



BACKCHAT

News from THEATRE NEW ZEALAND, *Fostering Community Theatre in Aotearoa*



The cast of Tauranga's Detour Theatre looks set to *Open All Hours* in their upcoming production based on the hit UK television comedy by Roy Clarke. 11-18 MARCH

Wanted: Production Photos

We'd love to see more pics in *Backchat* and would welcome your production (and rehearsal) photos.

To enter a theatre for a performance is to be inducted into a magical space, to be ushered into the sacred arena of the imagination.

SIMON CALLOW

Backchat Deadlines

20 March for April edition

22 May for June edition

24 July for August edition

25 September for October edition

20 November for December edition

To have your important events listed in 'Whats On', please send the details direct to planetgazza@xtra.co.nz The society, the event and the date(s) are all that is required.



President's Report

The banner head-line on the Editorial Page of The Christchurch Press on January 3rd states “*No city can survive without the arts, nor should it try*”.

The first section was in fact quoting newly appointed Dame, Adrienne Stewart - but more than that, the article went on to magnify her comments (*nor should it try*) with instances, statistics and The Press’s own editorial in defence of her statement. Not that it really needed defending!

Apparently the arts industries (some people hate that phrase) contribute \$212 million dollars to the Canterbury Region’s GDP and employ more than 3000 people.

Now I know some of you live in communities of just 3000 people so you are probably knocked a little side-ways by such figures - but what it points up to me is the viability and desirability of arts organizations in every community.

Theatre for instance (the synthesis for the arts) draws together actors, singers, dancers, designers, dressmakers, painters, builders, you name it we embrace and utilise them. When you are mounting a production do you not buy materials for the set including paint, material for clothing and footwear? We take out advertising in the local media and pay for rentals or electricity to run the lighting and heating. We are actually big investors in our communities.

Have you ever considered - even added up your yearly expenses, what you spend in your local community? Try it and see what you have spent in the last decade even, you may well be surprised. “*Money makes the world go round....*” an old adage and also a song from the musical *Cabaret* tell us - it sure does, and though you may be spending you are also receiving income.

Wages earned in your community are also being spent in your community so it all makes sense.

But, do you ever feel it’s a hard slug trying to get funding or sponsorship or sometimes even recognition!

When next applying for funding, a grant or sponsorship, work out what you are worth to your community and use that as a lever - there is no reason for any arts organisation to feel like the under-dog in its community.

The playing fields of Theatre are just as important as the ‘green’ playing fields and changing sheds you’ll find down the road which frequently receive more local body funding than the arts - although often used by less people! Do your figures - see how it all adds up and don’t feel like the under-dog next time you need a grant or some assistance from your council.

**BRYAN AITKEN, President
Theatre New Zealand**

Regional Round-up

Auckland

Auckland district remains active at the individual theatre level, though we have not yet found a unified voice in Theatre Federation. There is an enormous amount of theatre going on, both professional and proto-professional. We are delighted to have such an active community. The theatre groups themselves chat, share members, borrow, beg and generally support each other's shows. There is a long standing tradition of a round of comps given to other theatre groups. We have tried to meet a few times, and these meetings have been useful. It's funny the bridge is meant to unite us, but sometimes it seems a bit of a divide.

Hawkes Bay

Napier Repertory Players are producing three New Zealand plays in 2015, the first being *The End of the Golden Weather*, written by Bruce Mason in a company version written by Raymond Hawthorne. The show opens on 19th February and is directed by Mason Price.

Their mid-year production is *Swansong*, a domestic drama written and directed by Napier Repertory Committee member, David Moore.

The end-of-year production is *Kings of the Gym* written by Dave Armstrong and this will be directed by David Brock. Theatre Hawke's Bay in Hastings have just had auditions for *Motherhood Out Loud*, conceived by Susan R. Rose and Joan Stein and directed by Jacquie Hills. The show goes on in April.

