

News from Theatre New Zealand

BACKCHAT

Te Pūtoi Whakaari o Aotearoa

Vol. 44 - Issue 6





MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

What to do.....Whilst waiting.....

There is a sequence of dialogue between Vladimir and Estragon from Waiting for Godot, which goes something like:

“So what do we do now?”

“We wait.”

“But, whilst waiting.....”

We are hearing differing stories of success or woe from around the country – depending on where you are living and, the impact of a certain virus!

Scheduling your seasons, then auditioning, rehearsing and performing, has become a mine-field.

Productions are happening though. Some groups remain active with play readings!

Others have taken the opportunity to advance their skills and knowledge, in many aspects of Theatre, with workshops.

As we approach the summer hiatus, have you thought of requesting a workshop from Theatre New Zealand? Do you need an Actor or Director's workshops. Or Both. One in design or lighting. Youth workshops or Tutoring Youth. Production or Stage Management or some other aspect?

We can help you find the right people.

The importance of up-skilling and remaining relevant is vital, if we are all to lead and nurture theatre in our country into the future. It's worth remembering also – TNZ can help with a Guarantee Against Loss (GAL) if your group is hosting for your area/region.

Here's what some of our recent workshop participants have to say:



The value of Theatre New Zealand's support and workshops, has reached beyond the obvious benefits of training and mentorship and brought connection within our isolated West Coast Theatre communities. Bryan's Acting & Directing workshops have enhanced our actors' awareness of their roles, by bringing more truth to the characters. We are all more focused and confident with new tools and inspiration.

Ewen's knowledge of the machinations of governing bodies and the roles behind production, was vital to our team moving forward, reminding members of the importance of the vast amount of work that is required behind the scenes, to plan and create the finished product.

TMcE Westport.



MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

I have found the TNZ backed workshops to have been invaluable over the years, both for me as an actor and director, but also for our society. They have provided us with the necessary 'building blocks' to enhance the quality of our shows. It has also helped our younger members gain confidence both in their understanding of their performance as an actor and also in the joy that comes from real live theatre
HN Nelson.

I first attended a TNZ workshop in Greymouth in 2020. It reawakened in me a passion for live theatre that I had for a time way back in the 1970s. Bryan gave me confidence that I could do this again now in my sixties. But more than just me in Reefton, others were also inspired and even more so by success in TheatreFest in August, and thus we are very keen to continue with TNZ backed Festivals.
KT Reefton.

Theatre workshops provide actors with skills and techniques, giving them different approaches that can be used repeatedly in creating different roles. They enhance script and character analysis, exploring methods of acting. They are an opportunity to observe and grow your own understanding of what works and why. Theatre New Zealand workshops have been instrumental here in South Canterbury in developing local acting and directing talent, making them a valuable asset in deepening and extending arts activities in New Zealand. Long may they continue!
LD & JH Timaru

I have attended several classes and workshops thanks to Theatre New Zealand & Bryan Aitken, and have found his dedication and passion for his subjects very inspiring. TNZ Buller West Coast area participants have all benefited from his classes and workshops. Not only in their craft, but they have reawakened the drive to participate in festivals and other Coast-wide events. What a great addition to Theatre in our area!
PBMcL Buller

I've attended several TNZ backed workshops in the last few years. They have provided excellent opportunities for both beginners and more experienced theatre practitioners to gain practical skills and increased confidence. The guidance and constructive feedback from the tutor during the workshops positively changed the way our group approached the rehearsal process and helped members develop more depth to their performances. Participation in the workshops gave several members of our group the confidence to work with and direct children and young people.
JA Wakefield

Bryan Aitken's Acting/Directing Workshop held on 6th and 7th November was the first acting workshop most of the 11 attendees had experienced. Most of us began with some trepidation but right from the first exercise designed to limber us up physically and mentally, we knew we were in for a stimulating and worthwhile weekend. There was a minimum of theory, but what there was, helped us understand the craft better, for instance how useful sub-text is conveying a character, and the importance of identifying action verbs. The many exercises we took part in, in small groups, enabled us to put this theory into practice. As we watched each other perform, we appreciated how these techniques improved our performance. By Sunday afternoon, we understood Bryan's dictum "At the start of rehearsal - 10% character - 90% self, on stage 90% character - 10% self."
IC Havelock



MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

So there you have it fellow practitioners.

