



Playlovers Inc.
Hackett Hall, Draper Street, Floreat
www.playlovers.org.au

STAGES

NEWSLETTER ISSUE #4—June-July 2017

OTHER DESERT CITIES

Jon Robin Baitz

Directed by Barry Park

Old Mill Theatre, South Perth

8pm: Aug 4, 5, 10, 11, 12, 17, 18, 19 **2pm:** August 6, 13

Bookings: www.trybooking.com/QGYV

Originally Produced by Lincoln Centre Theater, New York City, 2010

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Other Desert Cities

Jon Robin Baitz

Directed by Barry Park

Originally Produced by Lincoln Centre Theatre, New York City, 2010

BY ARRANGEMENT WITH CREATIVE ARTISTS AGENCY, NY.

Playlovers presents a gripping contemporary family drama at The Old Mill Theatre

A family Christmas holiday erupts when a soon-to-be-published memoir dredges up a pivotal and tragic event in Playlovers' latest offering, at The Old Mill Theatre, South Perth.

Directed by Barry Park, *Other Desert Cities* by John Robin Baitz is a richly satisfying, finely-tuned contemporary play that effectively balances comedy with intense family drama.



Other Desert Cities cast in rehearsal

Presented by arrangement with Creative Artists Agency, New York, the play is a collaboration between The Old Mill Theatre and Playlovers, who lost their own theatre earlier this year.

Winner of the Outer Critics Circle Award for Outstanding New Off-Broadway Play and a finalist for the 2012 Pulitzer Prize, Baitz's play examines the lies people tell to protect each other and the damage they cause.

Brothers & Sisters creator and *West Wing* contributor, Jon Robin Baitz skilfully mixes American politics with a family in crisis in this smash hit US drama that bridges the public and the personal.

The play is an intriguing family mystery that delivers a delectable cocktail of humour and pathos.

In *Other Desert Cities*, an affluent, fractious Palm Springs family led by Reagan-like Hollywood Republicans has their Christmas reunion shattered when left-leaning daughter Brooke reveals her intention to publish an explosive family memoir.

It is a tell-all book that dredges up a pivotal and tragic event in the family's history that would surely tarnish her parents' political and social reputations.

Soon, ideological differences, all-but-forgotten slights and painful memories become near-lethal weapons in a war of wit and words that threatens to shatter the entire family as a closely guarded secret is revealed.

Barry Park says that he chose to direct *Other Desert Cities* 'as it is a superb, extremely well crafted play with a classic structure, intelligent dialogue and intriguing, memorable characters.'

'In the play, interesting developments and gradual revelations build steadily towards an unexpected and totally satisfying twist at the end.'

'This searing comedy-drama depicts a family struggling to keep their fragile façade from shattering,' Barry comments.

'As in plays by Arthur Miller, the story moves with ferocity towards its inevitable end in a way that is almost unbearable, yet deeply satisfying.'

'The dialogue is intelligent, with hilarious, witty comments contrasted with razor sharp, sarcastic banter that verges on outright warfare at times.'

'Among many other things, the play is about politics, family dynamics, class structure, loss and grief, but it's also about writers, the people they write about, and what, if any, responsibility the writer has to them.'

'The greatest challenge with an absorbing play like this, is to cast it well,' Barry says. 'I have assembled an extremely strong cast of outstanding seasoned actors who fully understand the nuances of the text and play their roles to perfection.'



Chandra Wyatt and Sally Berendse

'Sally Barendse plays the left leaning, depressive daughter, Brooke: Cate Jennings is her controlling, calculating mother Polly; Dean McAskil is her

protective, Republican ex-Hollywood film star father Lyman; Chandra Wyatt is her supportive recovering alcoholic aunt Silda; and Steven Hounsome is her laid back, TV producer brother Trip.'

'An interesting aspect of the play is its political context, which is relevant today,' Barry observes. He quotes the playwright, Baitz, who describes how politics have influenced the play:

'America is currently in a giant political debate, and you can see a kind of war going on that's actually a very old war. Our elections are about the soul of this country. It's like every four years there's open heart surgery here. I see the country as really broken, much as the family in the play is breaking.'

