

# PLAYMARKET ANNUAL NEW ZEALAND THEATRE 2016

## THE PLAY IN THE PLAYGROUND

The state of NZ theatre in schools  
and schools in theatres

## STILL YOUNG AND HUNGRY?

Te Rakau, Massive, Pacific  
Underground & Next Big Thing

## NZ YOUTH IN THEATRE WHY I WROTE FOR THEM

Kouka, Betts, Joe, Kightley & Farrell  
Lauren Jackson with Tim Bray

**No 51**  
SPRING 2016

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# DIRECTOR'S WORD

ISSUE *No 51*

Last year's new format annual and its focus on the process of playwriting was very popular. We ran out of copies very quickly. This year we have chosen to explore the place of the New Zealand play in schools; the quality of drama for the young; and focus on four companies working with youth, community and general audiences.

Playmarket has a strong commitment to assisting teachers through providing ongoing advice on the selection of work to study and stage, our biannual Edbulletin, and our playwrights in schools programme run in partnership with the NZ Book Council.

Inside Kate Prior probes the minds of secondary school drama teachers on the place of the play in schools. We cover the legacy of leading practitioners in youth, community and children's theatre practice such as Pacific Underground, Te Rākau Hua o te Wao Tapu and Tim Bray Productions. As well as the work of other companies focusing on youth and children. Also in this edition we continue our 'Why I Wrote the Play I Wrote' feature and the plays covered are some of particular interest to school and youth presentation.

The production calendar is bulging at the margins. It is the largest we have compiled and shows there is a massive amount of NZ work presented onstage and in found spaces throughout the country. Some of this growth is due to the profusion of collaboratively created scripts and in recent years Playmarket has been more involved in this area of theatre-making. Other areas of theatre practice are soon to be part of Playmarket's new remit to create discourse for a wider range of practitioners and we look forward to working on that.

The *Playmarket Annual* continues to celebrate the breadth of New Zealand theatre and, in this edition especially, the breaking of ground for future practice.

The biggest of thanks go to editor Mark Amery who has again commissioned a range of pertinent and thought-provoking articles. My thanks also to the Playmarket staff, in particular Salesi Le'ota for his contributions to this publication. Playmarket is also grateful to First Sovereign Trust Limited for providing funding to assist in the printing of this edition.

**Murray Lynch**

Director, Playmarket



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PLAY AND PLAYWRIGHT

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COVER IMAGE: *Shoulda Woulda Coulda* devised  
by the cast, Auckland Theatre Company Next Big  
Thing 2016. Image: Michael Smith.

PAGE THREE IMAGE: *Dust Pilgrim* by Red Leap  
Theatre. Image: Josh Griggs.



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CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: *Courage – Смелость* adapted by Annie Ruth from *Mother Courage and Her Children* by Bertholt Brecht, Toi Whakaari: NZ Drama School. Image: Philip Merry.

*Pigs on the Run* by Alison Quigan, Troy Tu'ua and the Company, Mangere Arts Centre - Ngā Tohu o Uenuku. Image: Tanya Muagututui'a.

*Hinepau* by Gavin Bishop, devised by the original cast, Capital E National Theatre for Children. Image Stephen A'Court.

*Stag Weekend* by Dan Bain and Brendon Bennetts, Centrepoint Theatre. Image: AH23Photography.com

*Frangipani Perfume* by Makerita Urale, Leeward Community College, USA. Image: Jonathan Reyn.

# Why I Wrote the Play I Wrote

HONE KOUKA

*on The Prophet.*

In 1998 I was in Gisborne on tour with a play I wrote called *Waiora*. While I was there a young whanaunga who was from the area took his own life. He was an exceptional young man being groomed as future leader of our people, and possibly this along with other expectations proved too much for him. My mother was touring with the company and at the young man's tangihanga she said to me, "You have to do something about this, people listen to you."

My response was not immediate. It was well over a year before I started sketching the piece. My thoughts fell on to the idea of a group of teenage Māori cousins coming together a year later for the headstone unveiling of another cousin and how him taking his life affected each of them.

Having rangatahi at the centre gave these young people a voice, a perspective I felt was often dismissed or not even considered in much mainstage New Zealand theatre. I also wanted the work to complete a trilogy of plays about the concept of 'home' – starting with *Waiora* in 1996, *Homefires* in 1998 and finishing it with *The Prophet*.

It quickly became obvious to me that since *Waiora* was about leaving, *Homefires* those who stayed behind, the new work should be about returning.

As I was imagining the work I thought of my own whānau, especially my nephews and nieces. The wild mix of them all connected by whakapapa and how as a whanau we all grew up with a basketball court as a central place of kōrero, growth and togetherness and always a focus for the young. I now had a central setting – the basketball court.

I remembered the conversations I had with my cousins at the local courts, away from the adults and of what was of importance to us. I liked that not everyone played and that it was a place to come together. It was ours.

I began to name the characters after my nephews and nieces and some of my cousins, including some of their traits and idiosyncracies in each character's evolution. I decided on five teenage characters, all cousins with two being brother and sister. I also knew I needed a connector – an adult who could move between both worlds. I created the character of Auntie Kay, the





## NEVER WRITTEN TO HOLD OR GIVE ANSWERS

mother of the young man who took his life. Trusted by the teenagers, but very much part of the adult world.

Setting the play primarily on a basketball court I could use the physicality of this game I knew so well, allowing one character in particular - Matt - to express himself in a physical way and not the more conventional method of dialogue. This came from knowing many young Māori men whose means of expression has a physical base. The scene of the basketball game between cousins Matt and Ty is one of my favourites as a playwright.

The two 'adult' cousins, eldest boy Ty and young mother Maia emerged to balance the physicality, and then there is the thoughtful, poetic and cerebral character of Andrew Beautiful. The last to come was Laura, Matt's sister and holder of the whanau gossip and secrets.

I put the story together over a period of two months and then somehow erased the guts of that draft. I finally wrote a full play in three days. I wrote to a soundtrack of Aotearoa R'n'B, hip hop and electronica, and this combined sound is infused in the vibe of the play.

*The Prophet* had readings, workshops in New York and New Zealand, a development season at Studio 77 at Victoria University and premiered at the 2004 New Zealand International Arts Festival in Wellington, playing at Downstage Theatre. It toured nationally and had its international debut touring the Hawai'iian Islands in 2006. I was fortunate due to tautoko of Artistic Director Carla van Zon to have all three works in the trilogy premiere at the New Zealand International Arts Festival.

Some of my most favourite recollections of the play almost always have teenagers at the core: a performance so fun and raucous at Kamehameha High School in Hawaii the actors could not hear each other; listening to young Māori students making the dialogue their own and watching school audiences cheer for their favourite character in the basketball game.

*The Prophet* was never written to hold or give answers, it is for me a korero of love, hope and, in the baby of eldest cousin Maia it represents the future.

*The Prophet* by Hone Kouka, Taki Rua Productions and NZ International Festival of the Arts, 2004. Image: Robert Catto.



# AUCKLAND

BY ANGELA GREEN

The theatre scene in Auckland continues to show signs of exciting growth, despite the decline in Lotteries grants and subsequent impact on funding. The Auckland Creative Coalition are leading a campaign to lobby government and champion the value of the arts, but it will take the commitment of everyone in the sector to gain traction on this. Keep buying those Lotto tickets eh, folks?

Auckland's strong population growth and diversity means creatives are demanding opportunities to express and see themselves on stage. Organisations throughout Auckland are waking up to the fact that the demographics of audiences and practitioners are changing. Community initiatives such as Mixit and Culture Clash, companies like Massive Company, Prayas, Pretty Asian Theatre and Oryza Foundation are already working effectively in this space, although largely on the fringe. We need more inclusivity across the whole sector to be truly reflective of our city.

The Pop-up Globe occupied the Greys Avenue carpark behind Q, the Town Hall and Basement between February and April and captured the attention of large numbers. A replica of Shakespeare's Globe, and brainchild of Dr Miles Gregory and Tobias Grant, the PUG ran *Romeo and Juliet* and *The Tempest* in a repertory season just shy of three months. Interspersed were short seasons by Auckland University Summer Shakespeare and the return of Fractious Tash's remix of *Titus*, among others. While popular, the programming was conservative and missed an opportunity to present a range of contemporary voices and styles.

Q Theatre's development season 'Q Presents' partnered with the Playground Collective to present the multifaceted, meta-theatrical *All Your Wants and Needs Fulfilled Forever*. Unashamedly millennial, poignant and universal in its themes of alienation, grief and existentialism, *AYWANFF* came to Q after rave reviews from New York's La Mama Theatre and went on to London's Vault Festival.

Also in the programme, Fractious Tash's *Not Psycho* continues Ben Henson, Jason Hodzelmans and company's development in reconfiguring popular culture for theatre: in this instance, Hitchcock-inspired thrillers.

A highlight performance in *Not Psycho* was that of Bryony Skillington. Her solo show *Northern Glow* transformed The Basement bar and studio into a 1980s Northern UK pub and lounge. The audience were invited to Lauren's fifth birthday party, complete with saveloys, cake and fairy bread. It was exciting to see Skillington's comedic skill contrasted with moments of dramatic poignancy.

The Basement continues to build its reputation as the home of original expression from practitioners new and established. Highlights included *Puzzy* by Kiana Rivera (with Victor Rodger). Part of Pride Festival, this was a hilarious tale of a Samoan Jehovah's Witness girl, her friends, her 'aiga and their acceptance (or not) of her sexuality. Alice Canton's *Orangutan* was a fascinating study in physical transformation with some gentle audience interaction. Canton played a captive orangutan struggling with its new life away from the jungle. Devastating, and charming.





## WE NEED MORE INCLUSIVITY

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP

LEFT: *Mall Dreams* by Northland Youth Theatre. Image: Chris Schreuder.

*The Sign* by M. Villanueva, Legacy Project, Auckland Pride Festival. Image: Kasia Marcisz.

*Not Psycho* by Fractious Tash and Q Theatre. Image: Fractious Tash.

*One Day Moko* by Tim Carlsen, Portable Union. Image: Andi Crown Photography.

*That Bloody Woman* by Luke Di Somma and Gregory Cooper, Auckland Theatre Company. Image: Michael Smith.

*Polo* by Dean Parker, Auckland Theatre Company. Image: Michael Smith.

*Dexter's Amazing African Adventure* by Darlene Mohekey and Jess Sayer, TAPAC and Blue Baths. Image: Andi Crown Photography.

*Potato Stamp Megalomaniac* by Andrew Gunn, Pressure Point Collective. Image: Connor Strati.

PREVIOUS PAGE: *Hudson and Halls Live!* by Kip Chapman with Todd Emerson and Sophie Roberts, Silo Theatre. Image: Josh Griggs.

Taking the audience on a remarkable journey of a more esoteric kind, *The Potato Stamp Megalomaniac* was a mind-bending take on an experience of mental illness. *Dido and Aeneas* was the first outing for Unstuck Opera, presenting what I hope is an ongoing mission to subvert the traditional opera experience. *If There's Not Dancing at the Revolution, I'm Not Coming...* featured Julia Croft literally peeling off the layers of the feminine archetypes as a sharp commentary on women's portrayal in popular culture.

The opening of Auckland Theatre Company's brand new theatre on the Waterfront in October represents a huge moment in the company's history. ATC's recent season highlights included Michael Hurst's bold interpretation of Aristophanes' *Lysistrata* at Q, featuring striking composition/sound design by John Gibson. At Māngere Arts Centre, Grace Taylor's *My Own Darling* was a late night urban love song to South Auckland, integrating Taylor's poetry and performance, and a great supporting cast of character actors. Court co-production and new NZ musical by Luke Di Somma and Gregory Cooper about Kate Sheppard, *That Bloody Woman*, was a riot of punk patriotism and lady power. Go Kate. The ATC season also included established NZ playwrights' new work: the premiere of Dean Parker's *Polo* and Roger Hall's *You Can Always Hand Them Back*.

Sophie Robert's first season at the helm of Silo Theatre was triumphantly capped by a collaboration with Kip Chapman and Todd Emerson: the immersive Hudson and Halls. We played a live TV audience for a (disastrous) Christmas special, complete with turkey and tonnes of booze, prepared and cooked in real time by Emerson and Chris Parker. Dripping with nostalgia like a maraschino cherry in a tinned fruit salad. The fantastic *The Book of Everything* also had a welcome return season before touring the country.

The team at Te Pou theatre continued building a strong kaupapa and performances by, for and with Māori practitioners. Regan Taylor's *SolOthello*, Jamie McCaskill's *Moa Show*, Te Rēhia's production of Albert Belz's *Yours Truly*, Victor Rodger's play reading series F.C.C and the Rangatahi emerging practitioners programme all found a home there.

Auckland Arts Festival had a strong line-up of New Zealand work including Theatre Stampede and Nightsong Production's *Te Pō* by Carl Bland, co-commissioned with the NZ Festival, and the world premiere of The Conch's *Marama*. As a programme manager at the Festival, I am unable to comment here but direct you to the many reviews of these works online.

# REASONS TO BE CHEERFUL

*Abby Howells on the dubious benefits of performing theatre in schools.*

Almost as long as there have been schools, there have been young people forced to participate in theatrical performances, from Shakespeare competitions to using theatre to explain the digestive system. There are lots of reasons why theatre in schools is important, but here are just a handful.

## 1. IMAGINATIONS ARE UNLEASHED

Unlocking a child's imagination can be achieved in many different ways but one of the least talked about is through black pants paired with a white top.

Black pants and white top are a staple of any high school performance. Everyone has a pair of black pants and a white top. And if you don't, The Warehouse has a very good selection at a reasonable price, and you could probably make it there and back before the end of lunch but you need to leave NOW.

Black pants and a white top is pure magic. The school wardrobe mistress/classics teacher just needs to add a waistcoat and - boom - you're in 1930s New York. A statement scarf (placed somewhere on your person for a funky splash of colour) can transform students into the fairies of *A Midsummer's Nights Dream* or guests at a 1960s discotheque.

## 2. CONSCIOUSNESSES AWOKEN

Schools typically choose to stage older shows such as *Oklahoma*, *The Boy Friend* and *Guys and Dolls*. A lot of people believe that this is because the rights are cheap and available, but this is actually not the case.

Teachers choose old-fashioned shows so that their students can start to think critically about social issues. Here is an example:

It is mandatory for all school children to perform in the musical *Grease*. *Grease* tells the story of two high school lovers, Danny and Sandy who find it difficult to be together because of their different social statuses and interests. Danny is cool. He likes car racing and combing his hair. Sandy likes bobby socks and singing about how lonely she is. How will it ever work? Sandy comes up with a solution. At the climax of the musical she decides to get a make over and fundamentally change her personality. She smokes! She wears leather pants! No socks to speak of! And it works! The chorus sing and dance - she has conformed at last - it is a happy ending.

The primary reason that schools choose to stage *Grease* is so that kids will begin to engage with the wider social implications of what this ending means. Why is Sandy

## A PAIR OF BLACK PANTS AND A WHITE TOP IS PURE MAGIC



the one who had to change? Will putting on leather pants solve all of my problems? Why do people like her now she has become sexualized? By the end of 'We Go Together' a new generation of feminists has been born. And someone has probably gone out and bought some leather pants.

### 3. COMMUNICATION IS KEY

Many students are given the opportunity to perform Shakespeare, thanks to Sheilah Winn. Adults who volunteer to watch often notice that angry shouting is a key part of many of these performances. This is a deliberate choice.

Students performing Shakespeare are told to yell as much as possible. If it is conceivable for a line to be shouted (and even if it is not) then the line must be shouted and shouted angrily. Anger is key. All this shouting soon becomes tiresome and students begin to look for more effective ways of communicating their issues. After all, a lot of these Shakespeare characters seem to end up dead.

### 4. THERE ARE NO SMALL PARTS

There are no small parts, only parts created by teachers so that everyone can get their name in the programme.

### 5. GENDER IS A CONSTRUCT

Attention is called to the performative nature of gender through the use of casting, particularly in single sex schools. This is done on purpose. Students are encouraged to take on roles of the opposite gender in order to explore the limitations and stereotypes that come with each. This leads to wider thinking about gender roles, gender fluidity and gender as a spectrum.

Cross casting also serves the dual purpose of showing the inequality of roles for women vs. the roles for men. Girls who take on roles traditionally played by men are astounded at how many lines they have, the complexity of their characters and the fact that they even have jokes! Boys taking on parts traditionally played by women are frustrated at how few lines they have to say and how little cool fighting they get to do. Again, feminists are born.

Theatre in schools has a huge amount of benefits - suffice to say that as long as there are black pants and white tops available at The Warehouse at a reasonable price, there should be theatre in schools.

ABOVE: *Beards! Beards! Beards!* by Ralph McCubbin  
Howell, Trick of the Light Theatre. Image: Stephen A'Court.



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## WHERE NZ PLAYS GET THEIR WINGS



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1 KENT TCE, WELLINGTON



# RESPECT THE WORK

*Stephen Blackburn on treating theatre for children with respect.*

In recent years major theatre companies in New Zealand have declared an interest in young audiences. But a number have often articulated this as part of a need for their organisation to engage in 'audience development activity'.

This suggests an audience in the making, of the future, not of the here and now. As a consequence resources allocated are often light, and the commitment to quality is, in some cases non-existent. A by-product is the promotion of the idea amongst theatre practitioners that theatre for children is something you do in the school holidays. As an opportunity for emerging practitioners before - you know - they can be trusted with the grown up work.

On top of this, we add insult to injury by inflicting the audience with derivative fairy tales or didactic educational message work. At best it may offer a candy-floss like experience, a momentary sugar rush, then nothing. At worst it puts them off the theatre

for life. Any audience, of any age deserves better.

When attending the fantastic theatrical work *White* by Scottish company Catherine Wheels in 2012 (I was Creative Producer at Capital E National Theatre for Children at the time), I was approached by a senior Creative New Zealand staff member who asked me: "why don't we make work like this here?". My response: that would require a sector-wide change in attitudes to children as an audience.

*White* had senior actors performing the work, and was designed by one of Scotland's best scenographers. It was produced by a company funded well enough to be able to segment its target audience to as precise a range as 2 to 4 years of age, with a maximum audience of 30 and still be economically viable to deliver.

Most actors in this country have it bred into them that children's shows are fillers while you wait for the real work. I see this even in



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the bios in programmes: often an actor will mention a main theatre show they may have had a small role in but not mention their lead role in a children's theatre piece, even when it has toured internationally. True also of designers. Why? Because the sector doesn't truly respect the work.

If this attitude changed, committed practitioners would need to be accompanied by a level of funding that understands that the best way to engage the young is not necessarily through the same delivery mechanisms as mainstream theatre. Smaller, more intimate experiences that are very specifically age appropriate are the best way to engage the very young, particularly.

