



The Play Bureau Newsletter

October 2016

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Christmas:

The year is fast drawing to a close and has gone very quickly with lots of fabulous productions around the country.

We will be closing Play Bureau for the Christmas break on December the 16th. Reopening officially on January 9th, mail will be cleared occasionally and emails checked.

Remember to secure your rights before you advertise or call for auditions. The principal agents often check on your website or facebook page to see if you are following the correct procedure. The power of social media, while great, also exposes many things in the modern world.

Warm Regards Helen

Welcome...

What's New?

HOT OFF THE PRESS!!

❖ **Ground Rules** by Eric Chappell

2M 2 F

When Gerry and Judith, a long married couple, rescue Jo from an assault by her aggressive partner Ashley one night in a pub they trigger off a chain of events that even Judith – a marriage councillor – can't manage. Things quickly spiral out of control, putting both couples' relationships under the microscope and challenging the ground rules each couple thought were clearly established.

❖ **Seasonal Allergies** by Katherine DiSavino

3M 3 F 1 boy or girl


So you have Seasonal Allergies? You might be experiencing the symptoms of them and not even know it. Seasonal Allergies tend to show themselves right around the holidays: do you feel a tickle in the back of your throat when you realize your vegetable dishes cooked faster than you thought, and now they're ready a full hour before the turkey will be out of the oven? Do your eyes water uncontrollably after you've nearly broken your back climbing into the attic to find the Christmas lights (and then discover that only half the strand lights up)? Do you find yourself overheated when family members decide to extend their vacation and "hang out" for a few more days in your home?

Then you, my friend, have got Seasonal Allergies. And you are not alone! 9 out of 10 people have Seasonal Allergies, but nobody has a case worse than Julia Shelby and her brother Peter. So get ready to laugh away your throat tickle, and clear your sinuses with a healthy dose of Holiday Fun.

❖ **Rest** by Samuel D Hunter

4M 3F

A retirement home in northern Idaho is being shut down, and only three residents and a bare-bones staff remain. When a record breaking blizzard blows into town and an elderly resident disappears into the storm, everyone is brought to face their own mortality.



❖ *The Irish Curse* by Martin Casella (recommended)

5M

What "The Irish Curse" is – and how it manifests itself – is the raw centerpiece of this wicked, rollicking and very funny new play. From its blistering language to its brutally honest look at sex and body image, *The Irish Curse* is a revealing portrait of how men, and society, define masculinity. In doing so, it dares to pose the fundamental question that has been on the minds of men since the beginning of time: "Do I measure up to the next guy?" Size matters to a small group of Irish-American men (all professionally successful New Yorkers) who meet every Wednesday night, in a Catholic Church basement, at a self-help group for men with small penises. This alleged Irish trait is the focus of their weekly sessions, as they all feel this "shortcoming" has ruined their lives. One evening, when a twenty-something blue-collar guy joins the group, he challenges everything the other men think about "the Irish Curse" ...tackling their obsession with body image and unmasking the comical and truthful questions of identity, masculinity, sex and relationships that men must face every day in the world.

❖ *Charles Busch's Cleopatra* by Charles Busch

5 M 3 F

The turbulent life of Cleopatra, Queen of the Nile, is told, viewed through the outrageous comic lens of master parodist Charles Busch. Evoking both 1930's Hollywood epics and the grand 19th Century romantic theatre of Sarah Bernhardt, this version of the life of the ill-fated Egyptian Queen takes her from her teenage seduction of the Roman leader Julius Caesar through her volatile tragic romance with Mark Antony and to her ultimate death. Charles Busch's *Cleopatra* has echoes of the many great stars that have played her on stage and on film, such as Claudette Colbert, Elizabeth Taylor, Vivien Leigh and several who thankfully didn't, including Jean Harlow, Barbara Stanwyck and Mae West.

