

Backchat

February 2014 Volume 37 Issue 1

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Ethel Gitt (Jennie Johnson) tries to make contact with her husband Wally as he hurtles into space. HASA Technician (Joanne Barrett) keeps track. Read about Havelock Theatre's Company summer production *Wally Gitt and the Havelock Mission to Mars* on page 3.

President



Our Voices on Stage

It has come to my attention that the number of Aotearoa/New Zealand stories finding their way on to our stages, is increasing at a very fast rate. Not just from some of the more recognised playwrights either – but from co-operatives and school groups, from

tertiary graduates and community groups.

People are often telling their local stories. Be it about the foundations of their community or an aspect of service that needs to be illuminated. Most of these stories, although particular to a community, have about them a commonality. Suffering or success is not peculiar to one town or country sector. Many of the stories (although based in New Zealand), are as international in their relevance, as any play written in America, Britain, Europe or Australia performed by our theatre groups.

In the last **Backchat** I enquired: “Is your membership dying?” This was asking you to assess your administrative processes and practices. Now I ask:

Are you being theatrically relevant?

Is your community tiring of the menu being served?

Are you nurturing new playwrights in your community?

“From little acorns, great oaks will grow.”

So why don't you tap into your young/new/aspiring playwrights, who have stories to tell.

There is a section in **TheatreFest** that stimulates, acknowledges and awards new, New Zealand scripts. This could be a big step in your community and theatre group – in bringing to the stage a local story or perspective of some sort. With the plays' length needing to be between 15 and 50 minutes, it's not too big a step for someone to have a try. Go to our website and TheatreFest for further information on new New Zealand plays.

I also want to draw to your attention that Theatre New Zealand doesn't just provide workshops in Acting/Directing/Designing.

We can also help you with: Governance, Managing Volunteers, Administering Your Society.

I hope you have an adventurous, scintillating, provoking, amusing and moving 2014 theatrical year.

Bryan Aitken
National President

National Treasurer



Welcome
to Blair
Kershaw

A very warm welcome to our new national treasurer Blair Kershaw. He lives in Christchurch where his day job is as Accounts Manager for nood.

Blair has had theatre connections with a couple of theatre companies. When Christchurch Theatre Workshop Inc was almost insolvent he was initially co-opted as Company Treasurer and quickly moved into hands-on production management. A highlight of his time with CTW was their production of *Wonderland* a fundraising venture for the Child Cancer Foundation.

At the same time as *Wonderland* was on he was co-opted onto Canterbury Repertory Theatre Society's Executive Committee and then was immediately asked to become Company Treasurer. Later he also took on various roles with them including production manager.

Our new Post Box number is PO Box 2585 Christchurch 8140

Participate, Educate, Innovate

Your National Executive has been working on a publicity booklet to raise our profile. We are very grateful to The Light Site for helping us with the cost of printing www.lightsite.co.nz The A5 eight page coloured booklet will be distributed nationwide next month. Stand tall and share it with prospective members.

Havelock Theatre Company

New to Theatre New Zealand membership, Ian Cameron writes of this group's history

Havelock Theatre, Marlborough was founded in 1999 by actor/playwright Don Edwards. He continues to be actively involved and along with fellow actor playwright Rick Edmonds they each write plays for the Theatre's summer season.

In fact most of the plays produced are by local writers but this pattern was broken in January/February 2011 when the off-Broadway musical *Lucky Stiff* was presented. This remains as the Company's most successful show ever, by box office standards. An extended season was required.

The Company also stages a second show each year, in early spring. In the past several years this has been a variety show showcasing local talents. The Theatre has a policy of including all interested local school children both in acting and technical fields.

The Theatre does not have a home of its own but uses the historic Havelock Town Hall (built in 1902). The Hall can seat 96 in café style seating. Patrons are encouraged to bring refreshments with them. Over the past three years Bladen Wines and two local restaurants ("Mussel Pot" and "Slip Inn") have sponsored the Gala Opening Nights.

The Company has a policy of using a percentage of the profits from its productions to improve the Hall facilities- over the years it has provided tables, new curtaining and a motorised screen.

The Company won the Trustpower Community Award for Arts and Culture in both 2010 and 2013. The citations comment that The Havelock Theatre Company offers the community top-class theatre.

