

BACKCHAT

News from THEATRE NEW ZEALAND
Fostering Community Theatre in Aotearoa

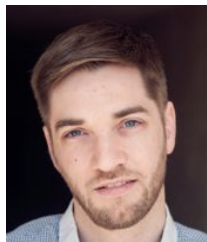
April/May 2017, Vol.40 Issue 2



Hamilton Playbox presents *The Witches* by Roald Dahl
Paris Eyeington is Bruno, surrounded by witches
prior to becoming a mouse. Playing to 8 April.
Four more current productions are featured on page 3

www.theatrenzeland.co.nz

Introducing Nik Rolls National Treasurer



I've been your treasurer since joining at the September 2016 AGM. I first seriously got into theatre at the age of 16. In search of a healthier social group I came across auditions for *Jesus Christ Superstar* in the local paper. I had grown up loving the movie, and decided to audition despite my sometimes-chronic introversion.

I very quickly realised how theatre is truly addictive, and began doing as much of it as possible. I primarily focused on acting but also tried other roles. I tried my hand at directing, designing, set construction, graphic design, sound design, lighting design, and very quickly learned where my strengths and weaknesses were. Most importantly, it brought me out of my shell. I found that theatre was a safe place for me where I could let out my inner extrovert without fear of judgement or ridicule.

By day I'm a software engineer working at Harmony, a peer-to-peer money lender in the financial technology industry. In my own time, I created the Olio Theatre Database (<http://olio.nz>) as an experiment to see how applying the IMDB model to theatre could be used to record and showcase our work which is so quickly lost to memory. More recently I've taken on the Communication & Marketing Manager portfolio at Howick Little Theatre in Auckland, which requires an understanding of the combination of traditional offline marketing, modern online marketing and social media.

As treasurer for Theatre New Zealand, I'd like to apply my technological experience to the role and work with the executive to give you all access to modern and efficient interactions with our organisation. Under consideration are improvements like online membership applications with PayPal integration, and a more streamlined and simple Theatre Fest fee structure. On the administration side, I'm working on digitising and categorising our financial history so we don't have to worry about damage to physical documents or couriering them around the country. We are also considering enhancing current and future financial recording by moving from

spreadsheets to industry-recognised services such as Xero. We are constantly on the lookout for ways to improve and modernise, obviously without excluding any of our members who for whatever reason may not have access to these newer methods.

I'm looking forward to the future of Theatre New Zealand and reporting on these improvements and enhancements as they go. As always, the feedback from our members is incredibly useful, so don't hesitate to get in touch with me at nik@rolls.cc, or contact all of us at info@theatrenewzealand.co.nz or via our website.

Subscriptions for 2017/18 are due now.
Just \$40 for an Individual and \$100 for all others.

Welcome to Individual Member **Adriann Smith** and Group Members **Diocesan School for Girls, Auckland**, and **Friends of the Globe Theatre, Dunedin**.

National TheatreFest Final and Theatre New Zealand Annual Conference in Wellington 16 and 17 September.

Two venues will be used over Saturday and Sunday. This structure means just one night's accommodation for teams, supporters and TNZ members coming to Wellington.

The National TheatreFest Final will be held Saturday 7:30pm and Sunday 1:00pm with the Awards Ceremony at approximately 3:30pm on the Sunday and it is hoped to have everything concluded by 4:30pm. The venue will be the Hannah Playhouse in Courtenay Place

On Saturday, the Conference will be held at the Whitireia Performance Centre in Vivian Street with morning workshops repeated in the afternoon. The TNZ Annual General Meeting and the Key Note Address will also be held there on the Saturday. On Sunday morning, there will be an Open Forum in the Foyer of the Hannah Playhouse.

More details soon, mark your calendars now.

4 April productions highlighting characterisation, set, music and publicity



The Wedding of the Century

playing to 8 April

Photo chosen by playwright director Devon Williamson of **Detour Theatre**, Tauranga because each actor's expression is a wonderful representation of their character and the photo beautifully captures the spirit of the play.

Michelle Parnell as Maxine, **Jane McKenna** as Phyllis (kneeling), **Lisa Thorne** as Mother Pat, **Georgia Thorne** as Jessica (on the bed), **Susi Jansen** as Sister Dorothy, **Kim Williamson** as Nelly.

Te Aroha Dramatic Society *Enchanted April* to April 8 **Ron Handford**, set designer, had a challenge: Act One comprises 9 separate wet winter London 1922 locations for which graphic reproductions from the local printer were used. Act Two is set at an Italian villa. The wisteria was purchased online. Director **Ian Harrop** comments "The transition from scene to scene must flow and keeps the stage crew well and truly on their toes. The setting adds greatly to the feeling of enchantment as the story unfolds. Interestingly *Costanza* speaks only Italian throughout the play yet our dress rehearsals reveal she is understood and generates much of the humour for audiences. Pictured villa owner **Antony Wilding (Kieran Watkins)** presents a bag of finest English walnuts to Mrs Clayton Graves (**Barbara Handford**)



Tokoroa Little Theatre *You Can Always Hand Them Back*

April 6 - 13

Director and Musical Director **Tina Ward** is pictured at the key board. She's reported as working tirelessly on the music composed by Peter Skellern to make sure they do justice to Roger Hall's brilliant play and also celebrate Peter's memory as he died recently.

