



THE LION
FOUNDATION
season of

Romeo & Juliet

by William Shakespeare

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Welcome to The Lion Foundation Season of ROMEO & JULIET – the fifth play in our 2010 CLASH season. For many years now Auckland Theatre Company’s Youth and Education programme has benefited from the support and encouragement of The Lion Foundation. Thanks to that solid support our rehearsal rooms have been pumping lately with energy, ideas and enthusiasm as this new production of Shakespeare’s tragedy of fateful young love as rehearsed concurrently with our Young and Hungry Festival of New Plays. It is exciting to see new plays barely a month old sharing themes and concerns with a Shakespeare classic that has endured for four centuries!

For an old dog like me it is thrilling, invigorating and downright necessary to see the fresh approaches and new energies these young theatre makers bring to their work.

Shakespeare tests actors’ mettle; the physical, emotional, intellectual demands, plus the technical requirements of the verse are unparalleled and it’s been a privilege to gather together a cast that teams up some of our finest classical actors with brilliantly talented younger actors, some of whom are grappling with the demands of Shakespeare for the first time in a professional production.

It is also a great pleasure to be showcasing Willem Wassenaar’s work in this, his first major Auckland production. Willem brings to this ROMEO & JULIET his European sensibility; the knowledge gained from his director training at Toi Whakaari: NZ Drama School, his own individual methodology for approaching the text and his huge, wild, passionate enthusiasm for making good theatre. I applaud him for that. My huge thanks to him, dramaturg Lori Leigh and his design team Andrew Foster

(set), Nic Smillie (costume), Nathan McKendry (lighting) and Thomas Press (sound).

With a talented team like this, the future of New Zealand theatre is in good hands.

Enjoy!

Colin McColl

HELPING GOOD CAUSES ACROSS THE COUNTRY



The Lion Foundation is committed to supporting the arts, an important part of New Zealand's cultural identity. To that end, we're delighted to help fund Auckland Theatre Company and particularly pleased to support the work they do with young people.

Over 2,500 secondary school students are booked in to see ROMEO & JULIET. The funding Auckland Theatre Company receives from The Lion Foundation enables them to subsidise tickets for these students, giving them a chance to see what will undoubtedly be a very fine adaptation of one the Bard's finest works.

Raising funds for community causes is at the heart of The Lion Foundation. This funding assists many groups nationwide to make a real and lasting difference in their communities.

As a charitable trust, we return millions of dollars annually to a wide range of arts, cultural, sporting, educational and health focused causes – both large and small.

We are proud to work locally across the country to help make a difference to hundreds of thousands of New Zealanders every year. To learn more about The Lion Foundation or our community grants please visit www.lionfoundation.org.nz or call freephone 0800 802 908.

Phil Holden
CEO – The Lion Foundation

The Lion Foundation season of

Romeo & Juliet

by William Shakespeare

CAST

Romeo Montague – **Michael Whalley** Juliet Capulet – **Brooke Williams**
Lord Montague – **Peter Daube** Lady Montague – **Catherine Downes MNZM**
Lord Capulet – **Stuart Devenie** Lady Capulet – **Elena Stejko**
Nurse – **Geraldine Brophy** Friar Laurence – **Gareth Reeves**
Benvolio – **Dan Musgrove** Tybalt – **Benjamin Farry**
Mercutio – **Kip Chapman** County Paris – **Sam Bunkall**

With students Paul Fagamalo, Mario Faumui from Pacific Institute of Performing Arts (PIPA)
& Ciarin Smith from UNITEC School of Performing and Screen Arts

CREATIVE

Direction – **Willem Wassenaar** Set Design – **Andrew Foster** Costume Design – **Nic Smillie**
Lighting Design – **Nathan McKendry** Sound Design & Additional Music Composition – **Thomas Press**
Dramaturgy – **Lori Leigh*** Fight Choreography – **Benjamin Farry**

*Lori Leigh has been assisted with a creative sponsorship from Victoria University of Wellington.

PRODUCTION

Production Manager – **Mark Gosling** Technical Manager – **Bonnie Burrill**
Senior Stage Manager – **Fern Christie** Assistant Stage Manager – **Gabrielle Rhodes**
Technical Operator – **Rob Larsen** Wardrobe Technician – **Emma Turnbull**
Costume Intern – **Emily Blanche** Properties Master – **Bec Ehlers** Set Construction – **2 Construct**
Rehearsal Photography – **Amber McWilliams & Sacha Stejko**

AUCKLAND THEATRE COMPANY WOULD LIKE TO THANK THE FOLLOWING FOR THEIR HELP WITH THIS
PRODUCTION: School of English, Film, Theatre, and Media Studies Victoria University of Wellington;
Shakespeare Globe Centre New Zealand; UNITEC School of Performing and Screen Arts;
Pacific Institute of Performing Arts (PIPA)

THE LION FOUNDATION SEASON OF ROMEO & JULIET is the fifth Auckland Theatre Company production for 2010 and opened on July 22nd.
THE LION FOUNDATION SEASON OF ROMEO & JULIET is approximately 125 minutes long with an interval.
Please remember to switch off all mobile phones, pagers and watch alarms.

DIRECTOR'S NOTES



*My bounty is as
boundless as the sea,*

*My love as deep;
the more I give to thee,*

*The more I have, for both
are infinite*

—Juliet

When I started to engage with ROMEO & JULIET as a director, I thought Shakespeare's classic should be about more than just 'love'. Having so many associations and experiences directly and indirectly related to ROMEO & JULIET, I felt that a production needed to capture more than what I regarded as the cliché of two star crossed lovers fighting to be together. Been there, done that.

But as I committed more and more to the essence of this ageless story, I realised it is actually about just that: 'love'. In a world driven by fear and a society that operates according to a restricting set

of rules and traditions, the language of love feels very alienated and yet is incredibly powerful. Shakespeare's ROMEO & JULIET presents us with two brave individuals who have the courage to abandon the identities that have been imposed on them and commit to a journey of rediscovery. This journey is a scary ride of vulnerability and exposure. Real love does not allow us to hide; we must take the plunge. We open ourselves to a future that is full of uncertainty and mystery, in which it is all or nothing. No compromise. Been there, done that?

Sometimes, as a director, you feel you are working on something that is a landmark, not only as an artist but also as a human being. ROMEO & JULIET is that for me, because it actually celebrates values that I hold very strongly. As any strong universal tale, it does not allow space for cynicism and in its heart reaches out to a feeling of hope in humanity,

even when the story is galloping from comedy towards full tragedy.

This ROMEO & JULIET is presented as a memory play. We try to acknowledge your past and present experiences of the story and invite you to look at the events in Verona through Benvolio's eyes.

