



New Players News

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New Players — for quality community theatre

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You can get *New Players News*

by e-mail as a pdf file instead of by post. (Files are less than .5 Mb.)

To change, please e-mail the editor

Thank you to our many contributors this month, who are listed on page 8.

M & M's *The Vase* performed on "radio"



Faces for radio: Margaret Potter (left) and Marie Thomson (right) with Di Robinson of "Malvina Major".

On 13 November, *The Vase* by Margaret Potter and Marie Thomson, was performed as a radio play at Malvina Major Retirement Village. The "two well-known local identities", as they have oft been referred to, were approached by a friend, Di Robinson, for something suitable for Village residents to present.

Margaret and Marie had written *The Vase* in 1984, and performed it at Lower Hutt that year, where they won the Drama Competition Finals for CWI. (Irene Miller and Marie's Nicola also acted in it.)

Margaret and Marie, dressed in their flashiest outfits, were guests at Malvina Major and were extremely impressed with the presentation of their one-act play, which Di had organised to be done as part of a Radio Show. She had written interviews, news bulletin and a weather forecast, all interspersed with jingles of yesteryear. A great memory-jogger, that was!

One of the actors was Jean Liner, who is well known in Wellington for her work in music.

It was by all accounts a wonderful evening, with drinks and nibbles which culminated with two of the residents taking them on a tour of their rooms.

INSIDE: are Marie's Manifest, news items including a report from our Auckland correspondent, photos from the Christmas Dinner and from through the year, a special Theatre Quiz, the full audition notice for *RolePlay* and our regular features: New Players people Out and About, a Monster Crossword and the Theatre Calendar.

NEXT PRODUCTION:

RolePlay by Alan Ayckbourn, directed by Ewen Coleman, to be performed between 6 and 15 of May at the Newlands Recreation Centre. Auditions will be held on Sunday 28 February at the Newlands Community Centre. Full details are on the back page.

New Players team fails to lose

What: Thespian Intelligence Challenge, a quiz night for Wellington District Theatre Federation members, hosted by Stagecraft at the Gryphon Theatre, 30 November.

The New Players team of **Jeff Osborne, Kim Smith, Kay McCormick** and **Barry Lakeman** just scraped in to win the Challenge against one team each from Khandallah Arts Theatre and Energy Theatre, and three teams from Stagecraft.

The rounds involved knowledge of current events, knowledge of various things about theatre, geography with a theatre bias, entertainment, identifying musicals and matching photographs of them with music, identifying Shakespearean plays from quotes, identifying the artists of art works, general knowledge, knowing the decade of the published date of plays and identifying singers.

A welcome outcome is that the shield that we donated has now been returned to us. The down side of this win is that New Players is now responsible for hosting the next one.

The results by round are on page 3.

Barry Lakeman in *The Strange and Distant Land of Nonsense* at the Drama School. More photos inside.



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maRIe's manIFeST



Greetings to all!

Things are definitely 'all go'!

Not only did attendees at the Christmas Dinner enjoy wonderful fare and good company, but caught up with each other in a very relaxed atmosphere!

Then, two days later, our fabulous, brainy team won back the TIC Shield that New Players presented for an inter-club quiz! TIC is short for Theatrical Intelligence Challenge. I was unable to attend - I thought I was having a heart attack, but apparently not. Just as well, still too much life to live. I've heard death is nature's way of telling you to slow down, but I'm not ready, yet!

Look for full details within, for our next production;

** "ROLEPLAY" **

** by ALAN AYCKBOURN!!!! **

Auditions are at 6.00 p.m. on Sunday 28 February, and the season is 6, 7, 8 and 13, 14, 15 May, so mark your calendar, now! Enquiries to director, Ewen Coleman, at 027 428 849; edcoleman@extra.co.nz; 384 1413 (h); 385 5864 (w).

I am most pleased to announce that Treasurer, Pat, and I have met with the Powers-That-Be at the WCC. Lots of issues were raised and some are even resolved already! A security wall will be installed to complement the Roller door and once the set is up and we are rehearsing, our set will be secure and we will have peace of mind! The storage issue is being worked on; curtaining placement agreed upon; rent settled; staging completion is being looked into and carpet is being investigated. WCC took notes, Pat took notes and the next thing we are to agree on is a Memorandum of Understanding - a contract, if you will.

