

# BACKCHAT

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

Patrons Jennifer Ward-Lealand and Rawiri Paratene

February/March Vol.44 Issue 1



Stagecraft Theatre, Wellington are in rehearsal for *That Bloody Woman*, a punk rock musical about the life of Kate Sheppard.

This publicity shot shows Kate Sheppard and her fellow suffragettes protesting at parliament. 'Frankie Leota' as Kate Sheppard is in the middle flanked by LR Aimee Sullivan (Ada), Kate Boyle (Jennie) and Jane Grace (Vicar) Allison Phillips (Mary)

Photo by Alex Rabina

[www.theatrenewzealand.co.nz](http://www.theatrenewzealand.co.nz)



Dear Members, Life Members & Theatre Friends

Planning for our **2020+1 Celebration** is underway!

The National Executive met in Wellington in January and not only looked at what stimulating and different workshops we could offer during the National *TheatreFest* Finals, but also started to develop a Strategic Plan for the next few years.

We do this from time to time - look inward a little, assessing what we are, who we represent, how we go about our work, the image we project, what we offer etc. A multiplicity of observations and thoughts were fed back to us. We identified several areas to monitor and develop. When was the last time your group tried this?

*Theatre New Zealand* is saddened by the passing of William (Bill) Sheat. A colossus in the Creative Industries and Community Performing Arts in our country. (See obituary p6)



**TheatreFest:** Most dates have been confirmed for Local, Regional and National levels - and there are a record number of regions participating! Could it be that you are inspired by the impending anniversaries? See p.3 & 4

As 2020+1 is a celebration of our 50 years and more of collegiality, activity and representation, it would be wonderful if you could mount a story about Aotearoa New Zealand. We want to hear YOUR stories which are in essence all our stories.

Is it perhaps a story of indigenous history. A story of immigration and assimilation. A story of sexual or gender conundrum. A straight-out farmland love story. A story of endeavour and heartbreak. Read about the Olga E Harding New New Zealand Playwriting Award, P 6.

*TheatreFest* is about training and education in all facets of theatre and very importantly, story-telling. It is about the integration of genre, of cultural and Performing Arts interdisciplinary presentation. Whether it be in Play Form, Dance Drama, Kapa Haka - we invite you to share your story and enter *TheatreFest*.

A full schedule of the **2020+1 Celebration**: Performances, Workshops, Hui, Alumni Conversazione, including the Annual General Meetings of *Theatre New Zealand*, *Association of New Zealand Drama Adjudicators* and *Speech Communication* will be released soon.

Its going to be a major national event.

**2020+1 @ Te Whaea: National Dance & Drama Centre, Hutchison Street,  
Newtown,  
Te Whanganui a Tara/Wellington, September 17-19.**

Nga Mihi  
*Bryan Aitken*, National President



## Local Dates, Venues, Contacts, Closing Dates and Adjudicators

**Northland** 31 July/August 1 at Dargaville Little Theatre, Deborah Steele [wayne.deb.steele@gmail.com](mailto:wayne.deb.steele@gmail.com). Closing date 16<sup>th</sup> July. Adjudicator Fiona Armstong

**Auckland** 7/8 August TBC at Howick Little Theatre. Contact TBC. Closing date 23 July. Adjudicator Johnny Givins, Auckland

**Waikato/Bay of Plenty** details TBC Adjudicator Jonathan Harris, Auckland

**Hawkes Bay** 7/8 August at Napier Repertory Theatre. Contact Adrienne Hurley [ahurley@temata.school.nz](mailto:ahurley@temata.school.nz) Closing date 23 July Adjudicator Hilary Norris, Wgtn

**Taranaki** 17/18 July at Cue Theatre Inglewood. Contact Andy Priest [winterspread@gmail.com](mailto:winterspread@gmail.com) Closing Date 2 July. Adjudicator Shannon Tubman Wellington.

**Manawatu/ Whanganui** June 11/13 at The Globe, Palmerston North. Contact Graeme Johnston [manawatutheatreinc@gmail.com](mailto:manawatutheatreinc@gmail.com) Closing date 28 May. Adjudicator Jillian Carpenter, Wellington.

