



Backchat

News from Theatre New Zealand
Fostering Community Theatre in Aotearoa

December 2015/January 2016, Vol 38 Issue 6



Twas the Fight Before Christmas by Devon Williamson

Director Kim Williamson of Detour Theatre plays Mary, long suffering mother of two delightfully horrible adult daughters. Here she discovers that one of them (Sarah Oemcke) has had her will changed. The other daughter is played by Susi Jansen. For too long the daughters have been ruining Christmas and this year Mary is determined to take Christmas back. A hilarious and uplifting comedy, it has been seen in Tauranga and will be produced in Masterton this festive season.

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President

Governance: the action of governing; Conduct the policy and affairs of an organisation; Govern (pilot); Exercise of authority; Management.

The word governance has cropped up a lot lately – whether to do with the Christchurch rebuild and restoration of societies and their theatres – or to do with separate issues surrounding the planning, management and programming of individual societies around the country. People come to us with all sorts of problems, seeking advice and assistance.

From the feedback I have received recently it would appear that some memberships are having trouble with their committees, or that is the perception – whether this is a lack of transparent operation, clear-headedness when dealing with issues, or the pushing through of ‘personal agendas’.

Some societies we have discovered, also don’t seem to have rules of limited tenure on their committees to enable timely inter-change of personnel. This can create a feeling of disenfranchisement within some groups; a ‘holding on of power’ it is felt. It can also have the adverse effect of stultifying growth, inhibiting vision and generally creating lethargy and ill-will amongst the membership. But, we also recognise that the disparity between people willing to stand for committee and those with actual administrative ability can sometimes be wide.

So, is your constitution working – is it fair? Some constitutions I have discovered have a clause that states one third of the committee must step down after three or four years consecutive service, and remain off for one year before seeking re-election. This creates a rotation and ensures two things – that committee experience is not totally lost with change, whilst some new ideas can be moderated into the pool. New members can gain the valuable experience of balancing the process of mounting productions with running the affairs of the society.

If there is a lack of interest of serving within your society, try a ‘buddy’ system whereby senior executive members ‘shoulder-tap’ someone to walk beside them for a year – or try a series of small sub-committees formed under executive members, to create a stimulus within the group which then feeds back into the main committee – this can involve; play/musical selection, design, promotion, any department you care to name really. It doesn’t take much time at all for the enthusiasm to rise and the feeling that membership isn’t just about taking the subs! The stronger the participation with-in your society – the stronger your society will become.

Have a great summer break and try expanding the horizon of your society in the New Year!

Bryan Aitken
National President
Theatre New Zealand



Meritorious Service Awards 2015

Names of those who have served community theatre groups with distinction for more than 25 years were announced at the Annual General Meeting in September. Heartiest congratulations to them all.

Iona Anderson Stagecraft, Theatre Wellington
Barbara Handford Te Aroha Dramatic Society
Peter Hurley Napier Repertory Players
Liz Rayner Marton Players



Iona Anderson's Service Award was announced in the presence of over 100 theatre practitioners gathered recently for the annual Wellington District Antoinettes Awards night. (Teams from seventeen full length plays were up for awards from an adjudicator and Stagecraft's *The 39 Steps*, the winning play is featured under Member's news) Among her 16 productions for Stagecraft Iona's play *Slam!* won the Festival of Community Theatre in 1995. She has been President twice, on the committee for 20 years, has an ongoing commitment to wardrobe and props, regularly does Front of House and keeps Stagecraft's Production Manual up to date among other things.



David Brockett Award for Backstage Achievement 2015

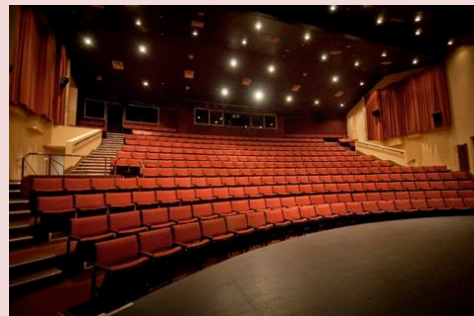
Sue Miller was presented with this award by Immediate Past President Ewen Coleman, at the Antoinettes night. She received it for her extensive work with wardrobe, creating costumes for many Wellington groups over a number of years.

TheatreFest 2016

Local venues confirmed so far are :

Dargaville, Northland	end of July.
Te Kuiti, Waikato	29/30 July.
Hawke's Bay	5/6 August
Rep House, Invercargill	5/6 August.