Question Of The Week, from our granddaughter, Lori. "G'anma, why did you get run over by a reindeer?"

God Bless,

Marie

HOL



09/10

New Players Reviews

is published monthly by the

New Players Theatre Company (Inc).

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Next copy deadline: Sunday 24 January.

NEW PLAYERS PEOPLE OUT & ABOUT

As well as his duties as Secretary and magazine editor for the Javeenbah Theatre Company on Australia's Gold Coast, our ex-President **Ralph Lenton** directed *Up'n'Under* by John Godber for them recently. A cast member was forced to dropout on the final night and Ralph had to go on "with the book".

Helle Rosenberg, who is at Toi Whakaari : New Zealand Drama School doing a costume design course, was one of the two costumiers for *An Adagio Christmas* at Downstage.

Marjorie McKee and **Barry Lakeman** have landed roles in a devised Fringe show at BATS, called *Irrepressible Urge*. It's scheduled for 22 to 25 February, so there is tons of time to worry about the fact that there is no script yet!

Marie Thomson is the Mayor in Khandallah Arts' *Play in the Park* production this year: *King Rat the Wicked*, written and directed by Rose Hudson. The season, at Khandallah Park, is from 6 to 7 and 12 to 14 February.

The *Play With Your Food* team, which includes **Don Blackmore, Belinda Clarke, Andrew Edgar, Barry Lakeman, Marjorie McKee** and **Jeff Osborne** have finished their current round of performing in cafes. They are coming to Johnsonville on 26 March 2010.

The performances, in aid of the Salvation Army missions, will be at the Salvation Army theatre. Jeff is pictured here in Henrik Ibsen's *Enemy of the People*, adapted by Chris Fisher and Kim Smith and directed by Chris for Drama Christi in September.



One of **Barry's** plays, *Waiting For Jim* (which is one of the *Play With Your Food* plays) has been selected to be performed as part of the *Short and Sweet* competition in Auckland from 19 to 23 January. It will be directed by Rachel Forman. This is Barry's third *Short and Sweet* success, following *Water Just Water* (Sydney 2005) and *Echoes* (Melbourne 2006 and Sydney 2007).

Are you, or someone you know, doing something that might interest other New Players people? Do you have photographs of recent performances? Please tell the editor.

THEATRE CALENDAR

At this time of the year, theatres are not saying what is happening in their "new seasons" that start in January. BATS and Downstage will have something on. But you are on your own, I'm afraid.

OPEN NOW

Dick Whittington and His Cat - The Pantomime by Roger Hall, songs by Paul Jenden & Michael Nicholas Williams, dir: Susan Wilson. Dick (and his Cat!) go to Wellington. Circa One, to 16 January.

OPENING IN JANUARY

21 **The 39 Steps** by John Buchan and Alfred Hitchcock, ad. Patrick Barlow from concept by Simon Corble and Nobby Dimon, dir: Peter Hambleton, with Serena Cotton, Cohen Holloway, Tim Spite and Julian Wilson. 4 actors, 139 roles, 100 minutes. Return season. Circa One to 13 Feb.

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

BJL

NEW PLAYERS PEOPLE OUT AT Christmas Dinner

The New Players Christmas dinner was on Saturday 28 November at the Windy Hills café and restaurant in Newlands.



