

BACKCHAT

News from THEATRE NEW ZEALAND
Fostering Community Theatre in Aotearoa

February/March Vol.42 Issue 1

A Midsummer's Night Dream at Rotorua Little Theatre



A spellbound Titania (Jennifer Wicks) has fallen in love with a “translated” Bottom (Richard Rugg who now resembles an Ass. For this production, Titania’s fairies will reflect a steam punk vibe.

www.theatrenewzealand.co.nz

The Glass Menagerie



You are a passionate thespian (Thespian may refer to: A citizen of the Ancient Greek city of Thespieae. An

actor or actress, derived from Thespis, the first credited actor). You have an addiction to spending hours at a time, perhaps in costume, or black clothes, creating magical stories to share with others, and even more time preparing and being part of a special event and working alongside a committed community. You know the thrill of storytelling, and the rush of performance. You work toward the pressure of deadlines, the nerves of performance, and the confines of space, time and limited resources. You love it, and you will be back for more.

We can thank Tennessee Williams for the title to this piece, however it might not just be his character Laura who creates a fantasy escape through glass medium.

In our perilous age of the glass interface, screen time replaces many human interactions. Our thoughts, entertainment, lives and communication are mediated by a cold, two-dimensional space, transmitted in minute electronic detail. Our personal highs and lows published and repeated as 1's as zero's. The screen provides music, and laughter on demand. It commands ever more of our attention, time and energy. It is cheap, accessible, and efficient.

We look to live sport and major music events, attracting tens of thousands

regularly; and appreciate the compound excitement of live mass participation. We meantime know and understand our own art, and wish for a full house in our theatres. The wonder of live action is the immediacy, without a medium. The performer and the audience find a communion, the one with the other, forming theatre in the space between. It is now, it is real, it is transient, and it touches us.

What is the challenge that live theatre faces as the public turns ever more to the glass bound existence of a fantasy never-land? I am reminded of the story of King Midas, who wished that all he touched would turn into gold, to increase his wealth and presumably his happiness. But when he picked up the flower it became gold without perfume or colour; the grapes and water also became gold - solid, cold and un-nourishing with the brush of his hand; and even his daughter became a lifeless statue under his touch. Midas becomes aware that his dream may have consequences beyond his wishes: he became aware of that there was beauty in his senses rather than in wealth. Are we seeking, ever more mediated living via screen time, even though it may not increase our happiness, connectedness nor feed us in the way we intend?

Theatres are challenged to be innovative, and creative to expand the art, but also, to some extent be predictable and safe to expand the audience base. These are not new problems. Radio, and then cinema, and television then video were seen as potential threats.

What about Entertainment channels, Social Media, and its streaming of personal lives? So, a very real challenge for us in live theatre is to

embrace the cell phone, tablet, monitor, billboard, and 3D holograms as part of our contemporary lives, but also to keep our performance art living - literally, fiscally and artistically. How? What is an ongoing 21st century proactive response?

Is there something to think about when we see spiralling costs, time poor volunteers, and increasing worrisome legislative risks - health and safety, rights and licences, reputation ruptures and so on. There will always be (and have always been) calls that live theatre is too expensive. And so, for many it is. However, a world without, would be costly indeed. Theatre carries culture, performance art, political message, social justice, commentary on life, irony, satire, history, relationships, cautionary tale, and so much more.

What is your personal response to the invasion of the screen dream? How should theatre groups individually, and Theatre New Zealand collectively react or be proactive?

It might be interesting for you to pen some thoughts, and we can share your views. Is theatre the delicate, and breakable unicorn in Laura's menagerie, or will we respond with increased vigour?

Steven Arnold
TNZ President



Theatrefest 2019

National Administrator:

Ewen Coleman

theatrefest@theatrenewzealand.co.nz

National Conference and Finals

Saturday 14, Sunday 15 September

Te Whaea, Newtown, Wellington

Adjudicator: **Jonathon Hendry**

Regionals

Upper North Island 17/18 August

Centre Stage, Taupo

Adjudicator **Lara McGregor**

Lower North Island 24/25 August

Pahiatua Repertory

Adjudicator **Lara McGregor**

Upper South Island 17/18 August

Boathouse Theatre, Blenheim

Adjudicator **Rob Ormsby**

Lower South Island 24/25 August

SCDL Timaru

Adjudicator **Rob Ormsby**

TheatreFest flyer coming out soon.

Good News!

The National Executive has reworked TheatreFest costings and decided to half the entry fee! This year the administration fee for each entry will be just \$75.

