



## Not the Programme Notes

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

### A few words from our director



About 5 years ago I watched a film titled 'Little Voice'. It was funny, it was sad, it had fantastic music, and I was blown away by all the actors' performances. It was one of those movies where you are spellbound to the end and then just sit and let the credits wash over you.

In the film, the woman who played the character of Laura Hoff (*Little Voice*) was English actress Jane Horrocks. To my surprise *she actually sang* the songs of Shirley Bassey, Judy Garland, Marilyn Monroe, Edith Piaf, Gracie Fields and others. (I thought)...WOW!!!!

I knew Valley Artists could and should do this play. BUT, I had to find **the Voice** and the voice had to be someone who could commit her time and importantly possess the vocal ability to pull it off.

The talent in this area never ceases to amaze me... on our doorstep I found the voice - Jodie Bawden - born and bred in the Wollombi Valley.

Since October 2008, Jodie has been in voice/singing training with world renowned American Jazz singer Francine Bell. Retired and living on Lake Macquarie, Francine was persuaded by Jodie to give her lessons to make her sing like Edith Piaf and other legends in the show. Valley Artists was able to pay for these lessons through sponsorship kindly provided by individuals and local businesses. Thank you sponsors!!

OK, so I had the Voice, now I needed music. Was it to be live or recorded? It was suggested I contact Bucketty based musician, writer and composer Rick Turk (*composer of themes to Foreign Correspondent, Four Corners, and many movie scores and children's shows - [www.rickturk.com](http://www.rickturk.com)*). As busy as he is, Rick found the time to compile a medley of tracks for us. Malcolm Goudie, local musician and actor, has also done some recording.

**Emma Pogonoski**, plays the daunting role of LV's mother, Marie Hoff. Emma studied drama in Sydney from a Valley Artists sponsorship a few years ago and her approach to this role is exceptional.

**Fiona Burless** (aka Fifi La Boom) brings a special touch of comedy to her role of next door neighbour, Sadie.

Laguna school teacher, **Craig Howe**, treads the boards for the first time as the irrepressible, lovable Ray Say. (*Pssst - I think he's a natural, but don't tell him*).

**Malcolm Goudie**, not just a musician, plays dual roles as the Phone Man, and club owner Mr. Boo.

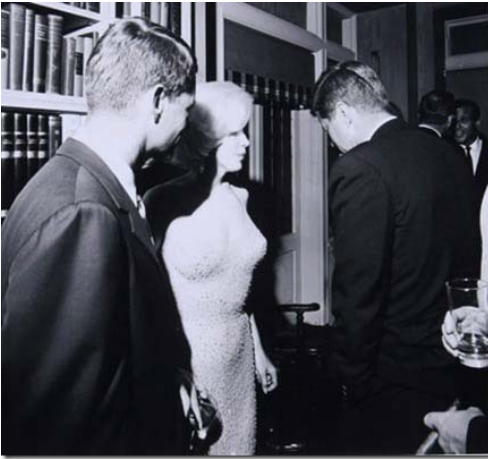
Just to keep it in the family, I cajoled Mal's son **Tim Goudie** to play Billy, the Phone Man's assistant. Billy becomes friends with LV and... well you will just have to wait and see.

Our technical crew includes - Stage Manager: Peter Fewtrell, Technical: Neville Newman, Tom Maurer & Darren Philip. Set Design: Giles Tester, Col & Darren Philip. Assistant Stage Manager: Lorraine Goudie, Props: Robbie Patterson, Costume: Lynda Marsh - and the list goes on. Producers are Leanne Bell and Lou Clarke, and Marketing Peter McCloy.

We are four weeks out from performance and I am truly inspired by the dedication of all who are involved. This is a winning show to kick off the year of entertainment by Valley Artists. You won't be disappointed.

Janine Oliver,  
Director

## Presidents Prefer Blondes



“Some men are following me,” says Marilyn Monroe to Groucho Marx in *Love Happy* (1950). “Really. I can’t understand why,” he replies.

