

BACK TO THE FRONT

*News from the New Zealand Theatre Federation Inc.
www.theatrenewzealand.co.nz*



Scott Frater with Adjudicator Bryan Aitken
and Festival Secretary Nanette Wright

President's Column

Dear Members,

This is my first editorial as the new NZ Theatre Federation President and I would like to begin by paying tribute to out-going President Denise Walsh. The past three years have not been easy ones for NZTF with financial constraints from all sides affecting much of what could be achieved. Coupled with that was the passing of our National Administrator Jannat Atchison, and latterly the ill health and passing of our National Treasurer David Brockett – an obituary follows later in this newsletter. Yet through all this Denise has steered a steady ship, kept NZTF on track and is able to look back at what appears to be a resurgence in NZTF if the interest in this years Festival of Community Theatre is an indicator.

And in respect of the Festivals I would like to acknowledge the work Joan Ford and her team did in Palmerston North in organising this year's National Final – *Glamour At The Globe*. And it certainly was a glamorous and glitzy affair, with near full houses both nights and seven plays, one up on our normal six and each of an exceptionally high standard, providing great entertainment value as well as being thought provoking and stimulating. Thanks also to our National Final adjudicator Bryan Aitken for his erudite words of wisdom. Thanks are also extended to Natalie Ellis-Wilson for her work as Regional Festival Adjudicator and also to organisers of both the North and South Island Regional Finals for their time and effort. Also much thanks and appreciation to all those who supported this year's Festival of Community Theatre at District level, both teams, organisers and audiences – five District Festivals with a combined total of 32 entries. Last but not least a big hank you to Nanette Wright, Festival Organiser. Well done to everyone involved, especially as there were a number of new groups in this year's Festival which augers well for the future.

At the National Final weekend we also held a well attended AGM, and officially opened the new Library space in Square Edge, all of which is documented in more detail further on in the newsletter. Suffice to say

that the interest and enthusiasm of those present in the future of NZTF and the direction we hope to now move the organisation was very pleasing for myself as the incoming President.

As is noted in this newsletter, one of the biggest changes planned will be the introduction, next year, of a flat fee subscription for all theatre groups and schools making the membership of NZTF much more equitable. There are also big changes planned to the constitution to bring it up to date, in particular improving the ability of theatre groups to have representation in the decision making process at executive level. It was also very exciting to see the new Library and the way it is immaculately set out, all due to the hard work and tireless effort of our Librarian Sheridan Hickey and her helpers. The catalogue of all our scripts going live online was also another exciting feature of the Library's official opening. So there was much to celebrate at our AGM/National Final weekend and much to be encouraged regarding the future of NZTF and I am looking forward to meeting up with and renewing acquaintances with many theatre groups up and down the country.

Ewen D Coleman
National President

Cover photo:

Scott Frater, playwright and director of Dramatix Youth Theatre (Nelson) receives the Book of Honour for *Youthanasia* at the final of the Festival of Community Theatre

Contents

President's Column	2
David Brockett Tributes	3
AGM and Library Opening	4
District Festivals	5
District Festivals	6
Regional and National Finals	7
Awards	8
Library News	9
What's On	9
Advertisements	10

David Brockett

A Tribute from Max Sullivan

I first met David when he stage managed *Time out for Ginger* I think in 1968 for Elmwood Players and I was aware that he also was the Stage Manager for other groups in the early 1970s.

By 1971 we were both representing our groups on the Canterbury branch of BDL (British Drama League) prior to the formation of NZTF. From then until 1995, David or Brock (or Brockie) as his close mates called him, served every year on the District Committee and together we handled the finance, worked Front of House, and enjoyed the "after match" functions for every District Festival and also numerous Divisional and National Finals.

Along with his mates Doug Clarke, Dave Cooke and Pat Bulman, Brock and I had some wonderful times and hilarious moments and always looked forward to the "one act play" festival with anticipation.

Brock had obtained a computer, long before they became common place and it was a tribute to his tenacity, how he mastered the machine, for it was he who taught me, far more than I ever knew.

As you all know, Brock was a man of few words, but when his voice dropped in pitch he gained everyone's attention, as we all knew that his words would be appropriate to the cause.

