

President's Report 2025

2025 was a busy and bustling year for Matamata Dramatic Society.

We kicked off the year with our regular Friday Flicks screenings. We were treated to a wide variety of films in 2025, from art house movies to a popular musical. While audience numbers vary, we all agree that Friday Flicks provides a valuable service to our local community and look forward to continuing these monthly screenings in 2026. Putting on these films is, of course, a team effort, however I would particularly like to thank Bob Blackwell, who headed our Friday Flicks sub-committee with aplomb, and projectionists Korstiaan Prins and Anthony van den Berg.

Our theatre was transformed into a cinema on two further occasions in 2025, with two successful screenings of local film "The Tavern". Written and produced by Matt Hicks, this Cambridge-based comedy was well attended and created a successful fundraising opportunity for the theatre.

The Improv-ables performance troupe continued to grace our stage, with an initial show at the beginning of April followed by three other performances during the year. The troupe enjoy regular games practice sessions and are always open to new members coming along to take part in some improvised mayhem. I enjoy coordinating (or should I say corralling) this inventive group of thespians. My thanks to all our members, both on and off stage, for their enthusiastic support.

We were fortunate to have Mark Wright perform his show "Voices from Gallipoli" on the 11th of April. This one man show, written and acted by Mark, was an outstanding piece of theatre. He played a multitude of convincing characters that explored the many attitudes and experiences of those involved in the Gallipoli campaign. His performance was both moving and thought-provoking, taking the audience on a nuanced journey that was entertaining, shocking at times, and emotionally challenging.

A second visiting production was staged later in the year, on Friday 10th October. "Waiting for Gertie!", directed by Jeff Kingsford-Brown, and starring Helen Moulder, was billed as an evening of Music, Mayhem and Madness. Helen Moulder did not disappoint with her portrayal of the irrepressible Cynthia Fortitude. We were treated to a rollicking good show, that encouraged hilarious audience participation and engendered much laughter. Definitely a fun night out!

"Kindly Leave the Stage" by John Chapman was our first major production of 2025. Directed by Anthony van den Berg & Chris Stead, this play within a play created a sense of rising tension, as the line between the play and the actors' personal lives became increasingly blurred. We were fortunate to have two directors on board, as Chris Stead unexpectedly had to step into the role of actor as well as director. This play had everything – dysfunctional relationships, deceptions, plot twists and an alcoholic actor who didn't

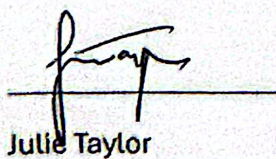
even know what scene he was supposed to be playing. The play was hugely entertaining, with a number of unpredictable surprises that kept the audience intrigued until the final curtain. Congratulations to everyone involved in this popular and critically acclaimed production.

Matamata Dramatic Society held its biennial ten minute play competition in 2025, with entries closing at the end of January. The six winning plays formed the basis of our mid-year "Short & Sweet" production, which was performed over five nights from the 18th to the 22nd of June. This festival celebrates local creativity and encourages participation from a wide range of members. It is always wonderful to see new writers, actors and directors taking part. As always, the public support for our "Short & Sweet" season was incredibly positive. Many thanks to the enormous team of volunteers who helped shape the six different plays into a seamless performance – it takes a great deal of patience and support to get these mini dramas on to the stage. Special congratulations to Ron van de Molen who penned the winning play, "Confession".

Our final large scale production of the year was "The Book Club" by Roger Hall, performed from the 13th to the 20th of September. Directed by Sandra Clark, and starring Yvonne Marshall, this sparkling comedy-drama took Matamata by storm. In a riveting performance, Yvonne created the character of Deb, a housewife who included us in her personal journey of self-discovery. The unexpected twists and turns of the plot were deftly portrayed, as we explored the roller coaster ride of Deb's inner turmoil. The set was stunning, and the technical changes supported the main action in superb style. Congratulations to the team who created this unforgettable night of theatre, particularly Sandra Clark, Yvonne Marshall, Eileen Weal and Murray Weal.

The theatre is fortunate to have a such a dedicated and hard-working committee. I am thrilled that our vacant Treasurer's position was filled. Many thanks to Megan Jeffcoat, for being prepared to take over the reins, and Korstiaan Prins who has continued to offer training, support and advice.

In 2025, Matamata Dramatic Society continued to produce a vibrant and varied programme for the local community. None of this could be achieved without the incredible volunteers who selflessly devote so much time and energy to our projects. Many thanks to everyone who has helped create theatre magic in 2025.



Julie Taylor