

BACKCHAT

News from THEATRE NEW ZEALAND
Te Putoi Whakaari o Aotearoa

Patrons Jennifer Ward-Lealand CNZM Rawiri Paratene ONZM

June/July 2021 Vol.44 Issue 3



“It’s in here somewhere”
Brenda, set design for Canterbury Repertory’s recent production
of *Wryd Sisters*.

www.theatrenz.co.nz

Festival Time!

My life in Theatre has made me aware of so much that is going on around our country. The future of theatre in Aotearoa New Zealand is quite secure I feel, seeing what is happening at grass-roots level, in schools and Community Theatre in some regions.

In a short space of time - on top of the productions of Community and Professional Theatre, I have seen presentations for the Shakespeare Globe Centre NZ, Showquest, and now we are moving towards round one of our own National TheatreFest. Community Theatre is an important aspect of community life. As important as the local representative Rugby, Soccer, Netball, Hockey teams, played through Autumn to Spring. Theatre is a team sport.

Theatre reflects societal concerns, cultural impact, emotional being, identity and kinship. Te Pūtoi Whakaari o Aotearoa. That's us! Theatre New Zealand is proud of the steps we are taking as part of our 2020+1 Celebrations: we are hosting our first Cultural Hui: Cultural Practice in The Theatre Space, as well as putting in place new incentivising Awards for TheatreFest. We are also preparing a Five Year Tactical Plan of development and out-reach.

A separate notification of the 2020+1 Celebrations will happen once all is locked in by the end of June. In the meantime, I'm looking forward to new New Zealand works and stimulating diverse performances, as part of our Anniversary of Celebrations and indeed TheatreFest itself. Happy creativity.

Nga Mihi
Bryan Aitken
National President

T h e a t r e N e w Z e a l a n d 
Te Pūtoi Whakaari o Aotearoa 

Editor Margaret Robertson
Technical Assistance Morris Robertson

Deadline for August September Backchat s
20 September 2021

Send Theatre New Zealand communications to info@theatrenewzealand.co.nz

Introducing Recent New Members



Evolution Theatre Company is a nonprofit semi-professional theatre located in Gisborne. Founded in February 2018 by Managing Artistic Director, Dinna Myers, it is currently entering its fourth season of production.

Their mission is to strengthen and promote the performing arts in Gisborne by providing arts education and high-quality theatrical productions using local talent in an intimate 70-seat venue. Their theatrical season is based on what is happening in the world that they think warrants visibility and discussion, what inspires audiences, what local artists need to grow in their craft, and

what just plain makes them happy.

Evolution Theatre has run a 48hour theatre challenge in the past and is promoting a play-writing competition (closing date 1st July). Their production of Bruce Mason's *The Pohutukawa Tree* is pictured with Trudz Levalier as Aroha Mataira and Caleb Collier as Johnny Mataira.



Greymouth Operatic Society has been in operation since 1945 entertaining Coasters with many shows over the decades ranging from full musicals to revues and concerts. They operate now with a small but enthusiastic group of mostly younger people who want to keep theatre alive in Greymouth.

Their aim is to provide an opportunity for locals to be involved in the performing arts, be the conduit for outside groups who approach them looking for local talent to

resource their project, and to help develop the abilities of any volunteer that finds themselves recruited into their ranks.

Five years ago they were in a do-or-die situation, the future of the group resting on the financial success of one, small show. Since then they have successfully staged eight shows in a dinner theatre setting in conjunction with The Union, a local restaurant, and two full musicals at the Regent Theatre. Focusing on mainstream comedies, and trying for the most professional product they have gone from strength to strength, pivoting constantly as the ebb and flow of capable passionate people come and go over time. Seeing students become masters is one of the biggest rewards they have.

This year their society will enter TheatreFest and they are looking forward to receiving a constructive critique to improve their creative processes. They are also looking forward to seeing other performances and meeting other groups in the region.

Pictured is a fantasy scene from *Bonking James Bond* by April Phillips with Ngakora Beal as James, and Emma Houliston as Betty.

Where are They Now? Past President Steven Arnold writes

As we move forward to celebrate our history and future with the VISION 2020+1 celebrations we would like to start a "Where are they now?" column.

We are specifically interested in honouring the winners of the TNZ TheatreFest (or similar by other names) in every year, since it began!

We would love to honour the best actors (male and female), director of the winning production, director of the winning New Zealand play, and winner of the best youth play. We are interested in receiving their contact details. We would then hope to contact the people, and ask for a few words of bio, a pic if possible, and some commentary on theatre life since winning.

If you know anyone or you yourself are a past champion please pass contacts to Steven Arnold (steven@peace.school.nz)

Exciting to think of the living history in our midst, and the stories they could tell! IF you know of any other historical / famous / interesting or amusing anecdotes about people from our past - do also pass them on.

Theatre Archives Past President Ewen Coleman writes

Do you know there's a manual called *Caring for your Theatre Archives* available to help you?

