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# HERE & NOW YOUNG WRITER'S TABLE

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Image: *8 Reasonable Demands* by Joni Nelson.  
Premiere production at HERE & NOW Festival 2019.  
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# DIRECTOR'S WORD

ISSUE *No 54*

In 2010 Playmarket first compiled statistics on percentages of New Zealand work on our stages. 2018's statistics show that 84% of work on our professional stages currently originates within Aotearoa. Even taking into account the different ways that we have gathered information on productions, our annual calendar has grown from recording 95 productions in 1999 to over 350 this year, including 26 productions toured or staged internationally. A testament to the growth of local work being produced.

Fifteen years ago, then Playmarket Director, Mark Amery asked playwrights to put questions to producers. This year we have done the same. The resulting responses reveal the ways relationships have stayed the same and those that may have changed. The theatre landscape has certainly altered. The range of venues utilised and the process of creation and writing are much broader today. Playmarket represents and helps develop work that provokes, inspires, entertains, and challenges audience assumptions of what theatre might be. Group devised work and work created by a solo playwright are equally part of the lifeblood of theatre in Aotearoa.

Throughout this annual we've aimed to elicit useful advice and inspiration from practitioners on aspects of the processes of theatre writing, theatremaking and producing. The factors that sustain relationships between playwrights and producers and the resilience that makes playwrights are the key focus. Articles cover myriad topics from the joys of touring, dealing with media, undertaking playwriting residencies, creative solutions in producing your own work and a wicked take on completing your tax obligations.

This issue, once again skilfully edited by Mark Amery, is full of information and I feel sure you will glean useful gems for your practice or your theatre attendance.

**Murray Lynch**

Director, Playmarket



**PLAYMARKET ANNUAL**

THE MAGAZINE OF THE NEW ZEALAND  
PLAY AND PLAYWRIGHT

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COVER IMAGE: Tanea Heke and Mitch Tawhi  
Thomas with Toi Whakaari: New Zealand Drama  
School students, Wellington. Image: Philip Merry.  
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CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: *Middle Age Spread* by Roger Hall, Centrepoint Theatre. Image: Alexander Hallag; *Medusa* by Julia Croft, Virginia Frankovich and Nisha Madhan, Zanetti Productions. Image: Julie Zhu; *Orientation* by Chye-Ling Huang, Proudly Asian Theatre and Q Theatre. Image: Nahyeon Lee; *Rants in the Dark* based on the book by Emily Writes, adapted for the stage by Mel Dodge, Lyndee-Jane Rutherford and Bevin Linkhorn, Circa Theatre. Image: Roc+ Photography; *Play Play* by Phoebe Hurst, Melanie Luckman and Hannah Wheeler, Cubbin Theatre Company. Image: Naomi Haussmann.

# Why I wrote the play I wrote

BRIAR GRACE-SMITH

*on Purapurawhetū*

*Purapurawhetū* was one of those rare stories that seemed to fall out onto the page already knowing what it was. It took a short time to write and didn't have a long development process. I think that's partly because I had more ideas back then (one had to leave to make room for another) and partly because it had been waiting to be told for a very long time.

One Sunday, I was in the whare raranga (weaving room) helping to weave one of the tukutuku panels in preparation for the opening of the new whareniui at Hongoeka Bay, near the mouth of the Porirua Harbour.

There was no one else in the whare raranga (weaving room) that day, except for me and one of the aunties. I sat at the back of the panel, threading strands of bleached white kiekie through the gaps to her. These she would wrap around the dowelling and thread back to me. When the strands became too short I would knot them as neatly as I could. The back of the panel you see, is as important as the front. The work was slow but very satisfying, especially when the pattern began to emerge.

The panel between us also made talk come easily and as we wove, this aunty told me stories I hadn't heard before about growing

up at the Pā, and about the different whānau that lived there. I began to build a picture of what it must've been like all those decades ago. The pattern we were weaving that day was purapurawhetū. This is made up of a series of white crosses against a black background. Each cross represents a star and each star is the spirit of someone who has passed on and who now watches over us from the night sky.

As the talk (and laughter) continued that day I began to think about writing a play where, as a panel was being woven, its meaning is revealed in the story that takes place on stage, with the actors criss-crossing it into life.

I wrote a story about Tyler, a young male weaver, who, when weaving the last tukutuku panel in preparation for the opening of a marae – pushes and pulls, not only at strands of kiekie but at the secrets of the past. By the story's end, the truth behind the character Bubba's death is revealed. This releases the burden of the secret from the child's murderer (a brother, who was just a boy back then) his chiefly father, who had since gone (so it seems) quite mad, and from his mother, the mysterious Aggie Rose. The village is then freed of the 'sadness' that has pervaded it for so long and Bubba's spirit is finally able to join his family in the sky.




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## WRITING IS A GREAT HEALER

While much of the play's genesis was inspired from that day spent weaving, it wasn't until the play's second season – during an interview with Brian Edwards – that the other reason I had told this story became clear to me.

As a child I grew up in a big family of boys. My childhood was one big noisy adventure. My mother had been the eldest of ten children and she was big on manaakitanga. We often had whānau, friends or people who needed somewhere to be, staying with us. When my two cousins came to live with us, I slept on a stretcher and became a transient sleeper and I liked it that way. I'd just lug the thing around and put it anywhere I wanted. But most of the time, if my plan was successful and they let me, I ended up top and tailing with one of my bros.

Mum always seemed to be busy, either working (she worked full-time) or cooking and looking after people. She had a full life. Most of the time she seemed happy or tired! She laughed a lot, but sometimes, just sometimes, I'd catch her looking far away into the distance. Occasionally she'd cry. I'd always known where her sadness came from. She had told me that I'd had an older brother who had died before he turned two. He was being looked

after by the neighbour and had drowned. It was an accident and Mum never blamed them.

"He was just a baby and he needed me" she said out loud once. Even now this breaks my heart.

We had moved from that place by the time I was born, but every year we'd call into that neighbour's petrol station on our way north and Mum would spend a long time hugging them, they were so sad. She also gave them lots of food. She was a great cook.

Writing is a great healer, whether it be your own pain, or someone else's – it has the power to get right inside of it and break it down. While *Purapurawhetū* is different to my mum's story of loss, what it is saying about grief and forgiveness is the same.

I know now that I wrote *Purapurawhetū* for my beautiful mother and for the brother I lost, who I never knew. I wanted to let go of the sadness that wasn't mine and yet had been part of me for as long as I could remember. I wanted Mum to truly know that no one was to blame. I wanted to visualise Mum and my brother (and also my Dad) as stars dancing across the night sky.

ABOVE: George Henare and Nancy Brunning in *Purapurawhetū*, by Briar Grace-Smith, Taki Rua Productions. Image: Stephen A'Court.



# WELLINGTON

BY JAMES WENLEY

With one week to go until the BATS 30th 'BATStravanga' birthday celebration, staff could be forgiven for freaking out, a little. For one night only, 1 Kent Terrace was to be moved up the road to the blockbuster-sized Embassy Theatre. Would it be filled?

The community more than turned out. *Puppet Fiction's* Tarantino knockoffs were dusted off to play to their biggest crowd yet (the cult show originating at BATS tiny Pit Bar (RIP) in 2012). Gobi and Zina visited from 1997's *Krishnan's Dairy*, courtesy of Jacob Rajan. Michael Galvin and Tim Balme squeezed back into their Everly Brothers suits, taking us all the way back to 1990 and Ken Duncum's *Blue Sky Boys*. But who in the audience had the longest association with the venue?

Hosts Jo Randerson and Carrie Green invited the crowd to stand. One year? Take a seat. Two years? Ten? Twenty? Fewer were standing. Thirty? Applause. And then they kept counting. Back through the Rodney Bane and David Austin period. And further still, to the Unity Theatre days. A moving acknowledgment of lineage and history, let the record show that Dawn Sanders outlasted us all.

I was back in my seat fairly smartly, a johnny-come-lately to Pōneke. Reversing the annual Wellington to Auckland drift, I've switched allegiance. Go Taki Rua! Up Tawata! Come on Red Scare! Binge for the win! Absolutely Performatively Wellington: where the co-op is king and the sparsity of salaried work is keenly felt.

I'd had a short skirmish during NZ Theatre Month, taking in the aptly-titled *Wonderful* by Dean Parker and *Modern Girls in Bed* by Cherie Jacobson and Alex Lodge.

The latter was part of Circa's WTF! Women's Theatre Festival, which took over the venue for over two months in 2018. WTF! included a development season of *Rants in the Dark* (an adaptation of Emily Writes' book, which later gained a full season), *Bloomsbury Women and the Wild Colonial Girl* by Lorae Parry, Lori Leigh's *Uneasy Dreams and Other Things*. Meanwhile Medusa shook the Circa foundations as the creators (Julia Croft, Nisha Madhan and Virginia Frankovich) took sledgehammers to clay and phallo-centric dramaturgy.

After my official move I plunged into the remaining offerings of late 2018: Te Auaha's Measina Festival, Barnaby Olson's shaggy dog OE story *The Turkish Dogs are Racist*, Nikita 雅涵 Tu-Bryant's beautiful *Tide Waits for No Man*, Vincent Konrad's absurdist *Life in the Whale*, and STAB Commission *Actual Fact*, a swirling post-truth storm from Meg Rollandi and Isobel MacKinnon.

I devoured the New Zealand Fringe: elastic-limbed Thomas Monckton's *Only Bones 1.0* won best in Fringe, and local premieres included *Full Scale* (MacKinnon and Rollandi) and talent-packed *Massive Crushes* (Uther Dean).

I orientated myself geographically through promenade pieces. George Fenn improvised a multidimensional back-alley street tour in Router *Sidewalker*. Binge Culture's mobile/live spy game *This Text Will Self-Destruct* resulted in a number of paranoid people making coded hand signals throughout CubaDupa. But I have Barbarian's *Captain Cook Thinks Again* to thank for necessary Te Whanganui-a-Tara education. Whenever I walk down



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## HERE'S TO BRAVER AND BOLDER THEATRE

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP  
LEFT: *The Attitudes: Refusing Performance* by Jade Eriksen and Madeline McNamara, BATS. Image: Philip Merry.

*Uneasy Dreams and Other Things* by Lori Leigh, Circa Theatre. Image: Tabitha Arthur.

*PSA: The Ghosts of Christmas Parties* by Thom Adams and Carrie Green, No Fefe Collective. Image: Philip Merry.

*Actual Fact* by Isobel MacKinnon and Meg Rollandi, BATS. Image: Philip Merry.

*Mating in Captivity* by Oliver Page, A Mulled Whine and BATS. Image: Eleanor Strathern.

*Fishin' Chip* by Maia Diamond, The Co-Lab. Image: Julie Zhu.

*Bloomsbury Women and the Wild Colonial Girl* by Lorae Parry, Circa Theatre. Image: Stephen A'Court.

PREVIOUS PAGE: *Second Unit* by Tāwhiri with Koko Creative. Image: Jeff McEwan, Capture Studios.

Taranaki and Wakefield Streets, I continue to feel the resonance of this piece and the colonial present.

But as 2019 continued I wondered – where was the edge? The agitators? BATS may be a millennial, but as it enters its thirties the lately plush venue appears to be experiencing something of an existential funk. After some grumblings as to how BATS was serving its community, it has stabilised under the leadership of new GM Jonathon Hendry. But is it content to play Little Circa? Circa itself is slowly going through a generational change, although its particular identity confusion (Big BATS?) can be illustrated in two programming decisions: a tired *Waiting for Godot* where neither Godot nor the production really arrived, and *Second Unit* presented by Tāwhiri (umbrella for NZ Festival). The promoters avoided the word “theatre” at all costs and waited till the last moment to reveal the venue was actually just Circa (did they fear stigma from the target audience?). The marketing had punters confused: extras wanted for a documentary film? Is Taika filming a sequel on the downlow? And while the design was bloody good, as an immersive “event” I found myself working really hard to get something from the experience. It was however a significant win for the industry, featuring a who’s who of Wellington actors.

Kia Mau Festival was the most essential event in Wellington’s annual theatre calendar – an outstanding programme curated by Hone Kouka. Here was work with verve, purpose and social awareness: Mitch Tawhi Thomas’ dark rom-com *Pakaru* finally shook us out of tepid theatre-going complacency.

Other promising developments: Tanea Heke’s appointment as director of Toi Whakaari; Barbarian Production’s Vogelmorn Bowling Club and living wage accreditation; Te Haukāinga as a company hub and rehearsal space; Wellington City Council funding Binge Culture to deliver their ‘Contemporary Performance Gym’.

Here’s to braver and bolder theatre. And I’m eagerly anticipating the BATS 60th further up the road at the renamed ‘Support Wellington Theatre’ Basin Reserve.

# OUR STORIES! OUR WAY! OUR LENS!

*Mitch Tawhi Thomas and Tanea Heke of  
Hāpai Productions in conversation.*

Surrounded by the lunchtime bustle of students at Toi Whakaari: New Zealand Drama School, I met up with Mitch and Tanea. It was shortly after Hāpai Productions outstanding premiere of *Pakaru*, written and directed by Mitch at Kia Mau Festival in Wellington. Both had also been recently appointed to lead roles at Toi. Also very present – if not physically on the day – was Hāpai’s cofounder Nancy Brunning.

## **Mark Amery, Editor**

**Mitch Tawhi Thomas:** I moved back down from being a high school teacher in Whangarei. I was living in Petone and wanting to reconnect with my theatre peeps, but I was busy working at college in Tawa. Then out of the blue in 2017 I got a call from Nancy: “Oh babe, dust the shoes off, come and tread the boards again. It’s been a year since Rowley Habibs’s death. We’re gonna do a commemoration piece, poetry and monologues, and there’s a real great

one for you. And it’s under our company Hāpai.” I was like, ‘Ho! Here it is! Here’s the reconnection.’ That lovely work was compiled by Nancy.

**Tanea Heke:** She shaped it so well. You would never know it was lots of separate works from separate years. It was so thematic, curated so carefully.

**MTT:** One lovely thing was that it was a collection of his life work, and reading them were the oldies like – no offence, Jim (Moriarty) – the koros, and then the middle agers like myself, and then the newbies, like Reuben (Butler) and Trae (Te Wiki).

Then I think I sat down with you both and asked you about Hāpai, I was looking for a production company that could hold my baby. You know, it was not my first time in the rodeo, writing, but I was looking for a producer who was also going to back me as a director. I had a strong hunch to hold onto this piece, and you guys were like “Yeah, sweet, of course.”



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## OH BABE, DUST THE SHOES OFF

**TH:** You call it, we'll do it! Tell us what you like and we'll do it!

**MTT:** And the first part of getting that ball rolling was, "Nancy, do you have a place to write? I've got a pokey room in Petone. But I'm also a teacher and I don't want to work at school."

She said, "There's Te Haukāinga." I'd been to a few play readings there and introduced myself to the building. Nancy said, "Just start coming in more. There's a storage room that Taki Rua are going to clean out and we're going to put indie producers in there. 'The Producers Room'. Come and use my desk. Jamie McCaskill, Erina Daniels and Sarita So are there. Other people are coming and going. If you wanna write come and write there."

We had an incredible heatwave summer and instead of going to the beach I felt this urge to go in every day and write. *Pakaru* just kind of slid out of me over a course of three weeks. That was thanks to the fact that I had a

concentrated space, that was also a hub, with fellow Māori practitioners coming and going.

**TH:** With Te Haukāinga it was really cool. Taki Rua as tuakana always saw it as their role to see how they could help. And also as teina, all our respective little companies are quite bitey at the ankles as well. So at that time Tawata, Taki Rua and The Conch were all in the building and they saw it as natural they'd have the teina hanging in there. It was a creative space – but don't get me wrong darling, I never used to go there! I was too comfortable at home. All the writery types went there!

**MTT:** There were rumours that Tanea Heke was somehow involved.

**TH:** Better never to be seen sweetheart.

**MTT:** But Nancy was the one, sitting there, just committed, working her arse off with her fingers in all the pies. Very stubborn, very motivated and focussed.

**TH:** With both Nancy and Mitch they've had the acting but its only one string to their bow. I think Nan has always been a prolific writer, we just haven't seen that, until recently.



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## WE CREATED THE COMPANY FOR OUR PEOPLE TO HAVE THEIR OWN VOICE

PREVIOUS PAGE AND NEXT  
PAGE: *Pakaru* by Mitch Tawhi  
Thomas, Hāpai Productions.  
Image: Julie Zhu.

ABOVE: *Hikoī* by Nancy  
Bunning, Te Kākano Season,  
Hāpai Productions. Image:  
Michael Hall.

She might tell the story differently, but *Hikoī* was probably the first time we saw her work. For her it was a great labour of love. For me it was just helping my mate. But for her I think it was the beginning of a whole love affair with writing.

And I can say that because I watched her do all the ghastly stuff, like writing CNZ applications. She wrote those with the same discipline and fervour, and most of the time they were as successful. She was real tūturu. Sometimes I'd say, "Isn't there a quicker way of doing this?" and she'd say "No, bae, you know how we do things here."

We created this company because we were so over working in places where they wouldn't acknowledge the value of Māori tikanga. So for us that has been always at the heart of everything we do. Being unapologetic about always working as a whānau. So when Mitch was opening his rehearsals we always carried our mate, because she is the one who holds the whole kaupapa and all of us really to account. That, if it's a Hāpai Production, this is how Hāpai does the mahi.

We created the company for our people to have their own voice and to ensure that the way that we work is the way we've always dreamed we would work – as a whānau. No one's more important. Everyone gets it. Being a shitbag or the hierarchy thing that happens often in theatre... it doesn't really work for us.

**MTT:** No, it doesn't fly.

**TH:** It's a really big deal for us when things don't go according to the kaupapa and it reminds us why we do what we do.

**MTT:** Looking back at the *Pakaru* process not only did you guys back me as a director, but the whole process of the mahi flowed. It's been just unreserved confidence and awahi, I'm so grateful. It was such a blast. Usually I hand my work over to amazing people and put a frock on and turn up at opening night and hear my words back – which is still one of my favourite things to do – but this was 'Oh, this is a lot more hard work eh?!'

**TH:** There were some really interesting things that I noticed. Mitch my friend, who I've known since drama school, or just before drama school. The friend that I know – well, I got to see all the parts of Mitch I don't know so well. Mitch the teacher. Mitch the director. And – it's a role we all sit in – but I also got to see Mitch the kaitautoko, standing outside as director, understanding where our actors were when it was tough. Having to step out of being the maker of the work and adding to an environment to keep them safe.

*Pakaru* is pretty confrontational. It has big ideas with open-ended questions. You're dragged in and there is a demand made for you to pay attention to what is being said. For the actors it's not to create answers to the questions, but to present them in a way that is accessible. It's quite big stuff to take on.

The character Jess [a solo mother] is representing so many women, as are the kids, They have a whole whakapapa behind them. By the middle of rehearsal it was really clear we were carrying a really quintessential and topical story. It may be unpleasant – it isn't Roger Hall, and I'm not taking away from that – but this is asking some really fundamental questions about how we see each other as whanau. For those of us who were brought up with a state system that looked after and provided benefit where there was social welfare and having seen the changes that have occurred...

As with all things, as with all amazing plays, it's not just what's occurring on stage. The actors became very aware of that. So for our mate to be able to hold that as well, to stay true to his vision is a real testament. We can only do it now because we're grown up! So for me this particular production was a celebration of Mitch and his work and where he is as a person.

**MTT:** Oh, kia ora babe!

**TH:** And also where our company is at. Even though our mate Nan isn't physically here today [she has been unwell] we always carry her with us. She is at the core of what we do. To have her there at opening and closing night and at two rehearsals I think was a humungous deal. To see her completely blown away by the depth.

**MTT:** Nan was there for me at the most important part and that was right at the beginning, getting it onto the page, which as a writer is an isolated time, a precious time of letting oneself go forth and spew it all out. And then at the really important time of getting support to get something workshopped, get it up on its feet and read out for the first time [Nancy directed the workshop].

I felt really held by Hāpai. They helped me assemble and cast the net out for the people who were going to be really good in that workshop room. Really generous but curious practitioners. Only one cast member changed from that workshop. So it became not just me as some ego-auteur, but once up on its feet instantly a collaboration.

Half of my mates said "Don't direct your own work, you're going to disappear up your own arse! You're going to miss out on another collaborative role." And I get that, because I've experienced handing it over to amazing people that have done wonders. But then, another half of my friends were like "If this is your instinct, you should hold onto it, just go for it." So I did.



One thing that was a real advantage was that when we got stuck in rehearsal and actors would offer stuff or outside eyes would come and offer stuff, I knew why it wasn't flowing, so I got my pen out and scraped it across the page. It would unblock it. I could just edit on the floor. And that was great. And fast, because we had fuck-all time!

What did we say during the crunch time darling?! 'Pressure makes diamonds.'

**TH:** And we made a whole mine!

I'm interested in how these things happen without us noticing it. How the more experience you have, the less thinking goes on. If you reflect on the Mitch of *Have Car Will Travel* are you conscious of how much the writing process has changed for you? Or why now you're able to stand up and do the directing? How you're able to define all your roles now, and it sits so well?

