



**Theatre New Zealand**  
*Fostering Community Theatre in Aotearoa*  
*Patrons: Jennifer Ward-Lealand & Rawiri Paratene*

[www.theatrenewzealand.co.nz](http://www.theatrenewzealand.co.nz)

# BACKCHAT

News from THEATRE NEW ZEALAND

June/July Vol.43 Issue 3



The rainbow: a universal sign of hope.  
Covid-19 may have darkened the skies, but the ghost light will remain on until we  
can take the stage once again.

*Photo: South Canterbury Drama League in Timaru.*



# 2020 VISION

Celebrating the Past Creating the Future

## Re-incentivising Your Groups

### Dear Members

I hope this *Backchat* finds you all well and not suffering from a cold or going down with flu as we head into winter! It's been a warm autumn here in Christchurch and because of the lockdown time at home, our garden is looking better than ever and I have read so many novels! But it also gave me time for reflection.

### Celebrating The Past, Creating The Future

With our *2020 Anniversary Celebrations* and *TheatreFest* postponed until next year, why not use this down-time fruitfully to reassess your group's ethos, as suggested by our *2020 Celebration Logo*.

*Theatre New Zealand* has been fielding all types of questions over the lockdown period. While it may be difficult to mount some productions for a while yet, due to social distancing, limited group gatherings and on-going sanitising procedures, I thought it could be appropriate for us to suggest that this time might be well spent on responsibilities we all face, as Incorporated Societies and Trusts.

### Governance: Processes and Administration

Further in this issue you will find messages from David: [Legal & Financial Responsibilities](#) and from Ewen: [Constitutions](#). We've had a few questions raised with us over Constitutions. When was your group's constitution last revised? Is it really fit-for-purpose! Is it time it was revised, brought up to 2020 practicality? We can help you if you have doubts, or need an experienced eye to simply overview its current application and relevance. We have also recently sent you a Covid-19 Survey Monkey, and links to the CNZ Arts Continuity and Emergency Relief Grants in case you are eligible. Have you seen them?

### Workshops: to help re-activate and incentivise your group

The size of gatherings allowed has been increased to 100, so how better to celebrate than with some aspect of theatre practice! We have professional tutors on our national resource lists in all areas of expertise, with some living not too far from you. Tell us what you need and we'll help you make it happen! \*Remember – if you are a member of TNZ and host a weekend

workshop for your area and not just for your society, TNZ will help with a Guarantee Against Loss. (GAL)  
Applications are on our website.

Before the lockdown we held successful workshops in Nelson and Westport. Waiting in the wings are Timaru, Greymouth and Northland. How can we help you Dunedin, Wairarapa, Bay of Plenty, Taranaki or anyone else?  
**Why not kick-start your Spring return season, with a Winter Workshop.**

**Bryan Aitken**  
**National President**

## **Legal and Financial Responsibilities:**

### ***Copyright and Play Readings***

With theatres still closed a number of member groups have been hosting play readings as a way of keeping members engaged. Whilst a great idea this does, inevitably, run up against Copyright Law and the possibility that a licence is needed. In most cases hosting a play reading, whether rehearsed or not, of a work within copyright will require a licence.

For the background to Copyright please see TNZ's paper on Copyright located on our website.

To determine whether or not you need a licence for a play reading (whether held physically or over an internet platform such as "Zoom") ask yourself the simple question: "Is there an audience?" Put another way: is anyone, even if only one person, just

sitting back and enjoying listening to other people reading the script? If the answer is "yes" then the people reading the script are deemed to be performing it and a licence is required. This presupposes that the play is still within copyright: Shakespeare, for example, is fair game and no licence is required.

It is irrelevant if only members of your society are invited to the play reading – if anyone is listening they are an audience, it is therefore a performance and a licence is required.

It is irrelevant if no charge is being made to listen to the play reading - if anyone is listening they are an audience, it is therefore a performance and a licence is required.

If unsure who to apply for to obtain a licence you should in the first instance contact Playmarket (mainly for NZ plays) and Play Bureau. If neither holds the agency for the play you want to read they should be able to point you in the direction of who does.