Finally I want to thank this wonderful ensemble and team for working on ROMEO & JULIET. I feel blessed. And my partner James for creating so many 'balcony' moments in my life.

Willem Wassenaar
Director

SYNOPSIS

PROLOGUE

Benvolio, a young man of Verona, remembers the feud between the families of Capulet and Montague, which led to the death of his friend Romeo and Romeo's beloved, Juliet.

ACT ONE

Sampson and Gregory, servants of Lord Capulet, meet two of Lord Montague's servants in the street. A fight ensues; Benvolio arrives and tries to break it up, but Tybalt, a Capulet, joins in and attacks Benvolio. The Montagues and Capulets arrive and hurl insults. Prince Escalus, the ruler of Verona, insists that the families keep the peace. Benvolio promises Lady Montague that he will find out why her son Romeo is miserable. Benvolio catches Romeo alone; Romeo confesses he loves Rosaline, who has sworn a vow of chastity. Benvolio tells Romeo that Rosaline will be at the Capulets' that night, and

invites Romeo to go with him to see Rosaline around other more beautiful girls. Romeo is not convinced, but agrees to attend.

Meanwhile, at the Capulets, Paris asks Lord Capulet for permission to marry Capulet's daughter, Juliet. Capulet thinks she is too young, but says Paris can woo her at the party that night. Lady Capulet tells Juliet and her Nurse about Paris and the three prepare for the party where Juliet is to meet him.

Romeo, Benvolio and their friend Mercutio make their way to the party. Tybalt recognises Romeo as a Montague; Capulet stops him from attacking Romeo. Romeo and Juliet meet and kiss. Juliet is called by her mother, and Romeo finds out she is a Capulet. Romeo is pulled away by his friends and Juliet discovers he is a Montague.

ACT TWO

Romeo hides in the Capulet's orchard. Benvolio and Mercutio call him, but give up and go home. Juliet comes out onto her balcony and Romeo overhears her praising him but despairing that he is a Montague. Delighted, Romeo shows himself and the pair exchange vows of love. Romeo agrees to send for Juliet tomorrow so they can be married. Romeo goes to church and arranges for Friar Lawrence to marry him to Juliet in secret. He then rejoins Benvolio and Mercutio. Juliet's Nurse arrives and Romeo tells her to send Juliet to church that afternoon, and to get a rope ladder so he can climb into Juliet's bedroom that night. Juliet is delighted to get the news from the Nurse. She meets Romeo at Friar Lawrence's cell and they are married.

ACT THREE

Tybalt, looking for Romeo, meets Benvolio and Mercutio. When Romeo appears, Tybalt challenges him, but Romeo refuses to fight Tybalt. Mercutio is outraged; he fights with Tybalt and is mortally wounded. Romeo, overcome with grief at Mercutio's death, attacks and kills Tybalt. Benvolio makes Romeo run; Prince Escalus banishes Romeo from Verona. The Nurse tells Juliet that Romeo has killed Tybalt and been banished. She then goes to find Romeo, who is hiding at the Friar's cell, and sends him to comfort Juliet. Meanwhile, Capulet arranges for Paris to marry Juliet next Thursday.

Romeo and Juliet spend the night together; Romeo leaves at dawn for Mantua. In the morning, the Capulets tell Juliet she is to marry Paris. She refuses and they are furious. The Nurse recommends that Juliet marry Paris; Juliet pretends to be comforted but decides to go to the Friar for help.

ACT FOUR

At the Friar's cell, Paris and Lord Capulet are arranging the marriage when Juliet arrives. When they leave, the Friar tells Juliet his plan: Juliet must drink a potion to make her appear dead, so she will be taken to the Capulet tomb. The Friar will send a letter to Romeo, and together they will rescue her from the tomb. Juliet agrees, and that night drinks the potion. The next



morning Paris and her family find her 'dead'.

ACT FIVE

Benvolio arrives in Mantua and tells Romeo that Juliet is dead. Because the Friar's letter has not arrived, Romeo believes him, and decides to commit suicide at Juliet's side. After buying poison from an apothecary, Romeo goes to the Capulet tomb, where he finds Paris grieving. The pair fight and Paris is killed. Romeo breaks in, kisses Juliet and drinks the poison. Friar Laurence arrives to rescue

Juliet just as she wakes up. He tries to convince her to leave but is frightened off by noises outside. Juliet sees Romeo dead and kills herself with his dagger. The Capulets and Montagues arrive. Seeing the dead lovers, the two families are united in grief and the feud ends at last.

THE LANGUAGE OF LOVE

Director Willem Wassenaar talks about his vision for this production of *ROMEO & JULIET*.

How will you approach this very famous story?

A lot of people are familiar with *ROMEO & JULIET* – it has really become part of our culture. Films like *TWILIGHT* have been heavily influenced by *ROMEO & JULIET*; they're basically about a boy and a girl from very different backgrounds whose love is so strong they try to find a way despite all the difficulties. I thought, 'okay, if so many people know the story, how can we play with that? How can we focus the audience on the essence of *ROMEO & JULIET*, the things that they wouldn't necessarily pay attention to?'

Within this production, we are looking at a reflection and a re-examination of the story, through the eyes of Benvolio. We are borrowing from different periods, and

using aspects that are related to a fantastical landscape – more dreamlike, more imaginary, and more sensory. In my production, Benvolio will be the only survivor of the young generation. I've seen some productions of *ROMEO & JULIET*, and I always wonder 'where does Benvolio end up?' Benvolio is, for me, a character who is witnessing the horrors in other people. Of course, he's indirectly involved, but really he's a spectator, and therefore there's that link to the audience as spectators.

What other changes have you made to the text?

In Elizabethan days, the audience worked more from the ears than the eyes, and that's why they could have elaborate plays that lasted for four hours. Today that is not possible! My question is 'how can we create an experience that invites an audience to actually stay with the story, rather than tuning out?' When I came to cutting, I thought that I would be very

rigorous, but I've ended up with a cut that feels quite conservative! There are such wonderful characters in this play; if you start cutting a lot of imagery and poetry, a lot of their intelligence and their sophistication gets lost.

So the momentum needs to go with the lovers...

Totally. *Romeo and Juliet* aren't on stage together for very long: just in the balcony scene, when they're about to get married, and after they've had sex. If they were together more, the time they spend together would be less special. By having them experience these very sparse moments with each other, their time feels very sacred, for them and also for the audience. We wish that they had more time to spend with each other.

I think Juliet is Shakespeare's most developed female character. In only a few days, Juliet grows from an obedient girl, into a girl who is in love, into a girl who is married, into a girl who is widowed.