**MTT:** That's right. I was as egotistical as any other 20-year-old when I first did *Coupling* at BATS in 1994. I was acting, directing, I wrote, but I wasn't one of these amazing wunderkinds you see these days. I had a breakdown. And gorgeous friends stepped in and helped to get it up and carry it through. So then I shied away from that. Everyone's got their own timeline, right? A combination of me being older, going through some crucial life experiences – some positive, some really

negative – the fusion of me teaching and carrying on performing and writing, that all comes together to inform the writer I am now.

**TH:** What I've always enjoyed being a part of the whanau is that raw emotion coming from all of your plays. They're highly crafted – that's something I'm always in awe of actually – that almost invisible way the audience are taken in. And then there are moments – those puku moments – where I've got to the precipice and I can't avoid falling in now. That for me is a constant in your work. There is nothing that is set up that you can take for granted.

**MTT:** And there's a sparseness, a trimness, a leanness to writing that I really aspire to. Every word has to fight to be there. I can debate it with actors, or with a dramaturg. It's about spewing it out and then stripping it back. There's a good maxim!

**TH:** You say that often. If it doesn't need to be there, show it.

**MTT:** And in this Kia Mau festival I really felt connected to the other works kaupapa-wise. It felt like we were all cuddies. I felt very grounded in my voice, but I also felt very connected to all the other voices present. Because we were all talking in the same world I believe. We're all talking about the environment we're facing, and about those struggling and who is missing. It was in all the pieces I saw.

**TH:** I also think in Kia Mau that there's no sense of hopelessness about the stories that have been told. These are strong stories, from an indigenous artists' perspective. Our stories told our way, through our lens. When we're all showcasing different, different, same – everybody wants to be part of that. There's something that binds us. That's quite different from say the Auckland Arts Festival, as wonderful as it is. That's what I really got with Hone (Kouka) and Miria (George) this year – this is the place for us to speak. To have a collective voice is like gold.

**MTT:** Our stories! Our way! Our lens! That's my takeaway babe!!

# Why I wrote the play I wrote

EMILY DUNCAN

*on Le Sujet Parle*

*“A photograph is only a fragment, and with the passage of time its moorings come unstuck. It drifts away into a soft abstract pastness, open to any kind of reading.”* Susan Sontag

Castle Street in North Dunedin is an iconic thoroughfare in the university’s student quarter with its named flats, abandoned couches, and confetti of broken glass on the pavement. Walking along Castle mid-afternoon of Halloween 2013, I encountered a group of young men dressed in Ku Klux Klan costumes. Three students paraded a celebration of racism, violence, and a legacy of unlawful executions in broad daylight.

My writing is often sparked by something that troubles me – some snagging conflict that smells of suppression, misrepresentation, and/or danger; smoke before the flame of narrative, characterisation, and story leap into life. This incident along with reading Sontag’s *On Photography* were the kindling for *Le Sujet Parle*, supplemented by a question: what if a photo existed of these young men? I wrote the first version in 2014 and reworked the script in 2018 and early 2019.

In the play, six (fictional) photographic subjects express their truths behind the images taken of them, which may be fallible. Details are omitted

and others amplified. *Le sujet parle* means “the subject speaks”. Before the events of 15 March 2019, the title had a second half: *And Then He Shot Me*, referring to each characters’ conscious or unconscious, literal or figurative ideas about how they’d been “shot”.

The 2019 Dunedin Fringe saw the play’s premiere, produced by Prospect Park Productions, the company I co-founded with H-J Kilkelly in 2016. It was the first time I’d directed one of my own plays since 2014. There had been previous unsuccessful attempts to bring the work to production and now I felt the length of time since I first wrote the script gave me some objective dramaturgical distance.

The venue was Otago Museum’s Beautiful Science Gallery. I wanted to create an immersive theatre experience in which an audience are framed on one side by large projections of photos and on the other a photographic studio backdrop, denoting the performance space. I sourced and curated photos in relation to each character’s monologue, which when projected were accompanied by the voice of ‘the editor’, an omniscient, unseen presence who determines the story she wishes to tell in relation to each subject.

The audience could move around the space should they wish. This allowed them to be editorially complicit and/or enter close proximity with the actors who were confined to the backdrop space. The entire gallery was plunged into red between each characters' monologue, reminiscent of a dark room safe light. For pre and post-show music, I selected Patti Smith's 'Gloria' and Beastie Boys 'Sure Shot' – tracks from before the digital/selfie/social media age. 'Gloria' was a nod to Smith's relationship with photographer Robert Mapplethorpe.

At 2pm on 15 March I was scheduled to do a pre-record interview for RNZ's *Standing Room Only*. Lynn Freeman started the interview by asking about the (then) title of the play. All writers know you need a title that really hooks the punters in, right? I especially needed it after opting for French for the first half. Sophistication then shock. After the pre-record, I re-emerged and re-tuned into the world and learnt of the terrorist act in Christchurch.

Over the next couple of days, I and my production team thought carefully about the whys and whats and hows of the show. We had feelings of being unmoored in our work, conscious of it being a blunder at best and incendiary at worst. Prospect Park released a statement:

*"The original title of our Dunedin Fringe show will be distressing for some. It was intended to provoke thought and discussion around the nature of creating and distributing photographic images, particularly in a digital age.*

*An objective with this work was to give voice to subjects who are marginalised, judged, and objectified in photographs and to prompt necessary discussion around unchecked bigotry and racism. The second half of the LSP title was metaphorical in reference to this notion as well as colloquial statements around the taking and making of images.*

*Given Friday's events, we wish to apologise for adding to anyone's trauma, especially*

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*those in our Muslim communities. For this reason, where possible we will be amending our publicity for the season.”*

We arranged new collateral and made decisions around some of the play’s content. This included removing five photographic images deemed too confronting given the current climate. One of these was taken by William Klein in New York City, 1954. It’s an arresting image, with has a germane backstory, which on first view appears to be documentary. According to the Metropolitan Museum of Art website, Klein sought subjects grittier than what he saw around him and, “asked two boys on Upper Broadway to pose. One pointed a gun at the camera, his face erupting with rage, mimicking the stereotypical poses of criminals in our image-saturated society.”

*Le Sujet Parle* asks: how do we effectually interrogate the stereotypical poses we are complicit in creating in our image-saturated society? More importantly, after 15 March, how do we gain empathy meaningfully in creative work that explores themes of violence and exploitation?

In a 1982 *Kaleidoscope* interview, when asked what he saw as the point of theatre Bruce Mason replied, “It contributes enlightenment. It contributes coherence. It lays a kind of grid on the disorder of the world and out of this, makes sense.”

Theatre does contribute this but there remain spaces outside the frame of analytically coherent comfort, beyond whose threshold we must venture in order to gain authentic empathetic traction. Coherence and truth are slippery in photographs and in life. It develops and fades and multiple takes are printed on our consciousness.

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## COHERENCE AND TRUTH ARE SLIPPERY IN PHOTOGRAPHS AND IN LIFE

ABOVE: Prospect Park Productions’ poster for *Le Sujet Parle*, Dunedin. Image: Emily Duncan.

# A GATHERING PLACE

*Dolina Wehipeihana writes on Tawata Productions and its role in Māori and Pasifika theatre.*

Tawata is a leading force in the promotion, production, and advocacy of Māori and Pasifika theatre. They are the engine room behind Kia Mau Festival and Breaking Ground Development Festival. I visited Hone Kouka and Mīria George at home in Rotorua to find out how Tawata got started and what drives them.

The catalogue of Tawata Productions over the past 15 years is a treasure trove of innovative, unique and dynamic writing. Co-directed by Hone and Mīria, partners in work and life, Tawata has ignited and challenged the theatre scene, producing a series of powerful works with indigenous-centred narratives.

In their home they are surrounded by items that connect them to ideas, family and heritage. On display are photographs of ancestors, pieces of art and baby photos of Hone's now 22-year-old daughter adorn the fridge. Whakapapa and family are at the heart of their practice. Books galore on art, poetry, sport, theatre and Pacific politics fill shelves

created from repurposed theatre set pieces.

Art was a way of life in both their family backgrounds. "I grew up with a grandfather who was a renowned artist." Hone says.

"My mum and dad are from Ngāti Porou, Kahungunu, Ngai Tahu and Raukawa. I was born and bred in south Dunedin hard. Youngest of a big crew, a 19-year gap from the eldest to the youngest."

The pōtiki of the whānau, Hone was super close to his mum. He wrote the plays *The Prophet* and *Bless the Child* in response to his Mum's encouragement, challenging him to use his voice to speak to significant issues affecting Māori.

Mīria hails from Te Arawa, Ngāti Awa and the Cook Islands. "I was brought up in the village of Horohoro just up the road from my marae. My Dad's family are from the Cook Islands and they migrated here in the thirties, and they lived in Sunset Road where my father grew up. My grandmother is from the island of Rarotonga and my grandfather is from the

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## THE POWER OF OUR INDUSTRY IS THROUGH OUR ARTISTS



island of Atiu. When I was growing up my parents would take us back to the Islands. I was really fortunate to spend a lot of time with my Nana and Papa from my Kuki side and my Kui and Koro on my Māori side.”

Miria’s play *Sunset Road* is a love letter to her family history, set in the steamy landscape of Rotorua in the seventies. She was raised in a family of artists. “My Dad’s side of the family are visual artists, so we always had an understanding of art – of creativity as a practice and art as a trade, as well as being a privilege, and that side of belief in creativity. And then, I met Hone.”

That moment happened when they met in the foyer of Toa Fraser’s play *Paradise* at Circa Theatre. What started as a blossoming romance grew into a creative partnership after Hone saw a work Miria was developing at Victoria University. The pair then went on to create the first Tawata production *Oho Ake* at the Gryphon Theatre in Wellington in 2004.

The creation of Tawata was also a response to the shifting landscape for Māori theatre in Wellington at the time. In the ‘90s the strength of Māori theatre in Wellington played a significant part in contributing to a vibrant and exciting national theatre scene. Productions such as Briar Grace-Smith’s *Purapurawhetū*, and Hone’s *Waiora* and *Nga Tangata Toa* were premiering to critical acclaim. Taki Rua Productions was a creative force, and Māori theatre was front and centre in NZ Festival commissions and on the mainstages. But by the 2000s this had begun to change.

Hone reflects on the time. “I was just bored, generally with my stuff. In the nineties it was rock and roll, it was amazing, but by the 2000s we’d been almost ostracised, as Māori. After *Have Car Will Travel* (Mitch Tawhi Thomas) it was really hard to point at shows that really rocked.”

Miria started her career on the tail end of that period. “Jamie McCaskill and I often talk about by the time we hit the scene,

everything we did as we were coming through was in this aftermath of the nineties. I learnt about it at Uni, we'd hear about it as we got closer to the industry, we'd hear about it from everyone, and yet it wasn't there anymore. I think for me it only existed when I joined Writer's Block."

Writer's Block was a Māori theatre writer's collective begun by Hone, who met regularly. Then, originally, Tawata began as a vehicle for Hone and Mīria's creative work. Their combined talents as artists and producers enabled them to support the development of each other's work. Between 2004 and 2018 Tawata have developed and presented a number of significant works. After *Oho Ake* Mīria wrote the futuristic *and what remains*, boutique love story *He Reo Aroha* (co-written with Jamie McCaskill), the indigenous satire *The Vultures* and dystopian *The Night Mechanics*. Hone wrote the acclaimed *I, George Nepia*, epic *Tū*, hyperreal digital love story *The Beautiful Ones*, and provocative *Bless the Child*.

Tawata aren't shy of confronting issues, writing about race, oppression, greed, climate change, capitalism, water rights, and child abuse. As writers they use their agency to speak to issues that concern Māori and challenge stereotypical perspectives of Māori. In an interview about *Bless the Child* Hone said, "How do we counter this – how do we put forward a really positive nurturing narrative. People have said to me this is a really heavy kaupapa. But I feel really enlightened and uplifted, and I'm going to do something about it. And for me, that's the key."

It wasn't long before this drive to uplift the voices and visibility of Māori, Pasifika and indigenous artists meant Tawata began investing beyond themselves and supporting the wider community of practitioners.

We can't overlook their fierce dedication to the empowerment of playwrights and the art of playwriting. Very quickly Tawata

established writing labs and writing groups and this year celebrated the tenth birthday of the Breaking Ground Festival (formerly Matariki Development Festival). An annual week-long playwriting festival, Breaking Ground has supported the development of plays by Māori, Pasifika and First Nations playwrights including Mitch Tawhi Thomas, Nancy Brunning, Victor Rodger and international guests such as Kiki Rivera from Hawai'i."

Kia Mau Festival – an annual festival based in Te Whanganui-a-Tara of contemporary Māori, Pasifika and First Nations theatre and dance – was launched to counter a lack of representation on the main stages.

Understanding their role as tangata whenua, they gave support to tauiwi minority voices by programming non-Pākeha artists including Ahi Karunaharan and Sarita So in Tawata's annual programme in 2012 and 2013. This was before diversity became an industry buzzword.

One of the strengths of Tawata's process and approach is that they are artist centred and artist led. "The power of our industry is through our artists, not our administrators," says Hone. "What we are doing is searching for another way and building another way. We've gone from the ground up to see what really works, what's the most powerful, what brings people back towards it, what brings resource towards it. And it's the artists."

A thriving community of Māori and Pasifika artists making theatre is Tawata's vision. "Te Ao Maori, Te Ao Pasifika, Te Ao Mana Moana, we have collective community-whānau-hapū value," says Mīria. "I got to watch my father and my grandmother advocate for community and industry – because if collectively you can lift, then the quality of the art will lift, the quality of the thinking and the conversations will lift."

Tawata will continue these collective conversations when Breaking Ground returns to Wellington in 2020 for its eleventh



Festival. In the meantime, Hone and Miria are focussing on their next theatre projects. Tawata premieres new work *Henare* co-created by Hone with his cousin Hōhepa Waitoa at the inaugural Te Tairāwhiti Festival in October to celebrate their grandfather, the renowned composer Henare Waitoa. Miria's *Fire in the Water, Fire in the Sky* will be performed in Auckland in November before being presented at FestPAC Hawai'i in 2020. Creative developments are in the pipeline, including a collaboration with Article 11 from Turtle Island who brought *Deer Woman* to Kia Mau Festival in 2018. The next Kia Mau Festival will take place in 2021.

Tawata Productions continues to carry on the legacy of its name. Suggested for the company by Hone's Uncle, 'Tawata' is the name of Hone's papakāinga in Tikitiki. Now a bull farm, in the days Henare Waitoa lived and composed there it was a gathering place for many artists and significant people including Sir Āpirana Ngata.

Community and whanaungatanga is key to the success of Tawata. "It's not fun having a party by yourself," says Hone. "That's where I come from. Why have a party by yourself when you can have it with heaps and heaps of people and then the goodness comes from there."

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## IT'S NOT FUN HAVING A PARTY BY YOURSELF

PREVIOUS PAGE: *Bless the Child* by Hone Kouka, Tawata Productions.  
Image: Matt Grace.

ABOVE: *The Beautiful Ones* by Hone Kouka, Tawata Productions.  
Image: Matt Grace.

# THE PLAYWRIGHT PRODUCER RELATIONSHIP

*A reconsideration in a new era with Kate Powell.*



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SHOUT ME A BUBBLE  
TEA AND I'LL BE SUPER  
APPROACHABLE

15 years ago Playmarket gathered questions from playwrights for producers. Producers in turn answered them in the *Playmarket Annual*. Doing the same again in 2019 highlighted how much has, and hasn't changed. Kate Powell looks at the changes in the playwright-producer and playwright-presenter relationships – and we hear from a range of playwrights who are also producers.

For the first time in almost 20 years, we now have a comprehensive look into the wellbeing, training and the earning power of creative professionals in *New Zealand: A Profile of Creative Professionals* from Creative New Zealand and NZ on Air. The last two decades have seen the rise of social media, and a revival in vinyl and skinny jeans, but living as an artist is still tough. A paltry \$15,000 is the median income earned specifically via artistic output. Only 23% of creatives feel comfortable financially.

The results call into question the state of the creative sector model and have sparked a call to pay artists fair wages.

ABOVE: *Conversations with Dead Relatives* by Phil Ormsby and Alex Ellis, Flaxworks Theatre Company.  
Image: Nik Janiurek.



What makes this cry for the bare minimum sting even more is increasing international evidence that art plays a vital role in our wellbeing.

Bearing this in mind, it is perhaps understandable that when Playmarket gathered questions from playwrights for producers earlier this year you could feel the frustration in the tone of the replies – some, to my mind, even seemed penned to provoke a response. While 15 years on there's clearly far more collaboration and some far closer playwright/producer relationships, for others there's still a feeling of power imbalance, and playwrights who guard their artistic licence.

#### **QUESTIONS FOR PRODUCERS**

Fifteen years ago: playwrights wanted to know what type of stories producers' wanted

landing on their desks; how to get their pieces in front of the right people; if a theatre dedicated solely to New Zealand work was possible. The questions were imbued with a sense of excitement, of wanting to craft meaningful stories that would not only get picked up, but accurately reflect the New Zealand experience. They were largely met with encouraging answers by producers.

There was a growing appetite for New Zealand plays. The sense of cultural cringe that had dogged every artistic outlet since time in memoriam was beginning to dissipate. Theatre no longer had to be an artifact of colonialism. After generations of systemic and societal oppression, the Māori and Pasifika renaissance that had budded in the 1980s was finally beginning to blossom,

though in the noughties there were speed bumps in terms of work actually getting produced due to a lack of independent producers. Arguably contemporary Asian theatre barely existed. And yet we still looked often towards our old developed theatres for affirmation – those producing venues, with their CNZ funded security. You wouldn't call them culturally diverse, but they were bastions of culture for playwrights to fix their sights on.

Since then Downstage in Wellington and Fortune in Dunedin have folded, while theatres like Circa Theatre, The Court Theatre and Auckland Theatre Company have diversified their programming models, at the same time as looking after traditional audiences. As far as the producers approached for this updated piece, some stalwarts remain – Circa, ATC and Court. But there has been a welcome rise in independent producers and playwright-led producing companies, adding to the range of voices within the theatre community. The likes of Breaking Ground and Kia Mau Festivals and Prayas Theatre bring more diverse perspectives to the table. There are currently no established producers with a strong Rainbow/Gender Minority focus.

These shifts are reflected in questions asked in 2019. They are less about what playwrights can do for producers and audiences, more about what producers can do for playwrights.

Yet these questions often relate to a traditional theatre model that doesn't reflect the diverse ways producers now operate in Aotearoa. Questions and answers combined, there's a sense of the relationship between playwrights and producers caught in metamorphosis. There's certainly no longer one way of producing theatre, instead a myriad of world views that inform the stories being told and different types of selection processes. It's vital that new ways of working are understood by those holding the funding purse strings. Work and advocacy is required jointly from both playwrights and producers, established stalwarts and independent producers to see systemic change.

### **When did you last ask a writer in and ask their views on anything?**

Speaking with writers is an almost daily occurrence. Writers that we speak with are also producers, directors, actors, musicians – they are multi-skilled professionals who work throughout the fabric of our arts industry.

*Miria George, Tawata*

### **ABBY HOWELLS**

The benefit of being a playwright who produces their own work is first of all – as a playwright in my early career – my plays actually got produced! When you're first starting out, it's difficult to get someone to take a chance on you and produce your work. Producing my own work forced me to learn about all the different roles that people take on when collaborating on a theatrical production. Getting insight into what a producer does, what a production manager does and the work and emotional burdens that go into those roles have allowed me to collaborate more

effectively. Now I'm in a position where I don't have to produce all of my own plays, my early experience means I seek out people who have similar values to me and who I know I can trust with my work. And of course, having done it myself, I'm now incredibly grateful to have someone help me fill out funding applications and talk to venues.

Finally, even though I initially produced my own work out of necessity rather than desire, I have those production skills now. Which means I can offer them to other people to support their work.



Story is at the heart of mostly everything I do, so I pretty much get writers into my making process and conversations.  
*Ahi Karunaharan, Agaram and Prayas*

At ATC we're fortunate to have the services of an experienced literary manager. Philippa Campbell meets with playwrights fairly regularly (and very often in recent months) to talk through possible projects and those already in the pipeline.  
*Colin McColl, Auckland Theatre Company*

In early June, I contacted a local writer to meet for a general conversation, including dramaturgical techniques. Having said that, most of my conversations with playwrights happen in relation to specific work they are creating or when I travel to Playmarket events.  
*Roanna Dalziel, The Court*

We are in conversation with writers all the time, and have seen quite a few in the last few weeks as they have pitched their shows to us. We've also brought back Women's Theatre Festivals. (Men do not seem to need this help).  
*Linda Wilson, Circa*

#### **What is the best way for a new playwright to approach you?**

Submit a script or script idea. Follow it up with an email.  
*Colin McColl, Auckland Theatre Company*

New plays may be submitted early each year. Last year we ran a course for people to "kickstart their play." Otherwise,

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## THE ARTIST AT THE EPICENTRE

ABOVE: *The Haka Party Incident* by Katie Wolfe, Auckland Theatre Company.  
Image: Michael Smith.



