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"I'm Ready"



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We're not ready to go yet, so...

Heaven Can Wait



by David Cosgrove
August 2005

by arrangement with Hal Leonard

Directed
 by
Ron Baker

Director's Note

At last I feel a weight has been lifted from my shoulders. I have kept this script under wraps for about two years waiting for what I thought was the right time for me to direct a play of this quality and style. I found the synopsis of HCW by accident whilst browsing through the catalogues of plays. After reading it I remember thinking, for me, this sounded like the ideal play.

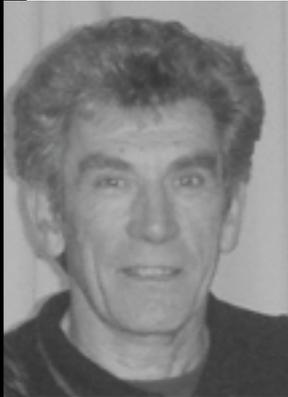
Since my involvement with theatre I have had a desire to direct plays which include musical interludes, be they light dramas, comedies or straight plays. So with this play, I felt I had it all - a fantasy situation with drama, comedy, and music, which provided insight into the personal lives of these three famous Rock'n Roll stars whose lives were so tragically cut short.

After sourcing the only copy available at the time, I set about securing the rights and obtaining permission to restructure some areas of the play so that the emphasis would lean toward the drama and not rely on the music. The play was originally produced as a musical and has only been performed in Great Britain.

After finally assembling a wonderful cast along with my experienced Assistant Director, Julie Bailey, and Musical Director, Graham Vale, I embarked on the challenging journey to bring to you this delightful play with music.

I hope you enjoy this flight.

Ron Baker



Ron Baker Director

Ron joined Wyong Drama Group 13 years ago and by default, was almost immediately catapulted into lighting and sound when the previous technician became unavailable. This was a baptism of fire, especially when Adrian Adam directed *The Scottish Play* with 94 lighting changes. His acting debut came in the form of Allan A' Dale, complete with one line of dialogue, in Peter Kocan's coarse-acting adaptation of *Robin Hood*. Since then his acting credits have included 2 drunks, an eccentric geriatric in a wheel chair, and a nerd.

Ron became interested in directing and, with encouragement from his mentor, Bonnie Bryant, directed his first production *Love Letters* in 1997. Sourcing interesting and challenging plays to direct quickly became Ron's passion. *Life Goes On* was his last full-length production but *Heaven Can Wait*, his fifth, has been the most challenging. Ron has also directed six one-act plays for theatre festivals, the most recent being *Shades of Gray*, which won the award for Best Drama at Wyong Theatrefest Encore 2004.

Julie has been a devotee of community theatre for the last 35 years. She was hooked during her first role, as a chorus member of *Oklahoma!* for Braidwood Music Club. Since then Julie has performed in a total of 48 productions. She has been an active member of WDG for 20 years and was last seen in Wyong Theatrefest Encore 2004, as Mrs H. in Peter Kocan's one-act play, *Home Fires Burning*. Julie's last role in a major production was Gabby in *Life Goes On* in 2003. In the 1970s Julie co-founded Picton Theatre Group where she first tried her hand at direction with *Wanted! One Body* and *This Fractured Century*. For WDG Julie gained further experience in directing with: Wyong's Centenary production of *This Fractured Century*; *Brush With a Body*; *Who Do You Think You Are?*; and *'Us'-Pride in the Past, Stepping Out to the Future*, WDG's 50th birthday show. She has enjoyed supporting Ron and Graham and working with such a delightful, youthful cast in this challenging but interesting production.



Julie Bailey
Assistant Director

Graham Vale Musical Director

Graham's origins in theatre and music performance go back to his primary school days on the Central Coast. In the 70s he was a regular in GMS orchestras and is proud to say he learnt his craft with Gosford Shire Band. This is his first involvement in music on the Coast after a 25 year absence. Graham has acted in, played music in, arranged music for ... and been musical director of ... too many shows to remember. His last two MD roles were for *Oliver* and *South Pacific* with Savoyards in Brisbane. In the last 12 months he has been seen with WWLT as Paul in *Absent Friends* and Henry in *Funny Money* and as Gray in WDG's *Shades of Gray*.