Wally Gitt and the Havelock Mission to Mars by Rick Edmonds



Havelock schoolchildren discover time capsules left behind by father of nuclear physics Ernest Rutherford and "rocket man" William Pickering. These illustrious past pupils left envelopes for their nearest descendent living in the town. It turns out that the Four Square grocer Wally Gitt, played by Ian Cameron, ("with unflagging energy") is related to both renowned

scientists. but unfortunately Wally is not as bright as he might be.

A Havelock space agency is formed and a rocket built to be sent to Mars, based on information in the envelopes.

The ascent of the Four Square-sponsored rocket, with Wally onboard, is the smoky highlight of the "laugh a minute" play with its cast of 25.

And how did the Company make the rocket? They found a "rocket engineer". Long time member Greg Bettjeman down plays his skills and says he's a 44 gallon drumologist. He just welded two drums together. A huge smoke cannon he built for a previous production using six metre long piston pumps, a winch and huge bungy cords under the stage came into its own again with smoke belching towards the audience on cue when triggered by an actor on the stage.



Wally suspended above the stage in space

Elmwood Players

Jack, the Giant and the Jiggery Plot by Richard Blythe

Another indoor family summer play took place at Elmwood Players in Christchurch. The 70 minute telling of the classic fairy tale Jack and the Beanstalk has a twist: the dimwitted Jack becomes an unsuspecting accomplice in a jiggery plot to kidnap a princess to appease the fearsome giant's appetite. Will Jack be able to use his wits to defeat the giant and save the princess?

This is Elmwood's fifth consecutive year of producing summer Children's Theatre. Rehearsals start before Christmas in readiness for ten performances in January. Average audience is 35 as the play 'competes' with outdoor activities in the summer sun; rain is their friend.



Jack (Kat Forrester) gets his ear pinched by his mother Mrs Wigglebottom (Sarah Coursey), part of the all female cast of 9. The Giant was done as a voice over SFX.

Association of New Zealand Drama Adjudicators

ANZDA plans two accreditation seminars in March/April, in Wellington and another in Christchurch or Dunedin. Dates TBC.

Theatre practitioners with over ten years experience are eligible to apply for accreditation. This is a practical seminar, held over one afternoon/evening/morning.

A short-list has been started – but if you wish to confirm your interest or want to add your name to the list, please contact:
bryanaitken@paradise.net.nz secretary of ANZDA, sending a full CV.

We have also been advised that fees for ANZDA adjudicators have increased. It is recommended that fees shall be \$75 (\$60 previously) for a one act play and \$120 (\$100) for a Full Length play.



Hilarious Comedies!

By Devon Williamson www.plays.co.nz

My Inlaws are Outlaws! - Latest Release!

Cast: 5 Female, 2 Male Length: Two Acts

Annie discovers her in-laws are outlaws... and her mother in-law has hired a mad group of assassins to kill her! How will Annie, a mild mannered Librarian, outwit the best of the Italian, Russian and Irish contract killers? This is outrageous; laugh out loud comedy at its best.

The Old People Are Revolting

Cast: 5 Female, 2 Male Length: Two Acts

An hilarious comedy about seniors seeking revenge! The residents of the Sunshine Retirement Village have had enough: they're revolting! Bursting with eccentric characters and crazy shenanigans the play is great fun to stage and a huge audience pleaser.

How To Train Your Husband

Cast: 5 Female, 2 Male Length: Two Acts

Three generations of the Smith family attempt to turn their men into fully trained members of the opposite sex. Nothing quite goes according to plan and the result is a hilarious comedy with plenty of unexpected twists and turns.

My Husbands Nuts

Cast: 3 Female, 2 Male

Length: Two Acts

Barbara's husband is missing on the family farm. When Jack finally returns he's convinced that he is a Japanese soldier holding out on an island after World War Two. Barbara's husband is nuts. The new vet and the local village idiot are charged with restoring Jack's sanity before the upcoming A & P Show.

Also available...