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## THE WRITER'S JOB IS TO DESIGN THE ARCHITECTURE OF THE PERFORMANCE

playwrights can send an email. *Roanna Dalziel, The Court*

By 2020 it will be going to our website and filling out a submission form and attaching a script so it will be sent to our readers. We receive a lot of scripts through Playmarket – so getting an agent is good too. *Linda Wilson, Circa*

Write a great play. *Miria George, Tawata*

Send me an email and be really upfront about why you are contacting me (it helps if you check that I'm not in the middle of production week when you send me that email!) Or bubble tea. Shout me a bubble tea and I'll be super approachable.

*Ahi Karunaharan, Agaram and Prayas*

**How does a playwright whose works have been exclusively performed by amateur theatre companies get their plays produced by professional theatre? Will the work be overlooked or dismissed because it's been produced by an amateur company?**

Great writing speaks beyond the parameters you and others perceive. *Miria George, Tawata*

I feel like most community and amateur theatre companies these days stage acclaimed or successful scripts. So if a writer has had their work produced previously by a company, it is likely to work in favour of the writer because it further supports that there is a following, a resonance of their voice with a community and an interest in what the writer has to say. *Ahi Karunaharan, Agaram and Prayas*

We are interested in the quality of the work, the ideas behind it and its suitability for our home theatre, the 660-seater ASB

ABOVE: *Mum's Choir* by Alison Quigan, The Court Theatre.  
Image: The Court Theatre.



Waterfront Theatre. *Colin McColl, Auckland Theatre Company*

Either through our unsolicited submission process or by being put forward by their agent. *Roanna Dalziel, The Court*

To put it bluntly they need to get a professional director on board to help them pitch their work to us. We discourage writers from directing their own work (it has been done in the past) as we believe it's important for there to be an 'outside eye'.  
*Linda Wilson, Circa*

**What part do you see yourself playing in supporting career development and upskilling for independent companies you work with?**

The creative and production teams at ATC constantly support career development and upskilling in the sector through internships, our Open House programme, writing clinics, our Here and Now Festival, free props and costume hire for independent companies plus feedback and advice. *Colin McColl, Auckland Theatre Company*

We aim to present opportunities for learning and development on the job. *Roanna Dalziel, The Court*

We support and encourage the companies that we work with – perhaps leading by example. As it says in our 40th Birthday Book we want “the artist at the epicentre, the artist as the decisionmaker, the artist in control, navigating their own career.”

*Linda Wilson, Circa*

Developing artists and upskilling companies to reach their full potential and beyond is what fuels me. I want to be the artist, the connector, the mentor that I needed when I was starting out in the industry. I still have a long way to go in developing myself but in the process try to support in whichever way possible.

*Ahi Karunaharan, Agaram and Prayas*

Tawata plays a vital role in career development as well as the upskilling of independent artists and companies – through multiple platforms that develop artists and their companies creatively and professionally – our Māori, Pasifika and global Indigenous playwrighting festival, Breaking Ground, is just one example of our work. *Miria George, Tawata*

**What steps are the company you're in as far you know taking towards ensuring the Living Wage for the professional artists you present?**

I know that ensuring that all our artists are remunerated and ensuring that it meets the bare minimum of the living wage is the kaupapa of all the organisations I engage with. *Ahi Karunaharan, Agaram and Prayas*

Advocating for more resources for the Māori and Pasifika sector of the theatre industry. Creating more sustainable business models for Māori and Pasifika artists and companies. *Miria George, Tawata*

We pay what we are able to. *Colin McColl, Auckland Theatre Company*

The Court Theatre pays standard industry writing rates in line with Playmarket's best practice guides. *Roanna Dalziel, The Court*

Circa still works on a risk-share basis for director, actors, designer, lighting, costume, stage manager and crew. The rehearsal period (usually four weeks) is covered by a grant from TACT (Theatre Artists Charitable Trust), but the rest of the income depends on the box office take after all the bills have been paid – so if a show does well they'll be paid well, and if not, they don't. So we have to ensure marketing and publicity is of a high standard. *Linda Wilson, Circa*

### **Has what you are programming changed in the last fifteen years? Why/Why not?**

I've only been involved in programming for the last two years, and my programming decisions have been in response to disrupting, shifting and challenging what has been dominating our spaces. I think we have become more specific in asking for works that reflect our changing times and unheard voices. *Ahi Karunaharan, Agaram and Prayas*

Our worldview is at the centre of our work. Our artists always lead the conversation. This will not change. *Miria George, Tawata*

Programming is now more diverse – we've engaged in co-production with independent companies, new creative energies and new audiences in our 2019 season. The results have been very heartening. *Colin McColl, Auckland Theatre Company*

There is an appetite for NZ Theatre that is undeniable. This grows apace. The biggest change is how much we have progressed into Māori and Pasifika theatre in our programming and development programme. *Roanna Dalziel, The Court*

Circa has always taken pride in the fact that it has championed NZ writers since it began. Over the years there have been many festivals of NZ women's writing, and it distresses me that in the 21st century we are still having to do this, and have not yet achieved the equality we would like. We are developing partnerships with other companies, such as Taki Rua, Tawata, Te Rēhia and Zanetti Productions to create a more diverse programme. Programming is also dependent upon what is pitched to us. *Linda Wilson, Circa*

### **Would you describe your theatre as a writer's theatre?**

Up to this point yes: when you are a voice that has had no platform, no representation, words really do matter. *Ahi Karunaharan, Agaram and Prayas*

Yes. *Miria George, Tawata*

No. Unfortunately I don't believe any theatre company of size in NZ can afford the luxury of referring to themselves as a writer's theatre. *Colin McColl, Auckland Theatre Company*

Yes. Not only do we have a comprehensive development programme, we stage work which seeks to honour the playwright's intentions. Integrity and authenticity are primary aims. *Roanna Dalziel, The Court*

Nowadays we have a readers' group of 4 people who read everything submitted to us as part of our pitch process. They then recommend the scripts to go forward to the council, and they all see the list. A selection is made that go on then to pitch the production in person, and everyone who wishes to vote on the programme then has to read each script. *Linda Wilson, Circa*



## JO RANDERSON – BARBARIAN PRODUCTIONS

In my early days as a writer, partner organisations would ask “What’s your process?” and I’d say, “What do you mean – process?” And then I would be slotted into someone else’s process. Running my own projects has helped me realise what suits me as a writer. So, now when I collaborate I can articulate more clearly how I work and then together we create a shared process that matches our needs.

I always feel super grateful for the amount of work an outside producer has done to get something off the ground, to get funding, to get everyone in the room. Both producing my own work and working for others lets me learn from other people’s processes, often learning new great techniques.

I was raised with I guess a ‘traditional process’ where the writer originates the script, and then the creative team work off that. In this case

you can be quite separated from the project as it develops. So it can be paradoxical – you can be quite revered as a writer but also separate from the group. I now want to be as engaged as I can on a project, even if my input is not needed it’s always great when a director emails and says, ‘we just did your play, here’s a photo of our opening night!’

Not everyone might feel like that but I have learnt that I like to know how my work is being received. With our company Barbarian, producing my own work helps me feel more like the artistic lead, rather than a cog in someone else’s machine. And then when I am asked to be a cog in someone else’s machine it helps me be a really good cog, because I appreciate the rest of the machine and how hard it is working too.

ABOVE: *Grand Opening* by Jo Randerson, Barbarian Productions. Image: Owen McCarthy.

**How many actors can a play require and still be considered by professional theatre companies?**

The quality and suitability of the work comes before cast size. *Colin McColl, Auckland Theatre Company*

There is no minimum. There is no doubt it is harder to stage larger plays due to expense. However, it is very much decided on a case-by-case basis against the importance of the play and/or the income that the play is budgeted to attract. *Roanna Dalziel, The Court*

Eight or more is a large cast for us; and with our larger cast plays we always try to get extra sponsorship for them. The bigger the cast the less money each person will receive at the end of the season. *Linda Wilson, Circa*

As many as the story needs. Again this question reflects your value system – not ours. *Miria George, Tawata*

I don't know if there is a magic number, five to six seems to be the popular average based from most major companies programming for 2019. Personally I'm drawn to works with large casts. What can I say, I'm greedy. *Ahi Karunaharan, Agaram and Prayas Theatre*

**How do you reconcile the difference between the huge number of volunteer hours that artists do creating professional work compared to the wages of arts administrators and personnel in arts organisations?**

In our 2017/18 year ATC employed nearly 200 artists. All were paid. We presented work by nine NZ writers and eight workshops of new plays. *Colin McColl, Auckland Theatre Company*

There is no simple solution to artists not being employed all year round – but we do our best to generate as many opportunities for artists as possible. For example, we do employ practitioners in our costume and workshop departments all year round. We support playwrights. Our performers are

paid throughout the term of their engagement. *Roanna Dalziel, The Court*

Circa Theatre Council has worked on a voluntary basis for the past 43 years to ensure that the bulk of any money received from CNZ, WCC, sponsorship, other funding bodies and through the box office goes to theatre practitioners... I think you've hit the nail on the head with 'love'. To be honest that is why most of us work in theatre; and there's no reconciling the amount of work and time with money. *Linda Wilson, Circa*

**QUESTIONS FOR PRESENTERS**

Not only is there a flourishing body of independent presenters there has been substantial growth in festivals: both new festivals like Kia Mau and the diversification of existing festival models. They in turn have been bolstered by a rapidly expanding touring network and the rise in presenting venues. BATS recently celebrated its 30th year, while Q Theatre and Basement Theatre have been welcome additions to Auckland. It's not all in the major cities, with Baycourt in Tauranga an example of success south of the Bombays. Having these spaces, independent production has been able to grow substantially.

We asked BATS, New Zealand Festival and Q to answer questions posed by playwrights. There's a tension here: presenters speak more directly to producers. Playwrights aren't always sure how to approach, or whether they should. Once again, we see the desire for New Zealand stories coming from presenters, but this is also underpinned by the desire to form relationships with playwrights in the first instance.

**How do you facilitate the meeting of producers and playwrights?**

We need playwrights to come with a producer already attached. Playwrights occasionally contact Q directly, however we generally aren't able to take part in the process until it is further down a path



## CASSANDRA TSE – RED SCARE THEATRE

An undeniable truth of being a playwright-producer, in New Zealand at least, is that we are producers out of necessity rather than passion. In an ideal world, my co-writer and I would have written our first musical, then sent it to a well-resourced theatre company who would have programmed it, produced it, and paid us a fair license fee for our work. That just wasn't an option for a couple of young musical theatre nobodies with no connections. So we founded Red Scare Theatre Company because we knew it would be our only way to get our work up onstage. We didn't really have any ambitions for Red Scare beyond our first show. Since then, Red Scare has grown into a fully realised production company with a programmed season of three shows a year, plus additional side projects. When James Cain joined the team in 2016, we found we had a whole lot of complementary producing skills,

all developed through trial and error through our years as playwright-producers. I can budget, coordinate schedules, manage expenses and write grant applications, while James creates full marketing and publicity campaigns and manages social media. Our skills as a production company are now at the stage where we are able to produce other playwrights' work as well as our own – meaning those playwrights don't have to go through the same six-year rigmarole of learning and making mistakes that we went through.

In all honesty, producing is still not something I'm passionate about. But I'm proud of all the things I've learned in my work as a producer, and that I'm able to use these skills to benefit other playwrights as well.

ABOVE: *MoodPorn* by Matthew Loveranes, Red Scare Theatre Company. Image: Roc+ Photography.

of development that includes a producer, director and a plan towards a presentation.

*Sarah Graham, Q Theatre*

**Do you receive playscripts and do you then acknowledge in writing, receipts of playscripts?**

Yes we receive playscripts and I do acknowledge in writing and explain that we are a receiving house who do not personally put on any productions. We will always try and forward it on if it's a solid script.

*Nick Zwart, BATS*

Generally speaking we don't receive scripts without an expression of interest to present attached. We aim to get back to everyone but like most organisations we're stretched and can't always get back to everyone in the form of receipts or the outcome of a submission.

*Sarah Graham, Q Theatre*

**What do you think of the argument that if you wanted to know what was happening in this country, what the undercurrents were, you wouldn't go to the theatre? Do you think theatre's really alive in the sense of being part of the national conversation?**

In my experience it is more likely you can find this on the fringe because these works can often get up and produced very quickly. There is also a lot more appetite for risk and putting up difficult conversations. Going to the theatre is not an everyday activity for most. We have to be real about this when we talk about how much effect we have on a national conversation. Attendance skews towards certain demographics which means we have a real problem around representation across class, race, gender, politics. So in that sense, no, I don't think theatre captures all of what is happening in this country, particularly the undercurrents.

Another challenge I've observed, is that for many audiences, going to the theatre is about enjoyment and escape from reality...

The comedy sector is one of our biggest influences on culture and can play a huge role in social change and lead a 'national' conversation. *Angela Green, NZ Festival*

Imagine if the programmer at BATS thought that was the truth, how ridiculous it would be. Of course New Zealand theatre is pertinent and current and has a lot to say about the state of who we are and what we do.

*Nick Zwart, BATS*

**Will plays simply die in the back drawer if we don't continually market them to festivals and producers if they haven't been developed with those producers?**

Yes they will – the squeaky wheel gets the oil – you need to surround yourself with people who can help you. *Nick Zwart, BATS*

**For festivals: does a play already have to be produced elsewhere to be considered for a festival? Is there another way to get your work in front of festival decision makers?**

Playwrights have the best chance of programming into festivals if they are working with producers, theatre companies or producing venues. The NZ Festival usually programmes projects that have a production attached to them because we generally do not have the means to cover the full cost of a theatre production. Our CNZ investment covers a small percentage of the full costs of presenting our New Zealand programme.

When we programme New Zealand work we look for that special alchemy between source material and script, design, direction, intended audience and point of view – and how this fits in to the wider programme. What will the combined effect of these elements be? We are one of a few commissioners in Aotearoa, and we look for works that have this alchemy, are of scale, or that could not be produced in Wellington without us. We also have a particular focus at the moment on what we call 'future of story': how the encounter between arts and audiences is changing,



particularly with technology. So, our artistic vision and strategy plays into the decisions we make as a commissioner and presenter.

In terms of getting work produced in general, my observation is that nothing gets produced in Aotearoa without building a relationship with players in the ecosystem – venues, other creatives, agencies, presenters, producers, funders and audiences. We don't have many mechanisms here where you can submit a work and hope it gets picked up.

In Aotearoa our independent producers are very few, chronically under-resourced, on the verge of burnout, and their fees can be the first under threat. They will make decisions to work on projects that mean something to them.

So if you can't find a producer my advice is to find a tribe of people who connect with your work and collaborate on getting it up. If your work is getting up regularly and audiences are coming, presenters will take notice. The trick is to make sure you build a relationship with presenters whose programming strategy and target audiences align with your work.

*Angela Green, NZ Festival*

ABOVE: *A Doll's House* by Emily Perkins, adapted from Henrik Ibsen's original, Auckland Theatre Company. Image: Michael Smith.

## FLAXWORKS

We originally produced our own work because it was the only way an unknown actor and playwright could get exposure. With no touring experience, no contacts and no real idea about what we were doing we wrote a play, booked some venues and hit the road. We performed in tiny cafés, movie theatres, and rural community halls. We learned not to rely on door sales on the night of a major rugby final or in places where it might snow – in the summer.

We made plenty of mistakes but mostly we only made them once. We started off as a playwright and an actor but in the process of learning the ins and outs of production we also learned some great life skills. Negotiating, problem solving, attention to detail and dogged perseverance.

### **Some basic rules to live by:**

**Be polite.** Acknowledge requests, reply on time and answer questions clearly.

**Be persistent.** Chase up unanswered calls and texts and emails. You're entitled to a bit of respect.

**Read contracts.**

**Don't work for nothing and don't expect people to do that for you.**

At least provide lunch.

**Don't push something if it doesn't feel right.** Sometimes you have to walk away from an opportunity that's becoming more trouble than it's worth.

**Deal with problems in a calm way.**

It's always appreciated if you can save your drama for the stage.

**Have a budget and monitor it.**

You may not stick to it but at least you can see where the money is going.

**Be ready to adapt.** Have a good plan and always have a plan B.

It's hard work but it gets easier and we absolutely love it.



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: *Eloise in the Middle* by Emily Duncan, Prospect Park Productions. Image: Lara Macgregor; *HarleQueen* by Abby Howells, Arcade and HarleQueen Productions. Image: Angus McBryde; *Dark Matter* by Martyn Roberts, Afterburner. Image: Martyn Roberts.

# DUNEDIN

BY LISA WARRINGTON

14 months since the Fortune unexpectedly shut down, the building stands empty, stripped of all equipment. A pointed reminder of the loss of Dunedin's professional theatre company. We're still coming to terms with the impact of that loss. One response has been the revitalisation of Stage South as an advocate for professional theatre.

This piece is about theatre making in Dunedin, but somehow venues seem to dominate. The DCC commissioned a report into venues – should we have a shiny new one? That remains to be seen. A purpose-built theatre might be good when so many existing spaces are conversions: a deconsecrated church (Fortune), an ex-living room (Globe), former cinemas (Regent and Mayfair), and so on.

Local companies now use a variety of inventive spaces, hoping audiences will follow. Arcade, a young company with a real sense of theatrical purpose, finds a different space for each of their shows, while Little Scorpion reportedly lost four venues before settling on a Port Chalmers church for *Hamlet*. The New Athenaeum in the Octagon (now a black box, once the Fortune's original home), offers a central space for local and touring productions, though it needs more funds to fit it out better. And the Regent has recently opened a small black box as a second space, which has yet to be tested in performance.

For NZ work there is a heartening rise of new, young companies, such as Prospect Park, spearheaded by playwright Emily Duncan and H-J Kilkelly, who have also initiated Ōtepoti Theatre Lab, a workshop for new and emerging local writers in response to the loss of the Fortune's writers programme. Two of

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## THE HEART STILL WOBBLER

Duncan's works have been staged in the last year. *Eloise in the Middle* (originally scheduled for the Fortune) featured a new, extended section in which solo actor Sara Georgie played both 7-year-old Eloise and her mother. *Le Sujet Parle* saw six photographed subjects tell the truth behind images taken of them. It was a confronting and intelligently written work, and played at the Otago Museum.

Arcade presented two works by Abby Howells: *Attila the Hun* and *HarleQueen*. The latter 'one-woman celebration of female fools' – performed by Howells – has both a charming vulnerability and a dark underbelly, as she describes her own experiences as actor and stand-up comedian.

The Globe offered two NZ classics – James K. Baxter's *The Devil and Mr Mulcahy*, (first staged in the same venue in 1967) and for the Arts Festival, Bruce Mason's *Blood of the Lamb*, directed by Richard Huber.

WWI was celebrated with 1917: *Until the Day Dawns* by Keith Scott at the Globe, while John Broughton wrote and compiled *Homecoming*, featuring experiences of Otago soldiers, including a promenade through the University to Allen Hall.

Allen Hall's Lunchtime Theatre programme continues (as it has for over 40 years) to offer a weekly showcase primarily for student

writers, actors and directors to stage new short works.

Wow! Productions recently announced a two-year programme with support from CNZ, the majority of which will be NZ work, though the first show is the NZ premiere of Annie Baker's *The Flick*, directed by Lara Macgregor, a former Fortune Artistic Director.

The Dunedin Fringe was home to some genuinely interesting locally-generated pieces. *Fission*, presented by Afterburner at Allen Hall, was a key Fringe event, melding quantum physics, design, dance and spoken word to suggest fragments of the story of Lise Meitner, who worked on splitting the atom.

Formerly from London, Ruth Carraway's short play *Lavvies*, set in the ladies' loos at a seedy Essex nightclub, was staged next to the toilets in local café-bar Zanzibar. She also worked with prisoners at the Otago Correctional Facility to create a Boal Forum Theatre-inspired piece called *Trouble D*.

Writer/performer Kiri Bell staged *Greta: A Journey*, first at the New Athenaeum and later at the Globe. Bell took on the role of Ellen Kelly, mother of Australian outlaw Ned in a piece blending Ellen's story with music from a live band.

Talking House, a Dunedin verbatim/documentary theatre company, offered *Toy Factory Fire*, a work which has had a long gestation period. Here, in a pared down but effective version, actor and co-creator Simon O'Connor sat quietly interacting with pre-taped material which included heartrending interviews with families of victims of the Kadar Factory fire in Thailand, alongside a continuous audio-visual installation.

With these local works, many other shows staged by amateur theatre, opera and musical companies, and various visiting touring enterprises, Dunedin gives the appearance of having a healthy theatre scene. The heart still wobbles, but we are trying to recover.