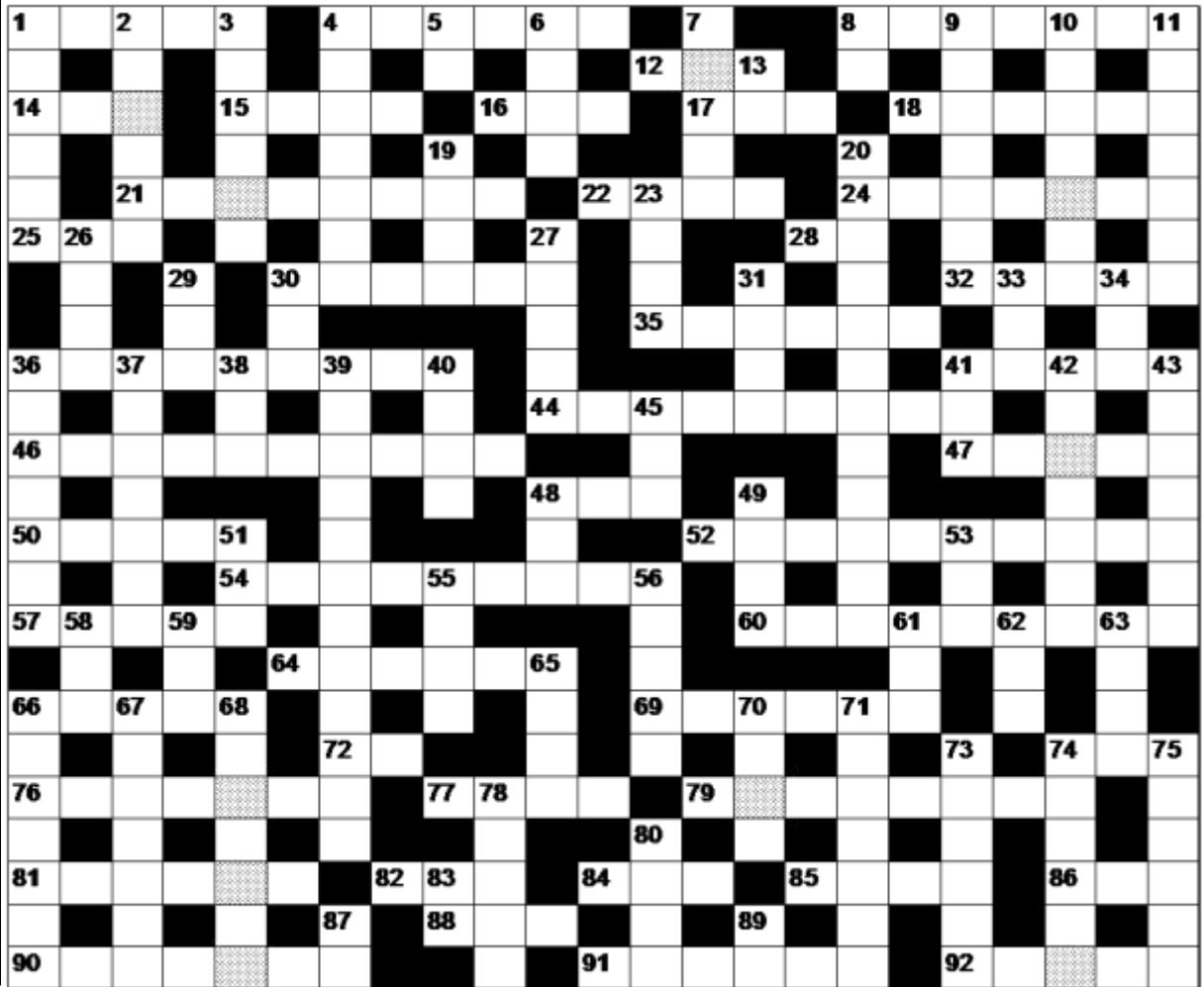
Clockwise from top left: The table, featuring Margaret Potter and Marie Thomson; Irene Miller; Giovanna Salvano; Emma Blackmore; Jean Slobbé; Steven Blackmore; Kim Smith; Jeff Osborne; and Ross and Heather Conland. Centre: Don Blackmore; and Cheryl de Boer (left) with Jill Blackmore.

How the New Players team failed to lose: round by round

Round	1	2	3	4	5	Half	6	7	8	9	10	Total	Pl
New Players	5	5	10	7	10	37	5	9.5	7	7	5.5	71	1
Stagecraft	7	6	9	7	10	39	7	6	8	4	6.5	70.5	2
Stagecraft	5	4	9	8	10	36	7	5	5.5	3	7.5	64	3
KAT	5	6	6	8	10	35	6	5.5	6	4	6.5	63	4
Energy	4	5	5	7	9	30	7	4.5	4.5	2	6.5	54.5	5
Stagecraft	5	3	4	8	9.5	29.5	4	5	6.5	2	5.5	52.5	6

