

Backchat

December 2013 Volume 36 Issue 6

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In performance at Stagecraft Theatre, Wellington, Ange Fitzharris and Martin Tidy as Anne Boleyn and King Henry VIII. The play *Anne Boleyn* by Howard Brenton was directed by Ewen Coleman.



President



So 2013 has come and almost gone. Here in Christchurch we smile every-time a road reopens, another old building has been saved or a new one has restarted a café, a bar, a gallery. We celebrate each and every season of theatre where-ever it be performed – in a school hall, a church, a gymnasium. Fortitude

is our middle name! We refuse to lie down and be beaten.

But what of you and your society?

Is your membership dying?

The 'Baby Boomers' are retiring – and 'Generation X' wants something different. The antiquated models of recruiting, retaining and engaging members cannot survive in an increasingly challenging and ever-changing operating environment.

If your association is to thrive into the future, you must be attractive to all generations. Your entire organisational culture needs to reflect a generationally diverse, welcoming and engaging community.

The exodus of the 'baby boomers' from senior management roles means this creates an issue for the future, unless you actively encourage, nurture and involve future leaders now.

Creating an organisation that appeals to younger generations means installing an innovative, proactive and member-responsive culture throughout your entire organisation.

'Baby Boomers' can often be resistant to change. They feel comfortable as they are.

But in the absence of associations that are responsive to their needs, younger members will find or create their own solutions. Or simply not bother with you. They want to belong to an innovative, socially aware organisation that they can relate to. Social Media is now too popular and powerful to be ignored.

Many associations/societies are too slow to adapt to new technologies.

What are you doing to be more generationally inclusive?

We on the National Executive are taking rapid steps to update and create a more comprehensive website: www.theatrenewzealand.co.nz

We have established a Facebook page. Check it out and use it. We are making our services easier to access; revamping our newsletter Backchat; facilitating quicker responses to enquiries and requests. (We can do this in the modern world can't we!)

Have you asked yourselves recently "are we as relevant as we used to be?" If not, why not. Perhaps you are not engaging your membership, fully.

I hope you all have a festive summer and fill the stage with happy hours.

Bryan Aitken

National President

We are pleased to announce that **Jade Gillies** is the new **Vice President** of Theatre New Zealand. He comes from Invercargill.

We are also very pleased to announce that the **new National Treasurer** will be **Blair Kershaw** of Christchurch. The post box will be transferred to Christchurch in the new year so watch out for the change of address. A warm welcome to Theatre New Zealand, Blair.



Results of TheatreFest'13 Survey

Special thanks to directors, cast, and crew who responded to the survey. Your feedback was very much appreciated, with most of the comments showing Theatre New Zealand in a positive light. All but one group would recommend other theatre societies or schools to enter the TheatreFest.

Director's positive comments included:

- The chance to see different plays and performances
- It was a lot of fun and I learnt a lot from the process and the adjudication.
- I enjoyed working on a play of my choice and being able to stage it with my own vision.
- Getting to meet other Directors and groups and seeing what other people are doing.

The main negative feedback related to the adjudication process. ANZDA will look into this.

Thanks also for the response from Organisers. All but one would recommend other theatre societies or schools to host a TheatreFest. All organisers felt they were well supported by Theatre New Zealand National Executive and all organisers received all relevant information.

Organiser's positive comments included:

- Great way to network with others and to see the types of theatre being performed by others and also a great learning opportunity.
- Meeting people from visiting societies, learning how others interpret scripts etc. Pulling together as an efficient team from our theatre. Appreciation by others of our venue/tech people etc. We had fun!!
- Anne Corney was excellent. She provided all the information required and kept in touch.
- Knowing that the teams were going to receive helpful feedback to help them develop their production
- It is a great experience meeting the teams and watching superb theatre.

The one negative comment made was that the time frame between local and regional TheatreFests was a bit tight.

Many thanks again for your responses. Systems are being put in place to improve the areas of concern.

Anne Corney
National Administrator

Profile: Lorna Ashton



A new member of National Executive

Lorna has been involved with Riverlea Theatre in Hamilton for many

years, first as a customer and then as a participant. Her initial involvement was with Musikmakers and for many years she was on the committee rising to President and receiving Life Membership. She has now been on the Playbox committee for quite some years and is deeply honoured to be a Life Member of this organization too.

She proudly boasts that she is the only member that has Life Membership of both societies and says, "This is what being a member of any organization associated with the Riverlea family is all about. We help each other out and keep both societies going from strength to strength."

Over the past five years Lorna has concentrated on getting Playbox involved with Theatre New Zealand. She has developed a keen interest in TheatreFest and has received some good results with the plays she has directed and performed in. This festival is important for recreational theatre, as it enables members to work on many levels of skill, meet challenges and trial new concepts. It is challenging for both competitors and audience. It also fosters great communication between the different theatres in New Zealand.