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# TALES FROM THE ROAD

*Travelling advice from Ralph McCubbin Howell  
and Hannah Smith of Trick of the Light.*

We fell into touring by accident. We'd been making one-off shows for years before we discovered that touring was possible. We got our first taste at the Edinburgh Fringe in 2012, and when we got home set off on an audacious self-funded tour, in Ralph's parent's Toyota TownAce with a cardboard box set and a suitcase of puppets.

It was a couple of years before we really got going, when we inadvertently made a tour-friendly show with *The Bookbinder*. We discovered not only is there a market for suitcase shows, but by coming back to a work it got better and easier.

In the years since, we've developed this into a (tenuously) sustainable model. We have three shows in rep (*The Bookbinder*, *The Road That Wasn't There* and *Tröll*) that we've regularly toured between New Zealand, Australia, the UK, and North America. *The Bookbinder* has toured the most (as far as South Africa and to Chile later this year) in no small part because it's the cheapest and easiest to put on. Others we've toured for a bit and then stopped. Then we've made some shows which we've known we could never tour (*Broken River* had a cast of ten and a kinetic water sculpture).

As we write we've just come back from six weeks touring around Aotearoa with Tour-Makers. In three weeks we head off to South Africa, and then head to the UK.

Whilst we've found a process that works for us, we haven't always had a game plan. Along the way we've got some things right, and a fair whack of things wrong.

Here are some things that we've learnt.

## **WORK**

We've found we can tour small-scale work – things we can fund (or take the risk on) ourselves. When we make anything larger we need buy-in to take it on tour. Festivals seem interested in the extremes (suitcase shows or spectacles). If you fall between it can be tricky to get a look in, or it means you're forced to cut corners (initiatives like Tour-Makers have helped to bridge the gap.)

Don't tour for the sake of it. Touring can be exciting and rewarding, but it's often exhausting and badly paid. When we started, we took every opportunity, which meant that sometimes we got burnt. We've got better at saying no. We love doing *The Bookbinder*, and would hate to start hating it, so now we'll only do it if the money's good, the

venue or occasion is exciting, or if it takes us somewhere we want to visit.

Think about why you want to tour. We go to Edinburgh Fringe not because it pays well but because it puts us in front of presenters who might programme us. It lets us refine shows in a concentrated way, and it's an opportunity to take in work from around the world.

Tour schedules are erratic. They can appear less demanding than a regular 9 to 5 but the process eats time. We are constantly attempting to do other work on the road and finding that the hours we thought we had disappear. People with regular jobs will tell you touring is a paid holiday. It's not. When we tour anywhere we actually want to visit, we try to build in time after the gig – otherwise you find yourself going from dark theatre to dark theatre and shitty hotel to shitty hotel.

We are notorious tinkerers, and reinvent our work on the road. We'd have been bored with *The Bookbinder* and *The Road* long ago had we not kept evolving them. There's some tweaking we do night to night (cutting lines, adding jokes, reblocking bits), and there's major reworking that requires getting under the hood between seasons.

When we rework shows it's often about making them more tour-friendly – more flexible in staging requirements, and easier to pack down (props that fit into other props become a source of surprising delight). Questions we are constantly asking are: how big is this? What does it weigh? How many pieces of luggage does that mean? Dimension and weight restrictions for flights are burned into our minds. Packing cubes are goddam game changers.

Don't think of gigs in hierarchy. We've toured to the Lincoln Center in New York and village halls in rural Southland. It's all part of the ecosystem that makes our company sustainable. Do good shows every time, and...

Don't be a dick. The theatre scene is small, and everyone talks to each other. Do good work and be a nice human and people will

recommend you. We once got booked for a festival in the States because someone saw us performing in a Masonic Lodge in Wānaka.

## LIFE

Making time for exercise, cooking real food and catching up with friends and family is essential. It's easy to get sucked into a cycle of boozing and festival nights – and a bit of that is a beautiful thing – but if you spend eight months of the year on the road you can't spend all those nights partying. Find a gym, find a market, climb a mountain, and get in the sea. Do things that serve you as a human body in the world.

Furthermore, as much as we love the people we work with – and there's a delightful madness staying together, four to a room in an Edinburgh flat – we've found we're better friends and do better shows if we're able to find our own space.

We've been able to make it work by staying small and fleet-footed. We share a room, so can take opportunities when they come up. This also means we have to be jacks of all trades and are often spread too thin. It's a balancing act.

Money can be stressful, especially managing cashflow between gigs. We recommend getting a side hustle, especially one with flexible hours or (dream) one you can do remotely.

International touring doesn't square with environmentalism, and it's hard to be green on the move. We try and live as sustainably as we can. We travel with KeepCups, reusable cutlery, and containers for food and compost. We insist on recycling facilities at theatres and accommodation and have recently discovered ShareWaste, an app that locates compost bins you can use around the world. We look to offset our carbon when we book flights and put this into our budgets for presenters as a cost of booking our work.

We celebrate our triumphs and treasure our war stories. We're never sure if the worst



show ever gong should go to the one performed in a basketball court during a rainstorm (the audience could hear literally nothing for at least the first 25 minutes) or the one in a school hall in rural Western Australia where we performed under a sign declaring “Mr Freeze says ‘Be Cool!’” and the show unexpectedly began with Ralph fighting his way out from beneath a web of fake cobwebs. Once we stayed in the sick bay of a girls boarding school where we slept on camp stretchers under elaborately illustrated poems about bullying.

Read the contract, stipulate the requirements, confirm the requirements, and double check.

Being on tour means being away from whānau, so it’s important to find your family on the road. We’ve been lucky enough to fall in with a community of touring artists who we run into around the world.

We love setting off on an adventure, and we love when we get to come home.

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## DO THINGS THAT SERVE YOU AS A HUMAN BODY IN THE WORLD

ABOVE: *Troll* by Ralph McCubbin Howell, Trick of the Light Theatre Company.  
Image: Tabitha Arthur.



# AUCKLAND

BY RACHAEL LONGSHAW-PARK

July last year and the theatre community bellowed angrily, gathering in response to a controversial announcement from Pop-up Globe. Their fourth season would see a *Taming of the Shrew* in direct response to the #MeToo movement, with 'Abuse of Power' as their theme and focus. But, and here's the rub, with an all male cast. After a unionised push back from the community, Pop-up Globe quickly revised their strategy and returned with promise of 50/50 gender casting. But is this enough? Theatre companies bandy around the term 'gender split/divide' but to be frank, it's 2019 – when will casting policies reflect the social evolution of gender?

In response Auckland Theatre Company took to social media to show their support for women in theatre. However, writer Kate Prior quickly raised the statistics for ATC's 2019 season: zero Kiwi women writers were given a platform. Some of the most promising ATC work in the past year has come from new voices: in the Here and Now festival, Joni Nelson (*8 Reasonable Demands*) and Leki Jackson-Bourke (*The Gangster's Paradise*), alongside a devised piece with Binge Culture (*Watch Party*). Then this June, by joining forces with Prayas Theatre and director Ahi Karunaharan for *A Fine Balance*, ATC showed they can give otherwise unheard people and communities platforms. I hope this marks a trend towards something more contemporary and inclusive, leaving behind tired western reboots.

Diversity and inclusivity don't happen overnight. Theatre companies need to commit to filling roles from people of all

walks of life. In an interview with Kate Powell, playwright Victor Rodger further explained, "Because otherwise, the power remains with those who are racially and often internally homogeneous. Nothing changes because they're all speaking the same language."

Without fundamental shifts how will leading theatre companies keep up with the shift in audiences over the next decade?

Under-representation in the arts is an issue that independent theatremakers are choosing to utilise as a reason to create. It's these theatremakers that keep proving that diverse and intersectional work is possible. It's about practice over profit. It's about your kaupapa.

A leading example in Auckland this past year has been Proudly Asian Theatre (PAT). Under the leadership of Chye-Ling Huang, they have had many successes under their belt, including *Orientation* in Q's 2018 Matchbox season (shortlisted for Adam NZ Play Award 2018, winner of Hackman Cup for most Original Production 2018) and *Tide Waits For No Man*. This past year PAT have also produced important development opportunities, like *Fresh off the Page*, a monthly directed playreading featuring Asian writers. In 2019 they have developed into a playwriting initiative for emerging Asian writers. And they're not alone, other theatre groups and collectives (FAFSWAG, WAITĪ Productions, Prayas, Oriental Maidens...) are working hard to create their own avenues, producing some incredible, award-winning work this past year such as *I Aint Mad At Cha*, *I Am Rachel Chu*, *Woman of Citrus*, and *Go Home Curry Muncha*.



## WHAT VOICES WE WANT TO ELEVATE



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: *Fleshies* devised by the company, Basement Theatre. Image: George Wallace.

*The Gangster's Paradise* by Leki Jackson-Bourke, Auckland Theatre Company. Image: 2113 Creatives.

*I am Rachel Chu* by Nathan Joe, Amanda Grace Leo, Ravi Gurunathan and Angela Zhang, Basement Theatre. Image: Ankita Singh.

*Manawa Ora: Invisible Threads* by Aroha Silenzio and Company, Ngā Rangatahi Toa. Image: Emily Raftery.

*Actresssexual* by Sam Brooks, Smoke Labours Productions. Image: Andi Crown Photography.

*Shortland Street – The Musical* by Guy Langford with Simon Bennett, Auckland Theatre Company. Image: Michael Smith.

PREVIOUS PAGE: *Wild Dogs Under my Skirt* by Tusiata Avia, FCC, Silo Theatre and Auckland Arts Festival. Image: Raymond Sagapolutele.

ABOVE: *The Daylight Atheist* by Tom Scott, Auckland Theatre Company. Image: Michael Smith.

A company that leads with a strong kaupapa is Basement Theatre, who celebrated their ten-year anniversary in October with a series of anniversary events and a plan for the future. By inviting theatremakers and friends alike to give input on the next ten years, Basement prove where their values lie. General Manager Elise Sterback in the *NZ Herald* explained, “I think the shift is going to look less like a numbers game about getting artists into the industry... and about a slightly more curated mission around what voices we want to elevate.”

The cancellation of much loved *Shortland Street – The Musical* tour early this year shocked many a fan of the work, however, the flop of SkyCity’s 12 million dollar spectacle-filled musical *City of 100 Lovers* came as no surprise after a rocky journey, leaving many homegrown cast and crew without jobs and months of unpaid wages.

Independent shows such as *Near Death Experience*, *Valerie*, *Breathe*, *Such Stuff as Dreams* and *Maniac on the Dancefloor* all spoke openly about mental health conditions. A myriad of strong female-driven productions such as *Run Rabbit*, *Rosemary*, *Bad Mood*, *Medusa*, and *Working On My Night Moves* fearlessly took on the patriarchy, addressing issues such as rape culture and gender politics. We are starting to see these types of works entering the mainstream theatres, but until the gatekeepers of these spaces begin to implement a practice that fights for inclusivity and representation this shift in content and culture will take a few more years.

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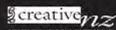
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# LIVE ART LIGHTING UP LIVES

T KENT TCE



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# CORPSE CANNON

*Finnius Teppett isn't serious, or is he?*

It's getting harder and harder for artists like me to make money from the theatre. Why? Because the boundary-pushing that is the lifeblood of our art strikes fear deep into the heart of the cabal of lily-livered gatekeepers who run our stages.

By bypassing homegrown talent in favour of bland, mealy scripts imported in bulk from continental Europe, we risk throwing an entire generation of New Zealand artists under the bus, or worse – making them do crowdfunding.

I am a nationally heard-of satirist, currently on the bones of his bum. Surely it can't be my fault that my work doesn't get programmed. No! It's the theatre programmers who are to blame. The cowering, dyspeptic little worms who refuse to commission anything that doesn't comply with the dark wishes of their shadowy corporate donors, or suit the tastes of the easily delighted mum-and-dad investors who make up their audience. Anything even remotely political is deemed 'off limits' and given a quick boot out the door. Bad luck for a writer whose stock in trade is satire of the political!

Here's one example. My latest show, *Corpse Cannon*, was recently turned down by an unnamed theatre company in Auckland because they were too scared to 'push the

boundaries.' In the show, one character, identified only as 'The Media' loads real human corpses (from a local medical school) into a giant cannon, and one by one shoots them across the room at a huge target on the opposite wall, labelled 'The Westminster System.'

In their rejection of my pitch, the programmer wrote that they weren't sure what "the point" of the show was. Could that really be the reason? Or is it more about what the champagne socialists of Grey Lynn have to say? God forbid that the keen eye of satirical scrutiny swing their way for once.

Think that was just a one-off? Think again.

In another one of my shows, *Sausage Sizzle*, the characters (each named after a former New Zealand prime minister) have a barbecue on stage, and then feed sausages to the audience – only to then reveal that the sausages are actually made of real human flesh (from a local medical school). To prove it, Walter Nash then begins a brief slideshow of photographs documenting him, Jenny Shipley, Norman Kirk, and Helen Clark butchering human corpses, and then running the meat through a grinder and into organic sausage casings – over which we play a real recording of current prime minister, Jacinda Ardern, doing a speech about the UN or something.




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## YOU CAN DRESS UP YOUR CENSORSHIP HOWEVER YOU LIKE

Guess what: that show was also turned down. The powers that be said they “weren’t sure it really was satire” and “couldn’t find the joke in it.”

You can dress up your censorship however you like, but it’s still censorship. And it’s strangling our stages and giving our artists heartburn.

So now even hardworking, often-thought-of-positively writers like me are reduced to staging our own work ourselves. Which is no mean feat—and I should know! Recently I self-produced one of my more recent works, a one-hander *Digging Up Sir Edmund Hillary’s Body to Show Him How Expensive Cigarettes Are Now* in the upstairs room of a local judo-poleira studio.

ABOVE: Finnius Teppett. Image: Matt Henley.

And before you ask: no, I didn’t really have the body of arguably our greatest mountaineer on hand to ‘dig up’ every night! That particular part of the show was, of course, just a theatrical illusion utilising a cleverly constructed set, some careful lighting, and a real human corpse (from a local medical school) in a wig.

I suspect the main reason the show was so poorly received was that the people who would’ve liked it didn’t come. Instead, I was left with an audience of mostly parents waiting for their child’s judo class to wrap up. C’est la vie.

Some audience members even had the gall to ask “that wasn’t a real human body, was it?” before saying they were “calling the police.”

That’s right. I was arrested. My crime? ‘Pushing the envelope.’

I’m not a “corpse thief” who “circumvents campus security” on “carefully planned raids of local medical schools.” I’m an artist. There’s a difference.

The good news is: you can help. I’m currently looking down the barrel of a hefty prison sentence and there’s a pretty strong case against me. Are you a lawyer? I’d really love to hear from you.

# Why I wrote the play I wrote

LYNDA CHANWAI-EARLE

*on Heat*

He was my captive audience of one. In the early summer of 1997, writer and friend Chris Orsman sat transfixed in a tiny rehearsal room at the historic Christchurch Arts Centre as I transformed into multiple characters before his eyes. My solo performance *Ka-Shue (Letters Home)* was an epic tale about my Chinese family history, and about a million thematic miles from the fierce terra incognita of Antarctica.

In his own epic way, Chris was about to make history and depart for the ice with Nigel Brown and Bill Manhire as one of the three inaugural Antarctic Arts Fellows.

After my rehearsal, out of the blue Chris asked, “What about applying for this Antarctic Arts Fellowship? Why not write a play about Antarctica?”

“Are you mad?” I chortled. “Can’t think of any possible reason I’d want to go there. Sounds like hell!” Ironic really, as Chris seeded the ice in my imagination. Now the coldest, windiest driest continent on earth has become my obsession.

*Heat* had its genesis as a commission for Circa’s birthday in 2002. However, it didn’t premiere until 2008 as a STAB commission

with BATS. It’s always been my screaming baby; one of my most difficult of script deliveries as a writer. In writing *Heat* I could really relate to Apsley Cherry-Garrard and his memoir *The Worst Journey in the World!*

I’m not a scientist, so getting under the skin of the science was a hellish learning curve and Circa Theatre had the patience of saints.

Love and hate on ice: it’s 1999 and a husband and wife scientific team hunker down inside a tiny, tightly packed survival capsule on the Ross Ice Shelf, wintering over in the vast frozen Antarctic, accompanied by only webcam, sporadic radio contact, the amazing Aurora Australis, and a colony of male penguins.

Struggling to maintain a failing relationship, Stella observes breeding patterns among Emperor penguins, while John monitors climate change – until the untimely introduction of a third character, an Emperor Penguin (nicknamed Bob) blowing their fragile world apart.

The ice, and Carson McCullers’ *The Ballad of the Sad Café* were inspiration behind *Heat*’s story; a love-hate triangle between a woman, a man and a penguin. It’s life-or-death as they’re marooned through four months of

endless winter darkness, on the cusp of the millennium.

So it's 2008. *Heat*, helmed by Ice Floe Productions, included director David O'Donnell, composer Gareth Farr (Antarctic Fellow 2005), set designer Brian King and Marty Roberts as our original lighting/alternative energy designer.

*Heat* also explored the interface between science and the arts by creating an installation of an Antarctic hut in a performance space, and a world-first: it was completely off-the-grid. This was a sustainably powered production within theatre venues, using only the renewable sources of solar and wind energy.

From the moment we phoned them with our crazy idea, Antarctica New Zealand backed *Heat*. All the props and costumes were real, historic items on long-term loan.

The STAB commission required artistic and technical innovation. It wasn't enough to have Bob our Emperor Penguin performed by a naked, body-painted actor, with no lines and on his knees throughout.

Our aim: to power the play within BATS theatre completely off-the-grid, emulating the conditions of an isolated survival hut on the ice. Solar panels and a petrol generator right?

Wrong. It was the fossil fuel beast and our very un-green carbon emissions that earned a lambasting from Marcus McShane following our premiere.

Best way forward? Suck it up. Go totally green. Marty Roberts had to go south (literally) so we invited Marcus to become our next alternative energy/lighting designer as we prepared for the national tour of *Heat* in 2010.

While CNZ funded the tour, Meridian sponsored our wind-turbine, Mitsubishi Black Diamond our solar panels, and Marcus created cutting edge LED theatre lighting to complete, happily, our one-hundred percent green off-the-grid system.

This was the first play in my Antarctic Trilogy – award-winning and groundbreaking, toured




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## IT'S ALWAYS BEEN MY SCREAMING BABY

to arts festivals over 2010 and 2011. And it was revived in a new production at Basement Theatre in Auckland just this year.

*Hole* and *Heart* are to be companion pieces. *Hole* is set after the ozone hole was discovered in 1985, during the wild-west frontier days of McMurdo Station and Scott Base, when women scientists were still new on the ice.

*Heart* goes back to Sir Edmund Hillary's time, as they drilled deep for the first ice-core samples, and they traced nuclear radiation in the snow after testing in the Pacific. The trilogy goes back in time to foreshadow events around climate change today.

I'm researching and writing these as part of my tenure as the 2019 IIML Writer in Residence at Victoria University. And our team have gathered once again, hoping to realise our long-term artistic vision of the trilogy as sustainable, green-powered touring theatre productions.

ABOVE: *Heat* by Lynda Chanwai-Earle, Circa Theatre. Image: Philip Merry.

# WORK IT BABY

*Michelle Lafferty of Elephant Publicity's how-to  
for media engagement in the arts.*

Love them or hate them, courting media is fruitful for selling the arts. In a world where cat videos rule and 'shoe of the week' has (arguably) the best print media pick-up, it can be daunting. So I'd like to offer practitioners some tips on making a successful marriage between art and media, albeit one of convenience.

The first rule of media connection: do your research. Know what they do. Know what they write about. They will have a defined audience. They will appreciate you taking the time to offer them ideas of how to cover your event that matches their positioning in the market. Those who make it easy for them to speak to their audience are more likely to make the cut for editorial.

The second rule: have a newsworthy idea. Pitching "I have a show on" is considered lazy by media. It's unlikely it will land you that cover or interview. Jump on the zeitgeist. Find a way your work can align with what's trending in the world. Consider political trends and cultural shifts when shaping your pitch.

Thirdly: it's not what you know but who you know. Contacts are key. Work any you have. New Zealand is a small place and everyone in media ends up somewhere else eventually: don't burn bridges. If you're starting out, invite journalists and media people you respect to

your work – so they can be a part of your world. Do it before you want to ask a favour. Getting media sold on your vision before you've got something to sell them is a genius move.

Be flexible. Journalists are mostly underpaid and under-resourced – something I'm sure you can relate to. Decide upfront if you're happy to supply written answers to Q&As and give insights into your personal life to get stories across the line. This could be as intimate as your recent nuptials or a lighthearted view of your recent travel experiences. It could also mean a lot of your time on your part writing clever, engaging editorial. Alternatively, there's a growing number of media websites that may consider you writing an opinion piece on your view of the world and how this could relate to themes in your work.

Finally: honesty works. Don't push for something you don't feel confident doing or have the time to do. If you know your schedule is slammed don't offer to write a 500 word opinion piece. If you're not ready to take on the thrill of live radio, don't set yourself up to fail.