Non-Traditional casting, Cross gender casting, Reduced casting (Doubling Possible), Drag performance, Expandable casting

The original production had a cast of eight actors, with several roles doubled. The play can also be performed with a larger cast each playing only one role. Several roles in the original production used cross gender casting. This is not a necessity. What is important is that each role be played with total conviction. The humour must not derive from the role being played by someone of the opposite sex, but from the lines and situation being comic.

❖ *Perfect Arrangement* by Topher Payne

3M 4 F

It's 1950, and new colors are being added to the Red Scare. Two U.S. State Department employees, Bob and Norma, have been tasked with identifying sexual deviants within their ranks. There's just one problem: Both Bob and Norma are gay, and have married each other's partners as a carefully constructed cover. Inspired by the true story of the earliest stirrings of the American gay rights movement, madcap classic sitcom-style laughs give way to provocative drama as two "All-American" couples are forced to stare down the closet door.

❖ *Who Is Theo?* by David Kimple (recommended for amateur groups)

2 M 2 F 1 either

Amidst the late-night din of St. Patrick's Day in New York City, Donna comes home to find a highly intoxicated man named Theo dressed like a leprechaun in her apartment. Mistaking Theo for her roommate Jamie's sublet, Donna puts him into the empty room only to learn that Jamie is still home. With no explanation of how he got in, Donna and her roommates try to figure out where Theo came from and how to get him out of the apartment. Theo's undeniable charm and seemingly magical habits, however, don't make it easy. After everything from a police chase and zombie apocalypse, we find out who we are, who we could be, and who is Theo?

❖ *A Nice Family Gathering* by Phil Olson

4 M 3 F

A Nice Family Gathering is a story about a man who loved his wife so much, he almost told her. It's Thanksgiving Day and the first family gathering at the Lundeen household since the Patriarch died. At the gathering, Dad comes back as a ghost with a mission; to tell his wife he loved her, something he

neglected to tell her while he was alive. After all, they were only married for 41 years. The problem is, she can't hear or see him. The trouble begins when Mom invites a date for dinner.



New Zealand Plays

❖ **The Supermarket Sisterhood** by Devon Williamson (new and already popular)

2 M 5 F

As if the daily skirmishes with farcical customers and the dim-witted men in their lives, wasn't enough, the women who operate the checkouts at the Discount Co supermarket are now facing a new boss and the prospect of losing their jobs due to newly installed automated checkout aisles. If the women are going to endure these challenges they're going to have to fight together and take things to a whole new level. Hilarious, madcap humour to tickle your funnybone and stir your heart

❖ **Dead Loss** by Richard C Harris (1st in Noosa International Competition and Gold Coast Arts Festival)

4 M 2 F (1 Act)

Trevor Loss, an aging ex rock star, is in trouble with a drugs gang, having purloined from them \$1M Heroin. With the gang after him and police surveillance he must resort to drastic measures to secure his future. Then fate intervenes before his plan comes to fruition, with hilarious results.

❖ **The Fraud** by Neil Troost

1 M 1 F (1 act)

An antique dealer keen to own the find of his career at all cost, or no cost. An elderly woman abandoned by her family and eager for company. A statuette that's been in her family for years. throw them all together and find out who the real fraud is. Mabel: Elderly woman who lives alone and suffers from a mild case of dementia. Angus: An antiques dealer of any age, as long as is at least 10 years younger than Mabel. He is, or at least thinks he is refined and dresses the part.

❖ **Behind the Bins** by June Allen

2 M 4F (1 Act)

A play with 6 characters. There is Lucy who is pregnant, became a street kid and is looked after on the street by Freddo, who has been living this way for some years. Topsy and Mandy are two other girls in their group. Sam is working part time in the restaurant, and comes across them when they are scrounging food from the garbage bins. Melissa is doing work experience as a reporter. She encounters the others in the yard when she steps out to interview Sam about his job. Lucy is belligerent; Freddo is comforting; Sam is straight laced; Melissa finds it difficult to understand when the situation of conflict with parents, and especially for a pregnant teen, arises.