## **INVERCARGILL REP LAMENTS THE LOSS OF ROGER HALL'S LAST LEGS – FOR THE MOMENT**

“F..k”. The last despairing word from the cunning character Garry as he surveys the cast chaos in the hilarious denouement of Roger Hall's rest home romp “*Last Legs*”. Perfect (or nearly so) as the lights come up on this almost final rehearsal. It was a mild March Monday a week out from opening night – claimed our director clearly delighted with this first run through.

Not for long alas, as production secretary, the late Buffy Edlin (more of Buffy later) entered the auditorium of our theatre, fresh from an emergency meeting of the Executive with the black news that *Last Legs* was to be canned. Response from the two male characters in the cast was a spontaneous audible “f..k” and from the more circumspect females a whispered “oh no!”. Resolving to resurrect the play – we had been rehearsing for six weeks – once this emergency was over, we left the premises slightly round-shouldered.

Lockdown began at midnight on the 25<sup>th</sup> of March and in the interim of the battle to banish the killer flu and the present (25<sup>th</sup> of May) nothing has changed in our theatre – the set is still there, the furniture and hand props in place as they were left on that very different world of mid-March 2020. Even the lighting bar is untouched. Arcane to say the least! All that is missing is the ghostly figure of the thwarted bride Miss Haversham.

At a very recent meeting, the Executive has concluded that *Last Legs* is to be reconvened and staged sometime in spring, albeit that the all clear has sounded.

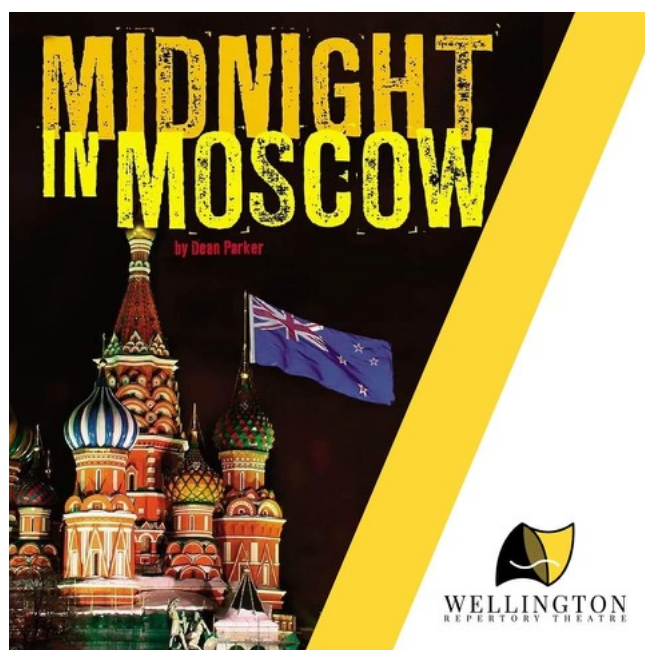
It is now nine weeks since lockdown has confined us all to house and home and bubble. Repertory Invercargill, like all its national thespian groups must bear the brunt of “in-operation” – no income from membership, production and reduced subsidies from a usually very generous Invercargill Licensing Trust. Junior classes for primary / secondary aged young people have been postponed or terminated for the immediate future.

But rise phoenix-like from the ashes (well not quite) we will and plans and productions for 2021 have already been made and here's hoping that our economy generally is not too battered and bruised as the year progresses as its recovery has a pronounced bearing on our well-being and even our ultimate survival.

Our beloved production secretary, Buffy Edlin, actress and doyen of our dramatic / operatic community here in Invercargill was taken from us suddenly in early April after a sudden coronary event. A mellifluous contralto, Buffy's busy bustling life involved performance – almost continuously for over 30 years – as a choral soloist, chorus member in Musical Theatre and countless Repertory roles, as well as being involved in every aspect behind the scenes in administration. A triumphant farewell is currently being planned as we move into normality.

**Jonathan Tucker**  
**Director of Last Legs and Patron of Repertory Invercargill**

## Wellington Repertory Theatre's production of *Midnight in Moscow* by the late Dean Parker



Wellington Repertory Theatre's second production of the year, Dean Parker's *Midnight in Moscow*, was successfully cast in early March and the team was raring to go. Rehearsals were due to start on 26 March... which turned out to be the first day of a six-week national lockdown, thanks to Covid-19.

*Midnight in Moscow* is known as a cursed play. Its first production in Christchurch was stalled after one performance by the 2011 earthquake, the second production in Auckland had to relocate due to a theatre fire, and Circa's production needed recasting shortly before opening due to illness. Rep's production has now joined this unhappy history.

