condom, discover your erotic side and combat impotency problems, reports the Daily Mail.

Critics say that, instead of paying for a sex guide, the council should concentrate on improving routine services such as schools, rubbish collection and public amenities.

Tory MP Ann Widdecombe said: "I think this guide is an incredible waste of money. If someone hasn't learnt how to have sex by the time they have turned 50 then a booklet is certainly not going to help."

The booklet is based on information gleaned from focus groups for the over-50s. It includes real-life experiences and information provided by pensioners celebrating their sex lives.

One, called Pam, 68, writes: "We're more experienced, more mature and more confident and we're able to talk about what we want which makes us better lovers."

Martin Rathfelder, 57, of patient watchdog Manchester LINK, said he was 'all in favour' of the guide which could teach his generation things they didn't know. "It's important there isn't a taboo over this. Some of us do foolish things and might not feel entirely at ease if we're the oldest person in the sexual health clinic."

Valley Artists wishes to emphasise that the council in question is Manchester, and not Cessnock. Cessnock City Council have supported Valley Artists for many years, and we value that support. However, if they have some good advice to offer...