Behind The Scenes

Executive Producer:	Wyong Drama Group Inc.
Director:	Ron Baker
Assistant Director:	Julie Bailey
Musical Director:	Graham Vale
Stage Manager/Prompt:	Darlene Cole
Stage Assistant:	Robert Donohue
Production Manager:	Jenny Newman
Choreographer:	Christine Vale
Lighting Design/Set-up:	Ron Baker
Lighting/Sound Operation:	Craig Lawton, Simone Woodman, Pam Campbell
Set Design:	Darlene Cole, Julie Bailey, Ron Baker
Set Construction:	Barry Sampson, Laszlo Weidlich, Stuart Mortimer, Marc Calwell
Set Decoration:	Darlene Cole, Julie Bailey, Marc Calwell, Millie Sampson, Ros Ellis
Costumes:	Darlene Cole, Wendy Potter, Nan Hawtin, GMS Costume Cottage
Make-Up:	Helen Schumann
Publicity:	Julie Bailey, Graham Vale, Ron Baker
Front of House:	Jenny Newman, Robyn Weidlich, WDG members
Bookings:	Robyn Weidlich
Suppers:	Millie & Barry Sampson, WDG members
Printing & Design:	Graham Vale, The Entrance Printing
Photography:	Mathew Richards, Graham Vale, Robyn Weidlich
Voiceover:	Graham Vale, Marc Calwell

Special thanks to the Soroptimists for their valuable contribution to a special opening night.

Many thanks to all the Wyong Drama Group members and friends who have lent a hand. Your support is greatly appreciated.

Did You Know?

Buddy Holly and The Crickets was the first white band in the USA to play before a black audience.

The Big Bopper made the first ever music video – it was for Chantilly Lace in 1958.

After the crash it was decided the show must go on at the next stop, Moorhead. Scouting for local talent, a 15 year old Bobby Vee was found in Fargo – this was the break that began his career.

Tommy Allsup opened a club named 'The Head's Up Saloon', a tribute to the coin toss that saved his life.

Waylon Jennings became a popular Country singer

Inscribed on Ritchie Valens' grave are the words, Come On, Let's Go!



The Day The Music Died ...

During the Winter Dance Party Tour, Holly, tired of dealing with the problems of the bus, chartered a plane for himself and his musicians.

J. P. Richardson had been developing a fever so he convinced Waylon Jennings to give him his seat on the plane. Hearing this, Holly jokingly said to Jennings, "Well, I hope your old bus freezes up", to which Jennings jokingly replied, "Well, I hope your plane crashes" - words that would haunt him for years.

Tommy Allsup flipped a coin with Valens to decide who would get the third seat - Allsup lost the toss.

The plane left the airport at 1 am on February 3, 1959. It only made it about five miles before crashing. It is believed that bad weather conditions coupled with the pilot's inexperience in using the instrumentation caused the crash.

In the words of Don McLean, it was 'the day the music died'.



Charles Hardin Holley ...

.... became known as Buddy Holly, the 'e' being dropped from Holley after it was inadvertently left off his first record. He started out playing the violin and piano as a kid but later developed a preference for the guitar.

By age 13 he and his friend Bob Montgomery were playing at local clubs. They played a variety of country songs and, what they liked to call, 'Western Bop'. A scout from Decca records saw the duo opening for Bill Haley and The Comets and decided to sign Holly alone. They later decided he wasn't ready and told him to go back home and work on his music.

With some friends, Holly formed The Crickets and they were signed up after recording *That'll Be the Day*. Holly became popular among teenagers with such songs as *Oh Boy* and *Peggy Sue*. Holly's band explored many styles of music including rhythm and blues. This led to their being mistaken for a black group and consequently they were booked to perform at the famous Apollo Theater before an all black audience. Although initially boo-ed, the band became a hit by the third day.

Jiles Perry Richardson ...