Upper North Island Regional 19/20 August
Lower North Island Regional 26/27 August in the Hawke's Bay
Upper South Island and Lower South Island Regionals at dates and venues TBA.



National Finals: Centre Stage, Invercargill 9/10 September 2016

Members' News

Assembled from newsletters and websites

Otamatea Repertory Theatre

Youth Theatre Performance Workshops:
"What can I do?" "I'm bored!" Here's the answer! Enroll now for January 25th - 29th workshops covering stagecraft, singing, dancing, working as a team and building self confidence. The week culminates in a show on the Friday night. Cost for members \$60 and non members \$80 includes membership fee.
ota.rep@gmail.com

Howick Little Theatre

Their President has dreamt up an incentive to get members involved with capturing group bookings - PlayDates - for next year. The name of a member successful in landing such a booking will be drawn from a hat and the lucky winner will receive a brandy filled Christmas cake cooked by the President herself.

Te Puke Repertory and Duets



In November Te Puke brought together four comedies by Peter Quilter, live music and a photography exhibition as a hilarious tribute to the strength and madness of the

human heart. The theme was love and duos sang love songs between each charming, bittersweet comedy. The call also went out for 'Happy Together' photos for display and audiences could vote on their favourite. The People's Choice and Judges Choice were announced on the final night.

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On-Stage Te Kuiti

One of their members won a Healtheries competition and as well as receiving \$500 for herself she won \$10,000 to donate to an organisation of her choosing. On-Stage is the lucky beneficiary and a builder will fix the leak in their theatre and new carpet will be laid.

Napier Repertory Players and Art

Deco Weekend 17 - 21 February 2016
This year Napier Rep performed *The End of the Golden Weather* for the Art Deco weekend. Next year they have chosen *An Inspector Calls* by JB Priestley. This mystery thriller takes place on a single night in 1912, focusing on the prosperous, middle-class Birling family. The family is visited by a man calling himself Inspector Goole, who questions them about the suicide of a young working-class woman. A classic "drawing room" piece, the play has also been hailed as a scathing critique of the hypocrisies of Victorian/Edwardian English society. And as the play is set in Edwardian England in full evening dress, ladies who auditioned were asked to wear a full length skirt.

Theatre Hawke's Bay's *A Night in*

Vegas is on now and has it all: fabulous singing and dancing, feathers and sparkle, Acrobats and Divas, Crooners, Rat Pack style swing medley, showgirl and musical theatre numbers, burlesque style dance, hoop performance, mime and impersonations.



Success for TNZ Members

at Norfolk Island Theatre Festival 2015

Congratulations to those involved with *Snap Time* who performed in Norfolk. It won Best Production and playwright John Cocking won Best Actor and Best Original Script. Last year at our National Final in Wellington, *Snap Time* won many awards including the Book of Honour. **Pahiatua Repertory** took *Waiting for Doggett* and Lesley Courtney won Best Female Actor. **Hamilton Playbox** took *Earwigs* to the festival and they won prizes for second best actress and costumes. There were twelve plays (maximum 45 minutes) from New Zealand, Australia and Norfolk Island.

Next year's festival dates are 5 - 8 October three days of performances and workshops. This is a month after our National Final 9/10 September in Invercargill. Week long holiday packages out of Auckland \$1089 pp twin share includes car hire and airport transfers from Denise Reeves of the Norfolk Island Travel Centre denise-r@travelcentre.nf

Playwrights Association of New Zealand, TNZ Member

Did you read that PANZ are looking for a venue for performance of their 10 minute play winners next year? They say It doesn't necessarily mean putting on all eight plays, selling tickets and trying to balance the books. It would be equally valid, from their point of view, if the three top playwrights were invited to a workshop with experienced directors and actors, leading to quality feedback for the writers and followed by a public reading. This year the eight winning plays were



performed in Palmerston North in September by Skin Theatre as *Bites* with the by-line 8 plays, 8 actors 80 minutes. Photo - Phil White and Hannah Pratt in *A Sentimental Journey* by Paula Crimmens, First Place Award Winner of 2015 PANZ ten minute play competition.

Wellington Repertory Theatre turns 90

Wellington's oldest community theatre group will celebrate its 90th birthday May 14th 2016 with a Jubilee dinner and entertainment. They plan to produce a book of memorable moments, anecdotes, photos and programmes to capture the spirit of Rep over the years. To this end they want to interview members past and present in late January. Contact Annabel annabel.hensley@clear.net.nz if you have memories to share.