Other Desert Cities is set in 2004, when American opinion was split over the decision to invade Iraq. There was political unease worldwide and there were mass public protests.



Dean McAskil, Cate Jennings and Steven Hounsome

The political divide between the characters is clear. Polly and Lyman are both very conservative, with Polly making strong, brazen statements throughout, which Brooke and Silda vehemently oppose.

A past event is the focus of the play. The Wyeth's son, Henry had been implicated in the bombing of an army recruitment centre during America's war with Iraq. Thousands of American soldiers and over a million Iraqi deaths occurred because of the conflict, for which both nations grieved.

In *Other Desert Cities* Baitz makes a national grief a personal one, by illustrating the effect that Henry's death has had on the Wyeth's family life.

The play has achieved considerable acclaim. The New York Times refers to it as "The most richly enjoyable new play for grown-ups that New York has known in many seasons,' adding that 'in his most fully realized play to date, Mr. Baitz makes sure our sympathies keep shifting among the members of the wounded family portrayed here. Every one of them emerges as selfish, loving, cruel, compassionate, irritating, charming and just possibly heroic... leaving you feeling both moved and gratifyingly sated."

The New York Magazine acknowledges the skillful craftsmanship of the playwright: "Power, passion, and superbly crafted palaver stippled with blow-darts of wit - this is what Baitz does best."

And the New York Post reviewer writes, "Spending time with these messed-up, complicated people is a genuine pleasure."

The director, Barry Park has won awards here and overseas for his productions. Locally, *M. Butterfly* picked up gongs for Best Director and Best Play at WA's annual Finley Awards. His productions of *Broken Glass*, *The Real Thing* and *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof* received several Finley Award nominations. His most recent production Noël Coward's *Design for Living* at The Old Mill was very popular, filling houses almost to capacity.

Acting and directing since the 1970s, Barry has performed in a plethora of plays, musicals, pantomimes, minstrel shows, films, radio plays and television in Salisbury, Cape Town, Edinburgh, London and Perth.

As an actor, he is equally at home performing in pantomimes and comedies such as *Black Comedy*, *A Laughing Matter* and *She Stoops to Conquer* as he is in Shakespearean tragedies such as *Hamlet*, *The Merchant of Venice* and *Othello*.

PERFORMANCE INFORMATION

Dates and Times:

4, 5, 10, 11, 12, 17, 18 19 August at 8pm;
Sunday 6, 13 August matinee at 2pm

Performance Venue:

Old Mill Theatre, Mends St, South Perth
Doors open half an hour prior to curtain.

Ticket Prices:

\$20 Adult **\$15** Concession/children
\$15 group bookings (group =10 or more)

Bookings:

Book online: www.trybooking.com/QGYV

Warning:

Coarse language, adult themes, smoking & drug use references

CAST

BROOKE WYETH	Sally Barendse
POLLY WYETH	Cate Jennings
LYMAN WYETH	Dean McAskil
SILDA GRAUMANN	Chandra Wyatt
TRIP WYETH	Steven Hounsome

President's Report



Hi all.

The year is absolutely galloping along and our 1st season for 2017 is almost upon us. *Other Desert Cities* is well into rehearsals, with the show going up in just over 3 weeks. So now's the time to book your tickets for what's going to be a great show. Thank you to the Old Mill for giving us the opportunity to put on this show in their theatre. Their generous support is very much appreciated.

Please support our shows in 2017 because there is a perception out in the theatre community that Playlovers have ceased to be which is so not true. Your committee is working very hard to make sure that Playlovers continues to provide theatrical opportunities for our members and audiences. Not having a venue at the moment is definitely a disadvantage but no reason for us to roll over. Whatever happens it's a new chapter starting to be written for our club.