Monroe perhaps gave a clue to why in an interview about her famous nude calendar photos: “The body is meant to be seen,” she said, “not all covered up”. When asked if she really had nothing on, Marilyn purred: “I had the radio on.”

Not every one was impressed by Marilyn. Nunnally Johnson famously declared “She has no charm, delicacy or taste. She’s just an arrogant little tail-twitcher who’s learned to throw sex in your face.”

In the opinion of Billy Wilder, “Marilyn was mean. Terribly mean. The meanest woman I have ever met around this town. I

have never met anybody as mean as Marilyn Monroe or as utterly fabulous on the screen.”

Marilyn starred in Wilder’s *Some Like it Hot* (1959) with Tony Curtis and Jack Lemmon. Curtis had no high opinion of her abilities. Wilder told Curtis that, in the famous seduction scene, he would have to be perfect every time – and he was. Wilder reckoned that with Marilyn in the two shot, there would be many takes, and Curtis would have to get it right every time, because the take when she got it right would be the one they would print. From this movie comes *I Wanna be Loved by You*.

On May 9, 1962, she attended the birthday celebration of President John F. Kennedy, where she sang Happy Birthday. Kennedy responded to her performance with the remark, “Thank you. I can now retire from politics after having had “Happy Birthday” sung to me in such a sweet, wholesome way.” You can catch this performance at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=k4SLSISmW74>

Marilyn’s final film was *The Misfits*, in which she starred with Clark Gable. Her husband Arthur Miller wrote the original screen play for her, but their marriage was disintegrating and they were divorced a week after the premiere. Within a year both stars were dead.

Of her death Billy Wilder observed “Hollywood didn’t kill Marilyn Monroe, it’s the Marilyn Monroes who are killing Hollywood.”

## The Little Sparrow - Edith Piaf



Did you see Marion Cotillard’s remarkable depiction of Edith Piaf in *La Vie en Rose*? If so, you already know much of her story.

In 1961, so crippled by illness that she could hardly stand, Piaf made her last public appearance at the Paris Olympia – reported as follows: “Her immense, infallible voice, which rose to the roof, carrying its enormous, authentic outcry of banal phrases of anguish over lost loves, and poignant despair of happiness that would never arrive. Ravaged, ill, bundled in her customary modest black dress, her pallid little moon face set in its sad, nocturnal smile, she tottered—her thin legs supporting her in faltering obedience to her courage—across the stage to the microphone, to which she clung, and then

her voice, that great remnant of her life, burst forth. Her rhythm was always like a beating pulse; she was the unassailable artist, raucously singing her *véridique* songs of truth about her own ancient class, the Paris poor.”

Within 18 months she died of cancer. Although she died in the south of France, her body was secretly moved to her apartment in Paris so that her fans would believe that is where she died. To this day there is confusion about the actual date of her death.

On the day after her death, her good friend Jean Cocteau also died, apparently of a heart attack provoked by the news of her passing. He had pre-recorded an epitaph for her, broadcast on Paris radio just an hour before he died: “She died as if consumed by the fire of her fame.”

Because of her lifestyle, she was forbidden a Mass by the archbishop of Paris, but more than 40,000 fans attended her farewell ceremony. Charles Aznavour, whose career she helped launch, recalls that her funeral procession was the only time since the end of WWII that Parisian traffic came to a complete halt. On that weekend, her records totally sold out in Paris – three hundred thousand of them.

If you are visiting Paris, you might think of visiting the Musee Edith Piaf at 5 rue Crespin du Gast. It's open by appointment only on Monday through Thursday – go to [www.paris.org/Musees/Piaf/info.html](http://www.paris.org/Musees/Piaf/info.html) - or phone 01-43-55-52-72.