... the Big Bopper grew up in Texas. He played football in high school and, in college, he obtained a job as a deejay at a local radio station. Whilst there he coined the name 'Big Bopper', which he later used as his stage name. Jiles established a world record for continuous broadcasting in May of 1957, spinning 1,821 records and broadcasting for six days straight.

He was discovered by Harold Daily in 1957, and that same year he recorded his most famous song, *Chantilly Lace*. This became the third most played song of 1958. Big Bopper signed on to do many tours to help promote his record, his last one being the Winter Dance Party Tour of 1959, where he met Buddy Holly.



Ricardo Valenzuela ...

Ritchie Valens grew up in a largely Hispanic community in the San Fernando Valley, California. In junior high school he would entertain his friends with his songs at lunchtime. By the time he started high school he had a love for Rock'n Roll, often imitating the likes of Elvis, Chuck Berry and Jerry Lee Lewis.

When he was 16, Valens joined a band known as *The Silhouettes* which played high school hops, church dances and local parties. He was discovered by Bob Keane, a Del-Fi record producer, who was responsible for the name change to Ritchie Valens. Valens recorded some of his most well-known songs under Keane, including *Come On*, *Let's Go*, *Donna*, and *La Bamba*. He later earned a spot on *American Bandstand* - one of the highlights of his career.



The Story

Wednesday, 3rd February 1959...

... a date which will live in music history forever, a date fated to be known as THE DAY THE MUSIC DIED.

As BUDDY HOLLY, RITCHIE VALENS and THE BIG BOPPER left the virtually snow-bound Surf Ballroom at Clear Lake, Iowa, little did they know that the plane, on which they were to fly, would take them on a journey from which they would never return.

As headlines around the world told of the tragic plane crash in which three of music's greats had died, BUDDY, RITCHIE, THE BIG BOPPER, and ROGER PETERSON, their pilot, were in a very different plane. In fact they found themselves in THE CELESTIAL BAR, a bar on the edge between Heaven and Earth, being tended by the mysterious STELLA BROWN - a soda-mixing mentor who is there to guide them on their third....and final....step to Heaven.

Soon the truth becomes all too clear that each of the boys has some unfinished business to address within himself before the path to eternity is complete.

The Scenes

Act 1

Scene 1	Surf Ballroom
Scene 2	Dwyer Airport
Scene 3	Somewhere between Heaven and Earth

Act 2

Same as Scene 3

Time

Unknown as *Time is Bent*

David Cosgrove

The Playwright

Originally trained as a social worker, David began writing and performing in 1988, appearing at *The Comedy Store* and *The Hackney Empire* while becoming a regular fixture on the emerging Scottish Comedy circuit. Writing commissions for BBC's *Naked Radio* and *Naked Video* followed, and *The Cathy and Clare Show*, which he co-wrote, appeared at the *Edinburgh Fringe*.

David also developed a strong interest in community musicals, principally with the *Craigmillar Festival Society* in Edinburgh. Whilst there, over the course of 4 years, he wrote the book for three musicals which formed the centrepiece of their annual festival. *Fit For Heroes*, the second of these shows, transferred to the *Edinburgh Fringe*. A further community musical, *Rave On*, was commissioned by the *Govan Initiative*.

Retiring from stand-up in 1992, to concentrate on writing full time, David's next project was to become *Three Steps To Heaven*, now retitled *Heaven Can Wait*. Opening at the *Brunton Theatre* in the *Edinburgh Fringe* of 1993, this sold-out production went on to win an *Edinburgh Evening News National Theatre* award. There have been nine productions of this show and, in 2003, it toured Great Britain for the third time.

In 2003 David was putting the finishing touches to a new musical based on the exploits of *Bonnie and Clyde* as well as developing and co-writing a sitcom for BBC1.



Nick McDougall

Nick's early experience was with Gosford Musical Society Juniors in such shows as The Wizard of Oz, Bugsy Malone and Cinderella The Pantomime. He also performed in Henry V for Mad Cow Theatre Company. His recent roles, as Mr Twimble and Mr Toynbee in GMS's production of How to Succeed in Business Without Really Trying, highlighted his strong but quiet sense of comedy timing.