The deal is not to take it too personally if you're rejected. You'll need a killer instinct (without manifesting the stalker within) to



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## GETTING MEDIA SOLD ON YOUR VISION BEFORE YOU'VE GOT SOMETHING TO SELL THEM

ABOVE: *Work Do* by  
Rose Matafeo and Alice  
Snedden, Basement  
Theatre. Image: Andi  
Crown Photography.

get stories across the line. Likely, if you work in the arts you are good at everything and are indeed a killer. However, it could be well worth your money and time to engage a publicist to do all of this for you. Just so you can concentrate on what you do best – making art.

Finding a publicist that works for you and understands your art is not easy. But when you find that person, dealing with media becomes a much less hefty proposition. Our scene is full of PR people that offer different services for a wildly different range of fees. Shop around. The gift a good publicist offers your campaign is expertly crafting bespoke angles and pitches for media. They have excellent contacts and can assist you in creating opportunities for your work and your brand.

Make sure the publicist you hire gels with your personality, has a sense of humour, can write, picks up the phone and ultimately is a hustler.

When looking for a publicist check their client base. Have a look at what they've achieved for people like you. The fear for most artists is that PR people are all jazz hands and champagne (I wish this was true). The tricky thing about deciding to go with a professional is that nothing is guaranteed. But they should be able to give you a good indication of what is achievable. A leap of trust is required, but also don't forget that references are king. Ask other practitioners which publicists have the smarts or contacts to deal with your project.

Whether you choose to go for a publicist or fly solo – strategy, lead time and great images are going to make life easier for you to nab that media scoop.

# Why I Wrote the Play I Wrote

ALBERT BELZ

*on Astroman*

Countdown to *Astroman*...

Ten... *Astroman* was conceived sometime late 2011. I was a bit tired of theatre. I felt I'd had a few good years, but the stuff I was writing didn't feel fresh to me. I was 'turgid reading and going to theatre where a lot of material, and the voices coming through, were a lot angrier than I was feeling about the world.

I can't quite put my finger on it – but my best attempt is to say, as I have in the past, it all felt a little 'victim-driven-heavy-drama-ry.' And why not? Key was into his second administration, and National's 'protect the economy, protect the babyboomers, cut, slash, rinse, wash, repeat' policies, were hurting generations... a lot of the vulnerable were becoming victims and these were the stories many of us wanted to tell or in many a case – yell.

Nine... With my own lack of desire to tell such stories at this point in my career, I was questioning my voice, and indeed my relevance as a playwright, hell at one point I even wondered if I was too old for this gig.

Eight... At this point *Astroman* was little more than a very brief outline on a refill pad.

Seven... Then my partner was head-hunted by an Australian pharmacy, and she moved to Geelong (down the road from Melbourne). I figured then that it might be a good time to follow my partner over to Oz and take a break from writing altogether. I'd convinced myself I'd take a two-year break and if I was ready to write again after that, then ka pai.

Six... Once in Australia I was able to find the most mind-numbing 9 to 5 kind of job possible. I was working a contract for a trucking company, it was great.

Five... While doing this I was travelling to Melbourne in the evenings and visiting comedy clubs. I was watching some of the best acts in Australia while returning to stand-up gigging myself. I was reminded how much I enjoyed making others laugh. I realigned my voice with this. I wanted to entertain smart audiences. I read somewhere: "Tell your story with triumphant humour." This very much appealed to me.

Four... This was all just what the doctor ordered... for a little bit. My fingers got itchy for the keyboard again, and the deal was sealed when I saw an advertisement from Playwriting Australia about a competition. The best six scripts would win a week's workshop in Sydney.

Sometime in 2013 I picked up that scraggy old outline of *Astroman* which was at that time set in Whakatane, and relocated it to Geelong.

Three... The script that eventuated was one of the six finalists and at the end of 2014 I was in Sydney. I had embraced the idea that I wasn't as young as I used to be, and set the piece in a time that I remembered fondly – 1984-ish. It was about a “young genius who loved video games but was often misunderstood. Not that he cared too much – he was busy doing the stuff he loved.” The piece was full of humour and one draft after the Sydney workshop, I was invited to Adelaide in 2015. *Astroman* was to receive a playreading as part of the Playwriting Australia Festival.

Two... It got a huge amount of love there, even Melbourne Theatre Company amongst others got a hold of me to say they were interested in it.

One... Accept that by the end of 2015 the interest from various Oz companies had died down. I was afraid it would never get made. And to me there is nothing worse than a script wallowing at the bottom of my undies drawer. And now that I'd returned to New Zealand, I figured I'd rewrite the script with its original intention of setting it back in Whakatane. By the beginning of 2017, The Court Theatre in Christchurch was sent the first draft and loved it. So it was going to be launched at The Court in 2018. Then Melbourne got back to me – they wanted it again! They too would make it in 2018. It was on!

Blastoff.

Turns out, the same day it was previewed at MTC, it was opening at The Court. The Court got it by two hours.




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## I WAS QUESTIONING MY VOICE

ABOVE: *Astroman* by Albert Belz, Melbourne Theatre Company. Image: Jeff Busby.



# CHRISTCHURCH

BY RUTH AGNEW

An 11 March 2019, *Stuff* article ‘Gerry Brownlee gets tied up in portaloos’ referred to local playwright Christina Stachurski’s eagerly anticipated political satire. Eight years after the quakes, a plot revolving around the kidnapping of Brownlee offered a piece of cathartic black humour for residents.

On 15 March, an act of terror changed Ōtāutahi and its people once more. The Court chose to cancel *EQ F@#%ING C*, instead using the theatre space to bring audiences together for shows that supported and strengthened Christchurch communities, such as comedy fundraiser *Stand Up For Peace*.

Without Stachurski’s contribution to The Court 2018-2019 season, the gender imbalance on the mainstage became more marked – one out of seven plays written by a woman. The Court had been working towards increasing diversity with their playwrights and practitioners, with positive moves such as the appointment of Vanessa Gray as their Kaihāpai Toi (Maori and Pasifika Producer).

For many, Christchurch theatre is synonymous with The Court. While it continues to thrive, the past 12 months have seen several smaller professional companies find firm foot-holds. Many have already been presenting exciting original work, with standout shows demonstrating the way we can celebrate diversity onstage.

Empress Theatre Collective’s *Free Radicals* (directed by Erin Harrington) invited female composers to pay tribute to pioneering women of science and technology throughout history using original song.

Blackboard Theatre Collective, a new musical theatre company explored gender roles in

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## THE COURT CHOSE TO CANCEL EQ F@#%ING C

*He Says, She Says; The Bechdel Test*, and in a season of original cabaret acts, *In Session*. One of the most successful shows in the season was James Foster and Rocky Fidow’s tale of male friendship, *Bromance*. Dan Bain meanwhile showcased stunning young talent in The Court Youth Company’s outstanding reinterpretation of *Boudica*.

The success of these smaller companies lies in their understanding of a niche market, creating entertainment for a specific audience. Cubbin Theatre Company, the brainchild of Artistic Director Mel Luckman has tapped into a previously overlooked demographic, the very young. Debut *Up and Away* blurred lines, using movement and music to create an innovative introduction for babies and toddlers to the world of theatre, followed by another sellout show, *Play Play*.

Finding your feet has added challenges when you are dancing on shaky ground. Since the earthquakes removed many performance and rehearsal spaces, sourcing centrally located, adaptable, affordable venues has been a challenge. Two Productions, helmed by the Pollyannas of the performing arts community, Tom Eason and Holly Chapell, have been offering free space in the Arts Centre since 2017.

In October, Michael Bell’s dream of a centrally located, multi-purpose performance space

LEFT: *Time Machine* by Andrew Todd, The Court Theatre.  
Image: The Court Theatre.

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CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT:  
*Hansel and Gretel* by Dan Bain,  
The Court Theatre. Image:  
The Court Theatre.

*Ripeka* by Tania Gilchrist,  
The Court Theatre. Image:  
The Court Theatre.

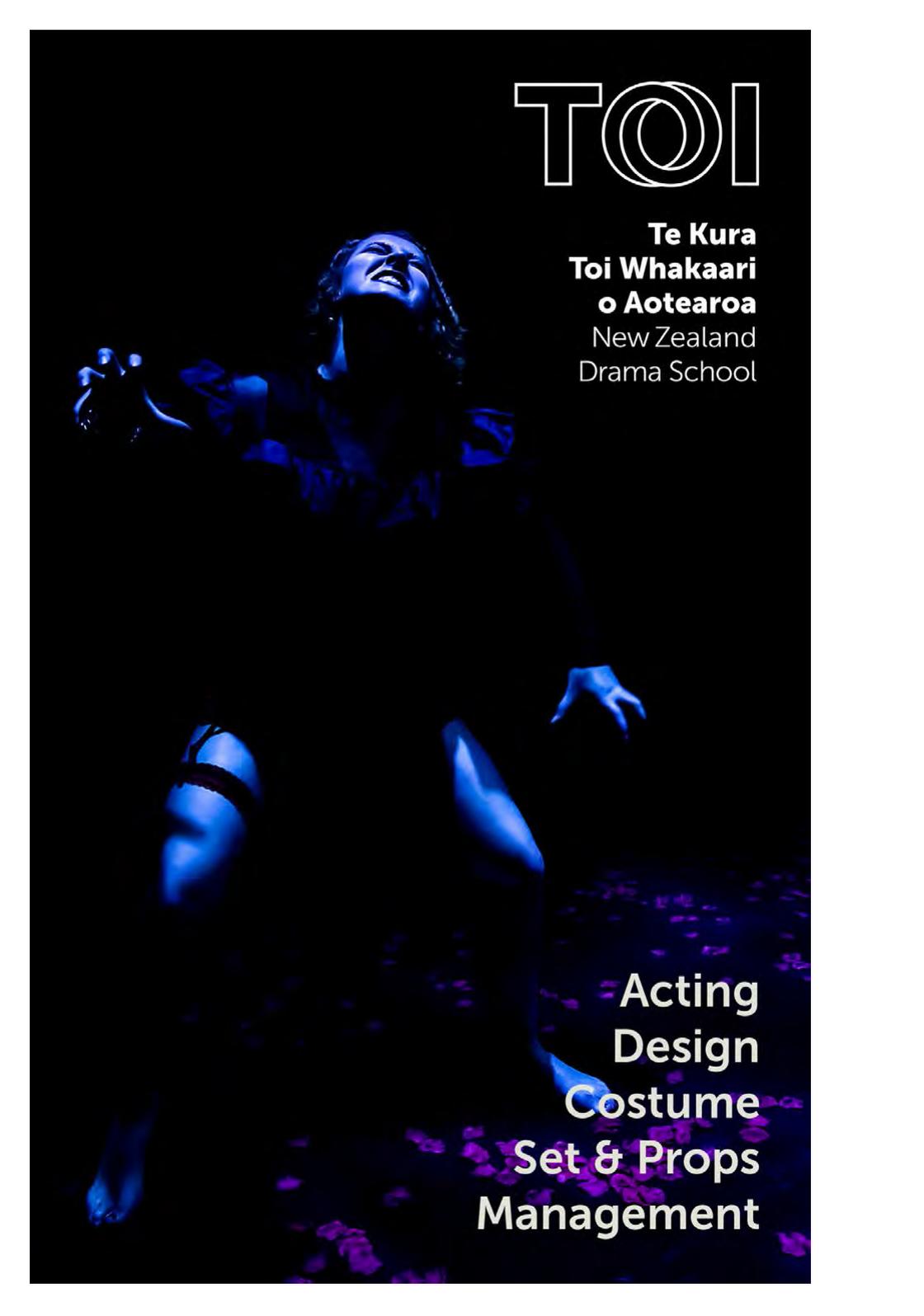
*Palu* by Y|Not, The Court Theatre.  
Image: The Court Theatre.

*A Christmas Carol* by Dan Bain,  
The Court Theatre.  
Image: The Court Theatre.

*Au Ko Tuvalu* by Tavita Nielsen-  
Mamea, The Court Theatre.  
Image: The Court Theatre.

became reality, in the form of a tent capable of catering to audiences of up to 300 pitched on the Performing Arts Precinct site. It provided space for a phenomenal 92 productions, attended by around 7000. The success of Bell's big top has led to the Christchurch City Council contributing \$50,000 towards Bell's plan to reinvent Little Andromeda as a more intimate indoor venue, seating around 100 in October.

The highlight of the year though, has to be The Court's production of *Hedwig and the Angry Inch*. This glam rock, cabaret style musical comedy exploration of gender identity was everything theatre should be: entertaining, confronting and relevant.



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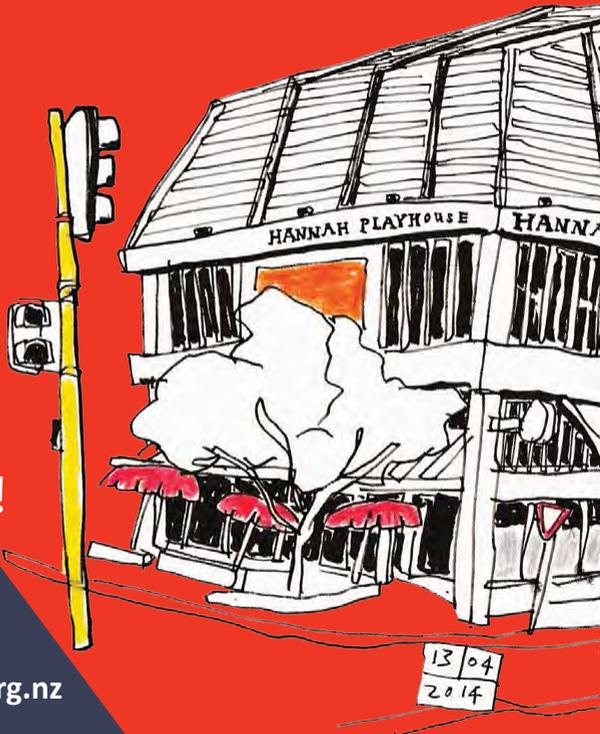
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# ES IST WUNDERBAR!

*From one who's been there: Vivienne Plumb on  
residencies for playwrights.*

A writing residency is a truly wonderful gift. It is a place of retreat, designed to help writers pursue their creative growth and focus on their work, without the usual disruptions of daily life.

At Varuna, a writing residency manse in the Blue Mountains out of Sydney where I wrote my playscript *The Cape*, dinner is even prepared for the writers every night, to help them concentrate fully during the day on their work. But there are also a number of marvellous residencies available for application within New Zealand. I spoke to a range of playwrights about their experiences.

Emily Duncan presently holds the 2019 Robert Burns Fellowship at the University of Otago, Dunedin. She feels that having this residency has been an absolute boon to her as a writer: a rare, important opportunity. As part of the experience, Emily enjoys being hosted within the Otago University department, where she has an office and has colleagues to engage with, and also enjoys having access to the university library.

Her project is not a play, the form she is generally known for writing in. Instead it's a memoir piece. Having a residency for a full year allows her to work in a different medium, an important thing for a writer – able to

spread her wings into another form.

The residency has however already allowed her time to redraft her play, *Le Sujet Parle* (an immersive theatrical experience) for a production this last March.

Most residency recipients I talked to saw the financial stability (a stipend) as being a big plus. Also, being given time and space is significant for a writing career, and the validation of receiving a fellowship or residency. Some however thought that residencies where there is an expectation of completing a work hanging over your head (not always the case) could be daunting.

Carl Nixon, a novelist and playwright, received the 2018 Katherine Mansfield Menton Fellowship, a residency allowing you three months minimum time in Menton, France. During his time there he worked on a new novel, *The Tally Stick*. He felt being overseas was a massive recharge. Being able to work in a different environment, to create a different routine, and to be exposed to a different culture all helped to broaden and open the mind. Having access to overseas museums, libraries, galleries, theatre, and other cultural events and influences was wonderful, he says.



Carl found receiving the Menton residency made him feel that New Zealanders valued more the plays, novels and short fiction he'd already produced. It was tremendous confirmation of his writing. He took his family with him to France (his wife and daughter speak better French than he does), but one or two writers who had singly attended residencies overseas, mentioned coming up against a feeling of isolation, especially if you are in a country where English is not the first language.

Whiti Hereaka, another playwright and fiction writer, was given a Randell Cottage residency in Wellington at a time she was about to throw in writing, so it came as an enormous boost for her, enabling her to complete her first novel, *The Graphologist's Apprentice*. Her play, *Rewena* was written entirely on a summer residency (the Maori Writers Residency) at the Michael King Centre in Devonport, Auckland.

Whiti also had an international residency at the University of Iowa in the USA, where a reading of her playscript *Rona and Rabbit on the Moon*, with the aid of a dramaturg meant she was able to experience the very different way American theatre approaches working with a drama writer. One aspect she found a

little more difficult was the need to transport notes and books in your luggage – more onerous travelling overseas.

Last year I lived in Berlin for almost a year while holding the 2018 Creative New Zealand Berlin Writing Residency. The sheer inspiration of being in Berlin – a city with a fascinating and sometimes scary history – made for an exciting time while I researched and wrote a creative nonfiction book.

Berlin is a crazy place, heavily graffitied, and the residents equally heavily tattooed. Let's not forget this is the city where the seamless condom was invented; I'm sure that the vegan sex shop I saw in Kreuzberg must be the only one in the world. Berliners are also famous for their 'Berliner schnauze' (like the 'snout' or 'snarl' of a dog), which refers to their sassy attitude and sharp sense of humour.

Speaking German was not such a problem for me. With the support of the Goethe-Institut in Wellington I had already been learning the language to help with the research for my book (presently entitled

ABOVE: Vivienne Plumb in Berlin.  
Image: Adam Wiedemann.

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*Nürnberg Nanny: my mother's secret past*). This residency is about eleven months in length. This gave me time for creative thinking, imagining and dreaming – important parts of a writing life and what helps to fuel a writer.

Writers who work full-time often have no down time. Instead, besides writing, you are constantly rigging up new work in advance in order to survive in this poorly-paid occupation. You are in effect subsidising the arts for every other New Zealander.

The Berlin residency is a one-bedroom apartment in what used to be East Berlin and includes central heating (the temperature went down to -12 degrees in winter), and the stipend had to cover your airfares, travel and health insurance, and the German visa. I applaud Creative New Zealand for continuing to offer such a terrific residency. It goes to a New Zealand writer every second year (the next recipient is Paul Diamond), and to a New Zealand visual artist every other year. Es ist wunderbar!

Chye-Ling Huang is a playwright and co-founder of Proudly Asian Theatre. She is on the verge of taking up a 2019 Grimshaw Sargeson Fellowship. This allows her a stipend of \$10,000 plus a four-month tenure at the Sargeson Centre in Auckland. This is a one-bedroom apartment situated near Albert Park and Auckland University, and the fellowship includes use of the University of Auckland library. She'll use the residency to complete the final draft of her play *Black Tree Bridge*, and to begin work on a new theatre piece, *The New Temple*, based on queer Asian experiences.

Overall, every writer I spoke to was very positive regarding the support and encouragement residencies can give. Chye-Ling: "The next logical step, if you're not seeing the work that you believe is valuable in the world, is to just make it yourself." And that's exactly such a residency such as the Grimshaw Sargeson Fellowship assists writers in doing.

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*Bevin Linkhorn,  
Good Times Company*

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Rants in the Dark, adapted from the book by Emily Writes by Mel Dodge, Lyndee-Jane Rutherford and Bevin Linkhorn, directed by Lyndee-Jane Rutherford and performed by Renee Lyons, Bronwyn Turei and Amelia Reid-Meredith. Photo by Roc Torio. Produced by Good Times Company.



# BECOMING A PLAYMARKET CLIENT

*Director Murray Lynch demystifies the process.*

Generally, Playmarket's invitation to represent a playwright as a client is made to those who have written works that we believe have substantial long-term production potential.

Most often playwrights will already have a substantial track record that suggests they will continue to write and treat playwriting seriously as a profession. Representation is not for us a judgement on the standard of a client's work but about addressing a practical need when business as a playwright is at a sufficient level to require our services.

Playmarket is constantly keeping an eye out for productions by new writers (of any age) or to identify writers via competition entries that may develop into future clients.

For it to be worthwhile for a playwright to become part of the agency there needs to be established sufficient need for the writer to have an agent – both in terms of the potential to gain more production opportunities for the playwright's work and Playmarket expending the time and resources on their behalf.

Once appointed as agent Playmarket has the authority, in consultation with the client as needed, to negotiate and sign all licences and agreements concerning the use of all scripts the client has written for the stage. We handle



the chasing and payment of royalties/fees, promotion of their work and archiving of scripts and material related to them.

However, Playmarket is always available to advise and support non-clients to navigate contracts and any issues or questions they might have. We're always happy to discuss representation with playwrights and provide licensing or production advice.

ABOVE: Ray Henwood and cast, *The Great Gatsby*, adapted by Ken Duncum, from the novel by F. Scott Fitzgerald, Circa Theatre 2010. Image: Stephen A'Court.