The publicity says “A lifesize cardboard image of Piaf, dressed in a black dress ‘from her good days,’ stands near a seated life-sized teddy bear, a present from her dear Theo (husband number two). Her voice is constantly singing in the background as you explore... you will see tiny dresses, mostly form-fitting black but one a surprising bright red; clutch bags; a pair of her open-toed pumps (size 34); souvenir glasses from grand concerts in Paris and New York; letters to her from the likes of Maurice Chevalier (who once called her ‘a little bantamweight champion’); Marcel Cerdan’s (a boyfriend, considered a husband) boxing gloves; and the bear, who seems like a guardian angel. There is no admission charge. At the Musee Edith Piaf, you feel almost as if you’ve seen The Little Sparrow on stage. Almost.”

## Somewhere - Judy Garland



Who was Frances Gumm? Here's a clue – she starred in the first movie I ever saw. My grandmother took me, and the movie frightened me so much that I ran screaming out of the theatre. Well, I was very young.

Frances Gumm became Judy Garland, and the movie was *Wizard of Oz*, which I can now watch with total equanimity.

Judy was one of three sisters who always knew what she wanted to do – sing. Her older sisters were singing in a concert when three year old Judy (Frances at the time) walked on and sang Jingle Bells – not once, but five times.

When she was five all three sisters appeared on stage as the ‘Gumm Sisters’. George Jessel told Judy she was as pretty as ‘a garland of flowers’, which led to

her change of name – especially when their act was billed as the ‘Glum Sisters’. ‘Judy’ was inspired by Hoagy Carmichael’s song of the same name.

When her sisters married the act broke up, leaving Judy as a solo artist. She was spotted by an MGM talent scout – and we know the rest.

Despite her success, she was not happy: “If I am a legend, then why am I so lonely?” she lamented.

Her father, Frank was a boy soprano of great quality, and in later life sang in his church choir and formed a quartet much in demand for weddings and parties. Frank was gay, and his activities caused the family problems.

Judy became a gay icon - two of her five husbands were gay, and she had many gay friends and went to parties where she joked that she was the only woman present. When she died in June 1969, many of her fans who filed past her casket went on to Stonewall’s Bar in New York, where, reacting to what they regarded as police persecution, they fought back in what became known as the Battle of Stonewall, which gave birth to the Gay Pride movement.

Judy had a somewhat disastrous tour of Australia in 1964. Crowds flocked to her first Sydney concert at the Stadium, but in Melbourne she began an hour late, and the 70,000 crowd, believing her to be drunk, booed and heckled her. She left the stage after only 45 minutes.

*The Judy Garland Show* ran for just one year (1963) on CBS, and is still available on DVD. This is the series that first introduced Barbra Streisand to a broader audience.

# Valley Artists needs



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.

*You look after us  
&  
We'll look after you!*

As a sponsor you will be entitled to:

*Tickets to all productions  
Tickets to the unique, popular and exclusive Sponsors' Night, which will be early December 2009  
Advertising space in programs  
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#### SPONSORSHIP PACKAGES for 2009

- Gold \$900- 6 tickets to both major productions in 2009 plus 6 tickets to our Sponsors' Night and up to a half page advertising space in our programmes
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- Bronze \$300- 2 tickets to both major productions in 2009 plus 2 tickets to our Sponsors' Night and a mention in our programmes
- Aluminium \$150- 1 ticket to both major productions in 2009 plus 1 ticket to our Sponsors' Night and a mention in our programmes

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VALLEY ARTISTS inc. c/- Laguna Store, LAGUNA, NSW 2325

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Gold ..... (qty) @ \$900 ea

Silver ..... (qty) @ \$600 ea

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Pay by cheque, cash, or swipe your card at Laguna Store

*PLEASE NOTE: To be included in the program for 'The Rise and Fall of Little Voice' all advertising details must be sent to [info@valleyartists.org](mailto:info@valleyartists.org) by Friday 3<sup>rd</sup> April, 2009*