Another decision has been made to rename the Best Male and Best Female Actor Awards at National level. In line with awards given locally and at Regionals, they will be renamed to Excellence in Acting.

National Executive welcomes **Deborah Steele**, Dargaville Little Theatre who has been co-opted to the committee and welcomes **Phil Jones** of Hamilton who is willing to give advice on health and safety matters.

What have you been doing? Interesting snippets gleaned from the internet
Do you keep your information up to date?

Katikaiti Theatre The 24-Hour Challenge lives on

Members, Barry Magowan, Di Logan, Tracey Carter and Julie Thomas entered the 24-hour play competition challenge at Playbox Theatre in Hamilton last year and have since performed the play they wrote, back home. Here Deidra, played by Julie Thomas, applies the protective gloves prior to Hamilton's termination in a scene from their play, *Quietus*. Note: Playbox Theatre will hold this year's 24 -Hour Challenge 26/27th April with Steven Arnold as Adjudicator once again.



Harlequin Theatre Masterton An end of year Facebook post

“Whew!! Looking back on 2018.....what a bumper year for our awesome little theatre! From poignant comedies, a little dose of MURDER, Acting Antics holiday programmes, Theatrefest competition entries, theatresports, TWO Vicar of Dibleys and finally a bit of pirate mayhem, we have been BUSY BUSY BUSY! Thanks to everyone who has been even a teeny tiny part of the fun we have had! The Committee and I wish each and every one of you a safe and happy New Year and look forward to your continued support in the year ahead 😊😊😊
Carol”

Centre Stage Taupo A Promotion for their Theatre Workshops

“Centre Stage is here to support the community in getting involved in theatre in a fun and social way. Come along to our workshops that are designed to increase our skill base and encourage participation. Our club members run the workshops and pass on their experience and wisdom and enthusiasm. Register your interest and what type of workshop you would be interested in this year by emailing the secretary. Free to club members and a small cost to those who are wanting to see what we offer without committing as a member.”

Khandallah Arts Theatre, Wellington Milestones



This month, along with their 20th production of a play for children in the local park KAT has taken the initiative to celebrate that park's centennial. Many local organisations are now involved in arranging Khandallah Park's 100th Birthday Picnic Party with fun for all - giant bubble blowing, novelty races, fancy dress parade and fun activities. This special day will be rounded off with the first performance of *The Ugly Duckling*.

Rotorua Little Theatre - An enigmatic insert in their latest newsletter:

Silence or Noise?	Phone Call or Text?	Form or Function?
Rich Friend or Loyal Friend?	Passenger or Driver?	Train or Plane?
Guilt or Regret?	Beer or Wine?	Working Alone or Working in a team?
Dine in or Delivery?	Morning or Evening?	Theatre or Cinema?
Book or Movie?	Reading or Writing?	Comedy or Drama?
Fruit or Vegetables?	Money or Fame?	Weird or Crazy?
Alaska or Hawaii?	Family or Friends?	

Canterbury Repertory Theatre Introducing: Repertory Youth!

“Repertory Youth is a training and performance group for young actors and theatre technicians aged 16-24. It will provide opportunity to develop practical theatre skills and performance through experience in all aspects of theatre. This includes: Voice, Movement, Stagecraft, Technical design, building, and operation



The main aim is to develop skills in performance and stagecraft with the view of staging a short production at the end of the year’s course.

The class, limited to 10 - 12 students, will meet on Wednesday evenings during school terms 1-3, starting in late February, with a variety of skilled mentors from around Christchurch, many of whom are

theatre professionals and/or experienced teachers. Note that there will be a cost of \$150 per term. If you are interested, email admin@repertory.nz by February 10th to secure an interview.”

Greytown Little Theatre Going out on a limb

Their next production *White Rabbit Red Rabbit* has had no rehearsals, there’s no director, no set. There’s a sealed script and a different actor each of the four nights. The performance will be in a local cafe and all proceeds are going to the new building fund.

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

The latest from April Phillips

SWINGERS by April Phillips. 3w, 3m. This is a play about golf. Golf buddies Ralph, Archie and George have retired and are spending more and more time on the golf course, to the dismay of their wives. The women set out to win their men off the golf course, and maybe even coax them back into their bedrooms.

Drama

4 NIGHTS IN THE GREEN BARROW PUB

by Kieran Craft. 3f, 3m. Highly commended in our Plays b4 25 competition 2018, this play is a humorous drama set in an Irish pub that has been run by the same family in the same way for generations. But the future is not certain as the eldest son, Darragh Green, is not so keen on keeping with tradition.