In regards to Hackett Hall's ongoing saga, a number of things have happened since the last edition of our newsletter. Mark Burns, a well known advocate for "justice", has stepped up to take on our battle with the City of Nedlands. Mark has done this at no cost to us and has brought with him other experts, also on a pro bono publico basis. His expertise and go getting attitude have been a real bonus for our club and without him our plight would have been dire! Some of you may have seen a number of articles in The Post newspaper recently, which has seen our club go on the offensive. The time for appealing to the good nature of the Nedlands Council had well and truly past and it turned-out to be pointless anyway, as it has come so obvious that Nedlands just wants the building and thus the land back. Their agenda just doesn't involve Playlovers when it comes to Hackett Hall. In our Lease there is opportunity for us to seek certain remedies, natural justice and a Review by the State Administrative Tribunal, in the case of any dispute and we have exercised all of these rights. Our case is currently being heard in the State Administrative Tribunal and we are also defending the City's recently issued Notice of Breach of Lease.

As expected the City of Nedlands have tried to halt this process on a number of occasions in order to have our Lease "ripped up". By doing this we would then have no leg to stand on, but thanks to Mark they haven't succeeded so far. The issue centres around the structural integrity of Hackett Hall and the Council's (unproven) position that the building is unsafe. We absolutely dispute the position and have some very qualified experts in our corner defending us.

Mark Burns has assured me that he'll remain by our side, until Nedlands is, and to quote Mark "harshly dealt with".

I hope that by the time of our October newsletter we may have an outcome.

I look forward to seeing you all at *Other Desert Cities*.

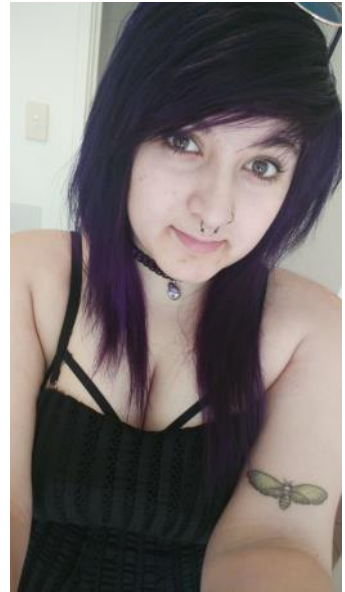
Alex McLennan

Meet the Committee - Chelsea Defontaine

Name: Chelsea Defontaine
Committee Portfolio/s: General committee member
Place of Birth: Australia
Favourite:

Musical	<i>Wicked</i>
Play	<i>All My Sons</i> (Arthur Miller)
Film	<i>The Lost Boys</i>
Music	Everything except country
Book	<i>Horns</i> (Joe Hill)
Food	Pizza and pasta

Bucket List Item: Travel to England
Dislikes: People who ruin the fun



How I came to be involved with Playlovers...

I was introduced to Playlovers by my school friend Daniel Toomath and new friend Alida Chaney

How I came to be involved in theatre...

I studied at WAAPA (West Australian Academy of Performing Arts) in props and scenery, which also included working backstage on the productions.

What would I like to achieve for/contribute to Playlovers...

I hope to get the pleasure of being involved with some amazing productions/people and would love to provide people with my fun and crazy company and hopefully improve my skills in all areas

The Jungle Book - Triva

In October/November, Playlovers will be presenting an adaptation by Monica Flory of Rudyard Kipling's classic story *The Jungle Book*.. Here are some interesting titbits about Kipling and the original work.

Kipling wrote the story in a house called [Naulakha](#) in Vermont, USA, which he designed and occupied. It has since been restored and is not a museum, but a holiday rental where history or literature buffs can stay.

Baden-Powell, the founder of Scouting, based Cub Scouting on one of the stories in Rudyard Kipling's *Jungle Book*. It was called "Mowgli's Brothers." ...or... "The Story of Akela and Mowgli." A copy of part of the story is in the Wolf Cub Scout Book. The story is continued in the Bear Cub Scout Book. There is a list of accepted pronunciations of the names of characters, many of which are traditionally used in the movement, [here](#).

