



# Backchat

News from **Theatre New Zealand**  
*Fostering Community Theatre in Aotearoa*



Riccarton Players recent production of Tim Rice & Andrew Lloyd Webbers's *The Likes Of Us*, the story of the life of Dr Thomas Barnardo, a man who was a fiery young medical student who gave up evangelical pursuits to become more entrepreneurial and philanthropic, and whose crusade to rescue children living on the streets, led to the foundation of the famous children's homes and an organisation that bears his name to today.

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Lady Weasel (Debi Walters) and Badger (Alister Williams) in Otamatea Repertory Theatre's production of *The Wind in the Willows*.

## President's Message



*Innovation* is my key-word this month. Theatre New Zealand is continuing to meet the new practices of technology and communication.

Next year Backchat will be created in the new formatting of Campaign Monitor. This formatting will save hours of time for our

creator and editor, Jade Gillies and Garry Thomas. It will still be email-able and be available on-line and will also be able to be printed off for your membership and interested parties if you need to. Big thanks to Margaret Robertson for her years of dedication as compiler and editor.

In an effort to pare back other expenses the Executive have also held its first Skype Meeting. A bit of a bother on a Saturday morning, as we all felt we had to dress! The National Final of TheatreFest and the Conference/Workshops have been confirmed in Hamilton for September 11/12 2015, with the Regional Finals being locked in as I write this column.

I hope you all have great festive end-of-year productions and a much deserved break before the new year.

Bryan Aitken  
National President



## Farewell From Margaret

I have a folder stuffed with cuttings gathered from your newsletters and elsewhere: theatrical tit-bits, wry jokes, wise sayings, masks and a collection of useful words in eye-catching fonts. This collection started at the turn of the century when I took over editing Backchat. In those days it was an in-house 'cut and paste' effort and the cuttings proved an invaluable resource. My husband Morris helped with production. Later I had help from Lyn Doncliff in Westport, followed by Matt Norrish, initially one of Denise Walsh's Dunedin students and for the last three years Jade Gillies in Invercargill has been in charge of the layout. I want to thank them all, all South Islanders with a flair for design.

This is the last Backchat I will be involved with. The new editor is National Executive member Garry Thomas [editor@theatrenewzealand.co.nz](mailto:editor@theatrenewzealand.co.nz) who is also President of Elmwood Players, Christchurch. He and Jade plan to take Backchat in a different direction to fit in with changing times.

I have really enjoyed my contact with you over these last 15 years and shall miss getting in touch to find out what productions you are planning. Thank you to many of you for sending in information for profiles of your theatre; it has been good to get to know you better. As I remain secretary of Theatre New Zealand [info@theatrenewzealand.co.nz](mailto:info@theatrenewzealand.co.nz) I will still be in communication with you all but now it will be mainly about membership. And if you have a query or need some help I am just an email away.

I wish Garry and Jade all the best for the development of Backchat and my long-out-of-date folder is now in the recycling bin.

Margaret Robertson

MERRY  
Christmas



## Meritorious Service Awards 2014

(25+ Years of active service)

Congratulations to the following valuable recipients whose names were announced at the Annual General Meeting earlier this year:

<b>Peter Baldock</b>	Butterfly Creek Theatre Troupe
<b>Lesley Tilley</b>	Hutt Repertory Theatre
<b>Barry Meyers</b>	Khandallah Arts Theatre
<b>Amanda Stone</b>	Porirua Little Theatre
<b>Ann Pocock</b>	On-Stage Te Kuiti



A delighted Ann Pocock with her well-deserved Meritorious Service Award.

## Thank You

A big "Thank You" to the Drama Development Trust for a cheque for \$1000 given to President Bryan on stage at the end of the National Final to further the work of Theatre New Zealand.

