

BACKCHAT

News from THEATRE NEW ZEALAND
Fostering Community Theatre in Aotearoa

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The Christmas Panto Tradition

Boo and hiss the baddies, Awwwww the downtrodden.
Join in "Oh yes you can/Oh no you can't



TheatreFest, a perspective



As 2018 draws to a close it marks the 10th Anniversary of my involvement with Theatre New Zealand

and TheatreFest. While I have been involved in various capacities, perhaps the most significant has been as an educator and Performing Arts teacher. It was back in 2008 I was first made aware of Theatre New Zealand and the annual TheatreFest competition. Determined to give it a go and see just what it was all about, I gathered two ex-students who had just recently left high school and pieced together a 45minute extract from Martin Sherman's play *Bent* to enter TheatreFest. As we progressed through the various levels of competition through to Nationals I was struck by just how educative, and meaningful the whole exercise was, for both my students and I as an educator. Until this point I had not encountered theatre competitions that provided such rich learning opportunities, feedback and guidance, developing participants far beyond just the competition. All to say, I was hooked and have subsequently entered numerous times with students from the three different high schools I have worked at since. TheatreFest has provided a wonderful platform for my students to write original works, direct and perform them, for a purpose other than just meeting assessment requirements as dictated by NZQA. Drama class, and the work done in it, becomes 'real', students developing their thinking, creativity and analytical skills - alongside their theatrical abilities.

The learning that takes place is far richer than when just developing works for Drama class as their works are critiqued and developed by different voices other than my own. TheatreFest has provided a platform for my students to take a risk, especially in writing and directing, many of them never having done so before, and has been instrumental in students recognising these abilities they possess. To see one's original work presented on stage in front of an audience is an opportunity I wish existed when I was at school, an opportunity that has shown my students they have what it takes and could pursue this further.

But it has not just been the students who have greatly benefited, I too have developed significantly in my directing and teaching ability through being introduced and exposed to the wisdom and experience of ANZDA adjudicators; seasoned practitioners generous enough to share what they have learnt in 'treading the boards' themselves.

As preparation begins now for next year TheatreFest is firmly in my mind and my teaching programme and assessments will be designed around it, allowing for a different bunch of students to have this rich experience. What this will specifically look like, I am not sure yet, and perhaps this is the most exciting part as it shall be based around the needs of the students, their thoughts, vision and creative ideas, merged together in a performance to be ready for TheatreFest 2019.

Laurence Wiseman,

St. Andrews College
Christchurch

In Memoriam
Kate Moetaua 1973 - 2018



Kate Moetaua much loved drama teacher at Wakatipu High School passed way early November. Ever-positive, Kate was fully engaged and committed to her theatre work and her drama students.

In 2015 the National Final was held at Playbox Theatre, Hamilton and Kate's team wowed the audience with *Bang Bang You're Dead* William Mastrosimone. and won the Book of Honour. Since then Wakatipu High School has regularly made it into the national finals. This year the team won the Selecon Design/ Technical Award for Renee's *Tiggy Tiggy Touch Wood* and two of her students received Emerging Distinctive Talent Awards.

We send condolences to her family and her many students. She will be missed.

TheatreFest 2019

The **National Final** will again be held in Wellington as it's the easiest place to rendez-vous. Mark the date now **September 14/15**

Regional Finals
August 17/18 and 24/25

Best Actor Male/Female Award - Name Change

In line with awards now made at local and regional levels, National Exec have decided that there will now be two awards for 'Excellence in Acting' at the National Final, not Best Male or Female.

SGC National University of Otago Sheilah Winn Shakespeare Festival

This year **Diocesan School for Girls** who performed *2b or nt 2b* by Sarah Delahunty at our National Final in Wellington won two awards for their *Romeo and Juliet* extract at the Sheilah Winn Final: Most Imaginative and Innovative Production Award and Best Connection with the Audience Award. We congratulate them.

Winner of the Theatre New Zealand's Award for Most Innovative Interpretation (student directed) at this Shakespeare Festival was **Whangarei Girls High School** for *Love's Labour's Lost*.

10 minute Play Competition Winners, Playwrights Assoc.NZ Judged by Richard Harris

1st *Intent to Commit* by Kerrie Anne Spicer. Comment: strong dialogue, fine punchline ending, 2 believable characters; school boy would-be gangsters.

2nd *Just Looking* by Tim Hambleton. Comment: good character development and sharp appropriate dialogue established their personalities. Set in a furniture store, a young employee desperate to make a sale and find love throws herself at an eligible customer.

3rd *A Star is Born* by Richard Prevett
Comment: A satire mocking today's political environment. Dialogue is snappy and differentiates the characters effectively. The humour was nicely balanced within the absurd yarn. Businessman Humphrey has decided he'd like to be prime minister so engages a team of experts to advise him on image and strategy.

