

THEATRICAL

*News from The New Zealand Theatre Federation Inc.
www.theatrenewzealand.co.nz*



Tawa Community Theatre actors celebrate a birthday. Whose is it? Turn to page 3

President's Column

Dear Members,

With Festivals well and truly behind us now groups around the country are no doubt well into planning, if not production for their end of year shows. It always interests me to see who is doing what and one of the aims of the new Executive is to increase communication between our members' groups especially through the web. A number of groups do send through their newsletters to be published in the What's On column in Backchat but with an increasing number of groups using email and their web sites the number of hard copies of newsletters appears to be decreasing and as a consequence the effectiveness of knowing what is on is being lost. It is therefore planned to have an Events Calendar on the NZTF web site where groups throughout the country can upload events which then can be sourced by anyone browsing our web site. I would also like to see a lot more links on our NZTF web site; a personal goal is to have every member society and school linked, and conversely those groups linked on their web site to NZTF's web site.

And with regard to NZTF's website a reminder that the Library catalogue is now on line. Currently you can search by play or playwright, although there is a little editing still to go on it is relatively up to date and is an effective tool in searching for NZ scripts. In future it is also hoped to have the catalogue sorted by full and one act and by cast numbers and gender – so if you're looking for an all female one-act play, everything we have in the Library that fits this criteria will pop up. It is also interesting to see who is producing what NZ play which combines both of my comments above in that we hope in the future to produce statistics through the web site Events Calendar and the Library on just which NZ plays are hot and which are not. As an avid reader of plays and of searching reviews of plays on the net both here and overseas, I find it fascinating to see what appeals to groups. A prime example of this is the play *Stiff* by April Phillips which has been doing the rounds recently. A number of people I have spoken with have been rather derisive of it as a play yet many of our theatre groups have put it on to great financial success if not artistic success. Yet when I look at the actual areas where the play has been performed it has rarely been put on in the large NZ cities – why would this be? The reasons could be numerous but the information gained could be of benefit to groups trying to find a play for a particular slot at a particular time of year.

The new Executive had its first meeting this month, by Teleconference, and much was discussed with everyone contributing with good and sound ideas which augers well for the future administration of New Zealand Theatre Federation. Of the many things discussed was Festivals and a decision was made to move next year's Festival further into the year. Regional Finals will now be late August early September and the National Final will be mid-September. We are also looking at the possibility of running a Theatre School next Easter here in Wellington.

And finally I would urge you all, if possible, to come to Wellington in November for the Special General Meeting and Strategic Planning Day. Further details in this newsletter. While we now have a very effective Executive essentially the future direction of the Federation is much dependent on the ideas and suggestions of its members. So this is your chance to have your say on what you want for the future of NZTF.

Hope to see many of you in Wellington on November 21st.

Ewen D Coleman
National President

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**Special General Meeting PLUS
Strategic Planning Day
Saturday 21 November 2009
9.30 - 4.30**

All members are invited to an **SGM 9.30am at Toi Whakaari NZ Drama School at 11 Hutchison Rd Newtown** to approve the 08 - 09 accounts. These were not ready for the AGM in June but have now been prepared and audited for presentation with special thanks to new treasurer Sharon Saxton and auditor Barry Meyers.

Now for the 'PLUS' part of the day - the really exciting bit! The Executive are planning for the future and we want you all to be involved. Next year will be NZTF's 40th birthday and we want it to be a celebratory year. Should we be planning for a national school at Easter, covering acting and directing using tutors from Toi Whakaari? Should we be linking with Musical Theatre NZ for this school, for an annual conference? Should we have a theme for the 2010 Festival of Community Theatre? How should we be re-engaging with previous members now that we have an on-line catalogue?

These are just some of the ideas we want to cover. If you have other suggestions please do send them to us - use the email or box number on back of this newsletter.

An indication too of your intention to be there will help in planning for the day. We want to have buzz groups, speakers and some form of entertainment over the lunch hour. It will be a day to focus on NZTF, get inspired and move forward!

