



New Players News

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New Players — for quality community theatre

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OUR SPECIAL EDINBURGH FRINGE FESTIVAL CORRESPONDENTS REPORT ON *The Lass wi the Muckle Moo*

What: *The Lass wi the Muckle Moo* by Alexander Reid, directed by Charles Nowosielski, with music by Richard Cherns.

Where: Duddingston Kirk Manse Gardens, Old Church Lane, Edinburgh.

greetings and 'och t' noo' from Edinburgh

Arrived yesterday (Friday) afternoon to discover the city overcome with people. Absolutely crowded. Everyone seems to be here for festival and fringe events. Managed to queue to pick up our tickets and after a chill out at our accommodation headed off to our first event.

This play was being held two kilometres outside the city centre, so we waited for a bus, but found due to traffic congestion these were running late, so hailed a cab and headed out to Duddingston Village suburb. Arrived at the Duddingston Kirk grounds where *Th Lass with the Muckle Moo* by Alexander Reid was being put on by Alba Theatre. This play is in Old Scottish (compare with Shakespeare in Old English) about a story teller who is in the land of the elves and is allowed back to the land of men on the condition he must tell the truth at all times.

We then meet the Laird of the manor and his family, including the daughter Meg who is the 'Lass'. It transpires the story teller is the person who created the story that this fine and beautiful lass was cursed with a 'muckle moo'. [We don't know what a muckle is but her moo (mouth) was described as big enough to fit a galloway coo (cow)]. The laird then goes off to fight the neighbours and brings home a prisoner who is a fine looking laddie. Meg falls in love with him and convinces her father to give him a choice of hanging or marriage. The rest of the play follows each character's agenda for either wanting the boy to hang or marry. In the end all's well that ends well, and everyone lives happy ever after!!

This highly amusing play was put on in the grounds of the kirk which bounds a large and beautifully set-out garden area which was created by two doctors from waste land, and after their deaths



taken over by a trust - sitting outside amongst the trees and midges and a box set not to be seen!!

Tea and coffee (biscuits as well) at half time made it seem familiar! We thought the play started early when a rabbit hopped from stage left to right, and marvelled at the director's talent for getting this to happen on cue, but this turned out to be one of the locals. Overall, a wonderfully produced theatre piece which we thoroughly enjoyed. A fantastic start to our festival experience. All the best to everyone.

Justin and Margaret

This was billed as "probably Scotland's finest comedy, filled with the peculiarities of early Scottish Borders life yet containing the wonders of Elfland" and "a typical example of Scottish 50's excellence". The play, translated into over 15 languages including Mandarin and Serbo-Croat, was used for over 20 years as the training play in comedy by the Moscow Arts Theatre.

INSIDE ...

... the **B-SIDE** is announced, we catch up with **Anton Chekhov's wife** and the **Antoinettes**, Jean Slobbé and Ralph Lenton tell us how **These Things Happen**, there is information about **reunions** (Butterfly Creek, Mana Little Theatre and Drama Christi) and **courses on** stage and screen acting, and something from the Ed.

Regular features are that we tell you about New Players people who are **Out and About**, there are a **crossword**, a list of **websites of interest** and a **Theatre Calendar**, and **News**.

A big "thank you" to our contributors this month: Justin Blakie & Margaret Taylor, Ralph Lenton, Jean Slobbé, Marie Thomson, Irene Miller, Jeff Osborne and Marjorie McKee. Everyone is welcome to contribute.

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New Zealand Theatre Federation's Festival of Community Theatre

The final of the competition will be between *Lest We Forget - FAHS War Years* (Feilding High School) devised by director Karla Crofts and year-13 drama students; *The Cook Tapes* by André Surridge (Feilding Little Theatre) directed by Dan Mateer, entries from Marlborough Repertory, Onstage Productions (Westport), and youth productions from Dunedin's Logan Park High School and Aranui High School (Christchurch).

The North Island (Regional) Final was held on 25 August at Feilding Little Theatre and the details of the two plays will go from there to the National finals are:

Feilding High School's *Lest We Forget - FAHS War Years*, an ensemble tribute devised by director Karla Crofts and year-13 drama students around World War II letters from former pupils, was awarded first place and won best youth production.

Feilding Little Theatre's play, *The Cook Tapes*, directed by Dan Mateer, was the premiere production of a script by André Surridge, an unusual perspective on Captain James Cook's first voyage to New Zealand. It was second and also won best technical award.

