

Backchat

News from Theatre New Zealand
Fostering Community Theatre in Aotearoa



April 2013 Volume 36 Issue 2

In The Spotlight...

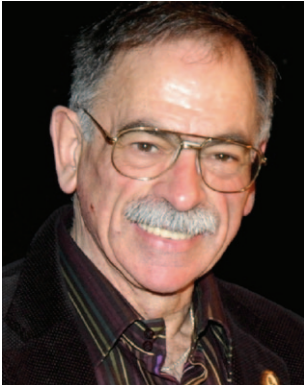
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Backchat Designer Jade Gillies and Editor Margaret Robertson met up at the New Zealand Fringe Festival in Stagecraft Theatre's foyer after a performance of *A Cry Too Far from Heaven*. Read more on page 2



President



The exceptionally long, dry summer has no doubt kept many people out doors. But looking at what's on around the country it has not been to the detriment of getting a production on stage. While comedy predominates, there is a good smattering of drama, Shakespeare as

well as NZ plays. Also it's good to see the number smaller groups like Waihi Drama Society, who are currently doing a NZ play, functioning so well.

This is also the time when hopefully groups are considering entering this year's TheatreFest 2013. All the information relating to this year's Festival has been sent out by the National TheatreFest Administrator and further details about local TheatreFest Festivals will be in the May Backchat. And remember that, although TheatreFest is a competitive Festival, it is also an opportunity to learn through performing, observing and meeting other participants and groups. TheatreFest also gives playwrights a chance to have their plays both seen on stage and assessed through the Olga E Harding New NZ Playwriting Award and we are pleased that well known playwright Dave Armstrong from Wellington is this year's script Assessor.

Over the past few months we have been promoting a special Public Liability Insurance scheme. No doubt many theatre groups have insurance policies of some form or other, especially if they own buildings or property. However few have probably looked into their policy in any detail of late and so we urge all groups to do so with specific reference to public liability. Like any insurance it could be unlikely that a group would be legally liable to pay for accidental damage or injury but if this did occur and a group didn't have Public Liability then it could be very costly for them.

Premiums can be very costly on top of all the other expenses incurred by theatre groups. So given this cost, NZTF have put together a scheme at very competitive rates which we urge all groups to consider. Groups will be contacted again in the next few weeks with more details.

Ewen D Coleman
National President

2013/2014 Subscriptions Now Due

Invoices will be in your mail boxes after Easter. Please fill in the form so our records can be updated before sending it back whether you pay by direct credit or not. Membership remains at \$100 for all groups and schools and \$40 for individuals.

First up this new financial year, a warm welcome to Riccarton Players. They lost The Mill Theatre, Addington in the earthquake and are in negotiations to build a replacement. In the meantime they're performing at Open Stage, Hagley College and 9 productions are planned. In February they held a car rally and scavenger hunt followed by a potluck dinner and later in the month a family picnic was held. We wish them a very good year and hope they will take part in Theatrefest at some stage.

A Cry Too Far From Heaven

by Angela Newell, Jade Gillies, Lizzie Dawson
performed at the NZ Fringe Festival by
Invers Theatre by way of Edinburgh Fringe'12

This provocative play features two of New Zealand's historical figures: she was convicted for infanticide in 1895 and became the only woman ever hanged in New Zealand. He was a young lad from Bluff who was shot for desertion in World War I. Minnie Dean and Victor Spencer share their stories just hours before their planned executions by the state. Observing their tales is Lewis, a staunch supporter of the death penalty.

This production was among nominees for Best Theatre Award at the latest NZ Fringe Festival and we congratulate Jade Gillies who played Victor Spencer for receiving two nominations as Stand Out Performer and Best Newcomer.

This play would be an ideal festival play. It's well written and a thought-provoking 50 minutes. Margaret reports that she was totally riveted by the trauma the characters were going through and was especially moved by the climatic reliving of the experience in the trenches. Contact Jade for more information:
book@inverstheatre.com

What do you think of our new logo? A new letterhead is being designed and for now the logo has been placed on all the material sent out associated with TheatreFest. Remember to talk of TheatreFest, not the Festival of Community Theatre or the one act plays!