- ★ Menopause Made Me Do It!
- ★ Understanding Women

- ★ Crazy Ladies
- ★ Lost for Words



For perusal scripts and information
contact The Play Bureau

Phone: 03 455 9959 E Mail: play.bureau.nz@xtra.co.nz

TheatreFest '14

Local TheatreFests

Northland - May

Venue - Otamatea Repertory Theatre
Contact - Kathy Bygrave (09) 431-4816
kathyr1963@hotmail.com

Waikato - July 19/20

Venue - Playbox, Hamilton
Contact - Lorna Ashton (07) 856-3801
nashton@clear.net.nz

Bay of Plenty - August 1/2

Venue - Shambles, Rotorua
Contact - Robyn-Ann Rumney (07) 347-8611
thompsonmowers@seaboss.co.nz

Hawke's Bay - August 1/2

Venue - Playhouse, Hastings
Contact - Anne Corney (06) 843-9197
theatreworld@clear.net.nz

Manawatu - Date TBC

Venue - Feilding Little Theatre
Contact - Joan Ford (06) 355-8834
joan.ford@fairfaxmedia.co.nz

Wairarapa/Wellington - July 18/19

Venue - Carterton Events Centre
Contact - David Johnson 022 659 0210
david.johnson@movingfrontiers.com

Top of the South - Aug 2

Venue - Boathouse, Blenheim
Contact - Anne McAuley (03) 578-6470
anne.mcauley@outlook.com

Canterbury - August 2/3

Venue - NASDA Studio, CPIT Madras St CHCH
Contact - Michelle Histen
histenone@xtra.co.nz

Bottom of the South - Aug 1/2

Venue - Repertory House, Invercargill
Contact - Jade Gillies 021 079 9676
oneactfest@gmail.com

Regional TheatreFests

Upper North Island - August 22/23

Venue - TBC

Lower North Island - August 15/16

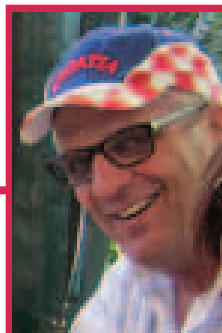
Venue - Feilding Little Theatre
Contact - Joan Ford (06) 355-8834
joan.ford@fairfaxmedia.co.nz

Upper South Island - August 15/16

Venue - NASDA Studio, CPIT Madras St CHCH
Contact - Michelle Histen
histenone@xtra.co.nz

Lower South Island - August 22/23

Venue - TBC, Dunedin
Contact - Jade Gillies 021 079 9676
oneactfest@gmail.com



National Final of TheatreFest'14

September 12/13.

Te Whaea, Newtown Wellington

David Chambers ANZDA will adjudicate



We are pleased to announce that **Steven Arnold** ANZDA will adjudicate the North Island Regionals.



We are pleased to announce that **Phil Peleton** ANZDA will adjudicate the South Island Regionals.

This month we bring you a selection of one act plays. If any of these plays interest you we can email you the script, FREE, unless otherwise noted. If you have any particular requirements we can also make other suggestions - please contact clientpromotion@playmarket.org.nz with your queries.

ELEVATOR by *Jess Sayer* (3w)

Elevator is the story of 3 women - each with a very dangerous secret. When Harper, Samantha and Bree are trapped in a broken-down elevator, keeping their secrets becomes harder than any of them thought. The masks are up. The smiles are on. Everybody has a story – and they're sticking to it.

BOWLED OVER by *Kathryn Burnett* (8w 5m)

Plans for the Balmoral Bowling Club's 100th anniversary party are crushed when obsequious council bureaucrat Rhys Van de Camp announces that it is in violation of several council bylaws. The largely retired members of the club are horrified and set about planning their fight to save it. Rhys steps right into it... but somewhere between his 2nd and 3rd Neenish tart he chokes and dies. It would seem that the members of the Balmoral Bowling Club now have a corpse to dispose of... A perfect vehicle for senior actors. "Hilarious" – NZ Herald

WHODUNNIT? by *Paul Jenden* (3 people)

A very short absurd play for three voices.

CHUB by *Thomas Sainsbury* (2w 1m)

Ann Van Venn is morbidly obese and living/hiding in her unit on Tainui Street. Stacey Wipongi is her anorexic carer with a penchant for cosmetic surgery. Together they come up with the best/kinkiest idea to make money and make all their dreams come true.