The adjudicator was Gabrielle Barr from New Plymouth.

The youth runner up was *Wonderland*, another devised ensemble play from Wanganui High School, based on controversial ECT therapy at the former Lake Alice mental hospital.

New Zealand Theatre Federation Festival of Community Theatre, 67th National Finals, Logan Park High School, Dunedin, 7-8 September. Adjudicator: Nanette Wright.

Websites of Interest

Reviews:

www.theatreview.org.nz contains reviews of New Zealand theatre of all types by various reviewers and forums of interest to theatre people generally.

www.lumiere.net.nz/reader: film and theatre review site.

Theatre community:

www.theatrecomrades.co.nz is a non-profit website for theatre.

www.nzlive.com cultural website by the Ministry of Culture and Heritage linking information and links provided by NZ sites.

www.thebigidea.co.nz an online community for NZ creative practitioners, producers and organisations. Updates daily.

<http://atlanticsource.org/wap> Wellington Actors Practice, a play reading group for actors

Play directories:

www.doollee.com is an online database for playwrights and plays.

www.scriptmagnet.com Prospectively, a script library for New Zealand writers.

www.buddybuddy.com run to promote gay and lesbian theatre throughout the world. It includes a list of such plays.

www.youtube.com. You Tube has video extracts of performances of plays by playwrights such as Beckett, Miller and Chekhov.

www.playmarket.org.nz Lists of New Zealand plays for which they hold the rights.

www.playbureau.com Lists of New Zealand and international plays for which they hold the rights.

www.bardwire.gut.edu.au The world of Shakespeare.

E-mail:

bsidegt@gmail.com The B-SIDE, a forum for independent practitioners

sixoclockswill@gmail.com. to be part of The Six O'clock Swill, a monthly series of one-act plays at the Mighty Mighty café.

New Players Reviews

is published monthly by the

New Players Theatre Company (Inc).

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Next copy deadline: Tuesday 25 September.

Editor in Chief: Don Blackmore.

Following our story on Chekhov in our June, issue, RALPH LENTON has some information on ANTON CHEKHOV'S WIFE and HER NIECE

Anton Chekhov's wife, Olga Knipper-Chekhova, played Ranyevskaya in the first performance of *The Cherry Orchard* in January 1904. It was a role she reprised many times - her 1,000th appearance was in a morale-booster for the Red Army in 1943. Although she was made a People's Artist of the Soviet Union in 1928 she was always on thin ice with the communists. The Knippers were of German descent who had family connections high up in the White Army during the revolution. So despite her People's Artist honour, she was always treated with suspicion and was never quite sure where she stood with the KGB and its predecessors. For example, attempts to obtain state recognition of her 75th birthday were met with silence from the Kremlin - in the days when silence spoke volumes.

She was also continually being confused with her much younger niece (by marriage) Olga Chekhova. This Olga lived in Germany and became a film star in the Nazi film industry in the 30s. She was pally with Hitler and appeared in Nazi films right up to the end of the war.

Olga Knipper-Chekhova was a founder member of the Moscow Arts Theatre and at the end of the war the theatre's celebratory performance for the victory was *The Cherry Orchard* with Olga once again reprising Ranyevskaya. And there, in the front row on opening night, was her niece, Olga Chekhova. The question, of course, is how did a famous Nazi film actress who used to dine with Hitler get from Berlin to Moscow in 1945, not only unscathed, but as an honoured guest at the Moscow Arts? One assumes the answer is that she was on the KGB's payroll all the time (although she was mistress to some very important personages during her career).

And I'm NOT a conspiracy theorist!

New Zealand Theatre Archive would like you to let them know if you have theatre records of any kind that you would like preserved for future generations, know of people who have theatre records that now need a home, or if you find any theatre records that urgently need saving.

It does not collect archives itself, but provides links to national regional and local libraries and other institutions that provide professional care for theatre archives. Its mission is to identify significant collections, list the archives held and provide information about accessibility for researchers, facilitate the deposit of 'at risk' archives with repositories that provide professional care, and provides professional advice about archival care to those retaining their own archives.

Website: www2.vuw.ac.nz/nzta



Anton and Olga

NEW PLAYERS PEOPLE OUT AND ABOUT

Good meal plays live on! *Melodramatic Murder and Mayhem at Moore Manor* by **Margaret Potter** and **Marie Thomson**, directed by **Margaret Potter**, returns to the stage this year for Tawa Community Theatre. This is the second "revival" at Tawa of a play originally premiered by New Players, following their successful *Who Sleighed Santa?* last year. Auditions are in the middle of this month - see the *Theatre Calendar* on page 5 for details.

