

Matamata Dramatic Society Inc.

ON-STAGE NEWSLETTER

March 2021

President's Ponderings

A belated Happy New Year to you all. I hope you had an enjoyable holiday and are all settling well into a year with much to look forward to. Despite the heat, I love summer and all the outdoor opportunities it brings.

Our society is off to a great start for 2021. Wanda has a talented cast for 'The Pink Hammer' and rehearsals are underway. Friday Flicks and the monthly theatrical gymnastics with the Improvables have already begun, thanks to the ongoing enthusiasm of Korstiaan, Robin, Colin, Janine and Julie.

Our theatre roof has been repaired, so no more drips in the auditorium (except possibly on stage!) We have a new heat pump in the foyer and new vinyl has been laid in the kitchen.

All we hope for now is that the ever-present threat of lockdown will not become a reality as it did last year. We are coping with level 2 so let's hope that can be lifted this week. Here's hoping for a great year ahead. I look forward to seeing committee members at the meeting on Monday and a good turn-out of members at next month's AGM.

Regards, Ron

NEWS FLASH! HOORAY! We are back to level 1! However, keep COVID tracing and washing those hands everyone!

COMING PRODUCTION

By Michele Amas

Rehearsals for this intriguingly human play are going really well. The main set is coming together and once that is done it will just need painting.

Then the exciting task of creating the décor for a bloke's shed will take place.



A really special treat for those guys (and girls) who have or would like to have a Bloke's/Blokess's shed!

Just to remind MDS members of who the cast members are: –

Eileen Weal is Louise

Liz Atherton is Helen

Issy Atton is Siobhan

Julie Taylor is Annabel

And newcomer to MDS Alan Williscroft is the hapless out of work chippie, Woody! Alan also happens to be a builder by trade which is fortuitous.

Looking for empowerment and sisterhood, Amanda, Helen, Louise and Siobhan, turn up to **The Pink Hammer** – a women's only woodworking course. But when Maggie the instructor disappears they find themselves left with a disgruntled Kiwi bloke, Woody, who is not at all willing to let them play with his tools. However, in the end he is cajoled into taking the course and as the play unfolds the characters reveal their all-too-human stories.

The production team is coming together with Greg Dunn as the consummate Assistant Director. Anthony van de Berg as the all-important Stage Manager. Korstiaan Prins, as always, is our magical Lighting and Sound man. Korstiaan is also working on set construction with Maestro Murray Weal who

we are delighted to welcome back in charge of the set construction. 'Woody' is also part of the set construction team so will really get to feel at home in 'his' Blokes Shed.

Heather Bond is the rehearsal prompt and Heather Wallace-Wells is in charge of wardrobe and is our wonderful tea lady at rehearsals. These two ladies make an awesome team!

We welcome back Julie Payze to the society as our main props person however, Julie does need an assistant so please think about taking this role on.

Taking on the artistic role of the painting of the backdrops will be newcomer Lorraine Vickers. Lorraine was to have painted the backdrops for 'Gasping' last year however, due to an accident wasn't able to, but she is really keen to work on this production.

So, thank you to everyone who has joined the production team as, of course, we can't put a play on without them.

STAGE MANAGER
**OF COURSE I TALK
TO MYSELF.
SOMETIMES, I NEED
EXPERT ADVICE.**

If you are thinking about becoming part of a production crew the following will help you learn about the parts members of a production Staff/Team play?

Assistant Director - Keeps rehearsal process organised and helps run the rehearsals, giving feedback and taking a rehearsal if the director is away. This is an excellent learning experience for those wanting to direct and gain vital experience. Greg had a taste of directing in the 'Short & Sweet' Festival, so he really is a great asset for this production.

Stage Manager - Is the liaison between the director and the technical staff and is in complete charge of the play during performances. They check that the cast and crew sign-in and know

where props are, remind them of cues and handle any emergencies.

Lighting & Sound Person – works with the director to plan the lighting plot and provide the sound effects and any music needed for the production. Korstiaan is at every rehearsal and adds his experience to the production in numerous ways.

Set Construction Person – Works with the director and other production personnel to discuss and design the set and supervise the construction. As Cambridge Gaslight Theatre did this play last year we are talking to them about set and props that we may be able to hire.

Rehearsal Prompt - Feeds lines to the actors during off-book rehearsals and corrects incorrect blocking. Some amateur theatres use a prompt during the production but over the past few years MDS has not.

Wardrobe Mistress/Dresser - Costumes for this production are modern day and not too much of a challenge as the actors themselves are sourcing their outfits. There aren't too many changes/ quick changes as there are not lots of scene changes which happens when an actor has written the play and who know the stress that quick changes, be it costumes, or scenes can cause!

Props Person – Goes over the props list with the director, production team and cast and then organises who can get what and also sources props themselves. Some props are personal others are general, but all have to be kept in a particular place, so the actors and props people know where and when they are needed during the production.

GETTING TO KNOW YOU . . .

As we have a couple of new members in the Pink Hammer, I thought it would be great to learn a bit about them, so I asked them for a brief bio.

Introducing Issy Atton



Much like Siobhan I've been calling New Zealand home for a few years now - although I am originally Australian (don't hold it against me!).

I had hoped to work in conservation here in New Zealand but have been enjoying my time in tourism instead - which is what brought me to Matamata.