THE ART OF REVENGE by Gary Stalker. 2f, 2m. A woman recovering from a coma and her husband, an artist, meet with a couple who are both wealthy real estate agents and are interested in buying a painting by the artist. But is that all they are interested in? A tense and gripping play.

ONE PERFECT MOMENT by Ellie Smith. 2f. Mum Pammie is menopausal, uptight and bored with her suburban life in Auckland. She sets off on a European trip with her sulky teenage daughter. The generation gap is more of a giant crater at first, but each colourful encounter works to bond them closer together.

DEATH OF A DREAM by Richard De Luca. 3f, 3m. This play examines the Loman family, first introduced by Arthur Miller in his classic *Death of a Salesman*, generations later in 2015. It premiered at Dolphin Theatre, Onehunga.

Plays about history

TE WAKA HUIA by Naomi Bartley. 1f, 2m.

This play honours the memory of the victims of the 1963 Brynderwyn bus tragedy, New Zealand's worst road accident that occurred outside the township of Helensville. While the play does not shy from sadness, it is also an uplifting and joyful piece that celebrates love and community.

ROGUES AND VAGABONDS by Elspeth Sandys. 4f, 2m.

Set at the close of the 19th Century, this play follows three out of work music hall actors who conspire to carry out a daring scam while the Boer War rages in the background. A play about beating the odds and with period music hall songs.

One Act Plays

ATTILA THE HUN by Abby Howells. 4f,

3m, 1m/f. It's the late-night shift at Fat Burger. Jo is the new duty manager but she has to jostle for position with her subordinate who believes himself to be Attila the Hun. Who will win the epic fight to the death, and who will be left to clean up the mess afterwards?

CAMPING by Thomas Sainsbury and Chris Parker. 2m, 2f. This new play is a hilarious comedy about two couples who are double-booked in a Kiwi bach.

MY FRIEND GEORGE by Tim Hambleton.

2w, 4m. A place getter in the Playwrights' Association of New Zealand's One Act Play competition in 2018, this touching drama follows the friendship of two boys. In 1906, they enjoy a blissful Kiwi summer together, and this contrasts with their meeting years later when World War I is on the horizon. One is determined to sign up while the other isn't and their friendship is tested as never before.

What's On in February and March 2019

Howick Little Theatre Hamilton Playbox Theatre 16 th Avenue, Tauranga	<i>California Suite</i> by Neil Simon <i>Frankenstein</i> by Bo List <i>Ladies Day</i> by Richard Harris	Feb 23 - March 16 March 30-April 13 March 29-April 13
Detour Theatre, Tauranga Rotorua Little Theatre Centre Stage, Taupo	<i>Murder on the Menu</i> by Devon Williamson <i>A Midsummer's Night Dream</i> William Shakespeare <i>Dirty Dusting</i> by Ed Waugh and Trevor Wood	March 28-13 April Feb 7 - 16 March 17 - 30
Napier Repertory Players Pahiatua Repertory Soc.	<i>Arsenic and Old Lace</i> by Joseph Kesselring AUDITION <i>The Rockin' Tale of Snow White</i> by Barbara Lennon Music by Francoeur	Feb 14 - March 2 February 17
Greytown Little Theatre Feilding Little Theatre Porirua Little Theatre Khandallah Arts Theatre	<i>White Rabbit, Red Rabbit</i> by Nassim Soleimanpour <i>On Golden Pond</i> by Ernest Thompson <i>Weighing In</i> by Lucy Schmidt <i>The Ugly Duckling</i> by Rob Ormsby AUDITION One Act Plays x 3	Feb 8-16 March 29-April 13 March 21 - April 6 February 23 - March 4 March 2 & 3
Stagecraft Theatre	<i>The Melancholy Play</i> by Sarah Ruhl AUDITION <i>Next to Normal</i> by Brian Yorkey	February 27 - March 9 February 9 & 10
Wellington Repertory Butterfly Creek, Eastbourne	AUDITION <i>The Beggars Opera</i> by Brecht/Weill <i>As You Like It</i> by William Shakespeare	Feb 16 & 17 March 5 - 9
Nelson Repertory	<i>'Allo, 'Allo</i> by Jeremy Lloyd & David Scott AUDITION <i>Dracula: The Bloody Truth</i> Le Navet Bete Feb 24 @10am	March 13 -16
Havelock Theatre Boathouse Theatre, Blenheim	AUDITION <i>Hayfever</i> by Noel Coward <i>It's My Party (and I'll Die if I Want to)</i> by Elizabeth Coleman	Feb 24 @ 4pm March 26 - April
Riccarton Players South Canterbury Drama L.	AUDITION <i>The Men's Room</i> by Patrick Evans AUDITION <i>Last Legs</i> by Roger Hall AUDITION <i>Legally Blonde the Musical</i> by Laurence O'Keefe and Nell Benjamin <i>Cut</i> by Robert Duncan, a World Premiere	Feb 10 @ 2pm Feb 16 @ 11am March 1-3 March 15 - 22
Clyde Theatre Group Globe Theatre, Dunedin	<i>Stiff</i> by April Phillips <i>Death of a Salesman</i> by Arthur Miller	March 29 - April 5 Feb 28 - March 9

Hilarious Comedy Plays by Devon Williamson!