**Wellington/Wairarapa** 7/8 August at Majestic Theatre hosted by Masterton Theatre Company Contact Paul Percy [wep@percy.co.nz](mailto:wep@percy.co.nz) Closing date 23 July Adjudicator Phil Peleton, Auckland.

**Top of the South Marlborough/Nelson** 3/4 July at Havelock Town Hall hosted by Havelock Theatre Company. Contact Ian Cameron [ianc.cameron@extra.co.nz](mailto:ianc.cameron@extra.co.nz) Closing date 18 June. Adjudicator Bryan Aitken, Christchurch.

**West Coast/Buller** date and closing date TBC. Contact Lyn Doncliff [lyn.doncliff@extra.co.nz](mailto:lyn.doncliff@extra.co.nz) Adjudicator Pam Logan, Blenheim

**Canterbury** 7/8 August at Rangī Ruru Girls School. Contact Mandy Perry [mandy.perry@extra.co.nz](mailto:mandy.perry@extra.co.nz) Closing date 23 July Adjudicator Annette Thomson Christchurch.

**Otago** 7/8 August at Logan Park High School. Contact Diane DuPres [diane.dupres@lphs.school.nz](mailto:diane.dupres@lphs.school.nz) Closing date 23 July. Adjudicator David Chambers Christchurch.

## Regionals

### Lower North Island Regional TheatreFest

21/22 August Majestic Theatre, Masterton. Contact Paul Percy [wep@percy.co.nz](mailto:wep@percy.co.nz) Adjudicator Laurence Wiseman, Christchurch.

**Upper North Island Regional TheatreFest**

28/29 August at Centre Stage Taupo. Contact Lynn Harriman [lynn.josh@extra.co.nz](mailto:lynn.josh@extra.co.nz)  
Adjudicator Laurence Wiseman, Christchurch.

**Lower South Island Regional TheatreFest**

21/22 August at Wakatipu High School, Queenstown. Contact Jake Hansen  
[jhansen@wakatipu.school.nz](mailto:jhansen@wakatipu.school.nz) Adjudicator Lara Macgregor, Dunedin.

**Upper South Island Regional TheatreFest**

28/29 at NBS Theatre Westport TBC. Contact Lyn Doncliff [lyn.doncliff@extra.co.nz](mailto:lyn.doncliff@extra.co.nz)  
Adjudicator Lara Macgregor, Dunedin.



**TheatreFest National Final**

17/18/19 September at Te Whaea: National Dance and Drama Centre,  
11 Hutchison St Newtown, Wellington.

Contact Ewen Coleman [edcoleman@extra.co.nz](mailto:edcoleman@extra.co.nz)

Adjudicator Steven Arnold, Auckland





## Olga E Harding New New Zealand Playwriting Award

The Olga E Harding New NZ Playwriting Award for new scripts is named after one of the founding members of New Zealand Theatre Federation. She had already been actively involved for many years with the British Drama League and after the 1970 formation of NZTF became President in 1980.

The aim of the Award is to encourage playwrights to write short plays 15 - 50 minutes long for assessment by a professional dramaturg. All entries receive a written report.

The script must have a production in a local TheatreFest in the year that the script is entered for the Award. To be eligible to enter the Award of a **new** New Zealand Script the play must not have been performed more than three months prior to the current year's Local TheatreFest.

The benefits of entering are therefore twofold. The script is assessed in order to give the playwright positive feedback on their writing which will help with any future writing and the writer will also see a live production of their script on stage.

This year we are grateful to Playmarket for sponsoring the cost of the assessor, the name of whom will be announced shortly.

The entry fee this year will be adults \$30 and students \$20 (under 20 years). The winning script will receive \$250. This will be announced at the National Final Awards Ceremony in September.

Find the entry form on the website [www.theatrenewzealand.co.nz](http://www.theatrenewzealand.co.nz) and email it back to [theatrefest.nz@gmail.com](mailto:theatrefest.nz@gmail.com) Entries close Monday 9<sup>th</sup> August.

## Remarkable Theatre, Queenstown



Remarkable Theatre have just performed the Best of British Comedy Sketches in the Queenstown Botanical gardens, their 12<sup>th</sup> year of free “summer promenade shows”. A fun time was had by all.

They will follow this with a full programme - monthly theatre nights, a \*playwriting competition that results in Pint-Sized performances and a major production in September. Last year the show was Louis Nowra's *Cosi* and the year before *One Man Two Guvnors* by Richard Bean.