To me, Brock was, my little solider, full of courage and always there to pick up the loose ends, I left behind. Such was the case when he became the National Treasurer of NZTF.

On very many occasions, I stayed overnight at his home and words fail me in the loss that Nancy, Katrina, Wendy, his relations and friends share with me.

I salute you Brock, as "a man for all seasons".

A Tribute from Nanette Wright

I knew David, and his involvement with NZTF and particularly the Canterbury District from the early seventies. He was part of a group of young men whom I might call a Band of Brothers with Doug Clarke as their leader who worked at all the festivals backstage, front of house and behind the bar until the early hours of the morning. The bar takings were a valuable source of income and David and Max Sullivan were devoted to their task. They were all great friends and I envied them their solidarity.

When I become president of Canterbury in 1980, a position I filled for 13 years they were a support team of renown and I am very grateful to them and remember them with fondness. David was the quiet worker behind the scenes. Loyal dedicated and reliable he devoted his recreation time to the Theatre Federation. David and I administered the federation's national directing and acting workshops at Lincoln University through the eighties and into the nineties. He was a wonderful treasurer and managed to find funding to ensure the success of these schools.

Canterbury District also was a driving force behind the The International Festival of Youth Theatre in 1990. David was an efficient front of stage organiser, always quietly in the background.

When I became National President in 1998 David had been National Treasurer for some years. He and Jannat were a force indeed to be reckoned with. What a great team they made. I was so lucky to have worked with them.

I will always remember David's dedication to N.Z Theatre Federation and his wonderful loyalty to me personally. He was indeed a good and faithful servant.

My fondest love and deep sympathy are with the family.



Report on 39th AGM of NZTF

Officers for 2009/10

President	Ewen Coleman
Vice President	Peter Jameson
Treasurer	Sharon Saxton

District Delegates

Hawkes Bay	Anne Corney
Manawatu	Joan Ford
Wellington	Ruth Sarratt

Top of the South

Canterbury/West Coast	Bryan Aitken
Otago/Southland	Denise Walsh

Co-opted for their special contributions:

Beth Evenson, Frank Hartley, Sheridan Hickey, Margaret Robertson, Nanette Wright.

Honorary Auditor Barry Meyers

The meeting noted with great regret the report on the health of David Brockett and noted that as a consequence no accounts were available for presentation to the meeting and resolved that the incoming president and treasurer work as quickly as possible to prepare a set of accounts to be presented to a Special General Meeting of members within 6 months of the end of the financial year.

Remit 'that the subscription for the year 2010/11 for both full members and associates (excluding individual

members) be fixed at \$100 + GST' Carried.

There is an ambitious plan to get a revision of the constitution, together with the 2008 accounts ready for a SGM later in the year.

Timing of the Festival: those entering festival must be full paid up members. Sub invoices are sent out in March for payment in April/May and this clashes with the sending in of money for entry into the May/June festival causing confusion for organisers and participants. Another clash is the fact that Sheilah Winn and Stage Challenge are also timed for June. It was agreed that the festival be moved; District Festivals start in July, with the Final in August or September. No dates yet for next year .

Meritorious Service Awards

Three recipients were announced at the AGM.

Sharon Kerr and Diana Ryan both of Napier Repertory Players (Hawkes Bay) and Brian Hudson of Tawa Community Theatre (Wellington) were congratulated on their achievement. Certificates and badges arranged and paid for by Wellington District were presented to Sharon and Diana who were present.



Opening of the May Ives Library

Over 20 people attended and enjoyed afternoon tea together before David Charteris of Wanganui entertained with an extract from his play *One of Those* commissioned by the Four Seasons Theatre in 2001. The play is based in historical fact and David gave a riveting few minutes performance as D'Arcy Creswell, poet and playwright, speaking from his coffin at his funeral in 1964. Read more on p9

After this incoming president Ewen Coleman cut a beautifully iced cake (which was recut on stage that night and later revealed as a chocolate mud cake when it was distributed for supper) and Hayden Rogers announced the launch of the catalogue on line. He warned though that the data is raw as yet and that he is depending on volunteers to audit it over the next few months.