I have always loved theatre and studied drama and performance during my final school years, a favourite subject of mine. I chose to study science instead of theatre at University, so have instead been engaging with my passion by getting involved with community theatre.

I got my first role outside of a school performance when I was 15, and continued from there. My part in the Short and Sweet festival last year as Violet the air hostess was my first in about two years, and I've since caught the theatre bug again!

NOT TO BE MISSED! Te Aroha Dramatic Society's Coming Production

Of course, this is proving a popular play to see so don't leave it too long before you book your tickets!

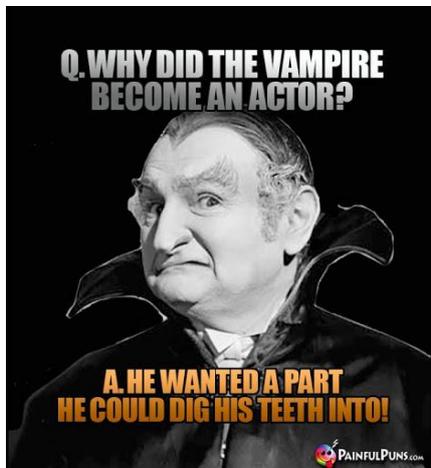
Techie Talks #8
In is down, down is front
Out is up, up is back
Off is out, on is in,
And of course,
Right is left, left is right.
A running crew rarely gets anywhere.
A trap will not catch anything.
Strike is work. (In fact, lots of work)
And a green room, thank God, usually isn't.
Now that you're fully versed in theatrical terms,
Break a leg-but not really!

FRIDAY FLICKS



(Photo courtesy of Carmen)

'Paddington' was a delightful movie, and these two young patrons were joined by Big Ted who was given a special treat by his mummy and daddy, Gabrielle and Colin Kemplen, to see the movie of his old friend Paddington.



**THE NEXT FRIDAY FLICKS IS THIS
FRIDAY 20TH FEBRUARY 2021.
SEE YOU THERE!**



**A day without laughter is a day
wasted!**

'THE COUNTRY DOCTOR' – 'Irreplaceable'
This gentle, good-humoured French film about a doctor (François Cluzet) facing illness himself and reluctantly inducting a younger city doctor (Marianne Denicourt) into his country practice has been a great hit in France. Upholding the humane values embodied by the old-style GP, it has clearly touched a vein of nostalgia which may run just as deep in New Zealand. Co-writer and director Thomas Lilti is himself a qualified medical practitioner, and not one given to sentimentality.



**A BIT MORE
ABOUT
THIS EXCITING
MYSTERY
THRILLER**
by Norman
Robbins

Which is to be our end of year production under the direction of Glen Rosewell.

A case of mistaken identity leads to tragedy in this engaging mystery thriller. In a snowbound guest house in the Peak District, Marjory Pike is wrongly identified by another guest as the author of a book declaiming certain mediums, one of whom had committed suicide as a result.

The son of the deceased medium is staying at the guest house, so when he arrives in the lounge bloodied and bruised, and Marjory is found dead, the finger of suspicion naturally points at him.

But the guest house may be haunted, other guests have their own secrets, and even the proprietors are not above suspicion ... In true Norman Robbins fashion, the deepening mystery is rich with shocks and laughs as the play moves to its unexpected close.

CAST – 5 women and 3 men

WHY IS THEATRE IMPORTANT?

Two things made me think about this question. One was whilst watching a documentary on the Greeks the other day and of course Greece was the birthplace of theatre as we know it today.

The other was a comment that Bob Blackwell made at a committee meeting last year. He said that during times of challenge such as war or a pandemic, theatre could take people out of themselves and entertain them in so many different ways.

As the immortal Bard wrote,
'All the world's a stage, and all the men and women merely players; They have their exits and their entrances, and one man in his time plays many parts.'

Theatre allows and promotes us to give power to truth, to take risks be they personal or as a group.

Being part of **Julie's Improv-ables** is allowing members to do things they probably wouldn't otherwise do, to be more open and expressive. And Colin Kemplen tells me he had loads of fun expressing himself in some challenging improv situations on Monday night! His first time at the

Improv-ables, he tells me. However, Colin is not new to Improv as when chatting the other day, we recalled that some years ago a team from the MDS tested their talents against a combined Tokoroa/Putaruru team in Putaruru and although they didn't win they did a fine job of improvising!

Theatre also offers opportunities to advocate for new and diverse voices. Most importantly in these somewhat challenging times of COVID, theatre reminds us that we are not alone.

For our audiences and those involved in a production we realise that we are not only sharing space and an experience, but we are also sharing the experience with each other. Be that as performers, production crew or as audience.

We are the story tellers, the creative artists and entertainers or the spell-bound, laugh-out-loud audience. *(Some more loudly than others!)* In the process we discover who we really are, grow and learn as we lose ourselves in the amazing world which theatre can open up for us.

Having started directing 'The Pink Hammer' I have realised, yet again, how much theatre means to me and how much I enjoy working with my fellow thespians as the play unfolds and comes to life. So yes, theatre is important not only to me but to all involved and to our supportive audiences who turn out for each production.

However, enough said and as Shakespeare so succinctly put it *'Brevity is the soul of wit'* and I have waffled on too long!



Yours Theatrically

Wanda