John Wise tells us that he is still playing "at odd places and at odd times". He played for the *Last Night of the Proms* at Southward Theatre recently with a medley of show tunes, but only in the second half, he says because "all the serious stuff was in the first half". He also played for the annual Hutt Community Concert again this year just to keep his hand(s) in. Soon, he will be playing for another murder mystery for Tawa Community Theatre (presumably *Melodramatic Murder and Mayhem at Moore Manor*). John is also continuing his playing at old people's homes. John says "I have a captive audience (it is difficult for them to get away quickly in a wheelchair) but I always ensure I get away quickly after playing in case I get kept in permanently."

As well as publicising Wellington G & S's North Island tour of *Tales of Hoffman* that begins this month, **Marjorie McKee** is publicist for *Shining City* by Conor McPherson, directed by Danny Mulheron, which opens at Circa this month.

Appearing in Tawa Community Theatre's *Are You Being Served?* until 8 September are **Marie Thomson** as Mrs Slocombe, **Margaret Potter** as a shopper, **Ross Conland** as Mr Grace, **Mike Boag** as Mr Granger, **Peter MacKenzie** as Mr Rumbold and **Jamie Najbert** (who sang in our last Panto) as Nurse.

Don Quiring has the lead in *Titus Andronicus*, directed by Robert Hickey for Stagecraft, which opens this month at The Gryphon: the season is 12 to 29 September.

Ewen Coleman is directing *Ladies Who Lunch* by Tudor Gates for Khandallah Arts Theatre. The season is 4 to 13 October at Cochrane Hall, Cockayne Road. The cast includes **Paul Langham** (lately from our production of *Take A Chance On Me*). Tickets are available from the Khandallah Pharmacy or phone 972 6180.

Barry Lakeman is currently in the middle of the filming schedule for *Garage Sale*, which is produced by Kerry Robbins and directed by Paul Murphy. There has been quite a bit of publicity about it in the Wellington papers recently, with articles about bit player John Rowles and star Geraldine Brophy.

Darrell Haddon, our stage manager for *3 in 1* has asked **Barry Lakeman** to join forces with him to provide a season of plays at the Newtown Community Centre at the end of October / early November. Casts are not finalised, but it is rumoured that they include **Belinda Clarke**, **Pauline Pyefinch** and **Mike Pyefinch**.

Barry Lakeman was invited to join the cast of the first *6 o'clock Swill* series of one act plays. More on page 3.

Jeff Osborne and **Dave Adams** are rehearsing for director **Chris Fisher** for a Drama Christi "period piece", *The Best Days of Your Lives* by John Dignam, to be performed from 5 to 14 October. Jeff is playing Billings, a school teacher, and Dave is playing Tassell, a teacher just returned from the RAF.

The B-SIDE

The B-SIDE is a forum for independent practitioners, [performers, stage managers, directors, designers, producers, technicians, publicists, etc.]. Supported by BATS theatre, it was initiated by Jo Randerson, Hone Kouka, Anna Cameron, Will Harris, Sarah Griffiths, Miria George and James Hadley, who came together out of passion, frustration and belief... A passion for the possibility of theatre, frustration at its current state and a belief that things are shifting, that there's change in the air!

The forum will generate discussion around the possibilities for theatre in the future. They are aiming for the widest possible representation from the world of independent theatre makers.

BATS Theatre, 1 Kent Terrace, Wellington, 12 noon to 5.00 p.m., Saturday, September 15, 2007. Free, but please RSVP as space is limited. RSVP and queries to bsidegt@gmail.com.

A month or two ago, we asked for contributions about New Players' "on stage" disasters. Ralph Lenton and Jean Slobbé remembered two things that happened in our production of *Farndale . . . a Christmas Carol* in 1963.

THESE THINGS HAPPEN

In New Players' production of *Farndale . . . a Christmas Carol* in 1963, Marley's Ghost (played by **Andrew Elzenaar**) is first seen on stage with his head pushed through the middle of a door. In a later scene, when he haunts Scrooge (played by **Louellen Bonallack**), he is still wearing the door which has become stuck. He and Scrooge tussle and Scrooge's bed falls forward to land at the feet of the audience. One night, Andrew came offstage to warn stage management that one of the audience was in a wheelchair in the front row and, being further forward than normal, the bed would land on the occupant's toes. This was not a problem: the bed was set 300 mm further upstage.

