

Backchat

News from Theatre New Zealand
Fostering Community Theatre in Aotearoa

June 2013 Volume 36 Issue 3

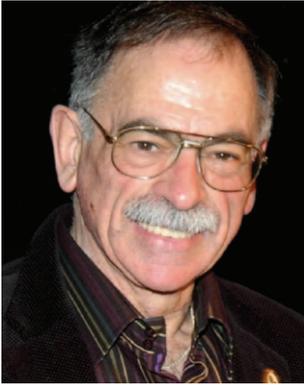
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Ellerslie Theatrical Society is profiled on page 3. Pictured from last year's production of *The Winter's Tale* are Jane Rushton as mother Hermione and John Edwards as her son Mamillius, in happy mood before tragedy strikes. This production was filmed by Greenstone Pictures as part of a television series called *Showtime*. The series will be shown later this year and will place Community Theatre in the spotlight.

President



Recently I was in Auckland and the Bay of Plenty talking to local theatre groups and it is interesting to note the range of activities that many of these groups are involved in. Like society itself, the groups are a microcosm of our communities with many thriving but others

struggling. Membership seems to be a major issue with many groups, not only how to involve more people in productions but those involved are not getting any younger because of a dearth of young people. Theatre has been and may it continue to be part of most communities, providing an outlet for creative expression and live entertainment for others.

Hopefully many theatre groups are considering this year's TheatreFest along with their major productions. There is still plenty of time to get entries in by the closing date 6th July but groups considering TheatreFest are urged to contact their local Festival organiser for details and get their production under way. See page 3. Festivals not only provide those participating an assessment of their work, offering constructive feedback through the adjudication process but also they help audiences appreciate theatre and encourage friendship, learning, and sharing of all things theatrical.

Also a reminder that the National Final of this year's TheatreFest is in Wellington 13/14th September at Te Whaaea: Dance and Drama Centre. As well as two nights of a wide range and variety of plays there will be an exciting weekend of workshops: pyrotechnics, singing for novices, playwriting and stage combat are amongst the choices. A really good key note speaker has been engaged to speak after the AGM. All details about our national conference will be in the next Backchat.

So all the best to those preparing for upcoming productions, especially those considering entering TheatreFest. And start planning for that trip to Wellington in September for an exciting weekend of theatre.

Ewen D Coleman
National President

Welcome to New Members

A warm welcome to Phoenix Theatre of Albany, Auckland and to individual members Mariette Dodd on Waiheke Island and Devon Williamson in Tauranga.

Thank you to those who have paid their subs and a reminder to those of you who haven't yet: \$100 for groups and \$40 for individuals. Remember that to enter TheatreFest you must be a paid up member. Closing date for entry is July 6th.

Meritorious Service Award

It's time to think about who deserves to receive recognition for their service to theatre. Do you have someone in your group who has actively contributed for at least 25 years onstage, backstage, front of house or administratively?

A nomination form is attached/enclosed to fill in and return by August 1st. Awardees will be announced at our AGM in September and certificates and badges presented.

New Members of ANZDA

Steven Arnold and Phil Peleton are two recently accredited members of ANZDA based in Auckland. They are looking forward to adjudicating local festivals this year.



Steven currently lectures on Montessori Education at AUT. He has had a long time love of theatre directing, producing, writing, devising, teaching, improvising and acting.



Phil works as a professional actor and tutor. He is a graduate of London's Poor School, worked in film and television and toured the UK with theatre productions before returning to New Zealand. Since then he has had a wide range of work on stage, film and extensively on television.

TheatreFest 2013 Local Festivals

Northland - 11th May

Venue - Otamatea Repertory Theatre, Maungaturoto

Contact - Kathy Bygrave (09) 431-4816

kathyr1963@hotmail.com

Adjudicator - Lindsay Nash

Waikato - 2nd-4th August

Venue - Riverlea Theatre, Hamilton

Contact - Lorna Ashton (07) 856-3801

nashton@clear.net.nz

Adjudicator - Lindsay Nash

Bay of Plenty - (date tbc)

Venue - tbc

Contact - Diane Leach (07) 573-8346

dandbleach@gmail.com

Adjudicator - Lindsay Nash

Hawke's Bay - 2nd and 3rd August

Venue - Little Theatre, Napier

Contact - Anne Corney (06) 843-9197

theatreworld@clear.net.nz

Adjudicator - Phil Peleton

Manawatu - (date tbc)

