

MEDIA RELEASE - AUGUST 2009

STEEL MAGNOLIAS... fragile as flowers, strong as steel

AUSTRALIA'S STEEL MAGNOLIAS HEAD TO ADELAIDE IN NOVEMBER

Producers of Steel Magnolias have confirmed that the production will play Her Majesty's Theatre in Adelaide from November 21st for a strictly limited season.

This heart-warming story of friendship, love and life, which opened in June to rave reviews is currently playing to thrilled audiences across Australia.

With over 150 performances scheduled the show will travel to 30 venues with a fully functioning hair dressing salon set. The production will cover in excess of 30,000 km's travelling to cities including Ballarat, Brisbane, Darwin, Melbourne, Launceston, Rockhampton, Tamworth and Wagga Wagga and now Adelaide audiences will have the chance to experience Steel Magnolias.

A luminous cast of Australia's favourite actors portray the six funny and fabulous women in the American South including **Ana Maria Belo, Jennifer Hagan, Debra Lawrance, Marian Frizelle, Geraldine Turner and Jacki Weaver.**

Robert Harling (*Soapdish, First Wives Club*), whose creation went from off-Broadway play to worldwide smash hit movie in only three years, attended the Sydney opening giving his seal of approval over this new Australian production. His play was written as a cathartic tribute to his sister, whom he'd lost to Type 1 Diabetes, and the story is that of his own family.

"The play's theme is that life must go on" says Director Darren Yap **"and although the seasons pass with different challenges these six 'steel magnolias' withstand the hardships of life through enduring friendship and wonderful humour."**

Set entirely in the local hair and beauty salon of a small Louisiana town, **Steel Magnolias** follows the lives of six women who all have dynamic personalities including wise-cracking beauty salon proprietor Truvy Jones who firmly believes that 'there is no such thing as natural beauty'. Truvy will be played by one of Australia's best loved and most respected performers – **Jacki Weaver.**

Truvy's new 'glamour technician' is the mysterious newcomer to town Annelle Dupuy and will be brought to life by **Ana Maria Belo** whose television credits include *All Saints, Home and Away and White Collar Blue*. Salon regular and elegant widow of the former town mayor is millionaire Clairee Belcher and will be portrayed by **Jennifer Hagan** a NIDA graduate who has acted in companies throughout Australia mainly MTC and STC. It is the unlikely friendship between Clairee and the sharp tongued, cantankerous, retired, divorcee and town eccentric Ouiser Boudreaux that inspire many hilarious one-liners. With a bark that is worse than her bite, Ouiser will be brought to life by **Geraldine Turner.**

Over the past three decades Geraldine has firmly established herself as a public favourite and a consummate performer. Following in the footsteps of Nicole Kidman and Julia Roberts who began their careers playing the role of Shelby will be **Marian Frizelle**. Since graduating in 2006 from the Australian Actors Centre, Marian has lived between Sydney and Los Angeles. She is an exciting newcomer to the Australian stage and one to watch. Playing M'Lynn the town social worker and mother of Shelby is one of Australia's favourite TV mum's **Debra Lawrance**, perhaps best known for her 8-year role as Pippa on *Home and Away*.

The last professional production of Steel Magnolias staged in Australia was in 1988 starring Nancye Hayes, Genevieve Lemon, Maggie Dence, Pat McDonald, Melissa Jaffer and then newcomer Nicole Kidman as Shelby.

Producers: *Blackbird Productions*
Lighting Designer: *Bernie Tan*

Director: *Darren Yap*
Incidental Music: *David Shrubsole*

Designer: *Graham MacLean*
Sound Designer: *Paul Tilley*

Originally produced by the WPA Theatre, New York City, 1987 (Kyle Kenick, Artistic Director)

**For dates and venues please refer to
www.blackbirdproductions.com.au or email info@blackbirdproductions.com.au**

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