



Spotlight

November 2015

Volume 11 issue 5

“Life and Beth” opens next Tuesday, 24th November

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Next Tuesday, 24th November, sees the gala opening of Titirangi Theatre’s final play for 2015. It’s Alan Ayckbourn’s Light-hearted comedy, “Life and Beth.”

It’s actually part 3 of a trilogy: remember his similarly structured “Norman Conquests”?

But the critics agree that “Life and Beth” can stand

very happily on its own.

The play revolves around the recently widowed Beth. She’s surrounded by a variety of comic dysfunctional characters.



Then Gordon, the dead husband appears, back to

help and guide Beth, much to her annoyance.

Ayckbourn considers the play his equivalent to Noel Coward’s “Blithe Spirit”, and we’re sure you’ll find this play just as entertaining.

Bookings are now open at Titirangi Pharmacy 817-7658 or on line at our theatre website www.titirangitheatre.co.nz

An urgent request for help!

Titirangi Theatre is looking for a treasurer, following an unexpected resignation. The theatre is a charitable trust run by an incorporated society.

It has a growing membership, and current equity of about \$50,000

While professional accountancy qualifications are not necessary, a good working knowledge of book-keeping would be

essential. The position is unpaid, and would require a commitment of two to three hours a week.

If you can help, or know of someone who might be interested, please email

president@titirangitheatre.co.nz



**Next show
opens
Tuesday
24th Nov**

2016 plays look promising

Wyrd Sisters by Sir Terry Pratchett, dramatised by Stephen Briggs
Titirangi Youth Theatre presents *Daughters of Heaven* by Michelanne Forster
Messiah on the Frigidaire by John Culbertson
Compleat Female Stage Beauty by Jeffrey Hatcher
Red Riding Hood and the Three Pigs by Chris Lane
all subject to rights

As always, a big thank you to our sponsors and helpers: Titirangi Pharmacy, Hunt & Gaunt, Glovers Real Estate, the Trusts, Hardware Café and Go West Music

Clearing your throat, those little ums and ahs—are they needed?

It's common on stage, but not always seen as a crime! It's what I call "pre-vocalisation". Let me explain. We all have little throat-clearing habits, "like um, well, ah, I mean", etc, before we start to say something of relevance. Some people have more "ums" than others: it's a very natural occurrence. But not on stage! Here's my note to an actor's question.

Lindsay, why do you regard 'pre-vocalisation' as such a bad thing? Isn't it simply adding a naturalism to the script - not so much adding words that aren't there, but just some inflexion - given that scripts are largely just a canvas which need interpretation by the speaker anyway. The script rarely says which words to stress in a sentence, and a pre-vocalised 'oh' or 'ah' or similar can add fluidity to what's written imho.

Put another way, people tend to pre-vocalise during everyday speech so why not on stage? Just wondered why you categorise it as one of the seven deadly sins?

You are quite right of course. People do pre-vocalise all the time. If you take a recording of a conversation, and then do a transcript, the text will be full of vocalisations, "spoken pauses", repetitions, stumbles, and so on. As a script, such a transcript is almost unintelligible! Yet in practice, in person on the spot, we follow

these rambling conversations easily.

Inserting a few ohs, ums and ahs, as you suggest, may add naturalism, but I don't agree it adds fluidity. It does the opposite: it inhibits the development of pace. This is especially true at the beginning of an utterance as you follow on from the previous speaker. Often there is an overlapping, and this is natural. Observe in real life how often people interrupt conversations.



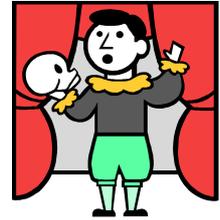
"people tend to pre-vocalise during everyday speech so why not on stage?"

Remember on stage it's not reality but the **impression** of reality!

Pre or sub vocalisations are often, I fear, to cover up lack of security in lines. This is especially true, I think, in the middle of speeches, as the actor gives the impression, in a naturalistic way, of looking for the right word to speak next.

But on stage it just slows things down. It can also take away from the focus in that speech. If you are knowledgeable and secure in your lines, you can subtly adjust your pace and pause to give

the impression of thinking what to say next in a natural way.



An author will sometimes give you a "well" or an "er" in the script. Of course, use this. But to add other wells and ums and ers, those pre-vocalisations, is in a way showing that you don't trust the playwright.

I put it in the same category as actors who paraphrase the script. It may be OK at one stage of rehearsals, but there comes a time when a director must insist the actor uses the words in the script.

Indeed some actors may protest "But I can't say that!" Too bad – those are the words the author has given you. I think it was Tom Stoppard who said how irritated he was when actors altered the words he had written.

I like your comment that "scripts are largely just a canvas which need interpretation by the speaker anyway." The actor will look for the sub text, what the character is **really** saying. **This** is what will give colour and texture to what the actor says. Sub- or pre vocalisation may muddy the performance.

Lindsay Nash,

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President Jerome recalls “opening night” & introduces our new team

I can clearly remember my first trip to the theatre when I was seven and watched Aladdin from a plush, red velour-trimmed box in Newcastle upon-Tyne’s Theatre Royal.

