

FROM THE CHAIR

An anonymous author penned a short poem entitled *The Tide* which seems appropriate for our community at present:

*The tide recedes, but leaves behind
bright seashells on the sand.
The sun goes down, but gentle warmth
still lingers on the land.
The music stops, yet echoes on
in sweet, soulful refrains.
For every joy that passes,
something beautiful remains.*

Without diminishing for one moment the absolute pain and heartbreak experienced by so many, I take heart that one consequence of the horror of March the 15th has been the unprecedented outpourings of compassion and comfort, strength and unity that have followed. Perhaps we are more than ever learning from an earlier age and those well-known words attributed to St. Francis of Assisi:

*Lord, make us instruments of your peace:
where there is hatred, let us sow love;
where there is injury, pardon;
where there is doubt, faith;
where there is despair, hope;
where there is darkness, light;
where there is sadness, joy.*

Let us sow indeed, and as we walk this sad journey together, our thoughts and prayers are with you and your families.

Kia kaha!
David Winfield



NEWS ABOUT YOUR COURT CUES

In considering the major cost involved in posting Court Cues to all supporters and with another increase arriving shortly, your committee recommended to the Annual Meeting that in future this publication should be distributed by email. This motion was adopted by the meeting. There will still be hard copies available in the foyer and arrangements can be made for those without email facilities. A consequence of this is that supporters should ensure that we have your accurate email addresses.

A NOTE FROM THE MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY



The good news is that our supporters program has been updated so that we may now send renewal notices plus any correspondence by email with a saving of over \$2,000 per year.

The first renewal notices were emailed at the beginning of this month. Please bear with us if we have any teething problems. Thank you to all those members who have updated their emails. For any who have not done so yet please send to supporters@courttheatre.org.nz.

If you do not wish to receive emails from us please advise by post to Court Theatre Supporters PO Box 268 Christchurch 8140 or to the email above.

As so many members now renew online and generously add a donation could you please add the word +donation on the bank statement to save any confusion. You will receive an email receipt.

Please remember to advise us if you change your address or phone number.

AN EVENING WITH EILISH

Eilish Moran and Spanish tapas - now there's an irresistible combination and a Supporters' exclusive.

Eilish is one of The Court Theatre's very special people. She joined The Court Company at 18 as a student actor and since then has been a regular on The Court's stage appearing in over 70 productions.

Eilish has agreed to be guest speaker at an informal dinner for Supporters on 15 May at Curator's House Spanish Restaurant on Rolleston Ave. She will have just completed a nationwide tour with the musical *Cats* and is sure to have lots of anecdotes about that experience to pass on. She will also be going into rehearsals for The Court's season of *Les Liaisons Dangereuses* playing the heartless, vengeful Marquise de Merteuil. We can look forward to some insights into acting that kind of role.

To register your interest, please email Cheryl Colley at ccolley@actrix.co.nz. Numbers are strictly limited so everyone has a chance to talk with Eilish as she moves around the tables.

We will send you further information in April. Cost is \$40.



WHY IS FRESH INK VITAL AND EXHILARATING?

Here's how The Court community (including you) helps playwrights.

Imagine, if you will, sitting at a computer and coming up with dialogue without anyone saying the words out loud. Far from easy! So, to help playwrights, The Court team organises *Fresh Ink*.

We put three playwrights in the middle of a developmental process with actors, a director and a dramaturg. (If you're looking for a definition of a dramaturg, the over-simplification is "script adviser".)

We're supporting compelling storytelling, vivid characterisation and powerful language. It's intense and fun.

Then we welcome you to the reading of the work-in-progress. During the reading, things are lively with no costumes, props or sets. Your reactions speak volumes to the playwrights.

Themes this year include being part of a minority (*Luncheon* by Aroha Awarau), boyhood friendship across cultures (*Scholars* by Tanya Muagututi'a) and all kinds of connections (*The Breath of Silence* by Gary Henderson).

Fresh Ink aims to connect us through escapism and inspiration.

Hope to see you there,
Ro Dalziel, Literary Manager.

***Fresh Ink* runs across three Sundays in April, May and June, starting with *Luncheon* on the 14th April at 4pm. All tickets are just \$10.**

FROM THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE

Hi Court Supporters, it was wonderful to meet many of you at your recent AGM. What a great night that was, and my thanks to Ross for introducing next season's programme to you.