*\*Editor - Maybe their playwrights would like the opportunity to have their scripts receive a written assessment by a dramaturg and a performance in TheatreFest?*

## Bill Sheat 1930-2021: A visionary advocate for the arts.

*William Newton Sheat, OBE, CNZM. b. Hawera, 1 May 1930 - d. Wellington, 20 January 2021*

Bill Sheat, a founding partner in Gibson Sheat law firm in Lower Hutt, was a lifelong vigorous advocate for an extensive range of art forms, and mentor to a large number of charitable trusts. He lived for and loved the theatre, and never forgot either a good play or a bad production.

During his student years at Victoria University, Bill began to write, direct and act in varsity revues and extravaganzas between 1949 and 1967, and he much lamented their later demise and that of the political satire they had engendered.

Bill was involved in the building of the Hannah Playhouse, founding the New Zealand Drama School (Toi Whakaari), the New Zealand Film Commission, Dowse Art Museum, Playmarket, Nga Taonga New Zealand Film Archive, the New Zealand Theatre Archive and National Dance Archive. He chaired boards of Royal New Zealand Ballet (for 15 years), The NZ Film Commission (serving as its inaugural chair for seven years) the QEII Arts Council, the Summer Shakespeare Trust and the Shakespeare Globe Centre New Zealand.

Bill was driven to apoplexy whenever he encountered self-serving bureaucrats within arts administration, and he remained bitterly disappointed at the country's failure to establish a national museum of theatre arts.

His record of successful ventures however is testament to how he was perfectly capable of driving projects through to conclusion, the shining example of which must be the saving of Wellington's Embassy Theatre from demolition, and then its magnificent restoration which he worked on with David Carson-Parker and Rex Nicholls. He was also earlier (1977) instrumental in saving the Wellington Opera House from demolition. He then served on its board for many years.



This photo was taken in 2019 when Bill was chosen as a Wellington Icon at the annual Gold Awards.

On 1 May 2020 he turned 90 during the Covid Lockdown so the planned family celebration was cancelled.

Bill was a Life member of Theatre New Zealand, having served as its second President 1973 - 1975.

## How Safe Electrically is your Lighting Rig?

*With venues around the country being used for TheatreFest, Phil Jones (Health and Safety Portfolio) gives you some suggestions for insuring your space is safe.*

Testing & tagging of electrical appliances is a useful way to check that electrical equipment is safe. Though it is not mandatory, it is legally required that your equipment is electrically safe and maintained in a safe condition. And, although testing and tagging doesn't guarantee future electrical safety, what it does provide is a snap shot of how safe the appliance is at the time of testing.

So where does this leave you as Chief Tech?. I would like to suggest that maybe a checklist approach may help you keep on top of this requirement.

**Leads & cords** are easily damaged, if these are "fixed" in place across your lighting rig,

- at least an annual check for any damage,
- leads are arranged so they are not a trip hazard,
- avoid running them across aisles & passages,
- Remove any strain on plugs by using insulated supports..(elec tape doesn't qualify..sorry),
- extensions leads need to be heavy duty sheathed type.

### **Plugs**

- hard plastic plugs are easily damaged, flexible types are the better choice,
- double adaptors & piggy back plugs.... not really suitable
- domestic multi- boards are worse than double adaptors.. not recommended
- Portable socket outlet assemblies or RCD supported multi plug boards are designed for the heavier duty tasks, choose these over domestic options, as you really have no idea what could be plugged in it during a production.

### **Repairs - Hold Tags**

- all repairs to electrical equipment need to be carried out by a qualified person.
- do you have a system for identifying damaged equipment; use a Hold tag or Out Service tag,
- do you have a designated area for damaged equipment to be stored, away from general use
- is there a method for recording damage & repair... can be as simple as a notebook.

**Setup Checks** - create a simple set of check sheets for tasks that should be carried out, annually, after initial set up, before a show & at pack out.

Items to be checked may include,

- RCD's, have they been tested?
- damage to cables, plugs or even fixtures
- Environmental hazards, water in use on the stage?, equipment protected from falling objects or creating other hazards,
- Are all fixtures clean & free from dust or contaminants?
- Training, my favourite. Are the people using the equipment, trained to do so?
- A quick look at the whole rig setup, are there any electrical or other risks identified?
- Equipment test and tag. If you are using this system are all the tags showing within inspection date.