The gathering then repaired to the library doorway for Life Members to pose outside around a big bow tying it up. Photos were taken by the local press before the door was opened.



Festival of Community Theatre 2009

This issue of Backchat celebrates our festival during May and June, the coming together to learn, at District, Regional and Final levels. More teams (32) entered this year than last and it was very pleasing to have the Hawkes Bay District operational again. In fact three of their entries, all from Napier Repertory, went all the way through to the National Final.

DISTRICT FESTIVALS

Otago Southland Festival

Adjudicator Hilary Norris

Park Players

Bitter Sweet

Written and directed by Denise Walsh

Park Players

Stick to Dreams

Written and directed by Denise Walsh

Otago Girls High School

Living with Lady Macbeth

By Rob John

Directed by Erina Caradus

Southern Players

Double Tap

By Michael Olsen

Directed by Gussie Johnson

South Otago High School

Excerpts from *Much Ado About Nothing*

Written by William Shakespeare

Directed by Hannah Gould

The South Otago Theatrical Society

Nefarious Nuptials at the Nuggets

Written and directed by Ron Neilson

The South Otago Theatrical Society

Sheep Ahoy

By June Allen

Directed by Selena Aitken-Boyle

Canterbury/ Westcoast Festival

Adjudicator David Chambers

Aranui High School

Excerpts from *A Midsummer Night's Dream*

By William Shakespeare

Directed by Robert Gilbert

Aranui High School

Niu Sila

By Dave Armstrong & Oscar Kightly

Directed by Bree Le Cren

Aranui Theatre Company

Hamlet :The Moody Dane

Adapted and devised by Robert Gilbert & cast

Directed by Robert Gilbert

Canterbury Repertory Society

Privates on Parade by Peter Nicholls

Directed by Robert Gilbert

Elmwood Players

Fault by Sam Fisher

Directed by Marilyn Ollett

Elmwood Players

Swiss Cider by Andre SurrIDGE

Director Gary Thomas

Greymouth High School

The Fifteen Minute Hamlet

By Tom Stoppard

Director Courtney Couch

Scapino Theatre - Waimate

A Friend like Artie by Wil Denson

Directed by Wim Bevers

Scapino Theatre - Waimate

Wait Wait Bo Bait by Lindsay Price

Directed by Dinie Bevers

St Margaret's College

Conspiracy of X by Brent Murdoch

Directed by Marcelle Murdoch

Top of the South Festival

Adjudicator June Glover

Dramatix Youth Theatre - Nelson

Big Top, Small Pants by Scott Frater

Director Scott Frater

Dramatix Youth Theatre - Nelson

Youthanasia by Scott Frater

Director Scott Frater

Havelock Theatre Company

Once were Happy Pixies

By Rick Edmonds

Director Rick Edmonds

Havelock Theatre Company

Two Funerals and A Wedding

By Rick Edmonds

Director Rick Edmonds

Manawatu Festival

Adjudicator Penni Bousfield

Awatapu College

Double Tap by Michael Olsen

Directed by Louise Flynn

FAHS Feilding High School

The Battle Within

By Karla Crofts and Year 13 Drama

Directed by Karla Croft

Manawatu Theatre Society

If I Said You had A Heavenly Body

By Andre Surridge

Directed by Maxine Dale

Pahiatua Repertory Society

Love or Nearest Offer

By Hugh O'Brien

Directed by Lesley Courtney & Peter Lea

Wanganui High School

Lysistrata by Aristophanes

Adapted by Colin Hedivan and Year 13 Students

Directed by Colin Hedivan

Hawkes Bay Festival

Adjudicator Ewen Coleman

Karamu High School

Niu Sila

By Dave Armstrong & Oscar Kightly

Director Jo Veen

Napier Repertory Players

Forward to the Right

By Lily Anne Green

Director Anne Corney

Napier Repertory Players

The World and Mrs T

By Philip Bentley

Director Ian Claridge

Napier Repertory Players

Waiting Rooms

By Sharyn Hildreth, Amanda Jackson

and Jane Sutherland

Director Alan Powdrell

Napier Repertory Players

Lily by T.J.Ramsay

Director Anne Corney

Theatre Hawkes Bay

As I Am by Peter Berry

Director Adrienne Hurley

This last play won for Peter Berry the Olga E Harding Award for best new play written for the Festival. Peter has written one previous play, a full length comedy called *Twenty Three Year Old Escort* which was very well received when performed at Theatre Hawkes Bay. He is a bee keeper with interests in tramping, wood-working and singing. He says he also plays the penny whistle and harp badly but the bodrun quite well. His major ambition is to write a musical. His photo appears on page 8.