# PLAYWRIGHTS GETTING FUNDED

*Mark Amery in conversation with  
Creative New Zealand's Cath Cardiff.*

I went into this story with the allusion that playwrights might get short shrift from Creative New Zealand applying without a producer in tow. That they might fall down a crack between theatre and literature. The stats CNZ provided say differently. Playwrights are about as successful as anybody else.

101 out of the 282 applications by playwrights applying themselves over the last four years have been successful. The general arts grant percentage over those four years is around 30%.

"I'm really delighted that the statistic is the same," says Cath, "because I didn't have any idea!"

## **Is a playwright more likely to get funded if there is a production lined up?**

It's always handy to have an indication of interest from a possible presenter but we're very aware that it's a work in progress. To get anyone to fully commit to an unwritten script would be pretty unrealistic... If you don't have someone committed to producing it, it's not a disadvantage. The assessment is done on the quality of the idea and the writing, not on whether someone has said they will produce it. It really falls into that creative development

category where we are perfectly happy to support something that is a great idea even if it's not committed into presentation, because if it's good somebody will.

## **So the criteria for you: quality and track record are key?**

Correct. So the guidelines – and they're not hard and fast rules – are basically that we want recognition from peers or experts. And even if they are an emerging person we just need somebody who can say "look they are really talented, they're just at the beginning of their career but I fully believe that they have the potential to be highly innovative." Even just that in a letter makes a big difference. Otherwise we are looking for people who are established – that there is a degree of critical or commercial success. That there is a confidence level there, or there has been some specialised training or experience.

Those things together add up to a track record. But I have to say that it's the most compelling idea that carries the most weight. You could have one or a few of those things but if the sample of writing or the synopsis that's provided is brilliant and everyone goes "wow, that's amazing" then it will get funded.



---

## IT'S THE MOST COMPELLING IDEA THAT CARRIES THE MOST WEIGHT

One of the best applications I ever saw was from Douglas Wright and (this was back in the day of manual applications) it was basically two sides of an A4 with a synopsis that he'd handwritten and everyone went "Wow, that sounds incredible, we've got to fund it." His ability to articulate his idea was very strong. He had a very concise and poetic writing style. You could get it straight away. It's all about the idea really.

### **Do writers provide a sample of a draft in progress?**

General writing guidelines are a two-page synopsis and up to 10 pages of an extract or a treatment. And it has to be that work rather than past work. If it's devised work we want some evidence of what the storyboard is or the trajectory of the text or how it might go – what the possibilities are – and some sample of text that's relevant to that devised purpose.

### **How useful are theatre reviews?**

Any good independent critical verification of quality is useful. Anything that's independent of that person, with a good critical eye because sometimes the assessors haven't seen the work in question.

### **Letters of reference are important yes?**

Totally. And not as a form thing you got from someone ages ago. I think people sometimes get a bit lazy on those things. It needs to be relevant to that new work, so we know they've looked maybe at that sample of writing.

### **Any final thoughts?**

The application itself is quite straightforward. What people struggle with is that articulation of what they want to do. Writing that in a way that isn't pages of wordy stuff. Simple, concise and compelling. Writers have an advantage there.

Having said that there is so much demand – and the numbers have gone through the roof in recent years – that there are often proposals in every round where there is nothing wrong with them but we can't fit them into the budget. Usually the ones that everyone agree on get funded. Similarly with the ones that people have serious reservations about. It's the bulk of applications somewhere in the middle, where there's a question or they have not provided something they really need for assessment. That's where the majority of debate is.

ABOVE: *Cradle Song* by Albert Belz, Te Rehia Theatre.  
Image: Peter Jennings.

# THEATRE CALENDAR 2019

*Professional Productions of NZ Plays 1 August 2018 – 31 July 2019*

## TOURING & INTERNATIONAL

### *No Holds Bard*

by Natalie Medlock and Dan Musgrove  
Arts on Tour National Tour  
29 Jul – 31 Aug 2018

### *Sightings*

by Miriama McDowell, Fiona Graham and Denyce Su'a  
Massive Company  
Forum North Whangarei  
1 – 2 Aug 2018  
Glen Eden Playhouse  
Auckland  
7 Sep 2018

### *The Messy Magic Adventure*

by David Ladderman and Lizzie Tollemache  
Rollicking Entertainment  
Auckland Live  
4 – 5 Aug 2018  
Nelson Arts Festival,  
Arts on Tour National  
Tour, Theatre Royal  
Christchurch  
11 Oct – 1 Dec 2018  
The Blue Baths Rotorua  
15 – 27 Apr 2019

### *Shot Bro*

by Rob Mokoraka  
Mookalucky Productions  
Touring Nationally  
5 Aug 2018 – 2 Jul 2019

### *Mrs Krishnan's Party*

by Jacob Rajan and Justin Lewis  
Indian Ink Theatre  
Company  
OneOneSix Whangarei,  
The Meteor Hamilton, Q  
Theatre, Theatre Royal  
New Plymouth, Te Auaha,

Papa Hou Christchurch,  
Trust Arts Education  
Centre Pittsburgh USA  
8 Aug – 21 Oct 2018  
The Cultch Vancouver,  
Canada  
15 Jan – 3 Feb 2019  
Taupo Winter Festival  
11 – 12 Jul 2019

### *I Ain't Mad At Cha*

by Turene Jones  
Waiti Productions  
Basement Theatre  
14 – 25 Aug 2018  
Kia Mau Festival  
1 – 2 June 2019

### *The Bookbinder*

by Ralph McCubbin  
Howell  
Trick of the Light  
Darwin Arts Festival,  
Horizon Festival Nambour,  
Australia,  
17 – 26 Aug 2018  
Auckland Arts Festival  
21 – 24 Mar 2019  
National Arts Festival  
Makhanda, South Africa  
30 Jun – 7 Jul 2019

### *Breathe*

by Daniel Goodwin  
Taurima Vibes  
Basement Theatre, BATS  
21 Aug – 22 Sep 2018

### *Kororāreka: The Ballad of Maggie Flynn*

by Paolo Rotondo  
Red Leap Theatre  
Napier Museum, Hannah  
Playhouse, Mangere  
Arts Centre, Baycourt  
Tauranga, The Meteor  
Hamilton  
24 Aug – 15 Sep 2018

### *Ngā Puke (The Hills)*

by John Broughton  
Waiti Productions  
Rotorua Little Theatre  
11 – 15 Sep 2018  
Herald Theatre  
Auckland Live  
23 – 27 Jul 2019

### *Promise and Promiscuity*

by Penny Ashton  
Centrepoint Theatre,  
Hawke's Bay Arts Festival  
12 Sep – 20 Oct 2018  
Baycourt Tauranga,  
The Meteor Hamilton  
24 – 29 May 2019  
Theatre Royal Nelson  
22 Jun 2019  
Hamilton Fringe Festival  
Ontario  
18 – 28 Jul 2019

### *Maggot*

by Freya Finch, Angela  
Fouhy and Elle Wootton  
Melbourne Fringe,  
Sydney Fringe  
14 – 29 Sep 2018

### *My Best Dead Friend*

by Anya Tate-Manning  
Zanetti Productions  
Melbourne Fringe, Arts  
Festival Dunedin, BATS,  
Nelson Arts Festival  
14 Sep – 19 Oct 2018  
Festival of Colour,  
Upsurge Festival,  
Southland Arts Festival  
2 Apr – May 2019

### *Kōtuku and the Moon Child*

by Birdlife Productions  
Ghost Light Theatre Nelson  
15 Sep 2018  
NZ Fringe, Dunedin Fringe  
16 – 31 Mar 2019  
Brighton Fringe, Prague

Fringe, Festival Valise  
Poland, Ludlow Fringe,  
Barnstaple Fringe, Small  
World Cardigan, Guildford  
Fringe, Great Yorkshire  
Fringe UK  
15 May – 20 Jul 2019

### *I'll Tell You This for Nothing*

by Kate Jason Smith  
BATS  
18 – 22 Sep 2018  
St Peters Hall,  
Paekakariki  
7 – 9 Dec 2018  
Avalon Pavilion, Lower  
Hutt 22 Jan 2019  
La Fiesta Festival  
Whanganui, Garnet  
Station Auckland,  
Paraparaumu,  
Dunedin Fringe  
23 Feb – 30 Mar 2019  
Temple Sinai Wellington  
4 Jul 2019

### *Jane Doe*

by Eleanor Bishop  
Zanetti Productions  
Arts Festival Dunedin,  
Sydney Fringe, Nelson  
Arts Festival, Hawke's  
Bay Arts Festival, BATS  
21 Sep – 3 Nov 2018  
Southland Arts Festival  
1 – 2 May 2019

### *Medusa*

by Nisha Madhan,  
Julia Croft and Virginia  
Frankovich  
Zanetti Productions  
Circa Theatre, Q Theatre  
21 Sep – 3 Nov 2018

### *Miss Jean Batten*

by Phil Ormsby  
Flaxworks Theatre  
Company

- Arts Festival Dunedin  
21 – 22 Sep 2018  
Summer Arts Festival  
Whakatāne  
16 Mar 2019  
ASB Theatre Marlborough  
18 – 20 Apr 2019
- Break Up (We Need to Talk)*  
by Binge Culture  
Melbourne Fringe,  
Sydney Fringe  
23 – 26 Sep 2018
- All Good*  
by Isaac Te Reina  
Taurima Vibes  
Basement Theatre, BATS  
25 Sep – 13 Oct 2018
- Watching Paint Dry*  
by Anders Falstie-Jensen  
The Rebel Alliance  
Basement Theatre  
25 – 26 Sep 2018  
Allen Hall Theatre  
1 – 3 Nov 2018  
Circa Theatre  
18 – 22 Mar 2019
- Valerie*  
by Robin Kelly with Tom  
Broome and Cherie Moore  
Last Tapes Theatre  
Company  
Arts Festival Dunedin,  
Hawke's Bay Arts Festival  
27 Sep – 18 Oct 2018
- Discharge is Rotten  
to the Core*  
by Discharge  
BATS  
2 – 6 Oct 2018  
Dunedin Fringe  
5 – 27 Mar 2019
- Blonde Mountain Wolf Man*  
by Craig Geenty  
Palmy Fringe  
6 – 7 Oct 2018  
NZ Fringe  
3 – 5 Mar 2019
- The Book Club*  
by Roger Hall  
Fusion Productions  
Centrestage Orewa,  
Baycourt Tauranga  
7 – 14 Oct 2018  
Artworks Theatre  
Waiheke Island  
11 – 13 Apr 2019
- Spot the Difference*  
by Antony-Paul Aiono and  
Benny Marama  
BATS, Baycourt Tauranga  
9 – 27 Oct 2018
- It's Mackenzie Country,  
Bitch*  
by Jess Jean  
Playspace Theatre Co  
Palmy Fringe  
10 – 11 Oct 2018  
NZ Fringe  
4 – 6 Mar 2019
- Period*  
by Amy Atkins  
Palmy Fringe  
11 – 12 Oct 2018  
NZ Fringe  
19 – 23 Mar 2019
- The Dunstan Creek  
Haunting*  
by David Ladderman and  
Lizzie Tollemache  
Rollicking Entertainment  
Nelson Arts Festival  
11 – 12 Oct 2018  
Circa Theatre  
9 – 20 Jul 2019
- Conversations  
with Dead Relatives*  
by Phil Ormsby  
Flaxworks Theatre  
Company  
Nelson Arts Festival  
13 – 14 Oct 2018  
Hamilton Gardens Arts  
Festival  
1 – 2 Mar 2019  
Circa Theatre  
1 – 11 May 2019
- The South Afreakins*  
by Robyn Paterson  
Hawkes Bay Arts Festival  
16 Oct 2018  
Southland Arts Festival  
8 – 9 May 2019
- Olive Copperbottom*  
by Penny Ashton  
Nelson Arts Festival,  
Oamaru Opera House  
16 Oct – 16 Nov 2018  
Hamilton Gardens Arts  
Festival  
22 – 23 Feb 2019
- The Scandalous Four*  
Original story  
by Christianne Van Wijk  
The Acting Collective  
The Pumphouse, Alberton  
17 Oct – 4 Nov 2018
- Wild Dogs Under my Skirt*  
by Tusiata Avia  
FCC Nelson Arts Festival,  
Hawke's Bay Arts Festival  
18 – 22 Oct 2018  
Silo Theatre and  
Auckland Arts Festival,  
Wanaka Festival of  
Colour, Upsurge Festival  
7 Mar – 7 Apr 2019  
Christchurch Arts Festival  
25 – 27 July 2019
- Guru of Chai*  
by Jacob Rajan and  
Justin Lewis  
Indian Ink Theatre Company  
OZ Asia Festival Adelaide,  
Australia  
25 – 27 Oct 2018  
Bathurst Memorial  
Entertainment Centre,  
Bunjil Place Studio  
Narrawarren, Frankston  
Arts Centre, Geelong  
Performing Arts Centre  
19 Jul – 3 Aug 2019
- Astroman*  
by Albert Belz  
Melbourne Theatre  
Company  
Arts Centre Melbourne,  
Australia  
27 Oct – 8 Dec 2018
- La'u Gagana*  
by Jake Arona, Maxwell  
Siulangapo, Talia-Rae  
Mavaega, Tavita Nielsen-  
Mamea and Mana Tatafu  
Y Not  
Little Andromeda,  
Christchurch 27 Oct 2018  
Measina Festival, Wellington  
14 – 16 Dec 2018
- Kokako's Song*  
by Birdlife Productions  
Hawke's Bay Arts Festival  
28 Oct 2018  
Hamilton Gardens Arts  
Festival  
2 – 3 Mar 2019
- Seven Deadly Stunts*  
by David Ladderman and  
Lizzie Tollemache  
Rollicking Entertainment  
Arts on Tour National  
Tour, Theatre Royal  
Christchurch  
1 Nov – 9 Dec 2018  
Upsurge Festival  
6 Apr 2019
- Social Climbers*  
by Roger Hall  
Ben McDonald Ltd.  
National Tour  
2 – 26 Nov 2018
- Ophelia Thinks Harder*  
by Jean Betts  
Wit Incorporated  
Bluestone Church  
Artspace Melbourne,  
Australia  
8 – 24 Nov 2018
- Movers*  
by James Cain  
Red Scare Theatre  
Company  
Basement Theatre,  
The Meteor Hamilton  
20 – 29 Nov 2018
- Rauru*  
by Cian Gardner and  
Karina Nathan  
Cove Theatre  
The Meteor Hamilton  
21 – 23 Nov 2018  
Rotorua Fringe  
6 – 8 Apr 2019  
Kia Mau Festival  
14 – 15 Jun 2019
- Tide Waits for No Man:  
Episode Grace*  
by Nikita 雅涵  
Tu-Bryant  
BATS  
4 – 8 Dec 2018  
Basement Theatre  
19 – 23 Feb 2019
- The Night Mechanics*  
by Miria George  
Tawata Productions  
Porirua, Stokes Valley,  
Ōtaki, Te Awamutu,  
Hamilton, Horohoro,  
Rotorua,  
6 – 15 Dec 2018
- Conversations  
avec mon Pénis*  
by Dean Hewison  
translated by Marc-André

## Affordable Theatre & Studio Hire



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**Thibault**  
Theatre Bistouri  
Quebec Tour, Canada  
16 – 19 Jan 2019

*Power Ballad*  
by Julia Croft and  
Nisha Madhan  
Zanetti Productions  
The Cultch Vancouver,  
Canada  
22 – 26 Jan 2019

*Tröll*  
by Ralph McCubbin Howell  
Trick of the Light  
Fringe World Perth,  
Australia, Q Theatre,  
Capital E National Arts  
Festival  
29 Jan – 9 Mar 2019  
Circa Theatre  
13 – 20 Jul 2019

*The Basement Tapes*  
by Stella Reid  
Zanetti Productions  
Blue Room Theatre,  
Fringe World Perth  
29 Jan – 2 Feb 2019  
HOME Manchester,  
New Diorama London,  
Tobacco Factory Bristol,  
Phoenix Arts Bordon, The  
Maltings Wells-next-the-  
Sea, Stantonbury Theatre  
Milton Keynes, Arts at the  
Old Fire Station Oxford,  
Greenwich Theatre,  
Woodville Gravesend,  
Ashcroft Arts Centre  
Fareham, Forest Arts  
Centre New Milton  
25 Jun – 11 Jul 2019

*The Secret Life of Seaweed*  
by Julie McKee  
HB Playwrights Theatre,  
New York  
2 – 16 Feb 2019

*Talofa Papa*  
by Kasiano Mita  
The Co-Lab  
Fringe World Perth,  
Adelaide Fringe,  
Basement Theatre  
12 Feb – 16 Mar 2019

*Deacon*  
by Jonny Brugh  
Auckland Fringe  
19 – 23 Feb 2019

Rotorua Fringe  
11 – 12 Apr 2019

*Uther Dean Reads 300  
Haiku*  
by Uther Dean  
My Accomplice  
Auckland Fringe,  
NZ Fringe  
22 Feb – 23 Mar 2019  
Open House  
The Court Theatre  
24 Apr 2019

*That's What Friends  
Are For*  
by The Hobson Street  
Theatre Company  
Auckland Fringe, NZ  
Fringe, Dunedin Fringe  
26 Feb – 24 Mar 2019

Yes Yes Yes  
by Eleanor Bishop and  
Karin McCracken  
Zanetti Productions  
Hamilton Gardens Arts  
Festival  
27 – 28 Feb 2019  
Upsurge Festival  
5 Apr 2019  
Southland Arts Festival  
2 May 2019  
BATS  
28 May – 1 Jun 2019  
Herald Theatre  
Auckland Live  
18 – 22 Jun 2019

*HarleQueen*  
by Abby Howells  
Arcade  
NZ Fringe, Dunedin  
Fringe  
1 – 24 Mar 2019

*The Man Who Was  
Thursday*  
adapted by Rob Suteling  
from the comic novel by  
GK Chesterman  
Three Bridges  
Ghost Light Theatre  
Nelson, NZ Fringe  
5 – 20 Mar 2019  
Prague Fringe, Czechia  
27 May – 1 June 2019