As we live in a country that requires state subsidy for most things (not just the arts - just look at the energy sector or even the banks) maybe we should start by looking for the signals of importance placed on young audience there? The bulk of funding goes to the 'high end' arts with less than 3% of the total Creative New Zealand budget going to arts for children (those under 15). Children make up nearly 21% of the population according to 2013 census figures.

Sport organisations in New Zealand see it differently. They know that the more they fund early in a person's life - to give them access cheaply to a variety of sports and facilities - then the less they have to fund later, and the better the professional results. They know that the child provided with opportunities could be the next elite sports person or, at the very least, a dedicated follower of the sport, willing to part with their future disposable income to watch the elite sportspeople - thus reducing the need for subsidy for the elite sports event.

But it starts before funding. Why should there be funding for something the sector only pays lip service to the need for? We need to examine our entrenched thinking before anything meaningful can change.

On a positive note, I would like to point out that, despite this climate, the work created for



## THE SECTOR DOESN'T TRULY RESPECT THE WORK

young audiences is improving, particularly over the past decade, but from mainly independent theatre companies. More adventurous works, more challenging works, more engaging works that live in the memories of the audience long after the performance has concluded. An example is pictured: *The Bookbinder* from Trick of the Light.

But they remain the exception. Some of the cynics in our sector might say that this is true of all theatre in this country. But the works targeting older audiences have at least been born out of a desire to achieve those things for their audiences. Often children's theatre in New Zealand doesn't even start from this point. It does a disservice to all, particularly to the audience and our artform.

This has been a hard piece to write. One doesn't want to sound too pessimistic or too critical, but equally one doesn't want to praise unnecessarily - that road leads to no innovation or growth in the arts.

ABOVE: *The Bookbinder* by Ralph McCubbin Howell, Trick of the Light Theatre. Image: Philip Merry.

# THE PLAY IN THE PLAYGROUND

*Kate Prior on theatre writing and the New Zealand play in schools.*





“At 16, to be handed a play that says ‘Hamlet was insufferable, Horatio boring, history incomplete or just plain invented, and all these things you might be starting to suspect are just a little bit unfair are 100% definitely, unequivocally real’ is such a validating, valuable, victorious thing”.

Wellington comedian Saran Goldie-Anderson wrote this note in a review for a recent production of *Ophelia Thinks Harder*, Jean Betts’ touchstone play which Saran discovered at secondary school in 2005.

Nine years earlier, age 14 I first discovered the play. I think it was the first New Zealand play I’d ever read – the first I really got my head into and wrangled with the ideas and language. Reading that play not only unearthed questions that were beginning to trickle in about social structures, but questions about art – what as a theatre maker you’re able to do with text, and hell, the fact you’re allowed to set a bomb under the classics.

1996, 2005 and now 2016: *Ophelia Thinks Harder* has endured. In the last two years alone it has been performed at over 10 secondary schools, studied and performed as part of the New Zealand drama curriculum. So if Saran and I were taking drama in 2016, how different would the landscape be? What exposure do students of all ages, primary and secondary, get to the New Zealand play, and as creators what tools are they offered in playwriting and devising themselves?

The New Zealand play in the secondary school drama curriculum has recently gained increased visibility. In the last several years, following a push from teachers, the amount of playwrights and plays on the prescribed list for NCEA assessment has increased. Now 50% of the list of 35 playwrights (from Euripides to Renée) are from New Zealand. Feilding High School drama teacher Karla Haronga, who started at her school in 1999 remembers, “once we got into the 2000s, New Zealand plays really came into their own”.

There was a time when this list of plays didn’t even exist. It emerged in the 1980s and even then the list was heavily Eurocentric. In 1976, teacher and playwright Susan Battye, then based in the West Coast, recognised that there was nothing in the curriculum in general, let alone the drama curriculum that reflected local histories. So she created a play about the Brunner Mine disaster, New Zealand’s worst. Since then, in various teaching posts, Susan has created over 20 plays which reflect New Zealand stories.

Teachers writing plays for their students is still often a solution for many who want to speak locally to their immediate

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## HUMILITY, EMPATHY, AND THE ABILITY TO ACCEPT DIFFERENCE

LEFT: *Remain in Light* by  
Stephen Sinclair, Aotea College,  
Wellington. Image: Matt Grace.



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## PRIMARY STUDENTS ARE ABLE TO EXPRESS THEIR OWN FEELINGS, WANTS AND NEEDS

community and need to fulfill that all-important criterion of productions in schools: a large cast with reasonably substantial roles for each student. Amongst their many other benefits, this is one practical reason behind the popularity of certain plays for performance in schools.

So what are those solid gold secondary school hits? It's not in fact Betts' *Ophelia Thinks Harder* but her anarchic feminist fantasia *Revenge of the Amazons* that Playmarket licensed the most in the last year, followed hot on its heels by Nigel Collins, Toby Leach and Damon Andrew's underdog farce *Wheeler's Luck*, Fiona Farrell's *Chook Chook* and Oscar Kightley and Dave Armstrong's *Niu Sila*.

Beyond production practicalities, the positioning of the New Zealand play within the curriculum is hugely valuable as a cultural, social and historical teaching tool. Betts' work offers opportunity for exploration into feminist perspectives. Plays such as *Niu Sila* cover territories of New Zealand history (such as the 1970s dawn raids) which aren't necessarily covered in the History curriculum. Haronga believes New Zealand plays are some of the best records of our history and has used Mervyn Thompson's *Children of the Poor* as a tool to discuss contemporary approaches to immigration and concepts of nationalism.

In their book *Drama at the Heart of Secondary School* John Rainer and Martin Lewis state, "Drama can act as a crucible within which human actions and the consequences of those actions can be examined". In this sense it's the form of the

ABOVE: *Whakaahuatua Mai* by Kahu Hotere, Taki Rua Productions Te Reo Māori Season 2016. Image: Phillip Merry.

playscript that inherently makes history accessible: a student potentially gains not just conceptual but also embodied understanding of a subject. Drama teachers commonly report complex discussions occurring in their classes; the kind of discussions which can only derive from society.

In New Zealand, the first steps towards theatre making will often be explored early at primary school. Charles Bisley, a primary teacher at Kelburn Normal School notes that as developmentally appropriate, he will work with children on creating their own work, which offers skills in the aesthetic and social dimensions of learning, as well as developing the lifelong learner. A primary teacher at Hataitai School, Jennifer Kim integrates drama learning into literacy, and recognises drama as an avenue in which primary students are able to express their own feelings, wants and needs.

The New Zealand play provides not only a bridge extending into the past but into other cultures. Plays such as Briar Grace-Smith's *When Sun and Moon Collide* and Hone Kouka's *Waiora* or *Mauri Tu* - both containing worlds in which Pākehā and tangata whenua connect - offer invaluable opportunity for embedded bicultural practice.

Iana Grace, a performer in Auckland Theatre Company's Next Big Thing season this year remembers the first New Zealand play she read - Hone Kouka's *The Prophet*. "I always thought it was an interesting choice for our painfully white North Shore high school considering its heavy Māori themes, with me being the "most brown" in the class as the whitest half-Samoan you'll ever meet. The play had a strong theme of displacement and the effect of urbanisation on young Māori people. It was a very different story for our class - not the usual culture we hear about in history".

The New Zealand play is utilised to explore very local community issues too. Haronga

## AN INTERNATIONAL PERSPECTIVE

In 2014 I had the opportunity to attend Berlinale Generation with a short film. This section of the Berlin Film Festival is curated by Kiwi Berliner Maryanne Redpath with young audiences in mind. Every screening is packed to the gunnels with school-age kids, all there to watch short films from Auckland to Istanbul. It feels like an essential part of the Berlinale.

It made clear for me the position of children and young people in the arts in Germany. What is true for film is perhaps even more so for theatre. Theatre is not luxury but lifeblood in Germany. In 1989 in Frankfurt, Kinder- und Jugendtheaterzentrum (the Children and Young People's Theatre Centre) was established, an organisation dedicated to the development of theatre for children and young people as art (not as provision, but as art), and the participation of all young people in the performing arts.

Deputy director at KJTZ, Henning Fangauf was part of establishing a program which connects performing arts and educational processes. The program is two-pronged; one section brings playwrights into theatres to create work for young people, the second, entitled TAtSch(Theatre Authors take to Schools) brings playwrights into schools. Fangauf explains that this involves playwrights and schools agreeing on a one-year sponsorship. "The authors come into the schools, work with students in writing workshops, do play readings and jointly create a play" he notes.

This programme is not only for students taking drama as a subject, it is for all students. A playwright will be assigned to a classroom with the primary aim of creating a piece of theatre with students. It's a program consistent with a festival like Berlinale Generation - treating the arts not as domain of the elite few but established early in life as democratic necessity for all.



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## TEACHERS COMMONLY REPORT COMPLEX DISCUSSIONS OCCURRING

was about to mount Miranda Harcourt and William Brandt's *Verbatim* with her Year 12 class when the devastating Scott Guy murder hit the Fielding community.

"I asked the kids if they still wanted to do it" Haronga remembers, "they said yes, let's do it because it's a conversation with the community. They thought it was good to have that discussion. There was a lot of respect for that play because it's real people".

In the same vein, this year Kerry Lynch, a drama teacher at Otahuhu College, and his class mounted a production of Aroha Awarau's *Officer 27*, which focuses on the police shooting of Halatau Naitoko in 2009. Halatau's younger brother William performed in the play - a project deeply connected to the school community. Pierre Allan, William's class member interviewed for Māori TV's *Native Affairs* said, "When I performed today I was trying to give all my best, because he deserves it. It's kinda like paying tribute to him".

When it comes to students creating their own work, both devising processes and single-authored script writing is covered in Year 11-13. However drama teachers will often utilise the tools of devising as an access point to script writing. Many teachers lean towards devising for several reasons. Often it's where the teacher will feel strongest in their own knowledge, but it's also due to the immediate necessity of getting students up on their feet and working with physicality and space, before getting bogged down in paralysing notions of 'what I want to say' or a predilection for excessive dialogue. By Year 13, the option of working with a collective or singular voice will often be chosen by the student themselves, and teachers acknowledge that students learn pretty early on where they thrive.

As a formally assessed subject, devising in the dedicated drama classroom begins in Year 9 and 10. A drama teacher to this age group at Logan Park High School, Christine Colbert and her colleagues were keen to shake up the prevalence of Shakespeare

ABOVE: *Ophelia Thinks Harder* by Jean Betts, Avonside Girls' High School, Christchurch. Image: Annette Thomson.



and include more devising around New Zealand stories in their programs, so initiated a unit in which students created devised work inspired by the stories and the space within exhibitions in the Toitū Otago Settlers Museum in Dunedin. The very act of finding their own voice regarding New Zealand stories gave the students energy for the work, plus “this age group are boisterous”, Christine notes, “they’ll give anything a go”.

Tama Smith, drama teacher at Hutt Valley High School, has developed a solid devising programme over 10 years of NCEA experience, but still acknowledges that devising is one of the hardest units to ‘teach’ - understandable when so much of this work is less about hard-and-fast rules and more about refining instincts.

That said, in a world in which ‘creativity’ has become an aspirational norm in the workplace, devising offers the kind of life skills that should be the most valued in an educational context. Humility, empathy, and the ability to accept difference are just some of the benefits for students learning to work in creative collaborations. So too are listening and negotiating in a group and recognising each other’s strengths. In one of Karla Haronga’s classes the question arose, ‘why is it important to get to know people?’ A student answered, ‘because you get to know what they’re good at’.

Despite single-author playwriting commonly being less of a teaching focus, there are still students who lean towards it, and in this case, it is common for the New Zealand play the students may already be studying to be referred to as an exemplar. The impact of media studies and our increasingly media saturated world on the drama classroom is perhaps more prevalent in 2016 than it would have been in 1996. Drama students who take media subjects already come with knowledge of scriptwriting structuring formulae and online writing software such as Celtx. Often these will be the drama students more interested in writing their own scripts. They

## THE CURRICULUM AND NCEA

Kim Bonnington, Secondary Curriculum Learning Facilitator at University of Otago College of Education believes the arts curriculum (covering year 1 through to 13) is world-class.

As she explains, the arts curriculum is not prescriptive but in fact extremely open; a teacher has the freedom to build the curriculum around the interests of students and needs of the community - drawing on as much local content as they would like. The aspirational statement in the curriculum notes: “by means of the drama that they create and perform, students reflect and enrich the cultural life of their schools, whanau and communities”.

To aid teachers, NZQA publishes online a comprehensive resource of NCEA assessment tools which contain more detailed information regarding assessment. This is where one can find the list of prescribed plays.

The assessment tools can be a double-edged sword – hugely valuable they also present a slight risk; for an extremely busy or perhaps newly-trained teacher tasked with creating programmes for a variety of age groups and battling covering off requisite NCEA credits the tools often become a ‘default curriculum’.

Instead of focusing on assessments and then considering what they will teach Bonnington encourages drama teachers to explore what they’d like to teach and then structure assessments around this. As John Rainer and Martin Lewis acknowledge, ‘we should be assessing what is of value rather than valuing what is assessed’. It’s an approach Feilding High School drama teacher Karla Haronga acknowledges is definitely trickier but more rewarding in the long-term. “It’s not about the curriculum” she says, “it’s what the teacher makes of it”.

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especially appreciate the freedom - outside screen conventions - which thinking theatrically offers.

In her 22 years at Epsom Girls Grammar Susan Battye was interested in exactly this - encouraging the individual playwright to untie their thinking from a television drama sticking place and take into account the theatre space. Always leaning towards playwriting over devising, she was aware that it was the less popular taught unit at the time, however Battye was more interested in “giving the individual the opportunity to express themselves unfettered, but with guidance”.

Common to both devising and playwriting processes in the drama classroom is a constant cycle of feedback and refining. Peer feedback in this context is valued just as much as teacher and self-assessment. Even if her Year 13 students are working on scripts of their own, St Kentigern College’s drama teacher Emma Bishop builds in a weekly check-in and script reads with fellow drama class members.

For the first time this year, Peter Rutherford will be teaching a playwriting unit with his students at Rangī Ruru Girls’ School and is interested to find how this develops. Peter is keen to bring playwrights into the room such as Philip Braithwaite, and fingers crossed, Fiona Farrell, acknowledging that talking with real flesh-and-blood playwrights is a rich opportunity for students. And for teachers too - several teachers noted that connecting with playwrights offers great professional development opportunities and they’d be really interested to see this as a potential growth area. “In the last five years I’ve seen more connection between teachers and playwrights”, Emma Bishop states. “Playwrights are interested in what teachers are teaching”.

In an institutional educational environment that categorises learning, the drama classroom has the potential to draw together disparate threads and subvert traditional hierarchical structures. The NZ play is experiencing unprecedented health in secondary schools. Its study and performance provide opportunity - alongside playwriting and devising - for students to gain trust and confidence in their own ideas and explore a range of concepts covered throughout the curriculum. They do so in an environment in which human action and its consequence is the vital area of enquiry.




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## IT'S WHAT THE TEACHER MAKES OF IT

ABOVE: *How the Kiwibird  
Lost Its Wings* by Daya  
Czepanski, The Hawkins Youth  
Theatre Company and The  
Hawkins Silver Stage Company.  
Image: Mina Sabour.



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# MORE GREAT PLAYS FOR THE YOUNG

After speaking with a range of drama teachers I'm convinced their knowledge of the New Zealand canon rivals our top critics. So, aside from those tried and true popular schools plays, what are some other rich plays for education?

Hutt Valley High School teacher Tama Smith rattles off an array of favourites he has worked on with students: Simon O'Connor's *Illustrated Death of Eddie Fivetrees*, Maurice Shadbolt's *Once on Chunuk Bair*, Michelanne Forster's *Daughters of Heaven*, and Duncan Sarkies' *Bystander and Lovepuke*.

Karla Haronga at Fielding High School would love Jamie McCaskill's *Manawa* to be studied more widely. Kim Bonnington loves the physicality that Pip Hall's *Shudder* inspires in students. Toa Fraser's *Bare* is one of the most popular plays in schools. Emma Bishop at St Kentigern College enjoys it as a real snapshot of New Zealand.

Playmarket consistently utilise their Plays for the Young competition as a way to access and promote new plays. Jean Betts instigated the competition while at Playmarket in 2009.

Both Claire Ahuriri's *Spilt Milk* and Steph Matuku's *A Story of Rona* came through the competition, and both are published in Playmarket's anthology *Stage Adventures: Eight Classroom Plays*. This is a great resource for plays for the primary school classroom. *A Story of Rona* is one of primary teacher Charles Bisley's favourites, as well as *Sapai and the Yam Snatchers* (Michelanne Forster and Leilani Unasa) and Dave Armstrong and Gareth Farr's *Kia Ora Khalid*. Other Playmarket favourites for performance in schools include Kevin Keys' *Desperate Antics*, Jo Randerson's *Fold*, Kerry Lynch's *Dream Seer*, Carl Nixon's adaptation of Lloyd Jones' *Book of Fame* and Lauren Jackson's



## RICH PLAYS FOR EDUCATION

*Polly Hood in Mumuland*. A key playwright for the young is Sarah Delahunty with a great favourite *2B or not 2B* (which has been published by Playmarket).

And just because plays are popular doesn't mean they can't be given given fresh and surprising new interpretations. When Whangarei Boys' High drama teacher Fiona Churcher offered several production options to her students, they collectively chose to mount an all-male version of *Revenge of the Amazons*. She worked with the cast to really explore the feminist issues within and found no resistance around these concepts, more a real interest to engage in ideas not previously considered. Here's to the Whangarei feminists of the future!

ABOVE: *Bloody Hell Jesus (Get Your Own Friends)* by Lucy Craig, Young and Hungry, BATs. Image: Stephen A'Court.



# WELLINGTON

BY LORI LEIGH

Wellington theatre has had a year marked by festivals, remounts, and touring productions. In fact, I've struggled to find works that did not fit into one of these three categories, but more on that later.

November brought to Wellington the inaugural Short and Sweet Festival of 10-minute works that has been held annually in Auckland since 2009. In its inception year in Wellington, *Opening Night*, directed by Stella Reid, won the overall award (Judge's Choice). Other notable works included: *The Oresteia* (directed by Samuel Phillips), *My Accomplice's The Decalogue*, and *Last Meals* written by Keely Meechan.

