



ON-STAGE NEWSLETTER

January 2022

HAPPY NEW YEAR EVERYONE!



President's Message

2022, it has a nice ring to it, doesn't it?. On behalf of the MDS committee I wish you a fun and prosperous New Year.

We have already lots of activities planned for the next 11 months and we look forward to seeing you all at one or more of those activities. First one up, is the film festival of short films as advertised last year. (18th February 2022). The ice creams have been ordered and we will stock the bar with your favourite beverage.

I had my birthday earlier this month and it reminded me that we have no one on our list in the succession planning to take on the important role of lighting and sound for our theatre. If you think this would suit you or someone you know, get in touch. Just like the Treasurer's role it is fun and you can be creative at the same time.

Till next time, keep smiling. *Korstiaan*



'Any Port in a Pandemic'

a side-splitting comedy by our resident playwright Maestro Richard Prevett which is to be directed by the indomitable Hilton Woodroffe.

This two-act play is set in the early days of our Covid lockdown. It tells the tale of an expatriate New Zealander who just happens to be a multi-millionaire. Wishing to escape high-risk London he returns to New Zealand and sets himself up in Auckland. He is accompanied by his young and attractive personal assistant, played by Theresa Hopson and his English financial advisor played by the dashing Daniel Addlington.

Our protagonist, played by Greg Dunn (*who played the part of Sir Chiffley Lockheart in*

'Gasping' with sophisticated perfection) is looking forward to running his empire and seizing opportunities to make even more money. (*My goodness, the character could have been based on Sir Chiffley!*) However, unexpected and unwanted guests (*who just happen to be our multi-millionaire's 3 ex-wives*) present considerable challenges to achieving his expectations.

And who better to take the roles of these ex-wives than the talented trio of Yvonne Marshall, Liz Atherton, and Julie Taylor.

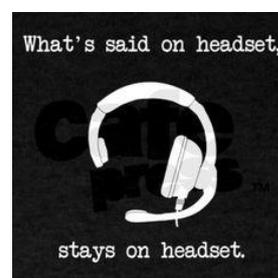
With production dates of April 23 – 30 this play will be something to really look forward to this year after all the lockdowns and so on. Watch this space for further details.

NB: Vaccine passports will be required for entry by all.

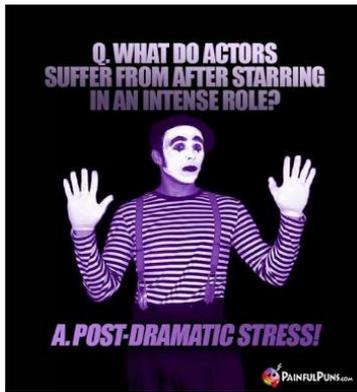


Sound advice for actors in Modern Day Westerns!

And Advice from our Sound Man



Whilst this was heard in the wings!



The Improv-ables Do it Again!

Despite the short notice, both the pre-Christmas one-night shows were well attended and once again much appreciated by audiences. Especially so, as the theatre had to cancel the end of year production and our monthly Friday Flicks.

Congratulations go to the enthusiastic members of this lively group led by Julie Taylor.



With our esteemed treasurer, Colin Kemplen, retiring at the AGM next year, we are looking for someone to take on this illustrious role. You do not need a PHD in applied mathematics or a doctorate in business studies, just the ability to count the cash, learn the codes and record the transactions so our accountants can do the really important stuff!

Colin says it's a really fun position!

So, if you would be interested in taking on this important role, please contact Colin

Phone: 07 888 412 or 027 447 8347



FRIDAY FLICKS

Starting up again on the February 18th all being well COVID-wise that is.



Colin Kemplen informs me that he has managed to get the Festival of Short Films to show that we had to cancel last year, which is great news. So, we look forward to seeing our faithful patrons back in February.

NB: Vaccine passports will need to be shown of course.



Like the Flu, COVID-19 is only one of many such pandemics the world has known across the centuries. In Shakespeare's day for example it was the dreaded plague.