Nick is studying Film and History at Sydney University and is an avid film maker. He was Director of Photography for Why We Ponder which won the Best Film category for the 2003 Quickflicks Film Festival. He was also a finalist with his directing effort for Love Limbo. With Christopher Walker, Nick produced and edited the film Slice of Life for Manic Bunny Films.

With his wry sense of humour, Nick underplays his talents by suggesting that, during his years of treading the boards, he has demonstrated great versatility, wh

Irish priest in Dracula Spectacular. He is also one third of the celebrated comedy troop, the Ben Ross Allstars and has performed in the Youth in Performing Arts concerts at Laycock St. Theatre

□
portrayal of Buddy Holly has broken the mould.

. Fortunately his



Adam Young

Adam's theatrical experience began with roles in school productions. At 15 years of age he won an impressive prize doing impressions on television. He has displayed a flair for comedy in roles such as Mr Bratt in Gosford Musical Society's recent production of How to Succeed in Business Without Really Trying and the transvestite Fanny Not in GMS's Cabaret in which Adam performed hilariously as the dancing gorilla complete with large pink tutu and a small pink bow on his head! In Cabaret, he also understudied the role of Emcee and played an edgy nazi as part of the ensemble.

Adam also played the role of Zach, an over-medicated Scotsman, in Cosi for Mad Cow Theatre Company.

Therefore Adam's enthusiasm for the role of 'the larger than life' Big Bopper in Wyong Drama Group's Heaven Can Wait is not surprising.

Ben Ross

Ben can be credited with a respectable number of achievements in all his years of performing, but being responsible for taking the lives of three musical superstars is a relatively recent addition to this list. After completing his HSC at Newtown High School of Performing Arts, Ben continued his studies at the University of Western Sydney, graduating with a Bachelor of Music degree in 2005.

Ben's association with theatre began when he played 'Annoying General Store Kid' in Gosford Musical Society's Juniors' Anne of Green Gables. He has since played a diverse assortment of characters from one of Joseph's brothers in Joseph, to a bumbling Irish policeman in Bugsy Malone and a man in a sequined baby bib and nappy in Chicago. Ben has also performed in the Youth in Performing Arts concerts at Laycock St. Theatre. One of his proudest moments came in 2005 when he, with Nick McDougall and Andrew Sampford, founded the legendary Ben Ross Allstars. Ben is also a devoted member of Manic Bunny Films, and strives to achieve his lifelong dream of being made into a video game character.



Myles Feist

Myles, a Year 11 student at Lisarow High School, likes to be active and is keen to learn new things. He has been involved in various sporting teams including basketball and soccer. Myles enjoys listening to music, singing and playing, and attending concerts. He aspires to be an actor or an entertainer. He currently has a lead role in Lisarow High School's Rock Eisteddfod entry which has made it to the finals. He is the first male dancer in the school's Rock Eisteddfod history. Myles seizes opportunities to be on stage. This year he auditioned for Australian Idol. He is enjoying his role as Ritchie Valens in Wyong Drama Group's Heaven Can Wait and says he is learning a lot from the experience. In his own words, Myles is a 'keen, fun, attention-seeking drama queen'. We think Ritchie would approve of our choice.



Christine Vale

While at primary school in Sydney, Christine had to make a choice between being in the school musical or on the netball team. She chose the musical and has been involved in community theatre on and off ever since. She has had several principal roles in musicals including Annie in Annie Get Your Gun, Madam in Call Me Madam, Domina in A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum, Gladys in The Pajama Game and more. Since moving to the Central Coast two years ago Christine has played Elvira in Wyong Drama Group's 2004 production of Bliethe Spirit followed by Diana in Absent Friends and Betty in Funny Money with Woy Woy Little Theatre. She is delighted to be combining her musical experience with the challenging multi-faceted role of Stella in Heaven Can Wait.



The Cast

- Stella.....Christine Vale
- Buddy HollyNick McDougall
- Ritchie Valens.....Myles Feist
- J. P. Richardson (The Big Bopper) Adam Young
- Roger Peterson (the pilot) Ben Ross
- Tommy Allsup Robert Donohue