Gisborne Unity Theatre's playwright and director **Jackie Davis** says, "I am humbled and thrilled in equal measures to bring *A Time Like This* to the stage"

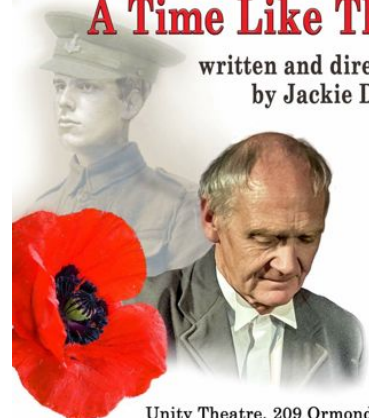
The play tells the touching, tender, yet at times horrific story of 88 year-old Douglas Chapman, a WW1 veteran, living in a rest home. It is ANZAC Day 1984 and Douglas has marched in the ANZAC parade. He is lonely and sad that his life has become so small and empty. He drinks too much, and as he drinks, he recalls his life in the final weeks of WW1. Time switches between 1984 and 1918, where young Douglas was a war artist, stationed in France, and then back in New Zealand after his return from war to his wife ...

Gisborne Unity Theatre

presents

A Time Like This

written and directed
by Jackie Davis



Unity Theatre, 209 Ormond Rd

7, 8, 11 - 13 April 2017, 7.30pm
9 & 15 April 2017, 4pm

tickets available from Gisborne i-SITE

and at the door

some language may offend





Roger Hall, playwright, plans a New Zealand Theatre Month for September 2018.

Roger Hall writes: “Almost all the other arts have celebrated and publicised their own field with a month, a week, a day. But theatre never has. The main aim is to get as many theatres (professional and community) to produce New Zealand work at some time during that month. The intention is that this will be an annual event for at least five years.”

Roger continues, “Theatre in New Zealand has never been so strong. The amount of work produced and the number of venues have never been so high. But the vast majority of people have no idea of what is happening.

“I never sense a national pride in what we do. Media attention to theatre is dwindling. Few politicians, if any, speak up for Theatre. And when did any museum put on a display about New Zealand Theatre? Yet our history goes back to Victorian times. We don’t seem to have a national voice.”

“The intention is that by the end of NZ Theatre Month, people will be more aware of the amount and quality of New Zealand Theatre; and that there will be a greater sense of pride in what we do.

As it says on our slogan: *(above)* ‘Celebrating and elevating New Zealand Theatre’”.

In early March, Hall talked about the idea with Theatre New Zealand’s Hawke’s Bay committee member and Napier Repertory Players President, Anne Corney, together with Trevor Rose, director for Napier Repertory and other groups. He writes

“Their response is almost everything I had hoped for: they had already scheduled two New Zealand works for September next year, Garry Henderson’s *Skin Tight* and *An Unseasonable Fall of Snow*. They have also planned an Open Weekend where the public will have access to workshops on script writing, technical skills and set design; and the public can attend an open forum and a rehearsal of the end of year production. They will ask libraries in Napier, Hastings, Taradale and Havelock North to showcase theatre literature.

“One reason I chose September for the month was because Theatre New Zealand’s National TheatreFest finals are held in that month. The hope is that all plays entered for the 2018 TheatreFest will be New Zealand works.

“Organising the Month is going to be a big job. Malcolm Calder, very experienced in theatre management, is the Month’s Administrator.

“We are both very excited about the idea and are delighted with the amount of positive response we have received so far. And let’s hope that Napier Repertory will have provided a lead that will be followed by others.”

Would your group like to take up this challenge and schedule a New Zealand play, in September ’18?