However, we're excited to announce that rehearsals can restart under Alert Level 2 restrictions as the cast is small enough and performances can be easily slotted into the next available Rep booking at the Gryphon Theatre. Needless to say, the theatre-starved cast and crew are happy to be working again and to be able to honour the memory of playwright Dean Parker, who sadly died in early April.

**You can see *Midnight in Moscow* - further curses notwithstanding - from 29 July to 8 August.**

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### Theatre Administration and Constitutions

Following the Covid-19 lockdown many theatre groups will be on hold, still taking some time to begin working on future productions. It would therefore be a good chance during this down time for groups to take stock of their administrative processes and governance.

The apparent need for this was also borne out of the many questions raised during a successful workshop on Theatre

Administration held earlier in the year in Buller Westport. And while many will be familiar with much of what is set out below some may not and so it will do no harm to remind everyone.

How a theatre group is run and administered, will be unique to each group with committees, sub committees, departments etc specific to the needs of the group. Nevertheless, there are several basic requirements, including some which are legal, that are necessary for the successful running of a theatre group,

which in fact apply to any similar group, not specifically theatre.

Administration of a group is normally referred to as **Governance**. Good governance should be: participatory, consensus oriented, accountable, transparent, responsive, effective, and efficient, equitable and inclusive, and follow the rule of law.

In order to run successfully most theatre groups are (and if they aren't should be) not-for-profit organisations, registered with the Companies' Office as being incorporated and have a constitution (it is necessary to have a constitution to be registered for incorporation). Most these days are also registered with the Charities Commission.

### **Not-for-profit organisations**

A not-for-profit organisation is any society, association or group that can be incorporated or unincorporated. The activities of the organisation are not carried out for the profit or gain of any member, and the rules of the organisation do not allow any money or property to be distributed to any member.

### **Incorporation**

In New Zealand, an incorporated society is a group of at least 15 people who have applied for registration under the Incorporated Societies Act 1908. Once registered the society constitutes a distinct legal entity, which provides protection to members from debts, contracts etc. This is done by registering under the Incorporated Societies Act 1908, which gives the group its own legal identity, separate to that of its members. It means that while the membership may change, the society's identity does not. It

also means the members are not personally liable for the society's debts or other obligations and cannot have a personal interest in any property or assets owned by the society. Any activity carried out by an Incorporated society must be lawful, be permitted by its own rules (constitution) and not make money for the benefit of individual members. Because the society's rules must meet the minimum requirements set out in the Incorporated Societies Act 1908, there is certainty and consistency in the way the society is run.

Whatever the reasons a group meets, there are some **significant benefits to becoming an incorporated society:**

- An incorporated society can lease, rent, buy and sell property, borrow money and sign contracts in its own name.
- The society's property (premises, money, trophies etc) is held by the society rather than by its members. No individual member can have a personal interest in any of the society's assets.
- An incorporated society maintains its own separate legal identity even when its membership changes.
- Members cannot be personally liable for the society's debts or other obligations unless:
  - they apply to activities undertaken to obtain money for profit that personally benefits those members
  - they relate to unlawful activities.

In these cases, every member involved is personally liable.

An incorporated society may be required to pay Company tax of 28% on any profits

but could be entitled to an income tax exemption.

Contact Inland Revenue on 0800 377 774 or visit their website at [www.ird.govt.nz](http://www.ird.govt.nz) for more information.

An incorporated society can register as a charity under the Charities Act 2005, if its activities and 'objects' are considered to qualify it.

### **Constitution (set of rules)**

The Constitution (set of rules) sets out how the society is to be run, which includes the rights, powers and duties of the management committee.

An incorporated society is required to have a constitution (set of rules) that establish its 'objects' (purpose), and how it will operate (a copy of the constitution [rules] will be required to be submitted

when filing an application for incorporation).

The Incorporated Societies Act 1908 sets out the **minimum requirements for a society's rules**, which must be clear and comprehensive. These are to include

- the society's 'objects' (its purpose)
- its membership
- how meetings are held
- the appointment of officers
- use of the society's 'common seal'
- how the rules can be altered
- the control of funds and property, and
- how to wind up a society.