These 32 District entries all represent a huge number of people on stage and backstage working together to perform the very best that they can. We salute them.

REGIONAL FESTIVALS

Adjudicator Natalie Ellis-Wilson

South Island Regional

Dunedin 5/6 June

Aranui High School

Excerpts from *A Midsummer Night's Dream*

Aranui Theatre Company

Hamlet: The Moody Dane

Dramatix Youth Theatre

Youthanasia

Elmwood Players

Fault

Havelock Theatre Company

Two Weddings and a Funeral

Park Players

Bitter Sweet

Park Players

Stick to Dreams

Southern Players

Double Tap

St Margaret's College

The Conspiracy of X

North Island Regional

Napier 12/13 June

Awatapu College

Double Tap

FAHS Feilding High School

The Battle Within

Napier Repertory Players

Forward to the Right

Napier Repertory Players

The World and Mrs T

Napier Repertory Players

Waiting Rooms

Pahiatua Repertory Society

Love or Nearest Offer

Wanganui High School

Lysistrata

NATIONAL FINALISTS

Palmerston North 26/27 June

Aranui High School

Excerpts from *A Midsummer Night's Dream*

By William Shakespeare

Directed by Robert Gilbert

Dramatix Youth Theatre

Youthanasia

Written and Directed by Scott Frater

FAHS Feilding High School

The Battle Within

By Karla Crofts and Year 13 Drama

Directed by Karla Croft

Napier Repertory Players

Forward to the Right

By Lily Anne Green

Director Anne Corney

Napier Repertory Players

The World and Mrs T

By Philip Bentley

Director Ian Claridge

Napier Repertory Players

Waiting Rooms

By Sharyn Hildreth, Amanda Jackson

and Jane Sutherland

Director Alan Powdrell

Pahiatua Repertory Society

Love or Nearest Offer

By Hugh O'Brien

Directed by Lesley Courtney & Peter Lea

These seven teams, all winners in their own right, were awarded Certificates of Appearance and vouchers worth \$75 for use in the May Ives Library by the Drama Development Trust.

Adjudicator Bryan Aitken awarded the Book of Honour to **Dramatix Youth Theatre** of Nelson for their production of *Youthanasia* written and directed by Scott Frater. See the photo on the front page. This production also won Best Performance of a New Zealand Play.

Awards

Awards also presented at the Festival of Community Theatre



Bryan Aitken Award
Best Youth Production
FAHS Feilding High School
The Battle Within



NZTF Award
Best Actor Female
Jill Foster
as Mrs T in *The World and Mrs T*



NZTF Award
Best Actor Male
James Hopkinson
as the Soldier in *The Battle Within*



Selecon Design/Technical Award
Aranui High School
Midsummer Night's Dream excerpts



Best New Director
Chosen at the Regionals
by Adjudicator Natalie Ellis-Wilson
Marcelle Murdoch
who directed *Conspiracy of X*
for St Margaret's College



Olga E. Harding NZ Playwriting Award
Peter Berry for *As I Am*

Jannat Aichison Awards (3)
for Emerging Talent

Josh Doggett
as Danny in *Youthanasia*

**Musicians - Sam Black, Matt Irvine, Debbie
Thompson, Kieran Thompson**
for *The Battle Within*

Anne Corney
Director of *Forward to the Right*

News from the May Ives Library from Sheridan Hickey

The Drama Development Trust generously gifted funds to the May Ives Library again this year and, now that the Memorandum of Understanding between Playmarket and NZTF is finalised we are busy drawing up lists of the most recent plays to add to our unique collection of play scripts. In the meantime, though, Playmarket has forwarded drafts of these recently written plays.