*Last Meals*, which chronicles the final meals of female prisoners, had a full production in the Fringe where it was runner-up for several awards. The play was notable for the abundance of female roles; something we absolutely don't see enough of in New Zealand theatre. Other highlights from the Fringe: *I am... Tasha Fierce* (Rose Kirkup), *Castles* (House of Sand), *Perhaps, Perhaps...* Quizás (Gabriela Muñoz), *Awkward Threesome* (Jennifer O'Sullivan and Matt Powell), *My Dead Best Friend* (Anya Tate-Manning and Isobel MacKinnon) and *The Offensive Nipple Show* (Pat-A-Cake with Jess Holly Bates). Again, it's nice to see women front lining, and it's my hope that producing, publishing, and funding bodies will finally take note.

The biennial New Zealand Festival was also this year, but seemingly the works in the Fringe outshone those in the Festival. Local works in the Festival were undercooked and in need of further development. Some exceptions include Carl Bland's outstanding new play *Tē Pō* and

the brilliant and moving remounted *Not in Our Neighborhood* by Jamie McCaskill.

The most impressive festival this year was Kia Mau. Billed as "a spellbinding festival of theatre and dance from Māori artists", the Kia Mau Festival presented many strong works from eight different companies across three different venues (BATS, Circa, and Te Papa). Miria George's thought-provoking new play, *The Vultures* made its debut at BATS as well as Rob Mokaraka's *Shot Bro — Confessions of a Depressed Bullet* (directed by Erina Daniels). I was lucky enough to see *Shot Bro* in development and found it one of the most successful depictions of depression I have ever seen: honest, raw, and strangely uplifting. Enjoying standing ovations and a sold-out season at Circa, *Mana Wahine* was a testament to the talent and productivity in New Zealand dance theatre.

BATS, now in its second year at the beautiful fresh facilities at 1 Kent Terrace, is still in the midst of establishing itself in the old/new home. Programme Manager and Co-General Manager Cherie Jacobson who saw BATS through the transition from off-site to home left at the end of March and Heather O'Carroll arrived. (BATS also got a flashy new website this year). As always, BATS has been the centre of Wellington's best emerging talent, including *My Dad's Boy* by Finnius Teppett, directed by Ryan Knighton.

Circa celebrates its 40th birthday this year and much of its programming was inspired by this anniversary. What has proven most successful has been the opening of its doors to new companies and works. Closing out 2015, *All Our Sons* by Witi Ihimaera in







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## THE MOST IMPRESSIVE FESTIVAL THIS YEAR WAS KIA MAU



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT:  
*The Woman Who Forgot* by  
Rachel Davies, created with  
Jess Feast, Storybox, NZ Festival.  
Image: Matt Grace.

*The Travelling Squirrel* by  
Robert Lord, Circa Theatre.  
Image: Stephen A'Court.

*The Trickle Down Effect*  
devised by Pat-A-Cake  
Productions, NZ Fringe Festival.  
Image: Stella Reid.

*Home* by Freya Desmarais, BATS.  
Image: Pip aka Phillipa Clark.

*The Devil's Half Acre* by  
Ralph McCubbin Howell,  
Trick of the Light Theatre.  
Image: Matt Grace.

*A Child's Christmas in Wales  
and Other Stories* by Dylan  
Thomas, dramatised by Ray  
Henwood, Circa Theatre.  
Image: Stephen A'Court.

THIS PAGE: *The Vultures*  
by Miria George, Tawata  
Productions. Image:  
Aneta Pond.

PREVIOUS PAGE: *Te Pō*  
by Carl Bland, Theatre Stampede  
and Nightsong Productions, NZ  
Festival, Auckland Arts Festival.  
Image: Matt Grace.

the main space was a theatrical tour-de-force, securing the production almost every major Wellington Theatre Award. In 2016, the second space of Circa has been at the forefront with devised works such as *Jekyll and Hyde* by A Slightly Isolated Dog, a sequel of sorts to last year's *Don Juan*, children's theatre such as *Grimm Bedtime Stories* by Playshop Performance Company, and the sell-out *La Casa Azul*, inspired by the writings of Frida Kahlo, directed by Lyndee-Jane Rutherford with a standout performance by Kali Kopae.

It's sad to say that the Hannah Playhouse is still routinely unoccupied, though Capital E has been making good use of the space. In June the Hannah hosted the Conch's *The White Guitar*, one of the best pieces of theatre I've seen this year.

In last year's *Playmarket Annual* Hannah Banks mentioned "the crushing defeat of not getting funded again", the "exodus" for Auckland, and practitioners stuck between BATS and Circa. It saddens me to see the city I love losing its place as cultural capital. Wellington is overflowing with some of the most masterful and gifted practitioners I have ever worked with or witnessed; it is home to Toi Whakaari and Victoria University of Wellington's Theatre Programme, two high calibre training institutions which draw some of the best talent to our city.

So what to do? Celebrate, cultivate, and support Wellington work and artists. In case I am not being clear: I am talking about women, youth, and our mid-career practitioners that have no home. I am talking about our audiences and how we need to be able to appeal to a wider demographic by representing their stories and bodies on our stages. And in case I am still not clear, I am talking to you.

# Why I Wrote the Play I Wrote

NATHAN JOE

*on Like Sex.*

*The girl with a reputation for sleeping around.*

*The boy you almost never see in class.*

*The mean girl who embraces being a bitch.*

*The popular guy who might not be as nice as he thinks he is.*

*The wallflower in love with the guy she barely knows.*

*The gay kid in love with their best friend.*

*The geek who just wants to play videogames.*

Who are these people? You'll call them stereotypes or strangers. But they are you. They are you before you left high school. They are you before you did that massive life-changing OE. They are you before you moved out of home and started paying rent. They are you before you got that job you said you'd never do. They are you before you got married. You, your friends, your children.

Based on the structure of Arthur Schnitzler's *La Ronde*, *Like Sex* takes seven teenagers and throws them into a daisy chain of love and sex. Couples flirt, fight and fuck their way through interlocking scenes. When I was commissioned to write the play by Young and Hungry in 2015 I didn't really know what I was doing. All I knew was that I wanted to

update *La Ronde* for teenagers, a *Spring Awakening* for today.

The play's working title *Dance of Flesh* seems more than a little inappropriate in retrospect: too pretentious, too European, better suited to something by Ingmar Bergman or August Strindberg maybe. Hardly reflective of a play about high school teenagers. If the current title *Like Sex* seems glib, I guess that's the point. Sex, for all the seriousness we give it is equally made out like a joke, the punchline of every teen comedy. Though sex induces laughter and giggles in most teenagers, it also makes them feel achingly vulnerable. The problem is they don't want to admit that. No teenager wants to appear weak in front of his or her peers or condescended to by adults. So while sex education is invaluable at explaining the essentials (pregnancy, STIs, condoms) you can't teach people the inner-workings of the human heart. Emotional intelligence isn't taught in classrooms, it's gained through experience and reflection.

Looking back and talking to old friends, I realised just how fraught those years were. I realised how those deeply complicated emotions stick with you, as much as you want to shrug them off. Teenagers are forced to deal with feelings they are never quite ready for: sex being one of the very first adult

choices they ever have to make. They're simultaneously told they're almost adults and that they're still only children. And let's not forget the impending NCEA exams to top it all off. Often all they have to turn to is film and television for advice, which is usually over-saturated with content telling them how they should be rather than reflecting how they actually are.

If Schnitzler's original, published in 1900, was an examination of class, showing audiences that sex was the greatest social equaliser, whether you were a doctor, poet or maid, I wanted to show that teenagers don't need to be portrayed as alien, as mysterious or unfathomable creatures. Theatre can't replace real-world experience, but it seems significant that a story about everyday teenagers should come to life on stage. No Hollywood bodies, no photoshopping, just living, breathing human beings right in front of you. In a time where sex can be found between the pages of newspapers, on television, our laptops and phones, where people are reduced to profiles and objects, theatre is a potent reminder that we're flesh and blood.

It's a fine line walking the tight-rope between preachiness and acceptance though. If I ever have kids, I don't know what I'll do, how I'll talk to them, how I'll protect them without over-sheltering them. Luckily this is not a cautionary tale about the dangers of sex.

It's not meant to be didactic or instructive.

*Like Sex* isn't a one size fits all condom.

The vastness of people's experiences are too immense to cover in a single play. *Like Sex* is simply a snapshot of seven young people on the cusp of adulthood, attempting to deal with the complications that come with love and sex.

There's this quote by Jack Kerouac from *On the Road* (bear with me): "Boys and girls in America have such a sad time together; sophistication demands that they submit to sex immediately without proper preliminary talk. Not courting talk — real straight talk about souls, for life is holy and every



## LIKE SEX ISN'T A ONE SIZE FITS ALL CONDOM

moment is precious." Replace America with New Zealand, and you've got a perfect encapsulation of the central idea running through *Like Sex*. The fact that the modern world is rife with pornography, dating apps and social media hasn't really changed the fundamentals of how we behave or who we are. If anything, they make things clearer.

We're all searching for connection, teenagers and adults alike. Sex is easy. But intimacy? That's the hard part.

ABOVE: *Like Sex* by Nathan Joe, Young and Hungry, BATS. Image: Stephen A'Court.

# PUT YOUR NAME ON IT

*Lauren Jackson talks to leading theatre for children practitioner Tim Bray.*

I meet Tim at The Pumphouse Theatre on a crisp April day in Takapuna, Auckland. Small, satisfied customers stream out of the theatre. We've just been enchanted by Tim's adaptation of *The Lighthouse Keeper's Lunch*. Tim and I sit down in the sunny foyer for a chat, and I'm delighted to be in the presence of a fellow Very Tall Person.

**Lauren:** Your work is really gentle, detailed and humorous. How deep can you go with children?

**Tim:** I think as I've gone on I've learnt that you can be gentle - all those things you mentioned - but also I've trusted the fact that you can go deep. Like when we did *The Whale Rider* - Noa Campbell played Nani Flowers. When Kahu goes out on the big whale she let out this gut-wrenching, "Nooo! My mokopuna!" and there's the enormity of that. We go through the same processes as an adult company - the same design processes, the same rehearsal process. So when something comes up like that in the script you have to go there because

otherwise you're denying the characters a truth, in a sense.

**Lauren:** You got a BSc from uni and your first job was as an actor. How did that come about?

**Tim:** Through Auckland Youth Theatre. At thirteen in 1977 Mum and Dad sent me off to drama classes with Mary Amooore and I eventually became a young adult with her. She had a schools programme called Theatredays. So my first job straight after varsity was performing with Mary, Patupatu Ripley, Rowena Yalland and Jim Rawdon. It was, you know, a paying gig! So I took it and loved it. Performing to children; we were on the road; really cool.

It's clear Mary Amooore, who founded The Central Theatre in 1961, was a teacher well ahead of her time. She made a huge impression on Tim who describes her as "like my second mum". She founded Auckland Youth Theatre, where I also took my first drama classes as a kid in the





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I'VE LEARNT THAT YOU  
CAN BE GENTLE

late '80s. When AYT folded in the early '90s, Tim took over the lease on the (now Basement Theatre) Greys Ave space. He staged professional adult and children's productions under the name The Central Theatre, in honour of Mary's company.

Having moved to a bigger venue - Kiwiland on the Ellerslie-Panmure Highway - Tim experienced his "big first fright as a producer" in 1994. Poor box office for *School for Clowns* "wiped the theatre accounts out". Tim started doing solo adult shows of his own "because it was less risky".

**Tim:** We did shows under The Central Theatre brand... 'til the 2000s I s'pose, and then I was turning 40 and I was sort of going, "What do I want to do with my life?" My brother Chris is a marketing consultant, so I did some sessions with him. He was trying to find where my passion was, so I said I think it was the children - theatre for children.

Tim committed to starting a new children's

theatre company. His brother said, "Well, put your name on it" and Tim Bray Productions was born. In the last four years, thanks to business mentoring through Art Venture in 2012, Tim Bray Productions has expanded. They have offices at the Lake House Arts Centre, Takapuna with a part-time staff of five.

Today Tim and his company are held in high esteem, however he is candid about the difficult times he has faced on his 25 year journey. Tim applied twice to be accepted on the ART Venture programme, and last year was hugely disappointed when audiences stayed away from *The Velveteen Rabbit*. Tim says it was possibly too unfamiliar. Maybe people shied away "because it is emotional. It is dark. The toy rabbit gets thrown out to be burnt. But it was a beautiful production. It was magical."

**Lauren:** You strike me as incredibly resilient. Where does that resilience come from?

[Long pause]

**Tim:** Where does it come from? I don't know whether it's just sheer bloody-mindedness. It's like the first [knock] you go, "Well I've been doing this for four years. Come on. On to the next one." And then the next knock happens and you go, "Ok, we've been doing this for this long and so actually we're nearly there and so actually just pick yourself up because that was just one thing that went wrong..."

**Lauren:** So you've got an ability to keep things in perspective.

**Tim:** Yeah, it's not the end of the world. Yeah.

Towards the end of our interview, Tim tells me about the worst time he has faced. In 2008 he lost his niece, Natasha Bray, in the Mangatepopo River tragedy. "That whole year the whole family was in grief. I lost the eye on the business." Tim continued to deliver shows to the public but by the end of the year the company was in \$90,000 of debt. Tim and his partner had to remortgage their home for the theatre to continue. Tim describes this time as "hell". While the loan against his home is "still sitting there", Tim repaid his creditors and kept going because "it's what I enjoy doing". I find Tim's humility and determination inspiring.

Tim's list of career highlights is far longer than the lowlights. In 2012 he famously pitched for and won the opportunity to stage a one-off performance of *Hairy Maclary* for Prince Charles and Camilla when they visited New Zealand's shores. Public confidence in Tim was evidenced by the \$50,000 in funding he was able to rustle up at short notice. Needless to say the Royals loved the show.

**Tim:** And I think another highlight would be doing Margaret Mahy's 70th birthday. We performed *A Lion in the Meadow*, and then we were asked to do something at her memorial at the Town Hall, so that was an honour... We've done sign language-interpreted performances since 2004, but last year we got funding for our first audio-description for blind and vision-impaired children which was amazing. Amazing.

As a fellow writer/director/actor/teacher I want to know how Tim focusses. What's his secret?

**Tim:** I can't write at the office. And I see playwriting as separate from my role as Artistic Director, so... I do it at the weekend or on holiday.

**Lauren:** And how many hours a day can you concentrate on writing?

**Tim:** Depends what the deadline is!

Tim began writing scripts in the early '90s when he couldn't find plays with small enough casts for The Central Theatre children's plays.

**Lauren:** What have you learnt about script writing over the years?

*[long pause]*

**Tim:** Just get it done.


Tim and I guffaw. I've discovered his secret then.

**Tim:** Yeah, just get it done. And I've had all sorts of different blocks. Like when I wrote *The Whale Rider*, I was confronted with a cast of twelve, fifteen or something and I was just going, "Nnnnggg! Has to be as small as possible!" So I got it down to three and then unpackaged that. Margaret Mahy's *The Great Piratical Rumbustification* - I just couldn't get through it. So I just sat down and drew pictures of each scene - how I saw the show as a director. And then once I got through all the pictures I went, "Got it" and just wrote from that. Sometimes... you're just doggedly writing and suddenly it unfolds the next scene. I think it helps that I'm an actor. It also helps that I'm a director and I can hear and see as I'm writing.

With *The Whale Rider* Tim gave the script to original author Witi Ihimaera, who not only approved the script, but contributed production ideas and song suggestions.

**Tim:** He fed into the script and his moments were beautiful. I'm glad we did it.

**Lauren:** Is it always that collaborative with an



## DRAMA CLASS WAS A SAFE PLACE TO EXPLORE ONESELF

author, when you work with their story?

**Tim:** No, it's probably the most collaboration I've had.

As a writer, director and drama tutor I've often worked with children and teens. I was 12 years old when I really 'got' drama class with Kerry Lynch at AYT. We did a status exercise and I went, "I understand what this is. This is a way of examining what's happening to me at school, in this class." Are Tim and I both hoping to "pay forward" the profound experiences with drama we had in our formative years?

**Tim:** Well, Mum and Dad and my older brother made us a puppet theatre - my younger brother and I - so we used to create shows. And then my Dad - he was an English teacher at St. Kents - used to produce and direct all the shows for the boys... I remember Mum making a stained glass window for *Murder in the Cathedral* and being mesmerised as a child when it was in situ and going, [gasps] "That's a stained glass window!" You know, but it was just cellophane a week ago!

Tim cites the Mercury Theatre and Limbs

Dance Company, alongside The Central Theatre, as big inspirations too.

**Tim:** I think drama class was a safe place to explore oneself. You could quietly build confidence, or unpackage stuff that was going on in your head, and safely play out the people that are within you: the angry people, the quiet people, the shy people. These things that you don't know what they are.

**Lauren:** So what are you giving the kids who came to the play today?

**Tim:** I hope they have the memories like I have, 45 years on. They still remember vividly something that they saw here and they hold on to that with relish. So I'm hoping that, yeah, they go away and just remember that hour with fondness for a long time. And that somewhere along the line they find, you know, they might not be actors or whatever, but somewhere they find their own creativity.

IMAGE ON PREVIOUS PAGE: *The Velveteen Rabbit* by Margery Williams, adapted by Tim Bray, songs by Christine White. Image: Katherine Brook.

ABOVE: *The Lighthouse Keeper's Lunch* by Ronda and David Armitage, adapted by Tim Bray, songs by Christine White. Image: David Rowland/One-Image.com.

# THEATRE IS A HUI

*Jamie McCaskill with Te Rākau Hua o te Wao Tapu Trust.*

I went and met Jim Moriarty and Helen Pearse-Otene at their beautiful kāinga in Island Bay. I was treated to some boil-up and an espresso coffee, which immediately got the yarns flowing about their history with Te Rākau Hua o te Wao Tapu Trust.

I have looked up to Jim since he performed in my high school hall in Thames in 1994. There was something about the electricity of seeing brown people performing theatre, something I didn't even know existed that got me hooked.

At the time he graced our school with his awesome presence Jim had been part of the evolution of Māori Theatre for 20 years. Having worked alongside every pou imaginable in Māori Theatre - Don Selwyn, Rangimoana Taylor, Tama Poata, Wi Kuki Kaa and Tungia Baker to name a few. I had never seen Māori stories on stage until then.

Te Rākau Hua o te Wao Tapu Trust was set up in 1989 as a way of telling Māori stories their way. "The International Arts Festival in 1990 had no Māori presence at all so we had to do something about it," Jim states passionately. "We put on our own thing called Live at The Depot and anyone who was on the Māori theatre scene was there."

Te Rākau produced Bruce Stewart's *Broken*

*Arse* and John Broughton's *Nga Puke* that same year. "We had people telling us how to tell our stories from another cultural perspective. The call was simple. We had to be guardians of our own stories and tell them from the informed heart. Not the observed heart."

Similar platforms are still prominent in Wellington with the work of Tawata Productions and the Māori kaupapa festivals they run.