No matter where you live in the country – Fiordland, Tasman, Thames or Taupo, plug in to the experience and expertise that you can gain very easily by approaching us.

This is who we are. This is what we do.

“So what do we do now?”

“Whilst waiting?”

“Whilst waiting.....”

“We approach TNZ for a workshop!”

Nga mihi
Bryan Aitken
National President



OUR PATRONS

Rawiri Paratene
ONZM



Jennifer Ward-Lealand
CNZM Te Atamira



ITICKET OFFER

iTicket is offering streamlined pre-verification of event attendee's COVID-19 vaccination status using the government's new My Vaccine Pass.

They have secured an integration licence to provide secure pre-verification for events built into the ticketing process. Event promoters who wish to use pre-verification can make their onsite entry process faster and more streamlined where vaccine passes are required.

After purchasing tickets online through the iTICKET website, customers will then link to a new portal enabling them to officially pre-verify their MoH issued My Vaccine Pass for their ticket ahead of time, along with the ability to share other tickets to friends for them to do the same. By pre-verifying, this means attendees will only need a single scan of their ticket on arrival at the event.

iTICKET's pre-verification feature will be available for when the government confirms the decision to move the country to the new COVID-19 Protection Framework (Traffic Light system).

If you are interested in learning more about this integration, or how to list events with iTICKET, contact hello@iticket.co.nz

ALWAYS THE PERFECT GIFT!



Thanks to Hawera Repertory on Facebook

"2 JABS TO GET YOUR SPOT"

This catchy slogan is being used by Dannevirke Theatre Company to advertise the upcoming release of tickets for their production of The Addams Family next year.

Has your theatre management decided what you intend to do in this new normal to ensure the health and safety of cast and crew and audience attending performances? Theatre New Zealand is going to set some guidelines but in the mean time here are some principles that need consideration:

Containment of Covid-19 within the Theatre and wider communities.

Duty of care to casts, crews and audiences.

Staying in proactive communication.

Protection of vulnerable and susceptible people.

Legislative compliance.

Understand the Legal Requirements at each level of the Traffic Light system:

- Green level (some cases in the community, limited community transmission and manageable hospitalisations):

- + Record keeping and scanning will be required.
- + Face coverings will be mandatory in public venues.
- + Specified outdoor community events allowed with capacity limits.
- + There will be restrictions if vaccination certificates are used – hospitality, gatherings and events (indoors and outdoors) will be able to open with up to 100 people, based on 1 metre distancing.
- + If a business, organisation or service does not request proof of vaccine, restrictions will apply or they will not be able to operate.

- Orange level (increasing community transmission putting pressure on the health system, increasing risk for at-risk people):

- + Record keeping and scanning will be required.
- + Face coverings will be mandatory in public venues.
- + There will be no limits if vaccination certificates are used for hospitality, gatherings and events (indoor and outdoor).
- + If a business, organisation or service does not request proof of vaccine, restrictions will apply (capacity limits and physical distancing) or they will not be able to operate.

- Red level (action needed to protect at-risk people and our health system from an unsustainable number of hospitalisations):

- + Record keeping and scanning will be required.
- + Face coverings will be mandatory in public venues.
- + Specified outdoor community events allowed with capacity limits.
- + There will be restrictions if vaccination certificates are used – hospitality, gatherings and events (indoors and outdoors) will be able to open with up to 100 people, based on 1 metre distancing.
- + If a business, organisation or service does not request proof of vaccine, restrictions will apply or they will not be able to operate.

Understanding these levels helps you work out what each one means for your community. Consider auditions and crew recruitment, rehearsals and performances.