MONSTER HOLIDAY CROSSWORD

by Barry Lakeman



ACROSS

- 1 Talked with angry Israelite about small commercial.
 4 Also your old prominent incisors.
 8 Turned around rapidly while little road turned about.
 12 Common to the names of every 24 hour period.
 14 Awl bent, as a rule.
 15 Kids run around to make a storage device.
 16 Mother, confused, makes uncertain sound.
 17 Light emitting diode shortly was in front.
 18 Shortage caused when thread coiled.
 21 Telephone handset appears when ever rice is stirred.
 22 What Charles I, George VI and Kong have in common.
 24 Ripe Mum arranged to be the best.
 25 Owing morning precipitation, I hear.
 28 & 82 across Orate madly for Wellington area.
 30 Half an instrument, calm by confusion.
 32 Windy guy surrounds little street.
 35 The real story before this place could be one of a thousand tiny ones.
 36 Souvenirs seem not confused about me.
 41 A silly pose for a story teller!
 44 O! Hardware swapped for weapon tip.
 46 Mad King George in charge on cert for emending.
 47 Speak for lowest interest.
 48 Carpet found in Raumatī.
 50 A main resort for revealing the soul.

- 52 Sire in semi chaos makes a few TV programmes.
 54 Depiction of another comes from making a mess of Royal part.
 57 Left melted lead, made a big spoon.
 60 Good of Wol to change for the Ranfurly Shield (3, 2, 4).
 64 Little foot invades, goof not convicted (3, 3).
 66 A woodwind instrument made from loud stringed instrument.
 69 To be wandering, tear around Royal Navy.
 72 A short time to make a small moustache.
 74 Bro' turns into sphere.
 76 Ere that change could create the stage.
 77 Lightly sleep in dodo, zebra and crocodile style.
 79 See 78 Down
 81 Votes for 100 fallen in melted steel.
 82 See 28 Across.
 84 Worker in pants.
 85 Is capable in stables.
 86 Dutch from commercial vehicle.
 88 Little current makes little amplifier.
 90 One's art revised for action of a quising.
 91 Cuddle into melted steel, following direction.
 92 Sense of recognising quality when state in upheaval.

DOWN

- 1 Thumped old jet around.
 2 See 29 Down
 3 Work out by chewing cud in Dee.

- 4 Fist yet arranged to give evidence.
 5 See 45 down.
 6 See 89 down.
 7 Short 36 Down
 8 Short weight in newts.
 9 Beg rice madly to create shipping hazard.
 10 Is role right about trucks?
 11 Home during the day in what is now Benin.
 13 See 78 Down
 19 Her British resident in the kitchen garden.
 20 Angrily he grips a Dane to be the main task force.
 23 Freezes up at the end of the services.
 26 Encourage Genetic Engineering to follow old city.
 27 Stupid Ralf. No plants!
 29, 62, 2 down Hew watery ewe about to make a song by Barbra (3, 3, 1, 4).
 30 Sever a canal.
 31 Dead? In what manner? An Arabian vessel!
 33 See 87 down.
 34 Also to come to nothing.
 36 Chip meal lain around for ex-Python traveller (7, 5).
 37 Ride ram around to be wed.
 38 Born a woman.

The first eleven across answers might remind you of the first lines of a Christmas carol. The letters in the shaded squares can be rearranged to make the name of the composer (5, 5).

HOLIDAY THEATRE QUIZ

Well, they are mostly about theatre. The answers to these questions are on page 8.

