



BACRCHAT

News from THEATRE NEW ZEALAND
Fostering Community Theatre in Aotearoa

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From *Death of a Salesman* by Arthur Miller at Gisborne Unity Theatre.
Read about the conversion of their theatre space into a black box p5

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President

Autumn approaches and with it the end of the financial year for many. So there's a raft of Annual General Meetings and balance sheets and lobbying for position on committees all around the country.....are you being pro-active in your society? Change will only happen if you help it to.



Your National Executive has also been busy - we have revised the **TheatreFest system** opening up the entry eligibility. (see more elsewhere) Also on our updated website you will be able to find a series of **pamphlets on the job description of production personnel**. This will be available under Resources/Job Descriptions for financial members using a password. Hopefully this will help you all to clarify 'who does what' when mounting a production, efficiency with congeniality are the keywords.

Jade Gillies and his team are hosting Conference and National Finals of **TheatreFest** this year in Invercargill. Although we try to centralise the Nationals each year for ease of travel costs, it still creates extra expenditure for our teams in the far north and far south - hence our decision to hold 2015 in Hamilton in the north and 2016 in Invercargill in the south. It's their turn! Next year the national finals will be centralised again. Meantime workshops are being planned and the southern hospitality will be guaranteed! I love the fact we get to travel to other centres for these celebrations.

My personal challenge to you all this year, is to see how many New Zealand plays you will mount - particularly in the 'new playwrights' category of TheatreFest. Let's break down the fusty walls of our play-writing and create new works that excite, challenge and confront our audiences. Theatre conventions need to be contested if we are to have a modern relevant vital theatre scene in Aotearoa New Zealand. Small steps can turn into big ones.....

Bryan Aitken
National President
Theatre New Zealand

Subscriptions Due Now

Our financial year runs 1st April - 31 March and an invoice will be sent by email or post. Societies and schools pay \$100 and individual members pay \$40. **Please fill in the form** - to keep our records up to date - and pay promptly. Thank you.

Happy Birthday!

Rotorua Little Theatre 65 years
Hawera Repertory Society 70 years
Wellington Repertory Theatre 90 years
Congratulations to you all.

Corrections

Friends of the Globe Theatre assisted by Brian Byas will host the Bottom of the South Regional Festival in Dunedin. (Not Bryan Byas)

This year's Norfolk Island Theatre Festival adjudicator will be David Chambers, teacher, actor, director and ANZDA adjudicator of Christchurch. (Not Robert Gilbert)

STOP PRESS! TheatreFest 2016

Under Fifteen Minutes Eligible

The length of presentations in *TheatreFest* has been expanded to include all performances under fifty minutes. Now under 15 minute productions can be entered; consider a variety of theatre conventions.

- *Sheilah Winn Shakespeare* entries. Let's celebrate the Bard's 400th anniversary.
- *Dance Drama* infused with a contentious theme perhaps
- *Songs* woven into a storyline or action
- *Improvised* presentation to suit your dramatic inspiration.

A wide format is encouraged - not just dialogue-based plays.

The minimum cast size is still two players.

TheatreFest Comes To You, October to July

Many schools and community theatres have found it difficult to fit in with the scheduled 'local fests' of July/August, that lead on to Regional and National Finals. So, maybe you are a single entry fitting in around your society's major productions and cannot make it to a local fest - now we have a more flexible policy. *TheatreFest* entries have been opened up to include the period of October (after the September National Finals) to July (prior to the next official round).

This means you are eligible to enter at any time during that period, as long as you pay for and receive adjudication from an ANZDA adjudicator. The adjudicator will attend your production, decide whether it's of suitable standard, and if so make a recommendation to the National TheatreFest Administrator that the production go forward to be included in the mid-August Regional Finals. This gives more flexibility to your programming. Contact Bryan Aitken

bryanaitken@paradise.net.nz

ANZDA only Adjudicator Appointments

Theatre New Zealand has introduced a policy of appointing and paying for ANZDA accredited adjudicators at all levels of *TheatreFest*. Organisers will pay for their travel and accommodation.

