



FROM THE CHAIR

Dear Supporters,

It's time to celebrate and laugh again.

We have obviously suffered a variety of losses with the cancellation of shows, but now we are through this sobering time and have enjoyed the uplifting atmosphere created by the outrageous and risqué *Hedwig and the Angry Inch*. What a huge success this has been. In direct contrast, *Les Liaisons Dangereuses*, with its fabulous set and costumes, opens on the 22nd June. A show of aristocratic decadence and treachery set in the pre-French Revolution period.

I was delighted to unearth my programme from the 1987 show of *Les Liaisons Dangereuses* performed at The Court featuring so many of the well know faces of the past. Ross in his debut as a bona fide actor for The Court, Sherril Cooper, Geraldine Brophy, Judie Douglass, Pamela Maling and many more. But it was the 1987 article about the history of The Court that really engaged me...

"...Christchurch has been a strong theatrical city from the earliest days as research shows. These elements combined with the



spirit of The Court's founders have sustained The Court over its first 15 years. This and the talents of the company promise to keep it fuelled for the next 15 years and beyond."

Well, we've certainly done that and more with our 48 years! Well done.

The Council continue to work with us over the plan to build our theatre in the city centre. In anticipation of the next stage of The Court, we are going to need the strength of our members behind us. This year is going to be dedicated to a major recruitment drive for new members. We need to expand the Supporters base, which will strengthen the whole foundation of the project.

So please, if you know friends who come to the theatre and love it - but are not yet Supporters - do encourage them to become part of our passionate team. This will give them the benefit of discounted tickets, involvement and the opportunity to be strong advocates for the theatre.

Kia kaha,
Annie Bonifant



FROM THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE

A big kia ora to the Court Supporters! What a time we've been having. I've been in my role for nearly eight months now and have had the opportunity to meet a number of you, especially our ushers. Among the group I have new friends and old friends, and its always great to see you in The Shed.

The Shed has a new roof!!! We are so excited about this. It says so much more than keeping the rain out. It says we care about our home, this place where we gather, share, talk, drink wonderful coffee or Giesen's finest. I challenge you when you come to *Les Liaisons Dangereuses*, that you enjoy a Base pizza, if you haven't yet had the pleasure.

Hedwig has left the building. We know that so many Court Supporters came to see her. All of our team thank Adam and Phoebe, our stars, for their tireless work, not only on the stage, but engaging with our patrons and being available for media calls. They were incredibly supportive of our talented team, and together we all achieved something magnificent.

I look forward to seeing you at *Les Liaisons Dangereuses*. As you know I share an office with Ross, and every day at 4.05pm he comes in after rehearsals absolutely on cloud nine with what they are creating. Can't wait. See you again very soon.

Ngā mihi nui,
Barbara

SURVEY RESULTS

As you may remember last year, the Court Supporters' Committee surveyed the Supporters to find out your views, ideas and expectations of the Committee.

Overall, we are pleased with the results. We learned that by far the largest number of respondents said the main reason they are Court Supporters is to support The Court and the arts community in Christchurch. The second reason is to be eligible to become a Court Theatre usher, while others said it was to receive ticket discounts and to receive the Quarterly 'Court Cues' newsletter

98.45% are satisfied with their membership. Many respondents are ushers and enjoy that role, others enjoy reading about the plays in advance and feeling part of the 'arts' in Christchurch. We were particularly delighted with the positive comments about the communications that come from The Court.

80.73% prefer to receive the 'Court Cues' newsletter by email and this is something we are now offering. Other comments mentioned a desire to be able to pay subscriptions online and this has already been introduced.

All those who responded and answered the survey went in a draw to win two tickets to an upcoming performance of their choice at the Court. Congratulations to the winner, Eileen Kerr!

Our thanks to everyone who took the time to respond, we value your feedback.

Annie

IT WAS A GREAT EVENING

Back in the March issue of Court Cues we promoted an irresistible combination - Eilish Moran as the guest speaker and Spanish tapas at The Curator's House Restaurant. And irresistible it proved to be - an exclusive opportunity for Supporters to meet and talk with Eilish who has been an integral part of The Court Theatre family since she was 18 appearing in over 70 productions.

Eilish came to dinner wearing her grey furry Grizabella coat - the costume she wore for her role in the nationwide tour of the musical *Cats*. She told us she had not sewn up the hole where her character's tail would be, but sadly she did not wear the tail that evening. The anecdotes about the tour however, kept the group of some 25 Supporters vastly entertained. We heard about how the show's costumes did not get washed, but had to be constantly mended as pieces fell off from continual wear in such an energetic production. (Of course someone had to ask her if she had washed the coat since the tour ended!) We also heard about how quickly the travelling from one theatre to another on a tour can become very tedious.