**An especially useful link for clarification on all of the above is to the Companies Office**

**<https://is-register.companiesoffice.govt.nz/help-centre/starting-an-incorporated-society/sample-rules-for-societies/>**



# What's On in June and July 2020

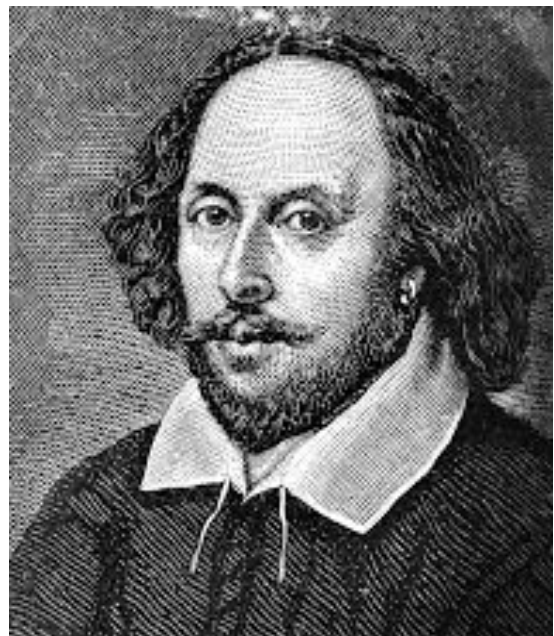
<b>Katikati Theatre</b>	AUDITION: <i>Taking Off</i> by Roger Hall	7 & 9 June plus AGM 19 June
<b>Howick Little Theatre</b>	<i>Love from a Stranger</i> by Agatha Christie	July 13 - August 1st
<b>Wellington Repertory</b>	<i>Midnight in Moscow</i> by Dean Parker	July 29 - August 8
<b>Stagecraft Theatre, Wellington</b>	<i>The Revlon Girl</i> by Neil Anthony Docking	June 13-14
<b>Butterfly Creek Theatre Troupe</b>	AUDITION: <i>Snap</i> by Fiona Samuel	June 6
<b>Remarkable Theatre</b>	AUDITION: <i>Cosi</i> by Lewis Nowra	June 5-6



We have been advised that the Norfolk Island Theatre Festival scheduled for late September has been cancelled due to the COVID-19 pandemic. They will be back in 2021

## Did you know...?

Between 1603 and 1613 London Playhouses were shut for 60% of the time due to bubonic plague outbreaks. During this time, it is thought that Shakespeare wrote King Lear. Many feared that theatre would not survive and that playhouses would shut forever. But they were not. Shakespeare went on to write his best works after this time: Romeo and Juliet, Hamlet, Macbeth, Antony and Cleopatra and many more.







Here is a sampler of the wide selection of plays we have on offer at Playmarket. Become a subscriber at [playmarket.org.nz](http://playmarket.org.nz) (\$40) to access as many manuscript titles as you like. To request any plays and/or musicals, contact our Script Coordinator Nathan Mudge [nathan@playmarket.co.nz](mailto:nathan@playmarket.co.nz)

### Lots of laughs

**BENEDICT CUMBERBATCH MUST DIE by Abby Howells** (3f) A control-freak actor, a sex-crazed celebrity obsessive and a socially phobic fan fiction writer have one thing in common: Benedict Cumberbatch. When they hear he is making a trip to New Zealand, they devise a show in the hope he will come see it.

**END OF A RAINBOW by Joe Musaphia.** (1f, 2m) A woman meets and befriends an octogenarian billionaire with the ulterior motive of convincing him to invest in her boyfriend's fledgling business venture. The three characters try to literally and figuratively screw one another to come out on top financially.

**THE BIGGEST by Jamie McCaskill.** (1f, 5m) Set in small-town Coromandel, *The Biggest* follows Walter, Pat, Mick and Stu as they try to win big at the local fishing competition. They're after a replacement for Stu's dream boat – the one that he spent his life-savings on and then wrote-off the first time he used it, landing himself in a wheelchair. Only problem is, they don't know how to fish.

**DAYS OF OUR WIVES by Louise Proudfoot.** (4f, 3m) This fast paced comedy, set in a quiet kiwi cul-de-sac, throws us through a ranch slider and into a dizzying romp of neighbourhood barbeque drama as lonely housewife Lisa's addiction to bourbon and coke and streaming American soap operas leads her down a path of destruction.