Venue - tbc

Contact - Joan Ford (06) 355-8834

joan.ford@fairfaxmedia.co.nz

Adjudicator - Nanette Wright

Wairarapa/Wellington - (date tbc)

Venue - tbc

Contact - Lynne Bushell (06) 304-9142

batonrouge@orcon.net.nz

Adjudicator - tbc

Top of the South - 10th August

Venue - The Boathouse, Blenheim

Contact - Anne McAuley (03) 578-6470

mattmc@xtra.co.nz

Adjudicator - Ewen Coleman

Canterbury/West Coast - 2nd-3rd August

Venue - Aranui Performing Arts Centre, Christchurch

Contact - Laurence Wiseman (03) 310-7424

laurie.zoe@vodafone.co.nz

Adjudicator - Steven Arnold

Otago - 10th August

Venue - tbc

Contact - Denise Walsh (03) 455-3230

denise.walsh@lphs.school.nz

Adjudicator - tbc

Southland - 20th July

Venue - Repertory House, Invercargill

Contact - Jade Gillies (03) 218-3073

oneactfest@gmail.com

Adjudicator - tbc

Ellerslie Theatrical Society Profile

Contributed by Anna Adam, ETS President

Ellerslie Theatrical Society Inc. (ETS) is a small niche theatre based in the Stables Theatre in Ellerslie, Auckland. Founded by members of the Pakuranga Community Theatre who were invited in 1989 by the Mayor of Ellerslie to create a theatre presence in the area, the Stables Theatre was set up in the Ellerslie War Memorial Community Centre and is currently owned and operated by Auckland Council.

We produce four plays each year and occasionally host guest productions. The annual programme usually contains at least one worthy or high risk play. This year opened with a modern adaption of Noel Coward's *Present Laughter*. The current play in

rehearsal is *Loot*, by Joe Orton opening in June and it will be followed by the biennial Ellerslie One Act Play Festival. One aim of the festival is to attract into ETS new writers, directors, cast, actors, crew and audience. We have found that new people in the cast and crew attract new audience members. The programme concludes with AR Gurney's *The Dining Room*.

We have a strong team of approximately thirty active members. With around two hundred paid members and a mailing list of over one thousand, our newsletter has an estimated readership of over three thousand people. ETS has a strong presence in Auckland and our budget and plans suggest a very healthy future.

This month we bring you a collection of World War I themed plays. If any of these plays interest you we can email you the script, FREE - and if you have any particular requirements we can also make other suggestions - please contact clientpromotion@playmarket.org.nz with your queries.

ONCE ON CHUNUK BAIR by *Maurice Shadbolt* (13m)

A drama about faith, courage and heroism amidst folly and betrayal. Set on the hill of Chunuk Bair above Gallipoli in 1915 we see one of the most horrific episodes of modern war and a tale of tragedy as New Zealand emerges for the first time as its own nation. A New Zealand Classic.

THE WAR ARTIST by *Carl Nixon* (3m)

Written for the centenary of the start of World War I, *The War Artist* focuses on the creation of the painting *Burial Party* at Bellevue near Solesme, painted by the NZ army's first official war artist, George Edmund Butler. Butler painted a number of moving paintings of scenes associated with the Great War, notably *Butte de Polygon* and *The Menin Road*, among others.

KING AND COUNTRY by *Dave Armstrong* (1w 5m)

King and Country is a powerful and evocative drama based on personal accounts gathered from letters, poems and newspaper articles of the era. Entrenched in the horror, humour and heartache of World War I. These stories are vividly brought to life with treasured New Zealand war songs, accompanied by a live brass band.

SISTERS AT SEA: THE SINKING OF THE MARQUETTE by *Philippa Werry* (Large Cast possible, minimum of 4w 4m)

During World War I thousands of young men went overseas to fight, but over 500 nurses - a quarter of New Zealand's nursing workforce - volunteered to serve as well. They had to cope with heat, dirt, disease and terrible injuries, as well as anti-colonial attitudes, and society's expectations of what women should and shouldn't do. Some never came home again. On 23 October 1915, the troop carrier *Marquette*, carrying the New Zealand No 1 Stationary Hospital, was torpedoed in the Aegean Sea. Ten New Zealand nurses were amongst the 167 people who lost their lives.