*Mockingbird*  
by Lisa Brickell  
Arts on Tour National Tour  
6 – 31 Mar 2019

- Te Kuia me te Pūngāwerewere*  
by Jamie McCaskill  
adapted from the book  
by Patricia Grace  
Te reo Māori translation  
by Hōhepa Waitoa  
Taki Rua Productions  
Capital E National Arts  
Festival, Auckland Arts  
Festival, Te Reo Māori  
Season National Tour  
9 Mar – 20 Sep 2019
- Only Bones v1.0*  
by Thom Monckton and  
Gemma Tweedie  
Auckland Fringe, NZ  
Fringe, Upsurge Festival  
12 Mar – 7 Apr 2019
- The Mournmoor Murders*  
by Alice May Connolly  
and Maria Williams  
NZ Fringe  
14 – 18 Mar 2019  
BATS, Basement Theatre  
7 – 18 May 2019
- Ka Tito Au*  
by Apirana Taylor  
Auckland Arts Festival  
15 – 24 Mar 2019  
Whitianga Town Hall  
5 Apr 2019  
Kia Mau Festival  
6 – 12 Jun 2019
- Camp Binch*  
by Chris Parker  
Dunedin Fringe,  
Melbourne International  
Comedy Festival,  
The Court Theatre  
5 Mar – 21 Apr 2019
- The Contours of Heaven*  
by Ana Chaya Scotney,  
Puti Lancaster and  
Owen McCarthy  
Zanetti Productions  
OneOneSix Whangarei  
29 – 31 Mar 2019
- The Road that wasn't There*  
by Ralph McCubbin Howell  
Trick of the Light  
Tour-Makers National Tour  
2 Apr – 23 May 2019
- Peter Pan*  
by The Pantaloons  
Carterton, Hannah
- Playhouse  
14 – 26 Apr 2019
- Death Throes*  
by Julia Croft, Harriet  
Gillies and Joe Lui  
The Blue Room Theatre  
Perth, Australia  
30 Apr – 18 May 2019
- I Am Māori*  
by Albert Belz, Nancy  
Brunning, Miria George,  
Briar Grace-Smith, Rore  
Hapipi, Witi Ihimaera, Hone  
Kouka, Mareaa Rakuraku  
and Mitch Tawhi Thomas  
Young and Hungry  
National Schools Tour  
30 Apr – 22 Jun 2019
- Eglantyne*  
by Anne Chamberlain  
Ms Chamberlain Presents  
Northumberland,  
Cumbria, County Durham,  
Stratford-upon-Avon,  
Birmingham, Ellesmere,  
Cobham, Marlborough,  
Newton Stewart UK,  
Beirut Lebanon, Geneva  
Switzerland  
3 May – 28 June 2019
- Perry*  
by Tom Clarke  
Basement Theatre, BATS  
3 – 11 May 2019
- An Unseasonable  
Fall of Snow*  
by Gary Henderson  
Simple Truth Theatre  
National Schools Tour  
6 May – 21 Jun 2019  
The Pumphouse  
Auckland  
22 Jun 2019
- Iconique*  
by Chris Parker  
Q Theatre, BATS  
7 – 18 May 2019
- Mincing*  
by Kura Forrester, Chris  
Parker, Tom Sainsbury  
and Brynley Stent  
Basement Theatre, BATS  
8 – 18 May 2019
- Sexy Buddha*  
by Geoff Allen
- Galatea Theatre  
The Vic Auckland  
9 – 11 May 2019,  
The Pumphouse  
4 – 6 Jul 2019
- Filthy Little Goblin*  
by Brynley Stent  
BATS, Basement Theatre  
14 – 25 May 2019
- Kura Shoulda Woulda*  
by Kura Forrester  
BATS, Basement Theatre  
14 – 25 May 2019
- Tom Foolery*  
by Tom Sainsbury  
Te Auaha, Basement  
Theatre  
14 – 25 May 2019
- Don Juan*  
by A Slightly Isolated Dog  
Presented in collaboration  
with Kaixinmahua Beijing  
Magnet Theatre Beijing  
18 – 25 May 2019  
A33 Theatre Beijing  
7 – 14 Jul 2019  
Clonmel Junction Arts  
Festival, Worthing  
Theatre Brighton, The  
Other Palace London,  
Greenwich Theatre  
London UK  
5 – 24 Jul 2019
- Monkey Mom*  
by Tooth n' Fang  
Prague Fringe Czechia  
28 May – 1 June 2019
- Ladies Night*  
by Stephen Sinclair and  
Anthony McCarten  
Jally Entertainment  
Australian Tour  
28 May – 22 Jun 2019
- Over My Dead Body:  
Little Black Bitch*  
by Jason Te Mete  
Tuatara Collective  
BATS  
4 – 8 Jun 2019  
Basement Theatre  
2 – 6 Jul 2019
- Cellfish*  
by Miriama McDowell.  
Rob Mocaraka and  
Jason Te Kare
- Taki Rua Productions  
Christchurch, Kia Mau  
Festival, New Plymouth,  
Hamilton, Whangārei,  
Palmerston North  
6 – 29 June 2019
- The Pope*  
by Anthony McCarten  
Royal and Dergate  
Northampton, UK  
8 – 22 Jun 2019
- Maniac on the Dance Floor*  
by Natasha Lay  
Basement Theatre  
11 – 15 Jun 2019  
BATS  
9 – 13 Jul 2019
- Oracles and Miracles*  
adapted by Norelle Scott  
from the novel by Stevan  
Eldred-Grigg  
Hollywood Fringe US  
14 – 30 Jun 2019
- Hudson and Halls Live!*  
by Kip Chapman with  
Todd Emerson and  
Sophie Roberts  
Giant Dwarf Sydney  
26 – 29 Jun 2019
- Astroman* (reading)  
by Albert Belz  
Vibrant 2019  
Festival of Finborough  
Playwrights  
Finborough Theatre,  
London  
27 Jun 2019
- Will Sacrifice* (reading)  
by Julie McKee  
HB Playwrights Theatre,  
New York 29 Jun 2019
- Beauty and the Beast*  
by The Pantaloons  
Carterton, Gryphon Theatre  
17 – 19 Jul 2019
- Spyduck: A Chinese Spy  
Comedy*  
by Sam Wang  
25a Downstairs Belvoir  
Sydney  
11 – 20 Jul 2019
- Power*  
Created by Sara Cowdell  
Basement Theatre, BATS  
16 – 27 Jul 2019



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» Auckland: 30 Sep - 4 Oct

» Napier: 7 Oct

» Wellington: 7 Oct

» Christchurch: 8 Oct

*Meremere*

by Rodney Bell  
Movement of the Human  
Māorilands Otaki, Nelson  
26 – 30 Jul 2019

*Mating in Captivity*

by Oliver Page  
Kings Head Theatre,  
London  
30 Jul – 4 Aug 2019

**Edinburgh Festival Fringe  
3 – 27 August 2018**

*Valerie* by Robin Kelly  
with Tom Broome and  
Cherie Moore

*Not in Our Neighbourhood*  
by Jamie McCaskill

*The Moa Show*

by Jamie McCaskill

*The Basement Tapes*

by Stella Reid

*Bleeding Black*

by Christopher Watts

*Clouds* by Laura Burns

*Don Juan*

by A Slightly Isolated Dog

*Eglantyne*

by Anne Chamberlain

*Erewhon* by Arthur Meek

*Welcome to Self Co*

by Theatrewhack

**AUCKLAND****Auckland Theatre Company***Rendered*

by Stuart Hoar  
18 Sep – 3 Oct 2018

*Still Life with Chickens*

by DF Mamea  
Hawke's Bay Arts Festival  
19 Oct 2018  
Oamaru Opera House  
2 – 3 Mar 2019  
Festival of Colour  
5 Mar 2019  
Dunedin Fringe  
26 – 28 Mar 2019

*Icarus: The Boy*

*Who Flew Too*

*Close to the Sun*

by Benjamin Henson  
Schools Tour  
29 Oct – 16 Nov 2018

*Shortland Street –*

*The Musical*  
music and lyrics

by Guy Langford

book by Guy Langford  
with Simon Bennett  
14 Nov – 9 Dec 2018

*The Daylight Atheist*

by Tom Scott  
7 – 23 Feb 2019

*Joan*

by Tom Scott  
8 – 23 Feb 2019

*Astroman*

by Albert Belz  
Co-production with  
Te Rēhia Theatre and  
Auckland Arts Festival  
17 Mar – 6 Apr 2019

*The Eel and Sina*

by Jono Soo-Choon  
Capital E National Arts  
Festival  
17 Mar 2019

**Here Now Festival**

*The Gangster's Paradise*  
by Leki Jackson-Bourke,  
*Watch Party* by Binge  
Culture, *8 Reasonable  
Demands* by Joni Nelson  
26 – 30 Apr 2019

**Basement Theatre**

*Near Death Experience*  
by Natalie Medlock  
31 Jul – 4 Aug 2018

*I, Will Jones*

by Eamonn Marra  
7 – 11 Aug 2018

*Sibs*

by Liv and Chris Parker  
7 – 11 Aug 2018

*Future's Eve*

by Michelle Aitken  
28 Aug – 1 Sep 2018

*Humble*

by Jamaine Ross, James  
Roque and Pax Assadi  
28 Aug – 1 Sep 2018

*Me and My Sister Tell*

*Each Other Everything*  
by Uther Dean  
11 – 15 Sep 2018

*Unsupervised*

by Rebekah Head and

Jess Brian

11 – 15 Sep 2018

*A Few Things I've Learnt*

*About Dating and Death*  
by Acacia O'Connor  
18 – 22 Sep 2018

*Retail Therapy*

by Grace-Amelia Vernal  
18 – 22 Sep

*Whispers*

by Mya Cole  
20 Sep 2018

*Paper Planes*

by Aaron Richardson  
2 – 6 Oct 2018

*Hearts of Men*

by Albert Mateni  
16 – 20 Oct 2018

*A Lost Cause*

by Loren Black  
16 – 20 Oct 2018

*The Exorshit*

by Tom Sainsbury and  
Lee Smith-Gibbons  
30 Oct - 3 Nov 2018

*Violent Bloom*

by Andrew Gunn  
Pressure Point Collective  
30 Oct – 3 Nov 2018

*Such Stuff as Dreams*

by Camilla Walker  
6 – 10 Nov 2018

*Jacinda*

by Sam Brooks  
The Actors Program  
14 – 24 Nov 2018

*Work Do*

by Alice Snedden and  
Rose Matafeo  
29 Nov – 21 Dec 2018

*Ethera*

by Coven  
12 – 16 Feb 2019

*Working On My*

*Night Moves*  
by Julia Croft and  
Nisha Madhan  
Zanetti Productions  
6 – 23 Mar 2019

*My Kuia*

by Breaking Boundaries  
19 – 30 Mar 2019

*Headsand*

by Benjamin Henson  
Fractious Tash  
26 Mar – 6 Apr 2019

*Before Karma Gets Us*

by Tess Sullivan, Ariaana  
Osborne and Liv Parker  
2 – 6 Apr 2019

*Woman of Citrus*

by Grace Bentley  
9 – 20 Apr 2019

*Woven Womxn*

created by Jaycee  
Tanuvasa and the cast  
16 – 20 Apr 2019

*Coral*

by Emma Newborn  
3 – 4 May 2019

*White Man Behind a*

*Desk: A Party for the  
End of the World*  
by Robbie Nicol  
3 – 4 May 2019

*Funk*

by Leon Wadham  
7 – 11 May 2019

*Fuq Boiz Forever*

by Hamish Parkinson  
and Ryan Richards  
8 – 11 May 2019

*Meme Lord*

by Alice Canton  
15 – 18 May 2019

*Tap Head*

by Barnie Duncan  
22 – 25 May

*Heat*

by Lynda Chanwai-Earle  
4 – 8 Jun 2019

*Fleshies*

by Bryony Skillington and  
Company  
18 – 29 Jun 2019

*Aroha is a Māori*

by Kahurangi Carter  
2 – 6 Jul 2019

*Inheritance*

by Jess Holly Bates,  
Alyx Duncan and  
Forest Kapo  
9 – 13 Jul 2019

*Upu Mai Whetū: Mea Fou*  
curated by Grace Taylor  
9 – 13 Jul 2019

*My Own Darling*  
by Grace Taylor  
10 – 12 Jul 2019

*Read My Lips*  
by Embers Collective  
16 – 27 Jul 2019

*Power*  
Created by Sara Cowdell  
16 – 20 Jul 2019

*Like a River*  
by Jo Randerson  
Massive Company  
23 – 27 Jul 2019

## Te Pou

等凳 – *The Chairs*  
by Eugène Ionesco  
translated by Henry Liu  
1 – 4 Aug 2018

*Cradle Song*  
by Albert Belz  
Te Rehia Theatre and  
Q Theatre  
5 – 22 Sep 2018

## Auckland Fringe Festival 19 February – 3 March 2019

*Actresssexual*  
by Sam Brooks  
*Go Home Curry Muncha*  
by Gemishka Chetty  
and Awa Pooamorn  
*I am Rachel Chu*  
by Nathan Joe,  
Amanda Grace Leo,  
Ravi Gurunathan and  
Angela Zhang  
*I Didn't Invite You*  
*Here To Lecture Me*  
by Amy Mansfield  
*Lovepuke*  
by Duncan Sarkies  
(on) *Whatipu*  
by Navi Collaborative  
*The Rise and Fall  
of Patti Superb*  
by Hayley Dallimore  
*Router Sidewalker*  
by George Fenn  
*Run Rabbit*  
by Victoria Abbott  
*Say Something Nice*  
by Sam Brooks  
*The Space Between*

by Sheena Irving and  
Cherie Moore  
*The Stoat, the Kererū  
and the Karaka Berries*  
by Christina Houghton  
and Melissa Laing  
*Stood Up!!*  
by Stephen Papps  
*This is How We're  
Gonna Die*  
by Lana Petrovic  
*Toil and Trouble*  
by Millions of Deaths

## Q Theatre

*Burn Her*  
by Sam Brooks  
Smoke Labours  
and Matchbox  
2 - 18 Aug 2018

*Orientation*  
by Chye-Ling Huang  
PAT and Matchbox  
5 – 15 Sep 2018

*Soft n Hard*  
by Barbarian Productions  
Matchbox  
11 – 12 Oct 2018

*Monster Mash*  
by Lara Liew and  
Tom Sainsbury  
Dynamotion  
16 – 24 Nov 2018

*There She Is*  
by Zak Enayat  
30 Jan – 2 Feb 2019

*Legacy Project Six:  
Between Fathers and  
Their Sons* by Daniel Ly,  
*Cracks* by Todd Waters,  
*The Grey* by Ashleigh  
Ogden, *For Pastor James  
of Lowell Christian Camp,  
the Gift of Movement* by  
Phillip Good, *Supernova*  
by Joshua Iosefo,  
*A Perfectly Normal  
Wedding* by Kieran Craft  
5 – 15 Feb 2019

*Karaoke Boiz*  
by Daryl Wright and  
Kermath  
7 – 16 Feb 2019

*Status*  
by Tom Sainsbury  
7 – 16 Feb 2019

*Two Hearts:  
The Winery Tour*  
by Laura Daniel and  
Joseph Moore  
7 – 11 May 2019

## The Pumphouse

*Kings of the Gym*  
by Dave Armstrong  
Tadpole Productions  
8 – 18 Nov 2018

*The Flight – Te Rerenga*  
by Jeffrey Addison and  
Whaitaima Te Whare  
Toro PikoPiko Puppets  
4 – 6 Dec 2018

*Middle Age Spread*  
by Roger Hall  
Tadpole Productions  
9 – 19 May 2019

## Tim Bray Theatre Company

*The Man Whose Mother  
Was a Pirate*  
by Margaret Mahy  
adapted by Tim Bray  
Songs by  
Christine White  
The Pumphouse  
6 – 28 Apr 2019

*Badjelly the Witch*  
adapted by Tim Bray  
from the book by  
Spike Milligan  
The Pumphouse  
23 Sep – 14 Oct 2018

*We're Going on  
a Bear Hunt*  
by Michael Rosen  
adapted for the  
stage by Tim Bray  
The Pumphouse  
29 Jun – 20 Jul 2019

## Other Venues Auckland

*Bright Star*  
by Stuart Hoar  
Plumb Productions  
Herald Theatre  
Auckland Live  
4 – 16 Sep 2018

*Tigerplay*  
by Gary Henderson  
Taurima Vibes  
Garnet Station  
21 – 24 Nov 2018

*The Madonna's Mule*  
by Geoff Allen  
Galatea Theatre  
Pitt St Theatre  
5 – 15 Dec 2018

*City of 100 Lovers*  
Book and lyrics  
by Peter Kellogg,  
music by Tom McLeod  
SkyCity Theatre  
20 Oct 2018 – 6 Feb 2019

*Grand Opening*  
by Thomas LaHood  
and Jo Randerson  
Barbarian and  
Auckland Live  
The Civic  
20 – 21 Jan and  
13 – 16 Jun 2019

*Movement of the Human*  
by Malia Johnston  
Auckland Live  
21 – 24 Feb 2019

*Sinarella*  
by Goretti Chadwick  
and Sean Coyle  
Māngere Arts Centre  
18 – 27 Apr 2019  
Q Theatre  
9 – 13 Jul 2019

## HAMILTON

### Hamilton Gardens Arts Festival 20 February – 3 March 2019

*Akakite Mai Itaua Tua –  
Tell Me a Story*  
by Jeremy Mayall and  
Benny Marama  
*The Case of  
Katherine Mansfield*  
by Catherine Downes  
*Hood Street - The Musical*  
by Smokey Productions

## Meteor Theatre

*A Revealing Thyme*  
by Joanna Bishop  
Creative Waikato  
2 Aug and 5 Dec 2018

*The First Time*  
by Courtney Rose Brown  
Kat Glass Creative  
9 Aug 2018

*The Tragedy of Cordelia*  
by Stephen Henderson  
Small Dynamite Theatre  
Company  
16 – 20 Oct 2018

*Pitching a Tent*  
by Mel Martin,  
Sharan Singh,  
Nicholas Bouchier  
and Jono Freebairn  
Loud Creative  
1 – 3 Nov 2018 and  
Hamilton Gardens  
Arts Festival  
27 Feb – 1 Mar 2019

*Tampocalypse*  
by Embers Collective  
24 – 25 May 2019

## PALMERSTON NORTH

### Centrepoint

*Club Cabaret*  
devised by the cast  
11 Aug – 8 Sep 2018  
The Blue Baths Rotorua  
10 Jan – 9 Feb 2019

*Hudson and Halls Live!*  
by Kip Chapman with  
Todd Emerson and  
Sophie Roberts  
10 Nov – 21 Dec 2018

*A Christmas Carol*  
by Dan Bain  
6 – 15 Dec 2018

*Middle Age Spread*  
by Roger Hall  
9 Mar – 14 Apr 2019

*Badjelly the Witch*  
adapted by Alannah  
O'Sullivan from the  
book by Spike Milligan  
26 – 27 Apr 2019

*Shortland Street –  
The Musical*  
music and lyrics  
by Guy Langford  
book by Guy Langford  
with Simon Bennett  
1 – 30 Jun 2019

*The Girl with a Grudge*  
by 2019 Basement  
Company  
2 – 4 Jul 2019

### Palmy Fringe 6 – 13 October 2018

*Allergic to Love:  
Curse of the 80s*  
by Tom Knowles  
*Bill Massey's Tourists*  
by Jan Bolwell  
*Femme Natale*  
by the Company  
*G+ Force*  
by George Fenn  
*Kono*  
by Toi Warbrick  
*Lashings of Whipped Cream*  
by Fiona Samuel  
*Once Upon a Dance*  
by Jan Bolwell and  
Mona Williams  
*Becoming Trump,  
de Sade, DJ Trump and  
Fred from Featherston*  
by Alexander Sparrow  
*Pat Goldsack's Swingers  
Club and Brothel*  
by Katie Boyle

## WELLINGTON

### Circa Theatre

*Bloomsbury Women and  
the Wild Colonial Girl*  
by Lorae Parry  
18 Aug – 15 Sep 2018

*Modern Girls in Bed*  
by Cherie Jacobson and  
Alex Lodge  
1 – 22 Sep 2018

*Uneasy Dreams  
and Other Things*  
by Lori Leigh  
10 – 27 Oct 2018

*Friday's Flock*  
by Reihana and  
Karla Haronga  
Te Pūanga Whakaari and  
Taki Rua Productions  
7 – 17 Nov 2018

*Puss in Boots*  
by Paul Jenden  
17 Nov 2018 –  
12 Jan 2019

*PSA: The Ghosts of  
Christmas Parties*  
by Thom Adams and  
Carrie Green  
No Fefe Collective  
24 Nov – 23 Dec 2018

*Rants in the Dark*  
based on the book by  
Emily Writes, adapted for  
the stage by Mel Dodge,  
Lyndee-Jane Rutherford  
and Bevin Linkhorn  
19 Jan – 16 Feb 2019

*Paper Shaper*  
by Peter Wilson  
and Tim Denton  
Little Dog Barking  
16 – 27 Apr 2019

*Second Unit*  
by Tāwhiri with  
Koko Creative  
13 – 30 Jun 2019

*Bathtime Bubbles:  
A Messy Magic Adventure*  
by David Ladderman and  
Lizzie Tollemache  
Rollicking Entertainment  
9 – 20 Jul 2019

### BATS

*Mating in Captivity*  
by Oliver Page  
9 – 18 Aug 2018

*Sons*  
by Victor Rodger  
Te Auaha  
14 – 18 Aug 2018

*My Name is Gary Cooper*  
by Victor Rodger  
Te Auaha  
21 – 25 Aug 2018

*The Lazarus Lottery*  
by James van Dyk  
23 Aug – 1 Sep 2018

*(A Smidge of) Pidge*  
by Sherilee Kahui and  
Jimmy Sutcliffe  
28 Aug – 1 Sep 2018

*Soft Tissue*  
by Ella Gilbert  
4 – 8 Sep 2018 and  
4 – 6 Mar 2019

*Wonderful*  
by Dean Parker  
Armstrong Creative  
4 – 15 Sep 2018

*She Danced on a Friday*  
by Nicola Pauling  
12 – 15 Sep 2018

*Fuq Boiz: Resurrection*  
by Hamish Parkinson and  
Ryan Richards  
27 – 29 Sep 2018

*Drowning in Milk*  
by Saraïd Cameron  
2 – 6 Oct 2018

*Aladdin*  
by Amanda Stone  
The Pantaloons  
9 – 12 Oct 2018

*In it Together*  
by Catherine Zulver  
16 – 20 Oct 2018

*The Memory Plays:  
Ruminate*  
by Helen Vivienne Fletcher  
*We are the Experiments by  
Oliver Probert*  
*The Ides of June*  
by Ethan D. Rogers  
30 Oct – 3 Nov 2018

*Committed*  
by Clarissa Chandrasenas  
6 – 10 Nov 2018

*Actual Fact*  
by Meg Rollandi and  
Isobel MacKinnon  
16 Nov – 1 Dec 2018

*The Turkish Dogs are  
Racist*  
by Barnaby Olson,  
Jonathan Price,  
Andrew Paterson,  
Stevie Hancox-Monk  
and Tess Sullivan  
20 Nov – 1 Dec 2018

*Santa Claus*  
by A Slightly Isolated Dog  
4 – 15 Dec 2018

*Life in the Whale*  
by Vincent Konrad  
FIDK and A Mulled Whine  
11 – 15 Dec 2018

*The Attitudes – Refusing  
Performance*  
by Madeline McNamara  
and Jade Eriksen  
19 Jan – 2 Feb 2019