You might remember him saying that *Scared Scriptless* is the longest running theatre show in New Zealand. Then he forgave us all for not seeing it as it's on way past most of our bed times!

Well, I have a rare treat for you. We will be running two performances of *Scared Scriptless* at the much more sociable time of 7.30 pm on both Friday 12 and Saturday 13 April. I can't wait - I've been looking for an opportunity to see the show. Why don't you come with me?

Prices are excellent value at only \$20, and Artistic Director Dan Bain promises us a night that is tailored just right for The Court Supporters. See you there! Thank you to The Court Supporters for all you do.



SUPPORTERS AGM

A good attendance recently considered items of business, acknowledged long-serving ushers and heard details of the theatre's 2019/2020 season from Ross Gumbley. Various people were also appointed or elected to office as follow:

- Patron** - Dame Adrienne Stewart
- Reviewing Accountant** - Ashton Wheelans Limited
- Honorary Solicitor** - Brian Palliser
- Honorary Treasurer** - Aileen Wyld
- Honorary Secretary** - Judy Ashton
- Honorary Membership Secretary** - Jay Pollock
- Committee**
 - Annie Bonifant
 - Pat Braithwaite
 - Wendy Carryer
 - Cheryl Colley
 - Charles Duke
 - Tony Feaver
 - Allanah James
 - Liz Lovell
 - John McSweeney
 - Lynn Vandertie
 - David Winfield
- Representative to the Trust Board**
 - David McBrearty

FROM NORWAY TO NZ - A JOURNEY OF SPONSORSHIP

Each year the Court Supporters have the honour of sponsoring a mainstage play at The Court. What a marvellous production we put our name to this year - the "excruciatingly funny and engaging" *Elling*. It was an absolute tour de force by two of our favourite Court actors - comedy double act Mark Hadlow and Ross Gumbley - reunited on stage again more than nine years since their last performance together as the misfits from a mental institution seeking to integrate into society.

Of course we had our sneak peak on the Supporters Gala night giving us that little advantage to then spread the word about this humorous and charming, as well as articulate and intelligent play. The entire cast shone in the production, but we watched Mark and Ross in awe, witnessing performers totally in command of their acting skills and perfectly attuned to each other.

We have another treat in store for Supporters next year. We are sponsoring a Court Theatre commissioned New Zealand play - *Lysander's Aunty*.

Think back to what you know about Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. Lysander hatched a plan. He has a wealthy old aunt who lives outside Athens and he suggests that he and Hermia, the woman he loves, meet in the nearby forest, sneak off to his aunt's house and get married outside of the reach of Athenian law. But they never get to the aunt's

house because the pesky fairies intervene.

Well, in the radical new comedy *Lysander's Aunty*, the world of Shakespeare is lovingly turned upside down with Lysander and Hermia landing in the lap of Lysander's unconventional, untraditional and very Kiwi aunty. The course of true love never did run smooth - especially out in the sticks.

The play is written by Ralph McCubbin Howell and will be directed by Dan Bain with Hannah Smith. It runs from 28 March - 25 April 2020. You definitely don't want to miss this very quirky piece of Kiwiana.

Cheryl Colley



MAJOR MILESTONE!

Derek Hargreaves has been involved with The Court since its birth, which brings his run to an incredible forty-seven years from 1971 – 2018.

He shared some of his story with me in his and wife Kirsty's beautiful new home in Innes Rd last week.

It appears Derek has theatre in his blood. His first entree onto the stage was as a third-year student at Christ's College in *The Winslow Boy* under the directorship of Yvette Bromley, with

performances thereafter in all of the school's productions, including *Arms and the Man* in his last year with fellow students Simon Acland and Chris McVeigh. Later, Yvette approached Derek to act in *The Emperor's New Clothes* for The Children's Theatre which immediately sparked my imagination! I wondered which role he took and what costume (or lack of!) had been worn, but he quickly reassured me he was

the 'tailor'. Appearing in the same production was another great Court Theatre pioneer, Bryan Aitken. But working part time, doing papers at University at night and participating in theatre all became too time consuming and Derek's acting career came to an end. He decided if he wanted a place in the theatre, being backstage rather than on-stage was going to be more compatible with his lifestyle.