Lorna believes that one of her greatest strengths is her ability to organize and prioritise. She believes she can pass on her passion for community theatre and in the first quarter of next year is going to have a get-together and invite other performing groups from Hamilton and the Waikato to appraise them of the benefits of joining the Theatre New Zealand family.

MERRY
CHRISTMAS

This month we bring you a selection of plays suitable for young audiences and companies.

If any of these plays interest you we can email you the script, FREE, unless otherwise noted. If you have any particular requirements we can also make other suggestions - please contact clientpromotion@playmarket.org.nz with your queries.

RIVERSIDE DRIVE by Graeme Tetley (large cast)

We're thrilled to now represent this script: It's the 1950s and New Zealand teenagers are beginning to discover sex and rock and roll. The adults are not impressed, and 15 year olds David and Rosa are right in the middle of it all. The hit of the 2011 Wanaka Festival. **'...funny, shocking, nostalgic and tender.'**

THEATREVIEW

TIGERPLAY by Gary Henderson (2w 3m)

Russ wants more in his life than the mail-order steak knives that have just arrived, or visiting the tiger in the zoo again. When he sees his new flatmate's tiger tattoo he may well have found his obsession.

COW by Jo Randerson (5w 5m)

All Beth wants to do is make a cow out of leaves, but her efforts are thwarted by, amongst others, a father who thinks he's a cat, an interfering yuppie couple and a loud American tourist. Black comedy on the farm.

AWESOME FOURSOME by Bevin Linkhorn (2w 3m)

Four students with very particular character traits are set to complete a group assignment that turns out to be much bigger than any of them had suspected. An apocalyptic comedy with extraordinary final assessment. Suitable for senior secondary school students.

THE RISING SCONE by Mel Johnston (3w 1m)

Four young people mount a scone race in an effort to put their small town on the map. The race is on, but the battle for places is soon overshadowed by something ... er ... bigger.

ARCADIAN NIGHTS by Philip Braithwaite (3w 5m)

Welcome to Arcadia, a dark and tragic island where the inhabitants speak a little funny and the challenge has begun; just how far would you go to preserve the ideals you think you live within. *Arcadian Nights* is a fairytale from hell. If you go down to the woods tonight you might just not come back.

SAPAI AND THE YAM SNATCHERS by Michelanne Forster and Leilani Unasa (large cast)

Samoa is plagued by the Alele, a gang of winged thieves who fly from island to island stealing all the food and whatever else they can lay their hands on. When they steal all of Chief Tuisamata's yams his eldest grandson, Sapai, embarks on a quest to rid Samoa of the Alele and return the yams. A quest that will take him to the Underworld and back.

ATLAS/MOUNTAINS/DEAD BUTTERFLIES by Joseph Harper (1-3w 5m)

Rhys and Phoebe live together at 10 Stencil Terrace, where their tap is dripping. Rhys wants to do something. Phoebe doesn't. Together and apart, they're shaken into action/inaction as Atlas buckles under the weight of the world. Activists, statues, plumbers, and hundreds of millions of dead butterflies fall into our lives as we wait for it to snow, and the taps go drip, drip, drip.

ELOISE IN THE MIDDLE by Emily Duncan (1w)

Eloise is a seven-year-old girl who has an poignant adventure when she visits her father, travelling on her own for the first time, and then meeting for the first time her dad's girlfriend. Winner of the 2013 Plays for the Young Competition (3 – 8 year olds).

SPACE CIRCUS by Holly Gooch (large cast)

An interactive circus play for up to two hundred 5-8 year olds who collectively explore what is out there in space, they boldly go where no child has gone before! Winner of the 2013 Plays for the Young Competition (3 – 8 year olds).

A STORY OF RONA by Stephanie Matuku (large cast)

Rona is renowned for her insulting manner toward her family and the village is sick of her so her rival, Kira, decides to hire a Taniwha to get rid of her. A prequel to the classic legend of Rona and the Moon. Winner of the 2013 Plays for the Young Competition (8 – 12 year olds).

THE WAYFINDER by Joey Moncarz (large cast)

A rebellious Auckland teenager is sent to live with an uncle in the Islands and there disturbs the locals when he learns what they say he shouldn't learn. Winner of the 2013 Plays for the Young Competition (Teenagers).

