

# couriermail.com.au

## Talent runs in the family

Suzanna Clarke

April 14, 2007 12:00am

Article from:

**The Courier Mail**

**IN HER first role as an actor in the play *Lotte's Gift* by David Williamson, Karin Schaupp is treading the boards solo.**

She narrates, acts and plays guitar in this story of three generations of women – a remarkable achievement for someone who only recently started acting.

Schaupp, *pictured*, already has an international reputation as a classical guitarist. So why would she want to put it on the line to start again in a completely new artform?

In person, Schaupp is a lot like her guitar performances – self-assured, yet with a passionate enthusiasm bubbling beneath the surface. The subject of the play is close to her heart, and she is eager to explain how it all came about.

"I had to cancel a tour to the US in 2001, because of September 11. So I found myself with some time, and decided to take some acting classes.

"At first it was a bit of fun, but then I fell in love with it and discovered how similar acting is to musical performance. It's about communicating a story and emotions to an audience, but acting is much more direct," she says. "I realised I'd love to do a project that incorporated both acting and music."

Schaupp had met renowned playwright David Williamson when he went to one of her concerts at the Noosa Long Weekend Festival.

"So I sent him an email, thinking I might get a cameo role in one of his plays. He misunderstood, and thought I was asking him to write a play for me. I would never do that!" she protests, shaking her head.

Williamson took a leap of faith, as he had never seen Schaupp act. Meeting her over coffee to discuss potential subject matter, he asked about her family history. She had come out from Germany as a child, and found herself telling him about her grandmother, Lotte Reinke.

"She had a one-in-a-million singing voice, but couldn't pursue it as a career because her father thought it wasn't decent for a young lady.

"During the 1950s, she had a huge offer to have a major radio career. But my grandfather wouldn't let her do it. He wanted her to stay at home with him and children. Then she met her first love again."

"As I was telling him this, David jumped and said, 'That's it'. He had his idea for the play. At first I had a lot of reticence about it. How are members of the family going to feel?"

Her grandmother's memoirs were translated on tape for Williamson, and he also interviewed her mother and aunt. "It was like a family therapy day," Schaupp says.

"There were stories I hadn't heard before. We laughed a lot, and we all cried at one point."

As the stories emerged, so too did the theme of how much times have changed for women.

"Things that weren't possible for my grandmother are possible for me. I am able to have the life and career she couldn't have."

And what a career it is. After receiving her first guitar from Lotte when she was only three, Schaupp was taught to play by her mother, Isolde. She won international competitions, and completed a Masters degree in music at the University of Queensland, winning the university medal.

Since then Schaupp has graced the international stage on many concert tours, playing with the likes of the London Philharmonic at Royal Festival Hall. She has released four solo albums, *Soliloquy*, *Leyenda*, *Evocation* and *Dreams*. Her most recent, *Songs Without Words*, is a collaboration with recorder virtuoso Genevieve Lacey. Critics have described it as "sublime".

Schaupp was a founding member of the Australian guitar quartet Saffire, with Gareth Koch and brothers Slava and Leonard Grigoryan.

"The unexpected thing was that the acting lessons have had a huge influence on my playing," she says. "In acting, I feel a much more direct connection with the audience."

"It has given me a different sense of openness when I'm playing the guitar, and has made my playing feel more like speaking."

The guitar also has a part at significant points during the play.

"David has placed musical items at the play's most poignant emotional moments. The idea is that those emotions are deepened and expanded. They are not simply an interlude, but give people time for reflection on the story," she says.

There have already been runs of the play in Noosa and Sydney, where one reviewer said it was "intimate and enchanting". On opening night, Lotte herself came on to the stage to take a bow. "She's a very resilient and vibrant character," Schaupp says. "She's a real inspiration. It's her spirit. Despite everything that has happened to her, all the betrayals, she has no regrets."

"She has had a great life. And now she can get the recognition and adoration she deserves."

*Lotte's Gift* is on at La Boite's Roundhouse Theatre, Kelvin Grove, Brisbane, from Thursday to May 5.

**For bookings visit the website [www.roundhousetheatre.com.au](http://www.roundhousetheatre.com.au) or telephone 3007 8600.**

- [Television](#)
- [Movies](#)
- [Gigs & Events](#)

Please select your TV services to begin browsing.

1. Select your Free-to-air region: QLD - Brisbane

service: None

SAVE

2. Select your Subscription TV

Please [select your local cinemas](#).

Once your preferences are saved, you can return anytime and see your customised listings.

SAVE

Please [select your local gig scene](#).

Once your preferences are saved, you can return anytime and see your customised listings.

SAVE



Classical guitarist Karin Schaupp has taken up the challenge of treading the boards. Picture: Peter Wallis

© Queensland Newspapers. All times AEST (GMT + 10).