"Every time we (Māori practitioners) get together it reminds me of those days and that this is the way it will always be. How vibrant we are and will always be."

Te Rākau became part of an education-touring network that toured for ten years. "It took us two years to get around the country once and we'd do over ten shows a week. We bloody worked hard mate. All the teachers in the country knew who we were."

All the travelling started to take its toll, as Jim and Helen's kids were growing up. They decided they had to be in one place longer than a day or two at a time: they toured through every prison in the country and often stayed in those prisons or residencies for up to three months at a time.

During that period Te Rākau became the beacon of light for hundreds of rangatahi



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## THROUGH THIS THING THAT WE ALL LOVE CALLED THEATRE



who turned their lives around because of the experiences Te Rakau provided them with and the power of telling their own stories.

Alan Scott (former head of NASDA) comments: "In many respects Te Rākau is one of New Zealand's theatrical success stories. Despite a frequently hard to mouth existence it presents its productions to thousands of people each year. There can never be a theatre company in New Zealand, or anywhere else for that matter, that has so moved its audiences to tears, for Te Rākau is the theatre where the lost and the damned reveal the pain of lives in a manner most of us can hardly comprehend."

These days Helen and Jim are well settled across from Tapu Te Rānga Island in Island Bay with their family in a house that Jim has lived in for 30 years. And they are creating stories about their back yard.

Helen has written a quartet of plays called *The Undertow*. All four will be presented in Wellington in January 2017.

"These plays are about the history of Wellington. We are interested at looking at our city and home, wanting to know who the people were who walked here before us."

All four plays have had their own seasons but have never been performed at the same time. With a cast of 30-40 this will be a highly ambitious endeavour, which Te Rākau will have no problem tackling.

Helen tells me, "If we can get the audience active about wanting to find out more about Wellington history, that's what I will find rewarding".

So why are Te Rākau Hua o te Wao Tapu Trust still relevant twenty-six years later? In the words of Jim Moriarty: "It's a hui. We motivate change, question apathy and challenge indifference through this thing that we all love called theatre."

Kia ora Jim.

ABOVE: *Dog and Bone* by Helen Pearse-Otene, Te Rākau Hua o te Wao Tapu Trust. Image: Aneta Pond.

# Why I Wrote the Play I Wrote

JEAN BETTS

*on Ophelia Thinks Harder.*

You had to be a Shakespeare fan if you were a serious theatre person, I knew that; but I've always had a bit of a problem with him. When productions were boring, as most of them were, I always assumed the director must be to blame, not the play - Shakespeare being a genius an' all. And I tried not to blame him for the fact that the best parts were for men; it wasn't his fault I was a girl, not anybody's *fault* - just an accident of history.

I read him at school and found much of it very powerful and strange. I loved the mystery of the odd language, and the excitement when I unlocked it and the sense came pouring out. But as time went by and my own life took courses that weren't charted in any way by his plays he seemed more and more alien.

Rhapsodising about how well Shakespeare understood human nature didn't help at all, as my nature bore little resemblance to Ophelia's or Lady Macbeth's - in fact I identified much more readily with many of the male characters. And even though I felt some affinity for the likes of Juliet, Beatrice and Rosalind I could never get past the fact that their central concern was always falling in love with some bloke, as if women did nothing else; and the fact - not always declared openly, but increasingly obvious -

that they all had to be *beautiful*. Why?? Don't ugly people fall in love?

But - Shakespeare speaks to all mankind as effectively as he's always done, I kept being told; so without even realising it I began to think - well, if I can't hear him the way I'm supposed to then there must be something wrong with ME.

And to cap it all there were occasionally all-male productions of Shakespeare - done, we were told, "as Shakespeare intended them". So - did he not actually intend me to be there at all?? If I didn't feel represented by this genius, this expert on human nature, was I fully human? Was I deficient in some mysterious way? Perhaps, even (god forbid) that chilling accusation du jour - 'inadequate as a woman'?

And I could never square my mentors' passion for Shakespeare with their belief in the social responsibility of theatre, either. What place did Shakespeare have here, exactly? With his army of bombastic, aggressive aristocratic men with serious anger problems wreaking all manner of havoc, particularly on their womenfolk; and yet being touted as great, tragic, admirable heroes - where was the 'social responsibility'? Where was the cutting edge in all this melodrama? Why was all this worth saying?

## I COULD NEVER SQUARE MY MENTORS' PASSION FOR SHAKESPEARE WITH THEIR BELIEF IN THE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY OF THEATRE

So when I began to direct I was never drawn to direct Shakespeare, and not wanting to direct Shakespeare made me doubt myself professionally, too. How could I be a 'real' director if I didn't want to direct Shakespeare? It was like saying I wanted to be a surgeon but didn't want to cut people up!

During a radio drama acting course I'd been asked to prepare a speech as an exercise and adapt the performance for the microphone. I chose Hamlet's "O that this too too solid flesh would melt", and delivered it with youthful intensity. My tutors seemed to approve, and said - "What impressed us most was that you made Hamlet a believable woman." I was flattered, but nonplussed. What on earth could they mean? Out of context, there's nothing in that speech that specifies the sex of the soliloquiser. It's a human being mulling over suicide and life's difficulties, and should present no problems for *any* sex. Surely they weren't expressing surprise at the idea that a woman could be as tortured - and as articulate about it - as a man...?

I thought Shakespeare was supposed to be a brilliant analyst of *human* nature, not just *men's* nature? Didn't all intelligent human beings understand that it was just historical accident that allowed only men to deliver these powerful lines on stage?

Well, clearly they didn't. I got tired of making allowances, tired at the lazy reliance on Shakespeare, 'the classics', myth, fairy tales, 19th century psychology, the Bible! - all still being trotted out as proof of women's deficiencies.

Ophelia has at least as much reason as Hamlet to rage and despair. She's forced

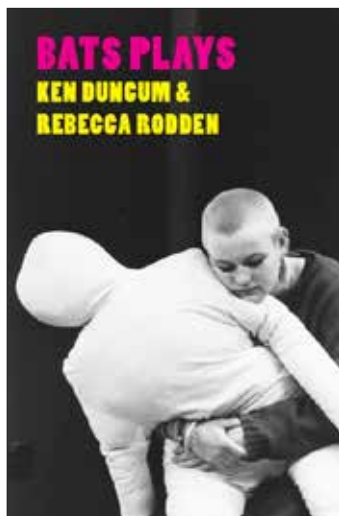


into a boring, pointless existence, has no friends, is bullied by brother and father, denied an education, loses both parents and endures cruelly dismissive behaviour from her self-centred boyfriend. She is a complex, confused, intelligent, moody and passionate creature in her own right. Examining this could be amusing, I thought. And so, I decided to re-write *Hamlet* - to push feminism and humour in bed together and meddle as ruthlessly as I could with this insidious, stubborn collective subconscious that denies women the right to be as fascinating, complex, cosmos-questioning, angst-ridden and deeply funny as men.

Let her "...strew dangerous conjectures in ill breeding minds", I said; and with Queen Gertrude - "Let her come in"! And moreover, this time let her survive.

ABOVE: *Ophelia Thinks Harder* by Jean Betts, Circa Theatre, 1993. Image: Joe Bleakley.

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# THEATRE TO SCHOOLS, OR SCHOOLS TO THEATRES?

*Jenny Wake on the state of making theatre for school audiences.*

Theatre in Schools: last century's story tells of dedicated puppeteers, mimes and storytellers, of shoestring budgets, of scenery materialising from small suitcases, heroic efforts to reach far-flung communities, free shows delivering sponsors' messages, and halls erupting with the belly-laughter of children.

Lately, it feels like New Zealand theatre for young audiences is coming of age.

Companies are busy creating wonderful work, drawing schools and families into theatres, and presenting work overseas.

This should also be a good time to take theatre into schools. Since 2007 the arts have been firmly embedded in the curriculum as an essential learning area. Every child in primary and intermediate, and every performing arts student in secondary should be seeing and evaluating theatre. Other parts of the curriculum offer broad scope for theatre companies looking for links in developing work.

Back in the 1970s and 80s, the Performers in Schools scheme, funded by the Arts Council and the Education Department, supported companies to tour schools. Neither Creative New Zealand or the ministry offer such targeted funding these days.

However, around 2013 CNZ made it one of their key priorities to support arts "by, with and for young people". Nonnita Rees, CNZ's Policy Development Manager, says this priority doesn't distinguish between theatre in schools and venue-based theatre – both are eligible. But she stresses: "You have to put in good applications that stand up against what else is coming in."

Auckland Theatre Company may seem an unlikely champion for theatre in schools. Its core business is theatre for adults and the company will soon be moving into a brand spanking new venue. They've been bringing high school students into their main bill shows for 15 years.

Ah, the dreaded school matinee. But Associate Director Lynne Cardy insists that the pre-show work put into prepping students means the matinee is no longer the battlefield of noise and projectiles some may recall.

"We just did *That Bloody Woman*," she says.

"We had about 500 students in. The kids were dancing in the aisles. Afterwards, I had cast writing to me to say, 'oh my God, that is like the best performance I've ever done in my life.'"

Last year ATC headed in a new direction: into primary schools with *Mr Nancy*, for a

new programme called Mythmakers. “We’re going back to the basics of touring schools. Schools have been asking us for years, particularly primary.”

This year’s Mythmakers show is *The Eel and Sina*, based on Polynesian mythology. “The script is probably nine pages of dialogue and everything else is told in song and dance,” says Lynne. “Most of the songs are quite ancient Samoan songs. It’s a really exciting, extremely visceral experience. Our ultimate goal: every primary school child in Auckland gets to see a show every single year.”

Like ATC, The Court Theatre mounts an annual tour to primary schools and runs school matinees. “We visit primary school age children, and secondary school-aged audiences come to us,” says Education Manager Rachel Sears.

This year, the company devised and toured bilingual show *Matariki – The Little Eyes in the Sky* to primary schools throughout Canterbury. With no stage lighting, the seven stars of Matariki were each represented by a puppet mounted on a pole. “We found magic in those hand-held elements – instead of the magic of lights and technical wizardry... We reach children with that tour who wouldn’t come to the theatre.”

For older students, attending a matinee and recognising that theatre professionals value their Q & A contributions can help counter perceptions that the theatre is not a space for them. “I know confident, intelligent young people who are nervous about going to box office and picking up a ticket,” says Rachel. “We hope they will become our audiences, supporters, artists and writers in the future. We need them.”

KC Kelly, founder of Ensemble Impact believes it’s just as important to take theatre into high schools: “When students go to a theatre they learn about the lights and costumes and action – but what they’re not getting is a lot of theatre, because they’re only going once a year, because that’s all they can afford!”



WE NEED THEM

It’s not easy for teachers to get students out of school. By the time they’ve organised tickets and transport, filled in the paperwork then jumped through hoops to absent students from other classes, a teacher’s budget and goodwill can be pretty much blown.

Ensemble Impact has been touring high schools throughout NZ since 2007. Each show is a compilation of excerpts from plays by NZ playwrights: next year’s show, *Outliers* will focus on goth, geek, punk, hoon, queer and other outsider voices on the fringes.

The productions have no set, instead offering a close-up, in-traverse experience of theatre, slotted into a 50-minute class period. They introduce English and drama students to plays and inspire drama students’ devised work.

Mention ‘production values’ and KC recommends reading Peter Brook’s *The Empty Space*. “It relies 98% on the ability of the actors and directors to bring the message forward. Actors can do it – a person standing in front of you can change your reality.”

Ensemble Impact shows are created for the high school age group. “Their view on the world is going to be significantly different than our view on the world. It’s important for theatre to excite and create conversations.”

Last year, fed up with fundraising and the uncertainties of CNZ project funding, KC invited the Young and Hungry Arts Trust to take over management. Diana Cable at Young and Hungry says: “Kids in schools in the cities are very well catered for, particularly in Auckland. ATC, Indian Ink, Red Leap, Silo, the Basement – they’re all offering different experiences. What I would like for Young and Hungry with Ensemble Impact is to reach young people out in the regions.”

Fair point: how otherwise can young people in the regions access professional theatre?

Geoff Shepherd, Principal of Kuranui College, Greytown is a former drama teacher, so Kuranui’s drama students have his full support: The Lord Lackbeards Touring Company came to the school last term; and groups of students go to Circa or BATS in Wellington once or twice a year.

“Students studying NCEA Drama must see ‘quality’ theatre so that they can reflect on the performance for their assessments,”

Geoff says. “If schools do not or cannot take their students to larger centres to view performances, their students may never see quality theatre. I think it is essential that theatre is brought into schools.”

Little Dog Barking specialises in theatre for children aged 2 to 8 years old. Some productions are designed for theatre venues, others for early childhood centres and primary schools.

“Good theatre can happen anywhere,” says Director Peter Wilson. “I think we should create as many art spaces as we can for children.”

Today the company is performing *Little Kowhai Tree* in a hall in Paekakariki; tomorrow they’re flying off to present *Guji Guji* in Japan.

Peter chooses strong themes. *Duck, Death and the Tulip*, for instance, is a story about

dying. “Children do experience life and death in their early years. We create work that is of their world.”

There’s a gentle quality to Peter’s work – and good reasons for that. For very young children, theatres can seem dark, scary places where there’s no knowing what might happen next – and that can be genuinely terrifying.

Taking shows into children’s own spaces allows children to experience theatre in an environment where they feel confident and open to that new experience.

“The stuff we do in early childhood centres is specially written and produced for those centres,” says Peter. “It doesn’t require a lot of lights, but it does have a set, and good workmanship in the props and costumes – the quality of the work still has to shine through.”

Capital E National Theatre for Children regularly tours nationally with shows for early childhood, primary and intermediate school students. The company never presents in school halls, instead hitting the road with a truckload of lighting and scenery, performing in theatre venues.

Stuart Grant, in his last days as Director of Capital E reflects on this approach: “We want to take young people into another world, into theatre in a way that’s as immersive as we can make it. We’re getting more funding for the development and production of these works than most other companies, so we’re able to create something that can transform a theatre space.”

This year Capital E is touring *Hinepau*. Next year they’ll partner with Taki Rua Productions – a new development – to take the show into schools nationwide for Taki Rua’s annual Te Reo Māori tour.

Stuart acknowledges that the combined cost of buses and tickets makes a trip to the theatre too expensive for many schools. “Our audiences have been skewed towards high-decile schools. In most places we go to the average transport costs are equal to the ticket price. That is seen as a major barrier.”



Other barriers include getting children out of schools, and time pressures brought on by National Standards. “Schools are finding it harder to justify undertaking activity that is outside of that narrow focus.”

Capital E’s National Arts Festival has been a huge success in breaking down such barriers for schools. The biennial festival runs over two weeks in Wellington, and features a dozen or so shows from NZ and overseas companies.

“What we’ve done in creating the festival is create a critical mass of activity that we can take to other funding bodies and ask them to either subsidise the ticket costs or cover the bus costs for students to come into us.”

A trip to see a 45-minute play can take half a day. The festival, on the other hand offers a whole-day experience: students can see three productions at subsidised ticket prices, and the transport is free. The package allows teachers to take a punt on a show they might not otherwise consider for their students; for example, a show in te reo.

So these days, the story of theatre in schools is really about theatre for schools. Theatre-makers are chasing the twin goals of quality and accessibility.

Let’s give our young people as many different kinds of quality theatre experiences as we can – wherever we can.

## WE SHOULD CREATE AS MANY ART SPACES AS WE CAN FOR CHILDREN

IMAGE ON PREVIOUS PAGE:  
*Shu’s Song* by Laura Gaudin,  
Rachel Callinan and  
Gina Moss, Capital E National  
Theatre for Children. Image:  
Stephen A’Court.

ABOVE: *Whakaahuatua Mai*  
by Kahu Hotere, Taki Rua  
Productions Te Reo Māori Season  
2016. Image: Phillip Merry.





CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: *Two Zones Please* by Feral Grace, Dunedin Fringe Festival. Image: Hayden Wright. *Farley's Arcade - The Wildest Place in Town* by WOW! Productions. Image: Martyn Roberts. *Kings of the Gym* by Dave Armstrong, Fortune Theatre. Image: George Wallace.

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# DUNEDIN

BY MARTYN ROBERTS

The big news has been the change of guard at Fortune Theatre. After a remarkable five year tenure, artistic director Lara Macgregor decided to move on. Lara has overseen a necessary transformation of the work put on, and her commitment to NZ plays has been phenomenal. Jonathon Hendry has taken the reins and has a well tuned theatre machine at his disposal. This year already (seeing out Lara's final programming) Fortune has put on *Kings of the Gym* (Dave Armstrong), *Winston's Birthday* (Paul Baker) and *Niu Sila* (Oscar Kightley and Armstrong) of which the latter toured the lower South Island too.

Wow! Productions produced *Farley's Arcade: The Wildest Place in Town!* a site specific promenade work in the old Athenaeum buildings. With a cast of 50 and a crew of over 20, Farley's celebrated 150 years of Dunedin's status as New Zealand's first city. Featuring a melodrama in a recreated Victorian theatre written by local writer Richard Huber, it had a full working set of a Victorian Arcade where audiences bought items from shops and mixed with dodgy characters. This was the talk of the town, selling out within days of opening.

The Globe Theatre finally reopened after roof repair and some remodelling to meet the building code. It is with enormous love and care that the committee has brought this renewed gift to the city, for this is NZ's longest continually running theatre. Before they moved back in, they kept shows running in other places including Robert Lord's *Balance of Payments* and *Glitter and Spit*, directed by Bronwyn Wallace and Feather Shaw.

Feather stamped her mark on Dunedin with

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## MUCH LIKE THE CELEBRATED AURORA AUSTRALIS

a monthly series of raucous cabaret shows by Feral Grace (including tours to other South island venues) as well as producing the popular *Two Zones Please*, set on a historic Dunedin bus as it drove around the city during Dunedin Fringe.

Counterpoint Productions produced *The Most Wonderful Time of the Year* by Rosie Howells and *Wine Lips* by Sam Brooks, continuing their commitment to young NZ playwrights. Dunedin Fringe once again was bursting at the seams with bright, fun and innovative works. Binge Culture put on *Enter the New World*, an audio play set in a local supermarket, Sarah McDougall put on the boisterous *Slutty Ladies Party* in the garden of her home and Glorybox made *Dream Collector*, a magical interactive world in the Cathedral crypt! Afterburner produced *Dark Matter*, a light and sound installation at Allen Hall Theatre, winning two Fringe design awards in the process and Hank of Thread from Wellington brought *Receiver* to a waterfront venue.

Having playwright Victor Rodger in town as the Robert Burns Fellow has brought his plays to the fore with readings of *Ranterstantrum Redux*, *Sons* and *My Name is Gary Cooper*.