It worked well enough for Lou, but when Andrew came on only his feet were well lit. The bed did miss the wheelchair, though. **Ralph Lenton** owns up to being SM for that one.

Then there was the gravestone that appeared in the "Christmas-yet-to-come" scene. On stage is a gravestone, black, with cut-out lettering that was invisible under front lighting. Hidden inside was a bulb and battery. When switched on, the letters appeared. The switch was at the back but very close to the top stage-right corner of the stone itself.

The action was Louellen saying "Tell me I may sponge away the writing on this stone" while **Jean Slobbé**, as the Ghost, leaned over, pointing to the gravestone. Her pointing finger was supposed to flick the switch, turning on the light. The gravestone had been on stage unlit for quite a few minutes without the hint of a flicker before the crucial moment.

But on opening night, as Jean's pointing hand approached it, but while she was still a good distance away, the light came on! People were quite spooked by it but accepted the logical explanation: loose wire, dust build-up, vibration causing it to arc out, etc, etc. The next night, it happened again, and again at exactly the right moment, just as Jean's pointing finger approached. The eeriness affected just about everybody.

That night, after the curtain, the gravestone was stripped down and its innards rebuilt. It behaved itself for the rest of the run.

But no-one has ever worked out why it happened.

Are you, or someone you know, doing something that might interest other New Players people? Tell us about it.

THEATRE CALENDAR

OPEN NOW

- The Cape** by Vivienne Plumb, dir: Conrad Newport. Road trip by 17 year olds to Cape Reinga. Circa Two to 1 Sept.
- Who Needs Sleep Anyway?** by Roger Hall & Pip Hall dir: Susan Wilson, des: John Hodgson, Lisa Maule, Zoe Fox with Jennifer Ludlam, Jane Waddell, Peter Hambleton, Mel Dodge, Paul McLaughlin, Nick Dunbar. Comedy about bringing up babies. Downstage to 22 September.
- The Venetian Bride** ad.: Robert Tripe from story by Maurice Shadbolt, dir: Rachel More, des: Jennifer Lal, Gareth Farr, with Helen Moulder, Grant Tilly, Carol Smith, Phil Peleton, Robert Tripe & Bjorg Halldosdottir. BATS to 1 Sept.
- Twelfth Night** by William Shakespeare, dir: Vanessa Byrnes for Toi Whakaari: NZ Drama School. 2nd year actors. Bookings: 381 9253. Te Whaea, to 1 September.
- Pig Hunt** by Brian Hotter, dir: Kerryn Plamer, des: Brian King, with Jason Whyte, Jamie McCaskill & Rapai Te Hau. BATS to 1 September. www.paralleluniverse.org.nz.
- Are You Being Served?** (author & director not listed) Tawa Community Theatre BYO cabaret / comic musical from the TV series. Cast includes **Marie Thomson, Margaret Potter, Ross Conland, Mike Boag, Peter MacKenzie and Jamie Najbert**. Bookings: 232 3711. To 8 September.
- The King And I**, Coasters Musical Theatre, 15 Hinemoa Street, Paraparaumu, to 8 Sept. See www.coasters.org.nz.

