

THEATRICAL

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



Disguised in male clothes, Anne Hathaway (Susan Lothian) and her best friend Alice (Fiona Popert) mingle with the groundlings at the Globe Theatre.

*Read about a production of **Mrs Shakespeare, the Poet's Wife** on page 6.*

President's Column

Dear Members,

It is often said that quality far outweighs quantity and this was certainly the case in regard to our Special General Meeting and Strategic Planning Day. The day was a great success and those who attended (from the South Island, Wellington and up to Napier) all made valuable contributions.

The Special General meeting ratified the 2008/2009 Audited Annual Accounts unanimously with little comment arising about the accounts and for this we must pay tribute to our new Treasurer Sharon Saxton for the work she has done, in a relatively short time, in getting the accounts ready for audit.

The remainder of the day was spent looking at NZTF, what we do now and what services we provide and how we can build on this and grow and develop into the future. Much stimulating and exciting discussion ensued and it was to the credit of all those present that ideas put forward were realistic and achievable and everyone came away revitalised and incredibly enthusiastic about the future of NZTF.

We were aided considerably in our discussions by a very stimulating talk by Kate Ghent, the Administrator for Musical Theatre NZ and one of its Executive members Alan Nagy from Palmerston North. There are many similarities between NZTF and Musical Theatre NZ at a national level and Kate and Alan provided us with many ideas and things to think about.

The Strategic Plan and Future Development for NZTF for 2010 and beyond that came out of our planning day is set out in full, pages 3 - 4.

As we head towards Christmas it is pleasing to note that theatre around the country is in good heart; see What's On page 7. By this time next year we will hopefully be able to look back and mark off many of the points in the Strategic Plan as having been or in the process of being achieved.

I wish all theatre groups and everyone involved and their families all the very best for Christmas and may you all have a very prosperous New Year.

*Ewen D Coleman,
National President*



Summer Reading Special

21 December 2009 – 22 January 2010

nztflibrary@xtra.co.nz

A special deal is being offered to all NZTF members for script hireage over this period.

FOUR weeks hire for perusal copies of all plays will be the equivalent of the usual minimum two weeks hire cost.

Orders for perusal copies must be received by Friday 18th December so that orders can be dispatched by Monday 21st. All copies to be posted by 22nd January to be returned to the library on or before Wednesday 27th January.

Plan your 2010 or even your 2011 programme in peace and tranquillity over the relaxing summer season. These summer hireage dates take into account all statutory and anniversary holidays.

Dates to remember:

Friday 18th December: final day for orders

Monday 21st December: orders dispatched

Wed 27th January: last day for script returns

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Strategic Plan, For 2010 and Beyond

Services

- To continue to increase communication amongst theatre groups in New Zealand through the newsletter Backchat, the web site and by creating a mentoring/support mechanism/network at grass roots level for face to face contact with theatre groups. These “grass roots rovers” are to be a conduit for information between NZTF and local groups. Individuals from the current executive already identified to begin this process.
- To increase opportunities for collegiality amongst theatre people – creating more opportunities to meet such as separating the Festival of Community Theatre Finals and AGM to different times of the year.
- To conduct a survey of our NZTF membership - ie: number of members, productions, cast, crew and audience numbers over a year, annual spend on marketing, assets etc. This information will help us better understand the demographics of NZTF and assist with applications for funding and sponsorship.
- To obtain patronage from key theatre people in New Zealand which could be displayed on letter head, website etc. This will give support and add mana to NZTF.
- To develop a system of Awards for achievement and service to theatre especially amongst young people.
- To join cognoscente organisations such as EINZ (Entertainment Industry New Zealand) for networking and increasing NZTF’s profile.
- To continue working with APRA to cover the use of incidental music for productions.
- To look at the possibility of re-branding the organisation including changing the name and logo.
- To look at the possibility of creating a Public Liability insurance policy to cover all our members.
- To work towards the possibility of returning to having the services of a part time paid administrator.

Library

- To increase promotion of the Library – especially NZ perusal scripts.
- To market the online catalogue and to continue to upgrade and improve the online catalogue.
- To look at ways of servicing non clients of Playmarket.

Workshops

- NZTF to provide support and assistance for running workshops on all aspects of stage craft and theatre within areas/regions/districts.