Photos: Sacha Stejko



It's a huge transformation. I see Juliet as a very headstrong girl – she's very feisty, and she's a fighter. She's not a victim. People tend to colour her as being naïve and innocent, but I don't think she is at all. She's very pragmatic: when you look at the balcony scene, she is instigating the action. She's very organised and quick in her emotional comprehension.

How do you understand the social context the lovers work within?

This is a group of young people who are desperately trying to find an identity. The identity that they have created is actually imposed by the society that they are living in, and the historical framework, and the authority figures that they are dealing with. These families are operating from within a conflict, and

they don't even know what it is about themselves! The young generation in the play – Tybalt, Romeo, Juliet, Mercutio, Benvolio, Paris – they've created this image of themselves, and what I find quite disturbing is that it's not necessarily who they really are. When Romeo and Juliet meet each other, they find love in each other, but they also start to rediscover themselves. So the story is really about change and transformation, and about how we as human beings fear change, especially when it is related to tradition.

What we do in today's world – as a survival technique – is to box things, to try to make things simple and to gain control. The world that we're living in is very complex, so we need a way to give it structure, but in the language

of love you cannot use that rigid structure. Shakespeare has used this amazing love story to articulate this bigger thing: that we need to embrace the fact that real poetry and beauty lies in complexity and not in simplicity.

BACKSTAGE WITH THE COSTUME DESIGNER

The costumes are not based in any particular time period but instead reflect the five worlds that Willem has decided to use to present this production.

Set within the world of Historical Framework (seen most strongly in the set element of the production and in the words of the play itself) is the world of Memory, of Benvolio's perspective — a narrative world where Benvolio has been costumed to both fit as a member of the audience as well as a character of the play, to help provide a link between the two, visually as well as in his role of narrator.

In the world of the Adults we have a sort of elegance and sophistication which I have found in the fashion and costumes of 1930s and 40s Hollywood, a formal look which reflects the restrictions of their society.

The world of Youth — a more extreme, sometimes brutal world where emotions and behaviour have not yet been bought entirely under control, this is seen in the

costume of the younger characters with a mix of contemporary garments and garments appropriated from the world of their elders, but worn in their way.

The world of Romeo & Juliet themselves, the most emotionally honest (and emotionally isolated) of the characters, and this is reflected in the simplicity of their costumes.

**Nic Smillie
Costume Designer**



JULIET #2



TYBALT #1



LADY MONTAGUE #1



MERCUTIO #1

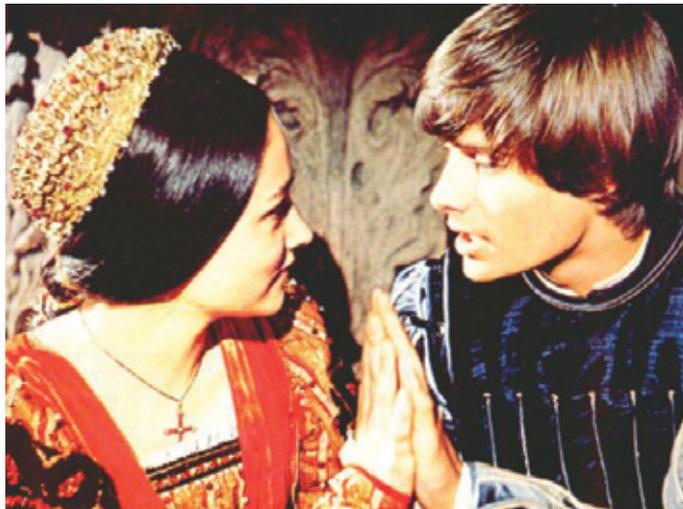
ROMEO & JULIET

By Lori Leigh

William Shakespeare did not invent his story of “star-crossed lovers” kept apart by feuding families. Like audiences today, Shakespeare’s would have been familiar with a story that had been around in myth since antiquity. Ovid’s METAMORPHOSIS, a source Shakespeare often drew on, tells the story of Pyramus and Thisbe, two lovers from Roman mythology who are separated by the rivalry of their respective families—and by a wall. A means of separation becomes a means for wooing as the lovers use a crack in the wall to whisper their forbidden love.

Moving away from myth, the real Romeo and Juliet, believed to be from the political factions of Montecchi and Cappelletti, were lovers who died for each other in 1303 in Verona. This folklore still exists: every Valentine’s Day the city receives thousands of letters addressed to Juliet, and it is even possible to get married

at the House of Juliet (Casa di Giulietta), a popular tourist attraction in Verona. The real popularity of the ROMEO & JULIET story began in Italy in the fifteenth and early



sixteenth centuries through its recounting in several novellas.

The most direct source for Shakespeare was Arthur Brooke’s THE TRAGICAL HISTORY OF ROMEOUS AND JULIETTE. In reworking Brooke’s poem into a play,

however, Shakespeare transformed the story. He dramatically condensed the action from several months to a few days, deployed marvellous rhetoric and

wordplay to tell the story, developed subplots, and expanded characters such as the Nurse, Friar Laurence and Mercutio. For example, in Brooke’s version Mercutio plays the minor role of a suitor to Juliet at the Capulet feast rather than the



boisterous character who delivers the famous Queen Mab speech and who is structurally at the crux of comedy turning into tragedy. Such transformations—including some of the most memorable poetry in the English language—mean that it is Shakespeare’s ROMEO & JULIET that has become immortalised. What Shakespeare re-invented, created, for the stage is what remains alive with us today.

In fact, Shakespeare’s play has had a consistent performance history since the sixteenth century. It was first performed probably sometime around 1594-1595 by the Lord Chamberlain’s Men at a theatre appropriately called The Theatre (later dismantled to construct the Globe). The title page of Quarto 1, printed in 1597, reads, “An Excellent Conceited Tragedy of Romeo and Juliet as it has been often (and with great applause) played publicly”. The play has continued to be frequently and successfully performed across the world and in various ways.

Of all Shakespeare’s plays, ROMEO & JULIET has generated the most adaptations, including operas, ballets, a Broadway musical (West Side Story) and film versions such as those by Franco Zeffirelli and Baz Luhrmann (ROMEO+JULIET). In fact, ROMEO & JULIET may be the most filmed play in history. The play has also featured in contemporary music. The Reflections, Bruce Springsteen, Bryan Adams, Tom Waits, Lou Reed, Taylor Swift and Dire Straits (covered by Indigo Girls and also The Killers) are among the pop artists who have songs directly inspired by Shakespeare’s ROMEO & JULIET. In 2010, the play finds life on the internet with actors from the Royal Shakespeare Company playing out the story in a series of tweets on the social network Twitter in a version called “Such Tweet Sorrow”. As of today, 161,964 people “like” the ROMEO AND JULIET Facebook page.