ANZDA members for their part recently honed their skills at a refresher seminar in Wellington.

TheatreFest Entry Fee Change

This year each team where ever they are in the country, will pay the actual cost of their adjudication at local level plus the administration fee towards Regionals and Finals. This does away with the uneven playing field in existence before when local areas charged fees ranging from \$0 - \$75 plus the national fee of \$60. Now the charge will be **\$130 per team** or \$200 for 2 teams from same group, \$270 for 3 teams from the same group. It will be up to local organisers as to whether they still need to charge a little extra to cover costs other than adjudicator's fees.

Enter and Pay On-Line www.theatrenewzealand.co.nz

One simple payment to streamline your entry is available now.

Closing Date Saturday 2 July

TheatreFest Administrator: Steven Arnold theatrefest@theatrenewzealand.co.nz

Playwrights Association of New Zealand -10-Minute Play Competition 2016

Theatre New Zealand members the Playwrights Association invite other members to join them and enter their new play in this competition as well as get it into TheatreFest'16.

Adjudicator: Angie Farrow. Proudly sponsored by Playmarket
Enquiries and submissions to: playwrightsnz@gmail.com

RULES:

1. The competition is for scripts suitable for performing on stage with a playing time between 7 and 10 minutes.
2. The entrant must be a member of PANZ. Membership is open to any person who is a long-term resident of New Zealand or is resident for the whole of 2016. The annual membership fee is \$25. [To join](#), see: newzealandplaywrights.wordpress.com. There is no additional entry fee.
3. A member may submit up to two plays. Each play can be individually authored, co-authored, or authored as a member of a collective.
4. The script must not be an adaptation of anyone else's previously published or performed work. We advise that you check copyright if quoting previously published work.
5. The name of the author(s) and/or their contact details must not appear anywhere on the script.
6. There is no prescribed script layout.
7. Writers are recommended to use no more than four actors.
8. The play must not have been performed before a paying audience before 1 May 2016.
9. Entries must be submitted by email to playwrightsnz@gmail.com attaching a completed [Entry Form](#) and the script as a Word file.
10. Entries open 01 March 2016 and close **30 April 2016**.
11. The Adjudicator will select a First, a Second and a Third place winner and five other Finalists who will all be announced in July 2016. No member can occupy more than one Finalist place.
12. The First, Second and Third place winners will receive a cash prize of \$100, \$50 and \$25 respectively and will be invited to a workshop later in 2016 organised by Playmarket where a professional script advisor, director and professional actors will help develop their winning play. This will be held in Wellington or Auckland and transport costs for the writer will be paid.
13. The winning four plays will be given a public performance late in 2016 by the Waihi Drama Society. Up to eight of the plays will be performed by Oamaru Repertory Society. PANZ will also promote the plays of all eight Finalists as a single show and is hopeful of finding an organisation willing to give them all a public production. See our website (newzealandplaywrights.wordpress.com) for the latest information.
14. In the event of a production, if the play runs for more than ten minutes then the writer will be obliged to shorten it. The director will not make alterations, additions or deletions to the script except with the consent of the writer. For the purposes of copyright ownership, any agreed alterations, additions or deletions of any kind will be deemed to be the writer's own work. Casting, set, sound, lighting effects and stage directions are at the discretion of the director.
15. Once selected for performance writers may not withdraw their play from production without the permission of PANZ.
16. All rights of each play will remain with the author.

Black Box Theatre in Gisborne

Gisborne Unity Theatre has been providing the Gisborne public with quality theatre for more than 50 years but is not afraid to reinvent itself to offer a new theatrical experience for its audiences.

We recently turned our clubrooms into a blackbox theatre space, an 'anyplace' to be configured as we choose for each production. We wanted to have a more intimate venue as an alternative to the Council-owned Lawson Field Theatre - a space where we could perform small scale, 'fringe' and experimental productions (including works by local playwrights) not suited to a larger venue and/or too financially risky to put on elsewhere.