Children's Plays



❖ *The Surprising Story of Three little Pigs* by Linda Dougherty

18 Flexible

Three classic fairy tales (The Three Little Pigs, The Three Billy Goats Gruff, and Goldilocks and the Three Bears) begin in their usual 'Once upon a time' fashion; however this time things change on the way to 'happily ever after' as the pigs wonder what life would be like if the wolf were not always at their door, the billy goats gruff can't face another trip-trap over the troll's bridge, and Papa Bear has had enough of the meddlesome little girl Goldilocks! Assisted by the Voice (struggling to narrate the changing stories) and three stagehands (desperately trying to juggle sets to keep the stories straight), the three trios join forces to rewrite their stories, ridding themselves of their respective villains by exchanging them. In the process, the family audience is inspired to conquer their fears by taking control of their own lives.

❖ *Thumbelina* by Vera Morris

20

Once there was a girl not taller than a thumb, so she was called Thumbelina. This wonderfully imaginative production takes us into Thumbelina's world, fraught with dangers for one so small. A water rat named Walter and an unpleasant family of toads are both determined to capture her. Plus, a grumpy old mole thinks she'll make a fine companion in his gloomy house. Only Thumbelina can find Prince, the boy who promised to take her to the Land of the Little People, where she'll be safe. This charming play is amazingly simple to produce and full of marvellous characters. Your audience will be enchanted by THUMBELINA. Good things truly do come in small packages!

❖ *Little Scrooge* by Patricia Barry Rumble

5 - 11

Little Scrooge is an extremely creative, kid-friendly adaptation of the Charles Dickens' classic A Christmas Carol. When an adolescent boy, Eben Scrooge, strikes it rich and makes a million dollars by inventing a popular phone app called Where's Fluffy?, which can help a person find a lost pet, he loses sight of what really matters in life. Eben's own life is taken over by greed. Worse, he actually stole the idea from his best friend, Bobbie Cratchitt, who now works for Eben, trying to raise money to buy the medicine that will help heal her little brother Tiny Tim's crippled legs. The show is loaded with lots of Christmas songs, sung a cappella, that will put smiles on the faces of everyone in the audience and enchant them. There is even a talking mirror to jolt Eben into seeing the reflection of the way his life will be if he doesn't change. The Ghost of Christmas Past (a surfer dude), the Ghost of Christmas Present (a beautiful spirit with an attitude) and the Ghost of Christmas Future (an eerie figure in white) help Eben to discover the true meaning of Christmas. Suitable for touring and kids of all ages, Little Scrooge is guaranteed to delight the entire family. It's the perfect holiday outing.

Filling Your Theatre – Useful tips others use.

My background in theatre has predominately been with musical theatre and I currently am on the MTNZ executive looking after Otago and Southland in the bowels of the country. As part of our strategic planning we have introduced knowledge cafe to our meetings where we can share ideas and find out what our members want from us. I thought I would share some of the suggestions with you that others have found helpful when promoting their shows.

- Sell opening night as a fund raiser – many other groups are looking for ways to fundraise, offer them a night at a slightly reduced rate with a guaranteed audience number. They put on what there margin over and above. Works well with cancer plays – Hospice, sports plays for sports groups. Parenting plays for Kindergarten Schools. A good comedy is recommended as often you get new audience members and you want them to come back
- Matinee at senior rates and invite the retirement villages and rest homes as they love an afternoon out. Or keep at the same rate and include afternoon tea.
- Look at all the free and low budget options to advertise – Facebook needs a dedicated switched on person to update details frequently as the show is rehearsing. It makes people think they do not want to miss out. Some well written articles or snippets add to the intrigue.
- Handouts at the local supermarket or event. Dress from the play if appropriate and interesting, as people tend to take flyers from people who look like they are having fun.
- One person to approach groups to come as a social night out well in advance and then contact them again 6 weeks later. Often the personal touch gets results.
- Advertise your next show on the back of your programme, ensuring you have the rights first.
- Mid week schools night – offer it to local drama teachers and make an education night out of it. Offer to meet the cast afterwards, walk the set, talk to the techies. Also works well for a student special rate on a week night especially uni students.
- Use your cast to advertise especially through facebook – following your guidelines. They just need to be really positive about the process they are experiencing.
- Use local business to sponsor a performer
- Email to previous ticket buyers
- Be a Guest speaker at Rotary or other groups
- Early Bird special – use occasions like Mothers Day and provide a package with ticket ie chocolates, programme and a drink if you have those facilities
- Seasons tickets – discounts for 2 shows
- RD flyers with the rural post
- Find different angles to promote and be prepared to try new things
- Window displays with local business – in exchange for free tickets to opening night