The Jailhouse Frocks 3 Female, 2 Male
Shattering dimwitted Officer Dwayne's tranquil evening at the Birchwood County police station is the arrests of three unlikely women; the mayor's wife, the local mad cat-lady, and a dangerous looking New Yorker. The already chaotic situation descends into mayhem with the arrival of a New York gangster, disguised as an FBI agent, hell-bent on exacting revenge on his wife. By the end of the night, the ladies have formed a gang, sang some songs, escaped from jail and locked the gangster up in their place, leaving Officer Dwayne wondering how on earth he's managed to make the arrest of a lifetime. Featured songs include "Respect" and "Monster Mash".

The Wedding of the Century 7 Female, 2 Male
Dorothy is a 99-year-old nun who has found the perfect item for her bucket list. She's going to find a man and get married on her 100th birthday next week! Hilarious comedy where the surprises and laughs just keep on coming, and an ending guaranteed to melt even the hardest heart.

The Supermarket Sisterhood 7 Female, 2 Male
As if the daily skirmishes with farcical customers and the dim-witted men in their lives wasn't enough, the women who operate the checkouts at the Discount Co. supermarket are now facing a new boss and the prospect of losing their jobs to automated checkout aisles. It's time for the women to band together and take their fight to the top. Hilarious, madcap humor to tickle your funny bone and stir your heart.

Also available... The Old People Are Revolting, My In-laws are Outlaws, Twas the Fight Before Christmas, How to Train Your Husband, Crazy Ladies, Menopause Made Me Do It... and many more!

**For perusal scripts contact
The Play Bureau
Phone: 03 455 9959
Email: info@playbureau.com**

OneMusic

OneMusic has been approached for clarification of licencing procedures and Ewen Coleman has written a report and this will be on our website.

Briefly there are 4 different kinds of licence: the first one issued by OneMusic is for playing music in the foyer of a venue. The annual charge for a smallest sized foyer (49 square metres) is \$303.59.

Playing background music in the auditorium before the performance starts, at the interval and afterwards needs a licence from OneMusic.

When music is used during the show in a 'Dramatic Context' APRA will issue the licence with a minimum fee per show of \$103.50

Finally, when music is out of copyright (e.g. Beethoven) a licence must be paid to RMNZ (Recorded Music NZ) for using the arrangement and the recording.

TNZ asked OneMusic if they would consider one reduced annual fee to cover all our members' venue licences but this was declined.

Working together: Cultural Practice in the TheatreSpace

We are grateful to Playmarket and Creative New Zealand for making it possible for each TNZ group member to receive this guideline brochure.

Norfolk Island Theatre Festival

Dates this year are Sept 29 - Oct 4
Free call 0800 0088 to contact the Norfolk Island Travel Centre.



Calling all playwrights! The University of Otago and UNESCO need your scripts! The University of Otago will host a UNESCO Cities of Literature Short Play Festival, in Dunedin between September 12 and 20, 2019. You are invited to submit 20 minute scripts, and to participate in, this exciting international event. The Festival will allow contributors and participants to share their work with a wider international audience, to explore new artistic connections and to receive considered feedback on their work from both professional specialists. Selected works will be staged by Otago Theatre Studies students during the Festival.

In addition to a full schedule of weekend and evening performances over eight days, the festival programme will feature workshops, rehearsed readings and "pitch" style presentations of scripts, and a series of forums on aspects of 21st century dramaturgy and playwriting - to all of which the public are also invited

The festival, which is part of the University's 150th anniversary celebrations, will underscore Dunedin's status as a cultural hub. "Dunedin has a long and strong theatre tradition, and we are proud that Theatre Studies at the University of Otago has both benefitted from, and made an enormous contribution to this."

Contact

Stuart Young, Professor and HOD of Music, Theatre and Performing Arts
Tel 64 3 479 9614

Email hodmusictheatre@otago.ac.nz

Editor	Margaret Robertson
Technical	Morris Robertson

April/May deadline 20 March 2019
info@theatrenewzealand.co.nz