The health and vibrancy of Dunedin continues to glow, much like the celebrated Aurora Australis that light up the skies down here!

# Why I Wrote the Play I Wrote

FIONA FARRELL

*on Chook Chook.*

The short answer is 'Because I was asked to'.

The Drama department at Otago University had a regular lunchtime theatre slot featuring plays, both new and published, performed by their students in Allen Hall. The play had to be short: around 45 minutes max. And it had to be simple to stage: quick to put up or take down.

It was suggested that the play should give scope to women, given the contemporary absence of plays with female roles. This was something I'd encountered before. In fact, it was the reason I started writing plays in the first place. I graduated in drama from the University of Toronto in the 1970s, and came back to New Zealand to teach drama to students at a primary teachers' training college in Palmerston North.

Finding plays for groups typically of 18 women and four men so that they could fulfill the performance aspect of their training was virtually impossible. Particularly if you wanted plays with a New Zealand setting. So I began writing them myself, beginning by adapting myths and legends, then an historical documentary play about the 1912 strike at Waihi, with songs and clowning in the style of Joan Littlewood's *Oh, What a Lovely War!*

It was suggested I write a play to entertain delegates for a convention of women

researching a whole new subject: women's history. History, literature, science, music and art were all about men. But young women had got tired of that. We had got tired of being told we were second rate, too stupid, too emotional, too menstrual, not worth the same wages as men doing the same job. Not interesting enough to take the lead in movies or plays or novels. Not capable of riding a racehorse or driving a racing car or leading a major company or a nation. Not permitted to join this, not allowed to enter that. Not really capable, so far as the entire system had it, of having any sort of opinion about anything.

We had long hair. We wore miniskirts and knee boots, or transparent filmy Indian muslin. Or if you were a bit more staunch, black leather or dungarees, generally worn without a bra. We simply said to men, like Lysistrata and her mates: "If you want to sleep with us, you have to let us do what we want."

And we did know exactly what we wanted.

It was called freedom.

Not everyone agreed: some women's conventions were also attended by women with conservative religious views. There was a lot of tension, a lot of yelling and argument. But it was great. At least we were all talking at last.

## AT LEAST WE WERE ALL TALKING AT LAST



I wrote a play about Amy Bock with an all women cast, and that led to a commission from the YWCA who wanted a play for girls, to celebrate their centenary. That was *Passengers*, a play about the girls and young women who had been brought out by the government to NZ in the 1880s. 12,000 of them, mostly no longer remembered.

So, when I came to write *Chook Chook*, it was with that background. I wrote it quite quickly, over a few weeks. It had four characters of equal importance: four hens in cages in a battery farm. They are simply drawn, each inhabiting a small area, a single rostrum, individually spot-lit. Each hen wears a simple - and very cheap - costume: a dirty white lab coat, their hair gelled into a hens' comb, and high heeled op shop shoes painted mucky yellow, like hen's feet.

Each hen has an individual point of view about their confinement in their cages. For 45 minutes they argue, before they are all transformed. The dream becomes real: in a

twinkling of an eye they are set free. They drag off their labcoats to reveal sparkly party dresses, and off they fly.

The play has been done many times since that first production and I've seen some of the performances. People constantly tell me they were Bron or one of the others in a production back at school or in a drama festival. I like that.

When I watch a production it still makes me laugh. I have the weird sensation I have with everything I have ever written: that someone else entirely was the author. When I see *Chook Chook*, I'm laughing at someone else's jokes.

I like it very much. More than any of my other books and plays. And though we've had Helen Clark, and girls ride racehorses, we've still got a way to go.

Those little chickens still have a point to make about not letting yourself be boxed in.

ABOVE: *Chook Chook* by Fiona Farrell, Avonside Girls' High School, Christchurch. Image: Annette Thomson.







# CHRISTCHURCH

BY ERIN HARRINGTON

## ISSUES OF EQUITY AND DIVERSITY DISCUSSED VEHEMENTLY

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: *The White Guitar* by Fa'amoana John Luafutu, Matthias Luafutu and Malo Luafutu, The Conch, Christchurch Arts Festival. Image: Megan Moss.

*The Mauricio Kagel Project* by Free Theatre, Christchurch Arts Festival. Image: Stuart Lloyd-Harris.

*Matthew, Mark, Luke and Joanne* by Carl Nixon, The Court Theatre. Image: Rob Wiley.

*Badjelly the Witch* adapted by Alannah O'Sullivan from the book by Spike Milligan, The Court Theatre. Image: Wendy Riley.

*Winston's Birthday* by Paul Baker, The Court Theatre. Image: Lara Macgregor.

The last year has been marked by a preponderance of work by New Zealand writers. The Court Theatre's main stage featured the première of Carl Nixon's *Matthew, Mark, Luke and Joanne* alongside Greg Cooper's *MAMIL (Middle Aged Man in Lycra)* and Paul Baker's *Winston's Birthday*. The smaller Forge space hosted popular runs of *Niu Sila* and the deliciously spooky *The Dunstan Creek Séance*. The Court's bilingual touring production *Matariki – The Little Eyes in the Sky* was particularly charming.

In the Christchurch Arts Festival, *MAMIL* – perhaps waving the flag for the Pākehā status quo – was complimented by terrific Māori and Pasifika shows including *Black Faggot*, *The White Guitar*, and Taki Rua's Te Reo work-in-progress *He Kura E Huna Ana*. The audaciously anarchic *Hamlet: The Video Game (The Stage Show)* was a rare treat. Greg Cooper and Luke Di Somma's rock musical *That Bloody Woman* was picked up by ATC and the Court immediately after its brief CAF run, and its doubly-extended 2016 Christchurch season sold out.

2015's Body Festival presented stimulating but painfully under-attended work, including Sarah Houbolt's remarkable *Dangerous Bodies* and the enigmatic, lyrical *Ex Tenebris Lux*. The Body Festival has since wrapped up and its offerings will be sorely missed. Hagley Theatre Company connected with Leeds University, UK and Brooklyn College, NY through the Gi60 International One Minute Play Festival.

Other highlights included NASDA's run of Jean Betts' *The Collective*, Free Theatre's witty, high-concept *Frankenstein*, and One Man Banned's evocative, if uneven, commemorative presentation of *Once On Chunuk Bair*. Other community companies remain busy, ardent supporters of local writers, but Top Dog Theatre's once-vibrant summer Shakespeare offerings have reached a point of stagnation.

In the last few months the post-quake consolidation of arts infrastructure seems to have picked up. Yet, we've also seen issues of equity and diversity discussed vehemently. Arguments about the lack of women in production teams, the persistently homogeneous nature of programming and casting (CAF shows notwithstanding), and the ethics of portraying race and ethnicity onstage mark theatre as a dynamic site of cultural debate as well as a mode of art and entertainment.

# THE UNDERGROUND COMMUNITY

*Jared Mackley-Crump on the Pacific Underground legacy.*

Pacific Underground has been an instrumental and influential force in creating and telling Aotearoa's unique Pacific stories for over twenty years. Beginning as a theatre company, it was co-founded in Christchurch by Oscar Kightley, Erolia Ifopo, Michael Hodgson, Mishelle Muagututi'a and Simon Small. Together, they helped nurture and support a roster of now-familiar creatives, across multiple art-forms – think Kightley, musicians Scribe and Ladi6, and so on. In the 1990s the first generations of NZ-born Pasifikans were coming-of-age in large numbers. With different outlooks and cultural perspectives, they began to thrust their stories into the spotlight.

Pacific Underground has established a significant legacy: seven plays (including *Dawn Raids* and *Romeo and Tus*) that have toured across NZ, Australia and the Pacific; eleven years of touring schools; two original music albums; part of New Zealand's delegation to three Festival of Pacific Arts; and successfully running their own Pacific Arts Festival for a decade. They were awarded the Lifetime Achievement Award at this year's Pacific Music Awards.

Beyond the familiar faces, there are many other people; names less familiar but just as central to the story. And although born

and based in Christchurch for most of its life, Pacific Underground and its many descendents came to be dispersed across Aotearoa. They are dispersed yet connected, across space and time, by shared history and shared experiences.

It is this sense of community that Tanya Muagututi'a and Pos Mavaega emphasise, when we catch-up over palusami pies and Koko Samoa cupcakes at Auckland café Blue Rose. As the collective's longest serving members, and having led the organisation for the past 17 years, they say the Underground community has become extensive, and that's a network crucial to its continued existence and development.

Like so many Cantabrians, life became somewhat defined by 22 February 2011. The earthquake rendered Pacific Underground's office unrepairable; the creative industries were thrown into disarray and came to a temporary halt. For Pacific Underground, it was simply another challenge.

In their early days it was sheer determination, resourcefulness and learning through trial and error that helped the Underground to rise. As Pos explains, there weren't lighting and sound technicians and other specialist roles, they



## DISPERSED YET CONNECTED, ACROSS SPACE AND TIME

had to learn how to do everything themselves. In the wake of the earthquakes, this same resourcefulness and the support of the Underground aiga whānau) came to the fore.

“Everyone was calling and texting, asking what they could do to help,” says Tanya. Fortuitously, out-of-town bookings were already long in the planning, and were able to proceed: a festival in Wanaka, a play as part of Matariki in Dunedin. The physical distance separating its members once again collapsed. “Those gigs and support of our network really helped us all to get through those first few months.”

Once the dust had settled, though, decisions had to be made. This was partly needing stability of place and schooling for the duo’s three daughters; it was also strategic: the necessity of keeping the Underground moving forward. And so, with a number of year’s experience working on Auckland’s mammoth Pasifika Festival under their belts (among other events), the heart of Pacific Underground relocated.

Now well settled in Auckland, the move has been difficult but successful. The Underground is working with a new generation of young Pacific practitioners, and moving in new directions. While continuing to perform and develop projects – most recently *Angels*

(*Re:born*) with ATC, and featuring the duo’s middle daughter, Josephine – both Tanya and Pos have stepped further behind the scenes into production and staging; Tanya with ATC and Pos at the new Te Oro arts centre in Glen Innes. Doing so has highlighted a gap.

In the early years in Christchurch they had complete control over how their stories were staged and told. They’ve realised that, in Pacific cultures there are nuances in considering how space is created. In the more well resourced Auckland, this can sometimes be lost if Pacific people are not in control behind the scenes. It’s something the duo would like to see change. “We need to train up more Pacific people, who have the cultural knowledge, with the technical skills required to work behind the scenes and help create Pacific spaces,” says Tanya.

Safely into its third decade, the Underground continues to spread its wings: geographically, strategically, and artistically. And, in spite of all the setbacks, shakes and a relocation it does so with its central kaupapa, emphasising the importance of connection and community firmly in place.

ABOVE: *Rangi and Mau’s Amazing Race* by Tanya Muagututi’a, Joy Vaele, Ave Sua and Raniera Daniels.  
Image: Pacific Underground.

# YOUNG GIANTS

*Alex Newlove reports on a dynamic young theatre company and community centre model in Whangarei.*

The last year has been characterised by a shift from creation to facilitation for Whangarei's Company of Giants – a theatre collective that came together when actor and director Laurel Devenie met multipurpose creative Ash Holwell on a chance hitchhiking encounter some five years ago.

They found their stride specialising in devised work, community collaboration and the activation of disused space. Cultural wasteland to some – Whangarei has been treated as a land of opportunity by the creative-gap seeking Giants. Early in 2015 they used their local cult following to collect 500 signatures to help convince the district council not to sell off a former youth centre and church on the town's historic Bank Street.

The company had used the abandoned building previously as a rehearsal space for their own and Northland Youth Theatre productions.

When it seemed no serious buyers felt the same, councillors shrugged with a “what have we got to lose” and signed a peppercorn lease agreement with the company in August 2015.

Now on Whangarei's main drag is a building where roller skaters, paper crafters, theatre makers, yogis and circus performers cross-pollinate daily, interspersed with a heartily welcomed parade of curious passersby, who stop to share stores of being married in the hall in its church days, or “one guy who turned up and had built the kitchen cupboards.”

When community radio station Beagle, one of the first tenants at ONEONESIX (so named for its 116 Bank Street location) goes on air on Monday afternoon listeners can hear a mass community choir chirping away in the background while DJs line up the next track. The space hosts dozens of regular local events every week, alongside travelling shows without an obvious home in Whangarei.

But in a way, telling this story is bittersweet for Ash and Laurel, who wistfully remember the days where they were concerned with creation, not plumbing and hand towels.

“That's been one of the challenges of the building, realising the generation of theatre did have to kind of stop,” Laurel says, who has also squeezed a full-time acting gig on *Shortland Street* into the last year. Meanwhile





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# Why I Wrote the Play I Wrote

OSCAR KIGHTLEY

*on Dawn Raids.*

In 1997 I was a few years into my career as a paid writer. It had all been collaborating with other writers, which was awesome. Writing is hard. If you write with other people it somehow seems a bit easier because you can keep each other to task when the energy waivers.

I knew though that I'd always try and write a play on my own. It didn't feel like you could call yourself a playwright, until you'd written plays on your own.

When it came to choosing what it would be about, dawn raids was always in my mind. For Pacific Islanders living in Auckland during the 70s, 'dawn raids' was a thing.

Even though I was only in primary school in the 70s, it was still something I knew about: from the occasional mentions on serious looking bulletins on the news, to the whispered mentions in overheard adults' conversations.

I knew that I wanted to know more about this and have a go at writing a play about it.

I spent a few months researching 'dawn raids.' I spent ages in a library that held old newspaper clippings - reading up on how this time was reported in the main city newspapers of the day.

Then I interviewed people who had lived through them and who had played various

roles in the struggle: the matriarch and social worker, the central city minister, and the Samoan who worked for the police. Then there were the ones who actively protested against them, while trying to create a space for Pacific Islanders to be in this new land that many were now calling home.

The stories were – in annoying street lexicon – totes out of it. It was shocking to read of the extent of the blatant racism. And interesting to read of how many sectors of society here caught up in it.

For example, I didn't realise that it wasn't just Samoans, Fijians and Tongans targeted. Legal citizen Niueans, Tokelauans, Cook Islanders and even Māori were advised to carry their passports with them to make things easier if they were stopped and questioned.

After months doing that research, I felt ready to write. I still didn't have my own computer, but thankfully had a job as a writer for Gibson Group and their acclaimed television shows *Skitz* and *Telly Laughs*. So after writing sketches during the day, I worked on the play at night.

It's nice to have written it and the impact on the audience was awesome. Having *Dawn Raids* in my work feels cool and I'm glad



## THE STORIES WERE – IN ANNOYING STREET LEXICON – TOTES OUT OF IT

I tackled that. It's something I still want to explore in later projects.

When I have time, I'd like to rewrite the play. Just sharpen it up a bit. Perhaps some would say that you should leave past work as it is, as a record of your state and skills at the time. But I don't know. With many more years

of experience, I am a better writer now, and would just love to give it one more pass.

Then I can let it lie peacefully within the CV.

ABOVE: Oscar Kightley with students from Rutherford College as part of Playmarket's Playwrights in Schools programme.



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# GROWING BIG

*Sam Brooks on Young and Hungry, Next Big Thing and Massive.*

When it comes to companies and programmes that work to educate and initiate young theatre-makers into the industry, there are three names that come to mind immediately: Young and Hungry, Next Big Thing and Massive Theatre Company.

I participated in Young and Hungry in Wellington in 2011 (which feels like 50 years ago to me). I was assistant stage manager for Thomas Sainsbury's zombie play *Disorder*. In 2013, I scribed for *Like There's No Tomorrow* - the big Next Big Thing project in Auckland for that year. I've scribed and collated surveys for Massive. I've seen countless shows that have come out of these companies and programmes; I know their work.

Young and Hungry and Next Big Thing are the easiest to compare, sharing an ages 15 to 25, commissioning three new shows a year style model. Although a staple in Wellington for two decades, Young and Hungry came about in Auckland through a partnership between the Wellington organisation and Auckland Theatre Company back in 2009 and lasted until 2011. After that, Auckland Theatre Company's self-programmed Next Big Thing filled the gap. Now they run side by side.

I was lucky enough to see both of this year's group of shows in Auckland and Wellington back-to-back one night after the other. After seeing six new shows, both written

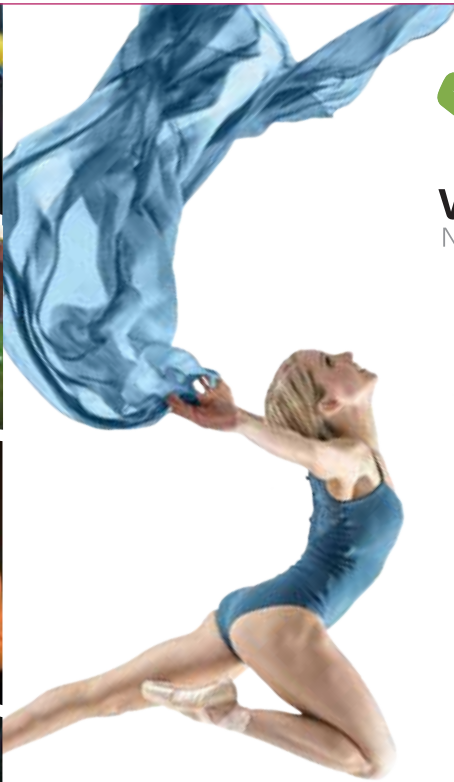
and devised, the differences, strengths and weaknesses of each programme became very clear.

*Next Big Thing* places itself in a very vital place in the Auckland theatre community, serving as a bridge between ATC and The Basement. Under the stewardship of Lynne Cardy and Whetu Silver it's given us devised works, musicals, and plays from London over the past few years. It is aggressively and proactively diverse in both the kinds of work it programmes and the participants involved – it is to be commended for both of these things.

A work like *Shoulda Woulda Coulda*, devised by Ahi Karunaharan with the cast - genuinely earnest and heartfelt - felt like a show that was made with young people in mind, both in the making and in the receiving.

*Angels (Re:born)* by Tanya Muagututi'a and Joy Vaale, felt like it was filling a gap. When was the last time Auckland audiences of *any* background saw a show that was explicitly about faith and how young people engage with it?

And then *Bravado*, with its Ben Henson trademark madcap energy and throw-paint-at-the-wall style, was an angry and vital piece of expression from four young emerging playwrights: Frith Horan, Natasha Hoyland, Beanie-Maryse Ridler and Billie Staples.



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These pieces felt curated to fill a gap, introduce those involved to new ways of making and audiences to the kinds of shows they might not see otherwise. It's pro-active, energetic and exciting. If I had the opportunity to see these shows in high school, I would've leapt at the chance.

