



# Not the Programme Notes

*Being sundry items of interest about our upcoming productions and the arts in general  
Christmas 2010 - Issue 15*



## Christmas Greetings

from

## Valley Artists

2010 - A very good year

“We have sampled the simple delight that being in a theatre can give a whole audience. Together we are experiencing the fizzing and utterly good-natured atmosphere that links us when we are all taking pleasure from what is happening on the stage. It’s one of those times when strangers smile idiotically at each other.”

These are the words of theatre critic Michael Connor reviewing a Sydney Theatre Company production (*Quadrant* December 2010), but they describe so many Valley Artists productions so appropriately that I wish I had said it first. Especially after seeing *The Twits*, our end of year production.

The cast of 18, and the crew of 32, were joined by a crowd of un-named supporters who fed them and minded the kids and generally participated in bringing it all together. All unpaid, doing it for the love of it and a willingness to do their bit for our community. Financially, it couldn’t have happened without the generosity of our sponsors.

Our charter at Valley Artists is to contribute to the community by providing top entertainment, encouraging local talent of all ages and in all areas of theatre. Giving everybody the opportunity to participate in the wonderful world of theatre. In which, I’m sure you will agree, we succeed beyond expectation.

We’re already planning for 2011, and we’ll make some exciting announcements early in the new year.

Meanwhile: A big thank you to all our supporters, and our very best wishes for Christmas and the New Year. Relax and enjoy the holiday season – we’ll be back!

Happy, happy Christmas, that can win us back to the delusions of our childish days; that can recall to the old man the pleasures of his youth; that can transport the sailor and the traveller, thousands of miles away, back to his own fire-side and his quiet home!

- Charles Dickens, *The Pickwick Papers*, 1836



## Another Christmas Poem

Bloody Christmas, here again.  
Let us raise a loving cup:  
Peace on earth, goodwill to men,  
And make them do the washing-up.

- Wendy Cope

## Superstitions



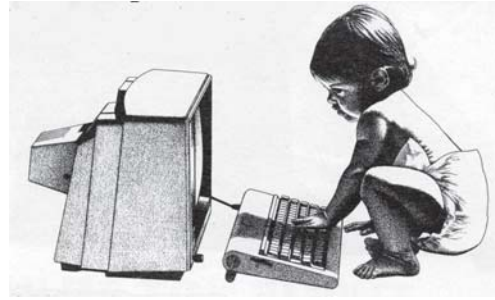
Many superstitions of the theatre are simply common sense. The strong lights onstage will reflect horribly from a mirror or mirrored surface, blinding the audience; thus, they are REALLY bad thing to have on a set. Similarly, flowers will wilt under such strong heat, so if placed on a set, they'll look a little pathetic after a night under hot lights.

If an actor whistles during rehearsals or in their dressing rooms during a play it is believed that the play will be doomed to failure and presumably the whistler will soon be out of work.

According to Kevin Robertson's *Dissertation on Theatre Superstitions*, "The reason for this superstition is as follows: before the advent of walkie-talkies or clear-coms, cues for theatre technicians were called with a sailor's whistle. Therefore, one who whistles in a theatre may, inadvertently, call a cue before it's time, setting all types of catastrophe into motion."

(Thanks to Rosie Glover, who provided notes on theatrical superstitions and sayings, used and to be used in our newsletter.)

I SAW IT ON THE INTERNET SO IT MUST BE TRUE!



LONDON (Reuters) – Britain's retailers are being forced to demand age-identification from shoppers seeking to buy Christmas crackers because of new health and safety legislation they have branded "daft."

Under the pyrotechnic articles (safety) regulations of August 2010, Christmas crackers have been classed as "category 1" fireworks, which means they have an age restriction of 16 and cashiers have to check the age of people buying them.

The majority of Britain's stores use a "challenge 25" policy for selling age-related products such as alcohol, tobacco and fireworks, meaning people who look under 25 are asked to prove they are old enough to buy.

"Busy shoppers with a lot on their minds will be understandably frustrated if they are asked to provide ID to buy a box of Christmas crackers," the British Retail Consortium (BRC) said in Wednesday.

Under the legislation, stores face financial penalties and individual cashiers fines of up to 5,000 pounds (\$7,848) and six months in prison for selling crackers to underage customers.

"It's the health and safety rules which have gone crackers and not retailers themselves," the BRC said.

Samuel Goldwyn wanted the rights to the plays of George Bernard Shaw. Shaw wanted more than Goldwyn was happy to pay. "Think of the millions of people who would get a chance to see your plays who would never see them," said Goldwyn. "Think of the contribution it would be to art."

"The trouble is, Mr Goldwyn," replied Shaw, "that you think of nothing but art and I think of nothing but money."