You could refer to the website of ETNZ (Entertainment Technology New Zealand)

<https://etnz.org/covid-19-resources-and-information/>

LOVE BEGINS @ 50 BY RAYMOND HOPKINS SOLD OUT



This comedy is set in the home of Anita and Clive Debanks who have been married for 28 years. The play covers a six-week period leading up to Clive's 50th birthday. Clive endeavours to recapture his youth with a foray into a "lonely hearts column". His wife, Anita, enters the loveless couple into a competition for the perfect married couple, to win a 6-week Caribbean cruise without telling her husband. Complications, misunderstandings and coincidences ensue to make this an hilarious farce.

The production celebrates the company's 75th birthday. Pictured: Anita (Lorraine Wilkie) overcome by some news about her husband with daughter (Anne Larcom) showing concern.

HAWERA REPERTORY SOCIETY

ON THE BOARDS

“Mistletoe, Murder and Mayhem” by Dorothy Parker at Gisborne Unity Theatre



The scene is the Christmas party of an import and distribution firm gone horribly wrong. The two old ladies are being questioned about a body found with a pitchfork through the chest. Deirdre, (Dorothy Fletcher who is actor, playwright and director of this whodunnit) is confused, and Vera, (Julie McPhail) is trying to help her. Wanda, (Jill White) is distraught because it is her son who has been killed. Ruby, (Wendy Dewstow) is the Customs Officer questioning them. She has been working undercover investigating the allegations that a drug smuggling gang are working through the firm.

In each performance, a different Macmillan and Sons staff member will decide they have had enough and take to murdering a workmate. Each night the audience has to guess the murderer by the end of the performance. This is the 8th murder mystery Dorothy Parker has written for local theatre groups and she says her favourite thing is seeing actors come in, take her characters and make them their own. She just loves the way they react to each other and get inside their characters even though some of them are a bit way out.

“Swingers” by April Phillips at 16th Avenue Theatre, Tauranga

Ralph, Archie and George have been golfing buddies for donkey's years and now they're retired and spending more time than ever on the course and in the 19th hole and their long suffering golf widows have had enough.



If you would like your show On The Boards,
please email Margaret at info@theatrenewzealand.co.nz

ON THE BOARDS

“She Kills Monsters” by Qui Nguyen at Evolution Theatre, Gisborne



A Dungeon and Dragons fantasy adventure that is all heart. The production is rated T for Teen; it contains strong language, adult themes, dead sexy costumes and lots and lots of violence!

“Sindafella” by Jonathan Smith at Napier Repertory Players

An adult pantomime: Sindafella’s fairy godmother transforms him into a gorgeous bearded princess and favourite fairytale characters come to life with a wicked lip-syncing twist.



If you would like your show On The Boards,
please email Margaret at info@theatrenewzealand.co.nz

PLAYMARKET SCRIPTS

Did you know that, by subscribing to Playmarket for \$40/year, you can download single copies of unpublished scripts directly from our website at any time? Become a member now at www.playmarket.org.nz/membership.

FUNNY WOMEN

Sense and Sensibility by Penny Ashton (6w, 0-17 any)

Austen fans are in for a treat with this charmingly witty and bravura retelling of the classic novel. Writer/comedian/actor Penny Ashton has adapted this well-known story, which follows the three Dashwood sisters and their constant struggle between sensible behaviour and sensitivity. Available to license from May 2022.

Bridal Shop Confessions by Lindsey Brown (7w)

Five best friends made a bridesmaid pact when they were eleven years old; they would be each others bridesmaids no matter what. But twenty years on, and the pact has become more of a burden than a joy. Available to license from May 2022.

Scarlet Heels: 26 Stories About Sex by Rachel McAlpine (3-28w)

Twenty-six erotic stories about sex and all its many hilarities and complications, and many are amusing; each is about sex as it is experienced by women. Several are about older women recalling their very surprising youthful adventures.

HARD HITTING DRAMAS

Same Difference by Roanna Dalziel (2w, 1m)

A play about a love affair between two middle aged lawyers, in which it is revealed the woman lawyer suffers from bipolar.

Anahera by Emma Kinane (3w, 2m)

11-year-old Harry Hunter is missing. While they wait for news, his distraught parents are supported by Anahera, a newly qualified social worker, but as the hours pass and the situation pushes everyone to their limits, Anahera is forced to take a stand.