What Shakespeare Actually Wrote About the Plague *By Stephen Greenblatt from the New York Times (adapted)*

Shakespeare lived his entire life in the shadow of bubonic plague. On April 26, 1564, in the parish register of Holy Trinity Church, in Stratford-upon-Avon, the vicar, John Bretchgirdle, recorded the baptism of one "*Gulielmus filius Johannes Shaksper.*" A few months later, in the same register, the vicar noted the death of Oliver Gunne, an apprentice weaver, and in the margins next to that entry scribbled the words "*hic incipit pestis*" (here begins the plague). On that occasion, the epidemic took the lives of around a fifth of the town's population. By good fortune, it spared the life of the infant William Shakespeare and his family.



Such outbreaks did not rage on forever. With the help of strict quarantines and a change in the weather, the epidemic would slowly wane, as it did in Stratford, and life would resume its normal course.

But, after an interval of a few years, in cities and towns throughout the realm, the plague would return. It generally appeared on the scene with little or no warning, and it was terrifyingly contagious. Victims would awaken with fever and chills.

A feeling of extreme weakness or exhaustion would give way to diarrhoea, vomiting, bleeding from the mouth, nose, or rectum, and tell-tale buboes, or swollen lymph nodes, in the groin or armpit. Death, often in great agony, would almost inevitably follow.



Innumerable preventive measures were proposed, most of which were useless—or, in the case of the killing of dogs and cats, worse than useless, since the disease was in fact spread by rat-borne fleas. The smoke of dried rosemary, frankincense, or

bay leaves burning in a chafing dish was thought to help clear the air of infection, and, if those ingredients were not readily available, physicians recommended burning old shoes.

In the streets, people walked about sniffing oranges stuffed with cloves. Pressed firmly enough against the nose, perhaps these functioned as a kind of mask.

It was early recognized that the rate of infection was far higher in densely populated cities than in the country (sound familiar?) Consequently, those with the means to do so escaped to rural retreats, though they often brought infection with them. Civic officials, realizing that crowds heightened contagion, took measures to institute what we now call social distancing.

Collecting data from parish registers, they carefully tracked weekly plague-related deaths. When those deaths surpassed thirty, they banned assemblies, feasts, archery contests, and other forms of mass gathering. Since it was believed that it was impossible to become infected during the act of worship, church services were not included in the ban, though the infected were not permitted to attend. But the public theatres in London, which routinely brought together two or

three thousand people in an enclosed space, were ordered shut.

Theatres today worry about decreasing finances and actors are out of work as the theatres are closed. Shakespeare, as a shareholder and sometime actor in his playing company, as well as its principal playwright, had to grapple throughout his career with these repeated, economically devastating closings. There were particularly severe outbreaks of plague in 1582, 1592-93, 1603-04, 1606, and 1608-09. Theatre historian J. Leeds Barroll III, who carefully sifted through the surviving records, concluded that in the years between 1606 and 1610—the period in which Shakespeare wrote and produced some of his greatest plays, the London playhouses were not likely to have been open for more than a total of nine months.

It is all the more striking, then, that in his plays and poems Shakespeare almost never directly represents the plague. In Shakespeare, epidemic disease is present for the most part as a steady, low-level undertone, surfacing in his characters' speeches most vividly in metaphorical expressions of rage and disgust. Mortally wounded in the feud between the Capulets and the Montagues, Mercutio calls down "*A plague on both your houses.*" Coriolanus spits at the plebeians: "*You herd of—Boils and plagues Plaster you o'er, that you may be abhorred Farther than seen, and one infect another Against the wind a mile!*"

So, like Shakespeare we have had theatres in lockdown due to this virus however, all being well this year we will be back on stage once again.



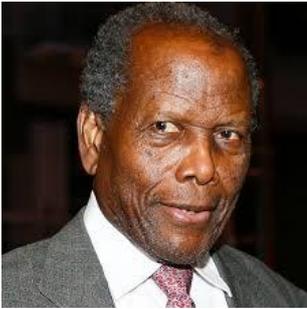
The Lady & the Tramp

Helen Elizabeth Clark ONZ SSI PC, and our Past Prime Minister, is of course the sister of our lovely, talented member Sandra Clark. Being a keen National Radio fan, I have been really enjoying Helen's

recent documentary series on National Radio about her experiences on the Great NZ Walks, some with Sandra, I believe.