The early publications of *The Jungle Book* had text by Rudyard Kipling and illustrations by his father, John Lockwood Kipling.

Independent Theatre Association News

Dramafest 2017

For more than 25 years the Independent Theatre Association (ITA) has run the WA One Act Drama Festival known as Dramafest.

This year it will be held at
St Norbert College
Treasure Road
Queens Park
on 20-24 September

Further information about the festival is available from

www.ita.org.au/dramafest/

YouthFest 2017

Youthfest is similar to Dramafest, but is restricted to under 18s so that schools and youth groups can stimulate interest in theatre arts in our younger generation.

Dates are 16-17 September, and the venue is the same as for Dramafest.

Robert Finley Awards

Due to the difficulty of booking a venue, the Robert Finley Awards for 2017 productions will again be early, on Sunday 17 December 2017, at the State Theatre Centre.

UNIVERSITY BRANCH 2017

Book Sale

FOR SAVE THE CHILDREN



efitpos available

A huge number of quality donated books in popular and specialist categories; plus CDs, DVDs, LPs and sheet music all at bargain prices.

70% of funds raised will go to programs here in WA in areas like Armadale, Gosnells, Kununurra and the Dampier Peninsula. The remaining funds are distributed across other programs run by Save the Children in Australia and across the World.

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

For more information please email
booksalevolunteers381@gmail.com

Proud event supporters



THE UNIVERSITY OF
WESTERN
AUSTRALIA



Friday

18th August 3pm – 9pm

Saturday

19th August 8am - 5pm

Sunday

20th August 8am - 5pm

Monday

21st August 9am - 6pm

Tuesday Half price day

22nd August 9am - 7pm

Wednesday Fill a box for \$15

23rd August 9am - 3pm

Location

University of Western Australia

Stirling Highway, Crawley

Under the Clock Tower



Save the Children

What's on Where

What's on	Where	When	Bookings
An Evening of Unearthly Encounters	KADS Theatre Town Square, Barber St Kalamunda	30 Jun-22 Jul 2017	9257 2668
Relatively Speaking	Garrick Theatre 16 Meadow St, Guildford	20 Jul-5 Aug 2017	garricktheatre.asn.au/
The Sunshine Boys	Harbour Theatre at Camelot Theatre, 16 Lochee St, Mosman Park	21-29 Jul– 2017	www.TAZTix.com.au
What Belongs To You	Stirling Theatre Morris Place, Innaloo	21 Jul-5 Aug 2017	9440 1040 (Morris News)
Ruthless: The Musical	Koorliny Arts Centre Kwinana Town Centre	18 Aug-2 Sep 2017	www.koorliny.com.au/Book-Tickets.html
Ballroom Blitz	Irish Theatre Players Irish Club of WA 61 Townshend Rd, Subiaco	28-29 July 2017	irishtheatreplayers.com.au/now-showing/
SPD D8N	Blak Yak Theatre inc Shenton Park Community Hall 240 Onslow Rd, Shenton Park	3-12 Aug 2017	www.blakyak.com.au/2017/02/25/spd-d8n/
Let The Sunshine	Limelight Theatre Civic Drive, Wanneroo	17-26 Aug 2017	www.limelighttheatre.com
It's My Party and I'll Die if I Want To	Rockingham Theatre 8 Attwood Way, Rockingham	25 Aug-9 Sep 2017	www.rockinghamtheatre.com

Playlovers' Playbill 2017

OTHER DESERT CITIES Directed by Barry Park 4-19 August	THE JUNGLE BOOK Directed by Sarah Christiner 20 October-4 November
BOOKINGS OPEN	

**If undelivered, please return to -
PLAYLOVERS INC
PO BOX 164
WEMBLEY 6913**

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**Bookings Open
Other Desert Cities
4 to 19 August 2017**

Bookings: www.trybooking.com/QGYV



PLAYLOVERS WEBSITE: www.playlovers.org.au



PLAYLOVERS INFORMATION EMAIL: info@playlovers.org.au



www.facebook.com/PlayloversWA

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