## Poster and Programme Competition 2014

18 posters and 8 programmes were entered in this years competition, which was judged by Becky Bliss, Independent Design (Wellington). Best poster was Elmwood Players' *Thick As Thieves*, designed by Glen Clark, and best programme was *Four Flat Whites in Italy*, designed by Samantha Turner, Hawera Repertory Society.



## New Editor

Hi, and welcome to this issue of Backchat – it's a bit of a transition period as I find my way, taking over the role of Editor from Margaret – I'm not too sure what I've let myself in for, with the great job that she has done in putting this newsletter together. Jade and I have a few ideas with regards to Backchat, and you will see this coming through from next year. I definitely want this newsletter to be informative, colourful and entertaining. I welcome your contributions, and would love to see some production photos that we can use – so send them in and let's see what happens. As I said, this issue is a little bit of a transitional one, so it's not quite bursting at the seams with info as I find my way, but come 2015 we'll be in full swing.

Wishing you all a safe and Merry Xmas

Garry Thomas

# TheatreFest 2015

Dates/Venues: Some are still to be confirmed, particularly at District level, but this gives you a flavour for what's being planned.

**NATIONAL FINALS** *Hamilton, 11/12 Sep*

## REGIONALS

Upper North Island	<i>Te Kuiti, 14/15 Aug</i>
Lower North Island	<i>Pahiatua, 21/22 Aug</i>
Upper South Island	<i>Top of South, 21/22 Aug</i>
Lower South Island	<i>Host TBC, 14/15 Aug</i>

## DISTRICTS

Northland	<i>Dargaville, Jul/Aug</i>
Waikato	<i>Hamilton, 24–26 Aug</i>
Bay of Plenty	<i>Rotorua, Early Jun</i>
Hawke's Bay	<i>Hastings, 31 Jul/1 Aug</i>
Manawatu	<i>Venue &amp; date TBC</i>
Wellington/Wairarapa	<i>Venue &amp; date TBC</i>
Top of South	<i>Venue &amp; date TBC</i>
Canterbury	<i>Christchurch, Date TBC</i>
Otago	<i>Venue &amp; date TBC</i>
Southland	<i>Venue &amp; date TBC</i>

To find  
another's voice,  
follow  
your own voice,  
wait until  
that voice  
becomes a  
private ear  
listening  
to another.

Start right now  
take a small step  
you can call your own  
don't follow  
someone else's  
heroics, be humble  
and focused,  
start close in,  
don't mistake  
that other  
for your own.

*Start close in,  
don't take  
the second step  
or the third,  
start with the first  
thing  
close in,  
the step  
you don't want to take.*

By David Whyte, *River Flow:  
New and Selected Poems*

## Start Close In

Start close in,  
don't take the second step  
or the third,  
start with the first  
thing  
close in,  
the step  
you don't want to take.

Start with  
the ground  
you know,  
the pale ground  
beneath your feet,  
your own  
way of starting  
the conversation.  
Start with your own  
question,  
give up on other  
people's questions,  
don't let them  
smother something  
simple.



# What's On in December/January/February

*It's a little quiet over the Xmas – New Year Period, so February is included*

Howick Little Theatre	<i>The Love List</i> by Norm Foster	28 Feb – 21 Mar
Napier Repertory Players	<i>The End Of The Golden Weather</i> by Bruce Mason	19 – 28 February
Elmwood Players	<i>The Owl And The Pussycat</i> by Tim Bray	15 – 24 January
Elmwood Players	AUDITIONS: <i>The Hen Night Epiphany</i> by Jimmy Murphy	14 February

*To be included in the 'What's On' section of Backchat, please keep sending through your newsletters, or even a separate email, and your production (or auditions) can be added: [editor@theatrenewzealand.co.nz](mailto:editor@theatrenewzealand.co.nz)*



"Ideas are like rabbits. You get a couple and learn how to handle them, and pretty soon you have a dozen." ~ John Steinbeck



Editor: Garry Thomas  
Designer: Jade Gillies

Deadline for February Backchat  
**January 23rd 2015**

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