

Calendar Girls by Tim Firth

JOHN FROST SCORES A DATE WITH CALENDAR GIRLS

Australia's leading theatre producer John Frost today announced he will produce the British hit comedy **CALENDAR GIRLS** in Australia in 2010. *CALENDAR GIRLS*, by Tim Firth, is currently playing to sell-out houses at the Noel Coward Theatre on the West End following the success of the fastest-selling regional tour in British theatre history. Audiences have been effusive in their praise for the play and its ensemble cast. *CALENDAR GIRLS* will open in Sydney and Melbourne early next year, with auditions beginning this week.

CALENDAR GIRLS is based on the very successful film of the same name starring Helen Mirren and Julie Walters, which in turn was based on an uplifting and inspiring true story that is quirky, poignant and hilarious. A group of extraordinary middle-aged women, members of a very ordinary Yorkshire Women's Institute, spark a global phenomenon by persuading one another to pose for a charity calendar with a difference! As interest snowballs, the Calendar Girls find themselves revealing more than they'd ever planned...

UK Producer **David Pugh** has wanted to turn the story into a play since first hearing about it. He said: "I dashed up to Yorkshire, armed with bunches of flowers, to try to persuade them it would make a great play. But they told me there was at least one film on the way so I knew I had no chance. When Tim asked me if I wanted him to adapt the film for the stage I had to say yes. It is such a lovely story."

David Pugh's first West End theatre production was *Steel Magnolias* which starred Rosemary Harris and Joely Richardson. He went on to produce *The Blues Brothers*, *The Weekend*, a comedy by Michael Palin starring Richard Wilson, and *A Passionate Woman* starring Stephanie Cole. He co-produced *Art* at the Wyndham's Theatre, which has subsequently become the most successful play in London for the last 25 years as well as winning every major award. He also co-produced *The Play What I Wrote* by Hamish McColl and Sean Foley directed by Kenneth Branagh; Tom Stoppard's adaptation of Gerald Sibley's play *Heroes*; one of the most successful productions ever in London's

West End, *Equus*, starring Richard Griffiths and Daniel Radcliffe; and Yasmina Reza's new comedy *God of Carnage* starring Ralph Fiennes, Janet McTeer and Ken Stott.

The director of *CALENDAR GIRLS* is **Hamish McColl**, better known as an accomplished actor, playwright and screenwriter (*Mr Bean's Holiday*). Hamish is currently directing the wildly successful stage tour of *French and Saunders*.

John Frost, David Pugh and Hamish McColl will be conducting auditions this week with actresses "of a certain age" from across Australia.

JOHN FROST, DAVID PUGH AND HAMISH McCOLL ARE AVAILABLE FOR INTERVIEW

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