This type of venue allows for intimate theatre, where storytelling and character portrayal are the prime foci. The floor has been painted matte black, and the walls of the clubrooms have been lined with heavy black curtaining; sections of curtaining can be closed or drawn back, depending on the requirements of the production and the staging needs. The whole space can be easily adapted to enable imaginative staging for a variety of types of play, and in our productions to date we have employed a thrust stage, a traverse stage and theatre in the round.

The most obvious additional benefit of having our own theatre space is not having the expense of paying for theatre hire. Making a profit, or at least breaking even, is always a priority with amateur theatre groups, and this has made a huge difference to our balance sheet.

We also avoid the disruption of moving sets and costumes to another venue. Our actors rehearse in the space in which they will perform, and they have, without exception, stated the advantage of this set-up – the transition from rehearsal to performance is seamless. Lighting and sound are able to be set up during the rehearsal period, eliminating the need for last-minute changes. As a result, there are fewer opening night nerves, as the space is comfortable and familiar for both cast and crew.

The most significant benefit, however, is one that we had not really considered – that is that our audiences have universally loved the experience of seeing a play in the black box theatre. They comment on the intimacy and involvement they feel with the actors, the set and the play as a whole, and they enjoy coming to a new play and discovering how we have staged it. As a result, we are building a new loyal audience – something that is a rare thing in today's society.

Our black box theatre also provides a venue for Unity Youth Theatre, an off-shoot of Unity Theatre in which about 30 high school-aged students have weekly lessons, and go on to present a production. This gives our young and budding Gisborne actors additional stage time and experience.



The plays we have produced so far in our own theatre space are 'Under Milk Wood', 'Death of a Salesman' and 'Shirley Valentine'. We are grateful to NZCT (New Zealand Community Trust) for assistance with funding for our black box conversion.

A Code of Ethics for the Theatre

Dos and Don'ts for the theatre written in 1945 by 24 year old actor Kathleen Freeman when she was establishing Circle Players one of the first small professional theatres in Los Angeles, equally applicable to non professional theatre here in the twenty first century.

Take a copy and put it up in the Green Room!

The “rules”:

1. I shall never miss a performance.
2. I shall play every performance with energy, enthusiasm and to the best of my ability regardless of size of audience, personal illness, bad weather, accident, or even death in my family.
3. I shall forego all social activities which interfere with rehearsals or any other scheduled work at the theatre, and I shall always be on time.
4. I shall never make a curtain late by my failure to be ready on time.
5. I shall never miss an entrance.
6. I shall never leave the theatre building or the stage area until I have completed my performance, unless I am specifically excused by the stage manager; curtain calls are a part of the show.
7. I shall not let the comments of friends, relatives or critics change any phase of my work without proper consultation; I shall not change lines, business, lights, properties, settings or costumes or any phase of the production without consultation with and permission of my director or producer or their agents, and I shall inform all people concerned.
8. I shall forego the gratification of my ego for the demands of the play.
9. I shall remember my business is to create illusion; therefore, I shall not break the illusion by appearing in costume and makeup off-stage or outside the theatre.
10. I shall accept my director's and producer's advice and counsel in the spirit in which it is given, for they can see the production as a whole and my work from the front.
11. I shall never “put on an act” while viewing other artists' work as a member of an audience, nor shall I make caustic criticism from jealousy or for the sake of being smart.
12. I shall respect the play and the playwright and, remembering that “a work of art is not a work of art until it is finished,” I shall not condemn a play while it is in rehearsal.
13. I shall not spread rumour or gossip which is malicious and tends to reflect discredit on my show, the theatre, or any personnel connected with them-either to people inside or outside the group.
14. Since I respect the theatre in which I work, I shall do my best to keep it looking clean, orderly and attractive regardless of whether I am specifically assigned to such work or not.
15. I shall handle stage properties and costumes with care for I know they are part of the tools of my trade and are a vital part of the physical production.
16. I shall follow rules of courtesy, deportment and common decency applicable in all walks of life (and especially in a business in close contact with the public) when I am in the theatre, and I shall observe the rules and regulations of any specific theatre where I work.
17. I shall never lose my enthusiasm for theatre because of disappointments.