Local festivals are now being organised for July/August and if you are not sure where your nearest one might be contact TheatreFest's National Administrator Anne Corney at:
theatrefest@theatrenewzealand.co.nz

At Regional level there has been a change in venue in Blenheim for the Top of the South 23/24 August. The venue will now be Blenheim Musical Theatre 81A Lakings Road. The other South Island Regional will be in Dunedin 16/17 August at a venue TBC.

North Island venues are as stated in February Backchat, Shambles Theatre, Rotorua. 16/17 August and MATTS, Masterton 24/25 August

Olga E Harding Playwriting Assessor

Dave Armstrong will be this year's Assessor of new plays entered in TheatreFest. He began his career as a trumpet player and is now a professional writer for theatre and television (*The Motorcamp* and *Seven Periods with Mr Gormsby* are examples of his work). He has won Chapman Taylor Theatre Awards three times, been a Writer in Residence at Victoria University and currently writes a weekly column in the Dominion Post.

Dave will be in attendance at TheatreFest in September.

Regional Workshops

Remember that NZTF has money available for travel and accommodation to help to bring a tutor to your area. This seeding money is not for individual theatres but for a grouping of theatres within an hour's drive of one another. So get together with an identified common need and ask us! If you don't know your neighbours we can give you contact details and we can recommend tutors suitable for various needs. The form is on the website under Downloads.

JUNE ALLEN'S AWARD WINNING PLAYS

Advertisement

ONE ACT PLAYS:

Amethyst - NZ. 1908. Ladies take tea in town; Edwardian gowns, and gossip galore. In the kitchen, the pantry maid bemoans her fate. Comedy 5W.

An Angel Calls - Who will the angel take away with him? Comedy 2W 2M

Sheep Ahoy - Sheep on a hill country farm are trying to revive the flagging wool industry. Comedy 3W.

Irene - adaptation of true story Beyond the Nightmare; an account of how alcoholism affects a family. 4W 2M

FIFTY MINUTE PLAY:

The Pear Tree - a mystical romance set in an historic house. 3W 2M.

FULL LENGTH PLAYS, WITH MUSIC: New Zealand historical events set in a comedic and entertaining way.

Moonshine - about Hokonui whisky making, with Scottish classics inserted. 80 min. 4F, 4M.

Kilkenney Rose - life of women in the gold mining era, with old-time bar room songs throughout. 80 min. 4W 2 M



Reading copies of all titles are available free of charge from June Allen, Bayview, Auckland.

Please contact June on june.all@xtra.co.nz (09) 443 4451

This month we bring you a collection of literary adaptations. If any of these plays interest you we can email you the script, FREE - and if you have any particular requirements we can also make other suggestions - please contact clientpromotion@playmarket.org.nz with your queries.

UPPER WAIMAKARIRI by Dean Parker (3-7w 5-9m)

Emily Brontë's classic novel *Wuthering Heights* is transposed to the high country of mid-19th century Canterbury. Heathcliff, a 7-year-old Ngai Tahu Maori, becomes part of the Earnshaw family, a settler household in the Upper Waimakariri. Gradually he becomes the obsessive love of Cathy Earnshaw, but when she comes of age she announces that she intends to marry into the Ellworthys of Thrushcross Station. Heathcliff, embittered by what he sees as a betrayal by Cathy, leaves the Earnshaws and seeks to transform himself. When he returns to Canterbury, a fortune made, he is bent on revenge.

IRISH ANNALS OF AOTEAROA by Simon O'Connor (3w 5m)

A comic, lyrical show about bi-cultural identity adapted from the novel by Michael O'Leary. Our drunken protagonist is a totally innocent victim of history - or is he? Latest in a long line of seducers and absconders, he's on the run from his pregnant girlfriend in Dunedin and he's just buried his Da. Hopelessly drunk on the Auckland express, he steps out of the wrong door and lies bleeding to death in the snow. In his delirious state, he is visited by the ghosts of his ancestors, and goes on a journey into the past until he finally discovers his own true identity.

ORACLES AND MIRACLES by Norelle Scott (2w 1m)

Adapted from the stage from the best-selling novel by Stephen Eldrid-Grigg, *Oracles and Miracles* tells the story of sisters Ginnie and Fag growing up in working class Christchurch in the 1930s and 40s.