Holding the New Zealand Government’s prestigious research scholarship, NZIDRS, Lori Leigh is currently a doctoral candidate in theatre at Victoria University where she researches Shakespeare, Early Modern English Theatre and Gender.



IMAGE CREDITS (LEFT TO RIGHT)

Franco Zeffirelli’s Romeo and Juliet
Source: www.hermes.hrc.ntu.edu.tw

Baz Luhrmann’s Romeo+Juliet
Source: www.linernaute.com/cinema

Royal Shakespeare Company
on the social network Twitter
Source: www.suchtweetsorrow.com/

CAST



MICHAEL WHALLEY

Challenging/rewarding while working/researching on this play?

My challenge has been deciphering the wondrous puzzle that is Shakespeare's work in order to know exactly what I'm saying. My reward has been watching my cast and crew mates do the same.

What do you do when you're not acting?

I'm thinking of writing a screenplay about two young monkeys from opposing jungles who fall in love, then take their own lives.

Favourite Shakespeare plays?

A WINTER'S TALE, PERICLES and of course ROMEO & JULIET. All plays I have worked on so have a better understanding of all their intricacies.

Are you into fate or chances?

I used to think "You don't need luck, just attitude", but now I tend to imagine there are other forces involved at times.

Anger is not...?

Altogether useful, though not a common factor in my personal emotional arsenal.

Your 'balcony scene' will?

Drive men from the lower levels of the Maidment Theatre to call to the balcony levels of the theatre, searching for THEIR next lover.

Young love is?

It is good for older love to observe, chuckle at and be reminded of where it all begins.

Best masquerade mask?

Probably the Phantom of The Opera's one. Though he was lazy with his.

My likely star-crossed lover...

Is possibly just around the corner. I'd better go and see, just in case...



BROOKE WILLIAMS

"I'm very excited to be joining Auckland Theatre Company for ROMEO & JULIET. It is my fourth production with the company having previously appeared in THE CRUCIBLE, FEMALE OF THE SPECIES and THE PILLOWMAN since graduating from from Toi Whakaari in 2006. My favourite theatre credits include THE CHERRY ORCHARD at the Court Theatre, Shakespeare's THE TEMPEST with the Peripeteia players at Hawke Sea Scout Hall in Cox's Bay (on the sea!) and MR MARMALADE at Bats Theatre for which I was awarded the 2009 Chapman Tripp Award for Most Promising Female Newcomer. Screen work includes GO GIRLS, SPARTACUS: BLOOD AND SAND, LEGEND OF THE SEEKER, OUTRAGEOUS FORTUNE and the upcoming feature films PREDICAMENT and ICE."



PETER DAUBE

Challenging/rewarding while working/researching on this play?

The sheer rigour and creative energy that everyone has brought to this production has been a totally rewarding experience. An example of what can be achieved when the high expectations of a production are reached by total belief in the talent, experience and skill of all involved.

What do you do when you're not acting?

I'm building a girlfriend in my basement out of papier maché. Once completed, I plan to co-star with her in a musical titled I BUILT MY GIRLFRIEND OUT OF PAPIER MACHE.

Favourite Shakespeare play?

I played Macbeth, so that is my favourite to date.

Are you into fate or chances?

Neither.

Anger is...?

So banal.

Your 'balcony scene' will?

There is something about ski bindings, open fires and fur rugs that has always appealed. Don't ask me to shave.

Young love is?

I really am over her.

Best masquerade mask?

I've always been partial to a pig's head or we all just wear each others heads. I'll wear Brooke's.

My likely star-crossed lover...

My 2nd form teacher Mrs Longneigh and I. It could never work.



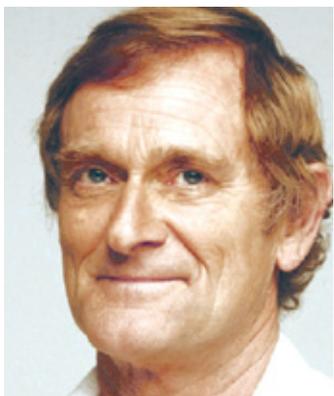
CATHERINE DOWNES MNZM

"In a career spanning 4 decades in this magical industry, amidst 1,000 performances of THE CASE OF KATHERINE MANSFIELD and a wad of fantastic plays and screen roles on both sides of the Tasman, I've been involved in 7 Shakespeare productions: MACBETH - 3 productions; first at Victoria University as an 'Apparition' and 'Serving Wench' to Sam Neil's Macbeth, then later as Lady M in Colin McColl's production at Downstage set in a 1970's fascist state, and most recently as a director at Unitec where I showcased a different actor as Macbeth and Lady Macbeth in each act in an eclectic production focusing on greed.

At university I played Paulina in a vividly memorable A WINTER'S TALE. I've encountered OTHELLO twice - as Emelia at Downstage in

The Boer War, then during my tenure as Artistic Director of The Court Theatre, I set a production in the NZ Land Wars on a Longboat up the Waikato River, with Jim Moriarty playing Othello as a Maori General in the British army fighting Maori. In JULIUS CAESAR at Circa I played a female Mark [Marg] Anthony in contemporary war-torn Europe.

This is my first encounter with ROMEO & JULIET, as Romeo's mother. In Willem's production Lady Montague is a silent witness to the agonising, unalterable fate of her son. Moreover, as a figment of Benvolio's memory, I must explore what it is he recalls about me - is it naked truth or is it coloured, distorted, even grotesque?."

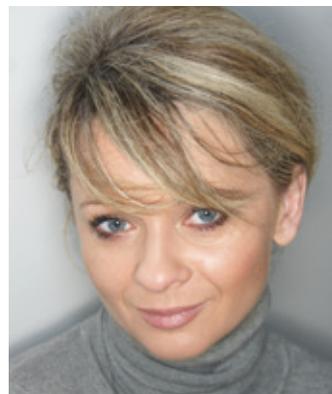


STUART DEVENIE

"Here's my Will: Hastings Boys High 1966, 4th Form running late for performance of HENRY IV part I. Playing Lady Percy. Have to go by cab to the Muni

(big theatre) in sky blue dress, permed hair and falsies. Oh dear! Teacher tells me they'll do ANTONY AND CLEOPATRA next year if my voice holds. Playing Cleopatra at an all boys school, you must be joking. It breaks over Christmas! 6th form, Antonio in THE MERCHANT OF VENICE. Hastings Group Theatre 1970, second go at directing a play - TWELFTH NIGHT "mod" ponchos and see-through tops. Radical! 1971 first year at Victoria University, Malcolm in MACBETH (Sam Neil as the Man). I love Wellington! Next year - A WINTER'S TALE directed by Anthony Taylor (Catherine Downes in it too). Magic! Oberon the following year in A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM. Hot pants and a beard. What!/? 1977 off to UK to audition for an amateur company in London. Antonio again. At least I know the lines. 1981 - 1990 Court Theatre, Christchurch. MACBETH again - this time the Man himself. Scary. Magic. Not cast in THE TEMPEST. Baby due. Laurel arrives second week of run. Back to Auckland - Peripeteia Players - CYMBELINE and MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING at the Dogs Bollix pub. Shakespeare on a postage stamp. Fantastic! THE TEMPEST in a scout hall as Prospero - my daughter as Miranda - his daughter. Tempis Fugit! Sheila Winn Festivals - adjudicating, judging and tutoring. The young ones love him! Then, recording sonnets

for Radio New Zealand which was challenging and intimate. Watching Willem grow at Toi Whakaari on his directors' course. And here we are! Ah the whirligig of time!"