- 1** A 1953 film starring Marilyn Munroe was "Gentlemen Prefer ..." what?
 (a) Watching sport on TV (b) Beer
 (c) Blondes (d) Money
- 2** In 1974 Artistic Director Sunny Amey set a record of 6 New Zealand plays in a year on the main playbill at Downstage. When, if ever, was this record broken?
 (a) 1984 (b) Never (c) 2009 (d) 1996
- 3** Ross Jolly and Susan Wilson direct most of the plays at what theatre?
 (a) Downstage (b) BATS
 (c) St James (d) Circa
- 4** Where is the ceremony for the Chapman Kip awards, the fun version of the Chapman Tripp awards, held?
 (a) "The Jimmy", St James theatre
 (b) The auditorium, Downstage
 (c) Wharfside Restaurant, Circa Theatre
 (d) The Pit Bar, BATS
- 5** In literature, what is the word for the events that follow the climax of a drama, literally "the untying of the complexities of a plot"?
 (a) Denier (b) Dénouement
 (c) Denominator (d) Dentrifice
- 6** What was the occupation of P.L. Travers character Mary Poppins?
 (a) Parking warden (b) Nanny
 (c) Coal miner (d) Exotic dancer
- 7** Which of these is a traditional English dish made with the shallow-fried left-over vegetables from a roast dinner, mainly potato and cabbage?
 (a) Bubble and squeak (b) Brew and scream
 (c) Pop and tweet (d) Squirm and chirp
- 8** Which of these musicals was the earliest to be staged?
 (a) Godspell (b) Aspects of Love
 (c) Cats (d) Hello Dolly
- 9** Who was an American-born Greek soprano opera singer who had a public love affair with Aristotle Onassis?
 (a) Kiri Te Kanawa (b) Maria Callas
 (c) Jacqueline Kennedy (d) Joan Sutherland
- 10** What theatre used to be the home of Wellington Repertory Theatre?
 (a) Phoenix Theatre (b) The Depot
 (c) Gryphon Theatre (d) BATS
- 11** Complete the title of this James Bond film: "On Her Majesty's ..."
 (a) Secret Service (b) Corgi
 (c) Favourite Chair (d) Bicycle
- 12** What is the current name for the venue where Unity Theatre performed plays from the late 1960s until 1975?
 (a) Gryphon Theatre (b) BATS
 (c) Phoenix Theatre (d) The Depot
- 13** What happens to an actor when he "dries"?
 (a) Changes costume during the performance
 (b) Stands under a hot light for too long
 (c) Forgets his lines
 (d) Goes out into the audience
- 14** What is the name of the Wellington City Council Arts Centre in Abel Smith Street?
 (a) Toi Whakaari (b) Toi Poneke
 (c) Taki Rua (d) Te Tai Tonga
- 15** How far did The Proclaimers sing that they would walk "To fall down at your door"?
 (a) 1000 miles (b) 500 miles
 (c) 250 miles (d) 50 miles
- 16** What was the first name of the playwright Williams who wrote "A Streetcar Named Desire"?
 (a) Nevada (b) Arizona
 (c) Tennessee (d) Florida
- 17** Who did Shakespeare say were Hamlet's mother and stepfather?
 (a) Gertrude and Claudius
 (b) Guinevere and Lancelot
 (c) Veronica and Thomas
 (d) Ophelia and Polonius
- 18** Which theatre commissions the STAB festival of plays that are performed in November each year?
 (a) BATS (b) St James
 (c) Downstage (d) Circa
- 19** What production that opened on 15 October 1973 was the first at the Hannah Playhouse by Downstage?
 (a) As You Like It by William Shakespeare
 (b) Middle Aged Spread by Roger Hall
 (c) The Pohutukawa Tree by Bruce Mason
 (d) Well Hung by Robert Lord
- 20** In "Speed The Plough" by Thomas Morton (1798) which character never appeared, but became a symbol of public prudery and conventional morality?
 (a) Mrs Bucket (b) Mrs Grundy
 (c) Annie Walker (d) Mrs Whitehouse
- 21** Which theatrical production company started the same year as New Players?
 (a) Taki Rua (b) BATS
 (c) Downstage (d) Circa
- 22** Who is the bulldog who appears in "Tom and Jerry" cartoons?
 (a) Spike (b) Pokey
 (c) Thumper (d) Bouncer
- 23** What play opened at the former site of the Walkabout Cafe on the corner of Cambridge Terrace and Courtenay Place on 20 November 1964?
 (a) Look Back In Anger by John Osborne
 (b) Zoo Story by Edward Albee
 (c) Oh What a Lovely War: Joan Littlewood
 (d) Entertaining Mr Sloane by Joe Orton
- 24** Which production is associated with the most Chapman Tripp Awards for 2009?
 (a) Collapsing Creation (b) Postal
 (c) Death And The Dreamlife Of Elephants
 (d) The Intricate Art of Actually Caring
- 25** Which US President is associated with the "Teddy Bear"?
 (a) Theodore. Roosevelt (b) George Bush
 (c) John F Kennedy (d) Barack Obama

Thanks to www.freequiztrivia.com for these questions from their stock.

