



Spotlight

October 2015

Volume 11 issue 4

Titirangi Theatre financially secure, artistically alert!

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What a bright, vibrant, optimistic quality there was at this year's Annual General meeting! An encouragingly large attendance heard positive reports from outgoing president Duncan and treasurer Graeme, and Titirangi Theatre is clearly in good shape.

How marvellous too to have such a large number of candidates for the committee, 13 in all. It was a

promising mix of experience and fresh blood.

Our new president is Jerome Scott, introduced in full on page 4.

In a brief acceptance speech he spoke impressively of his hopes and plans for the future.

We are indeed lucky to have the presidential reins taken over so smoothly and vigorously.

The new committee is: Jerome, Duncan Milne, Frank Cruikshank, Teena Speedy, Mac Mclver, Malcolm Dale, Phoebe Falconer, Liz Malcouronne, Deb Hudson, Graham Douglas, Chris Lane, Alan Thomson and Taimi Allan. We'll have more news next issue.



"Spotlight" continues to bring you theatre news

**Next show
opens
Tuesday
24th Nov**

We plan to have another issue of Spotlight before the opening on 24th November of our final production for 2015, Alan Ayckbourn's "Life and Beth".

You'll find a brief note inside. Booking details will be published soon on our website. Look too for any email alerts. The AGM decided to make no

change in membership fees and associated privileges. Make sure you are up to date financially, and mention the huge benefits of membership to friends and family; \$35, free tickets!



As noted last issue I had the pleasure of adjudicating the national finals NZ Theatre Federation one act TheatreFest. It was a marvellous gathering of plays from throughout NZ, with the winning play "Bang, bang, you're dead" an outstanding piece from Wakatipu High School.
Lindsay Nash

Outgoing president Duncan gives his final annual Titirangi report

2015 has been a year of consolidation for Titirangi Theatre, after a few tumultuous and challenging years and a great deal of change. I am proud to report that Titirangi Theatre is in good shape, with audience numbers improved compared with last year, and business and governance issues settling into shape.

But first the plays! *Fawty Towers* (the last play before the last AGM) set an extraordinary standard, which the first play of the current year fully achieved. *Cinderella*, written and directed by Chris Lane, also entirely sold out prior to opening - a remarkable achievement.

This production was notable both for the high energy onstage, and for a first for Titirangi, an entire mobile set, pushed onstage from the wings! I'd also like to thank Chris and the team for stepping up at short notice when the original director was unable to continue.

Next up (and first up in 2015) was *A Shortcut to Happiness* by Roger Hall, directed by Lindsay Nash. A delightful cast meant a heart warming night out at the theatre, and this was reflected in most nights being sold out.

Mid-year we had *Heroes* by Gerald Sibleyras, directed by Christine Nash, and again a delightful cast meant a lovely show and good audiences. Most recently we have just finished *Abelard and Heloise* by Ronald

Miller, directed by Liz Watkinson. A cast of seemingly thousands brought us a visually striking drama, but audience numbers were not as high as the quality of the production deserved.

The committee decided early on to focus on settling into our new home and getting back to

business as usual. This meant that play selection was fairly conservative, with a deliberate strategy of selecting plays which were likely to be popular and successful. I supported this approach, and I think we achieved those goals, but I look forward to hearing your thoughts on play selection and how to strike the right balance between commercial success and the desire to stage pieces which are more challenging to the audience.

The relationship between Titirangi Theatre and the management of Lopdell House has been a big focus this year. The day to day working relationship is great, and many of you will have met and worked with Jolie and you will know how helpful and pleasant she is to work with. There are still minor issues which pop from time to time, but I am now confident that we are able to work through these as they arise and get a good solution. An example of this is in our use of the Treasure House for wardrobe. As some of you may have been aware, there were some questions around

our making more use of that space, and this had led to some anxiety around whether we were going to have to move out, or share the wardrobe space with other users. But we met with Jolie and the LHDT and found a solution which was acceptable to all - including most importantly the wardrobe team.

Commercially we are in good shape. As Graeme will report, we now pay only a peppercorn rental, and pay power bills for the wardrobe only, so our overheads are significantly reduced. It will be an interesting challenge for the incoming committee to consider if we should increase spending on productions if we continue being successful. We should have some cash reserves so we can ride out any less successful productions, but we are not here to make money. So what should we spend it on? Increasing our marketing efforts, to attract more audience? Increasing our membership? Improving the venue (but it doesn't belong to us)? More productions? Better support for our classes, so we can have more crew, so we can have more productions? A paid administrator? Buying more lights?

One area which certainly needs some attention is the stage itself. We have got away without needing to raise the stage until now, but Abelard and Heloise needed a raised stage and we spent a lot of effort on moving stag-

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“This organization exists only because of the people who make it happen..”

ing units from Corbans estate. I cannot recommend this option as a lasting solution. But storage space here is limited and we can no longer rely on big piles of pallets in the wings. So I would encourage the incoming committee to prioritise finding a solution for this issue.

Lastly, I'd like to talk about people. This organisation exists only because of the people who make it happen - which is all of you here tonight. And that's how it should be, a community organisation with no community doesn't deserve to exist. But I do want to acknowledge that theatre is a team sport, and we all care deeply about it and so we make it happen. So thank you and we'll done to all of you.