You can operate a simple check list approach (which you should review annually) as a prompt to see that your electrical equipment is safe to use. As life can be hectic enough on stage without needing to read through endless manuals. **Make Safe - Phil**

# HE RŌPŪ TAUTOKO TITO WHAKAARI O AOTEAROA PLAYMARKET.ORG.NZ AGENT. ADVISOR. BOOKSHOP

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### TWO COMEDIES: THE PINK HAMMER / FLAGONS & FOXTROTS

In *The Pink Hammer* by Michele Amas, four women sign up for a carpentry workshop to find the tutor has absconded with their fees and left behind Woody, her disgruntled husband. *Flagons and Foxtrots*, by Alison Quigan and Ross Gumbley, recreates New Zealand's Saturday night dance-hall era of the 1960s. \$24

### PURAPURAWHETU by Briar Grace-Smith (2w, 3m)

The town of Te Kupenga has been tainted by a tragedy that happened 30 years ago. Tyler is an outsider who wants to fit in. As Tyler helps weave the tukutuku panel for the new wharehau, new faces and old demons haunt Te Kupenga. Tyler must weave together the secrets of the past in order to save his town from collapsing all over again. \$26

### Fun for the Whānau

**CINDERELLA** by Simon Leary and Gavin Rutherford (3w, 2m, 1nb, 1 any) Cinderella lives in a leaky room on Mt Victoria. Nearby are her rich, evil and unkind step siblings. Things are rough – but with Cinderella's can-do attitude, an encounter with someone who may turn out to be a Prince, and a fairy godmother with magical powers, could things possibly end happily ever after?

**UNDER THE MOUNTAIN** by Maurice Gee. Adapted by Pip Hall (3w, 7m, 4 any) Twins Rachel and Theo, and their psychic powers, are enlisted by Jones, a wise alien out to save the universe from the Wilberforces, a race of giant creatures waking from a spellbound sleep beneath Auckland's extinct volcanoes, whose sole goal is planetary destruction.

### A CHRISTMAS CAROL by Dave Armstrong

(2-5w, 4-13m, 1 any) Dickens' classic is hilariously updated. Set in New Zealand, a blisteringly funny and timeless heart-warming family yarn.

### New Zealand Comedy

#### SNIP by April Phillips (2w, 2m)

Frank's wife wants him to have a vasectomy. His life won't be worth living unless he gets the snip. What would a real man do? What would The Godfather do?

#### AN UNLIKELY SEASON by Carl Nixon (2w, 3m)

In January 2016 middle-aged, overweight, electrician Jim Sullivan is diagnosed with terminal cancer. He's given five months to live. Jim is a life-long supporter of Leicester City Football Club, perennial battlers in the English Premier League. Accompanied by his old friend, Gary Webster, Jim travels to England to see for himself the five-thousand to one miracle of Leicester winning the Premier League. The question is what will win first, his team or the cancer? (Based on a true story - the Football, anyway).

#### A RELATIVELY UNEVENTFUL EVENING by George Arthur (5w, 5m)

A dark comedy in which a group of friends gather for a dinner party in honour of one of their having written and published a romance novel. But affairs have been taking places and upon revelation, one of the characters spikes another's salad with nuts. What follows is a "what do we do now?" farce as an aspiring detective guest attempts to get to the bottom of it.

### Te Ao Māori

#### THE UNDERTOW by Helen Pearse-Otene

Through the 180 year journey of six generations of one family, pivotal moments in Aotearoa New Zealand's history are brought to life in Helen Pearse-Otene's critically acclaimed quartet of plays. It is the story of Māori, Pākehā and tauīwi; of ordinary people who lived during extraordinary times. From the arrival of the first settler ships and the gentrified Port Nicholson, to our complex war history and current day urban development, *The Undertow* is a bold and fearless journey into our past, present and future.

Purchase at [www.playmarket.org.nz/bookshop](http://www.playmarket.org.nz/bookshop)

#### WHETU AND NICK by Mike Hudson (1w, 1m)

Whetū & Nick tells an original tale of a young Mori girl and a British orphan cabin boy who set out in search of Cook's map, a flying kite and the sacred maunga (mountain). Along the way they discover their cultural differences and similarities, the voyages of their people and their shared love of Aotearoa. Their young lives take a momentous turn as they go through the forest and find themselves atop the sacred *maunga* and that they have lost everything they ever had.