KING OF STAINS by *David Geary* (2w 4m)

Friday night. Wellington. Full moon. Six lonely people go crazy. The most dramatic stain removal since Lady Macbeth uttered 'out damned spot.' Suitable for Young Adults.

LITTLE DEATH by *Kathryn van Beek* (1w 1-4m)

A young woman discovers sex, pain, actors, philosophers, cars...and finally freedom.

SPIN by *Conrad Newport* (4w 3m)

With a bottle of vodka, a knife in his pocket and a chip on his shoulder, Mike confronts his ex-girlfriend in her music shop but events quickly get out of hand when no one takes him seriously. Suitable for Young Adults.

LOVEPUKE by *Duncan Sarkies* (4w 4m)

A whirlwind tour of true love. With funny and intense revelations this popular script taps directly into the relationship concerns of contemporary young adults everywhere.

MAGPIES by *Campbell Smith* (2m)

Two old men meet on a seat in a cemetery. The cry of magpies is heard. One of the men is menaced. He feels the cry is ominous for the magpies are taking over the land. The other old man is more rational. After talking the men leave. The seat is empty. The magpies remain.

THE BUTCHER AND THE BEAR by *Michelanne Forster* (1w 3m)

Bear and bird get into big trouble when spring arrives, and hungry, they venture into the village to find some food. They annoy the butcher, get caught by the gypsy, and have a terrible job getting free. Music is integral to the script. Great for small children.

REPLAY by *Angie Farrow* (2w 2m)

A brilliantly funny, very short play themed around infidelity, playing backwards in short replays.

THE BOWLER HAT by *Angie Farrow* (3-6w 4-8m)

A basket of the strange, the real, the impossible, and the disorientingly funny. It exists at the funeral of the Belgian surrealist painter René Magritte (1898-1967), and includes a detective investigating the death of Magritte's mother, a director of a play who is under the impression that the people at the funeral are her actors and dancers, and the loss of the dead painter's clothes.

THE BLACKENING by *Paul Rothwell* (3m)

A psychological thriller set on a decaying orchard where the inhabitants are as blighted as the trees they live under. Mal returns home to the two brothers he abandoned years before. Time has stood still in the home of his youth and Mal intends to start over and do things right. But as he discovers, the old orchard has secrets of its own. "You won't leave the theatre with a smile on your face and a skip in your step, in fact you might just want to sleep with the light on for a while ..." – Capital Times.

JACK WINTER'S DREAM by *James K. Baxter* (1w 6m)

Baxter's first play has all the richness and exciting imagery which filled his poetry in the fifties. Jack Winter, the old swagman, lies down for his last sleep in the ruins of "The Drover's Rest" and dreams of the colourful characters of gold-digging days who one stormy night filled the shanty pub with song and argument; laughter and deceit. Published by Victoria University Press and available from our Bookshop for \$15.00.

What's On in February and March

(Consult society websites on www.theatrenewzealand.co.nz/links for more details)

