encore THEATRE

CITY OF MONASH

Steel Magnolias

Written by Robert Harling

Directed by Susan Rundle

Program

October 16th to 25th



CAST

In alphabetical order

Justine Garnes as Shelby

Kirsty Hall as Truvy

Gabby Llewelyn as M'Lynn

Glenda May as Ouiser

Molly Spencer as Annelle

Lisa Upson as Clairee

SETTING

Inside Truvy's in-home beauty salon, located in the fictional Louisiana parish of Chinquapin, during the mid 1980s.

<u>Act One</u>

Scene 1: April

Scene 2: December

<u>Act Two</u>

Scene 1: June, eighteen months later

Scene 2: November

Running time is approx 140 minutes including a 20 minute interval

CREW & CREATIVES

Director...Susan Rundle

Production Coordinator...Jackson Langelaan

Stage Manager…Jenny Ford

Assistant Stage Manager…Grace Brown & Christine

Simmonds

Lighting Operation...Jackson Langelaan

Sound Operation...Alex Howard

Set Design...Susan Rundle and Peter Rundle

Set Construction…Ian McCormick and Ian Carlsson

Set Dressing/Painting…Susan Rundle, Peter Rundle,

Gabby Llewelyn, Ian McCormick and Ian Carlsson

Costume Design...Cast

Wig Stylist…Katie Stoicevski

Lighting Design...Hayley Francis-D'Amour

Sound Design...Pam Ford

Properties…Hayley Francis-D'Amour, Cast & Crew

Rehearsal Prompt…Gail Brackley

Radio Announcer…Liam Mitchinson

Diabetic Consultant…Jason Triggs

Marketing & Publicity…Simona Riftin & Katie Simmonds

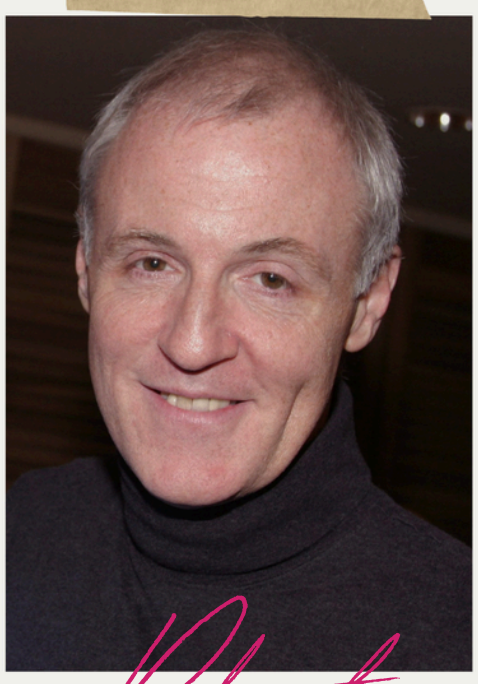
Ticket Secretary...Sandra Langelaan

Front-Of-House Coordinator...Ian Carlsson

FOH...Friends of Encore

Photography...Dave Swann

ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Robert Harling is an American playwright and screenwriter from Natchitoches, Louisiana. He initially studied law before moving to New York to pursue acting.

Harling wrote *Steel Magnolias* in just ten days as a therapeutic outlet following the tragic 1985 death of his sister, Susan. Driven by raw grief, Harling channelled the quick wit and resilient spirit of his mother and her friends into a beauty salon setting. His goal was to ensure his young nephew would always remember his mother's vibrant memory.

In 1987, Harling adapted the story into the play *Steel Magnolias* and two years later, he wrote the screenplay for the much-loved 1989 film starring Shirley MacLaine, Sally Field, Olympia Dukakis, Daryl Hannah, Julia Roberts and Dolly Parton.

ABOUT THE DIRECTOR



Susan Rundle began her performing career as a ballet and jazz dancer, then dancing teacher before moving into musical theatre and studying drama at the **University of Canterbury** and under renowned New Zealand actress and director Elizabeth Moody.

Having found her true passion in theatre, Susan has been involved in more than 60 productions in New Zealand and Australia as an actor, choreographer and director. When she is not involved in theatre, Susan is home with fur babies - cats Roxie and Ziggy, dog/assistant director Teddy and husband Peter.

DIRECTOR'S NOTES

I was delighted to be asked to direct *Steel Magnolias*. Although it was written nearly 40 years ago, it remains as meaningful as ever, showing how true friendship and a healthy dose of humour can carry us through the worst life throws at us.

It has been a joy to work with this talented cast of women and watch them bring this real, heartfelt story to life. My sincere thanks to everyone who helped me bring this story to the stage.

Sadly, as you will know, Dolly Parton died in August, so staging this play now feels like a fitting tribute. She made the world a better place and will be greatly missed.

I hope you enjoy the show.