At this point I'd like to mention that several

members of the Titirangi Theatre family have been struggling with illness this year. I won't mention names, but I did want to say how much each of you are in our thoughts. These events have made me reflect on just how much Titirangi Theatre is a community, and how much people have come to mean to me over the more than 25 years I have been part of this group.

And lastly, I'd like to thank the committee. They do a great deal of work which is never seen, but without which we would not be here. There can be as much work outside of productions as there is inside them, and we owe a huge vote of thanks to them. I'd like to thank Tony Dunne, Graeme Heap and Michael and Marian Allen, who are not able to make themselves available for committee again this year,

for their outstanding contributions. And I'd like to thank Mac Mciver, Phoebe Falconer, Liz Malcournne, Graham Douglas and Taimi Allan who are making themselves available again. I'd like to welcome Frank Cruickshank, who will be our new Treasurer.

And I'd like to thank you all for your support of me personally. Thank you for your kind words and your encouragement. It has meant a lot to me. While I am not standing as President this year, I am happy to offer to serve on committee to support the incoming team. A trawl through the records revealed that I have been president for five years. I think that's enough for anyone, but I look forward to the next five years of growth and development of Titirangi Theatre.

Duncan Milne

**Book at
Tgn Pharmacy
817-7658
or online www.titirangitheatre.co.nz**

“Abelard and Heloise” continues a fine 2015 season

This play was a triumphant testament to Liz Watkinson's experience, creativity and quality production values.

The deceptively simple and stylised set, coupled with atmospheric lighting and music set the scene from 'curtain up' and continued to the finale.

It is no mean feat to stage a play of this complexity in the new theatre space, and to ensure the movements of such a large cast and the many scene changes appear effortless and seamless.

Rehearsals must have been conducted with military precision at times!



Adding to the ambience were the suitably attired nuns and hooded monks with their Gregorian chants contributing greatly to the 'sense of place'.

Jerome Scott as Abelard and newcomer to the

stage Phoebe Richter as Heloise created their characters with realism and integrity, and were brilliantly supported by the many other players in this tragic and emotional story.

“Abelard and Heloise” is a long play, so it needed to be riveting to hold the audiences attention. It certainly succeeded. Congratulations to Liz, the cast, and a dedicated crew.

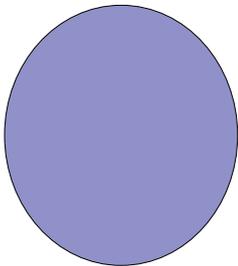
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Introducing our incoming President, Jerome Scott

It is with a heavy heart that I sit down to write my first Spotlight piece as your new president. As many of you will know, our friend and colleague Jos Evans and his wife Suzi have recently suffered the unimaginable tragedy of the death of their son Thomas. Jos is a man of great heart, humour and talent and was a huge part of our *Abelard & Heloise* company. I think I speak on behalf of the entire Titirangi Theatre family when I say that Suzi and Jos are very much in our thoughts.

And now some introductions are in order. For those of you who have not met me, my name is Jerome Scott and I have been involved in both community and professional theatre since 2003, as an actor, producer and board member. I live near Titirangi Beach with my wife Vanessa and our two daughters.

Having now performed in two Titirangi Theatre shows (*Favity Towers* and *Abelard & Heloise*) I have come to appreciate what a special and welcoming place our theatre is. It is testament everyone's passion and dedication to community theatre that we endured our Lopdell-hiatus and came roaring home with 7 (at time of writing) stonking seasons of theatre.

Duncan deserves a great deal of thanks for his leadership through these transitions and I was delighted to see him bestowed with a life-membership of our theatre. He leaves his tenure as president with the theatre in great shape and I am excited for the challenges ahead as we forge the next chapter safely ensconced in our ancestral home.

In addition to myself there are several new additions to the committee and we now have a sizeable and motivated

team ready to take up the challenge of leading us on to the next phase of our development.

Our focus for the coming year is on growing our membership and improving our audience sizes and experience while continuing to provide theatre of exceptional quality. I am also committed to establishing a youth theatre as part of the Titirangi Theatre family. I will have more to say about these and other exciting initiatives as well as a who's who on committee in due course.

In the meantime I welcome one and all to get in touch with comments, suggestions and offers of helping hands. I can be reached via president@titirangitheatre.co.nz

I look forward to seeing you at the theatre soon.



Lesley Locke on our next show, a comedy

The final play for 2015 from Titirangi Theatre is a light hearted comedy entitled *'Life and Beth'* by Alan Ayckbourn directed by Lesley Locke. Set appropriately at Christmas it revolves around recently widowed Beth (played by Rochelle Cowie) and her rather dysfunctional family. Connie (played by Andrea Diprose) her sister

in law, spends her time between drinking and lusting after the local vicar. Beth's son Martin (Kieran Maskell) arrives to give his mother a Christmas she will never forget. While his new girlfriend Ella (Anne-Lise Mornard) joins him in achieving just that. Add to the mix a rather absent minded vicar (Max Golding) who in-

nocently causes the ghost of Beth's not so dearly departed husband (Alan J Thomson) to appear, and you have all the ingredients for an entertaining night at the theatre. We open 24th November.