#### MĀUI MAGIC by Albert Belz (4-5 any)

Two fantastical adventures of Maui. Children and their parents alike will enjoy this Jack-Black-esque Maui as he takes on the Ocean Taniwha with his awesome karate moves and dances with his drag queen Auntie Mahuika Goddess of Fire. Luckily he has his two brothers Tahi and Rua to help him out.

To request any plays and/or musicals, contact our Script Coordinator (Kaiwhakahaere Whakaari)  
Nathan Mudge [nathan@playmarket.org.nz](mailto:nathan@playmarket.org.nz)



## What's On in February and March 2021

Dargaville Little Theatre	AUDITION <i>Kaipara Homegrown</i> , a Variety Show	March 14 @ 2pm
Howick Little Theatre	<i>The House</i> by Brain Parks (NZ Premiere)	Feb 27 - March 20
Te Aroha Dramatic Society	<i>The Vicar of Dibley</i> by Richard Curtis	March 12-17
Hamilton Playbox	<i>Get Smart</i> adpt. by Christopher Sergel	March 13 - 27
16 <sup>th</sup> Ave Theatre, Tauranga	<i>Life, Love and the Choices We Make</i>	Feb 19 - 27
Detour Theatre, Tauranga	<i>My Inlaws are Outlaws</i> by Devon Williamson	March 11 - 27
Gisborne Unity Theatre	AUDITION <i>Revenge of the Amazons</i> by Jean Betts and	February 20
Shakespeare		
Napier Repertory Players	<i>Threads of Life</i> by John Cocking	Feb 17-March 6
Rororua Little Theatre	<i>Black Adder II</i> by Richard Curtis/Ben Elton	March 5 - 20
Centre Stage Taupo	AUDITIONS <i>Mama Mia</i> music by Benny Andersen/	
Bjorn Ulvaeus. Continuing until February 6		
Performing Arts Taumaranui	<i>The Fantastic Mr Fox</i> by Roald Dahl	Feb 18 - 21
New Plymouth Repertory Soc.	<i>Rough Justice</i> by Terence Frisby	Feb 25-March 5
Cue Theatre, Inglewood	<i>Love on the Beach</i> by Raymond Hopkins	March 17 - 27
**Hawera Repertory Soc.	<i>Bugsy Malone</i> Youth by Alan Parker	February 9 - 13
Mana Little Theatre	<i>Title of Show</i> by Jeff Brown & Hunter Bell	March 17 - 27
Khandallah Arts Theatre	<i>The Reluctant Dragon</i> by Carl Nixon	Feb 20 - 28
Stagecraft Theatre	<i>That Bloody Woman</i> by Luke Di Somma and	
Gregory Cooper		Feb 24 - March 6
Wellington Repertory	AUDITION <i>Julius Caesar</i> by Shakespeare	February 27/28
	<i>Captain Corelli's Mandolin</i> adpt. Rona Munro	March 31 - April 10
Hutt Repertory	<i>Central</i> by Dave Armstrong	March 31 - Ap. 10
Butterfly Creek Theatre Troupe	<i>The Winter's Tale</i> by Shakespeare	Feb 23 - 27
Masterton Theatre Company		
AUDITION	<i>Chitty Chitty Bang Bang</i> by Roald Dahl and Ken Hughes	March 27/28
South Canterbury Drama League, Timaru	<i>Broadway Melody</i>	February 10 - 13
	<i>Witness for the Prosecution</i> by Agatha Christie	March 5 - 12
Clyde Theatre	<i>The Pink Hammer</i> by Michele Amas	March 28 - April 4
Invercargill Repertory Theatre	<i>Blackadder, the Golden Age</i> by Richard Curtis/Ben Elton	March 17-20

Send information about productions and activities to [info@theatrenewzealand.co.nz](mailto:info@theatrenewzealand.co.nz)



**\*\*Bugsy Malone** guns loaded with silly string make an impact!

Editor Margaret Robertson  
 Technical Assistance Morris Robertson  
 Deadline for April/May Backchat  
 20 March 2021

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