Stagecraft Theatre, Wellington

Earlier in the year Stagecraft staged *The 39 Steps* adapted by Patrick Barlow directed by Shannon Tubman. It was entered in the local full length festival along with 16 other plays from around Wellington. Recently everyone came together for the awarding of the Antionettes where it was judged a near perfect production by adjudicator Lindsey Rusling. She awarded it Best Overall Production, Best Director (Shannon Tubman), Best Male Actor (Simon McArthur as Richard Hannay) and Best Supporting Actress (Tanisha Wardle as Clown 1).



A publicity shot taken in Wellington's old cable car: Tanisha Wardle, Geoff Simmons. Simon McArthur and Lydia Harris.

This month we bring you wide range of New Zealand plays, some drama, some comedy, some for adults and some for kids.

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.

SONGBIRD by *Richard Huber* (1w 1m)

A sparkly and witty one act romantic comedy about a policeman and a recently married bride who has run away from her husband. *Songbird* is driven by unconventional and unpredictable dialogue and a great sense of playful fun.

FINDING THE LOCUS by *Denis Edwards* (2w)

In this sharp little comedy two women are caught in a drama that only one of them knows everything about, and it is one affecting both of their ambitions and hopes. They are rehearsing a play, knowing a successful production has positive career implications for them both. One realises the other has an agenda that is definitely not in her best interests. 2ND PLACE IN THE NEW YORK SCRIPTWRITING COMPETITION.

THE FIRST 7,500 DAYS OF MY LIFE by *Uther Dean* (large cast)

Some people collect stamps, some people play sports, and some people undertake in-depth scientific surveys for each day of their entire lives. Let's just say that Max Addison doesn't collect stamps or play sports. The presentation of the findings from Max's survey, findings that could indeed be literally considered their life's work, will be a momentous occasion. To not attend such a momentous occasion could easily be construed as oafish or unthinking. Max is certain that you will wish to avoid this pitfall. HIGHLY COMMENDED PLAYS FOR THE YOUNG 2015

DEXTER'S DEEP SEA DISCOVERY by *Darlene Mohekey and Jess Sayer* (4w 2m)

When Dexter pulls the bath plug, something grabs his foot, and he is dragged into a deep sea adventure that will change his life forever. A loony show full of musical mermaids, sharks with swag and dancing dogfish! *Dexter's Deep Sea Discovery* is an interactive, immersive and explorative pantomime that reaches out to all ages. 3-8 YEAR OLD CATEGORY WINNER PLAYS FOR THE YOUNG 2015

HITS OF '74 by *Lucy Schmidt and Stayci Taylor* (2w 2m)

Four old friends meet regularly in Graeme's bar. They all have fond memories of the bar's '70s heyday,

but in the here and now things aren't as golden, as the bar's tragic decor suggests. Kathy's almost given up on her husband ever making parole; Jason and Tina have almost given up on each other – but Graeme's not giving up on the bar, even as business slows to a stop and the building is condemned.

With flashbacks to 1974, the friends sing their way through the smash hits of that year, and overcome their differences to pull together, save the bar and bury the past once and for all. An unashamedly nostalgic and energetic romp.

HOW TO CATCH A GRIM REAPER by *Helen Vivienne Fletcher* (3w 4m)

A filmmaker, a med student, and a psychology major come up with a plan to catch the Grim Reaper... but there's just one problem: they need to kill one of their friends to do it. Well... almost kill them, that is. None of them expect it to work ... and they have absolutely no clue what to do now they have Death itself caged in their lounge... FINALIST PLAYS FOR THE YOUNG COMPETITION 2015

MRS VAN GOGH by *Geoff Allen* (1w 3m)

The story of the woman who created the legend. Vincent van Gogh sold only one painting during his lifetime, today he is the most reproduced artist in the world - all because his sister-in-law Johanna refused to destroy the hundreds of paintings left to her. All because she spent years taking them to galleries to get attention. All because she translated 500 letters between Vincent and Theo Van Gogh.

THE BOXER by *Matthew Saville* (1w 3m)

100 years ago, in a world of cowboys and Indians, vaudeville and incredible hardship, a Kiwi boxer took on the world and won. Bob Fitzsimmons, a 10-stone blacksmith from Timaru, followed his dreams to become the lightest man ever to win the World Heavyweight title. *The Boxer* tells the story of his life in a one hour vaudeville extravaganza which is filled with romance, comedy, and pugilistic prowess.