Susan Rundle

MEET THE CAST

In alphabetical order



Justine Garnes as Shelby

Justine's love of community theatre began at eight years old, when she first stepped on stage in *Hello, Dolly!* alongside her grandfather, and she has loved performing ever since. Favourite roles include the Baker's Wife in *Into the Woods* (**Madhatter Productions**), Megan in *Puffs* (**Beaumaris Theatre**), Fiona in *The Scottish Play* (**Malvern Theatre**) and Yvette in *Clue* (**Platform Players**).

Justine is delighted to be making her **Encore** debut as Shelby in *Steel Magnolias*. She has loved being part of this beautiful production and feels incredibly fortunate to have shared the experience with such a talented and supportive all-women cast. She hopes audiences enjoy this special story as much as she has.



Kirsty Hall as Truvy

Since joining her family on stage at the age of 10, Kirsty has performed with many theatre companies around Melbourne including **Mordialloc**, **Brighton**, **PLOS**, and most recently, **Beaumaris Theatre** in their production of *Ladies in Black* in the role of Miss Cartright.

Some of Kirsty's favourite roles so far have been Glinda in the *Wizard of Oz*, Frenchy in *Grease*, Daisy Mae in *Lil' Abner* and Audrey in *Little Shop of Horrors* for which she received a **Guild Commendation**. She has enjoyed spending time with these beautiful ladies putting together this absolute gem of a play.



Gabby Llewelyn as M'Lynn

Gabby trained in Australia, South Africa & the UK. She has many theatre credits - current Top 5 favourites over the past 20 years are: *Dangerous Liaisons* (**Peridot**), *Speaking In Tongues* (**Warrandyte**), *Enchanted April* (**Heidelberg**), *Private Lives* (**Eltham**) & *Under Milkwood* (**Williamstown**) She says that making theatre with great people is always a highlight, whatever the play.

Her screen credits include *Superwog* (**ABC TV**), *Swiping Right 2* (**Webseries**) and she can be seen in independent Aussie feature film *The Last Grind* via **SBS on Demand** & **Amazon Prime**. Her kids are now old enough to drive themselves to see her in this play. She says that they are the reason she's any good at all in the role of M'Lynn.



Glenda May as Ouiser

Glenda has worked with most of Melbourne's theatre groups since arriving in the city 30 years ago, playing a wonderfully varied array of roles and earning multiple accolades along the way. Her first production with **Encore** was *Lost in Yonkers* in 2004, returning in 2014 for *Love, Loss and What I Wore* — an experience that would go down as one of her favourite theatre adventures.

Among her other favourite roles are *Under Milkwood* with **Heidelberg Theatre**, *Silly Cow* with **Williamstown Theatre**, *Deathtrap* and *The Appleton Ladies' Potato Race* with **Malvern Theatre**, where she once again found herself playing a grumpy old lady. At this point, Glenda is beginning to wonder: typecasting or acting?



Molly Spencer as Annelle

Making her **Encore** debut as Annelle in *Steel Magnolias*, Molly is thrilled to be joining this wonderful production. Molly has studied theatre since the age of 11 and graduated from the **Victorian College of the Arts Secondary School**, where she completed her two year intensive theatre programme.

Over the years she has enjoyed playing Peter Pan (*Peter Pan in Neverland*), White Rabbit (*Alice Through the Looking Glass*), Jim Hawkins (*Treasure Island*), Porthos (*The Three Musketeers*), Tinman (*Wizard of Oz*), and Smike (*Nicholas Nickelby*).



Lisa Upson as Clairee

Lisa is excited about being back at **Encore Theatre** and tickled 'blush and bashful' pink to be playing the dream role of Clairee!

A late addition to the cast, Lisa has had to bury herself in the script, practising her Southern drawl 24, 7! When not on stage and getting up to mischief, Lisa sings in an a Cappella group called *Vocal Agents*.

She would like to thank Susan Rundle for trusting her to play this iconic character, and the cast and crew for making her feel so welcome.

We acknowledge the Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung and Bunurong peoples of the Kulin Nation, the Traditional Custodians of the lands and waters where we gather and create. For tens of thousands of years, this land has been a place of story, song, performance, and community. We honour their Elders - past, present, and emerging - and recognise that sovereignty was never ceded.

Encore Theatre extends its thanks to the following for their assistance in this production: Peter Rundle, Lynn Hunt (Lead Tutor Screen & Media Specialist, Melbourne Polytechnic), Beaumaris Theatre, Peridot Theatre, Richard May (Kwik Kopy Braeside), Annie Galiano and David Dodd.



Dedicated to
Dolly Parton
(1946–2026)

This show has been made possible by the Encore Theatre Committee - a group of passionate volunteers. To find out more about us visit: www.encoretheatre.com.au