Members News From East Coast North Island

Pahiatua Repertory:

Don't Dress for Dinner directed by Ngaire Ngatuere to 8th December. If an old saying was applied to Marc Camoletti's hilarious farce *Don't Dress for Dinner*, it would be, "Oh, what a tangled web we weave when first we practice to deceive." There's pure madcap fun as the key players in the multi-level infidelity plot begin manoeuvring to cover their tracks.



Dannevirke Theatre Company:
'Allo 'Allo by Jeremy Lloyd and David Croft dir by Andrew Crollen to Dec 8



"Listen very carefully, I shall say this only once", Renee's café will only open until 8th December. This classic TV Show will leave you weak from laughter!
Herr Otto Flick - Benjamin Ellington

Te Puke Repertory:

Try This for Size or Moustaches, Muffs and Minstrels by David McPhail & Jon Gadsy, director - Di Leach, to 1st Dec.



Everyone in Te Puke knew about this production as the team were pictured wearing t-shirts advertising the show all over town "Bawdy

Brilliance" also made for an eye-catching heading in the newspaper whose reviewer wrote "As soon as I saw the austere hovel made out of kiwifruit bins with mushrooms growing through the floor, and sexy bloomers hanging up to dry I knew it would be entertaining"

Katikati Theatre

A Walk in the Woods by Debbie Metzler directed by Eryl Raymond to December 2nd

A light-hearted romp through classic fairy stories, a first performance in the new Arts Junction Theatre constructed inside the old library.



Three pigs in search of a new home

Members' News In the Wellington Region

Levin Little Theatre:

Vicar of Dibley 'Celebration of Life'
by Curtis/ Mayhew-Archer
dir. Linda Buckley to December 1

Geraldine instructs the shepherds for the Christmas pageant.



Kapiti Playhouse:

Blind Eye by April Phillips directed by
Teresa Sullivan to 1st December

A dramatic, intellectually substantial play that challenges the audience to ponder the most basic concept of right and wrong. Vera is blind and a nurse is there to help, or is she?



Porirua Little Theatre

Joseph and the Amazing Technicolour Dreamcoat by Lloyd and Weber dir.
Rob Ormsby to 1st December

PLT homeless once again, converted an events centre into a far eastern kingdom complete with palm trees desert and pyramids. The vibrant

production, the largest in 20 years, involved almost 100 performers including an energetic ensemble of 25 high energy singers and dancers, a live rock band and a youth choir. Rob, the director said "it's all about having fun and dreams that can come true"



Wellington Repertory and Stagecraft Theatre

Wolf Hall and *Bring Up the Bodies* adapt
Mike Poulton from Hilary Mantel directed
by Ewen Coleman and Anthony Hogan

This was a double bill production with two completely different casts of 20 and crews sharing the same theatre - sometimes with only about an hour and half between the curtain coming down on one show and going up on the other. Logistical challenges of sharing rehearsal and technical time in the theatre and then sharing the wardrobe space were overcome through the committed and very organised people making it all work.

The most exciting thing about the project was the number of people involved. It was a successful collaboration between the two non-profit theatre groups based in Wellington City, and the end result says a lot about the very healthy state of both societies, and theatre in Wellington.





Here is a sampler of the wide selection of plays we have on offer at Playmarket. We can email these as perusal scripts for no charge. Please email us any other script requirements you might have on: holly@playmarket.org.nz

Comedy

MATTHEW, MARK, LUKE AND JOANNE

by Carl Nixon. 1w, 2m.

Matthew has a spiritual experience in the organic and gluten free aisle of his local supermarket. This profound change cannot be accepted by his wife, nor his best friend and business partner.

A LOVE LIKE OURS by Joe Musaphia.

3f, 2m. This play may be set at a funeral however the audience will be laughing rather than crying at the hilarious revelations that unfold coffinside from the lovers and beloved of the deceased.

Drama

DEAR JANE by Nataliya Oryshchuk. 1f, 2m.

A 40-minute play set in nineteenth century Christchurch. Jane Deans reflects back on her life forged by her marriage and her immigration to New Zealand from Scotland. This play is both emotionally and historically rich.

MACBETH by Dean Parker. 4f, 1m. Dean Parker's stripped-down version of The Scottish Play has all the action and terror of the original but can be staged by a small cast.

CHERISH by Ken Duncam. 2f, 2m. Maeve and Jess are blessed with two daughters thanks to the help and good wishes of their gay friend Tom. But when Jess becomes pregnant again so that she can return the favour to Tom and his partner William, Jess finds she can't bring herself to give the new babe away. This touching play explores the sensitivities and complexities of love, loss and relationships.

HOPE by Jenny Patrick. 2f, 2m. Set in the future in a time when the health system is pushed to its limits, Irina, an ailing piano teacher is frustrated with a new government policy that does not allow her access to drugs that could save her life. At the same time, her former student, Adam is trying to end his life. Irina's son and daughter become involved not only in their mother's struggles but also Adam's in this tense drama.