40th Festival of Community Theatre

National Final 2010

17/18 September in Wellington

Regional Final North Island 2010

27/28 August venue to be advised

Regional Final South Island 2010

3/4 September in Canterbury

Backchat Reproduction

You will have noticed that you can actually see the photo on the front cover of this issue. The executive have agreed that Backchat from now on needs to be professionally photocopied. We cannot afford colour but at least those of you on email see it in full glory on the screen before you receive the black and white version in the mail.

If you have email and would like your address added to the mail-out please let us know.

Front Page Photo

Several theatres in the Wellington District have produced Shakespeare this year as part of the Complete Workes a 400th celebration since the publication of Shakespeare's sonnets, as mentioned in the February Backchat. Tawa Community Theatre celebrated the 400th anniversary in their own way.

The cover photo was taken at a Tawa Community Theatre dress rehearsal for the Michael Greene coarse acting Shakespearean piece, *Julius and Cleopatra*. Actors took time to celebrate the Great Bard's 445th birthday on April 23rd. The photo shows Cleo's maids Lynn Coory and Margaret Potter, with Julius Caesar played by Colin Bleasdale, Aperiens (Mark Anthony) was played by Richard Kelly, and Cleopatra played by Jodie Mahan.

This play together with one by Caryl Churchill, *A Number*, was entered in the Wellington District Full Length play competition under the intriguing title '*From Shakespeare to Churchill*'.



News from the Library

The library has received the following perusals from Playmarket:

<i>Before the Birds</i> (formerly <i>Paradise</i>)	Angie Farrow
<i>The Blackening</i>	Paul Rothwell
<i>Born to Clean</i>	Renee
<i>Christmas Indoors</i>	Paul Rothwell
<i>Collapsing Creation</i>	Arthur Meek
<i>Cracks</i>	Lorae Parry
<i>Curl Up and Dye</i>	Michellanne Foster
<i>Despatch</i>	Angie Farrow
<i>The Farm</i>	David Geary
<i>Finding Murdoch</i>	Margot McRae
<i>Flavons and Foxtrots</i>	Alison Quigan and Ross Gumbley
<i>Forever and Ever</i>	Angie Farrow
<i>The Gods of Warm Beer</i>	Peter Hawes
<i>Greek Fire</i>	Dean Parker
<i>The Hollow Men</i>	Dean Parker
<i>The Last Gasp Cafe</i>	Sarah Delahunty
<i>Love, babe</i>	Christine Stachurski
<i>The Love of Humankind</i>	Brian Sergent
<i>Harbouring Ghosts</i>	Kerry Lynch
<i>Little Red Riding Hood</i>	Roger Hall
<i>The Sex Fiend</i>	Stephen Sinclair and Danny Mulheron
<i>Skool!</i>	Christine Stachurski
<i>Star Crazy</i>	Robert Lord
<i>Te Karakia</i>	Albert Belz
<i>Things I hate About Mother</i>	Sarah McDougal
<i>Weather</i>	John Smythe
<i>Where We Once Belonged</i>	Dave Armstrong
<i>Whero's Net</i>	Albert Belz
<i>The Wife Who spoke Japanese in Her Sleep</i>	Vivienne Plumb
<i>Yours Truly</i>	Albert Belz

Green Room Theatre

PO Box 19018, Onekawa, Napier 4146
GreenRoomTheatre@xtra.co.nz

Green Room Theatre in Napier is NZTF's newest society member. It's a new mobile theatre group, taking theatre out of the theatre to the people of Hawke's Bay. The group was formed in October 2008, following an invitation to perform *Lily* by TJ Ramsay, at a local hotel for an end of year Christmas function. Since then *Lily* has been performed at a private home, restaurants and a women's gym. The group will perform in any venue including schools, offices, Churches, Conference venues, woolsheds and only charge a fee to cover the cost of scripts and royalties, making them an excellent fundraiser idea.

