



## STAGE

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LEGENDARY ACT Keating had it. Warne had it. But does Ron Barassi have that special sumthin' that will make a stage show based around his life a safe punt? That's what the creators of Barassi will be hoping in the lead-up to a September season at The Athenaeum. The cast includes Steve Bastoni, Jane Clifton and Matt Parkinson. Stage rookie, ex-AFL player Russell Robertson, is in the cast. It's a fair swap - the thespians can offer tips on projecting to the back of the theatre and Robbo can school them in the ancient art of the specky.

PAY YOUR RESPECTS James Joyce's most famous character, Molly Bloom, returns to Melbourne on June 16 as part of the annual theatrical homage to his best known novel, Ulysses. Five actors □ Uschi Felix, Debra Low, Suhasini Seelin, Jamaica Zuanetti and, more surprisingly, Drew Tingwell, who was cast as Leopold Bloom in 2010 □ will play Molly in Yes, Yes, Yes!, an adaptation of the novel's Penelope chapter, directed by Brenda Addie at Trades Hall's New Ballroom. The celebration will also include a Joyce seminar and a dinner that can be combined for \$100 or booked separately, online or on 9898 2900.

RUSH'S NEW FORUM The most scathing (and efficient) piece of theatre criticism ever written might be the review of a production of Stephen Sondheim's A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum which simply read: "No it didn't." Veteran producer John Frost is pulling out the stops to ensure nothing of the sort occurs with the November mounting of the musical at the Comedy Theatre. He's reuniting local legend Geoffrey Rush (pictured in Drowsy Chaperone) with the actor's long-time friend and **director** Simon Phillips. The duo most recently worked together on The Importance of Being Earnest and The Drowsy Chaperone during Phillips' last years as head of the MTC.

JOIN THE FUN Playwright Lally Katz could be about to meet her toughest audience yet. Her latest production with Arena Theatre Company, Starchaser, opens at Arts Centre Melbourne on Saturday, and is followed by a workshop in which the children from the audience can write new adventures for the story and direct their parents in their own scenes. Starchaser's actual **director**, Christian Leavesley, will be on hand to mentor the fledgling theatremakers. There's no



telling whether the kids' embellishments will end up influencing later performances, but Katz herself will be part of the conversations, too.