Eilish also gave us some insight into the role she is currently playing - the heartless, vengeful Marquise de Merteuil in *Les Liaisons Dangereuses*.

The food prepared by The Curator's House was utterly delicious and beautifully presented - main course choices of lamb, fish or duck cooked in Spanish style, followed by a refreshing mango sorbet. It was a great evening - a perfect combination of Eilish's charm and wit and superb food.

Cheryl Colley



Note: These dinners with Court Theatre greats are proving very popular. We will run another next year. So watch out for details early in 2020 and be ready to take up the limited spaces.

KIDSFEST FUN AT THE COURT THEATRE!

The Princess and the Frog (and the Robber!) is not your usual fairy-tale. This modern adaptation, written by Court Jester Jeff Clark, takes the premise of *The Frog Prince* and adds puppetry fun, a big dollop of theatrical magic and a brand-new twist!

Recommended for little ones aged 4 - 8, *The Princess and the Frog (and the Robber!)* sees a princess and a frog - the unlikelyst of friends - work together to save Princess Lillian's castle from a sneaky robber trying to steal the palace's jewels.

"I thought 'what if *The Princess and the Frog* turned into *Home Alone*? And the idea just clicked!" says Clark.

At first, Princess Lillian has no desire to be friends with a frog - ew! - but when someone breaks into the castle, the pair must work together to save the day.

"I'm very excited thinking that for some kids this will be their first time seeing live theatre, so I want it to be as magical as possible," says Clark.

***The Princess and the Frog (and the Robber!)* runs at The Court Theatre from 10 - 20 July with all tickets \$10**



THE COURT'S NEW MAINSTAGE SEASON IS ALMOST HERE!

It's almost that time of the year - The Court's brand-new Meridian Energy 2019/2020 mainstage season kicks off this August!

The season begins with *The Father*, an absorbing story of dementia starring one of our best actors, Mark Hadlow. This international sensation promises a profoundly moving experience at the theatre that shouldn't be missed.

Up next is Kiwi comedy *The Pink Hammer*, a heart-warming play about an all-women woodworking workshop that goes hilariously awry.

Rounding out 2019 is Pasifika comedy *Fresh Off the Boat*, written by Oscar Kightley and Simon Small. Exploring the tribulations of culture-clash in a hilarious yet confronting fashion, this affecting story is the last play before The Court's summer season of *The Wind in the Willows*. This magical adaptation is a whimsical, family-friendly production that offers up fun for the whole family.

Welcoming us into 2020 is Pulitzer winning drama *A Streetcar Named Desire*. This American classic will have audience members glued to their seats in a riveting and dangerous night out at the theatre.

The Court Supporters are the proud sponsors of the next show, brand-new Kiwi comedy, *Lysander's Aunt*. Lovingly mixing the world of Shakespeare with the Kiwi bush, this quirky play is magical, inventive and excitingly radical.



Hir promises to light a fire on the mainstage with its captivating and caustic dark humour. An international hit, this breathless piece of theatre (starring Eilish Moran!) takes a blow-torch to the status quo.

Finally, beloved musical *Rent* will showcase the musical talents of The Court, as Lara Macgregor directs this ground-breaking drama about a group of artists struggling and striving to follow their dreams in New York City.

In *The Forge* at The Court, audiences can expect their favourite regular performances of *Scared Scriptless*, *The Early Early Late Show* and *A Christmas Carol*, alongside two new plays that speak to our need to be kind to one another - starting with *The Arsonists*. Full of haunting music performed live on-stage, this swelling, poetic drama explores the bond between parent and child.

Similarly family-focused, bittersweet comedy *Au Ko Tuvalu* is returning in September after its sell-out performance in our *Ē Toru* development season. Offering an essential and evocative story around climate change, this Pasifika play is sure to melt even the coldest of hearts.

There's plenty of magic for the kids, too, in brand-new plays *The Princess and the Frog (and the Robber!)*; *Escape from Haunted House*; *The Ferocious Animals Petting Zoo* and *The Pied Piper*, all designed to ignite a love of theatre in our littlest audience members.

Last but not least are the productions performed by our Court Youth Company (*Boudica* and *Brainstorm*) and our rehearsed reading series, *Fresh Ink*.