- 39 Comparatively did better, or perfumed to madness.
 40 Nags around voiced song.
 41 Fuss for a party.
 42 Shop floats around air for Helen who sang "Walkin' Back to Happiness".
 43 Des pale, confused, but satisfied.
 45 & 5 down Squeal from no tar mess.
 48 Allowed one month.
 49 Herb is a stupid person.
 51 Imitate man's distant cousin.
 53 Santa's little helper lost in Delft.
 55 O for odd building cover.
 56 Last placed rose left around.
 58 See 78 Down
 59 Left it with the light on.
 61 Nothing at edible seed.
 62 See 29 Down
 63 Left off lover above.
 65 Little Fiona takes the first 40% of a 1970s Texan rock band for effervescence.
- 66 Exam follows good physical condition for those most likely to survive.
 67 Eel, Luke tangle to find an instrument.
 68 The assets after death are smashed tea sets.
 70 Actual ale stirred, right before.
 71 Famous lone bat destroyed.
 73 Influence alters little foot face.
 74 Love is a mess: use for making oil.
 75 See 80 Down
 78, 58, 13 down & 79 across The fool! A family clue can be determined to become Carol (1, 4, 3, 2, 8).
 80 & 75 down One rent ban amended for "Agnes Grey" author (4, 6).
 83 Artist could be the Egyptian sun god.
 87 & 33 down Sun returns in, that is, not idle.
 89 & 6 down A confused moth finds direction to be in residence.

LAST MONTH'S CROSSWORD

O	F	F		F	E	E	L	E	R		H		
T		A		I		D		R		V	A		
T	H	I	N	G	S		A	R	D	O	U	R	
O		N		U		S		O		L		R	
M	E	T	E	R		T	O	R	Q	U	A	Y	
A		H		E		O				N		M	
N	E	E		S	T	R	I	P		T	O	E	
E		A				I		A		E		T	
M	I	R	A	C	L	E		S	T	E	P	S	
P		T		H		S		T		R		A	
I	C	E	C	A	P		B	U	R	I	A	L	
R		D		I		N		R		N		L	
E				E	N	C	O	R	E		G	A	Y

The first four across answers might remind you of the title of a play by Jean Betts. The letters in the shaded squares can be rearranged to make the name of the play in which the title character first appeared: HAMLET.

Fragments from the last year



This is how the stage looked for the District Theatre Federation's Antoinette's Awards evening (for full length play competition), held at Porirua Little Theatre on 26 September. Russell Kitto was the creator of the set design, Denise Andrews the signwriting and Colin Brown the lighting.



On holiday, Ross Conland felt strong (or is it "heavy") while Heather found a friend. Don Blackmore is pictured at the making of a mockumentary about a plague called A.R.O.C.K. Oh, and Marie had an important birthday. (Photo credits are on page 8.)



Here is Jeff Osborne at work on the steps of Parliament, getting some microphone practice.



Paulette McIndoe (right) with Regan Hoskin and Carol Reed as "The Everley Sisters" in Porirua Little Theatre's production of *A Great face For Radio 2*.



Tanisha Wardle and Don Blackmore making films for Blue House Films.



Film-making is not "all go". Here is Tanisha with her production manager Paulette McIndoe. Is this called a "production meeting"?

HELP WANTED

BOOKS, BOOKS, BOOKS, Stagecraft needs your BOOKS, BOOKS, BOOKS.

Stagecraft will perform *84 Charing Cross Road* in February and as it is set in a bookshop they need lots and lots of books. They need hard covered books with spines suitable for the 1940s or before and they promise to make sure that they know whose is whose and to return them. Or you could just donate them and tell them you don't want them back!

Contact the person for 84 Charing Cross Rd, Jane Arthur at janey.arthur@gmail.com or 021 125 7090.

JUST FOR FUN

A Matter of Interpretation

Molière's company was preparing to stage *Titus and Bernice*, a new play by Corneille. Michel Baron was playing the role of Domitianus and, memorising his part, he could not figure out the meaning of a particular quatrain. He asked Molière what the four lines meant: he shrugged that he did not know.

Then Baron went to Corneille himself. The poet read the lines a few times, and said, "I must admit, I don't know what I meant."

"What am I to do?" asked the actor.

"Nothing," said Corneille, "just say the lines as written. There will be some in the audience who won't understand yet will deeply admire them."



Pictured on the left is Irene Miller after being presented with a Volunteer Service Award for her work with New Players by Peter Dunn. Above, your editor ponders what to put here.

NEWS

Maybe more competitors for 2010 Clueless Cup?

You might remember that, at the last Clueless Cup for competition in Charades by Wellington District Theatre Federation members, only three clubs were represented: Stagecraft, Khandallah Arts Theatre and New Players.