Sydney Poitier - 20 Feb 1927 – 6 Jan 2022



I am sure many of us would have heard about the death of this much-loved Black American actor who was also a film director, activist, and ambassador.

In 1964, he won the Academy Award for Best Actor, becoming the first African American and Bahamian actor to win the award. From 1997 to 2007, he was also the Bahamian Ambassador to Japan.

He grew up in the Bahamas, but moved to Miami at age 15, and to New York City when he was 16. He joined the American Negro Theatre, landing his breakthrough film role as a high school student in the film *Blackboard Jungle* (1955).

In 1958, Poitier starred with Tony Curtis as chained-together escaped convicts in *The Defiant Ones*, which received nine Academy Award nominations. Both actors received a nomination for Best Actor, with Poitier's being the first for a Black actor, as well as a nomination for a BAFTA, which Poitier won. In 1964, he won the Academy Award and the Golden Globe Award for Best Actor for *Lilies of the Field* (1963).

Poitier also received acclaim for *Porgy and Bess* (1959), *A Raisin in the Sun* (1961), and *A Patch of Blue* (1965). He continued to break ground in three successful 1967 films which dealt with issues of race and race relations: *To Sir, with Love*; *Guess Who's Coming to Dinner*, and *In the Heat of the Night*.

He was the top box-office star of the year in 1968. Beginning in the 1970s, Poitier also directed various comedy films, including *Stir Crazy* (1980), starring Richard Pryor and Gene Wilder, among other films. After nearly a decade away from acting, he returned to television and film starring in *Shoot to Kill* (1988) and *Sneakers* (1992).

Poitier was granted a knighthood by Queen Elizabeth II in 1974. In 1995, Poitier received the Kennedy Centre Honour. In 2009, Poitier was awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom, the United States' highest civilian honour.

In 2016, he was awarded the BAFTA Fellowship for outstanding lifetime achievement in film.

In 1999, Poitier was ranked 22nd among the male actors on the "100 Years...100 Stars" list by the American Film Institute. Poitier was chosen to receive an Academy Honorary Award, in recognition of his "remarkable accomplishments as an artist and as a human being."

Coming On-Stage Around the District

Riverlea Theatre Hamilton MAMA MIA!

February 4 – 19

Directed by John Drummond



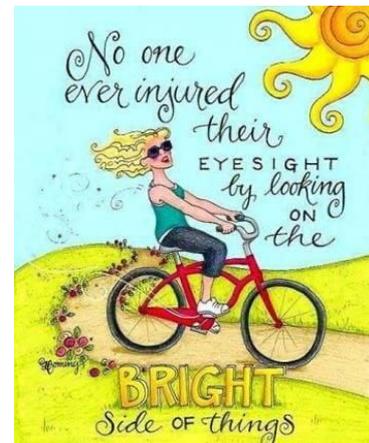
Te Aroha Little Theatre
Like our society, TADS had to postpone their production of this hilarious comedy-thriller. However, new production dates have been set! The new show dates are now set for:

Thurs 10 March – Sat 12 at 7.30pm
Sunday 13 March - either 2pm OR 4pm
matinee - time yet to be confirmed
Weds 16 March – Sat 19 - 7.30pm

Tickets will go on sale from 24th February.
Vaccination passports are required for entry.

Cambridge Gaslight Theatre
Conjugal Rites – 30 April – 14 May
Directed by Andrea Goodman

BAYCOURT Tauranga - LES MISÉRABLES
February 4 - 19



IF YOU HAVEN'T PAID YOUR SUBS OR WOULD LIKE TO JOIN US THEN MEMBERSHIP DETAILS ARE ON THE WEBSITE www.mds.org

Yours Theatrically
Wanda