Where Next Big Thing feels vital, Young and Hungry feels like a relic in an ever-changing industry. The process - which I've also been through as a playwright - is of another time. Playwrights pitch their scripts, actors and crew apply, and directors are assigned to those scripts; it's reactive rather than pro-active.

It's a process that made sense when it came about in the early 90s, but in a country, and a city where making work is accessible, and education is accessible, working in this way feels old school. It lacks vitality, a necessity that is so vivid in Next Big Thing.

Watching the plays this year, quality aside, felt like another three plays, another 20 or so performers, another year of Young and Hungry. It should feel as special for the audience as it does for the kids onstage or backstage.

This is not to throw Young and Hungry under the proverbial bus. Young and Hungry has guided many names into the industry - Taika Waititi, Eli Kent, Jackie van Beek and so on - but anything that's been around for twenty-two years is going to start showing signs of age. Being reactive in an industry that is slowly isolating itself in silos can fast turn from stagnation into regression.

Auckland's Massive Company serves another role. When collating survey cards for *The Brave* - and it says a lot that Massive gets the huge amount of responses that they do for these surveys - there's a huge number of people seeing theatre for the first time. Massive activates that audience (a lot in their teens), they talk to them and their loyal fanbase.

Which is to say nothing of their education programme, working across Auckland, building pathways for performers from an incredibly diverse range of backgrounds into



## I SAW THE FOUNDATIONS BEING LAID

their professional shows. Founded 25 years ago as the Maidment Youth Theatre, Massive shows no signs of slowing down.

Some of my closest friends came out of that crazy 2011 Young and Hungry production of *Disorder*. Some of my most valued collaborators have been through Young and Hungry, Next Big Thing or Massive. When I was sitting watching my Young and Hungry play be rehearsed last year, when I saw the three Next Big Thing plays this year, when I saw *The Brave*, I saw the foundations being laid for the next generation. I saw new communities, new groups of makers being formed before my very eyes.

If nothing else, this shows the value of these programmes, and why they're vitally important in an industry whose most valuable strength is how close and intimate this community can be.

ABOVE: *The Island* by Massive Nui Ensemble, Massive Company. Image: Andi Crown Photography.

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# SCRIPT ADVICE

*Stuart Hoar on dramaturgy in Australia and New Zealand.*

This is my last article as script advisor, and I thought I would sum up the dramaturgical or script writing advice given to attendees of one of this year's sessions at the recent Playwriting Australia National Play Festival in Melbourne.

In one of the industry sessions nine dramaturgs gave a brief talk about their experience in the role, and what they thought most useful to pass on to fellow dramaturgs, as well as the directors, playwrights and other theatre workers who were there. I went to talks by freelance dramaturg Peter Matheson, literary manager for the Australian Script Centre Tom Healey, and literary director at the Melbourne Theatre Company Chris Mead.

Peter began by saying that he always treats the writer he is dealing with as a professional, regardless of background and experience. The basis of their dramaturg/writer relationship is therefore one of respect for the playwright. He feels that there is a distinct hierarchy for the role of dramaturg, which is to be considered as under that of writer, director and producer. That said, he has found that quite often a skilled dramaturg has a better idea than the playwright as to what he or she are trying to say with their play. A key dramatic question he likes to ask the

playwright is what is a play's theme - what is its philosophy? As a reply he often asks the playwright to provide a synopsis.

As dramaturg he believes his role is to honestly reflect his response to the play. To tell the writer when he is bored, or confused or simply doesn't understand. Another key role is to make sure that the play is a play, not a film or TV script.

Tom Healey talked about the potential wider role of the dramaturg - how it can be the dramaturg's responsibility to frame the play to the audience or community at large. Not only can a dramaturg have the potential to work with the playwright on the script before rehearsal, they can also be part of the production process, reminding all the collective about the overall objective of the play as the rehearsal and production process literally takes over the play. After opening, a dramaturg can draw the attention of communities or cultures to the play that perhaps wouldn't normally be aware of the play's existence, as well as monitoring audience feedback for the playwright beyond whether the play is selling or not selling well.

Chris Mead has a distinguished background as a dramaturg, and used to run Playwriting Australia. In his talk he spoke much about the craft of the play he is dealing with,

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and how he focuses on the nuts and bolts elements of a play: plot, character function, dramatic development and so on. Then he confessed that lately he was just sick of how everything in contemporary life was required to be analysed in terms of psychology - how this with dramatic characters implied a narrowcast rather than open approach to character motivation, and further back, from the writer's point of view, to character creation and character interaction.

"A play", said Chris "is a simple thing. It's a body under pressure." His other simple but pleasing bon mot regarding plays: 'Act One made it matter, Act Two made it messy and Act Three made it meaningful.'

All three dramaturgs reiterated what is the heart of my own dramaturgical belief: a good dramaturg offers options rather than certainties. It's our job to offer suggestions, not directives. At the end of any written script advice I write something like this: "To finish, all my notes are mere suggestions. If anything is useful, excellent, but if not then please ignore." A dramaturg has many roles but one he or she does not have is to tell a playwright

how to write their play. That is a job for the playwright.

In the past three and a half years I have read more than 800 plays for Playmarket and given dramaturgical advice to dozens of playwrights. Playmarket is a unique organisation in the world in the way it combines a script advisory service with an agency service. It's Playmarket's job to encourage playwrights, develop scripts and chase royalties. As a playwright about to become solely a client I feel so lucky we have this organisation doing the work it does for us. It's a great place to work and I've enjoyed my time there so much. While working for Playmarket I was lucky enough to attend three Playwriting Australia National Play Festivals, and each time I came away knowing that our level of scriptwriting is excellent. May the plays keep coming. And may our theatres produce even more of them. All the best for the future.

ABOVE: *Conversations Avec Mon Pénis* by Dean Hewison translated by Marc-André Thibault, Théâtre Bistouri, Montreal, Canada. Image: Andrée-Anne Brunet.



MYTHMAKERS - AGE OLD TALES TOLD LIVE

# THE EEL AND SINA

by Jono Soo Choon

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*The Bookbinder* by Ralph McCubbin Howell  
Trick of the Light  
Edinburgh Fringe, UK,  
Circa, Kokomai Festival,  
Adelaide Fringe, Australia,  
Christchurch, Southland  
Festival, Brighton Fringe,  
Imaginate Festival  
Traverse Theatre,  
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Festival of Art and Ideas,  
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*Home* by Freya Desmarais  
Hungry Mile Theatre, BATS,  
Centrepoint Dark Room  
6 – 22 Aug 2015

*Live Orgy* by Freya Desmarais, BATS,  
Centrepoint Dark Room  
11 Aug – 10 Sep 2015

*Gloria's Handbag* by Helen Moulder and Sue Rider  
Willow Productions  
Queensland and New  
South Wales Tour,  
Australia, Hawkes Bay,  
Matamata, Rotorua,  
Auckland, Kerikeri  
28 Aug – 21 Nov 2015

*SoloOthello* by Regan Taylor  
Te Rēhia Theatre Company  
Centrepoint Dark Room,  
Tauranga Arts Festival,  
Te Pou, Kia Mau Festival,  
Circa, Matariki on the  
Move Auckland  
11 Aug 2015 – 14 Jul 2016

*Daffodils* by Rochelle  
Bright Bullet Heart Club  
Taranaki Festival, Tour  
Makers Oamaru and  
Blenheim, Christchurch  
Festival, Tour Makers  
Palmerston North,  
Wellington, Nelson Festival,  
Tauranga Festival, Q  
Theatre, Riverside Theatre  
Parramatta, Brisbane  
Powerhouse, Merrigong  
Theatre Company,  
Australia, Auckland,  
Salisbury International  
Arts Festival, UK  
13 Aug 2015 – 11 Jun 2016

*Who Does He Think He Is?*  
by Jason Chasland and  
Lyndee-Jane Rutherford  
Stella Adler, Los Angeles,  
USA 14 – 30 Aug 2015

*Black Faggot* by Victor  
Rodger, Multnesia  
Taranaki Festival,  
Christchurch Festival  
18 Aug – 2 Sep 2015

*A Stage of One's Own*  
curated by Pat-A-Cake  
Productions, BATS,  
Lower Hutt Little Theatre  
18 Aug – 20 Nov 2015

*The Book Club* by Roger  
Hall adapted by Rodney  
Fisher, Ensemble Theatre,  
Sydney, Melbourne

Theatre Company,  
Australia 26 – 28 Aug 2016

*The Keys are in the  
Margarine* by Cindy Diver,  
Susie Lawless, Stuart  
Young, Talking House  
Auckland Live, Hamilton,  
Invercargill, Wanaka,  
Alexandra, Fortune  
Theatre, BATS  
22 Aug – 14 Nov 2015

*Bubblelands* by Renee  
Liang Omphalos Co and  
A+ Productions  
Basement, BATS  
25 Aug – 17 Oct 2015

*Rangitahua... The  
Stopping Off Place*  
by Company of Giants  
Whangarei, Gisborne,  
Wellington 27 Aug 2015 –  
19 Apr 2016

*That Bloody Woman*  
by Luke Di Somma  
and Gregory Cooper  
Christchurch Festival,  
Auckland Theatre  
Company, The Court  
Theatre 28 Aug 2015 –  
6 Aug 2016

*MAMIL: Middle Aged  
Man in Lycra* by Gregory  
Cooper, The Court  
Theatre, Hawkes Bay  
Festival, Southland  
Festival of the Arts  
30 Aug 2015 –  
14 May 2016

*The White Guitar*  
by Fa'amoana John  
Luafutu, Matthias Luafutu  
and Malo Luafutu  
The Conch, Christchurch

Festival, The Hannah  
Playhouse, Q Theatre  
1 Sep 2015 – 15 Jul 2016

*If There's Not Dancing at  
the Revolution, I'm Not  
Coming...* by Julia Croft  
Basement, BATS 2 Sep  
2015 – 16 Apr 2016

*Duck, Death and the Tulip*  
by Wolf Erlbruch adapted  
by Peter Wilson  
Little Dog Barking  
Christchurch Festival,  
Lower Hutt, Waikanae,  
Didcot, Brighton,  
Canterbury, UK,  
Quangzhou International  
Puppet Festival, China,  
Auckland Festival, BATS,  
Southland Festival  
2 Sep 2015 – 8 May 2016

*Tiki Tour* by Kura  
Forrester, Basement,  
BATS, Kia Mau Festival  
4 Sep 2015 – 18 Jun 2016

*All Your Wants and  
Needs Fulfilled Forever*  
by Eli Kent, The  
Playground Collective  
Q Theatre, Vault Festival,  
London, UK  
9 Sep 2015 – 6 Mar 2016

*Real Fake White Dirt*  
by Jess Holly Bates  
Theatre Beating  
Centrepoint Dark Room,  
Emerging Writers Festival,  
Melbourne, Australia  
9 Sep 2015 – 22 Jun 2016

*Loose: A Private History  
of Booze and Iggy Pop  
1996 – 2015* by Jonny  
Potts, Sydney Fringe,

Australia, Dunedin Fringe  
10 Sep 2015 – 10 Mar 2016

*No Holds Bard* by Medlock  
and Musgrove and Michael  
Hurst, Royale Productions  
Basement, Tauranga  
10 Sep 2015 – 4 Jun 2016

*Be|Longing*, Talking House  
Invercargill, Timaru,  
Wanaka, Alexandra,  
Fortune Theatre, BATS  
15 Sep – 21 Nov 2015

*Frangipani Perfume* by  
Makerita Urale, Leeward  
Community College  
Pearl City, Hawaii, USA  
17 – 26 Sep 2015

*Kiwi Moon* by Gavin  
Bishop, adapted for the  
stage by Rachel Callinan  
Capital E National Theatre  
for Children, Hannah  
Playhouse, South Island  
Tour 26 Sep – 20 Nov 2015

*Dark Stars* by Arthur Meek  
Jonathan Council, Aux Dog  
Theatre, New York, USA  
9 – 25 Oct 2015

*The Mooncake and the  
Kumara* by Mei-Lin Te  
Puea Hansen, PANNZ,  
Oamaru, Hamilton,  
Nelson Festival, Tauranga  
Festival 10 – 25 Oct 2015

*The Things We Do*  
by Sarah Tuck  
Pat-a-cake Productions  
BATS, Auckland,  
Waiheke, The Meteor,  
Centrepoint Dark Room  
14 Oct – 1 Nov 2015

*Dead Men's Wars*  
by Ralph McCubbin Howell  
Canberra Youth Theatre  
and Long Cloud Youth  
Theatre, Show Pony  
The Street Theatre,  
Canberra, Australia, BATS  
14 – 31 Oct 2015

*Hillary Clinton / Young  
Lover* adapted from the  
book by Richard Meros  
by Arthur Meek and Geoff  
Pinfield, Theatre Beating  
Nelson Festival, Hawkes

Bay Festival, Circa  
17 Oct 2015 – 20 Feb 2016

*The Elephant Wrestler  
(The Guru of Chai)*  
by Jacob Rajan and  
Justin Lewis, Indian  
Ink Maryland, Illinois,  
Pennsylvania, New Jersey  
USA 18 Oct – 7 Nov 2015

*Café* by Rachel Callinan  
and Paul McLaughlin  
Site Specific Theatre  
Nelson Festival,  
Tauranga Festival  
19 – 30 Oct 2015

*Beards! Beards! Beards!*  
by Ralph McCubbin Howell  
Trick of the Light  
Nelson Festival, Hawkes  
Bay Festival, BATS,  
Brighton Fringe, Salisbury  
International Festival, UK  
19 Oct 2015 – 1 Jun 2016

*The Road that Wasn't There*  
by Ralph McCubbin Howell  
Trick of the Light  
Kokomai Festival,  
Tauranga Festival, Fringe  
World, Perth, Adelaide  
Fringe, Australia  
22 Oct 2015 – 20 Feb 2016

*Banging Cymbal,  
Clanging Gong*  
by Jo Randerson  
Barbarian Productions  
Hawkes Bay Festival,  
BATS, NZ Fringe  
30 Oct 2015 – 3 Mar 2016

*Ladies in Black book*  
by Carolyn Burns, music  
and lyrics Tim Finn  
Queensland Theatre  
Company, Melbourne  
Theatre Company, Australia  
16 Nov 2015 – 27 Jan 2016

*Blowing It*  
by Stephen Sinclair  
and Stephen Papps  
Fly on the Wall Theatre  
The Owl and the Cat  
Theatre, Melbourne,  
Australia 24 – 28 Nov 2015

*Christ Almighty!*  
by Natalie Medlock  
and Dan Musgrove

Bella Union, Melbourne  
Australia  
28 Nov – 10 Dec 2015

*The Elephant Thief*  
by Jacob Rajan  
and Justin Lewis  
Indian Ink, The Meteor,  
Nelson, Hannah  
Playhouse, New  
Plymouth, Q Theatre  
4 Dec 2015 – 2 Jul 2016

*"Ze": Queer as F\*ck!*  
by Michelle Lunicke  
Michelle/Ryan  
Fringe World, Perth,  
Australia, Dunedin Fringe,  
Whangarei, Auckland,  
Toronto Fringe, Canada  
24 Jan – 9 Jul 2016

*Butch Masters:  
Man of Destiny*  
by Jamie Burgess  
Midsumma Festival  
Melbourne, Australia  
28 Jan – 6 Feb 2016

*My Best Dead Friend*  
by Anya Tate-Manning  
Fringe World, Perth,  
Australia 10 – 13 Feb 2016

*At the End of My Hands*  
by Equal Voices  
BATS, TAPAC  
28 Jan – 6 Feb 2016

*funnygirl*  
by Anthony McCarten  
Salzburger Landestheater,  
Salzburg, Austria  
5 Feb – 24 Apr 2016

*The Loose Dick  
Kiddies Show*  
by Kylie Milne  
and Daryl Wrightson  
KD's Performing Arts  
Auckland Pride,  
Q Theatre, BATS, NZ  
Fringe, Dunedin Fringe  
12 Feb – 12 Mar 2016

*The Ballad of Jimmy  
Costello* by Tim Balme  
De Noorder Smederij  
Netherlands Tour  
12 Feb – 30 Apr 2016

*The Underarm* by David  
Geary and Justin Gregory  
Silly Mid On Productions

Australian Tour  
11 Mar – 2 Apr 2016

*The Offensive Nipple Show*  
by Jess Holly Bates and  
Sarah Tuck  
BATS, Basement  
16 Feb – 12 Mar 2016

*Receiver* by Daniel Fraser  
Hank of Thread  
NZ Fringe, Nelson Fringe  
18 Feb – 5 May 2016

*Potato Stamp  
Megalomaniac*  
by Andrew Gunn  
Pressure Point Collective  
NZ Fringe, Basement  
23 Feb – 18 Jun 2016

*Yours Truly* by Albert Belz  
Te Rēhia Theatre Company  
Hamilton Gardens  
Festival, Te Pou Theatre,  
Q Theatre, Waiheke  
26 Feb – 16 Jul 2016

*Not in Our  
Neighbourhood*  
by Jamie McCaskill  
Tikapa Productions  
NZ Festival  
Auckland Festival  
26 Feb – 5 Mar 2016

*Eglantyne*  
by Anne Chamberlain  
Ms Chamberlain Presents  
Adelaide Fringe, Australia  
1 – 6 Mar 2016

*Te Pō* by Carl Bland  
Theatre Stampede and  
Nightsong Productions  
NZ Festival, Auckland  
Festival 1 – 12 Mar 2016

*Swimming with Whales in  
Tonga* by Skeleton Crew  
Hamilton Fringe, Nelson  
Fringe 3 Mar – 6 May 2016

*The Wholehearted*  
by Massive Company  
Mangere Arts Centre,  
Q Theatre  
18 Mar – 10 Apr 2016

*Sons of a Bitch* by Amelia  
Dunbar and Emma  
Newborn, Farmstrong  
South Island Tour  
30 Mar – 1 May 2016

*Guji Guji* by Chih-Yuan Chen, adapted for the stage by Peter Wilson  
Little Dog Barking  
Lower North Island, Japan  
6 Apr – 31 Jul 2016

*A Man Walks into a Bar* by David Geary; Off the Avenue Productions  
Blood Moon Theatre, Sydney, Australia  
17 Apr – 7 May 2016

*Shu's Song* by Laura Gaudin, Rachel Callinan and Gina Moss; Capital E National Theatre for Children; North Island Tour  
18 Apr – 1 Jul 2016

*The Moa Show* by Jamie McCaskill and Craig Geenty; Tikapa Productions; BATS, Te Pou  
26 Apr – 7 May 2016

*Fucking Parasites* by Ninna Tersman, La Mama  
Melbourne, Australia  
Apr 27 – May 8 2016