It was a mesmerising experience and one which would colour every subsequent play I saw. That fervent, crutch-clutching excitement waiting for the curtain to go up, knowing a group of actors were on the other side ready to begin is something that stayed with me to the point where I just had to find out what it was actually like to do it.

Fast forward to me standing in the wings on my first opening night waiting for my cue, feeling sick to the stomach and wondering why on earth I inflicted this misery on myself by choice.

And then heartily auditioning for the next play, the opening night trauma locked away (like childbirth?) until the next time. It’s a strange business alright but it’s a fact that once theatre sinks into your personage, it never lets go.

Theatre is as old as humanity, it’s just something we do, even in a world now infused with the bright glow of the tablet screen and the fifty inch TV, the need

for humans ponce around on the boards is still with us.

So what has all that tosh got to with the price of fish, I hear you ask. Well, a new year of poncing is almost upon us at Titirangi Theatre and as I said in my last piece, one of my immediate goals is investment in our youth theatre.



I am committed to flipping the theatre switches on a new group of youngsters and to give them opportunities to be involved in all aspects of the work of putting on a play.

The play committee (Deb Hudson, Graham Douglas, Duncan Milne, Taimi Allan, Chris Lane and myself) have been working hard to put together a fun and thought-provoking programme for your delectation and I am delighted to say that one of these shows will be a full youth production that will be slotted between our first and second regular adult plays next year.

I am looking forward to seeing some of our bright young things sick

to their stomachs on opening night! The rest of the slate is stacked up with some great plays directed by some of our finest directors as well as hot new talent. Look out for the brochures very soon to see the feast you have in store!

Meanwhile your new committee has been grafting to ensure our current year ends strongly and the new year planning is well under way.

I dished out some specific brass hats at the first committee meeting and some posts are still to be filled but so far we have (drum roll):

Secretary – Deb “Mrs Wilson” Hudson; Technical Manager – Duncan “Gaffer” Milne; Marketing Manager – Teena “Gonzalez” Speedy; Membership Manager – Malcolm “Friend of the People” Dale; Front of House & Publicity Manager – Phoebe “Mein Host” Falconer. Liz “The Scribe” Malcouronne is making sure the hot air we spout is all recorded for posterity in the minutes.

Finally our last show of the year *Life & Beth* is selling very well so don’t risk missing out as often happens for our Christmas productions and get your tickets booked early.

Beginners please!
Jerome.

Book at

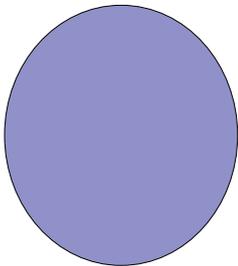
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The Geddes family has long links with theatre

Long time followers of theatre in Titirangi would have been saddened to hear of the recent death of John McKail Geddes.

The Geddes name is engraved right at the heart of our theatre body. John's mother, Ethelwyn, was the founder of what was originally the Drama Group of the Titirangi Women's Institute, based in the Macandrew Hall on Titirangi Road.

Some programmes of those early productions were pasted on the walls of the dressing rooms downstage, and I remember being impressed by the challenging range. There was Ibsen, Chekhov, Giraudoux, Shakespeare, as well as contemporary classics from UK and the USA. She was apparently a commanding figure.

When I arrived in Auckland in 1978, her husband "Mac" was still

alive, and I remember meeting him, the "mayor" of Titirangi.

The Titirangi Drama Group regularly took part in a fundraising season, the "Telethon one acts" and I auditioned for a role in "The Dumb Waiter". (I didn't get the part!) Theatre was clearly thriving in Titirangi.



Claire Geddes, John's wife, would relate how most of the Geddes furniture at one time or another had been on stage at Titirangi. Later I too was grateful for the loan of a chair or table to match the decor of the set.

I don't remember seeing John on stage though his brother Andrew and sister-in-law Janet have served the theatre for

many years. More noticeably he was the souchophone player the "Lex Pistols", a traditional jazz band made up of fellow lawyers. And of course he was the genial mine host at many a social gathering on the Geddes estate.

He was also a willing and lively participant in various panels and teams we've invited into the theatre, ever to be relied on for an imaginative and unpredictable contribution. His obituary notice used the word "Flamboyant", a fitting term.

So another link to our theatrical past is gone. Fortunately others remain from the Geddes clan, and opening night would not be complete without Andrew's appreciative laughter and applause. We'll remember John with affection.

Lindsay Nash

24th November workshop for FOH

Attention, current and potential Front of House helpers at Titirangi Theatre!

Saturday November 24 at 10am at Titirangi Theatre, basement, Lopdell House

Are you keen to put your theatre membership to good use but don't know where to start?

Front of House staff (those lovely folk who take your money, pour your drinks, explain where the toilets are etc) are always looking for extra helpers.

This is your chance to become an active member of your theatre without the scary acting stuff.

The workshop, to be run by Phoebe Falconer,

will take only two hours of your precious weekend time.

Cowed by the coffee maker? Exasperated by the Eftpos machine? This is your chance to get rid of those fears.

Phone Phoebe on (09) 623 9192 or 021 279 7901 to secure your place in this workshop.