Two Mad Women by Stanley Mukawe (2w)

Ten years after their young sons and 81 other school children perished in a horrific road accident, two grieving women meet at the site of the accident. As they reflect on their sorrows and joys, can they finally come to terms with their losses?

PLAYMARKET SCRIPTS

PLAYS FOR THE YOUNG - WINNERS

Gillian: Dog in the Big City by Kieran Craft and Jonathan Vanderhoorn (32 any + ensemble)

Winner - for 3-8 year olds. Gillian the Dog is having the best summer ever, running around playing with her best friend Rolf the Human. But one day Rolf leaves to some mysterious place called school. With the help of fellow pets, Gillian tracks Rolf all the way to the Big City to reunite her with her best friend.

Monarch by Beth Kayes (4w, 1m, 3 any)

Winner - for 8-12 year olds. When a greedy city planner announces plans to build a motorway that will destroy Lea's grandma's research centre and an entire ecosystem of plants and wildlife, things aren't looking good. Will Lea be able to stop it?

Spilt Milk by Catherine Smith (5w, 3m)

Winner - for teenagers. Two sisters return to their run-down family farm when their Dad passes away. Struggling with what to do next and their strained relationship with each other, the girls start to replay their childhood and so begins the unravelling of a local mystery and a disturbing family secret.

To request any plays and/or musicals, contact Nathan Mudge, Script Coordinator Kaiwhakahaere Whakaari, on nathan@playmarket.org.nz.



REGIONAL ROUNDUP

16th Ave Theatre “Tauranga Swingers” by April Phillips “12 Angry Men” by Reginald Rose	to December 11 January 21- 29
Detour Theatre, Tauranga “Sherlock Holmes; the Adventure of the Speckled Band” by Tim Kelly	to December 4
Evolution Theatre, Gisborne “She Kills Monsters” by Qui Nguyen	December 1 - 12
Unity Theatre, Gisborne “Mistletoe, Mayhem and Murder” by Dorothy Fletcher	to December 4
Rotorua Little Theatre “A Christmas Carol” by Charles Dickens	December 8-18
Napier Repertory Players “Sindafella” by Jonathan Smith	to December 11
New Plymouth Repertory Theatre “Dangerous Obsession” by N.J. Crisp	December 11 @2pm (AUDITION)
Hawera Repertory Soc “Love Begins @ 50” by Raymond Hopkins	December 3 -11
Havelock Community Theatre “The Old People are Revolting” by Devon Williamson	January 26 –Feb 5
SCDL Great Variety Christmas Show	December 1 – 4
Remarkable Theatre, Queenstown “Sweet As” - in the gardens	January 28 – 30



Jingle bells, jingle bells, Covid all the way,
It's not much fun to wear a mask or hang around all da-ay,
Jingle bells, jingle bells, isolate or else
You'll end up in an MIQ talking to yourself.

Covid's getting worse, we hear it every day,
Numbers climbing high, we know it's here to stay.
Holidays are gone, we have to stay at home,
Oh, how sad to sing this song sitting all alone.

Oh, jingle bells, jingle bells, Covid all the way,
JA's got us roped and tied, we don't have a sa-ay,
Jingle bells, jingle bells, it's so hard to cope,
But have the jabs, and wear your mask, and never give up hope



With thanks to Eileen Joyce of Te Aroha Dramatic Society

If you would like for us to display your show,
please email Margaret at info@theatrenewzealand.co.nz

COPING IN THE TIME OF COVID - THE EXPERIENCES OF DARGAVILLE LITTLE THEATRE

Contributed by Deborah Steele



Getting a show on the stage is difficult in these times. Dargaville Little Theatre has just finished their season of A Christmas Carol adapted from Charles Dickens by Eryn Wilson-Collins, Music and Lyrics by Julianne Parkinson and it was a roller coaster ride, to say the least.