OPENING IN SEPTEMBER

- 1 **The Winslow Boy** by Terence Rattigan, dir: Ross Jolly. A father's belief. A Nation's obsession. Let Right be Done! Based on a true story about one small man's fight for right against soulless authority and injustice. Circa One to 6 Oct.
- 2 **Adam Playreading Series**, Downstage, 3.00 p.m. *The Trial*, ad. by Dean Parker from Franz Kafka's novel, dir: Stephen Bain. Josef awakens one morning and finds he's being arrested - no one will reveal what his crime is. \$8.
- 2 **Ovation** dir: Bonita Edwards, mus dir: Julianne Jackson at Porirua Little Theatre. Cabaret from the Company of Musical Players. Cafe Style, BYO Drink & Nibbles. Energetic, colourful, with well known songs and dance routines and a heavy emphasis on humour. 2.00 p.m. to 4.30 p.m.
- 4 **Dance Your Socks Off**, dance festival at various venues, including BATS Theatre, to 22 September.
- 5 **The Norman Conquests - Living Together** by Alan Ayckbourn. The third in the trilogy. Mana Little Theatre. Season heavily booked. Phone Judy 233 8498. To 15 Sept.
- 7 **NZ Theatre Federation Festival of Community Theatre**, Logan Park High School, Dunedin, Adjudicator: Nanette Wright. To 8 September. See page 2.
- 8 **Shining City** by Conor McPherson (*The Weir*: Circa 2001, *This Lime Tree Bower*: Circa 2004), dir: Danny Mulheron, with Jason Whyte, Emmet Michael Kennedy, Sean de Burca & Miranda Manasiadis. A man says he has seen the ghost of his recently deceased wife. Circa Two to 13 Oct.
- 9 **Adam Playreading Series**, Downstage, 3.00 p.m. *Caustic* by Thomas Sainsbury, dir: James Hadley. Provocative, dark and funny, set in a 1950s-inspired future dystopia of enforced consumerism and government-by-corporation \$8.
- 9 **Improv Idle** by The Improvisors. The audience are judge, jury and executioner. Sundays, Circa Two to 21 October.
- 12 **Titus Andronicus** by William Shakespeare, dir Robert Hickey for Stagecraft. Cast includes **Don Quiring**. Shakespeare's bloodiest play. Passionate language, beauty, barbarity, humanity, atrocity. The Gryphon to 29 September.
- 13 **Father's Day** by **Eric Chappell**, Harlequin Theatre (Masterton), to 21 September. (This was advertised as **Outside Edge** by Richard Harris.)
- 13 **Reliving the 60s**, Greytown Little Theatre to 22 Sept.

- 15 **Tales of Hoffman** by Jacques Offenbach for Wellington G & S with Patrick Power and the Vector Wellington Orchestra at Southward Theatre.
- 15 **Antoinettes awards**, Porirua Little Theatre 7.30 p.m. Tickets \$10 from 476 3515. See page 6.
- 16 **Adam Playreading Series**, Downstage, 3.00 p.m. *The Love Wrangler* by Ryan McFadyen, dir: David O'Donnell. A post-greenhouse city, water levels have risen to maroon the inhabitants of a building. Love arrives to fulfill a promise to Hope. Hope has committed suicide. \$8.
- 19 **Tales of Hoffman** by Jacques Offenbach for Wellington G & S. Opera House to 22 September. [Also tours to Wanganui (Opera House, 29 September) and Palmerston North (Regent on Broadway, 6 October).]
- 20 **New Zealand National Shakespeare in Schools**. Shakespeare Globe Centre New Zealand's (SGCNZ) National Shakespeare in Schools - Regional and National University of Otago / Sheilah Winn Festivals of Shakespeare in Schools perform scenes from 3 of Shakespeare's plays. 7.00 p.m., St Patricks College Auditorium, Silverstream.
- 28 **Cynthia Fortitude's Farewell - her first**, dir: Danny Mulheron, with Helen Moulder, Jeff Kingsford-Brown, Wellington Chamber Orchestra cond: Michael Vinten. Soundings Theatre, Te Papa, to 29 September.
- 29 **Angels in America Part I: Millennium Approaches** by Tony Kushner, dir: Willem Wassenaar, des: Daniel Williams, Karl Jenkins, Pat McIntosh, with Bryan Coll, Colleen Davis, Dan Musgrove, Sophie Roberts, Maria Rose MacDonald, Anya Tate-Manning, Asalemo Tofete, Matt Whelan, Martyn Wood. Downstage, to 6 October

REGULAR

- Wednesdays: Comedy in The Pit** at 9 p.m., Pit Bar at BATS Theatre, 1 Kent Terrace. See www.myspace.com/pitcomedy.
- Sundays: Poetry Studio**, open mike at the Bluenote, Cuba / Vivian Sts, 3 -5 p.m.