Paul Rothwell	<i>Christmas Indoors, The Blackening</i>
Sarah McDougal	<i>Things I Hate about Mother</i>
Peter Hawes	<i>The Gods of Warm Beer</i>
Kerry Lynch	<i>Harbouring Ghosts</i>
David Geary	<i>The Farm</i>
Albert Belz	<i>Whero's New Net, Te Karakia, Yours Truly</i>
Brian Sergent	<i>The Love of Humankind</i>
Angie Farrow	<i>Despatch, Before the Birds (was Paradise)</i>
Tom Scott	<i>Daylight Atheist</i>

For those of you who have requested Roger Hall's *Four Flat Whites* this is not yet available for amateur licensing nor is the script for sale – probably sometime in 2010.

Since the official opening of the May Ives Library in its relocated space in Palmerston North, three playwrights have generously provided complimentary copies of plays to the library. At the opening, John Ross gave us two of his recent writings : *The Companion of Ostriches* : *The Testing of Job* and *Biblical Chicks* based on Bible stories. David Charteris also gifted his script *One of Those*. This historical-docu-drama explores D'Arcy Creswell's relationship with the Wanganui Mayor and others, culminating in an 'unfortunate incident' during the 1920s. Some of you may remember *The Cook Tapes* at the National Finals in Dunedin in 2008. This script and *Inner Space* have been given to us by Hamilton based playwright, Andre Surridge. We are very grateful to Playmarket and these playwrights for the generosity of their creativity and consideration to the NZTF May Ives Library.

What's On

New Plymouth Repertory	<i>Weekend Comedy</i> by Jeanne & Sam Bobrick	August 11 - 22
Theatre Hawkes Bay	<i>Stiff</i> by April Phillips	July 23 - August 1
Pahiatua Rep. Theatre	<i>Are You Being Served?</i> by J.Lloyd & D. Croft	August 11 - 15
Harlequin Theatre	<i>Home Land</i> by Gary Henderson	July 16 - 25
Heretaunga Players	<i>Snake in the Grass</i> by Alan Ayckbourn	August 6 - 15
Hutt Repertory	<i>Charlotte's Web</i> by Joseph Robinette	Sept 28 - Oct 3
Foxton Little Theatre	<i>Look No Hans</i> by Chapman & Pertwee	August 21 - Sept 5
Levin Little Theatre	<i>Forget-Me-Knot</i> by David Tristram	July 31 - August 8
Kapiti Playhouse	Audition - <i>Blithe Spirit</i> by Noel Coward	September 13
Mana Little Theatre	50th Birthday Celebrations	July
Stagecraft Theatre	<i>The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie</i> by Muriel Spark Adapted by Jay Presson Allen	August 5 - 15
Marlborough Repertory	<i>Country Cops</i> by Robert Lord	September 17 - 26
South Canterbury D.L.	<i>Death and Deceit on the Nile</i> by Peter De Pietro	July 16 - 25
	<i>Hollywood Collated</i> by Alice Sollis, Theatre Royal	Sept 12 - 19
	<i>The Cemetery Club</i> by Ivan Menchell at Playhouse	

For inclusion in this column send in your newsletters.

Remember to include the name of the **production**, the **playwright** and the **dates**.

Do you send out your newsletters by email?

If you do please include the Backchat editor on your list: c/- nztflibrary@xtra.co.nz

For Sale

Fireproofed Black Sharkstooth Gauze

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Made by John Herber for Eltham Little Theatre Inc

Cost \$2,084.00 in June 2000, used twice

Excellent condition

Offers accepted

Contact: Lorraine Morris, Box 22, Eltham, Taranaki
or lorrainemorris@hotmail.com

NZTF Badges for Sale \$10

Wellington District has a stock of badges for sale, Display your affiliation to our national organisation and wear it with pride.

Contact: info@theatrefed.wellington.net.nz

Drama Development Trust

Grant applications for individuals, group activity and capital development are now available.

For details contact: margaretr@vodafone.co.nz
or PO Box 22249 Wellington 6441



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