

BACKCHAT

News from THEATRE NEW ZEALAND
Fostering Community Theatre in Aotearoa

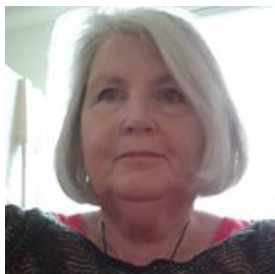
April/May 2018 Vol.41 Issue 2



Emily Perkins adaptation of Ibsen's *A Doll's House* is set in present day New Zealand. Nora (Abi Balasogiou) and Theo would appear to be the perfect family with two children (Sienna Wheeler and Aled Gjelstad) living off grid in a new home. The arrival of two long lost friends just on Christmas shatters that perfect image.

A dynamic script, with a talented all Blenheim cast, directed by Pam Logan and Tamara Henry, April 4 - 13, this is the first production in an all NZ play line-up celebrating 70 years of Marlborough Repertory Society.

Introducing Lorna Ashton



Members of the executive have been asked to write an editorial so TNZ members can get to know us a little. I find it very difficult to talk

about myself but here goes. I think I was born trying to make people happy; I loved performing and my sisters and cousins would put on concerts once a week for our parents and anyone else who happened to be around at the time.

My mother was very musical and one of the things we had in our dining room was a pedal organ and after dinner we girls would do the dishes while Dad had a smoke and a cup of tea and mum played the organ. One of my favourites was Jamaican Farewell. You can imagine my joy many years later as an adult, visiting Jamaica for my niece's wedding when we were sitting on a verandah drinking Red stripe and someone put on Harry Belafonte. I did not know whether to laugh or cry, and that is my life, I either laugh or cry.

I have served on many committees and was so lucky to be one of the founding members of the Huntly Community Arts Council. I instigated visiting performers like Garry McCormick, The Humanimals, Limbs Dance Company to name a few and then we created courses, clubs and workshops across all disciplines. I also assisted with remedial reading at Huntly High School. Whilst living overseas I worked in community TV and hosted and filmed interviews and human interest stories. I also taught drama in schools and libraries both in NZ and abroad.

I was the first person to become a life member of both Musikmakers and Hamilton Playbox which is a very distinct privilege and honour, thank you. I now share that honour with one other person, Mark Perry.

I have also received a Meritorious Service Award from Theatre NZ. So, needless to say a lot of my time is spent in theatres these days. I also work from home. This is what keeps us young, being busy.

Our annual TheatreFest is a love of mine, mainly because I really enjoy absurdist plays and this is one of the few avenues available for its performance. As I've become older I really enjoy the directing side of theatre too. This year I am directing *Peter Pan*, the original play and am also organising, with the assistance of the Hamilton Playbox committee, a new initiative, the 24-hour play challenge at the end of May. (see page 3) I also hope to have an entry in TheatreFest again this year.

I volunteer at Riverlea Theatre in Hamilton and we have regular working bees. I was very proud to be nominated by Hamilton Playbox and voted onto the Executive of Theatre NZ and I try to do my bit. I attempt to keep in touch with all the groups in Waikato BOP area but would really love to receive more feedback on how you are doing and if we can be of any help. Just contact us through the secretary and tell us how we can help you and your group.

Lorna Ashton

Welcome to New Members

Two girls' colleges have recently joined and we welcome them: Iona College of Havelock North and Rangi Ruru College of Christchurch. We look forward to seeing them in action at TheatreFest.

Poster Competition



Get posters of NZ productions from 2017 and up until 31st July 2018 ready to send for judging. Best

community Theatre poster wins \$1000. Open section Best NZ Poster Ever! will also win \$1000



TheatreFest 18

National Finals Wellington

15/16 September,
venue to be confirmed.
Adjudicator Hilary Norris

Lower South Island Regional

17/18 August in Dunedin
at the Globe Theatre,

Upper South Island Regional

24/25 August, venue yet to be decided,
Adjudicator for both Jonathon Hendry

Upper North Island Regional

17/18 August at Centrestage Taupo,
Adjudicator Claire Marsh

Lower North Island Regional

24/25 August at Feilding Little Theatre,
Adjudicator Pam Logan

Local Festivals

North Island

Dargaville (date unknown), Taupo (27/28 July), possibly Bay of Plenty, Hawkes Bay (3/4 August), Manawatu (date unknown), Wellington (3/4 August),

South Island

Top of The South, Nelson (15/16 June), Canterbury, Christchurch (3/4 August), Otago/Southland, Logan Park High School, Dunedin (3/4 August).
Adjudicators for these will be announced in the coming weeks.

24 Hour Play Challenge at Riverlea Theatre 24 - 26 May

Organised by Hamilton Playbox Repertory Society

Here's a great initiative to join in with!

Rules

Minimum entry 2 performers | director.
Maximum entry 4 performers | director | technical.

Two props provided.

10 lines of text provided. All additional text must be original.

Music source will be available to use, free of copyright and charge.

All entrants must pay \$5 at time of entry.

