

# Spotlight: Harry Black and the inaugural Bar Revue

interviewed by Talitha Fishburn



7 GARFIELD BARWICK CHAMBERS

*Elevators open, Ms Fishburn enters, peering from beneath her Bar News press hat, wielding notebook and pen. She asks for Mr Black. It isn't long before he appears, walking briskly down the hallway. He wears tan pants and a collared shirt sans tie. They enter the boardroom.*

From a young age, Harry Black was creating and acting in skits and movie parodies with his younger sister, a NIDA graduate, and also a trained lawyer. Since those early years, Harry has acted in dramas, musicals and revues. It turns out he's fascinated by the immediacy and intensity of theatre as a participant and spectator but particularly as a creator and playwright.

In between his busy common law practice, Harry amuses himself, and audiences, with stage writing. Already, some of his plays have been performed and to acclaim. Two, *The Midwife* and *Unend*, played in the Sydney Fringe Festival. *Unend* went on to tour the Adelaide Fringe Festival and was remounted at the iconic Queens Theatre.

As a playwright, Harry specialises in character studies (with an emphasis on the absurd). He is particularly inspired by writers Harold Pinter and Samuel Beckett. His favourite play is *The Birthday Party*.

He loves a good farce and slapstick is by no means beneath him.

Fortunately for the local legal community, Harry is sharing his dramatic talents and can't wait to stage the inaugural <DRUM ROLL> *Bar Revue* in 2023.

So what's it all about? Harry jumps in, 'think back to your Uni days, an old school, classic revue with some parody musical numbers'. Harry anticipates the program will comprise two acts packed with short skits each about two to four minutes in duration. Most of the skits will be live, although there may be a sprinkling of some video sketches. The content will be mixed. Some will be inspired by Phillip Street, some by current affairs. Some may even be political.

Harry's vision for the *Bar Revue* was partly inspired by the very existence of *Bottled Snail Productions*. As the name suggests, it's a company run by and for Victorian legal professionals. In addition to revues, they

have produced musicals and plays and are a mainstay of the legal scene in Victoria. Perusing their (very good) website, they have a swag of intriguing upcoming projects (*Shakespeare in the Supreme*; *The Dark Web: The Musical*; *Melbourne Lawyers' Big Band*; *Habeus Chorus*; *Melbourne Lawyers' Orchestra*; *Lyrical Lunchtimes at the Supreme*).

Arriving at the Bar in 2019, Harry identified a gap in the local legal performing stage. This surprised him given revue culture is so entrenched in local universities, and particularly in their legal faculties.

Despite a hope to get a Bar revue off the ground earlier, the pandemic kept it off the stage. Now, that's changed and the curtains are wide open! *InBrief* advertised a call out for Bar Revue 2023 in August 2022. The response has been very positive. A colourful cast crew has gathered boasting a range of skills from acting, singing, instrumental to technical although numbers are by no means capped. Expressions of interest are always welcome whether that be to perform or to write.

At the first meet up, Harry showed the cast a few scripts he had been working on. We witnessed Blanche DuBois, appearance in a Local Court Magistrate's list concerning an alleged driving offence in her pink Prius. Then Mr Yul B Allwright turned up, remonstrating in court with Ms Phillipa Bucket. The energy in the room was palpable. Abdominals were aching.

It seems that *Bar Revue* is the perfect antidote to the isolation of the pandemic. Who knows what other colourful characters might be lurking around the corner? There's only one way to find out – come and see the show! Keep your eyes peeled for more information about venue and dates and don't hesitate to reach out to Harry if you would like to be involved in the show. **BN**