This assistance to cover tutors, organisation, promotion and marketing and funding and could be in the form of a DVD and on the web site

- To look at the possibility of re-instigating master classes

Newsletter

- To continue developing Backchat as the central organ of communication within NZTF including more feature articles in specialist areas such as Schools, ANZDA, EINZ

Website

- To redesign the front end of the web site to make it more attractive and appealing as well as user friendly
- To have as much up to date information as possible that is of relevance to theatre groups such as Health and Safety issues, changes to the Copyright Laws, guidelines for protection of underage children, smoking on stage etc
- To have every member group including schools with a web site as a link and have them linked to the NZTF web site.

Festival of Community Theatre

To continue to enhance the purpose of festivals through learning, sharing, assessment, recognising excellence, enjoyment, entertainment **and** encouraging ‘Theatre on the Edge’, with an emphasis on fun and passion. To also foster the emergence of new directors and playwrights

For 2010 the format and structure of the Festival of Community Theatre will remain the same as it has but with a change in timing: festivals will be later in the year.

District/local area Festivals July/August.

North Island Regional 27/28 August.

South Island Regional 3/4 September.

National Final 17/18 September.

District/local area Festivals

These run autonomously as in the past and still follow rules and guidelines set down by NZTF for Festival of Community Theatre but they do not have to be in defined Districts but could be a group of 3 or 4 theatres in a particular area.

Regional Festivals – South and North Island

Continue to be run as in the past by a District or theatre group on behalf of NZTF.

Awards have now been standardized so that they are consistent at both Regional Finals and National Final. Only change is the raising of the maximum age of a Youth participant to 20 years of age and the introduction of a Best Overall Adult Play at regional level.

National Final 17/18 September – Te Whaatea: National Dance and Drama Centre, Newtown, Wellington

No changes envisaged for 2010 except for the introduction of a Best Overall Adult Play, the Best Overall Production of a NZ Play (in recognition of NZTF's 40 Birthday) and the David Brockett Memorial Award for outstanding backstage work.

Information and entry forms for the 2010 Festival of Community Theatre will be sent out early in 2010.

Celebration of NZTF's 40th Birthday

At the National Final/AGM weekend 2010.

We plan to have as many past Presidents, Administrators and those associated with NZTF in attendance as possible – included will be an exhibition of memorabilia and a cake cutting ceremony at the AGM.

Poster/Photographic Competition

Entry details later. Winners will be announced at the National Final/AGM weekend and all entries and winners will be displayed during the weekend and on NZTF's website.

Workshops at 2010 National Final/AGM

Following the AGM it is planned to have an Open Forum – Q and A session with a panel of highly qualified speakers covering Promotion, Advertising, Marketing.

During the afternoon of the National Final/AGM weekend a number of workshops are planned to run concurrently on various aspects of theatre and stagecraft.

Festivals of the Future

Trial Festival in Otago/Southland 2010

It is proposed that groups from within this region will come together to prepare a selected part of a play over a weekend without sets and costumes with each being assessed by an adjudicator. The emphasis will be on theatre skills to encourage "Theatre on the Edge".

Proposed changes to 2011's Festival of Community Theatre

It is proposed that we do away with the Regional Finals and just have a two tier system – District/local area and a National Final.

Each District/local area would be eligible to send forward a set number of entries to National Final weekend. The finalists would play out over Friday night, Saturday afternoon and evening – with a maximum of 10 – 12 plays. Groups would have no rehearsal time except for a basic technical rehearsal but would have been informed of stage dimensions and technical details beforehand. Sets and props to be minimal. The AGM/Conference would then be held at another time during the year.



Alan de Malmanche

Alan de Malmanche's passing in October is recorded with sadness. Alan worked for both NZTF and ANZDA as actor, director and adjudicator. Long-time members may remember his adjudication at the 1985 National Final in Whangarei, won by Northland Players with *A Day in the Death of Joe Egg* by Peter Nichols. As a director he won the Book of Honour twice in BDL days: 1955 with *Winterset* by Maxwell Anderson and in 1959 with *A View from the Bridge* by Arthur Miller. Both productions were for South Island groups.

An Invitation from Musical Theatre NZ

from Ian Reid, President, MTNZ

On behalf of Musical Theatre New Zealand I would like to invite all NZTF members to attend all or part of our 50th Anniversary AGM and Conference to be held at the Rydges Hotel in Auckland from **19 – 21 March 2010**.

MTNZ views this as a great opportunity for those involved in the entertainment and theatre industry to network and a number of NZTF members would have been involved with our societies over the years.