ELENA STEJKO

"At times I have felt overwhelmed by the many interpretations with which Shakespeare can be performed - the ugly duckling amidst a company of swans. But the director's interpretation and overall vision of the world of ROMEO & JULIET have been truly captivating and inspiring.

I found the Shakespearian language challenging, as English is a fourth language for me, but as I have searched for the truth of the character of Lady Capulet, a Russian trophy-wife, I became enchanted by the adventures and discoveries offered within the text.

That search has also been rewarding in

unraveling the mysteries of Shakespeare's universe alchemy, philosophy, words and actions. The key for me to unlock Lady Capulet lay in the dynamics of her relationship with daughter Juliet. Lady Capulet has a domineering nature and through control, conflict and love, is ambitious to vicariously achieve through her daughter. It is hard for her to let go and know when to step aside: realising that what will be, will be.

For me ROMEO & JULIET puts flesh on the ancient calamity of romance versus tragedy, of fate versus free will. In the end, the meaning of existence is love, without which we are all lost."



GERALDINE BROPHY

"I was twelve when I first discovered that Shakespeare came in a book. Until then I'd thought Shylock's plea for the world's acceptance of our sameness, despite our differences, was as

commonly spoke as Grace before meals. But then, I also thought everybody prayed the Our Father, and porridge sandwiches were normal fare for a school lunch. Beatrice, Portia, Hamlet, Lear, Titania, Juliet, Isabella and Falstaff, were like distant relatives of whom there was no surviving photograph, but plenty of family stories. Shakespeare was not text, but people! Brimming with blood and breath and blarney. Thanks to my Dad, who, despite the misfortune of a childhood spent in a Christian Brothers' orphanage in Ireland, emerged with heart, mind and mouth, full of the two great influences of Western literature, Shakespeare and The Bible. These have shaped my love for the Bard and been invaluable in the playing of many roles. I believe that Shakespeare's characters should be seen and heard, in their total humanity, presented as living beings to a collective audience. Not read. This is my third foray into the world of ROMEO & JULIET and there is still a universe of discoveries. Our ATC production has been a highlight, thanks to Willem and the wonderful, talented company he has assembled."

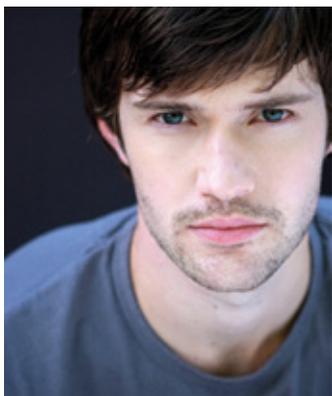


GARETH REEVES

"8 years ago I was in a play called THE CHERRY ORCHARD by Anton Chekhov. He's Russian. So is Elena Stejko. Peter Daube was also in that production, he's currently making me a shelf. Catherine Downes and Brooke Williams were both in that production too. Catherine later directed me in a play opposite Brooke who is from Christchurch, like me.

As is Kip Chapman and Michael Whalley. Kip and I were both in THE CULT and I play football with Mikey for the mighty North Shore Raw (Fourth Division). My last play with the Auckland Theatre Company was CAT ON A HOT TIN ROOF where Stuart Devenie played my Dad. I was once in another ATC play with Benjamin Farry but pulled out to do a television show that Nic Smillie designed and Geraldine Brophy was in, I used to watch Gerry on stage when I was young.

I've never acted with Paul, Mario or Ciarin before either and they're great. Dan Musgrove and I had horse-riding lessons for a film and both came off our horses during the shoot. Dan went to Drama School in Wellington like me. And Sam Bunkall. And Willem Wassenaar."



DAN MUSGROVE

"This is my first production with Auckland Theatre Company and I am thrilled to be working on this play with such a talented ensemble. I graduated from Toi Whakaari: NZ Drama School in 2007, a year behind Juliet (Brooke Williams), two years behind Romeo (Michael Whalley) and in the same year as director Willem Wassenaar. As an actor, I first encountered Shakespeare at high school, playing 'Bottom the Weaver' in A MIDSUMMER'S NIGHT DREAM and then, in 2001, performed at the Globe Theatre London with the

NZ Young Shakespeare Company. My writing/devising work includes the shows BLINKERS and SPURS and the Christmas show CHRIST ALMIGHTY! at the Basement Theatre. In Auckland, my stage credits include BACKSTORY, LIFE IS A DREAM and HOLDING THE MAN. Recent screen appearances include Fiona Samuel's PIECE OF MY HEART and the upcoming feature film TRACKER, alongside Gareth Reeves."



BENJAMIN FARRY

Challenging/rewarding while working/researching on this play?

Working with Willem has been truly rewarding, while challenges include moments in rehearsals where I was unable to contain my excitement even when it was obvious to all and sundry that I could have been clueless or even distracted.

What do you do when you're not acting?

A little writing, dabbling with end-of-days concepts, trying to live an honourable life and spending ample of my time trying not to trip over the pile of my own inadequacies.

Favourite Shakespeare play?

HAMLET.

Are you into fate or chances?

I believe in spherical time, it either has already happened/ is happening/will happen, no choice, no chance.

Anger is not...?

Something that should ever be regretted.

Your 'balcony scene' will?

Pass me by without me noticing it

Young love is?

Sweaty, clumsy, desperate, hormonal and very brief.

Best masquerade mask?

A bad imitation of leather face from THE TEXAS CHAINSAW MASSACRE.

My likely star-crossed lover...

I'm already married, therefore off the market.



KIP CHAPMAN

"I worked with Willem Wassenaar on THE GLASS MENAGERIE at Centrepont Theatre and THE LITTLE DOG LAUGHED at Downstage in 2006 and 2008. Stuart Devenie was part of a workshop for my play, ADVANCE IN ORDER, about the Auckland City Council for Auckland Theatre Company in 2007. I auditioned for Catherine Downes for a Court Theatre production in 2004 and was nearly cast in a film by Elena Stejko in 2002.