WHERE WE ONCE BELONGED by Dave Armstrong (3w 2m)

Alofa Filiga is thirteen years old. She lives with her family, the Filiga 'aiga, in the village of Malaefou, not far from Apia in Western Samoa. But Alofa isn't happy; coming of age in Samoa isn't as easy as those European anthropologists imagined it to be. A forceful and honest adult work, based on Sia Figiel's book of the same name, telling a modern tragicomedy of violence, the repression of women and the struggle for identity in today's Samoa. Winner of the Chapman Tripp Award for Outstanding New Zealand Play, 2008.

THE BOOK OF FAME by Carl Nixon (4-13m)

Adapted from the Lloyd Jones novel *The Book of Fame* tells the story of an unlikely bunch of lads heading to the UK in 1905 as All Blacks in the tour that made the team famous in New Zealand and around the world. Can be played by a cast as small as four.

THE GREAT GATSBY by Ken Duncum (5w 3m)

Ken Duncum smartly and sympathetically translates from page to stage F. Scott Fitzgerald's classic novel *The Great Gatsby*. Set in America's Jazz Age, the play opens with narrator Nick Carraway drawing from the shadows the ghosts of wealthy and indulgent lives lived in and around Jay Gatsby's Long Island mansion. 'It's about power, wealth, and temptation' says Duncum, 'and how power and wealth are used to get away with stuff.'

GREAT EXPECTATIONS by Dean Parker (6+w 6+m)

One of the most beloved novels of all time comes to the stage in Dean Parker's adaptation of *Great Expectations*. Experience Dickensian England in all its grime and glory as the young orphan Pip makes his way in the world surrounded by a host of unforgettable characters. Can be played by a cast of 10 with doubling.

THE THREE MUSKETEERS by Stuart Hoar (5w 12m)

All for one and one for all! 17th Century France springs to life in Stuart Hoar's adaptation of Alexander Dumas' classic novel of adventure, romance, treachery and swashbuckling.

THE WIND IN THE WILLOWS by Tim Bray (2-5w 3m)

Based on the classic story by Kenneth Grahame, *The Wind in the Willows* follows the adventures of Mole and Ratty, as they try and locate the best place for a picnic. Along the way they meet Otter, Badger and the inimitable Toad. In a rollicking audience participation finale, the audience helps the animals rid Toad Hall of the nasty Weasels.

THE OWL AND THE PUSSYCAT by Tim Bray (2w 1m)

The wonderfully quirky and nonsense poem by Edward Lear comes to life on stage with all the fun of the Turkey who lives on the hill, and the Piggy-Wig with a ring at the end of his nose, his nose, his nose... And find out why the Bong Tree is so-called.

2b or nt 2b by Sarah Delahunty (5w 1m)

A contemporary humorous take on characters from Shakespeare's *Hamlet* and *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, Chekhov's *Three Sisters* and *The Seagull*, Sophocles' *Antigone* and Ibsen's *Hedda Gabler*. Hamlet and Antigone have dysfunctional families, Helena and Masha moon over unattainable boys and Irena and Hedda feel trapped in their boring lives. As present day teenagers they all end up on whatsthepoint.com - a website for those searching for meaning in life - and the play follows their plans to meet up. At midnight on the Bridge to Nowhere. A chance for young actors to discover six classics and meet them in today's world.

Published by PLAYMARKET in the New Zealand Play Series 2009 with Eating the Wolf (This title is available from our Bookshop for \$26.50 RRP)