NGA TANGATA TOA by *Hone Kouka* (3w 4m)

East Coast 1919. From all parts of the country whanau travel to their marae at Onehura to celebrate the return of a war hero, their warrior brother Taneatua. But the shifting sands yield secrets - guilt, family honour and unfulfilled longings. Based on *The Vikings* by Henrik Ibsen. **Published by Victoria University Press** (This title is available from our Bookshop for \$20.40 RRP)

JACK'S INTERESTING TIMES by *Denis Edwards* (3m)

Jack is a World War I veteran having a rough day. War archives have been opened, placing Jack close to the torturing of a conscientious objector. Journalists are arriving and we meet him just as he has retreated into his home. His defence to the torture allegation is the truth, his behaving with integrity, and honour, and at great risk to himself, only there's something no one else knows, and it could get him jailed for the rest of his days. Jack might be caught in a big story but this is no frightened victim. He's lining up to fight his way out of the mess. It's a big, big day.

INVISIBLE INK by *Brian McNeill* (1w)

A tightly knit portrayal of the "last performance" of the infamous World War I spy Mata Hari, a figure whose name is still synonymous with duplicity, desire and mystery.

SAPPER MOORE-JONES: PAINTER OF GALLIPOLI by *Campbell Smith* (3m)

Horace Moore-Jones was a painter born in the 1880s who enlisted in the army when WWI broke out, and sketched and painted the Gallipoli debacle, including the famous *Simpson and his Donkey*. He became an art teacher at Hamilton High School in the 1920s and died in a fire at the Hamilton hotel after returning to the building to rescue others. Short Play.

BLIGHTY: 11-11-1918 by *Campbell Smith* (2w 3m)

Winner of the 2006 PANZ One Act Playwriting Competition, *Blighty* is set both in the trenches of World War I as the death toll mounts in the last few hours of the war, and in the present as a lecturer provides dramatic illustration of the damage the war caused. Short Play

THROUGH THE DARK CLOUDS SHINING by *Campbell Smith* (4-12w 4-16m)

Ettie Rout was a very active campaigner for our NZ soldiers to practice safe sex in WWI. She designed a kit to help prevent VD among the troops, and after the war continued to work and write on sexual, relationship and other health issues. Her unusual lifestyle contributed to her reputation as a strong and controversial figure.

ANZAC by *John Broughton* (3w 4m)

December 1917. At the Dunedin railway station as Gladys and Violet wait for brother John's return from the front, we see John's wartime experiences performed by the railway staff.

THE PRIVATE WAR OF CORPORAL COOPER by *John Broughton* (1w 1m)

Sister Bartholemew is a nun who knits socks for Kiwi soldiers. In one pair she leaves her name and address, and a correspondence ensues when Corporal Johnny Cooper replies. Short Play. **Published in Playlunch by Otago University Press** (This title is available from our Bookshop for \$30.00 RRP)