AUDITIONS

- 1 **Seussical the Musical**, dir: Bob Cater, mus. dir: Stephen Gibbs for Porirua Little Theatre for season 14 November to 1 December. Enquiries / appointment to Matt at sendtomattbentley@hotmail.com or 021 183 6760. To 2 Sept.
- 16 **The Shakespeare Revue** at the Newton Community Centre at 2.00 p.m. for season by Wellington Repertory Theatre, 28 November to 7 December. An anthology of the work of comedians and writers: Alan Bennett, Stephen Fry, Hugh Laurie, Maureen Lipman, Derek Miller, the Monty Python team, Ned Sherrin and Victoria Wood, with music from Cole Porter, Noel Coward and music halls. Contact Sue Miller 233 1842 or kotuku.media@xtra.co.nz.
- 16 **Melodramatic Murder and Mayhem at Moore Manor** by Margaret Potter and Marie Thomson, dir: Margaret Potter. Linden Social Centre, 2.30 p.m. for season for Tawa Community Theatre, from 22 November. Audience-participation Dinner Murder Mystery like *Who Sleighed Santa?* (2005). Owen Moore has passed away leaving debts, when to the rescue comes the charming Count Mein. Enquiries to 24 hour answerphone: 2323 711.
- 23 **Unoriginal Sin** at Heretaunga Players Studio for season 22 November to 1 December. Info: Adam at 526 9169, 027 451 541 5 or adam@firststar.co.nz.
- 24 **They Came From Mars and Landed Outside the Farnedale Avenue Church Hall In Time for the Townswomen's Guild**. Harlequin Theatre. Contact Graeme Burnard at 377 0139 or graemeb@unitedtravel.co.nz.
- 30 **Mean Jean the Pirate Queen** by Michelanne Forster, dir: Caroline Wallis, Kapiti Playhouse. At theatre, 1.00 p.m.

If you know of (or especially if you are involved in) a show that could be listed here, please let the editor know.

NEWS

Lucette needs your house!!

Lucette Hindin has a show, *Flight Patterns*, which she is bringing to the next Fringe Festival, and she wonders if somebody might be able to find a suitable venue for it: a house, preferably with a garden, bathroom, kitchen, and 2-3 other rooms for 2 to 3 weeks. She says that audiences have to be quite small (so Don can't go - Ed). Please contact Lucette Hindin at oilnutcrusher@yahoo.co.nz if you can help.

Venue shopping for the Fringe?

Last time I looked, The Gryphon on Ghuznee was available for hire for the first week of the 2008 Fringe Festival, from 3 to 16 February. Productions can share the venue but they need to negotiate between themselves regarding how to pay for it. Prospective hirers can contact the Venue Manager, Leigh Cain, on 387 8400 or e-mail gryphon@stagecraft.co.nz. More information: www.stagecraft.co.nz/gryphon.html.

Wellington Performing Arts Centre

WPAC celebrated their 20th Birthday Celebrations on 25 & 26 August, with four concerts presented by four groups of current students.

Wellington Actors Practice

I recently discovered this regular table reading group, run by Walter McGinnis. It is an informal group of actors who read plays. Readings are not held on a regular basis - the next ones are planned for 1 September and 20 October. For more information visit <http://atlanticsource.org/wap>. There, you can sign up for e-mails that keep you in touch with their activities.

New Zealand Theatre: A case for investment

Some of you may remember **William Walker**. Author and lead actor in *Take Me Home, Mister* at Circa in 2004 and the subsequent North Island tour, his appearances in a number of television shows (including TVOne's *Close To Home* and last year's *Rude Awakenings* for TVNZ), he was Artistic Director at Downstage many years ago. Anyway he has written an essay entitled *New Zealand Theatre: A case for investment*, which has been circulated widely in the industry. If you want to see it, have a look at <http://www.theatreview.org.nz/forum/topic.php?id=155>. Forum comments are wide-ranging, covering the place of amateur theatre in the industry and questions of funding.

BJL

ANNIVERSARIES

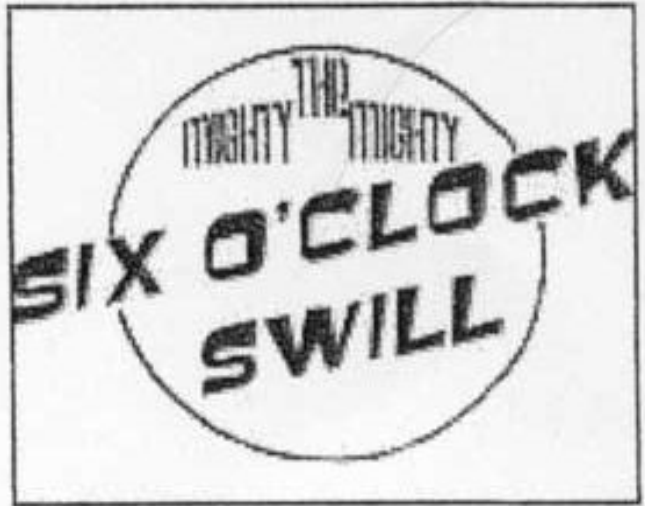
Drama Christi: 60th Anniversary on Labour Weekend (20 to 22 October). Contact: 4759562 or e-mail info@dramachristi.org.nz.