During Saturday we plan 11 forums and 10 seminars which cover everything from venue design, to marketing, auditions, production & stage management, costume workshop, copyright holders forum (including Playmarket, Play Bureau and Dominic Drama), musical directing to name a few and all the presenters and facilitators are the best in the business.

On Saturday night to celebrate 50 years of Musical Theatre New Zealand (formerly Federation of Operatic Societies) we are having a gala dinner and masquerade ball at the Sky City Convention Centre. Friday night will be at Rydges and there will be a trip down memory lane and a great chance to catch up with old friends from the New Zealand community theatre fraternity with members attending from Keri Keri to Invercargill.

We look forward to celebrating one of the most important milestones in our organisation's history and invite NZTF members to be part of the occasion.

Please do not hesitate to contact Kate Ghent our Administrator if you would like to discuss anything or have any questions. For further information and costs etc please visit our Website www.musical.org.nz or contact Kate at kate@musical.org.nz or 04 479 5911.

"Life is what happens to you while you're busy making other plans" John Lennon

ANZDA Accreditation Seminars

The Association of New Zealand Drama Adjudicators will be holding accreditation seminars in **February 2010 in Wellington and Christchurch**.

If you have over ten years consistent experience as an actor, director or teacher/tutor, and would like to seek accreditation, or you would simply like to learn more about the process and criteria of adjudication, email Bryan Aitken the ANZDA President,

bryanaaitken@paradise.net.nz, as soon as possible so a register of interest can be drawn up.

Notice of dates and requirements will be advised later. In the meantime polish up your CV's.

ANZDA recognizes the need to refresh the gene pool. If you are accredited, you will join a band of specialist practitioners who will mentor you through your first experiences.

Aranui High School Success

After this year's Festival of Community Theatre at which Aranui High School won the Selecon Design/Technical award at National Finals for their New Zealand interpretation of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, they toured to Norfolk Island and garnered more awards in the October trans Tasman festival there. The team won Best Youth Production, Rawiri Maniapoto who played Oberon won Best Youth Actor, Samantha Foster who played Bottom won an Excellence in Acting award and director Robert Gilbert was awarded Best Overall Director. He said, "It was a fantastic week. Our students did themselves, their school and country proud."

Drama Development Trust Vouchers

DDT reminds all festival teams who have appeared at National Finals that their group has credit in their library accounts to be used up. Stretch the credit even further by taking out perusals over the summer break.

Playwright's Trip to India

Contributed by Denise Walsh

At the beginning of November I went to an international Women Playwrights Conference in Mumbai which was an exciting and humbling experience. Strong contingents from Europe, America, Canada, Australia, Philipines and two of us from New Zealand mixed and worked with a committed wonderful group from India, the host country and Pakistan. There were shared play readings in the mornings, seminars in the afternoons, followed by really interesting theatre.

Indian women writers tackle many social problems and one play about prostitution featured actual prostitutes who performed with dignity as they put their view point across. Much of the theatre was in dialect, but there was always a precis in English and the work showed such talent and energy it was easy to follow. I was impressed with their commitment on stage and many of the performances were more than professional. Perhaps when things don't come easily it helps people to develop that cutting edge in their work. It was great to have the chance to sit in on play readings of different types of approach and it made the brain whirl with ideas. As a result two Australians and I are going to work at having a bit more cohesion between our countries and I will also work at getting more women aware of the opportunities these three yearly conferences offer.

The next one is to be held in Sweden in the August. Belinda Leckie HOD Drama from Girls High travelled over with me to observe and get inspiration and she has now become involved in the international networking.

Never be afraid to try something new.

Remember that a lone amateur built the Ark.

A large group of professionals built the Titanic.

Front Page Photo/Mana Little Theatre

Contributed by Sue Miller

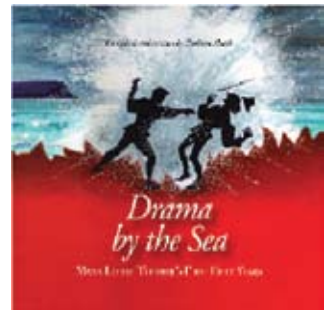
Plimmerton's Mana Little Theatre staged the New Zealand premier of *Mrs Shakespeare, the Poet's Wife* by Avril Rowlands, in November. It puts forward the theory that Anne Hathaway wrote all the plays, poems and sonnets attributed to her husband Will, who was a good actor but a bad playwright.