THE BEGINNINGS

In 1971 Yvette approached Derek and asked him to help her create a professional theatre. From here, The Court Theatre was born on April 21st, 1971. *The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie* was the first performance staged and in 1972 a Trust was formed and Derek was appointed the Secretary. The theatre gradually evolved from here with the appointment of Elric Hooper as Artistic Director, the move to the Arts Centre in 1976 and Stuart Alderton's appointment as Business Manager in 1987. The theatre had taken a great leap forward into the future and Derek felt confident enough to take a step back from the direct operations and continued on solely in the role of Secretary for the Trust Board, a role he carried out for decades, until his retirement at the end of last year. His quiet, thoughtful and perceptive observations through the roller coaster ride of the theatre are to be recorded in the history of The Court that he is currently writing. The artistic and colourful personalities of those around the theatre kept the company, both on and off the stage, full of drama. The story of the extraordinary Elric years, the momentous Philip and Ross years, the earthquake and its ramifications and much, much more will all be recorded.

I was able to persuade Derek to tell us about just one of the dramas...

Derek remembers a controversy in 1982 surrounding Greg McGee's play *Foreskin's Lament*; a highly risqué play that the Artistic Director wanted to programme, but the Chair wanted to ban on grounds of obscenity. It was during the era of Patricia Bartlett and her campaigns of strict censorship. The trustees courageously overruled the Chair in support of the AD and his given role of programming decisions. The play was then most successfully staged in the Theatre Royal as The Court was going through a major refit.

Derek has also been involved in other Arts organisations. He was President of The Canterbury Society of Arts from 1977-1981, taking over from Sir Miles



The Founder of the Court Theatre Yvette Bromley on her 100th birthday with Derek and Chris McVeigh in 2013.

Warren and presiding over the centennial in 1980, and was then a trustee of the Christchurch Arts Festival for eight years. He fondly remembers his early link with The Canterbury Society of Arts.

"Kirsty was the gallery receptionist for the organisation before we were married and I would pick her up after work. Rusty Laidlaw, the secretary manager, would ask me in for a drink which was either gin and water or whisky and water and he (or the gin) soon persuaded me to come on board!"

Derek's family were also involved with The Court. His mother Yvonne was great friends with Yvette and became the very first wardrobe mistress at The Court, followed soon after by Pamela Maling. Kirsty, Derek's wife served on The Supporters' committee, was the usher convenor and worked in costume hire for twelve years.

In retirement Derek's new role now appears to be one of an advisor.

"My friends constantly ask me 'what's on at The Court? Is it any good?'"

We have so much to thank Derek for in his extraordinary role with our Theatre

and we know, even though he's no longer at the coal face, he will always be there as a sage guide and mentor for us.

Derek was honoured with "Associate of the Theatre" in 2002 and was appointed as a Member of NZ Order of Merit for Services to the Arts in 2003.

Annie Bonifant

TIME TRAVEL FOR KIDS!

From the 13th April we'll be whisking you and your little ones away to the long-forgotten past and magical future in brand-new kids play *Time Machine!*

Written by former Court Jester, actor and director Andrew Todd, this fun and futuristic adventure is sure to entertain the kids these school holidays, running from the 13 – 27 April, with all tickets just \$10.

Sender:



The Court Theatre
PO Box 268
Christchurch 8140
New Zealand

KEY DATES

APRIL

7 – *The Early Early Late Show*
13 – *Time Machine* opens
14 – *Fresh Ink* reading #1: *Luncheon*
27 – *Time Machine* closes

MAY

11 – *Hedwig and the Angry Inch* opens
15 – *An Evening with Eilish*
19 – *Fresh Ink* reading #2: *Scholars*
25 – *Backstage Tour*

JUNE

1 – *Hedwig and the Angry Inch* closes
22 – *Les Liaisons Dangereuses* opens
24 – *Boudica* (Court Youth Company) opens
29 – *Boudica* (Court Youth Company) closes

WELCOMES & FAREWELLS

FAREWELLS

Matt McCutcheon (Set Construction)
Rachel Pugh (Box Office & inter-department star)
Samantha McConnell (Marketing & Communications Manager - maternity leave)

WELCOMES

Anne Le Blonde (Set Construction)
Mally Goldberg (Marketing Manager)