The manual is designed to be an easy-to-follow guide covering all the basic steps of archives practice, including:

- A Policy for Theatre Archives
- To Keep or not to Keep
- Depositing your Archives
- Preservation and Conservation
- Digital archive management

it also includes Appendices that give useful examples and information on how to obtain supplies *for storing archives*.

While the manual is published to give assistance *to* those responsible for or holding theatre archives, it will be useful to all people who care for archives of small organisations, *but* who do not have ready access to training or to outside expertise.

The manual is available as an ebook from Playmarket. Purchase it [here](#)
For more information about Theatre Archives NZ visit their web site <https://www.theatearchives.nz/>

Theatre Archives New Zealand is also currently surveying all theatre organisations and personnel about theatre records that they hold or are responsible for. They invite you to participate in this survey which is intended to assist people researching New Zealand theatre to find out where such material is held and by whom. Information provided by you will be made available to researchers on the web, but your personal contact information apart from your name will be confidential to Theatre Archives NZ unless you wish to make it known.

Please take this opportunity to register the theatre records in your possession. If you provide them with a phone or email contact they will respond and arrange to send you a set of labels you can attach to your archival material to ensure other people know it is to be preserved.

Follow this link to the Survey: https://vuw.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_cUqUesp5xON6FEN

Captured from Facebook

Do you use Facebook to keep the public up to date and interested?



Cast of *Kaipara Homegrown*,
Dargaville Little Theatre

Craig Haywood as Bungling Inspector Pratt in Mana
Little Theatre's *Murdered to Death*



"Suor sharp drama" Julius
Caesar at Stagecraft Theatre





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<http://www.playmarket.org.nz/membership>.

Brand New Comedies

LOVE ME TINDER by Stephen Sinclair

(1w, 2m) A comedy musical for anyone with a smart phone and an open heart, offering a hilarious perspective on the path of love in the age of Tinder. Featuring original music by Kloos, this is the story of Zoe and Daren who meet on the ubiquitous dating app. But the app that brought them together offers ongoing temptations that threaten to tear them apart.

DO YOU THINK I'M SEXY by Carl Nixon (1w, 1m) Two enthusiastic yet inept actors attempt to stage a community- theatre production of a script that one of them has written. The script is about the 'fairy-tale romance' and marriage of Kiwi model Rachel Hunter and aging rocker Rod Stewart. The play does not go smoothly.

THE SURPRISE PARTY by Dave Armstrong

(3w, 3m) A satire about a small extreme left-wing party that somehow manages to win a general election and is able to rule by itself, and thus enacts extreme left wing policies, which all seem disastrous to the rather ineffectual leader until magically they all start working brilliantly.

Katherine Mansfield On Stage

THE CASE OF KATHERINE MANSFIELD by Catherine Downes (1w)

Katherine Mansfield's letters, diaries and stories are incorporated with dramatic skill into a finely achieved monologue. The puzzle of Katherine Mansfield's character seems truly revealed through these moments of her 'very typically false life'.

BRIGHT BIRDS by Elizabeth O'Connor

(3-12w, 2-9m) An adaptation of four of Katherine Mansfield's short stories beginning with the Sheridan's garden party. This play was commissioned by the Court Theatre to celebrate KM's centenary.

TELLING STORIES by Craig Thaine

(3-6w, 1-4m) 1919 - Katherine Mansfield reviews Virginia Woolf's *Night and Day* negatively; 1920 - The two women meet to catch up and make up. In amongst the gossip, stories unfold and friendship is explored. An imaginary recreation of a real event.

Three Plays by Victor Rodger

MY NAME IS GARY COOPER (5w, 3m)

A roller-coaster ride through cultural appropriation and the impact of the American film industry on the South Pacific (and vice versa), cutting between the filming of *Return to Paradise* in Samoa in 1952, Hollywood in 1973 and New Zealand in 2000. This contemporary revenge tragedy balances post-colonial politics, humour and eroticism in a gripping, original plot. \$35. Purchase at

www.playmarket.org.nz/bookshop

AT THE WAKE (1w, 2m)

Robert, a half-Samoan ex-pat returns to New Zealand to accompany his palagi grandmother to his mother's funeral. But potty-mouthed Joan is hardly a conventional grandmother - she smokes like a chimney and drinks like a fish; she loves men but hates Robert's father with a passion, and she will make sure *everybody* knows it.

SONS (5w, 3m)

A young half-Samoan man goes to see his dying father after ten years of no contact. During his visit he sees a photograph of his half brother and sister whom he always knew existed but has never met. His assumption that his father will tell his siblings about him is painfully wrong.

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

Also captured from Facebook



The Boat House. Marlborough Rep's *The Pink Hammer* by Michele Amas is proving a popular choice throughout New Zealand. Characters Woody, Siobhan and Annabelle are pictured.