First Meeting 7pm Friday 25th at Riverlea to receive the props and text and from then on through to 5pm Saturday you have time to create and rehearse a 8 - 12 minute play. You will be given rehearsal space and a roving advisor, Michael Switzer will be on hand to guide competitors.

At 5pm Saturday each team will be given a 10 minute technical on stage.

At 7pm there will be a public performance (ticket price \$10 includes supper). The plays will be adjudicated by Steven Arnold and the winning team will, if suitable and meets the competition standard, be given the opportunity to be a Playbox entry into TheatreFest at local level (value \$150) or team members may elect to receive a year's subscription each to Hamilton Playbox.

http://www.playbox.org.nz/images/documents/2018_24hr_play_challenge_entry.pdf



This month we bring you a wide selection of short plays. If any of these interest you

we can email you the script for free. If you have any particular requirements we can also make other script suggestions - contact claire@playmarket.org.nz.

FULL-LENGTH SHORT PLAYS (40 – 50 minutes)

WHICH WAY OUT by Bryan Aitken (3w, 2m)

Evelyn Spicer, a feisty unmarried schoolteacher in her seventies, is dumped by her family in a country rest home after a heart attack. With her love of the countryside, art and vibrant memory, she embarks on an emotional journey of renewal, battling aside indifference and an incompetent dictatorial matron. As she reconstructs her rich fulfilled life, she also discovers maybe why she has ended up alone.

HOLD ME by Emily Duncan (2w, 1m)

Time is of the essence for Grace, Stanza, and Erik, who are forever teetering on the cusp of Autumn, and the cycles of life, money, and war are the only constants as our heroes hunt love and each other. *Hold Me* invites the audience into a realm where time and space have been revived and adapted. A twisting, surrealist tale of love, money and war.

THE GIFT OF TONGUES by Michelanne Forster (3w, 3m)

Dell Woods, a retired American Missionary who spent his life in Japan, sneaks away from California where he lives his badly incapacitated wife, Daisy, to complete a final mission of faith in Japan. His elder daughter Braegen is horrified as she knows her parents are barely coping with daily life, much less international travel. She alerts her brother Bud, who lives in New Zealand. They meet in Tokyo to plan a 'sensible' future for their zealous parents but Dell's final mission to the banks of the Toyama River changes the game plan for everybody.

STUFF: A PLAY ON WORDS by Patrick Evans (2w, 3m)

When Carol and Alan arrive for a Saturday night suburban dinner and the lights are out and nobody appears to be home, their comfortable and unthinking routine is thrown into complete disarray. They are joined by other couples and together find that language is running their lives. An absurdist comedy.

PIRATES VS. NINJAS by Anya Tate-Manning (3w, 6m)

Humanity's forces of freedom and anarchy are at war, and the Clans must unite together to defeat their foe. But will they be able to bury their own grievances to unite as allies? The Pirate King is determined to have his bride, the Gypsy will have her revenge and the Ninja must face her

destiny. Tempers will flair and blood will be spilt. Fast paced and unrelenting, with rich language, high passions and firebolt action.

SCIENCE IS DEAD! by David Geary (1-3 either gender)

A short sharp play about 3 modern day Mad Men types who jam ideas on how to discredit science and scientists, which is all fun and games until someone gets thrown out a window. Also includes Fake News, Superman, and what really killed Leonard Cohen.

INSTINCT by April Phillips (2w, 1m)

Two ordinary, everyday women stand before a bound hostage in an abandoned warehouse. They are armed with a gun, a knife and a video camera. Barbara is overwhelmed by suspicion and doubt. She wants answers. Carol is bitter, calculated and steadfast. She wants justice. Control and purpose break down during the interrogation as emotion and gut instinct take over.

VERY SHORT PLAYS (10 – 20 minutes)

KIWIS IN PARADISE by Susan Battye (2w, 1m)

When American tourists Bob and his wife Stacey encounter teenager Amy, the enthusiastic 'Save the Kiwi' collector at the Franz Josef glacier Visitors' Centre, they get more than they bargain for. This comedy sketch was a finalist in the 2016 Saving Endangered Species International Playwriting Competition.

THE REUNION by Tim Hambleton (2m)

Two men in their mid 40s meet at a school reunion. Each tries to outdo the other as they talk about how successful they have been since leaving school. They are making it all up.

PIRITI by Mike Isle (3m)

NZ 10th June 1968: A country and a time in a traumatic state of afterbirth. The compulsory blending of two cultures produces confrontations, particularly in the Bay of Plenty where this play is set.

PHOBIA by Mel Johnston (1w, 1m)

A man and a woman discuss life, the universe and everything, including a freezer.

THREATENED PANDA FIGHTS BACK by Rex McGregor (2w, 2m)

As the World Wildlife Fund's poster boy for endangered animals, Ling enjoys a comfortable life full of adulation and all the bamboo he can eat. But when a rival species challenges him for the role, he risks losing everything.

PINK by Christina Stachurski (5-21w) A quick series of thematically linked monologues and short scenes about breasts and cupcakes. Comic and tragic. Exciting to stage.