Otamatea Repertory Theatre	<i>'Allo 'Allo</i> by David Croft and Jeremy Lloyd	March 21 - 30
Ellerslie Theatre	<i>Take a Chance on Me</i> by Roger Hall	March 20 - 29
Dolphin Theatre Onehunga	<i>Ladies Down Under</i> by Amanda Whittington	Feb 15 - March 8
Howick Little Theatre	<i>Bookworms</i> by Bernard Farrell	March 1 - 22
Hamilton Playbox	AUDITION <i>Open All Hours</i> by Roy Clarke	February 8/9
16th Avenue Theatre Tauranga	<i>A Short Cut to Happiness</i> by Roger Hall	March 12 - 29
Detour Theatre , Tauranga	<i>Over Paid, Over Sexed and Over Here!</i> by Devon Williamson	March 26 - April 12
Rotorua Little Theatre	<i>See How They Run</i> by Philip King	March 28 - April 12
Theatre Whakatane	AUDITION <i>Cats</i> by Andrew Lloyd Webber	Jan 30, 31 & Feb 1
Napier Repertory	<i>The Great Gatsby</i> adapted by Ken Duncum	February 12 - 22
	AUDITION <i>On Golden Pond</i> by Ernest Thompson	March 16 @2pm
Theatre Hawke's Bay	<i>Le Sud</i> by Dave Armstrong	March 27 - April 5
Harlequin Theatre Masterton	<i>Peninsular</i> by Gary Henderson	March 20 - 29
Hawera Repertory Society	<i>Calendar Girls</i> by Tim Firth	February 15 - 22
	AUDITION <i>Four Flat Whites in Italy</i> by Roger Hall	March 2/3
Wanganui Repertory	<i>Funny Money</i> by Ray Cooney	March 28 - April 5
Feilding Little Theatre Players	<i>The Learner's Stand</i> by David Geary	March 14 - 29
Levin Little Theatre	<i>Entertaining Angels</i> by Richard Everett	March 27 - April 12
Mana Little Theatre	AUDITION <i>Alice</i> by Sue Mortimer and Stephanie Drew (adapted from Lewis Carroll)	February 2 @ 7pm
Porirua Little Theatre	<i>The Full Monty</i> book by Terrance McNally, score by David Yazbek	March 26 - April 19
Khandallah Arts Theatre	<i>The Little Mermaid</i> by Carl Nixon	February 15- 23
Butterfly Creek Eastbourne	<i>Romeo and Juliet</i> by William Shakespeare	March 4 - 8
Stagecraft Theatre	AUDITION <i>Crumble (Lay Me Down, Justin Timberlake)</i> by Sheila Callaghan	March 8/9
Wellington Repertory	AUDITION <i>The Addams Family - A New Musical</i> book Marshall Brickman & Rick Elice, music & lyrics Andrew Lippa	March 8/9
Top Dog Theatre Christchurch	<i>The Tempest</i> by William Shakespeare	Feb 12 - 22 @6pm
Elmwood Players	AUDITION <i>Rabbit Hole</i> by David Lindsay-Abaire	February 22
Riccarton Players	<i>The Laramie Project</i> by Tectonic Theater Project	March 5 - 15
SCDL Timaru Repertory	AUDITION <i>Calendar Girls</i> by Tim Firth	February 14 - 16
Little Theatre	<i>In the Next Room or The Vibrator Play</i> by Sarah Ruhl	March 7 - 15
	<i>Too Far From Heaven</i> by Angela Newell, Jade Gillies, Lizzie Dawson	March 22
Clyde Theatre Group	<i>Calendar Girls</i> by Tim Firth	March 29 - April 4

Do you send your newsletters by email? Please add Backchat editor info@theatrenewzealand.co.nz

For Sale

Phoenix Theatre, Auckland has 5 copies of *Ghost Writer* by David Tristram 3M 3 W. for sale.

A London theatre company staged Shakespeare's *Hamlet* - fronted by a TV Soap star, and backed by a cast of second-rate hams. After the last-night party Ruby who played Ophelia was found dead, an overdose of naughty pills and booze. The theatre world went into a state of mourning that barely lasted into the afternoon but a year later grieving playwright/actor husband Edward can't face the torment of living on his own and moves in with gay friend Alex. A haunting comedy.

The scripts at \$15 each are in excellent condition and cheaper to buy than hire. Anyone interested can phone Russ Boyes on 09 476 6312 or contact info@phoenixtheatre.co.nz

Hamilton Playbox invites....

all interested parties to morning tea and discussion about membership of Theatre New Zealand; what's in it for you?

Date & Time: 8 March 2014 at 10:00am

Hosts: Hamilton Playbox

Place: Riverlea Theatre, Riverlea Road.

Cost: Free

RSVP: playbox@playbox.org.nz

You will meet some members of National Executive, take away information about Theatre New Zealand and may also collect entry forms for TheatreFest'14.

Napier Repertory Players thanks....

A recent newsletter lists sponsorships received:

- The Eastern and Central Community Trust for providing valuable assistance towards our administration and operational costs.
- Pub Charity for funding the cost to repaint the exterior of The Little Theatre
- The Southern Trust for funding the air conditioning in dressing room and kitchen.
- Infinity Foundation for contributing to our hefty insurance premiums.
- Endeavour Community Foundation for assisting with Last of the Summer Wine.

Is your society asking for help?



Editor: Margaret Robertson

Designer: Jade Gillies

Deadline for December Backchat

March 20th 2014

Send Theatre New Zealand communications to

info@theatrenewzealand.co.nz

or PO Box 2585 Christchurch 8140