LONG AGO, LONG AGO by Cassandra Tse.

2f, 1m. When Audrey's flat is damaged in a storm, she is forced to move in with her sister Ella. With scenes from the present day intermingled with scenes from the past, this play is a poetic meditation on grief and siblinghood.

Great for young adult performers

DRACULA by Claire Ahuriri-Dunning

5w, 7m, 3 any gender. This is a play for teenage actors to sink their teeth into. A group of actors encounters the text of Bram Stoker's Dracula and with campy, amateurish fervor start to enact the tales from within it. This historical piece is accompanied by singing from a chorus of the three emancipated brides of Dracula.

Plays with environmental themes

SWING AMONG THE STARS by Philip Braithwaite. 1m, 1f.

This very short play is set in the future when human habitation on alternative planets is a reality. A young couple farewell each other as one heads on a one-way journey to Mars and the other stays behind on earth. This play questions how we value dreams, love and survival.

WORLD by Elspeth Tilley. 5w, 3m + 1 gender fluid and a chorus. A typical suburban supermarket becomes the target of protest action against the quantities of packaging on grocery items. The values and behaviours of the employees, new and old, management and team members, and of the protestors are all called into question as the community tries to find a way forward. A highly relevant play amidst changes to plastic bag usage practices in New Zealand supermarkets.

What's On in December 2018 and January 2019

Dargaville Little Theatre	<i>Charlie's Christmas Adventures</i> by Eryn Wilson-Collins	to Dec 2
Howick Little Theatre	<i>I'll Leave it to You</i> by Noel Coward	to Dec 1
Katikati Theatre 16 th Avenue, Tauranga	<i>A Walk in the Woods</i> by Debbie Metzler <i>Stepping Out</i> by Richard Harris	to Dec 2 to Dec 1
Detour Theatre, Tauranga Te Puke Repertory	AUDITION <i>Alice in Wonderland</i> by Tom Whalley <i>Vicar of Dibley Christmas</i> by Curtis/Carpenter/Gower <i>Try This for Size or Moustaches, Muffs and Minstrels</i> by David McPhail & Jon Gadsby	Jan 14- 20th to Dec 8 to Dec 1
Dannevirke Theatre Pahiatua Repertory Soc.	<i>'Allo, 'Allo</i> by Jeremy Lloyd and David Croft <i>Don't Dress for Dinner</i> by Marc Camoletti	to Dec 8 to Dec 8
New Plymouth Repertory Hawera Repertory Soc.	<i>First Things First</i> by Darek Benfield Three One Act Plays + 1; <i>Lunch Hour</i> by John Mortimer	to Dec 1
Strawberry Jam by Brice Fisk	<i>The Tram-Track Tragedy</i> by Patirica & Peter Ariss	Dec 5 - 15
Foxton Little Theatre Levin Little Theatre Kapiti Playhouse	<i>Cinderella</i> by David Swan <i>Vicar of Dibley Celebration of Life</i> Gower/Carpenter <i>Blind Eye</i> by April Phillips AUDITION <i>Sideways, The Play</i> by Rex Pickett	to Dec 15 to Dec 8 to Dec 1 December 9
Mana Little Theatre Porirua Little Theatre	<i>Take a Chance on Me</i> by Roger Hall <i>Joseph and the Amazing Technicolour Dream Coat</i> by Tim Rice and Andrew Lloyd Webber	to Dec 1 to Dec 1
Drama Christi Wellington Repertory Soc. Hutt Repertory Theatre	<i>Gift of the Magi</i> by O'Henry AUDITION <i>Royal Hunt for the Sun</i> by Peter Shaffer <i>Jack and the Beanstalk</i> by Roger Hall AUDITION <i>Antony and Cleopatra</i> by Shakespeare	to Dec 1 Dec 8- 9 to Dec 8 Dec 9 @ 4pm
Havelock Theatre	<i>An Affair of the Art & Mrs Muligan's Marvelous Muffins</i> by Rick Edmonds	Jan 24 - Feb 6
Canterbury Repertory Globe Theatre, Dunedin Invercargill Repertory	<i>The Hollow</i> by Agatha Christie <i>Cinders, the True Story</i> by David Tristram <i>Central</i> by Dave Armstrong	to Dec 1 Dec 1- 8 to Dec 1

Send information about 2019 productions to info@theatrenewzealand.co.nz

Happiness cannot be travelled to
owned, earned, worn or consumed.
Happiness is the spiritual experience of
living every minute
with love, grace and gratitude.





"I know you're exhausted, love, but at least the panto season is now... BEHIND YOU!!!"



Editor Margaret Robertson
Technical Assistance Morris Robertson

Deadline for February/March Backchat
20 January 2019

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