What's On in April and May 2017

Dargaville Little Theatre	<i>Grease</i> by Warren Casey & Jim Jacobs	May 12 - 27
Phoenix Theatre Belmont,	Auckland <i>Motel</i> by April Phillips	May 18 - 28
Howick Little Theatre	<i>Our Man in Havana</i> (Graham Green) by Clive Francis	May 6 - 26
Waihi Drama Society	<i>The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe</i> CS Lewis	to April 8
Te Aroha Dramatic Soc	<i>Enchanted April</i> by Matthew Barber	to April 8
Hamilton Playbox	<i>The Witches</i> by Roald Dahl	to April 8
Detour Theatre, Tauranga	<i>The Wedding of the Century</i> by Devon Williamson	to April 8
Putaruru Theatre Players	<i>The Amorous Ambassador</i> by Michael Parker	May 2 - 7
Tokoroa Little Theatre	<i>You Can Always Hand Them Back</i> by Roger Hall	April 6 - 13
On Stage Te Kuiti	<i>Snip</i> by April Phillips	April 26 - 29
Rotorua Little Theatre	<i>Wait Until Dark</i> by Frederick Knott	April 26 - May 6
Gisborne Unity Theatre	<i>A Time Like This</i> by Jackie Davis	April 7 - 15
Napier Repertory Players	AUDITIONS <i>Momento</i> by Angie Farrow & <i>After the Accident</i> by Julian Armistead	April 3 - 7 May 14 @2pm
Pahiatua Repertory Soc.	<i>Play On!</i> by Rick Abbot	May 18 - 27
New Plymouth Repertory Soc	<i>Unoriginal Sin</i> by David Tristram	May 1 - 13
Cue Theatre, Inglewood	<i>Eugenia</i> by Lorae Perry	April 25 - May 6
Hawera Repertory Society	<i>Disney's Beauty and the Beast</i>	May 23 - June 3
Levin Little Theatre	<i>Monty Python's Spamalot</i> by Eric Idle	April 28 - May 13
Kapiti Playhouse	<i>It's Never Too Late</i> by Ron Aldridge	April 19 - 29
Mana Little Theatre	<i>Pride and Prejudice</i> adpt by Jon Jory	to April 8
Porirua Little Theatre	<i>Seussical Jr</i> by Lynn Ahrens & Stephen Flaherty	April 22 - 29
New Players Theatre Company	AUDITION <i>The Supermarket Sisterhood</i> by Devon Williamson	April 30
Khandallah Arts Theatre	AUDITION <i>The Wind in the Willows</i> by Alan Bennett	April 9 & 11
Stagecraft Theatre	<i>Daughters of Heaven</i> by Michelanne Forster	May 17 - 27
Wellington Repertory	<i>Play On!</i> by Rick Abbot	April 5 - 15
Hutt Repertory	<i>A Midsummer's Night Dream</i> by William Shakespeare	April 26-May 6
Heretaunga Players	<i>All's Well That Ends As You Like It</i> by Michael Green	April 6 - 9
Canterbury Repertory	<i>Yes. Prime Minister</i> by Antony Jay & Jonathan Lynn	May 9 - 20
Elmwood Players	<i>All This Intimacy</i> by Rajiv Joseph	April 19 - 29
Princess Margaret Hospital	Players <i>Not Aunt Lil!</i> by Penny Webb	April 26 - May 13
Riccarton Players	<i>The Cow Jumped Over the Moon</i> by Rachael Chamberlain	April 22 - 30
	AUDITION <i>E.Q.f*ingC. A Revenge Comedy</i> by Andrew Scott and Christine Stachurski	May 20/21
Top Dog, Christchurch	<i>2 Graves</i> by Paul Sellar	April 18 - 29
Lincoln High School	<i>Fear and Misery of the Third Reich</i> by Bertolt Brecht	April 6
	<i>Children of the Poor</i> by Mervyn Thompson	April 11
South Canterbury Drama League	Timaru, <i>Disneys' Alice in Wonderland Jr</i>	April 20 - 22
McKenzie Drama Group	<i>Calendar Girls</i> by Tim Firth	April 26 - 29
Clyde Theatre Group	<i>Cinderella Meets the Mother-in-Law</i> by Judith Prior	April 1-7
Invercargill Repertory	<i>Lovepuke</i> by Duncan Sarkies	May 3 - 6

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

"Life is like a camera. Just focus on what's important and capture the good times, develop from the negatives and if things don't work out, just take another shot".



Rights & Promotional Billing

from Past President Bryan Aitken

Many of you will be aware of the 'billing' obligations and credit requirements when obtaining rights to perform a play or musical.

For some time now *Theatre New Zealand* has been trying to remove the word 'amateur' from our lexicon, as it doesn't always describe the complexity of our productions - some even find the word demeaning. *Theatre New Zealand* has used 'Fostering Community Theatre in Aotearoa' for some years now as its by-line, replacing the word 'amateur' with 'Community'.

We have been in discussion with Helen Horsnell from *Play Bureau*, to persuade *Samuel French* to alter their stance on this and replace the word amateur. This they have agreed to do. Although the word amateur may well still be in scripts, the 'terms & conditions' form that will accompany your contract will now have the requirement for the wording altered to 'a community theatre production'. This if you are not a professional company, you are obligated to do on all promotional material.

***Theatre New Zealand* - working on behalf of its membership on a national issue.**



Editor Margaret Robertson
Technical Assistance Morris Robertson

Deadline for June/July Backchat
20 May 2017

Send Theatre New Zealand communications to
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NEW: or Box 14041, Panmure, Auckland 1741