Waipukurau Little Theatre's first production is *Peninsula* written by Gary Henderson and directed by Linsey Bishop. Auditions will be held on 1st February. Aubyn Live Theatre in Hastings are rehearsing *Aladdin* directed by Julie Smith. This is their youth company production and will go on stage in April. Napier Operatic Society are rehearsing *Evita* which opens at the end of next month. Napier Repertory Players have seven copies of the Revised 2006 Edition of the script for *On Golden Pond*. The cost per script is \$12.00. (cost price was \$12.24) Note: performance royalties also need to be applied for through Hal Leonard. They also have a backdrop of the lake used in last year's production. The backdrop is made up of six boards, similar to corflute, measuring 2.4 x 1.2 each. Contact Anne Corney: theatreworld@clear.net.nz

Hamilton

Hamilton City is gearing up for the *Waikato Gardens Art Festival* held in their World Class Gardens. Lots of interesting acts. 13 - 26 February, check it out at: hamiltongardensfestival.co.nz

Riverlea Theatre is a hive of activity with rehearsals for a production of *The House of Bernardo Alba* as a fundraiser to purchase the land that the theatre is sited on. Stagecraft classes will commence for the year soon and Hamilton Playbox is busy in rehearsals for the WW100 commemorations with a production of *Once on Chunuk Bair* by Maurice Shadbolt - check out playbox.org.nz Three school preview productions then opening Anzac Day.



MATINEES AVAILABLE

**WWI DISPLAY IN LOUNGE
OPEN 3-6PM PRIOR TO SHOW**

TICKETS AVAILABLE ONLINE AT WWW.ITICKET.CO.NZ
or Riverlea Theatre, 83 Riverside Rd, Hamilton
p. 07 856 5450 or 0800 800 192 www.playbox.org.nz

Wellington

Theatre in the Wellington area is underway for the year. Khandallah Arts Theatre as usual is first to launch a production, performing *Tommy and the Jabberwock* by Tanya Piejus mid February in a local park. Butterfly Creek and Hutt Repertory follow in March with the classics *Hamlet* and *Pride and Prejudice* respectively and then Stagecraft Theatre will produce *Gaspig* by Ben Elton. Meanwhile Porirua Little Theatre in their 65th year remain optimistic that the show will go on in spite of the imminent demolition of their theatre. They have big plans involving a brass band to commemorate 100 years since the Gallipoli campaign. Other theatres in the region will also commemorate this anniversary. Our District AGM is timed for 10am Sunday 22 February and another Full Length Festival from 1 March - 31 August is planned. Lindsey Rusling will be our adjudicator.

Canterbury/West Coast

The TheatreFest committee met in mid January to commence planning for this year's District short play festival. Suitable venues still remain a problem in post-quake Christchurch. We are hopeful of gaining the use of NASDA facilities again this year, but this is still to be confirmed. Lots happening within the various theatre groups at present: Riccarton Players are rehearsing the NZ comedy *Ladies For Hire*, Repertory are preparing for *Richard III* and Elmwood Players have auditions coming up for the Irish dramedy *The Hen Night Epiphany*. Top Dog's annual Open Air Summer Shakespeare In The Park this year was *Macbeth*, and has just completed the season.



Southland

Shakespeare in the Park - now in its 15th year - continues to please audiences each February, and this year was no exception. A modern rendition of *The Taming of the Shrew* brought fun and fits of laughter into Invercargill's idyllic Queen's Park, with many declaring it to be the best production yet! The weather certainly didn't disappoint either.

Invercargill Repertory Society is in rehearsal mode for the upcoming WW1 saga, *Once on Chunuk Bair* by Maurice Shadbolt. The season runs from 22-25 April at the Civic Theatre.

Invercargill Musical Theatre will be staging *The Phantom of the Opera* later in the year, whilst Gore Operatic have recently auditioned for their production of *Hairspray*.

Playwrights Association

The Playwrights Association of New Zealand (PANZ) joined the Theatre Federation in 2012 to foster closer co-operation between our two organisations and we encourage our members to participate in TheatreFest.

Three Award-Winning Comedies from Playwrights Association of New Zealand's 2014 One-Act Play Competition, written and designed to provide an evening of fun in your theatre:

red_devil_1917

by COLIN BEARDON

Kate's grandad is an old-style socialist who refuses to change. She wants him to get out more and shows him the Internet so he can look up some old friends. When that doesn't work she recruits Marco to try. Some deception is needed to gain grandad's confidence, but the two men end up co-operating in a way Kate didn't anticipate.