Mana Little Theatre: 50th anniversary in 2008. Barbara Heath, compiling a history, requests any relevant anecdotes, photos, etc.: e.b.heath@xtra.co.nz.

Butterfly Creek Theatre Troupe: 20th Anniversary Celebrations are 5 to 7 October.

September clubnight
There is no clubnight this month.

SEP 5 2007



A while ago I directed one of two plays by Diane Spodarek that were performed at the Newtown Community Centre. Looking at the simple sets and lighting designs, it occurred to me that it must be possible to take theatre to where the people are, rather than to ask potential audiences to make a special trip to a "theatre". It may come as a surprise, but some people are uncomfortable about (or feel intimidated by) going to any theatre building, especially if they don't go very often. And some people do not like the "adventure" of finding a theatre building that is new to them.

I thought that it must be possible for simple plays to be performed at "café-style" venues such as the Blue Note, and it might be possible to "tour" through Wellington and the Hutt Valley. There are music and poetry performances at many "suburban" café venues, so there is no reason why one couldn't have plays there, provided the actors didn't spend a lot of time sitting or lying on the stage floor.

And then I was asked by a Drama School friend of mine to be in a play that would be one of three to be performed in one night in a café. I discovered that this was to be part of a series called **The Six O'clock Swill**, the brain-child of Mark Westerby, the Fringe Festival director, and Brianne Kerr, well known publicist about town.

The Six O'clock Swill is a new monthly series of one-act plays that begins at the Mighty Mighty café in Cuba Mall at 104 Cuba St on 10 and 11 October. Performances will begin at 6.00 p.m., and entry is \$5.

The three plays and their casts in the October slot are:

- *Cow* by Jo Randerson, with Phil Darkins, Lorraine Ward, Heather O'Carroll, Ben Fransham, Kate Conaglen, Jasmine M'Nijel, Jon Devine and Nathan Green.
- *On Story* by Bill Wrubel, with Ben Fransham, Krista Thomson, Phil Darkins, Walter McGinnis, Daniel Price and Barry Lakeman.
- *Magnum: The Lost Episodes*: with Heather O'Carroll, Phil Darkins, Jennifer Thompson, Thom McGrath, Melissa Billington, Ben Fransham and Walter McGinnis.

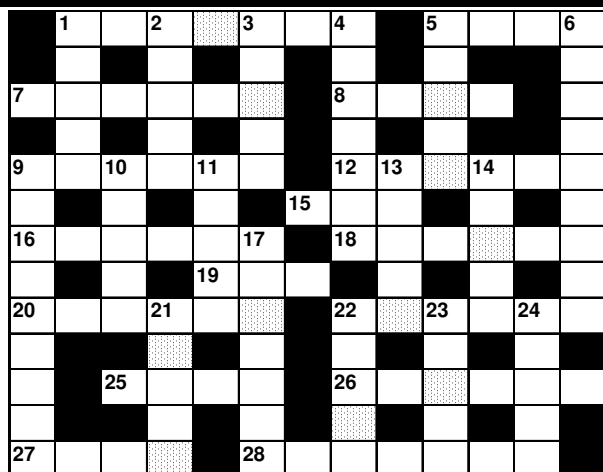
As yet, I don't know what the rule of thumb is for knowing which days they are on each month (though it looks to be the second Wednesday and Thursday of each month).

They are seeking actors, writers, directors and other creative people who are into edgy, interesting and diverse work. If you would like to be involved in upcoming productions, send your expressions of interest to sixoclockswill@gmail.com.

BJL

CROSSWORD

by Barry Lakeman



ACROSS

- 1 Hit Gert about and got closer.
- 5 As Dan's angry, it falls through the hourglass.
- 7 Could be Barker, Corbett, Spector, or nine confused.
- 8 Vehicles hidden in Scarsdale.
- 9 Wait little sister, I hear it's inactivity.
- 12 Wes ran around in reply.
- 15 Short day just before the weekend.
- 16 Hun angry at tail.
- 18 Beat Ed to a pulp, but leads to a formal discussion.
- 19 A little amplification requires a current.
- 20 Get wages of scattered coin. And me!
- 22 For tiny flat, Des bit, chewed.
- 25 Bow due to British finish.
- 26 Speaker to roar wildly.
- 27 Rodents appear when star returns.
- 28 Ray tied can be concerned with eating habits.