What's On in April and May 2018

Otamatea Repertory Theatre	Festival of One Act Plays	April 13 - 15
Howick Little Theatre	<i>House by the Lake</i> by Hugh Mills	May 5- 26
Hamilton Playbox Theatre	<i>Allegiance</i> by Wayne Green	April 7 - 21
Te Aroha Little Theatre	AUDITION <i>Peter Pan - the Panto</i>	April 6 @7pm
Waihi Drama Society	<i>Curtain Up!</i> By Peter Quilter	May 24 - June 3
Katikati Theatre	AUDITION <i>Family Spirit</i> by Pat Wollaston	April 12 & 15
Putaruru Theatre Players	<i>The Amorous Ambassador</i> by Michael Parker	May 1- 5
Rotorua Little Theatre	<i>Glide Time</i> by Roger Hall	May 2 - 12
	AUDITION <i>The Vicar of Dibley</i> adapt Ian Gower & Paul Carpenter	May 13 @2pm
Taumaranui Performing Arts	<i>Last Legs</i> by Roger Hall	April 13 - 21
Gisborne Unity Theatre	<i>Pop Corn</i> by Ben Elton	April 13 - 20
Iona College	<i>One Man Two Guvnors</i> by Richard Bean	May 2 - 3
Danevirke Theatre Co.	<i>Once Upon a Time</i> by Paul Barron & Susan Dyson	April 18 - 21
Greytown Little Theatre	<i>Educating Rita</i> by Willy Russell	April 4 -14
New Plymouth Repertory Society	<i>Roots and Wings</i> by Frank Vickery	May 1 - 12
Inglewood Dramatic	<i>Boeing Boeing</i> by Marc Camoletti	April 26 - May 5
Feilding Little Theatre	<i>Habeas Corpus</i> by Alan Bennett	April 6 - 21
Foxton Little Theatre	<i>Mothers and Fathers</i> by Jo Muasphia	to April 7
Levin Little Theatre	<i>An Unseasonable Fall of Snow</i> by Gary Henderson	April 13 - 28
Kapiti Playhouse	<i>The Memory of Water</i> by Shelagh Stephenson	April 11 - 21
Mana Little Theatre	<i>Radium Girls</i> by D. W. Gregory	May 23 - June 2
Khandallah Arts Theatre	AUDITION <i>The Pink Hammer</i> by Michele Amas	April 29 & May 2
Wellington Repertory Theatre	<i>Our Country's Good</i> by Timberlake Wertenbaker	April 4 - 14
Stagecraft Theatre	AUDITION <i>King Lear</i> by William Shakespeare	April 7 - 8
	<i>Bronte</i> by Polly Teale	May 23 - June 1
Hutt Repertory Theatre	<i>The Dresser</i> by Ronald Harwood	April 11- 28
Heretaunga Players	<i>The Fat Lady Sings in Little Grimley</i> by David Tristram	April 26- May 5
Nelson Youth Theatre Co	<i>Aesops Fables</i> by Ed Graczyk ; <i>Holy Moses!</i> Bob Kolsby	April 15-16
Marlborough Repertory Soc.	<i>A Doll's House</i> by Emily Perkins from Ibsen	April 4 - 13
Canterbury Repertory	<i>The Vicar of Dibley</i> adapt Ian Gower & Paul Carpenter	May 9 - 19
Elmwood Players	<i>Always a Bridesmaid</i> by Jones Hope Wooten	April 18 - 28
Riccarton Players	<i>Kings of the Gym</i> by Dave Armstrong	April 26 - May 5
Big Little Company, Ashburton	<i>One Man Two Guvnors</i> by Richard Bean	April 20 - 22
South Cant. Drama League	<i>Seussical Kids</i> by Lynn Aherns plus <i>Hairspray Jr</i> by Marc Shaiman and Scott Wittman	April 12 - 14
	AUDITION <i>Beauty and the Beast</i>	April 18 - 22
	<i>Darling Buds of May</i> by H.E. Bates	May 3 - 11
McKenzie Theatre Group	<i>Charlie and the Chocolate Factory</i> by Roald Dahl	May 19 - 26
Invercargill Repertory	<i>The Last Five Years</i> by Jason Robert Brown	April 25 - 28

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



It's not all about a production in September!

Not everyone can put on a New Zealand production during NZ Theatre month, but there are many other ways that NZ Theatre can be celebrated. During the month, Auckland's Q Theatre is having four conversations with playwrights; Dolphin Theatre is devoting each of the

Monday nights to a topic on NZ Theatre.

Other suggestions: hold a reading of a classic NZ play that you love but have trouble casting or a play you might consider for your next year's programme. Display costumes or models of sets or posters from previous productions at the library or in a local store window. Host a morning or afternoon tea to honour the founders, long term members and leading lights of your organization. Dedicate one day in the month to all the skilled people who work back stage: set designers; costume; lighting, sound, stage manager. They probably all deserve a day to themselves, but the point is how much is the average theatre-goer aware of their skills and what they do? Hold a quiz with a NZ Theatre theme, a possible fund-raiser?



Editor Margaret Robertson
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Deadline for June/July Backchat 20 May 2018

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