What's On in April & May

• Ellerslie Theatrical Society	AGM at Stables Theatre	April 29 @ 8pm
• Papakura Theatre Company	AUDITION: <i>Romeo and Juliet</i> by William Shakespeare	April 7/9
• Howick Little Theatre	<i>Steel Magnolias</i> by Robert Harling	May 11 - June 1
• Waihi Drama	<i>The Old People are Revolting</i> by Devon Williamson	April 10 - 20
• Tauranga Repertory	AUDITION: <i>Gaslight</i> by Patrick Hamilton	April 28 @ 3pm
• Detour Theatre Tauranga	<i>Bullshot Crummond</i> by Ron House, Diz White et al	May 15 - June 1
• Theatre Whakatane	<i>My In-laws are Outlaws!</i> by Devon Williamson	April 4 - 20
• Rotorua Little Theatre	<i>Peter Pan</i> by Piers Chater Robinson	May 10 - 24
• Feilding Little Theatre	<i>Run for Your Wife</i> by Ray Cooney	April 12 - 27
• FAHS Feilding High School	<i>Grease</i> by Jim Jacobs and Warren Casey	May 24 - June 8
• Foxton Little Theatre	<i>Oedipus the King</i> adapted with music by Karla Croft	April 9 - 10
• Levin Little Theatre	<i>Menopause Made Me Do It</i> by Devon Williamson	April 5 - 13
• Kapiti Playhouse	<i>Tons of Money</i> by Will Evans and Valentine	April 18 - 27
• Mana Little Theatre	<i>Brilliant Lies</i> by David Williamson	April 3 - 13
• Hawke's Bay Theatre	<i>Cinderella a Girl of Today</i> by Julia Barnes	April 25 - May 4
• Harlequin Theatre Masterton	Masquerade Ball	May 25 @7.30pm
• Heretaunga Players	Murder Mystery Dinner	April 4 - 6
• Hutt Repertory Theatre	<i>Absent Friends</i> by Alan Ayckbourn	May 16 - June 1
• Stagecraft Theatre	An Evening of Alan Bennett - four plays	April 11 - 20
• Wellington Repertory	<i>Bert and Maisy</i> by Robert Lord	April 19 - 20
• Marlborough Repertory	AUDITION: <i>Pride and Prejudice</i> by Jane Austen	April 6/7
• Elmwood Players	<i>The God Boy</i> by Ian Cross	May 22 - June 1
• Riccarton Players	<i>Calendar Girls</i> by Tim Firth	April 10 - 20
• SC Drama League Timaru	<i>Much Ado About Nothing</i> by William Shakespeare	April 10 - 20
• Fine Thyme Theatre	<i>Cosi</i> by Loius Nowra	April 24 - May 4
• Invercargill Repertory Society	AUDITION: <i>Someone Who'll Watch Over Me</i> by Frank McGuinness	April 13
	<i>Murder by Membership Only</i> by Thomas Hischak	April 24 - May 4
	<i>Fame Jr</i>	April 25 - 27
	<i>Peninsula</i> by Gary Henderson	May 17 - 25
	AUDITION: <i>Death and Taxes</i> by April Phillips	April 21
	<i>Mum's Choir</i> by Alison Quigan	April 6 - 13

Do you send your newsletters by email? Include Backchat Editor info@theatrenewzealand.co.nz

Did You Know?

Play Bureau is now located in Dunedin, managed by Helen and Brian Horsnell. The new address is 3 Albert Street, St. Clair, Dunedin 9012; PO Box 9013, St. Clair, Dunedin 9047. New phone 03 455 9959 and fax 03 455 9959 and freefax 0800 PLAYBUREAU (0800 752 928). The email will remain the same – play.bureau.nz@xtra.co.nz

Helen introduces themselves thus:

“My background in the theatre started at High School and has seen me progress into most areas of a production over many years. I am quite passionate

about community theatre and feel it gives people valuable skills to use in life. At present I am on the executive of Musical Theatre New Zealand as a zone councillor for Otago and Southland, which allows me to meet with lots of lovely theatre people and see a vast range of productions. Up until now I have mixed my life as a nurse with community theatre and it will be great to work with people with the same passion. Brian works in IT and will bring those talents to support the business and me in this new stage in our life.”

Boosted

You will have heard of PledgeMe, the online, collaborative way of helping to fund creative projects. Now the Arts Foundation has established boosted.org.nz, a crowdfunding website solely for arts projects in New Zealand. Their website outlines five steps to follow that could provide a model to base your next publicity campaign on. Check it out.

Publicity on Websites

Do you regularly include information about upcoming productions on websites? It's easy to list your event. Try eventfinder.co.nz

Join the Conversation

Our organisation has joined up with the Ministry of Education's artsonline.tki.org.nz/ which promotes itself as the key communication network and quality resource portal for NZ arts education.

Entertainment Technology New Zealand

This is an organisation that recognises and supports the technicians, craft persons and designers working in the entertainment industry in New Zealand. Have you looked at their website www.etnz.org? You will find there version 12 of a Guide to Safe Working Practices in the New Zealand Theatre.



Editor: Margaret Robertson

Designer: Jade Gillies

Deadline for next issue of Backchat

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