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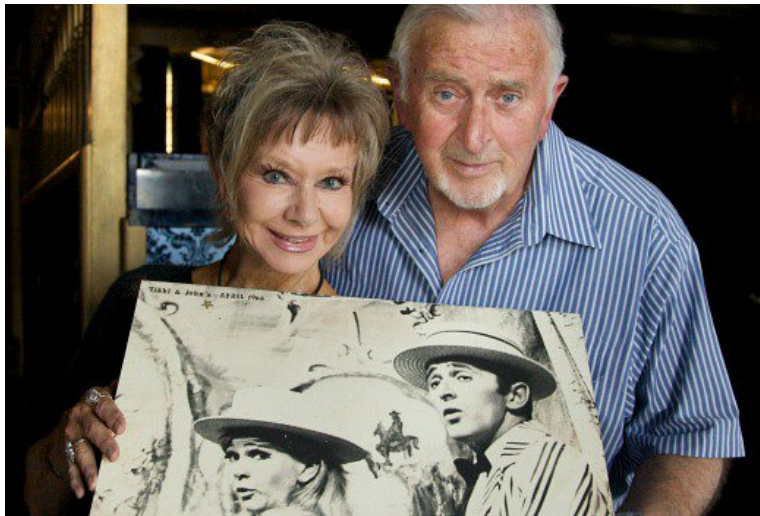
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CURTAIN CALL

By David Knox on August 10, 2014 / Filed Under Reviews, Top Stories 2



Terry Gill and wife Carole-Anne are more than just showbiz veterans, they are the owl and the pussycat (not necessarily in that order).

For decades the Brit-born couple, now both in their 70s, have been treading the boards in Melbourne's theatre restaurant circuit, including at their own venues the Naughty Nineties (formerly in Hawthorn) and the Tivoli in Malvern.

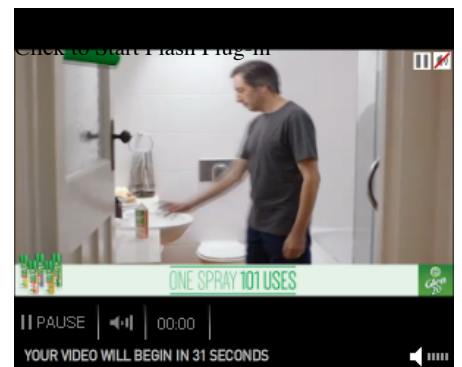
The Tivoli enjoyed a long run as a '50s rock and roll nighttime venue and during school holidays it built up a loyal following for its children's theatre.

But in 2011 the venue was threatened with closure when the landlord earmarked the site for less salubrious development. Young directors Justin Olstein and (Eleanor Sharpe) have captured the end of this era in a narrative documentary, **Curtain Call**.

Most viewers will recognise Terry Gill from his many television roles, especially in Crawford and Grundy Productions, including **The Flying Doctors**, **Prisoner**, **Homicide** and **Bluey**. Gill has also played Santa at **Carols by Candlelight** for years (he was sorely missed last year due to illness).

Together with wife Carole-Anne they have decades of performing in Melbourne, from shopping centres to cabaret. Known for running everything from the scripting to sets, directing and marketing, the pair have also fostered innumerable talent of all ages. Some of the names to have appeared in their productions include Shane Bourne, Daryl Somers, Patti Newton, Rosie Sturgess, Ken James, Frankie J. Holden and Collette Mann -but it is the younger performers who have been given opportunity, that owe much to the Gills.

In **Curtain Call** we see the end of an era, as the magic of theatre is gutted for commercial prospects. Archival footage details how the pair met in London, emigrated to Australia, raised a family and devoted their lives to the theatre. There are some fabulous glimpses of Melbourne's rich theatre history.



More than 250 children’s productions have been staged at the Tivoli, most of them with the affable Terry Gill and the defiant Carole-Anne at their centre. Classic Grimms Brothers fairytales with singalong Disney songs and complimentary fairy bread and lemonade are all part of the smell of the greasepaint. But campaigns to “Save the Tivoli” were ringing hollow...

Carole-Anne, who was still playing Snow White (or was that Cinderella?) into her 60s, is larger than life in this documentary. Never shy of an opinion or her physical attributes, she likens the crushing of the Tivoli to the evil of Hitler without batting an eyelid. Husband Terry Gill is far more humble, letting the performance and work speak for itself. It is hard not to see the pair clinging to a lifestyle that has become their purpose, but one that has undoubtedly introduced so many children to a first-time experience at the footlights.

As a feature documentary **Curtain Call** veers between the bizarre and the gloomy, contrasted by a world of fairies and nursery rhymes. Significantly, there is no scene in which the final verdict is delivered: that they have been evicted and the curtain must fall.

This aside, the film will serve as a time capsule to a colourful couple who remain true to the mantra that the show must go on.

Curtain Call airs 7pm Monday August 18th on STUDIO.

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Subversion13 August 11, 2014 at 10:25 pm -

Detective Inspector Grace – he managed to appear in all eight seasons of Prisoner I think. At the very least he appeared as early as 1979 and as late as 85.

bettestreep2008 August 11, 2014 at 11:25 am -

I know there are a lot of movies that screen at the Melbourne Film Festival and then get a commercial release a few days or weeks later, but Curtain Call has already screened last week and will screen again tomorrow night.

If I just shelled out \$19 to see a film that will be on television 6 days later I'd be demanding my money back.

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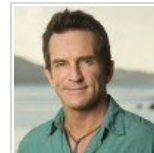
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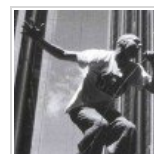
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