Green Room Theatre is increasing their repertoire and members are rehearsing three one act plays to meet the demand for this year's Christmas entertainment session. The plays include *Joining the Club* by David Tristram, *What Brutes Men Are* by Constance Cox and *Day Trippers* by Jean McConnell.

A major production to be held in Napier's Army Hall on 6 – 8 May 2010 is planned, to commemorate the 65th Anniversary of the liberation of the Terezin Concentration Camp in Czechoslovakia. The production involves two one act plays by Celeste Raspanti – *I Never Saw Another Butterfly* and its sequel *The Terezin Promise*. The plays are inspired by a book of children's poems and drawings from the concentration camp.

Research for the production has taken Anne Corney, co-director, on an amazing journey with contact with members of the Wellington Holocaust Education and Research Centre, to a survivor of Terezin living in Prague and Alex Went, a playwright and director who also lives in Prague.

Green Room Theatre is full of enthusiasm and energy and is committed to making theatre accessible to everyone. For more information contact Anne Corney Phone: (06) 843 9197

www.theatrenewzealand.co.nz

Free publicity for your productions available!

Webmaster Hayden Rogers would like to set up an events calendar for societies to enter their productions. Put a young person in charge - ask them to contact us to get a password and just make sure they have all the information they need for each production.

More and more people these days find information on the internet and another service Hayden would like to offer is the setting up of a link from the NZTF website to individual society websites. Take advantage of both these opportunities now!

What's On from later in September, October to November/December

New Plymouth Repertory	<i>Dick Whittington</i> by Leslie Emslie	November 24 - Dec 5
Gisborne Unity Theatre	50th Celebration stephen@sjphotos.co.nz	November 14, 7pm
Detour Theatre (Tauranga)	<i>Menopause Made Me Do It</i> Devon Williamson	November 23 - 28
Feilding Little Theatre	<i>Unoriginal Sin</i> by David Tristram	November 6 - 21
FAHS School Theatre	ARTAUD (Theatre of cruelty) devised by Year 13 <i>The Five Dancing Princesses</i> by Karla Crofts	October 29, 7pm November 24 - 26
Pahiatua Repertory	<i>A Game</i> by Denis E Noble <i>Mother Hubbard</i> by Tony Nicholls	October in Norfolk Island November 25 - Dec 5
Foxton Little Theatre	<i>The Christmas Spirit</i> by Frederick Stroppel	November 20 - Dec 6
Levin Little Theatre	<i>Once Upon A Time</i> by Paul Barron/Sarah Dyson	November 19 - 28
Kapiti Playhouse	<i>Blithe Spirit</i> by Noel Coward	November 18 - 28
Mana Little Theatre	<i>Mrs Shakespeare, the Poet's Wife</i> by Avril Rowland	November 18 - 24
Porirua Little Theatre	<i>A Great Face for Radio 2</i> by Amanda Stone	November 19 - Dec 4
Khandallah Arts Theatre	Golden Jubilee Celebration	November 1st, 3pm
Stagecraft	<i>Wuthering Heights</i> adapted by Jane Thornton	September 16 - 26
Wellington Repertory	<i>Ophelia Thinks Harder</i> by Jean Betts/Shakespeare	October 28 - Nov 7
Hutt Repertory	<i>Charlotte's Web</i> by Joseph Robinette <i>Steaming</i> by Nell Dunn	September 28 - Oct 3 November 19 - 29
Heretaunga Players	<i>Old Fashioned Music Hall</i>	November 4 - 7
Marlborough Repertory	<i>Country Cops</i> by Robert Lord <i>Secrets Every Smart Traveler Should Know</i> inspired by Wendy Perrin	September 17 - 26 November 19-26
South Canterbury Drama League	Repertory <i>Who Wants to be 100?</i> by Roger Hall Mill Theatre 2 <i>Hot & Spicy</i> a Revue	November 6 -14 November 26 - Dec 5
South Otago Theatrical Society	<i>Stiff</i> by April Phillips	November 19 - 28

Looking for a New Zealand Play?