**THE WEDDING PARTY by Fiona Samuel.** (4-9f, 5-8m) Set in the 1990s, the New Zealand way of getting married is explored on Heather and Rob's wedding day, with flashbacks to Peggy and Archie's experience, 20 years earlier. One night before her wedding, Heather dreams that her hair turns to glass and shatters and all her teeth fall out. Is she doing the right thing? Wedding guests share their hopes and fears about romance, sex and marriage.

### Political plays

**TE KAUPOI by Whiti Hereaka.** (2f, 1m) In the not too distant future, internal terrorism has rocked New Zealand. Māori who protested against the government's abolishment of Māori seats are widely blamed for civil unrest. The most notorious protester – Te Kaupoi – runs a pirate radio show that encourages Māori to gather and overthrow the illegal government.. Who can you trust?

**THE MERCY CLAUSE by Phil Braithwaite.** (1f, 2m) Tom is a young lawyer with a new client: a young man who killed his own father. Was it a mercy killing? The details keep changing, and Tom is forced to constantly revise his opinion. Tom and his wife Rachel are having their own problems. The two stories bleed into one as the lives of all three become inextricably bound.

**BURN HER by Sam Brooks.** (4f, 2m) It's election night and the small left-leaning Aroha Party led by Aroha Robson manages to clinch one seat in Parliament. That same night, one of her interns comes to her with a scandal that could sink the party by morning.

### Vale Dean Parker

**MIDNIGHT IN MOSCOW by Dean Parker.** (4f, 3m) Intrigue swirls around the NZ Embassy in Moscow in 1947, and the staff must question their loyalty to themselves, their friends, and their country, when suspicions arise that someone is leaking classified information. Woven with threads of real events and characters.

**GREAT EXPECTATIONS by Dean Parker.** 3-5f, 7-11m. Based on the novel by Charles Dickens, blacksmith apprentice Pip believes he has suddenly been elevated to a gentleman so he can eventually marry the girl of his dreams.

**FRANZ KAFKA'S THE TRIAL by Dean Parker.** 2-10f, 3-23m. An adaptation of Kafka's paranoia novel. Josef K believes he is innocent of a crime the nature of which is never revealed to him or us. *The Trial* remains a compelling tale of personal guilt and submission and it's brilliantly accompanied and relieved by the blackest of humour.

**PONSONBY by Dean Parker.** (3f, 2m) Shadrach, Daphne and Mrs Fa'amasino live in Housing NZ units in Ponsonby. Storm and her girlfriend arrive from New Plymouth and squat there. The trio learn about a neighbouring Catholic priest who is ill and denying treatment.



## Covid-19 Survey Results

Recently Theatre New Zealand sent out a Survey Monkey to members regarding the effects of Covid-19 on their society. The results are in! The following is a summary:

- 95% of societies are worried about the impact on their society
- The majority of societies are finding it difficult to work under Covid-19 restrictions
- The biggest challenges are physical workspaces, physically mounting a production, worry of long term finances, retaining and regaining audiences and being able to physically connect with their groups
- 65% of societies are not sure if the current situation could be maintained for more than a year

**BUT overall, the common thread was that although there are significant challenges with the current situation, we are a positive, resilient bunch, who have hope for the future. Banning together and adapting to what we can do in the current situation is what we do best. The show must go on!**

### *Light relief from Gisborne Unity Theatre*

#### COVID and local Businesses

It is with great sadness that I have to mention the loss of a few further local businesses and in the surrounding areas:

- \* the bra manufacturer has gone bust,
- \* the specialist in submersibles has gone under,
- \* the manufacturer of food blenders has gone into liquidation,
  - \* a dog kennel has had to call in the retrievers,
  - \* the suppliers of paper for origami enthusiasts has folded,
- \* the Heinz factory has been canned as they couldn't ketchup with orders,
  - \* the tarmac laying company has reached the end of the road,
    - \* the bread company has run out of dough,
  - \* the clock manufacturer has had to wind down and gone cuckoo,
    - \* the Chinese restaurant has been taken away,
  - \* the shoe shop has had to put its foot down and given their staff the boot
    - \* and finally the launderette has been taken to the cleaners!

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Editor - Deborah Steele

**Deadline for August/September Backchat 20 July 2020**

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