*Where the Wild Woman Is* by Pat-A-Cake Productions  
Upper South Island Tour, Wellington  
28 Apr – 3 Jul 2016

*Ophelia Thinks Harder* by Jean Betts; The Lord Lackbeards; North Island Tour  
30 Apr – 3 Jun 2016

*Te Tenir Contre Moi* by Gary Henderson translated by Xavier Mailleux, Theatre L'Instant  
Theatre Prospero, Montreal, Canada  
1 – 31 May 2016

*Wheeler's Luck* by Nigel Collins  
Toby Leach and Damon Andrews  
The Southside Players  
Backspace Theatre, Hobart, Australia  
4 – 14 May 2016

*Everest Untold* by Gareth Davies  
Ffyfnoc Productions  
Auckland Live, Circa

Theatre, Arts on Tour NZ  
Tour 20 May – 31 Jul 2016

*Mr and Mrs Alexander* by David Ladderman and Lizzie Tollemache  
Arts on Tour NZ Tour  
31 May – 3 Jul 2016

*Ladies Night* by Stephen Sinclair and Anthony McCarten, Jally Productions NSW, QLD, VIC Tour, Australia  
8 Jun – 16 Jul 2016

*The Creeps* by Catherine Waller  
Hollywood Fringe and Encore, Los Angeles, USA  
3 Jun – 28 Jul 2016

*The Viagra Monologues* by Geraldine Brophy  
Off The Avenue Productions  
Blood Moon Theatre, Sydney, Australia  
12 Jun – 2 Jul 2016

*The Politician's Wife* by Angie Farrow  
Centrepoint, BATS  
15 – 2 Jul 2016

*Dust Pilgrim* by Read Leap Theatre; Hamilton, New Plymouth, Wellington  
23 June – 9 Jul 2016

*The Island* by Massive Company  
Mangere Arts Centre, Exchange Festival, Stirling, Scotland, UK  
28 Jun – 8 Jul 2016

*Conversations Avec Mon Pénis* by Dean Hewison, translated by Marc-André Thibault  
Theatre Bistouri  
Monument National, Montreal, Canada  
10 – 21 Jul 2016

*The Little Kowhai Tree* by Peter Wilson  
Little Dog Barking  
Wellington region  
12 – 18 Jul 2016

*Milky Bits* by Leon Wadham, Chris Parker and Hayley Sproull

The Bakery  
Basement, BATS  
14 Jun – 2 Jul 2016

*Power Plays* by Arthur Meek  
Ensemble Impact  
National School Tour  
2 May – 1 Jul 2016

*Ok, but where are you really from because your English is Very Good!* by Sam Selliman  
Stage Werx Theatre  
San Francisco, USA  
12 Jun 2016

*Purapurawhetū* by Briar Grace-Smith  
Ruia Taitea Creative  
Te Pou, Auckland Live  
6 – 13 Jul 2016

*Shot Bro – Confessions of a Depressed Bullet* by Rob Mokaraka  
Mookalucky Productions  
Kia Mau Festival, Wainuiomata  
9 Jun – 17 Jul 2016

*Whakaahuatia Mai* by Kahu Hotere; Taki Rua Productions; National Tour  
22 Jul 2016 – 24 Sep 2016

*Hinepau* by Gavin Bishop, devised by Rachel House, Jamie McCaskill, Erina Daniels, Stephen Tamarapa and Maria Walker, Capital E National Theatre for Children  
North Island Tour  
27 Jul – 25 Aug 2016

## AUCKLAND

### Auckland Theatre Company

*My Own Darling* by Grace Taylor  
Mangere Arts Center  
17 – 22 Oct 2015

*Mr Nancy* devised by Felix Becroft and the cast, Schools Tour  
4 – 17 Nov 2015  
7 – 18 Mar 2016

*Polo* by Dean Parker  
Sky City 11 – 28 Feb 2016

*You Can Always Hand Them Back* by Roger Hall, Music and Lyrics by Peter Skellern, Sky City  
31 Mar – 16 Apr 2016

*The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* by Mark Twain, adapted by Mike Hudson  
Selwyn Theatre  
21 – 30 Apr 2016

*Next Big Thing: Shoulda Woulda Coulda* devised by the cast; *Angels (Re:born)* by Tanya Muagututi'a and Joy Vaele; *Bravado* by Frith Horan, Natasha Hoyland, Beanie Maryse-Ridler and Billie Staples, Basement Theatre 16 – 30 Jul 2016

### Basement Theatre

*Success* by Stephen Sinclair  
28 July – 7 Aug 2015

*Loving Kurt Vonnegut* by Gary Stalker, Deep Field 19 – 29 Aug 2015

*The Black* by Josephine Stewart-Tewhiu  
8 – 12 Sep 2015

*Ernest Rutherford: Everyone can Science!* by Nic Sampson  
8 – 19 Sep 2015

*Fun Run* by Hamish Parkinson  
15 – 19 Sep 2015

*Callback* by Frith Horan and Lucy Suttor  
22 – 26 Sep 2015

*Officer 27* by Aroha Awarau 22 – 26 Sep 2015

*Young and Hungry: The 21st Narcissus* by Sam Brooks; *The Presentation of Findings from My Scientific Survey of the First 7500 Days of My Life, Done in the Interest of Showing You How to Live Better Lives* by Uther Dean  
10 – 24 Oct 2015

*The Stronger*  
by Nathan Joe  
Theatrewhack  
28 – 30 Oct 2015

*The Last Man on Earth (Is Trapped in a Supermarket)*  
by The People Who Play  
with Theatre  
3 – 7 Nov 2015

*Northern Glow*  
by Bryony Skillington  
10 – 14 Nov 2015

*Tiny Deaths* by Uther Dean  
17 – 21 Nov 2015

*Jesus Christ Part II*  
devised by Thomas  
Sainsbury, Gareth  
Williams, Jason Smith,  
Lara Fischel-Chisholm,  
Oliver Driver and the  
Basement Theatre  
27 Nov – 20 Dec 2015

*Defending the J.J. Mac*  
by Beanie-Maryse Ridler  
Last Tapes Theatre  
Company 2 – 6 Feb 2016

*Benedict Cumberbatch  
Must Die!* by Abby Howells  
The Frulu Collective  
23 – 27 Feb 2016

*Girl You Want*  
by Tessa Mitchell  
Luminary Pictures  
22 – 26 Mar 2016

*Miss Jean Batten*  
by Phil Ormsby  
Flaxworks  
29 Mar – 9 Apr 2016

*Hungover – A Musical  
Comedy* by Naomi Cohen  
5 – 9 Apr 2016

*Camping* by Thomas  
Sainsbury and Chris  
Parker 23 – 30 Apr 2016

*The Voice in my Head*  
by Jodie Molloy  
24 May – 4 Jun 2016

*Sham* by Jess Sayer  
We Three Productions  
31 May – 10 Jun 2016

*Glimmer* by Jason Te  
Kare 28 Jun – 2 Jul 2016

## Q Theatre

*Not Psycho*  
by Ben Henson  
Fractious Tash and  
Q Theatre

15 – 29 Aug 2015

*No More Dancing  
in the Good Room*  
by Chris Parker  
Silo 3 – 13 Feb 2016

Legacy Project 3:  
*The Last Date* by Sean  
Carley; *The Pronoun  
Game* by Iana Grace; *The  
Sign* by M Villanueva;  
*Smoke* by Joni Nelson;  
*Straight Acting* by  
Juliet Lyes and Paulo  
Va'a; *Sugar Cubes* by  
Dominique DeCoco  
Auckland Pride Festival  
9 – 13 Feb 2016

*One Day Moko*  
by Tim Carlsen, Portable  
Union 20 – 22 Jul 2016

## The Pumphouse

*The Velveteen Rabbit*  
by Margery Williams,  
adapted by Tim Bray  
Tim Bray Productions  
21 Sep – 10 Oct 2015

*Social Climbers*  
by Roger Hall  
Tadpole Productions  
15 – 25 Oct 2015

*The Santa Claus Show*  
by Tim Bray  
Tim Bray Productions  
7 – 22 Dec 2015

*People Like Us*  
by Joanna Jayne St John  
Auckland Pride  
17 – 21 Feb 2016

*The Lighthouse Keeper's  
Lunch* based on the  
books by Ronda and  
David Armitage,  
adapted by Tim Bray  
Tim Bray Productions  
11 – 30 Apr 2016

*Bare* by Toa Fraser  
Simple Truth Theatre  
26 – 28 May 2016

*Four Flat Whites in Italy*  
by Roger Hall  
Crummer Entertainment  
18 – 25 Jun 2016

*Badjelly The Witch*  
by Spike Milligan  
adapted by Tim Bray  
Tim Bray Productions  
6 – 23 Jul 2016

## Auckland Live

*Hudson and Halls Live!*  
by Kip Chapman  
Silo Theatre  
Auckland Live  
5 Nov – 5 Dec 2015

## TAPAC

*Kookoo the Bird Girl*  
by Sarah Houbolt  
TAPAC 11 – 13 Nov 2015

*Dexter's Amazing African  
Adventure* by Darlene  
Mohekey and Jess Sayer  
TAPAC and Blue Baths  
8 – 22 Jul 2016

## Te Pou Theatre

*Sister Anzac* by Geoff Allen  
Stark Theatre, Going West  
Festival 3 – 6 Sep 2015

*The Great American  
Scream* by Albert Belz  
16 – 19 Sep 2015

*Bent not Broken* adapted  
by Merrin Cavel  
8 – 9 Oct 2015

*An Unseasonable Fall of  
Snow* by Gary Henderson  
Herd of Cats Theatre  
Company 5 – 7 Nov 2015

*Niu Sila* by Oscar Kightley  
and Dave Armstrong  
12 – 14 Nov 2015

*Nga Puke* by John  
Broughton; Rua Taitea  
Creative 10 – 12 Dec 2015

*Moana and the Taniwha*  
by Wild Rumpus  
23 Jan – 8 Feb 2016

*Balls* by Joshua Baty  
Navi Collective  
16 – 19 Mar 2016

*A Man Walks into a Bar*  
by David Geary  
Dusky Room  
24 – 26 Mar 2016

*The Ball Date* by John Rata  
Simple Truth Theatre 30  
Mar – 2 Apr 2016

*Seven Deadly Monologues*  
by Benjamin Teh  
A+ Productions  
6 – 9 Apr 2016

*Occupy: The Road to Joy*  
by Andrew Parker  
Don't Blink Theatre  
Company 13 – 16 Apr 2016

*Pirates vs Ninjas vs the  
Evil Vampire Wizards*  
by Russ King  
20 – 24 Apr 2016

*Cinderella* by Michael  
Jamieson music and lyrics  
by Blaise Clotworthy  
27 – 30 Apr 2016

*Kiwa* created by Siosaia  
Folau, Theresa Sao,  
Rew Worley, Lauie Tofa,  
Kolopa Simeil Barton,  
Olive Asi and Billy Revell  
The Blackfriars  
23 – 25 Jun 2016

## Maidment Theatre

*Bare* by Toa Fraser  
Circle Up 22 – 23 Oct 2015  
*Insecurity* by Billy Revel  
The Blackfriars  
22 – 23 Oct 2014

*Only in Body*  
by Peter Hibberdine  
Navi Collaborative  
18 – 27 Nov 2015

## Garnet Station

*The Rover*  
adapted by Nathan Joe  
Theatrewhack  
10 – 19 Dec 2015

*Silent Night* by Yvette  
Parsons 23 Dec 2015

*Ain't That a Bitch*  
by Anthea Hill  
Fox Rabbit Bear  
22 Jun – 2 Jul 2016



## Mangere Arts Centre

*The Girl from Niue Island*  
by Sinahemana Hekau  
and Vela Manusaute  
20 – 27 Jan 2016

*Pigs on the Run* created  
by Alison Quigan, Troy  
Tu'ua and the Company  
23 – 30 Apr 2016

## HAMILTON

### The Meteor

*The Devil and Mr Mulcahy*  
by James K Baxter  
Rune Theatre  
16 – 19 Sep 2015

*Hansel and Gretel*  
and the *Big Bad Wolves*  
by Cecilia Mooney  
Stories and More  
Theatre Company  
7 – 10 Oct 2015

*Pancakes* by Louise  
Blackstock  
14 – 17 Oct 2015

*God Only Knows*  
by Conor Maxwell  
Small Dynamite  
20 – 23 Apr 2016

*Sherlock Holmes and the*  
*Case of the Missing Notes*  
by Ross Macleod  
Apocalypse Lounge  
29 Jun – 2 Jul 2016

*The Prince and The Pea*  
by Benny Marama  
19 – 23 Jul 2016

### Other Venues Hamilton

*Drowning in Veronica Lake*  
by Phil Ormsby  
Flaxworks Theatre  
Hamilton Gardens Festival  
22 – 23 Feb 2016

*Life Music* by Carving in  
Ice Theatre Company  
Hamilton Gardens Festival  
24 – 26 Feb 2016

*Hot Water* by Roger Hall  
Clarence Street Theatre  
30 – 9 Jul 2016

*Tales of Gogol*  
by David Sidwell

and John Mandelberg  
Hamilton Gardens Festival  
23 Feb 2016

### Hamilton Fringe 3 – 13 March 2016

*Bill Massey's Tourists*  
by Jan Bolwell  
*I Wanna Learn Aikido*  
by Michael Gaastra  
*Knitting* by Brian Turner  
*Remains* by Antony-Paul  
Aiono and Benny Marama  
*Running Uphill*  
by Rosie Cann  
*Shoes* by Sebastian Byrne

## PALMERSTON NORTH

### Centrepoint

*Boys at the Beach*  
by Alison Quigan and  
Ross Gumbley  
7 Nov – 19 Dec 2015

*Stag Weekend*  
by Dan Bain and  
Brendon Bennetts  
1 Apr – 14 May 2016

*The Journey of Hōiho /*  
*Te Haerenga o Hōiho*  
by Tainui Tukiwaho  
Te Rēhia Theatre  
13 – 16 Jul 2016

### Dark Room

*Everything is Surrounded*  
by *Water* by Hannah  
Banks and Uther Dean  
My Accomplice  
11 – 12 Sep 2015

*The Lola Show*  
by Ian Harman  
11 – 12 Sep 2015

*Eating the Wolf*  
by Sarah Delahunty  
The Production Co  
8 – 10 Oct 2015

*Lashings of Whipped*  
*Cream* by Fiona Samuel  
Proper Job Productions  
5 – 7 Nov 2015

*Wings*  
by Jess Sayer  
Junket Theatre  
2 – 6 Sep 2015

## WELLINGTON

### Circa

*The Travelling Squirrel*  
by Robert Lord  
5 Sep – 2 Oct 2015

*Gifted* by Patrick Evans  
10 – 31 Oct 2015

*Ache* by Pip Hall  
24 Oct – 21 Nov 2015

*All Our Sons*  
by Witi Ihimaera  
Taki Rua Productions  
5 – 14 Nov 2015

*Robin Hood: The*  
*Pantomime* by Roger  
Hall. Lyrics by Paul  
Jenden, Music by Michael  
Nicholas Williams  
21 Nov – 20 Dec 2015  
2 – 9 Jan 2016

*A Child's Christmas*  
*in Wales and Other*  
*Memories of Childhood*  
dramatised by Ray  
Henwood  
28 Nov – 20 Dec 2015

*The ACB with Honora Lee*  
by Kate de Goldi  
adapted by Jane Waddell  
NZ Festival  
27 Feb – 26 Mar 2016

*Jekyll and Hyde* by  
A Slightly Isolated Dog  
19 Mar – 16 Apr 2016

*Joyful and Triumphant*  
by Robert Lord  
2 Apr – 7 May 2016

### BATS

*Cleanskin* by Andrew  
Clarke; Making Friends  
Collective and Notre Vie  
4 – 8 Aug 2015

*Stutterpop*  
by Sam Brooks  
Smoke Labours  
1 – 5 Sep 2015

*Knifed* by Adam Goodall  
Making Friends Collective  
8 – 19 Sep 2015

*All Ears* by Kate McIntosh  
SPIN and Barbarian

Productions  
10 – 12 Sep 2015

*Scene* by Alayne Dick,  
Daniel Goodwin and Jess  
Green 16 – 19 Sep 2015

*The Quiet Room*  
by Renee Liang  
24 Sep – 3 Oct 2015

*A Collection of Noises*  
by Alexander Sparrow  
3 – 7 Nov 2015

*Call Me Bukowski* by Ben  
Wilson 10 – 14 Nov 2015

*The F Word* by Best on  
Tap 11 – 14 Nov 2015

*Gift of the Gab*  
by James Cain, With Our  
Powers Combined  
17 – 21 Nov 2015

*Paper Chains and Black*  
*Holes* by Andrew Clarke  
19 – 21 Nov 2015

*A Christmas Karel Čapek*  
by David Lawrence  
The Bacchanals  
4 – 19 Dec 2015

*Stages of Cheer: It's an*  
*Infinite Christmas!*  
by David Klein; *Crossbow*  
*Cat* by Abby Howells;  
*Alien Customs* by Johnny  
Crawford; *How to Plan a*  
*Perfect Christmas*  
by Sasha Tilly  
8 – 12 Dec 2015

*Discharge Goes*  
*Back to School*  
by Discharge  
2 – 13 Feb 2016

*Last Meals: A Nine Course*  
*Buffet* by Keely Meechan;  
Cool, Calm and Collective  
9 – 14 Feb 2016

*Wolf* by Tim Barcode  
15 – 24 Mar 2016

*The Seven Sons of*  
*Supparath: The Winch of*  
*Fate – Part One* by Uther  
Dean and Paul Waggott  
My Accomplice  
29 Mar – 9 Apr 2016

*The Blue-Bearded Lady*  
by Pipi-Ayesha Evans  
Overhead Risk Circus  
Theatre

30 Mar – 2 Apr 2016

*A Trial* devised by  
Joel Baxendale, Karin  
McCracken, Anya Tate-  
Manning, Jo Randerson  
and Maria Williams  
19 – 23 Apr 2016

*Public Service*  
*Announcements: Civil War*  
by James Nokise, Thom  
Adams and Simon Leary  
No Fefe Collective,  
NZ Comedy Festival  
10 – 14 May 2016

*My Dad's Boy*  
by Finnius Teppet  
26 May – 4 Jun 2016

*Versions of Allah*  
by Moana Ete  
Omokomo, Kia Mau  
Festival 7 – 11 Jun 2016

*The Vultures*  
by Miria George; Tawata

Productions, Kia Mau  
Festival 8 – 18 Jun 2016

*Young and Hungry:*  
*Bloody Hell Jesus Get*  
*Your Own Friends*  
by Lucy Craig; *Like Sex*  
by Nathan Joe; *Dead*  
*Days* by Owen Baxendale  
15 – 30 Jul 2016