In addition, the document continued:

“I understand that membership in the Circle Theatre entitles me to the privilege of working, when I am so assigned, in any of the phases of a production, including: props, lights, sound, construction, house management, box office, publicity and stage managing-as well as acting. I realize it is possible I may not be cast in a part for many months, but I will not allow this to dampen my enthusiasm or desire to work, since I realize without my willingness to do all other phases of theatre work, there would be no theatre for me to act in.”

All members of the Circle Theatre were required to sign this document. And they must have - because the theatre, and the group into which it evolved, was successful for many years.

What's On in April and May 2016

Dargaville LT.	<i>The Rookie. Black, White and Shades of Grey</i> by Julianne Parkinson	May 6 - 14
Phoenix Theatre, Belmont.	<i>Move Over Mrs Markham</i> by Ray Cooney/John Chapman	May 19 - 28
Ellerslie Theatre	<i>Murder in Stages</i> , Dinner Theatre	April 22 - 23
	<i>The Graduate</i> adapted by Terry Johnson	May 19 - 28
Dolphin Theatre, Onehunga.	AUDITION <i>Principal Principle</i> by Joe Zarrow	April 17 @ 1.30pm
Howick Little Theatre	<i>The Perfect Murder</i> adpd by Shaun McKenna/ P D James	May 7 - 28
Papakura Theatre Company	Disney <i>Alice in Wonderland Jr</i>	April 21 - 30
Hamilton Playbox	<i>Charlie and the Chocolate Factory</i> by Roald Dahl	April 8 -23
On-Stage Te Kuiti	<i>Calendar Girls</i> by Tim Firth	April 12 - 16
Rotorua Little Theatre	<i>Bedroom Farce</i> by Alan Ayckbourn	April 22 - May
Centre Stage, Taupo	AUDITION <i>Calendar Girls</i> by Tim Firth	April 2/3 @2pm
Performing Arts Taumarunui	<i>The Book of Everything</i> by Richard Tulloch	April 8 -15
Waihi Drama Soc.	<i>The Games Afoot or Holmes For the Holidays</i> by Ken Ludwig	May 5 - 14
Te Aroha Dramatic	<i>Quartet</i> by Ron Harwood	April 7 - 16
Detour Theatre, Tauranga	<i>Checkout Chicks</i> by Devon Williamson	March 30 - April 16
Te Puke Repertory	<i>Ladies Day</i> by Amanda Whittington	April 6 - 16
Theatre Whakatane	<i>Jack and the Beanstalk</i> author unknown	May 11 - 21
Gisborne Unity Theatre	<i>Treasure Island</i> adapted by Stuart Paterson	April 7 - 16
Theatre Hawkes' Bay	<i>The Third Week in August</i> by Peter Gordon	April 21 - 30
Pahiatua Repertory Society	<i>Funny Business</i> by Derek Benfield	May 19 - 28
Harlequin Theatre, Masterton	<i>Motel</i> by April Phillips	April 7 -16
Limelight Theatre, Carterton	<i>Murderer</i> by Anthony Shaffer	April 17 - May 7
Greytown Little Theatre	<i>Take a Chance on Me</i> by Roger Hall	to April 9
New Plymouth Rep	AUDITION <i>Secret Bridesmaids Business</i> by E. Coleman	April 11@ 11am
	<i>How the Other Half Loves</i> by Alan Ayckbourn	May 2 - 14
Cue Theatre, Inglewood	<i>The Fox on the Fairway</i> by Ken Ludwig	April 2 - 16
Hawera Repertory Soc.	<i>Duets</i> by Peter Quilter	April 15 - 23
Foxton Little Theatre	<i>The Old People are Revolting</i> by Devon Williamson	April 8 - 23
Levin Little Theatre	<i>The Vicar of Dibley</i> by Richard Curtis	May 5 - 21
Kapiti Playhouse	<i>Calendar Girls</i> by Tim Firth	April 6 - 16
Mana Little Theatre	<i>Under Milk Wood</i> by Dylan Thomas	March 30 - April 9
	AUDITION <i>The Complete Works of Shakespeare</i> (abridged) Long,Singer,Winfield	April 17
	AUDITION <i>Blue Remembered Hills</i> by Dennis Potter	May 1
Khandallah Arts Theatre	AUDITION <i>A Skull in Connemara</i> by Martin McDonagh	May 1
Stagecraft Theatre	AUDITION <i>The History Boys</i> by Alan Bennett	April 2- 3
	<i>Steel Magnolias</i> by Robert Harling	May 18 - 28
Wellington Repertory	<i>Arsenic and Old Lace</i> by Joseph Kesselring	April 6 - 16
Hutt Repertory	<i>A Kiss on the Bottom</i> by Frank Vickery	April 13 - 23
Butterfly Creek, Eastbourne	AUDITION <i>Touch of Danger</i> by Francis Durbridge	April 10
Canterbury Repertory	<i>A Streetcar Named Desire</i> Tennessee Williams	May 11 - 28
Riccarton Players	<i>All About the Bunny</i> - Playbox Theatre	April 21 - May 1
	AUDITION <i>A Riccartonian Palace of Varieties</i> - Old Time Music Hall	April 9 @10am
Elmwood Players,	Christchurch <i>Jumpy</i> by April de Angelis	April 20 - 30
	AUDITION <i>Bouncers</i> by John Godber	April 2 @10am
Princess Margaret Hospital Players	Opawa <i>Soul Mates</i> by Chris Coleman	April 27-May 7
South Canterbury Drama League		
	Theatre Royal <i>The Little Mermaid - Junior</i>	April 21 - 23
	Repertory <i>Heroes</i> by Gerald Sibleyras trans Tom Stoppard	May 13 - 21
Clyde Theatre Group	<i>Noises Off</i> by Michael Frayn	April 9 - 16
Invercargill Repertory Theatre	<i>Fool to Cry</i> by Steven Page*	May 4 - 7