DOWN

- 1 Fish model before major defeat.
- 2 Little gentlemen for men only.
- 3 Reset changed vegetation.
- 4 A rich little doctor arranges three kings.
- 5 Villiens change minor references to the South.
- 6 Put off man for cleaning fluid.
- 9 Paper seller lies in state or confusion.
- 10 Wild cat: it is in the roofspace.
- 11 Sorted mails for religion.
- 13 Brother's daughter is pleasant round the end.
- 14 Erodes with lugs.
- 17 Changed when dead men fall about.
- 21 Unlatches door for no writers.
- 22 A thousand in dishevelled robe: it won't work!
- 23 Scattered armada loses a play.
- 24 Key when Rory loses face after four.

The first four across answers might remind you of the title of a play that opens this month at the Gryphon. The shaded squares can be re-arranged to provide the surname of the author.

COURSES AND WORKSHOPS

Screen acting classes by **Miranda Harcourt**. Group classes: 10 participants, master-class. \$45 plus GST. 6.00 to 8.00, week-night, Toi Whakaari. Also one-on-one coaching. \$90 plus GST (and venue cost of \$20 plus GST per hour). Minimum 1-hour. **Contact:** mirandaharcourt@actrix.co.nz or 021 484 776.

ANTOINETTES

The Antoinettes are the Wellington District Theatre Federation's "Oscars" for plays performed between April and September each year. All the plays in the competition are judged by one adjudicator; this year it was Ewen Coleman. Various awards are presented. The usual ones are Best Actor / Actress in Comedy / Drama, Best Production and so on, and there are usually some surprise awards as well. The productions entered in this year's competition are:

Butterfly Creek Theatre Troupe: *A Midsummer Night's Dream* by Shakespeare and *Six Characters in Search of an Author* by Pirandello.

Heretaunga Players: *The Business of Murder* by Richard Harris and *Off the Hook* by Derek Benfield.

Hutt Repertory: *Rattle of a Simple Man* by Charles Dyer. (I thought that *The Countess* by Gregory Murphy was a contender, but it is not in the official list.)

Mana Little Theatre: *Belles* by Mark Dunn and *The French Lieutenant's Woman* adapted by Mark Healey.

New Players Theatre Company: *Take a Chance on Me* by Roger Hall.

Porirua Little Theatre: *Chicago* by Fred Eb and John Kander and *Mothers and Fathers* by Joe Musaphia.

Tawa Community Theatre: *Are You Being Served?* by Jeremy Lloyd & David Croft.

Antoinettes Awards, Saturday 15 September at 7.00 p.m. for 7.30 p.m. at Porirua Little Theatre . Tickets: \$10 from Rose Hudson on 476 3515. BYO.

BJL

DEAD LINES

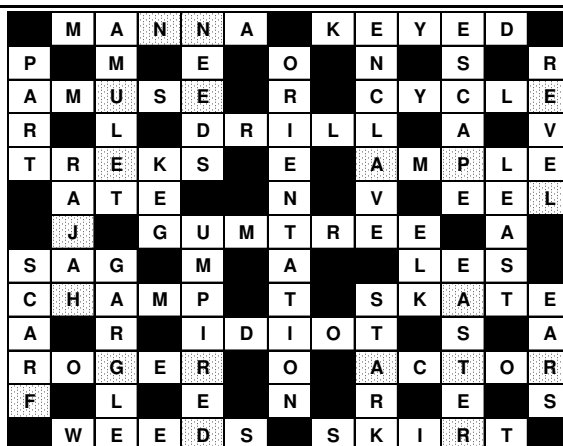
The next round of the Creative Communities NZ Local Funding Scheme closes **28 September**. See www.wellington.govt.nz/services/grants.

Proposals for a season at **BATS theatre** within the Fringe Festival are due on **1 October**. Contact BATS Programme Manager: james@bats.co.nz

15 October is the deadline for registration for Fringe 08: **Information Packs For Fringe 08** are now available, you can have one emailed to you (email them at welcome@fringe.org.nz with Info Pack in the subject line), or collect one from their office.

15 October is also the deadline for **Kakano New Works Funding**. Applications will be available this month.

ANSWER TO LAST MONTH'S CROSSWORD



The first four across answers might remind you of Circa's main production at present. The shaded squares can be rearranged to find the names of the two creators:
PAUL JENDEN and GARETH FARR.