Order your perusal script today!

Outrageous NZ Comedy!
"Another winner from the writer of *Crazy Ladies!*"
Understanding WOMEN
Mike, Dave and Julian spend a weekend in a garden shed determined to break an age old mystery. Armed with a case of beer, a box of girle magazines and a holy book they are going to "understand women". What they discover is not quite what they expected.
By Devon Williamson

Hilarious NZ Comedy!
crazy Ladies
An outrageous comedy! Five school friends stage their own reunion after 25 years apart. Friendships are rekindled, secrets are revealed, a janitor is kidnapped! Hilarious and uplifting.
By Devon Williamson

Hilarious, sidesplitting, comedy!
MENOPAUSE MADE ME DO IT
Five menopausal women are lured to a motel by a kidnapper who has seriously underestimated his prey. A weekend of madness and mayhem ensues as the woman seize control and marry the kidnapper off to one of their group.
By Devon Williamson

Hilarious NZ Comedy!
Lost for Words!
Can a BBC announcer, a mute receptionist, a heel clicking German and a white guy who's convinced he's Jamaican, convert their Classical Music station to Reggae?
By Devon Williamson

What theatres and critics are saying about Devon Williamson's plays...

"Hilarious, dramatic, insightful. Williamson's plays are winners for the audience and producer alike".

Stuart Gunn
Artistic Director Absolute Theatre

"Ideal comedy for the Repertory Theatre!"

Gregory Brownless
Past President Tauranga Repertory Theatre"

"A superb show!!!"

Louise Dean,
The Radio Network Tauranga

"Brilliant fast moving script.... Fun to stage, hilarious to watch..."

Toni Henderson
Director for Tauranga Musical Theatre"

"Quick, witty dialogue... fast-moving... real Kiwi comedy that is sure to appeal and entertain..."

Whakatane Beacon

"Looking for a NZ play that will pull in the crowds? This is it!"

Phil Ormsby
Artistic Director Flaxworks Theatre

For perusal scripts and information contact: | Email: info@plays.co.nz | Ph: 07 5710752
Post: Detour Theatre Trust, 1 Oriana Crescent, Tauranga 3110

www.plays.co.nz

South Island Theatres On The Rise

Bryan Aitken, National Executive member of Christchurch, writes:

Several South Island theatres have had makeovers or radical reconstruction over the past couple of years. Amongst them The Opera House, **Oamaru**, re-opened last November to much praise. It is one of the most beautiful Lyric Theatres left in this part of the world although it was one of the last theatres to have a raked stage, the old 'vista' style of construction. (ghastly things and having toured and directed on them I know.) There is now a great drop-in centre with a coffee bar in the foyer running daily. A small auditorium in the old Council Chamber rooms has also been built, with foldaway seating for 120, all under the guidance of Richard McWha. Also opened last year was The Events Centre in **Asburton** with its flexible auditorium, hydraulic pit and fly tower.

The oldest working wooden theatre in the Southern Hemisphere has been The Theatre Royal, **Nelson**. It's due to re-open in April next year and will have a magnificent edifice surrounding it complete with new stage and fly tower. **Westport** is also to open a new auditorium in March. The old St James which was heading into restoration, broke its back one night (during an ABBA concert) and was demolished within a week. This marvelous new complex will also house a cinema. **Blenheim** has plans drawn up and is currently finishing its fundraising to open a new auditorium in 2012 and **Hokitika** is raising funds to restore their Regent Theatre.

Several of these theatres are either owned or part owned by the local council who see a need to have such facilities available for their communities - just like the green playing fields, libraries, and museums. Te wai pounamu is no cultural desert.

Postage
Stamp

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Designer: Matt Norrish

Deadline for next issue of Backchat
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Contributions please to:
nztflibrary@xtra.co.nz
or PO Box 329, Palmerston North 4440