THREE YOUNG AND HUNGRY PLAYS

A selection of 3 plays commissioned from the last 20 years of Young and Hungry. Futuristic *queen b* by Pip Hall, hilarious *Exchange* by Lauren Jackson, and Miria George's gripping play *Urban Hymns*. One of our most popular titles. **Available from our Bookshop for \$26.50 RRP**

What's On in December and the New Year

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

Otamatea Repertory Theatre	<i>1001 Arabian Knights</i> pantomime	December 6-15
Dolphin Theatre Onehunga	<i>Calendar Girls</i> by Tim Firth	to December 7
	AUDITION <i>Ladies Down Under</i> by Amanda Whittington	Nov 24, 1.30pm
	Production dates	Feb 15 - March 8
16th Avenue Theatre Tauranga	<i>Are You Being Served</i> by Jeremy Lloyd/David Croft	to December 14
Theatre Whakatane	<i>Holiday Variety Concert</i>	December 29-30
Napier Repertory	<i>The Great Gatsby</i> adapted by Ken Duncum	February 12 - 22
Theatre Hawkes Bay	<i>Dick Whittington and His Cat</i> by Ben Crocker	to December 7
Pahiatua Repertory Society	<i>'Allo 'Allo</i> by David Croft and Jeremy Lloyd	to December 7
	AUDITION <i>Whistle Down the Wind</i> Lloyd Webber/Steinman	December 11/19
Cue Theatre Inglewood	AUDITION <i>The Dining Room</i> by A. R. Gurney	December 8, 1pm
Wanganui Repertory Theatre	<i>A Christmas Carol</i> adapt. by Mark Rayner	to December 7
Khandallah Arts Theatre	<i>The Little Mermaid</i> by Carl Nixon	February 15- 22
Wellington Repertory	<i>Some Canterbury Tales</i> adapted by Ken Pickering	to December 7
Hutt Repertory Theatre	<i>Forget-Me-Knot</i> by David Tristram	to December 7
Butterfly Creek Eastbourne	AUDITION <i>Romeo and Juliet</i> by William Shakespeare	December 8
Marlborough Repertory	<i>Calendar Girls</i> by Tim Firth	to December 7
Havelock Theatre Marlborough	<i>Ernie Gitt and the Havelock Mission to Mars</i> by Rick Edmonds	January 16 - 25
Elmwood Players	<i>Jack the Giant and the Jiggery Plot</i> by Richard Blythe	January 16 - 25
Riccarton Players	<i>Don't Get Your Vicars in a Twist</i> by Ann Gawthorpe & Lesley Brown	January 21 - 26
SCDL Timaru Junior Section	<i>Santa Gives Back Christmas</i>	December 6 - 8

Do you send your newsletters by email? Please add Backchat editor info@theatrenewzealand.co.nz

Kapiti Playhouse Attracts Sixteen New Members In a Day

Liz Alpine, Vice President, writes

We held an Open Day on Labour Weekend Sunday, and the Wednesday beforehand we had a full page ad in the local paper, which included a write-up and 3 good photos from our archives. The ad emphasised the fact that we were looking for more people to get involved, as we were short on manpower, and it listed the areas in which they might be interested. Most people who came along said they knew about the day because they had seen the ad. We had three of our sponsors help us out with the cost, with their own ads along the bottom of the page. (If we had had more time, we would also have put posters up around the local shopping areas).

We had the theatre half set up with our usual table

seating, and down the middle put a couple of trestle tables with photo albums of past shows, dating right back to our early days. We also had posters of past shows on the walls. We borrowed mannequins, which we dressed in interesting costumes from the wardrobe, and placed around the theatre. In the dressing room we had wigs, hats and our makeup boxes on display.

Committee members greeted people, told them about the theatre, and took them on tours backstage. This worked really well, as each person or small group had their own personal tour guide. Set-building was also going on for an upcoming show, another point of interest for visitors.

In the foyer we provided tea, coffee and biscuits, and had a membership table set up, with forms available for people to either fill in or take away with them.

We have gained 16 new members, some of whom have had lots of experience in other theatres. Our skills database is now looking stronger, and we also have lots of new members who are keen to learn and help out.

TheatreFest'14

National Conference and Finals

Wellington September 12/13

Regionals

North Island 15/16 and 22/23 August
Feilding and an upper North Island venue.

South Island 15/16 and 22/23 August
Canterbury, Otago or Southland are being
considered as venues.

Local TheatreFests

Organisers can choose dates to suit themselves
eg July 25/26 or August 1/2. Contact Anne
Corney for details on how to organise one:
theatreworld@clear.net.nz

Meritorious Service Awards 2014

Congratulations to the following worthy recipients
whose names were announced at the Annual
General Meeting in September:

Dennis Cole	Levin Little Theatre
Ewen Coleman	Wellington District
Owen Gerrard	Invercargill Repertory Soc.
Kenneth Ireland	Levin Little Theatre
Gussie Johnson	Invercargill Repertory Soc.
Joan Tite	Hutt Rep Theatre
Jonathan Tucker	Invercargill Repertory Soc.



Seasons Greetings!

Best wishes for Christmas and the New Year. May you enjoy the company
of family and friends and return refreshed for theatre in 2014.

Editor: Margaret Robertson

Designer: Jade Gillies

Deadline for December Backchat

January 23rd 2014

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