Atmospheric advertising from Masterton Theatre Company



Overtones by Alice Gerstenberg is an intriguing early 20th century stream of consciousness one act play. At [Khandallah Arts Theatre](#) it was a hit. One of the actors writes....

“Just finished a sold out season at [Khandallah Arts Theatre](#). Every time I attend a wrap party I get a bit emotional about all the people willing to volunteer their time, effort and skills to produce community events.

It looks like we are all together because we love theatre - but we also get involved because we love our communities.

Communities with souls rely on the unpaid work of committees and volunteers, on kindness and initiative.

I ADORE these people, and am so grateful for all the seen and unseen things our volunteers do to keep our communities strong.”

Jessica Hammond

What's On in June and July 2021

Howick Little Theatre	<i>Dinner with Friends</i> by Donald Margulies (Studio)	June 2 - 5
	AUDITION <i>My Cousin Rachel</i> by Daphne Du Maurier	June 26
	<i>The Viewing Room</i> by Mark Smith	July 10 - 31
Te Aroha Little Theatre	<i>Waiting for Godot</i> by Samuel Beckett	June 18 - 26
Hamilton Playbox	<i>Move Over Mrs Markham</i> by Ray Cooney	June 12 - 26
Katikati Theatre	<i>Between Mouthfuls</i> by Alan Ayckbourn; <i>Remember Me</i> by Jean McConnell; <i>Retail Therapy</i> by Cherol Filbee	June 15 - 19
Detour Theatre, Tauranga	<i>How to Train Your Husband</i> Devon Williamson	June 17 - July 3
Tauranga Repertory	<i>Neighbourhood Watch</i> by Alan Ayckbourn	July 9 - 24
Rotorua Little Theatre	<i>Witness for the Prosecution</i> by Agatha Christie	June 23 - July 3
Tokoroa Little Theatre	<i>Surprise Youth</i> by Elaine Long	July 7 - 10
Onstage Te Kuiti	<i>The Fat Lady Sings in Little Grimley & Lockdown in Little Grimley</i> by David Tristram and <i>Remember Me</i> by Jean Mc Connell	June 15-19
Centre Stage, Taupo	<i>Mama Mia</i> music by Benny Anderson, Bjorn Ulvaeus	June 19 - 26
Performing Arts, Taumarunui	<i>The Vicar of Dibley</i> ; <i>The Wedding</i> by Richard Curtis and Paul Mayhew-Archer	June 11-19
Evolution Theatre, Gisborne	<i>The Glass Menagerie</i> by Tennessee Williams	July 1 - 11
Gisborne Unity Theatre	<i>Blackadder III</i> Ben Elton & Richard Curtis	July 8 - 17
Napier Repertory Players	<i>tragedy tomorrow, COMEDY TONIGHT</i> , classic British Comedy	July 21 - 24
	Studio production of three one act plays	July 16 - 31
Pahiatua Repertory	AUDITION <i>King John</i> by William Shakespeare	July 3-4
Masterton Theatre Company	<i>Chitty Chitty Bang Bang</i> by Sherman & Sherman	June 24- July 4
New Plymouth Repertory	AUDITION <i>Jack and the Beanstalk</i> adpt. Les Emslie	July 4 @1pm
Mana Little Theatre	<i>Murdered to Death</i> by Peter Gordon	June 16 - 26
Porirua Little Theatre	<i>The Hound of the Baskervilles</i> by Steven Canny	July 14 - 24
Newlands College	<i>Shrek the Musical Dreamworks</i>	June 1 - 4
Khandallah Arts Theatre	<i>The Adventures of Tom Sawyer</i> by Mark Hudson	July 22 - 31
Stagecraft Theatre	<i>She Kills Monsters</i> by Qui Nguyen	July 1 - 10
	AUDITION <i>Hangman</i> by Martin McDonagh	July 3 from 10am
Wellington Repertory	<i>Popcorn</i> by Ben Elton	June 9 - 19
Hutt Repertory	<i>The Raft</i> by Carl Nixon	July 7 - 17
Butterfly Creek	<i>It Runs in the Family</i> by Ray Cooney	June 24 - July 3
Havelock Theatre	<i>The Bespoke Overcoat</i> by Wolf Mankowitz	July 3 - 4
Nelson Repertory	<i>The Pink Hammer</i> by Michele Amas	June 23 - 26
Canterbury Repertory	AUDITION <i>Chook Chook</i> by Fiona Farrell & <i>DNA</i> by Barry Grant	July 12
Burnside High School	<i>Blood Brothers</i> by Willy Russell	July 28 - 29
South Canterbury Drama League	<i>Private Lives</i> by Noel Coward	July 2 - 8
Reefton ROARS	<i>Hidden Meanings</i> by Michael Snelgrove	July 8 - 17
Clyde Theatre	<i>Lockdown in Little Grimley</i> by David Tristram	July 31 - August 1

Is your production missing from this list?
Did you email dates, title & playwright to the address below?
Please send information about August & September productions to
info@theatrenewzealand.co.nz