I danced with Geraldine Brophy in FLAGONS AND FOXTROTS in 2007 at Downstage. I acted alongside Benjamin Farry in THE TALENTED MR RIPLEY for ATC in 2004 and alongside Peter Daube in SEX WITH STRANGERS in 2005. I directed Michael Whalley in his play APOLLO 13: MISSION CONTROL in 2008 and 2010 and helped backstage in a production that Brooke was in when she was 15 in

Christchurch. I share office space with Dan Musgrove and in 2009 helped Sam Bunkall with some technical issues during WOLF'S LAIR - also directed by Willem."



SAM BUNKALL

Challenging/rewarding while working/researching on this play?

It's incredibly rewarding working with a team who are so clear and passionate about their vision behind this production. From the very beginning our focus has been on purpose; why do this play now? I think it's vital for artists to understand what they're offering their audiences and why.

What do you do when you're not acting?

I've been involved in sound and lighting design/operation for Almost A Bird Theatre Collective. I am also writing/directing my own film work

and always on the hunt for new and interesting work opportunities. I've enjoyed making the most of life while being constructive about the future.

Favourite Shakespeare play?

TITUS ANDRONICUS - ye olde Tarantino.

Are you into fate or chances?

Both. Through some strange logic I don't yet understand, I think they exist together.

Anger is not...?

To be bottled up.

Your 'balcony scene' will?

Avoid the mundane and uncover something special.

Young love is?

Too easily exchanged for old love.

Best masquerade mask?

One that hides your façade completely and allows what's really beneath the surface to emerge uninhibited.

If you were Juliet...

I would have run away with Romeo when he was banished.



PAUL FAGAMALO

Challenging/rewarding while working/researching on this play?

I enjoyed seeing that it's about the ensemble that really makes a play, not just the individual characters. How what we do is a process of working together, of trial and error, and of discovery.

What do you do when you're not acting?

I'm also a dancer in a contemporary dance collaboration initiative.

Favourite Shakespeare play?

HAMLET.

Are you into fate or chances?

Fateful chance.

Anger is not...?

Anger, but a reaction to things that don't go the way you want them to.

Your 'balcony scene' will?

Be saved for the balcony.

Young love is?

Tender, sweet and uninhibited.

Best masquerade mask?

Half-faced, hooked nosed and gold.



MARIO FAUMUI

Challenging/rewarding while working/researching on this play?

The most rewarding part of the work would have to be the knowledge gained by each and every inspiring and talented actor in this cast. It is also really special to see all the characters of ROMEO & JULIET come to life.

Apart from ROMEO & JULIET?

I am currently studying at The Pacific Institute of Performing Arts (PIPA), completing a Diploma in Pacific Performing Arts. Dance highlights

include Pacific Dance Fono with Dance New Zealand, STRICTLY BROWN by Kila Kokonut Krew and ATC. I was also involved with the comedy festival featuring in PANI AND PANI: PHAT CHIX IN THE SETTEE and hosted the TVNZ's Polyfest series 2009, for the Samoan episode. In the last 2 years I have been involved with many stage productions including YELLOWMAN, BLOOD WEDDING, LITTLE SHOP OF HORRORS and OPHELIA THINKS HARDER.

Favourite Shakespeare play?

A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM and ROMEO & JULIET.

Are you into fate or chances?

Fate.

Anger is not...?

Anger is not 'tough love'. Anger is not my friend.

Your 'balcony scene' will?

My balcony scene would be a tree house in a forest, with a flying fox.

Young love is?

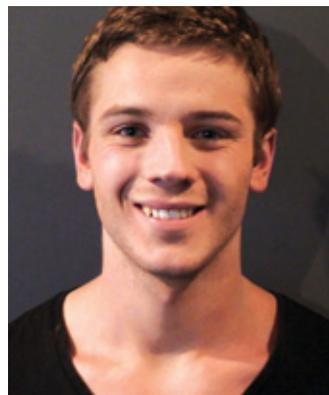
Young love is falling asleep on the phone because no-one wants to hang up ("no, you hang up").

Best masquerade mask?

Best masquerade mask would look like Lady Gaga/mirror looking one

If you were Romeo...

I'd have one last smoke to kill time before drinking the poison. By then Juliet would've woken up and we'd all live happily ever after.



CIARIN SMITH

Challenging/rewarding while working/researching on this play?

We have worked very physically and impulsively with this piece, and this is both scary and, if you give yourself into it, incredibly rewarding. It takes a certain courage to work in ways you're not used to, and put the logical brain to one side and just use your instincts.

Apart from acting?

I have a background of musical theatre, and singing is my main passion. I have written a cabaret which will be on stage in February next year. Dance and movement are also big focuses for me, and I aim to become more

adept at these in the future.

Favourite Shakespeare play?

A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM.

Are you into fate and chances?

Chances.

Anger is not...?

Anger is not solitary. I think it always lies above a bed of fear and a lack of understanding.

Your thoughts about the 'balcony scene'?

My balcony scene will be at that moment just before dawn, and I will be serenaded with 'You belong to me'.

Young love is?

The sort of love that gives you butterflies in your stomach. It's irrational, impulsive and feels like nothing else matters anymore.

Best masquerade mask?

Black velvet and non-symmetrical.

Most likely star-crossed lover...

Someone beautiful, mysterious, sweet, funny but genuine.

CREATIVE



WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE / PLAYWRIGHT

Widely regarded as the greatest writer in the English language and the world's pre-eminent dramatist, William Shakespeare was born in 1564 at Stratford-upon-Avon and died in 1616. His surviving works include 38 plays and 154 sonnets. His plays have been translated into every major living language and are performed more often than those of any other playwright.

Between 1585 and 1592, Shakespeare began a successful career in London as an actor, writer and part owner of a playing company called the Lord Chamberlain's Men, later known as the King's Men. The first recorded works of Shakespeare are RICHARD III and the three parts of HENRY VI, written in the early 1590s. ROMEO & JULIET, his great romantic tragedy of

sexually-charged adolescence, is thought to have been written in 1594 or 1595.

Few records of his private life survive, and there has been considerable speculation about his physical appearance, sexuality, religious beliefs and whether the works attributed to him were written by others. Though revered as a playwright in his own time, Shakespeare's reputation did not rise to its present heights until the 19th century.



WILLEM WASSENAAR / DIRECTOR

Apart from directing this play?