The best way to see The Court's mainstage season - at the best price - is to become a Court Theatre Subscriber. To find out more, contact The Court Theatre's box office or visit courttheatre.org.nz/subscribe

JOIN US FOR A WINE TASTING

On the 25th July at 4pm we're hosting a free wine tasting at The Shed with the staff from The Court Theatre!

Spaces are limited, so make sure you RSVP before the 3rd July to allanah.james@gmail.com



SUPPORT US WITH YOUR ENTERTAINMENT MEMBERSHIP

Help our cause with your purchase of a new 2019/2020 Entertainment Membership, packed full of valuable offers on food, drinks and activities around the South Island. Visit our Box Office to buy one now!

SAVE THE DATE FOR OUR QUIZ NIGHT

Our annual Supporters' quiz night will be held this year on the 27th August at 7:30pm, so save the date and start gathering your team-mates!

KEY DATES

JULY

7 *The Early Early Late Show*
10 *The Princess and the Frog (and the Robber!)* opens
20 *The Princess and the Frog (and the Robber!)* closes
20 *Les Liaisons Dangereuses* closes
25 Supporters Wine Tasting
(spaces strictly limited, RSVP to allanah.james@gmail.com)

AUGUST

3 *The Father* opens
4 *The Early Early Late Show*
10 Backstage Tour
17 *The Arsonists* opens
19 *O Le Malaga Fa'a'atua (The Journey of the Gods)*
schools tour begins
24 *The Father* closes
27 Court Supporters Quiz Night
30/31 . . *Scared Scriptless* Birthday Shows at 8:30pm

SEPTEMBER

1 *The Early Early Late Show*
7 *The Arsonists* closes
7 *The Pink Hammer* opens
12 *Au Ko Tuvalu* opens
13 *O Le Malaga Fa'a'atua (The Journey of the Gods)*
schools tour ends
21 *Au Ko Tuvalu* closes

KEEP AN EYE OUT FOR

A te reo workshop, with details to be confirmed soon!

FAREWELLS & WELCOMES

WELCOME - Mandy Perry (Acting Production Manager)

WATCH YOUR BACK AROUND THE MARQUISE DE MERTEUIL

Eilish Moran stars as the heartless Marquise de Merteuil in The Court's production of *Les Liaisons Dangereuses*. Cheryl Colley talked with her about the play and about preparing for such a role.

What is the theme of *Les Liaisons Dangereuses*?

It depicts a very bored society, one soon to be cleansed by the French Revolution. The plot focuses on the Marquise de Merteuil and the Vicomte de Valmont, rivals and ex lovers, who use sex as a weapon to humiliate and ruin the reputations of others. They really enjoy their cruel games and boasting about their manipulative talents. They have to have some way to pass the time!

What makes this play relevant today?

Certainly the scandalous novel on which the modern play is based was written by Pierre Choderlos de Laclos in the eighteenth century, but the material has lost none of its power and bite. Just as with Shakespeare, the themes are universal and timeless, focusing on those emotions that are deep within us all - pride, love, revenge and jealousy.

How do you portray the Marquise?

It's important to flesh out the character and not have her as one-dimensionally evil, calculating and heartless. I looked for the reasons

behind the way she behaves. She describes herself as a self-made woman and her own creator. As a young girl Merteuil refused to let fate or society describe her and after her husband died, she set about educating herself and creating a reputation. Since then, she has remained at the top of the heap through careful manipulation, never once letting her guard down. She's deceitful and cruel, yet intelligent and witty. A lot of the time she's lying on stage, but for me it's about working out the times and they are few, when Merteuil's true self appears.

What preparation do you do for a role of this kind?

I looked at previous versions of the play - both film and on stage, particularly the latest National Theatre production at the Donmar Warehouse. But I did this well in advance of beginning my work on the play so that I could still come to the role fresh and give it my own interpretation. I also like to compare the characters I play with animals and the traits of those creatures. I see both a tiger and a snake in Merteuil.

How do you regard this role?

I am very excited to be playing the Marquise. She is a real gift for an actor and it's the highlight of my career so far. The language of Christopher Hampton's play is marvellous too - beautiful and clever. It's been a huge text to learn, but it was important to do that really quickly so I could take my eyes off the page and into those of my fellow actors.

What else can we expect of this production?

Alongside all the drama, tragedy and dark comedy on the stage you can marvel at the wonderful costumes and wigs we wear. My two sumptuous gowns have each taken 40 hours to make; the wig has been specially imported and even the shoes have been authentically made from fabric. This production is definitely the poster play of the season for the theatre's costume department.

***Les Liaisons Dangereuses* is on at The Court Theatre from 22 June - 20 July**