The front page photo shows Anne Hathaway (Susan Lothian) and her best friend Alice (Fiona Popert) disguised in male clothes. They mingle with the groundlings at the Globe Theatre to watch, with a mixture of excitement and wonder, a performance of Richard III with Richard Burbage in the lead role.

Mana's production was directed by Sue Miller, who wanted to contribute to The Complete Workes year but felt she was not confident enough to direct a Shakespeare – not to mention the logistical problems of a small stage, a small pool of people available at this time of the year, and the need by audiences for light-hearted, non-challenging entertainment as Christmas approaches.

The title role of Anne Hathaway is a huge one, as it takes at least sixty percent of the script, with no breaks off stage apart from half-time. The part was filled by actor, Susan Lothian, whose stage experience goes back (at least) to Dame Ngaio Marsh's Canterbury University drama club productions at the same time as Sue's husband, Ross was involved; he played actor Richard Burbage in this production.

Fifty years of theatre at Mana Little Theatre were celebrated this year with a book, *Drama By The Sea*, compiled and edited by Barbara Heath, one of the founder members.



Email the secretary triciaandjohn@xtra.co.nz for a copy. Cost \$25 plus postage and packing.

What's On November/December

New Plymouth Repertory	<i>Dick Whittington</i> by Leslie Emslie	November 24 – Dec 5
Detour Theatre (Tauranga)	<i>Menopause Made Me Do It</i> by Devon Williamson	November 23 – 28
Napier Repertory Players	<i>Funny Money</i> by Ray Cooney <i>Wednesday to Come</i> by Renee	November 12 – 21 February 19 – 27, 2010
Feilding Little Theatre	<i>Unoriginal Sin</i> by David Tristram	November 6 – 21
FAHS School Theatre	<i>The Five Dancing Princesses</i> by Karla Crofts	November 24 – 26
Pahiatua Repertory	<i>Old Mother Hubbard</i> by Tony Nicholls	November 25 – Dec 5
Foxton Little Theatre	<i>The Christmas Spirit</i> by Frederick Stropel	November 20 – Dec 6
Levin Little Theatre	<i>Once Upon A Time</i> by Paul Barron/Sarah Dyson	November 19 – 28
Harlequin Theatre	<i>The Owl and the Pussycat</i> by Bill Manhoff	December 10 – 18
Greytown Little Theatre	<i>The Glass Menagerie</i> by Tennessee Williams	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	<i>King Rat, the Wicked</i> by Rose Hudson	February 6 – 14, 2010
Stagecraft	<i>The Beard of Avon</i> by Amy Freed	November 25 – Dec 5
Hutt Repertory	<i>Steaming</i> by Nell Dunn	December 9 – 19
Marlborough Repertory	<i>Secrets Every Smart Traveler Should Know</i> Songs and sketches by Douglas Bernstein	November 19 – 26
South Canterbury Drama League		
Repertory	<i>Who Wants to be 100?</i> by Roger Hall	November 6 – 14
Mill Theatre	<i>2 Hot & Spicy</i> a Revue	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!

The image shows four promotional posters for plays by Devon Williamson. Each poster features a group of actors and descriptive text. The first poster is for 'Understanding Women', the second for 'Crazy Ladies', the third for 'Menopause Made Me Do It', and the fourth for 'Lost for Words!'. Each poster includes the author's name, 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

New Ventures in Feilding

Beth Evenson of Feilding Little Theatre writes that her theatre has been concerned about a dearth of new, upcoming directors, backstage personnel and actors. Their solution to the problem in 2008 was to present evenings of one act plays quite separate from the Festival system. New people are given the opportunity to 'have a go' without the extra pressure of adjudication and the committee and others experienced in theatre are on hand to guide and offer advice or help where needed. This event has proved most successful over the last two years. Three plays are staged over two evenings with a most appreciative, paying audience.

Back in 2005 Feilding Little Theatre won the Book of Honour with a production of *The Wooden Pear* by Gillian Plowman. Tony Vincent was in the cast and now, in consultation with the playwright, he is turning the play into a Short Film to be shot March/ April probably at the Kimberly Centre, Levin. Casting is complete and Miralie Thomas Vincent will reprise her role of Madeleine. Playing opposite her as Daniel is Reihana Haronga, a local professional actor. Tony himself will produce the film and his Director of Photography is Davorin Fahn from Auckland. Local theatre people are helping put the venture together.

Postage
Stamp

Editor: Margaret Robertson
Designer: Matt Norrish

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Contributions please to:
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