I am the Artistic Director of Long Cloud Youth Theatre. In September we will perform THE SEAGULL by Anton Chekhov and THE MISANTHROPE by Moliere. Together with my main collaborator Sophie Roberts I also run Almost A Bird Theatre

Collective; our most recent tour shows are WOLF'S LAIR and BROKEN CHINA. I will be based in Berlin next year, where I will continue my work as a director and teacher.

Favourite Shakespeare play?

Always the very play I am working on. ROMEO & JULIET, with its beauty and its cruelty, has challenged me at a deep level emotionally. I also like TITUS ANDRONICUS and THE TEMPEST. Having watched numerous Shakespeare plays, these ones in particular never cease to surprise me and shake my world up.

Are you into fate or chances?

We have the ability to create our own fate. This notion comes with the responsibility to make choices and judge those choices according to the relative situation, which ultimately reveals the complexity rather than the simplicity of human nature.

Anger is not...?

Never alone. It arises mostly out of our incapability to deal with a situation, coming from our need to desperately control our past, present and future.

The 'balcony scene'...?

It is the meeting of two lovers, of Romeo and Juliet, discovering their love and themselves at the same time. One of the spare intimate moments that they share with

each other in the play; where the outside world does not seem to matter and the heart is giving them guidance.

Young love is?

Uncompromising. For first-timers it feels like hundreds of butterflies are raiding your stomach, and you cannot tame them. As Juliet says: "Boundless as the sea".

Best masquerade mask?

A mask which allows us to unleash our inner animal.

The person I admire...

Comes in the appearance of my partner James, who brings out the best in me and encourages me to enjoy the present moment to the fullest.



ANDREW FOSTER / SET DESIGNER

"It's a Freudian notion that the retelling or replaying of a story exposes the heart of the reader. This has been our fascination in approaching ROMEO & JULIET. Everyone knows this story. It belongs to us all. In his writing on dreaming Freud identifies that a dream is like a collage, pasting together unrelated images as we try to make sense of our waking experience. This is at the heart of the design for this production; this world is a collage if you will.

From the outset we've been interested in a dreamlike landscape, and Salvador Dali's paintings have been an important touchstone. Populated by fragments of memories and distorted remembrance, they are compelling investigations into the mysterious workings of the human mind. Film Noir

has also been an important influence. In the film D.O.A. a stranger arrives at a police station wanting to report a murder. It turns out that it is he who has been murdered, and thus the story moves backwards through time in order to make sense of this Escher like conundrum.

In fact much of the aesthetic feel of our production stems from an exploration of 20th century modernism. Our aim has been to work with simple, bold and evocative elements, suggestive of the thematic, geographical and cultural forces at play within the story. Whilst remaining enigmatic enough to transform as the play and players require.

I feel blessed to be working with such a wonderful creative team. We've enjoyed a really exciting and open-minded production period. Willem, Nic, Nathan and Thomas – I love you all, it's been a lot of fun."

Challenging/rewarding while working/researching on this play?

I've experimented with a few new building materials and techniques on this project, partly due to the luxury of having the support of a good PM and builders. There's always something exciting about venturing into the unknown.

Apart from ROMEO & JULIET?

I've just finished performing

in MAURITIUS at Circa Theatre in Wellington and composing music for my wife, Sarah Foster, on her latest choreography for Footnote Dance. I'm also developing the play PENINSULA with writer/director Gary Henderson. With my design hat on, I'm currently designing a new work BODY/FIGHT/TIME with choreographer Malia Johnson.

Favourite Shakespeare play?

It's pretty impressive what Iago does to Othello. Beatrice and Benedict work each other nicely too.

Are you into fate and chances?

Yes, as part of a well balanced diet.

Anger is not...?

It is not 'thing'.

Your thoughts about the 'balcony scene'?

What I find romantic about this scene is the fact that they've both contrived to be there.

Young love is?

Ephemeral.

Best masquerade mask?

A sticking plaster over the nose.

My likely star-crossed lover...

You make your own star-crossed lovers.



NIC SMILLIE / COSTUME DESIGNER

Challenging/rewarding while working/researching on this play?

I have loved researching 1940s Hollywood glamour - it has always been a favourite era of mine but until now I have never had the chance to include it in my designs. The bead-work, draping and gorgeous fabrics - just divine!

Apart from ROMEO & JULIET?

Currently designing the costumes for ATC's next production, AUGUST: OSAGE COUNTY.

Favourite Shakespeare play?

I have a cat called Titus Andronicus.

Are you into fate or chances?

A little of both.

Anger is not...?

An option in my line of work.

The 'balcony scene'...?

Probably feature hanging up wet washing.

Young love is?

Wasted on the young.

Best masquerade mask?

One that does not smudge your lippy and allows you to eat canapes.

If you were Juliet...

I would have planned to elope to an exotic island for my wedding, that way hopefully avoiding a lot of the drama.



NATHAN MCKENDRY / LIGHTING DESIGNER

"The Lighting Design for ROMEO & JULIET evokes emotion and thought which lives within the complex, dark and shadowy worlds that we have identified within the

piece. It will draw attention to the most intimate moments between characters and open the audience up to the large and vast expanses of the world that we have created which the cast now bring to life. The lighting design also creates a thread that intertwines through the show and helps draw all the design elements together: the imposing set and stunning costumes by Andrew and Nic, and Thomas's dynamic soundscape."

Challenging/rewarding while working/researching on this play?

ROMEO & JULIET has always fascinated me. I enjoy seeing how the director has created something that wows and changes the audiences' perspective of the piece. The challenge was to ensure the lighting design was in-sync with the director's vision.

What do you do apart from lighting?

I am currently working as a production manager on the production of THE DECEMBER BROTHER at Downstage in August. I also enjoy teaching kids a little about Lighting Design to get their interest started.

Favourite Shakespeare play?

TWELFTH NIGHT.

Are you into fate or chances?

Neither really, but I like to see

what happens.

Anger is not...?

Overrated.

The 'balcony scene'...?

Be a moonlit night with a beer.

Young love is?

Innocent and unobstructed by outside influences.

Best masquerade mask?

Held up on a single gold stick, it would be a small mask that only covers the eyes and nose but sits at an asymmetrical angle across the face, with a black and white paisley pattern that is trimmed in gold, and has an authentic gold leaf peel on top of the main pattern.

My likely star-crossed lover...

Would be someone who watched as many movies as I do.



THOMAS PRESS / SOUND DESIGNER

"In presenting ROMEO & JULIET as a memory play, a cello threads its way through the piece unpicking the fabric of the five worlds we have identified. Through the lens of these worlds the sound design creates an aural environment which is as small as Romeo and Juliet's most intimate of glances, and as large as the grandeur and splendour of the Capulet party."

Challenging/rewarding while working/researching on this play?