A little bird tells us that that Hutt Repertory and Heretaunga Players have their own regular contest going.

It just might be possible that if the past regular competitors that have fallen away (such as Porirua Little Theatre) and those two could be encouraged to come into the fold, that there might be even more varied and yet more intense competition next year!

JUST FOR FUN

It wouldn't happen on our stage, surely?

Ralph Richardson once electrified a first-night audience and other members of the cast by stepping out of character in mid-scene and turning towards the auditorium with the question, "Is there a doctor in the house?"

Somebody in the audience stood up.

"Doctor," said Sir Ralph, "isn't this play awful?"

From *Theatrical Anecdotes* by Peter Hay (OUP).

JUST FOR FUN

Good news, bad news

Two stage managers were discussing the likelihood of there being some form of theatrical endeavour in the here-after. One consulted a friendly medium and reported back:

SM1: "I have good news and bad news. The good news is that there is a wonderful theatre in heaven — well equipped, spacious, plenty of wing space. In fact, there's a show opening tomorrow night."

SM2: "That's wonderful! So what's the bad news?"

SM1: "You're calling the show."

WANT TO HELP?

Do you have some free time to help to keep New Players ticking along? The committee will welcome whatever help you can offer. Call Marie Thomson on 478 4305.

Answers to the HOLIDAY THEATRE QUIZ

- 15 The Proclaimers "would walk 500 miles", and "would walk 500 more, just to be the man who walked (a) 1000 miles To fall down at your door".
- 16 Playwright Mr Williams was (c) Tennessee.
- 17 Hamlet's mother and stepfather were (a) Gertrude and Claudius.
- 18 The theatre that commissions the STAB festivals is (a) BATS.
- 19 The first production at the Hannah was (a) *As You Like It*.
- 20 The 1798 Thomas Morton character is (b) Mrs Grundy.
- 21 The theatre that started the same year as we did is (d) Circa.
- 22 The bulldog in "Tom and Jerry" is (a) Spike.
- 23 Downstage's first play on the present site was (b) *Zoo Story*.
- 24 (a) *Collapsing Creation* won the most Chapman Tripp Awards.
- 25 (a) Theodor Roosevelt is associated with the "Teddy Bear".

- 1 *Gentlemen Prefer (c) Blondes*.
- 2 The record for NZ plays at Downstage was broken in (c) 2009.
- 3 Ross Jolly and Susan Wilson direct most plays at (d) Circa.
- 4 The Chapman Kip's are awarded at (d) The Pit Bar, BATS.
- 5 "Uniting the complexities" is (b) Denouement.
- 6 Mary Poppins was a (b) Nanny.
- 7 A dish made with leftover vegetables is (a) Bubble and squeak.
- 8 The earliest of those musicals was (d) Hello Dolly.
- 9 The soprano with Aristotle Onassis was (b) Maria Callas.
- 10 The home of Wellington Rep was the (a) Phoenix Theatre.
- 11 *On Her Majesty's (a) Secret Service*.
- 12 Unity performed at, now, (b) BATS.
- 13 An actor "dries" when he (c) forgets his lines.
- 14 The WCC Arts Centre in Abel Smith Street is (b) Toi Poneke.

AUDITIONS for our next production: *RolePlay* by Alan Ayckbourn.

Auditions for *RolePlay* by Alan Ayckbourn, directed by Ewen Coleman, will be held at 6.00 p.m. on Sunday 28 February 2010 at the Newlands Community Centre. The production dates are 6 to 9 May and 13 to 15 May 2010.

RolePlay is a hilarious piece of theatre with dark undertones - a vintage 'dinner-party from hell'. As a playwright Alan Ayckbourn is a master at writing about people divided by class, accent, habits and race and *RolePlay* is no exception.

Synopsis

A young well-to-do couple, but mis-matched in love, Justin and Julie Ann, living in a posh London docklands apartment, have planned a dinner party at which they hope to introduce each other's parents and also announce their engagement.

Into this rather intense environment arrive two unexpected guests, one a lap-dancing gangster's moll, the other her burly gun-toting minder.

What Julie-Ann's parents (the bigoted northern stereotype and his dim twittering wife) and Justin's mother (who is toy-boy chasing and drink-soaked) find when they arrive shows us that the bourgeois guests, under their respective veneers, are far more frightening than the interlopers.