RAPUNZEL by *Brendon Bennetts* (1w 2m)

The classic fairytale has been adapted by Brendon Bennetts into a fun show for all ages. The story of a beautiful girl with long hair trapped in a tower, a handsome prince and a wicked witch remains the same - with a territorial wolf, a magic carrot and a tuba-playing butler added for good measure. We're also thrilled to be representing Brendon's other children's plays written for the Court Theatre including *Little Red Riding Hood*, *Jack and the Beanstalk*, *Antarctic Adventure* and *The Adventures of Captain Hook*.

What's On in December, January and February 2016

Otamatea Repertory Theatre *A Christmas Carol* by Karen Louise Hebden to December 5
Dargaville Little Theatre *Santa's Christmas Panto - The Auditions* by Anna-Marie Cutts
Phoenix Theatre AUDITION *Move Over Mrs Markham* by Ray Cooney Dec 2 @2pm
Howick Little Theatre *Seven Year Twitch* by David Lewis to December 5
Central Otago Man a Kiwi comedy by Justin Eade Feb 27 - March 19
Dolphin Theatre *Last of the Summer Wine* by Roy Clarke to December 5
Hamilton Playbox AUDITION *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory* by Roald Dahl
adapted by Richard George December 5/6 9am - 5pm
On-Stage Te Kuiti *Jersey Girls - Farmed and Dangerous* by Lynelle Kuriger Dec 2 - 5
16th Ave Theatre Tauranga *Joyful and Triumphant* by Robert Lord to December 12
*Star*Man - that 70's Musical* by Sam Martin January 13 - 23
Theatre Whakatane *Avenue Q* dinner and show December 3 - 13 & January 8 - 16
Cue Theatre, Inglewood AUDITION *Fox on the Fairway* by Ken Ludwig Nov. 29 @11am
Napier Repertory Players *An Inspector Calls* by J.B.Priestley February 18 - March 5
Theatre Hawke's Bay *A Night in Vegas* to December 5
AUDITION *Third Week in August* by Peter Gordon 31 January
Pahiatua Repertory *The Addams Family Musical* by Brickman/Ellis to December 12
Kapiti Playhouse *Book Ends* by Roger Hall to December 5
Khandallah Arts Theatre *The Gingerbread Man* by Sarah Delahunty February 13 - 21
Stagecraft Theatre AUDITION *Kafka's Dick* by Alan Bennett December 2
Wellington Repertory AUDITION *Arsenic and Old Lace* by Joseph Kesselring
December 13 @ 11.30am
Hutt Repertory *A Christmas Carol* by Christopher Schario December 2 - 12
Limelight Theatre, Carterton *The Sex Fiend* by Stephen Sinclair and Danny Mulheron
to December 5
Harlequin Theatre, Masterton *Twas the Fight before Christmas* by Devon Williamson
December 2 - 12
Havelock Theatre *Diplomatic Baggage* by John Chapman January 27-February 6
Marlborough Repertory *You Can Always Hand Them Back* by Roger Hall/Peter Skellern
to December 6
Riccarton Players *The First Quarter - musicals from last 25 years* December 9-12
Elmwood Players AUDITION *Jumpy* by April de Angelis February 20

Send information about your upcoming productions to info@theatrenewzealand.co.nz

Playmarket Play Series publication

This year's publication *Here and Now* is a tantalising reflection of contemporary Aotearoa by many young award-winning NZ playwrights:

The Intricate Art of Actually Caring by Eli Kent

Manawa by Jamie McCaskill

Sheep by Arthur Meek

Rewena by Whiti Hereaka

The Road that wasn't There by Ralph McCubbin Howell

Fix by Jess Sayer

Riding in Cars with (Mostly Straight) Boys by Sam Brooks

Eloise in the Middle by Emily Duncan

Anagrams - Just for fun

Astronomer = moon starrer
Desperation = a rope end it
The Eyes = they see
The Morse Code = here come dots
Dormitory = dirty room
Slot Machines = cash lost in me

Animosity = is no amity
Election Results = lies - let's recount
Snooze Alarms = alas, no more z's
A Decimal Point = I'm a dot in place
The Earthquakes = that queer shake
Eleven Plus Two = twelve plus one

Seasons Greetings Everyone

Best wishes for Christmas and the New Year. May you enjoy the company of family and friends and return refreshed for theatre in 2016.



Editor; Margaret Robertson
Designer: Morris Robertson

Deadline for February Backchat
18 January 2016

Send Theatre New Zealand communications to
info@theatrenewzealand.co.nz

or

PO Box 2585 Christchurch 8140

MERRY
CHRISTMAS