*This Long Winter*  
by Sarah Delahunty  
A Mulled Whine  
10 – 20 Apr 2019

*Moodporn*

by Matthew Loveranes  
Red Scare Theatre  
Company  
23 Apr – 4 May 2019

*Femme Natale 2*

by the Company  
26 Apr – 4 May 2019

*Aunty*

by Johanna Cosgrove  
21 – 25 May 2019

*Public Service**Announcements:**Incignity War*

by Thom Adams  
No Fefe Collective  
21 – 25 May 2019

*Running Late*

by Courtney Rose Brown  
Toi Ngākau Productions  
28 May – 1 Jun 2019

*Pakaru*

by Mitch Tawhi Thomas  
Hāpai Productions,  
Kia Mau Festival  
4 – 8 June 2019

*Palu*

by Y Not, Kia Mau Festival  
5 – 8 June 2019

*Au Ko Tuvalu*

by Tavita Nielsen-Mamea  
Kia Mau Festival  
6 – 8 Jun 2019

*Fishin' Chip*

by Maia Diamond  
The Co-Lab,  
Kia Mau Festival  
12 – 15 Jun 2019

*Digging to Cambodia*

by Sarita So  
I Ken So Productions,  
Kia Mau Festival  
13 – 15 Jun 2019

*The Duck Who Loved Me*

by Fingal Pollock  
16 – 20 Jul 2019

*Bleeding Black*

by Christopher Watts  
16 – 20 Jul 2019

**Kidzstuff Theatre for Children**

*Robyn Hood and her*

*Merry Gals!*

by Guy Langford  
1 – 13 Oct 2018

*The Man Whose Mother was a Pirate*

by Margaret Mahy  
adapted by Tim Bray  
13 – 26 Apr 2019

*Hansel and Gretel*

by Amalia Calder  
6 – 19 Jul 2019

**Other Venues Wellington***Almost Sober*

by Ben Wilson  
121 Theatre Space  
24 Jul – 4 Aug 2018

*Black November*

by Kerry Palmer with  
THEA 301  
Victoria University  
9 – 17 Oct 2018

*Origins*

by Frances Leota,  
Erebuka Bwauro and  
Sela-Emily Fiu-Poufa  
Te Auaha, Measina Festival  
13 and 15 Dec 2018

*The Frog Prince*

by The Pantaloons  
Gryphon Theatre  
14 – 18 Jan 2019

*Captain Cook Thinks Again*

by Tom Clarke and  
Jo Randerson  
Barbarian Productions  
Wellington CBD  
13 – 24 Feb 2019

*Black Dog*

by Pamela Allen  
adapted by Peter Wilson,  
Little Dog Barking,  
Capital E National  
Arts Festival  
Hannah Playhouse  
17 – 22 Mar 2019

*This Text Will Self-Destruct*

by Binge Culture  
Cubadupa  
30 – 31 Mar 2019

*Boys*

adapted by Eleanor  
Bishop from Greg  
McGee's *Foreskin's Lament*

## Toi Whakaari:

NZ Drama School  
Te Whaea National Dance  
and Drama Centre,  
8 – 16 Jun 2019

*Thereafter*

by Long Cloud Theatre  
Company, 292 Willis St  
17 – 22 Jun 2019

**NZ Fringe Festival****1 – 23 March 2019***Au Ko Tuvalu*

by Tavita Nielsen-Mamea  
*Binge and Chill*  
by Potentially Playing  
Productions  
*Bottled*

by Cary Stackhouse

*Cartoonaroony*

by The Cartoonaroones

*Coffee Bean-Queen**Machine*

by Paja Neuhoferova

*Full Scale*

by Isobel Mackinnon and

Meg Rollandi

*How to be a Stripper*

by Katherine Kennedy and

Jordan Dickson

*I Never Thought I'd Have**to Explain it All*

by Public Fodder

*Imposter Child*

by Hannah Kelly,  
OiOi Productions

*Lord Bi-Ron: Mad Bad**and Dangerous*

by Aimee Smith

*Manless Mamet: Toxic**Masculinity and Tequila**Massive Crushes*

by Uther Dean

*A New Man*

by Warped Productions

*Once There was a Woman*

by Beth Kayes

*Post-It Notes*

by Ben Wilson

*Sexy Ghost Boy*

by George Fenn

*Shadow*

by Liam Whitney and

Keegan Bragg

*Tant Pis*

by Roger Gimblett

*Slow Antiheroes*

by Lucas Neal

*Some Sort of Boy*

by Mark Wittet

*Tell Me What Your Name Is*

by Cooki Stains  
*The Universe is Pretty Big  
and I'm Afraid of Sex*  
by Pretty Big Company  
*The Well-Rehearsed and  
Not at All Slapdash Story  
of Pete Bennett*  
by Katie Hill  
*Yesterday, In Space*  
by Troy J. Malcolm

**Kia Mau Festival****1 – 15 June 2019***I Ain't Mad at Cha*

by Turene Jones

*Shel We?*

by Tupua Tigafua

*Over My Dead Body: Little**Black Bitch*

by Jason Te Mete

*Pakaru*

by Mitch Tawhi Thomas

*Palu*

by Y Not

*Ka Tito Au*

by Apirana Taylor

*Au Ko Tuvalu*

by Tavita Nielsen-Mamea

*Cellfish*

by Miriama McDowell,

Rob Mokaraka and

Jason Te Kare

*Fishin' Chip*

by Maia Diamond

*Digging to Cambodia*

by Sarita So

*Rauru*

by Cian Gardiner and

Karina Nathan

*Breaking Ground*

Readings of new work

by Maranga Mai, Kiki

Rivera and Hōhepa Waitoa

**Hawke's Bay Arts Festival****15 – 28 October 2018***Duck, Death and**the Tulip*

adapted

by Peter Wilson

from the book

by Wolf Erlbruch

*Freedom is**Behind my Breath*

by Puti Lancaster and

Owen McCarthy

*MAMIL (Remounted)*

by Gregory Cooper

*Mana Whenua A*

*Spring of Fragrant Water*  
by Hawke's Bay  
Arts Festival 2018  
Ambassadors with  
Daniel Betty and  
Puti Lancaster

### Other North Island

*Under*  
by Cassandra Tse  
Red Scare Theatre Company  
4th Wall Theatre,  
New Plymouth  
21 – 22 Feb 2019

*Weave: Yarns with  
New Zealanders*  
by Kate McGill  
Alacrity Productions  
Rotorua Fringe Festival  
10 – 11 Apr 2019

## CHRISTCHURCH

### The Court Theatre

*Ē Toru Readings: Ripeka*  
by Tania Gilchrist,  
*Au Ko Tuvalu*  
by Tavita Nielsen-Mamea,  
*Palu*  
by Y Not  
9 – 11 Aug 2018

*Mum's Choir*  
by Alison Quigan  
15 Sep – 6 Oct 2018

*Hansel and Gretel*  
by Dan Bain  
29 Sep – 13 Oct 2018

*Fresh off the Boat* (reading)  
by Oscar Kightley and  
Simon Small  
30 Sep 2019

*Astroman*  
by Albert Belz  
27 Oct – 10 Nov 2018

*A Christmas Carol*  
by Dan Bain  
1 – 22 Dec 2018

*Children of the Night*  
adapted from Bram  
Stoker's *Dracula*  
by Dan Bain  
The Court Theatre  
Youth Company  
The Arts Centre  
13 – 15 Dec 2018

*Thumbelina*  
by Emma Cusdin  
16 – 26 Jan 2019

*Crash Bash: Reaction*  
by Brendon Bennetts  
Schools Tour  
18 Feb – 22 Mar 2019

*Time Machine*  
by Andrew Todd  
13 – 27 Apr 2019

*Fresh Ink Readings:  
Luncheon*  
by Aroha Awarau,  
*Scholars* by Tanya  
Muagututi'a,  
*The Breath of Silence*  
by Gary Henderson  
14 Apr, 19 May and  
30 Jun 2019

*Matai*  
by Sela Faletolu-Fasi  
and Silivelio Fasi  
Open House Festival  
24 Apr 2019

*The Princess and the Frog  
(and the Robber!)*  
by Jeff Clark  
10 – 19 Jul 2019

### Little Andromeda

*Palu*  
by Y Not  
7 Oct 2018

*Her*  
by Playspace Theatre  
Company  
17 Oct 2018

*The Lifestyle*  
by Playspace Theatre Co  
4 – 8 Nov 2018

### Other Venues Christchurch

*Play Play*  
by Hannah Wheeler,  
Phoebe Hurst and  
Melanie Luckman  
Cubbin Theatre Company  
Theatre Royal  
10 – 15 Nov 2018

*King Arthur*  
by Lizzie Tollemache  
Rollicking Entertainment  
Christchurch Botanic  
Gardens  
27 Feb – 17 Mar 2019

*Project T – Six Short  
Plays: Breaking the  
Routine*  
by Aaron Richardson,  
*Are you there God?  
It's me Dog*  
by Chris Wood  
*Concept*  
by Tyler Brailey  
*Eat, Pray, Elevator*  
by Rhian Firmin,  
*Beach*  
by Ashleigh Hook  
and Lugh  
by Rebekah Dack  
Simple Truth Theatre  
Hagley Open Stage  
10 – 12 Jan 2019

## DUNEDIN

*Indignation  
– Determination –  
Celebration*  
by Karen Elliot,  
Rachael Francis,  
Sue Graham  
and Matt Best  
Otago Pioneer  
Women's Hall  
15 – 18 Aug 2018

*Up the Duff*  
by Sarah McDougall  
Allen Hall Theatre  
16 – 17 Aug 2018

*Homecoming*  
by John Broughton  
Allen Hall Theatre  
6 – 7 Sep 2018

*Attila the Hun*  
by Abby Howells  
Arcade  
Arts Festival Dunedin  
19 – 22 Sep 2018

*Eloise in the Middle*  
by Emily Duncan  
Prospect Park  
Productions  
Dunedin Public Art Gallery  
29 Sep – 6 Oct 2018

*So Long, Hold the Fish*  
by Kerry Lane  
Sacrilige Productions  
Stiletto's Revue Bar  
15 – 17 Nov 2018

*Prince Charming*  
by Shaun Swain

New Athenaeum Theatre  
17 – 22 Dec 2018

*The Scapegoat  
Redemption*  
by Kerry Lane  
Sacrilige Productions  
University of Otago  
Bookshop  
23 – 25 May 2019

*Wings*  
by Jess Sayer  
*Women Like Us*  
by Helen Varley Jamieson  
Little Scorpion  
Productions  
New Athenaeum Theatre  
15 – 22 Jun 2019

### Dunedin Fringe 21 – 31 March 2019

*Fission*  
by Afterburner  
*Greta: A Journey*  
by Pete Stewart  
and Kiri Bell  
*Lawvies*  
by Ruth Carraway  
*Marine Snow*  
by Finnius Teppett  
*Oh Substance*  
by Ezra Prattley  
*Le Sujet Parle*  
by Emily Duncan  
*A Thousand Natural  
Shocks*  
by the Down Low  
Theatre Company  
*Toy Factory Fire*  
by Talking House  
*Jacks the Ripper*  
by Phil Davison

### OTHER SOUTH ISLAND

*Whenua/DP4Lot173*  
by Paul Maunder  
Kiwi Possum Productions  
Regent Theatre  
Greymouth,  
24 – 25 Aug 2018

*LoBSTERS*  
by Borderline Arts  
Ensemble  
Nelson Arts Festival  
15 Oct 2018

# PLAYMARKET INFORMATION

Playmarket issues and manages performance licences and royalty payments, circulates clients' plays in New Zealand and internationally, advises on and negotiates commission, translation and collaboration agreements, and maintains an archive of playwrights' work.

Playmarket also offers advice to all New Zealand 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 has a comprehensive catalogue of unpublished plays to download or purchase.

## FACTS AND FIGURES

### 1 July 2018 – 30 June 2019

Professional performance licenses issued: 52

Community performance licenses issued: 96

International licenses issued: 24

School/Tertiary performance licenses issued: 114

Scripts circulated: 1844

Scripts/drafts received: 385

Paid script assessments: 10

## PUBLISHING 2019

### NZ Play Series

*Waiora: Te Ūkaipō – The Homeland* by Hone Kouka | Series Editor: David O'Donnell | Design: Cansino & Co | Editing and Production: Whitireia Publishing

*101 New Zealand Monologues for Youth* | Editor: Holly Gooch | Series Editor: David O'Donnell | Design: Cansino & Co | Editing and Production: Whitireia Publishing

*Badjelly the Witch* adapted by Alannah O'Sullivan from the book by Spike Milligan | Series Editor: David O'Donnell | Design: Cansino & Co | Editing and Production: Whitireia Publishing | Publication deferred from 2018

### Playmarket Annual

Editor: Mark Amery | Design: Cansino & Co | Editorial assistants: Shane Boshier and Murray Lynch

### Playmarket Guidelines Series

*Working Together: Safety, Respect and Wellbeing* Writers: Fiona McNamara and Borni Te Rongopai Tukiwaho | Editors: Claire O'Loughlin and Murray Lynch, with help from Salesi Le'ota | Design: Cansino & Co

### eBulletin

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

### edBulletin

Published biannually via email. Resources and opportunities for teachers and educators | Editors: Salesi Le'ota and Shane Boshier

## AWARDS, COMPETITIONS AND PROJECTS

### Bruce Mason Award Winner 2018:

Ahilan Karunaharan

### Adam NZ Play Award Winner 2019:

*Pakaru* by Mitch Tawhi Thomas | Runner Up: *Taniwha Woman* by Nancy Brunning | Highly Commended: *Penalty* by Peter Croft

### Best Play by a Māori Playwright:

*Pakaru* by Mitch Tawhi Thomas



**Best Play by a Pasifika Playwright:**

*thursdays.child* by Benny Marama

**Best Play by a Woman Playwright:**

*Taniwha Woman* by Nancy Brunning

**Playwrights b4 25 Winner 2019:**

*Breathless* by Courtney Rose Brown

**Playmarket Plays for the Young**

**Competition 2018:** *Charlie, Estelle and the Poppazoid* by Jodie Bate (3 – 8 year olds), *Rasha and Abd* by Rex McGregor (8 – 12 year olds) and *Once Was Lost* by Lee Armitage (teenagers)

**Brown Ink Development Programme 2018:**

*Au Ko Tuvalu* by Tavita Nielsen-Mamea and *Goddess* by Terri Ripeka Crawford

**Asian Ink Development Programme 2018:**

*Scenes from a Yellow Peril* by Nathan Joe

**Rebecca Mason Executive Coaching**

**2018:** Anya Tate-Manning

**Playwrights in Schools programme in partnership with NZ Book Council 2018:**

Susan Battye, Philippa Werry, Dave Armstrong, Holly Gooch, Oscar Kightley

**Robert Lord Cottage Residencies 2018:**

Maria Samuela, Damian Barr, Lesley Glaister, Andrew Greig, David Howard, Alison Glenny, Rochelle Savage, Hannah Bulloch

**CLINICS, SCRIPT ADVISORY, READINGS AND WORKSHOPS**

**1 July 2018 – 30 June 2019:**

*Cradle Song* by Albert Belz, *Eloise in the Middle* by Emily Duncan, *The Water Clan* by Morna Young, *Tropical Lovebirds* by Vela Manusaute, *Hope* by Jenny Patrick, *Four Nights at the Green Barrow Pub* by Kieran Craft, *The Kingdom of Katz* by Albert Belz, *Scenes from a Yellow Peril* by Nathan Joe, *Au Ko Tuvalu* by Tavita Nielsen-Mamea, *Alice in Wonderland* by Simon Leary and Gavin Rutherford, *Two Mad Women* by Stanley Makuwe, *Strong Subjects* by Emily Duncan, PAT Fresh Off the Page and Hauora Festival

**Playwriting Workshop with David Geary**

**Dramaturgy Workshop with Iain Sinclair**

**Safety, Respect and Wellbeing Workshop with Fiona McNamara and Borni Te Rongopai Tukiwaho:**

Auckland, Wellington and Christchurch

**Playmarket Playfellows 2018 – 2019:**

The Wallace Foundation, Alister McDonald, Chris and Kathy Parkin

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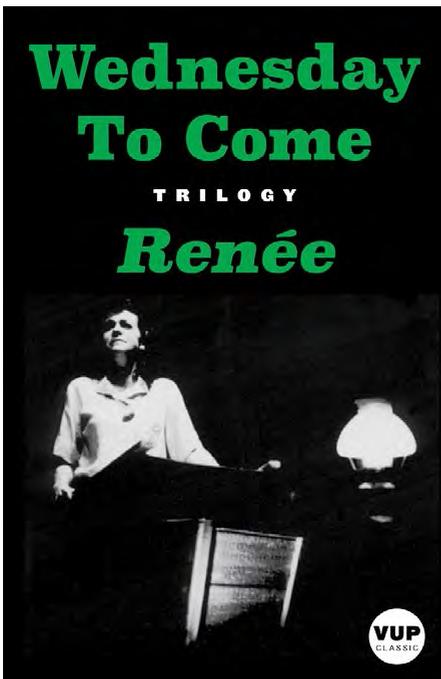
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PREVIOUS PAGE: Allan Henry and Stanley Makuwe at Adam NZ Play Awards 2019. Image: Philip Merry.



Renée's celebrated trilogy of plays produced between 1984 and 1990 is a passionate celebration of the contribution women have made to the politics of New Zealand.

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# THE LAST WORD

*Gary Henderson on what playwrights don't like to talk about. Tax.*

“Hello?”

“Hi, It's Sandy from Inland Revenue. Is this a good time to chat about your tax?”

I usually don't hear the end of that sentence because my gears are screaming, trying to reconcile the bizarre pairing of 'Inland Revenue' with 'Good Time.' I'm not sure I'm the right person to be advising you on the playwright's relationship to tax and paperwork (yep, that's my brief) but here goes...

First of all, whether you think taxation is theft or a social duty or charity is irrelevant. It's the law, so don't argue the case with Sandy. The IRD can legally ask you for (or take from your bank account) whatever they think you owe. You, on the other hand have the right to pay no more than the minimum amount of tax you're legally required to. The best way to do this, and the one piece of advice you should take away from this article is this: get a good accountant. If you already have a good accountant there's probably no need to read any further. If you haven't, here's why you should.

Your accountant will charge you a fee, but it's worth it – oh, it is so worth it – to have someone who knows the game do the hard stuff, on time, and get it right.

There's a popular claim that your accountant's

fee should be less than the amount of tax they save you. Otherwise you're losing on the deal, right? Wrong. For a start, there's no way of telling how badly you would have got it wrong, so there is simply no equation. Second, what value do you place on your time? Whether it's a dollar value or an emotional value, your accountant also saves you that. Third, how much stress, procrastination, penalties, interest charges and phone calls from Sandy result from trying to do your own tax? Chalk that one up too. Get a good accountant.

Of course your accountant will require something from you. Information. Accurate information. If you hand it over in a beautifully collated tax-ready form, your accountant will love you. A good accountant will also be able to handle the rough-as-guts shoebox full of mismatched receipts and invoices, and if they're really good they'll still love you anyway. So let's look under the hood for a moment.

Most of your earnings in your playwright persona will be from commissions and royalties. You may also do some fee-paying teaching, workshopping, acting, profit-share projects and so on. These earnings will either be untaxed or have withholding tax deducted. You may also have a playwriting-unrelated job where you earn wages or a salary with tax already deducted.



Your income is all the money you receive from all sources. Your taxable income is your income less any expenses you incurred in order to earn it, any part of your income that isn't taxable, and other deductions you're entitled to. Your accountant will know the ins and outs of all this and will be able to reduce your taxable income – and therefore your tax – to its legal minimum.

Starting at the rough-as-guts end, get a receipt for every cent you spend, on anything, and write on it what it was for. Throw it in the shoebox. Also throw in every bill you paid, every invoice you received, every pay slip, donation receipt... anything that looks remotely like a financial transaction. Give that box to your accountant, who may manage to smile wearily before rolling their sleeves up and trolling through the lot, sorting out which is a deductible expense either wholly or partly and which isn't. They will also come to know your lifestyle intimately, and may offer a few financial life hacks.

Advancing from rough-as-guts, you may have already sorted your documents into groups of related expenses: travel, rent, food, entertainment, phone, power, internet, vehicle and so on. Labelled envelopes or ziplock bags come in handy here, and your accountant will love you just a little bit more.

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## THROW IT IN THE SHOEBOX

At the top end you'll present your accountant with a beautifully clear, detailed spreadsheet of all your income and expenses for the year, already categorised, labelled, totalled and thoroughly notated. Your accountant will take you out to dinner.

Finally, put money aside into a dedicated bank account to pay your tax. If you're GST registered (a whole other kettle of fish) set aside 25% of everything that comes in. That'll cover your GST and income tax. If you're not GST registered, 15% should do it. 20% if you're likely to earn over \$48k during the year. This doesn't take into account any deductions, so it should be ample. You may even be pleasantly surprised.

For more under-the-hood information check out the IRD's website which is becoming increasingly layperson friendly.

PS: If you're Sandy from IRD, nothing personal, okay?

ABOVE: *Shepherd* by Gary Henderson, The Court Theatre.  
Image: The Court Theatre.

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Lori Dungey (*A Lion in the Meadow*  
and *Other Stories* by Margaret Mahy)  
Photo by David Rowland/One-Image.com

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