Originally, the show was set to be staged in November 2020, but then Covid-19 appeared on our shores. We decided to push it out until 2022 and at the beginning of this year, it looked as though NZ had gained one over Covid -19 so we held auditions in July and had a massive turn out. Fully cast, we began our rehearsals in August. After having met with the cast in person only once, Delta arrived and we were plunged into Level 4 lockdown. It was here that we first tried out Zoom rehearsals. Although not ideal, we worked with the platform that we had and managed to maintain some momentum until the lockdown lifted and we were able to meet in person again.

What followed was a massive commitment from the cast and crew with extended rehearsals, extra hours on set, props and costumes to make up for lost time, only to be (once again) put back into lockdown. We were so close to being ready the consensus was to keep going - the show must go on! After more Zoom rehearsals, we were allowed back into the theatre four weeks before opening night, where we pulled off the momentous task to getting the show ready for opening night.

We were finally there - opening night was just days away. But then, a new challenge presented itself. Covid-19 decided to make an appearance in Dargaville. Places of interest, combined with cold-like symptoms in the cast, meant that some cast had to get a test and isolate, cancelling our first weekend of shows. A week, negative tests and fully recovered bodies later and we finally got to tread the boards with an audience! After experiencing so many challenges it was a relief to get to perform in front of someone!

We are extremely proud of the resilience that the cast and crew have shown during this roller coaster ride. It has shown us that with a bit of determination, thinking outside the box and constant re-working, we can adapt to challenging situations and still have a great outcome.

THEATRE NEW ZEALAND IS EXPANDING INTO THE BULLER/WEST COAST AREA!

It is with much pleasure and much excitement that I write about the revitalisation of TheatreFest in the Buller/West Coast Districts with the set up of Theatre NZ Buller/West Coast. Firstly, to put our task into perspective, the area we are working in extends from Karamea to Haast and inland to the Southern Alps which is approximately the same as the distance from Auckland to Wellington. Not a small challenge to bring all the communities together.

Some years ago, OnStage Productions (Westport) was an award-winning member of NZTF Canterbury/West Coast before going into hiatus with the departure of their Artistic Director, who, incidentally, has now returned. Starting from small beginnings with meetings in Reefton and Westport, zoom meetings and many emails and then the mounting of a local Theatrefest this year at the NBS Theatre in Westport in August, it has become evident that this part of the country needs its own Theatre NZ area. With some sleuthing, investigating, and communicating, theatre groups suddenly find that they are not alone, and enthusiasm has begun to build.

After a couple of false starts due to the disastrous floods in Westport in July, seven plays were performed at a 2021 local TheatreFest in Westport with entries from Granity, Reefton, Westport, and Hokitika while a Greymouth production was adjudicated in their own town. The latter was due to the change of dates not being suitable for some of their cast's commitments. We aim to be all inclusive and when needed be flexible to members' needs.

There is now an entire area to begin to administer and invigorate. A steering committee is in place and funds have been granted by Creative Communities to run a course on Waitangi Weekend on Stanislavsky. Next year we will reach out to schools throughout the area and invite them into the programme and work with members to participate in TheatreFest 2022. Currently the steering committee consists of Westport members, however it is hoped to expand the executive to include at least one person from each town or group.

Acknowledgement must be made to Bryan Aitken for his many texts, emails and phone calls to wake our districts up to their potential. With Bryan just over the Alps, we will be using his vast knowledge for advice on administration and facilitating the wonderful classes he provides for new and experienced thespians.

Lyn Doncliff



REPORT FROM NATIONAL EXECUTIVE

The new Executive recently met on Zoom and started planning for next year. To that end Ewen Coleman is again co-opted to the role of TheatreFest National Co-Ordinator, Mark Perry is Website Manager and Te Rau-o-te-Rangi Winterburn continues as our advisor on Tikanga.

It is confirmed that TheatreFest's National Final will be held from 16 – 18 September and 2021 adjudicators for Regionals and the Final have been re-engaged.

Several big topics were parked until we can meet face to face over a day in January; guidelines for Covid, TheatreFest entry forms, website and Cloud storage, and engagement with youth.



Editor: Margaret Robertson

info@theatrenewzealand.co.nz

Magazine Layout: Bethany Wood

alaskanicegaming@gmail.com

<https://theatrenewzealand.co.nz/>