You maybe have tried all these things, but if not it could be worth a try as others have found some of these things have helped them to fill the theatre and make their show an artistic and financial success.

What's on around the Country

<i>Play</i>	<i>Author</i>	<i>Group</i>	<i>Dates</i>
Waiting In The Wings	Noel Coward	Ellerslie Theatrical Soc	Nov 03 - Nov 12
Bombshells	Joanna Murray-Smith	Hawera Repertory Society	Nov 05 - Nov 12
Moonlight And Magnolias	Ron Hutchinson	New Plymouth Repertory	Nov 08 - Nov 19
Death By Fatal Murder	Peter Gordon	Mana Little Theatre	Nov 09 - Nov 19
Waiting In The Wings	Noel Coward	Tauranga Repertory Society	Nov 11 - Nov 12

Charlie And The Chocolate Factory	Roald Dahl	Taieri Dramatic Society Inc	Nov 11 - Nov 18
Oliver Twist	Jeremy Brock	Dolphin Theatre Inc	Nov 11 - Dec 03
The Ladykillers	Graham Lineham	Howick Little Theatre	Nov 12 - Dec 03
One Man, Two Guvnors	Richard Bean	Company Theatre	Nov 12 - Nov 26
Noises Off	Michael Frayn	Canterbury Repertory Soc	Nov 16 - Dec 03
Nana's Naughty Knickers	Katherine Disavino	Detour Theatre Company	Nov 16 - Dec 03
Vernon God Little	DBC Pierre	The Actors Programme	Nov 17 - Nov 27
Aladdin	Norman Robbins	Onewhero Society of Performing Arts	Nov 17 - Nov 20
Dad's Christmas Miracle	Pat Cook	Foxton Little Theatre Soc Inc	Nov 17 - Nov 26
On the Shore of the Wide World	Simon Stephens	Hutt Repertory Theatre	Nov 23 - Dec 03
Same Time, Next Year	Bernard Slade	Greytown Little Theatre	Nov 23 - Dec 03
The Shakespeare Revue	Christopher Luscombe	Three Men At Lunch	Nov 23 - Dec 17
The Fox On The Fairway	Ken Ludwig	Marlborough Repertory Soc Inc	Nov 23 - Dec 03
One Man, Two Guvnors	Richard Bean	Tauranga Repertory Society	Nov 23 - Dec 10
You Have The Right To Remain Dead	Pat Cook	Theatre Hawkes Bay	Nov 24 - Dec 03
The Fox On The Fairway	Ken Ludwig	Marion Players Inc	Nov 24 - Dec 03
Nana's Naughty Knickers	Katherine Disavino	Waiheke Theatre Company	Nov 24 - Dec 10
Silly Cow	Ben Elton	Manawatu Theatre Society	Nov 25 - Dec 10
Last Panto In Little Grimley	David Tristram	Clyde Theatre Group	Nov 25 - Nov 27
Key For Two	John Chapman	Wanganui AMDRAM Musical Society	Dec 08 - Dec 17
Lysistrata	Douglass Parker	The Court Theatre	Dec 08 - Dec 10
Little Scrooge	Patricia Barry Rumble	Opunake Players	Dec 14 - Dec 18
Christmas Shorts	Matt Hoverman	Coromandel Players	Dec 15 - Dec 17