Although a comedy with farcical elements *RolePlay* nevertheless says something about how we all play roles and make assumptions about other people's roles.

A quote from one of the many reviews of the original production:

"One of Ayckbourn's greatest skills is the mixing of the accidental and the improbable with the inevitable and the realistic, and in *RolePlay* he displays it with magisterial cunning. The writing is as funny, nimble and lethally observant as ever".

Is there a part for you?

Characters – ages approximate only

Justin Lazenby: about thirty, a software developer - serious, kind, eager to please, anxious, nervy, indecisive.

Julie-Ann Jobson: early twenties, Justin's somewhat mis-matched prissy girlfriend, sweet and conventional but an obsessive perfectionist.

Paige Petite: late twenties, an ex-lap dancer and a boxing promoter's moll living in a penthouse upstairs - a sexy Cockney blonde.

Micky Rale: early forties, an ex-boxer and Paige's "minder" – an intellectually challenged monosyllabic Neanderthal bruiser.

Derek Jobson: late fifties, Julie-Ann's right-wing joke cracking father, an unforgiving racist Yorkshire businessman.

Dee Jobson: late -forties, Julie-Ann's dippy dim witted and twee mother.

Arabella Lazenby: fifties, Justin's stylishly alcoholic acid-tongued mother, a glamorous, gravel-voiced, sophisticated soak from Surrey.

Dates and details

Auditions: 6:00 p.m. on Sunday 28 February at **Newlands Community Centre**, Batchelor Street, Newlands. There is no need to book an audition time, and "prepared pieces" are not required.

Production dates: 6 to 9 and 13 to 15 May 2010.

Contact details for the director: edcoleman@xtra.co.nz or 027 428 849, 384 1413 (h); 385 5864 (w).

NEWS

Auckland theatre starts to really hum

Our Auckland correspondent, Bronwyn Elsmore, told us this about local theatre: Theatre is going so well in Auckland now, it's almost an embarrassment of riches as there's so much to go to. After years of going to everything on, I now have to select what to see. Breaking news here is that the old Mercury theatre building is for sale after being a church for many years! So a group of theatre people has set up a committee to look into the possibilities. All sorts of ideas came from the Forum, there were committees being set up in every corner. If only half of the energy translates into action the place will be buzzing.

Meanwhile, construction of Q Theatre, at 305 Queen Street, Auckland, is due to start, for completion at the end of 2011. The project, to build an auditorium with flexible staging and seating for audiences of about 350 to 450, was set up in 1996 when the lease for the "Watershed" could not be renewed. Q Theatre will be next to the Town Hall, extending to Greys Avenue, and will complement the Town Hall, Civic Theatre, Aotea Centre, and smaller venues like the Herald Theatre, the Basement Theatre and the Classic Comedy Club in the areas "arts and creative hub". It will have a bar/café off Queen Street and an auditorium facing onto Greys Avenue and Mayoral Drive, and is expected to be fully fitted for staging world-class performances.

NEWS

Lynch the new Playmarket director

Playmarket has appointed Murray Lynch as their next Director, to take over from Mark Amery in February.

Murray has worked at nearly every major professional theatre in New Zealand since he began his career at Four Seasons Theatre in Wanganui in 1973. He has been Associate Director and then Artistic Director of Centrepoint in Palmerston North, Associate Director at Auckland's Theatre Corporate, Artistic Director of the Maidment Arts Centre at the University of Auckland, the founding director of Tantrum Theatre Company, Associate Director and then Director at Downstage Theatre. He has also headed the Acting and Directing Programmes at Toi Whakaari : NZ Drama School.

Playmarket is NZ's playwrights' agency & script advisory service. Its focus is on the development and representation of NZ playwrights and their plays.

Thank you to all our contributors: Marie Thomson, Irene Miller, Ewen Coleman, Bronwyn Elsmore & Marjorie McKee, especially for photos. Photos: *Marjorie McKee*: front (Barry); *Heather Conland*: P6 (Ross & Heather); *Tanisha Wardle*: P6 (Don, Tanisha & Don, Tanisha & Paulette), P7 (Barry); *Unknown*: P2 (Jeff); P6 (PLT stage, Jeff, Paulette); *Marie Thomson*: all others.