### Gryphon Theatre

*The Genie, The Lamp*  
*and Aladdin*  
by Rodney Bain  
Kapitall Kids' Theatre  
29 Sep – 10 Oct 2015

*Kiwiman and Robin*  
by Jessica Hammond  
Backyard Theatre  
19 – 30 Apr 2016

*Dinorock – A musical for*  
*Kids* by Aaron Blackledge  
Kapitall Kids' Theatre  
12 – 23 Jul 2016

*Hyde* adapted by Jett  
Ranchod, *Mirrored Faces*  
27 Jul – 6 Aug 2016

### Other Venues Wellington

*The Princess and the Pea*  
by Rob Ormsby, Kidzstuff  
Taranui Tramping Club  
26 Sep – 10 Oct 2015

*Nightmare* by Lana Burns  
Sweet Muffin Productions  
Newtown Community and  
Cultural Centre  
29 Oct – 7 Nov 2015

*Snow Bright and*  
*the Frozen Waste*  
by Geraldine Brophy;  
Next Stage Theatre  
Company Lower Hutt  
Little Theatre  
2 – 5 Nov 2015

*Mrs Merry's Christmas*  
*Concert* by Geraldine  
Brophy; Nextstage  
Lower Hutt Little Theatre  
15 – 19 Dec 2015

*Dog and Bone* by Helen  
Pearse-Otene Te Rākau  
Hua o te Wao-Tapu-nui-a-  
Tāne Soundings Theatre  
21 – 31 Jan 2016

*The Woman Who Forgot*  
by Rachel Davies with  
Jess Feast, NZ Festival  
2 – 9 Mar 2016

*The Devil's Half-Acre*  
by Ralph McCubbin Howell  
Trick of the Light Theatre  
NZ Festival, Hannah  
Playhouse 9 – 13 Mar 2016

*Page Turners*  
by Jim Moriarty,  
Jo Randerson, Jean  
Sergeant, Isobel Mebus  
and Jane Yonge  
St James Theatre, NZ  
Festival 6 Mar 2016

*The (Kiwi) Gingerbread*  
*Man* by Guy Langford  
Kidzstuff; Taranui  
Tramping Club  
16 – 30 Apr 2016

*Harold and the Witch*  
by Prue Langbein and  
Kate Ward, The Academy  
of Dramatic Arts  
Coasters Musical Theatre  
19 – 28 Apr 2016



### Drama NZ: the New Zealand Association for Drama in Education.

#### Who is Drama NZ?

Drama New Zealand is the national body that represents  
and advocates on behalf of drama teachers from all sectors,  
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practitioners at national and international forums as well as  
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**Create, Educate, Communicate**

*Ecosystemic* by Long  
Cloud Youth Theatre  
Taranua Tramping Club  
13 – 14 May 2016

*The Owl and the Pussycat*  
by Rachel More, Kidzstuff  
Taranua Tramping Club  
9 – 23 Jul 2016

## **NZ Fringe Festival 10 February – 4 March 2016**

*All Pearls Want to Return  
to the Sea* by Julia  
Campbell; *Billy and the  
Curse of the Falling Limbs*  
by Icicle Productions;  
*Birdlife* by Bridget Sanders  
*Citizen* by Freya Daly  
Sadgrove; *Conversations  
with my Counsellor* by Ian  
Harris; *Death Never Blinks*  
by Sam Smith and Steven  
Youngblood; *Extremely  
Loud and Incredibly Gross*  
by Adam Goodall; *How to  
Romance a Human* by Dog  
with Ball; *I Am... Tasha*  
*Fierce* by Rose Kirkup;  
*Layman* by Patrick Carroll;  
*I Lip Synch for Him* by  
Sam Brooks; *Life Finds  
a Way* by Timedesk  
Productions  
*Man Parts – Dannevirke's  
Greatest Female Tenor*  
by Carrie Green;  
*Misunderstood the Musical*  
by Laura Irish, Daniel Allan  
and Isaac Thomas; *Natural  
Habitat* by Bridie Connell;  
*The Owl and the Pussycat*  
by Company of Giants  
*A Play About Space* by  
Uther Dean; *Queens* by  
Sam Brooks and Uther  
Dean; *Retraction* by  
Kristyan Sian; *Silent Moon*  
by Reuben Todd; *The  
Trickle Down Effect* by  
Pat-A-Cake Productions  
*This is What it Looks Like*  
by Neenah Dekkers-  
Reihana; *Thoughts and  
Observations from my  
Holiday on Earth* by Harriet  
Hughes; *Through Rose  
Coloured Glasses* by  
Courtney Rose Brown;  
*Where She Stood*  
by Sarah Delahunty

## **OTHER NORTH ISLAND**

*The Choice*  
by Darlene Mohekey  
and Jess Sayer  
Blue Baths, Rotorua  
22 Jan – 26 Feb 2016

*Dexter's Deep Sea  
Discovery* by Darlene  
Mohekey and Jess Sayer  
Blue Baths, Rotorua  
30 Sep – 10 Oct 2015

*Butter to Burlesque*  
Northland Youth Theatre  
Whangarei  
11 – 20 Oct 2016

*Mall Dreams* Northland  
Youth Theatre, Whangarei  
29 July – 6 Aug 2016

## **CHRISTCHURCH**

### **The Court Theatre**

*Maui and the Sun*  
by Holly Chappell  
and Rutene Spooner,  
Schools Tour  
11 Aug – 4 Sep 2015

*Hamlet – The Video Game  
(The Stage Show)*  
by Mary DeMarle  
and Simon Peacock  
Christchurch Festival 3 –  
6 Sep 2015

*Ngā Tai o Kurawaka:  
He Kura e Huna*  
by Hōhepa Waitoa  
Taki Rua Productions  
and Christchurch Festival  
8 – 10 Sep 2015

*Little Red Riding Hood*  
by Brendon Bennetts  
30 Sep – 10 Oct 2015

*Badjelly The Witch*  
by Spike Milligan,  
adapted by Alannah  
O'Sullivan  
20 – 30 Jan 2016

*The Wonderful  
Wizard of Oz* devised  
by the Company  
Riccarton House  
3 – 21 Feb 2016

*Winston's Birthday*  
by Paul Baker  
6 – 27 Feb 2016

*Matthew, Mark, Luke and  
Joanne* by Carl Nixon  
9 Apr – 7 May 2016

*The Dunstan Creek Séance*  
by Lizzie Tollemache and  
David Ladderman  
16 Apr – 7 May 2016

*Matariki – The Little Eyes  
in the Sky* by Rutene  
Spooner and Holly  
Chappell; Schools Tour  
30 May – 6 Jul 2016

*Cops and Robbers*  
by Hamish Parkinson  
and Daniel Pengelly  
20 – 30 Apr 2016

*The Little Mermaid*  
adapted by Allison  
Horsley 13 – 23 Jul 2016

### **Other Venues Christchurch**

*Frankenstein*  
by Free Theatre  
The Gym  
17 Jun – 2 Jul 2016

*White Cloud*  
by Tim Finn and Ken  
Duncum, Jumpboard,  
Christchurch Arts Festival  
4 – 5 Sep 2015

## **DUNEDIN**

### **Fortune Theatre**

*Kings of the Gym*  
by Dave Armstrong  
6 – 27 Feb 2016

*The Emperor's New  
Clothes* adapted by  
Gregory Cooper  
16 – 23 Jul 2016

*Flagons and Foxtrots*  
by Alison Quigan and  
Ross Gumbley  
14 Nov – 12 Dec 2015

*Winston's Birthday*  
by Paul Baker  
12 Mar – 2 Apr 2016

*Niu Sila* by Oscar Kightley  
and Dave Armstrong  
30 Apr – 3 Jun 2016

### **Other Venues Dunedin**

*Farley's Arcade: The  
Wildest Place in Town*

by Wow! Productions  
Athenaeum Building  
28 Aug – 6 Sep 2015

*Janus*  
devised by Clisterfk  
Counterpoint, Dunedin  
Pride; Community Gallery  
8 – 10 Oct 2015

*The Most Wonderful  
Time of the Year*  
by Rosie Howells  
Counterpoint  
Playhouse Theatre  
9 – 12 Dec 2015

*Wine Lips*  
by Sam Brooks  
Counterpoint,  
Allen Hall  
6 – 8 Apr 2016

## **Dunedin Fringe Festival 3 – 13 March 2016**

*Slutty Ladies  
Garden Party*  
by Sarah McDougall;  
*Tales of the Tabletop*  
*Two Zones Please*  
by Feral Grace

## **OTHER SOUTH ISLAND**

*A Brief History of  
Madness*  
by Paul Maunder  
Kiwi Possum Productions  
Regent Theatre,  
Greymouth  
16 – 19 Sep 2015

## **Nelson Fringe Festival 1 – 7 May 2016**

*Choreomania* by Gaelynnne  
Pound; *The Enchanted  
Coast* by John Crick;  
*Hot Chocolate and The  
Trail's End: A Tale of  
Bonnie and Clyde* by  
Laura Irish; *Japanese  
Love Tales* by Akiko  
Miyamoto, Frances  
Rae and Roger Sanders;  
*Scumbag* by AJ Murtagh;  
*The Story of How I  
Became Me, What is Me,  
and Where to From Here?*  
by Georgina Sivier;  
*Uncensored* by Dramalab;  
*Wag the Dog* by Dawn  
Marron

# PLAYMARKET INFORMATION

The Playmarket agency issues and manages performance licenses, manages royalty payments, circulates plays in New Zealand and internationally, advises on and negotiates commission, translation and collaboration agreements, and maintains an archive of playwrights' work and materials related to it and circulates their plays in.

Playmarket offers advice to playwrights, theatremakers and producers, a raft of development resources such as clinics, readings, and events; and industry discourse, partnerships and networks. Our Bookshop provides every published New Zealand play in print and an extensive catalogue of plays in manuscript form available to download or purchase.

## FACTS AND FIGURES

### 1 July 2015 – 30 June 2016

Professional performance licenses issued: 89

Community performance licenses issued: 66

International licenses issued: 27

School/Tertiary performance licenses issued: 149

Scripts circulated: 1880

Scripts/drafts received: 323

Paid Script assessments: 13

## PUBLISHING

### NZ Play Series

*Shift: Man in a Suitcase* by Lynda Chanwai-Earle, *Mum's Choir* by Alison Quigan, *The Wife who Spoke Japanese in her Sleep* by Vivienne Plumb | Series editor: David O'Donnell | Design: Cansino & Co | Editing and Production: Whitireia Publishing

*Best Playwriting Book Ever* by Roger Hall  
Design: Cansino & Co | Editing and Production: Whitireia Publishing

### Playmarket Annual

Editor: Mark Amery | Design: Cansino & Co  
Editorial assistants: Salesi Le'ota and Murray Lynch

## eBulletin

Published monthly via email. News and opportunities for those interested in New Zealand plays | Editor: Salesi Le'ota

## edBulletin

Sent to schools biannually, offering resources and opportunities to teachers  
Editor: Salesi Le'ota

## COMPETITIONS AND PROJECTS

### Playmarket Award Winner:

Jean Betts

### Bruce Mason Award Winner 2015:

Jess Sayer

### Adam NZ Play Award Winner:

*Tan-knee* by Maraea Rakuraku

**Runner-up:** *Sean Penn is in his Boat* by Josephine Stewart-Tewhiu

### Best Play by a Woman Playwright:

*Tan-knee* by Maraea Rakuraku

### Best Play by a Māori Playwright:

*Tan-knee* by Maraea Rakuraku

### Best Play by a Pasifika Playwright:

*12th Round* by Suli Moa

**Highly Commended:** *Fool to Cry* by Steven Page and *My Dad's Boy* by Finnius Teppett



**Playwrights b4 25 Winners 2016:**

*Like Sex* by Nathan Joe

**Highly Commended:** *The First Time* by Courtney Rose Brown and *My Dad's Boy* by Finnius Teppett

**Playmarket Plays for the Young**

**Competition 2015:** *Dexter's Deep Sea Discovery* by Darlene Mohekey and Jess Sayer (3 – 8 year olds), *The Puha Squadron* by Chris Molloy (8 – 12 year olds) and *Inky Pinky Ponky* by Amanaki Prescott-Faletau and Leki Jackson-Bourke (teenagers and overall winner)

**Playwrights' Retreat 2016:** Nicki Bloom (Playwriting Australia Exchange Writer), Sam Brooks, Kathryn Burnett, Sarah Delahunty, Adam Goodall, Lori Leigh, Renee Liang, Isobel MacKinnon and Jo Randerson

**Playwrights in Schools programme in partnership with NZ Book Council:**

Dave Armstrong, Gary Henderson, Stephen Sinclair, Philippa Werry

**Scotland Residency in partnership with**

**Playwrights' Studio Scotland:** Arthur Meek

**Young and Hungry Playwrights' Initiative**

**2016:** *Bloody Hell Jesus (Get Your Own Friends)* by Lucy Craig, *Like Sex* by Nathan Joe, *Dead Days* by Owen Baxendale

**Robert Lord Cottage Residencies:**

Nick Starr, Barbara Else, Paula Green, Kate Prior, Murray Edmond, Diana Noonan, Bernadette Hall, Chris Carey

**CLINICS, READINGS AND WORKSHOPS**

**1 July 2015 – 30 June 2016:**

*Officer 27* by Aroha Awarau, *The ACB of Honora Lee* by Kate de Goldi, adapted by Jane Waddell, *The Woman Who Forgot* by Rachel Davies with Jess Feast, *The Gift of Tongues* by Michelanne Forster, *Significance* by Tom McCrory, *Cell Fish* by Miriama McDowell and Rob Mokaraka, *Blackout* by Sepelini Mu'uau, *Congregation* by Gavin McGibbon, *Rukahu* by James Nokise, *Let's Save the Universe* by Benjamin Teh, *Women with Swords* by Geoff Allen, *Hold Me* by Emily Duncan, *Scarlet and Gold* by Lorae Parry,



*Modern Girls in Bed* by Cherie Jacobson and Alex Lodge, *The Devil's Half-Acre* by Ralph McCubbin Howell, *Sean Penn is in his Boat* by Josephine Stewart-Tewhiu, *The Legacy* Project 3, *The Biggest* by Jamie McCaskill

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### Playmarket thanks our partners for their support:

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PREVIOUS PAGE: *Funnygirl* by Anthony McCarten, Salzburg State Theatre, Austria. Image: Anna-Maria Löffelberger.



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# THE LAST WORD

*George Parker of Free Theatre asks what the proposed Performing Arts Precinct for Christchurch tells us about theatre.*

Christchurch has changed radically since the earthquakes, its theatre almost not at all. Reviews and season releases consign theatre to passive distraction: a reassuring mirror held up to a white, middle class perspective with conventional staging designed to make an audience feel safe.

In a city that has a unique chance to refocus art's role in challenging times, why are we falling back on middle class distractions loaded with past stereotypes that are not reflecting our lifestyles any longer?

Theatre is not taken seriously as art in New Zealand. This culture boasts artists recognised internationally for distinctive work in other artforms. The same cannot be said for theatre. It expresses more than the others a deeply ingrained colonial hangover. It says a lot that perhaps the best example of a distinct New Zealand theatre has been presented by those working in dance. The likes of Lemi Ponifasio have greater success overseas than here.

Theatre here is the most conservative of the arts because it is potentially the most radical and politically efficacious. Theatre can position the spectator in live exchanges, incorporating diverse disciplines to explore questions from multiple directions. It can create different perspectives that threaten a monocultural view.

I'm not against commercial theatre distractions, I'm just sick of this being funded continuously, disproportionately and at the expense of artistic alternatives.

I wouldn't be writing this now if I hadn't played chicken with an alternative. In 1995, I attended *Medeamaterial* at the Free Theatre. Peter Falkenberg's direction of this Heiner Müller piece completely redefined theatre for me. Reviewer Imogen de la Bere commented: "[I]t bears as much relationship to what passes for theatre here as chess does to snakes and ladders".

Alan Brunton: "I had recently returned from a decade of theatrical work in New York and in Europe. This production indicated that there was a dialogue between the high cultural centres and New Zealand. I left the performance with both exultation and relief. It seemed that in this country there could be work done that was serious, experimental and dangerous."

How does an artist of this calibre, producing high-quality, ground-breaking work for nearly four decades, continue to be made so invisible in this country? Filmmaker Shirley Horrocks who has been filming Free Theatre work keeps asking the same question.

Recent reports on performing arts venues (Ministry for Culture and Heritage) and

community theatre (CNZ) have obfuscated activity in Christchurch. The reports seem an attempt to retrospectively affirm buildings proposed by the big players and blueprints, having jumped the vital step of surveying and consulting with the diversity of players across disciplines towards an arts strategy for the city.

A glossy “vision document” for the proposed Performing Arts Precinct (PAP) was released in February. It described the number one driver for the PAP as “a new artistic identity for Christchurch”: a growing local and international appreciation of the “experimental” post-quake spirit. The authors failed to consult contemporary performing arts groups.

Also missing, organisations such as the Arts Festival and the Arts Centre. The latter’s vision document features contemporary performance spaces as a core part of its future plans. This has already begun with Free Theatre and its work in The Gym, the first arts-based residency in the Arts Centre and the first professional theatre organisation to return to the central city in September 2014.

When theatre organisations were finally invited to take part in conversations around the PAP with CCC staff in May, it was with a view to ascertaining how we might use a new black box theatre proposed for the precinct. Clearly, this venue would be suited to touring companies with pre-existing work with little concern for how to foster local groups to develop new contemporary work. There seemed little awareness that an artist-driven black box theatre had commenced in the Arts Centre with The Gym.

A specialised light and sound fitout in The Gym has allowed Free Theatre to a central New Works and Education Programme with a diversity of artists. This is part of what the new Arts Centre can provide: small to medium spaces that allow for the development and presentation of new, interdisciplinary performance work. However,




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## A UNIQUE CHANCE TO REFOCUS ART'S ROLE

the role of the Arts Centre is being displaced by attempts to fulfil the imposed idea of a ‘precinct’. The crazy plethora of proposed presentational venues continues this culture’s commercial obsessions.

In cultures where theatre is valued as an art, a functioning part of a healthy society, the innovators and experimenters create the avant-garde experiences that expand what is possible, developing new audiences, so that the mainstream might evolve. Rather than seeing experimental art theatre as a release valve for youthful exuberance before joining the commercial mainstream, we need to develop it as an essential way to question our time and place. If we don’t, theatre will continue to act not simply as a reflection of an unsustainable consumer culture but a powerful affirmation of its destructive logic.

ABOVE: *Kafka’s Amerika* by Free Theatre. Image: CMG Studios.

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