

Director duo to pull the curtain back on community theatre with hilarious murder mystery

Bringing nearly 60 years of theatre experience between them, Kirstie Francis and Sarah House have banded together to direct Australian farce, *Midnight Murder at Hamlington Hall* by Mark Kilmurray and Jamie Oxenbould.

Coming together under the banner 'Middling Cove Players', this show will be Kirstie and Sarah's debut as a director duo. In partnership with an equally-as-experienced cast, this witty, self-referential comedy is bound to be an unmissable Garrick Theatre season.

Having both directed before, Sarah and Kirstie explained that this home-grown script, which pokes fun at amateur theatre, called for more hands-on-deck to do it justice.

"The script was found by Sarah's sister and on the first read, I found myself laughing out loud – so I knew it had potential to be a great show if done well," Kirstie explained.

"The play is fast-paced and complex, meaning it offers an exciting and challenging directorial opportunity – so sharing the load as co-directors has been essential in bringing this show to life."

"It's been very rewarding to co-direct the play – while having two people involved in decision-making can be tricky, it has definitely made the show even better", Sarah elaborated.

With a cast who will be largely recognisable to those embedded in Perth's community theatre scene, the actors are also bringing their own, unique flavour to the characters.

"We have an incredibly experienced cast on board who are nailing their characters and comedic timing," Sarah said.

"Featuring Jim Brown, Jarrod Buttery, Meredith Hunter, Jay Shaw, Jack Riches and Olivia Keary, the actors will make this a special and very funny production."

Portraying the backstage drama in the lead up to a play, *Midnight Murder at Hamlington Hall* will be most appreciated by those who have dipped a toe into the world of community theatre.

"I expect our audience will enjoy the jokes about life in theatre and identify with the characters, who themselves are thespians working to stage a community theatre play", Sarah explained.

Book your tickets now at www.taztix.com.au/garricktheatre or call 9255 3336.

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Performance Dates:

- March 27, 28, 29 at 7:30pm.
- March 30 at 2:00pm.
- April 3, 4, 5, 10, 11, 12 at 7:30pm.
- April 5 & 6 at 2:00pm.

Tickets: Adult \$28, Concession \$23, Members \$22, Children \$15. Processing fees apply.

About Midnight Murder at Hamlington Hall

It's the opening night of a new murder mystery.

Seven of the cast are down with the dreaded lurgy. So, the Middling Cove Players' director, two of the remaining actors (and whoever else the director can co-opt), pitch in to continue the long tradition of 'the show must go on'.

Juggling nerves, props, and absurd miscasting, will they manage to pull it off? Or will everything go horribly and terribly wrong?

This new comedy looks behind the scenes at the world of amateur theatre, where luck, determination and unbridled confidence rule the day. A very funny take on bad timing, incompetence and sweet optimism.

About Kirstie Francis

Kirstie began her journey in the theatre over 18 years ago. She is originally from the UK but after settling in Western Australia, she rediscovered her love for acting and since then has appeared in multiple productions across many different theatres. Her last performance was playing the actress in "The Actress" at KADS theatre, presenting her with a nomination for Best Actress at the Finley Awards.

Kirstie enjoys the thrill of being on stage but also enjoys the excitement of bringing a production together in the role of directing. She has previously directed at KADS, Rockingham and Harbour Theatre over the past years and is very happy to have Sarah House on board as her co-director for this production which needed the extra hands and keen eye to bring it to life and is also very grateful to be surrounded by an immensely talented and dedicated cast and crew.

About Sarah House

Sarah is no stranger to the stage. She has been involved in the theatre since finishing her drama teaching degree many (many!) years ago. Sarah has been performing in Perth for over 20 years and recently received a Finley "Best Supporting Actress" award for her role as "Grandma" in Roxy Lane's "Lost in Yonkers". She has performed in many shows at The Garrick, including "The Mysterious Amateur Tramp", "Bette and Joan" and "Managing Carmen".

Sarah has directed four one-act plays and was keen to try her hand at directing a full-length play. Fortunately, Kirstie was looking for a co-director, and Sarah saw this as a perfect opportunity to learn the ins and outs of directing a full-length play. This is certainly no play for a novice, and she is thankful to have been expertly guided by her co-director throughout this tricky play. She has also been fortunate to work with such talented actors and backstage crew.