

# 5 MINUTE CALL

the theatre onset newsletter December/January 2014/15

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"I go to the theatre to be entertained. I don't want to see plays about rape, sodomy and drug addiction. I can get all that at home" Peter Cook

**the song remains (more-or-less) the same** On Wednesday, November 12, Theatre Onset held its Annual General

Meeting. All positions were declared open. Rebecca Lupton was re-installed as President; Alex Nicol – who had been Acting Vice-President since Kas Fenton took off for the desert after Jillian Rheinberger nicked off to New Zealand – became the official Vice-President; Alison Vandenburg was retained as Treasurer, as was Mahamati as Secretary and Jamie Forbes took over Nic's old job as Public Officer. The committee members are Diana Nicol, Bob Buck, Jane Gordon and Penny Hunt.

**the beck stops here: news from the president's desk**

The financial year of 2013/14 was an interesting one for Theatre Onset members, as many were acting in the feature film *Life Class*, or in one of the several short films made in the Bega Valley. Unfortunately for theatre goers this also meant that there were fewer productions in this time, with *Bag Dancing* and *Talking With ...* as our only live productions. We also held two film nights, with mixed responses.

*Talking With...* represented our first outing as an itinerant troupe, as we took over an empty shop in Bega's main street. We hope to make this a regular occurrence, trying out various premises for size until we find the perfect fit.

Our next production is a live performance of Orson Welles' radio play adaptation of H G Wells' *The War of the Worlds* in a location yet to be determined, then in 2015 a youth production, a play about Joan Crawford and Bette Davis, and the evergreen Neil Simon comedy, *The Odd Couple*.

We hope 2015 will bring us new active members willing to give it a go on and off the stage. Keep an eye out for audition notices on our Facebook page, Web page or emails, or if you would like to propose a new production, get in touch!

Rebecca

*nic's who's on next*

Things are deathly quiet in the near neighbourhood. **Spectrum**, **Footprint** and the **Cooma Little Theatre** are all contemplating AGM's or Christmas wind-downs. Thank goodness for **StageFlight**, that marvellous organisation driven by Lis Shelly. They're busy practicing their *aaaaarrrrs* for a rollicking production of *Treasure Island*, due to set sail at Mandeni on December 19 to 21.

Up the coast though **The Bay Players** and **Nowra Theatre Company** are hard at it. The Bay with a production of one act plays from 29 November and at Nowra you could see Joanna Murray-Smith's *Female Of The Species* late November/ December.

There's much dancing at the Canberra Theatre Centre this month but **Canberra Rep** will stage Mr Coward's very stylish *Blythe Spirit* from 21 November to 6 December.

**Narooma Kinema** is silent on the showing of the next National Theatre Live production but is offering the live cabaret *Santa's Got Soul* on 20 December and if you're anxious for your classic fix, try [Globeplayer.TV](http://Globeplayer.TV). The site offers better than 50 of **The Globe Theatre's** best productions for sale or rent and they're cheap.

mike nichols  
1931-2014



Mike Nichols – who directed the original Broadway production of *The Odd Couple*, which Theatre Onset is looking at performing next year – died on the 19<sup>th</sup> of November in New York. Born Mikhall Peschkowsky in Berlin, Nichols began his career in theatre as an actor, studying with Lee Strasberg. Finding work scarce he moved to Chicago where he had attended university and worked with a troupe there, becoming adept at improvisational comedy, particularly clicking with actress Elaine May. Nichols and May became a hugely popular comedy duo, performing in nightclubs and on television and releasing several albums, culminating in a legendary and highly influential run on Broadway. After splitting with May Nichols moved into directing, scoring a huge hit on Broadway with Neil Simon's *Barefoot in the Park*. *The Odd Couple* – another of Simon's works – earned Nichols his second Tony (he would win nine in all and go on to be one of the few entertainers to win an Emmy, a Grammy, an Oscar and a Tony). Among his other credits as a theatre director are *Plaza Suite*, *The Prisoner of Second Avenue*, *Uncle Vanya* (1973), *Annie*, *Hurly Burly*, *Whoopi Goldberg*, *Death and the Maiden*, *The Seagull* (2001), *Spamalot* and *Death of a Salesman* (2012). The films Nichols directed include *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?*, *The Graduate*, *Catch-22*, *Carnal Knowledge*, *Silkwood*, *Working Girl*, *Postcards from the Edge*, *Regarding Henry*, *The Birdcage*, *Primary Colors*, *Closer* and *Charlie Wilson's War*.

Something to add? Something to say?  
Wanna audition or put your hand up  
for production? Wanna DO a show OF  
YOUR OWN? Get in touch! This is  
COMMUNITY THEATRE!!!

# THE NIGHT THAT PANICKED AMERICA

“Radio is new and we're learning the effect it has on people,” said Orson Welles, 23, addressing a hastily called press conference on the morning after his Mercury Players 'terrified' the nation with their radio adaptation of H G Wells *The War Of The Worlds*. (You can watch the press conference here:

<http://youtu.be/uuEGiruAFSw> ) In the footage of the conference Welles is unshaven and a little blurry ... but perhaps kind of thrilled (he ought to have been ... he'd just made himself very famous and earned the clout that would get his *Citizen Kane* made). He makes very sure that his wide eyed 'who me?' face is in the lights and that every statement he makes is clearly heard. (“Quiet!” he snaps at an assistant at one point because she is bothering with details while he's got the whole world's attention.) “Of course we are deeply shocked and deeply regretful about the results of last night's broadcast.” The actual results? Not as much as the media would go on to suggest. A lot of people tried to get out of New Jersey (where the Martians were supposed to have landed) and some phone circuits blew up. But Welles played into the panic right along with the press.



Orson trying to not freak people out.



Orson failing to not freak people out.