**Fool to Cry* was awarded Highly Commended in the recent Adam Play Awards. A comedy drama it explores a 2004 committee in charge of putting together Invercargill's 150th celebrations in light of a Mick Jagger signature scrawled on a wall calling Invercargill "arsehole of the world".

Send information about your upcoming productions to info@theatrenewzealand.co.nz

Win-Win for Te Puke Repertory

Attendance at Te Puke's first two nights of a production provide the impetus for the rest of the season. Their committee sells the tickets for a Gala Opening night to include a free glass of wine and sometimes supper. The second performance is Charity Night. Two months prior, they advertise for applicants who want to raise money for the community. The treasurer then sends out an application form on request and the charity is chosen by the committee. The charity organiser sells the 83 seats at a price of their choosing, but not less than regular show price, and also puts on supper as a sweetener. The Rep Committee runs the bar and takes the money. The organiser also pays Rep \$450 for the night but if every seat is sold \$1625 can be raised plus raffles can be sold. The charity is also responsible for all their own advertising which in turn benefits the theatre.

By doing this they have two audiences, 160 people, spreading the word about the show to all their friends and family which is good advertising for the rest of the season. Plus on the first two nights the cast perform to sell out audiences which is a confidence booster.

Ready for success with *Ladies Day* opening April 6th. On Charity Night, the money raised by Maketu Rotary is going to Maketu School for their 150 centenary.



Editor Margaret Robertson
Designer: Morris Robertson

Deadline for June Backchat
20 May 2016

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