Cliché

by BRONWYN ELSMORE

Stock characters, stock settings, familiar situations, predictable dialogue. If you haven't seen and heard it all before, you need to go to the theatre more often. *Cliché* is a play to be enjoyed by actors who revel in the chance to send-up the genre; and to be groaned at by audiences who have provided the bums-on-seats at local theatres for too long.

Margaret Thatcher Hits New Zealand

by REX MCGREGOR

The 13th Commonwealth Games in Edinburgh four years ago were a disaster. 32 countries stayed away. Now in 1990 the 14th Games in Auckland look set to be a success. Nearly every eligible country is taking part. But that's not enough for Margaret Thatcher. She wants more.

All three works are being offered as a single entertainment entitled *Fun Expected* - providing an opportunity not to be missed. Three sparkling kiwi plays in one hilarious production in which fun is not only expected but guaranteed! To access this trio of scripts, visit

www.playmarket.org.nz or email info@playmarket.org.nz

23rd India Theatre Olympiad

Organising of the 23rd India Theatre Olympiad as International Theatre Festival in the millennium city of Cuttack, Odisha (Orissa) state - situated on the eastern coast of India is underway.

This annual International Theatre Festival (Drama, Dance & Music) is the only of its kind in the country and this year it will be held from 1 to 12 July.

This International event will provide a wonderful platform - a small world stage - for countries to strengthen ties with the people of India. The Theatre Olympiad welcomes performing arts companies, groups and artists to present their productions in all genres of performing arts including Theatre (drama, comedy, mime, pantomime, puppet, fingers theatre, visual), Dance (modern, folk, classical etc.), Music (opera, classical, musical, contemporary, jazz, folk etc.) and other forms of performing arts. For full details, email: theatre.olympiad@gmail.com



Hilarious New Zealand Comedies!

By Devon Williamson www.plays.co.nz

Over Paid, Over Sexed and Over Here!

Cast: 4 Female, 5 Male **Length:** Two Acts

The outrageous comedy about the Yanks 1942 invasion of NZ!

As our men fight overseas, a sleepy seaside kiwi town is about to experience an invasion by the Americans. The arrival of the Yanks brings much needed excitement for the ladies, but for the local lads there are three big problems with the visitors... they're over paid, they're over sexed, and they're over here!

My Inlaws are Outlaws!

Cast: 5 Female, 2 Male **Length:** Two Acts

Annie discovers her in-laws are outlaws... and her mother in-law has hired a mad group of assassins to kill her! How will Annie, a mild mannered Librarian, outwit the best of the Italian, Russian and Irish contract killers? This is outrageous, laugh out loud comedy at its best.

The Old People Are Revolting

Cast: 5 Female, 2 Male **Length:** Two Acts

An hilarious comedy about seniors seeking revenge! The residents of the Sunshine Retirement Village have had enough: they're revolting! Bursting with eccentric characters and crazy shenanigans the play is great fun to stage and a huge audience pleaser.

Other plays include: My Husband's Nuts, Menopause Made Me Do It, Crazy Ladies, Understanding Women, and Lost For Words.



For perusal scripts and information contact The Play Bureau

Phone: 03 455 9959

Email: info@playbureau.com

Over 60 productions staged by theatres across NZ and Australia!

What's On

- **Howick Litte Theatre** *The Love List* (Norm Foster) 28 FEB - 21 MAR
- **Hamilton Playbox** *Once On Chunuk Bair* (Maurice Shadbolt) 23 APR - 2 MAY
- **On-Stage Te Kuiti** *An Unlikely Adventure* (Hilary Blamires) 24-28 FEB
- **Te Puke Repertory** *Shirley Valentine* (Willy Russell) 18-28 MAR
- **Napier Repertory Players** *The End Of The Golden Weather* (Bruce Mason) 19-28 FEB
- **Wellington Repertory** *Soldier's Songs* (Campbell Smith) 15-18 APR
- **Riccarton Players** *Ladies For Hire* (Alison Quigan) OPENS 6 MAR
- **Elmwood Players** *The Hen Night Epiphany* (Jimmy Murphy) 8-18 APR
- **Christchurch Repertory** *Richard III* (William Shakespeare) 13-28 MAR
- **Invercargill Repertory** *Once On Chunuk Bair* (Maurice Shadbolt) 22-25 APR