I have found it rewarding being a part of a team who is so passionately dedicated to presenting a revered classic in a fresh and relevant manner.

What do you enjoy doing apart from designing?

I have just written a score for Capital E National Theatre for Children and About Face

Production of *BOXES*. Later this year I'll be workshopping a new show for Capital E National Theatre for Children in collaboration with Richard Nunns.

Favourite Shakespeare play?

A *MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM*.

Are you into fate or chances?

In striving to order chaos, fate is a reassuring kind of a story.

Anger is not...?

Ever expressed satisfactorily.

The 'balcony scene'...?

Tea, cigarettes and music. Perhaps Tom Waits.

Young love is?

Fragile and invincible.

Best masquerade mask?

What better masquerade than the mask we wear each day?

If you were Romeo...

I'd do it all the same.



**LORI LEIGH /
DRAMATURG**

Challenging/rewarding while working/researching on this play?

I always find Shakespeare both challenging and rewarding. I suppose this time around on *ROMEO & JULIET* I've enjoyed respecting the Elizabethan dramaturgy while at the same time making the piece a "here and now", which is, in part, what Elizabethan dramaturgy is all about.

Apart from acting?

I'm directing an American play called *DOG SEES GOD*, opening at *BATS* early August. Following that, I'm directing *THE WINTER'S TALE* for Wellington Summer Shakespeare 2011. My current research involves essays on the lost play *CARDENIO*, forthcoming in a collection ed. by David Carnegie and Gary Taylor. My doctoral thesis focuses on

Gender and Shakespeare.

Favourite Shakespeare play?

It is always the one I am working on at the moment so now it's *ROMEO & JULIET*. Soon, it will be *THE WINTER'S TALE*.

Are you into fate or chances?

I am into the chance of fate. "There is special providence in the fall of a sparrow".

Anger is not...?

Always wrong, but can turn tragic when we don't know the way to peace.

The 'balcony scene'...?

Be a window scene and show love that is out of reach literally and metaphorically.

Young love is?

... "a thousand times good night".

Best masquerade mask?

I always like Venetian masks, which stem from *Commedia dell'arte*.

If you were Juliet...

I would don a cross-gender disguise and follow Romeo to Mantua.

AUGUST: OSAGE COUNTY

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AUGUST: OSAGE COUNTY

By Tracy Letts

Maidment Theatre
2 – 25 Sept

Beverley Weston is an academic and minor poet of some renown. He's also an alcoholic. When he suddenly goes missing, the Weston clan returns to the family home to confront their lies, secrets, guilt and the lacerating tongue of their pill-popping mother Violet.

SILO THEATRE Auckland

ASSASSINS

Music & Lyrics by
Stephen Sondheim

Book by John Weidman
Concert Chamber
24 Jul – 14 Aug

America is the land of the free and the home of the brave. But some sing a different kind of national anthem. This chorus line has tried, with and without success, to assassinate the President of the United States. They want to be known and have their fair share of fame. One man's American dream can become a nation's nightmare.

CENTREPOINT THEATRE Palmerston North

DEAD TRAGIC

By Michael
Nicholas Williams
10 Jul – 21 Aug

Featuring more than 20 hits (and misses) from the 50s, 60s and 70s, this cult musical return with the original cast. Who shot who at the Copacabana? What did they do to Maria? Why did Billy Joe MacAllister jump off the Tallahatchie Bridge? These mysteries of pop music may be answered by DEAD TRAGIC.

BATS THEATRE Wellington

DOG SEES GOD
3 – 14 Aug

This award-winning show exploits the all-grown-up characters from Charles Schulz's beloved comic strip. The endearing characters which stamped an indelible mark on kids and adults for decades are given a hedonistic re-rub. When CB's long-loved dog dies from rabies, the poor fella begins to question the existence of an afterlife.

CIRCA THEATRE Wellington

THE GREAT GATSBY

By F. Scott Fitzgerald
Adapted for the stage by
Ken Duncum
31 Jul – 28 Aug

Over a shimmering summer on Long Island, Nick Carraway is exposed to a restless world of feverish excitement and elegant romance of the Jazz Age. Entangled in the fatal attraction of beautiful Daisy Buchanan and the mysterious Jay Gatsby, Nick embarks on a devastating discovery which threatens to explode his American Dream.

DOWNSTAGE THEATRE Wellington

THE DECEMBER BROTHER

By Tim Spite & SEED
Theatre Company
12 Aug – 11 Sept

From the makers of PAUA and TURBINE, comes this story of how well do you actually know your family? Tim Spite and SEED Theatre Company bring together two contrasting stories that revolve around family, adoption and the impossibility of truth.

COURT THEATRE Christchurch

THE SUNSHINE BOYS

By Neil Simon
24 Jul – 4 Sept

After forty years in vaudeville, the veteran comedy duo of Al Lewis and Willy Clark "The Sunshine Boys" split up, vowing never to speak nor see each other again. When an irresistible television offer forces the two ageing entertainers to mount a reunion, the stage is set for a perfectly-formed, very funny comedy.

FORTUNE THEATRE Dunedin

A SONG TO SING O

By Melvyn Morrow
31 Jul – 1 Aug

A SONG TO SING O by Melvyn Morrow, tells the story of Gilbert and Sullivan and George Grossmith, the Savoy patter man. The musical does two dazzling things: it gives Gilbert and Sullivan fans a chocolate box full of their favourites; and for the addicts, it gives them something very special and exciting – George Grossmith's own songs.

To find out what else is going on in Auckland be sure to read the latest copy of

Metro

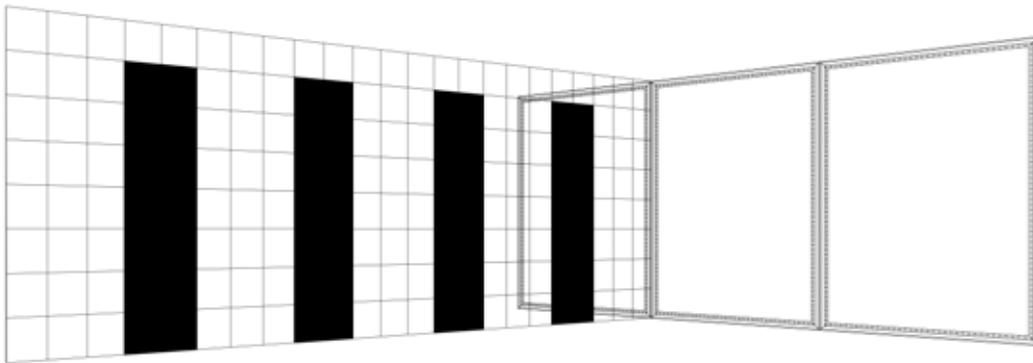
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