What's On in June & July

Consult society websites on www.theatrenewzealand.co.nz/links for more details

• Otamatea Repertory	<i>Seussical</i> by Stephen Flaherty & Lynn Ahrens	July 27 - Aug 18
• Titirangi Theatre	<i>On Golden Pond</i> by Ernest Thompson	June 4 - 15
• Ellerslie Theatrical Society	<i>Loot</i> by Joe Orton	June 6 - 15
• Papakura Theatre	<i>Romeo and Juliet</i> by William Shakespeare	July 13 - 27
• Howick Little Theatre	<i>The Cat's Meow</i> a Jazz era drama by Steven Peros	July 13 - Aug 3
• Detour Theatre, Tauranga	<i>The Vicar of Dibley</i> by Richard Curtis & Paul Mayhew-Archer	June 25 - July 13
• Te Puke Repertory	<i>Stiff</i> by April Phillips	July 10 - 20
• Hamilton Playbox	<i>Footrot Flats</i> by Roger Hall, Phillip Norman & AK Grant	July 6 - 27
• Cue Theatre, Inglewood	<i>When did you Last See Your Trousers?</i> by Ray Galton & John Antrobus	June 29 - July 13
• Hawera Repertory	<i>The Wizard of Oz</i> from L. Frank Baum	June 28 - July 6
• FAHS Feilding High School	<i>Before the Birds</i> by Angie Farrow (extracts)	June 26/27
• Napier Repertory Theatre	<i>Winter Shorts</i>	July 26 - August 1
• Theatre Hawkes Bay	<i>Death and Taxe\$</i> by April Phillips	July 25 August 3
• Pahiatua Repertory	<i>The Mousetrap</i> by Agatha Christie transferring to Feilding	June 6 - 22 June 28 - 29
• Harlequin Theatre, Masterton	<i>Bungling Burglars</i> by Michelanne Forster	July 20 - 26
• Greytown Little Theatre	<i>The Burial at Thebes</i> by Seamus Heaney	July 19 - 27
• Butterfly Creek, Eastbourne	<i>Beauty and the Beast</i> by David Swan	July 4 - 13
• Hutt Repertory Theatre	<i>The Mousetrap</i> by Agatha Christie	July 3 -13
• Mana Little Theatre	<i>The Old People Are Revolting</i> by Devon Williamson	July 3 - 13
• Porirua Little Theatre	<i>Witches of Eastwick</i> based on John Updike's novel	June 19 - July 13
• New Players, Newlands	<i>Nana's Naughty Knickers</i> by Katherine DiSavino	June 6 - 15
• Khandallah Arts Theatre	<i>Rumors</i> by Neil Simon	July 25 - August 3
• Stagecraft Theatre	<i>Pride and Prejudice</i> by Jane Austen	June 26 - July 13
• Marlborough Repertory	<i>A Short Cut to Happiness</i> by Roger Hall	June 26 - July 6
• Elmwood Players	<i>Someone Who'll Watch Over Me</i> by Frank McGuinness	June 12 - 22
• Riccarton Players	<i>A Riccartonian Palace of Varieties</i> <i>Charlotte's Webb</i> adapted from the novel by EB White	June 5 - 15 July 18 - 28
• Lincoln High School	<i>Weekend Threesome</i> group of one acts <i>High School Musical</i>	July 20 - 28 July 1 - 4
• SCDL, Timaru	<i>Eat, Drink and be Murdered</i> by Saramea Waterman	June 13 - 22
• Fine Thyme Theatre, Cromwell	<i>Death and Taxe\$</i> by April Phillips	July 19 - 27

Do you send your newsletters by email? Include Backchat Editor info@theatrenewzealand.co.nz

Of Note in the Wairarapa

Greytown Little Theatre are very excited about their July production, a NZ premiere (as far as they know) of *The Burial at Thebes*, a modern retelling of Sophocles' 2500 year old play *Antigone*. Irish playwright Seamus Heaney is also a poet, translator, lecturer and was the 1995 recipient of the Nobel Prize in Literature. Their director Pat Craddock has produced plays in many countries and has "retired" to Greytown and she will have the stage in the centre of the theatre with audience on all four sides, a first for the theatre.

Limelight Theatre Company are excited too about their radio production of *Under Milk Wood* for an Access Radio station (written up in Backchat May 2012 p5) has been nominated as a finalist in the 2013 NZ Radio Awards. Well done and fingers crossed for them.

Looking for a New Zealand Play for your Theatre?

New release!

How to Train Your Husband

Training your husband? Sound impossible? Not when you have a legendary husband trainer living right next door! Three generations of women in the Smith family attempt to turn their men into fully trained members of the opposite sex. The result is an hilarious comedy.

Lost for Words

Can a BBC announcer, a mate receptionist, a heel clicking German and a white guy who's convinced he's Jamaican, convert their Auckland classical music station to reggae?

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 women seize control and marry the kidnapper off to one of their group.

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.

My Husband's Nuts!

Barbara's husband is missing on the family farm. When Jack finally returns he's convinced that he is a Japanese soldier holding out on an island after World War Two. Barbara's husband is nuts. The only people she can trust with this information is the new vet and the village idiot. How will they restore Jack's mind without the help of the medical profession... or common sense?

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

*Phil Corahy, Artistic Director
Florence Theatre*

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 girly magazines and a holy book they are going to "understand women". What they discover is not quite what they expected. Understanding Women is a comedy play for both sexes!

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

*Stuart Gunn, Artistic Director
Absolute Theatre*



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

Whakatane Beacon

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

*Tom Henderson,
Tauranga Theatre
Director*

Productions staged in Auckland, Wellington, Christchurch, Tauranga, Waikato, Taranaki... it's time to stage one at your theatre!

By Devon Williamson Order perusal scripts at Play Bureau!

For perusal scripts and information contact: The Play Bureau Phone: (06) 757-3103 E Mail: play.bureau.nz@xtra.co.nz



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