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MIDDLE aged SPREAD



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MIDDLEAGE SPREAD

BY ROGER HALL

Welcome to the first professional production of "*Middle Age Spread*" to be staged in Auckland in nearly twenty five years.

Many of you would have seen Roger Hall's classic home-grown comedy when it first came around back in late 1970s; an innocent time when fondue, shagpile, ponchos and polyester were the epitome of cool. Hard to believe I know.

In keeping this production true to its original time frame, Director Colin McColl does more than deliver a superb insight into a slice of New Zealand's social history. He deftly shows that while fashions and fads quickly change, the important things in life will always remain eternal.

Things like honesty, integrity, loyalty, friendship....and your vehicle's trade-in value on a new Volvo ... to name but a few.

Enjoy the show.

Robert Nash

General Manager, Volvo



Playfair in association with the Pohutakava Company present

Stuart Devenie
In Tom Scott's
the daylight
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Directed by
William Walker
Design by
Sean Coyle



"Play of the year." - Sunday Star Times
"Scott has created another of NZ's funniest and cruelest men, and the funniest piece of theatre in a very long time." - New Zealand Herald

Howick	Howick Little Theatre	9 - 13 July
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MICHAEL HURST + ELIZABETH HAWTHORNE + ANNA HEWLETT



MAIDMENT THEATRE MAY 23RD - JUNE 14TH
BOOKINGS PH: (09) 3082383 (TRANSACTION FEE MAY APPLY)
MON, TUES, 6.30 PM WED-SAT 8.00 PM

DIRECTOR MICHAEL HURST ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR CHRISTIAN PENNY
DESIGNER JOHN VERRY COSTUME DESIGNER JUDITH GROZIER
LIGHTING DESIGNER DAVID EVERFIELD ORIGINAL MUSIC BY JASON SMITH



THE LARGE GROUP ACKNOWLEDGES WITH GRATITUDE THE SUPPORT OF BRENT WOOLTON

**Congratulations,
you've just
sat down to
the worst
dinner party
in town.**

We're proud to present Auckland Theatre Company's
season of Roger Hall's 'Middle Age Spread'.



ONE STEP AHEAD



ASB BANK is a long standing supporter of the Arts, both within Auckland and nationwide. This is our thrid year as Gold Sponsor of the Auckland Theatre Company, an organisation, like ourselves, committed to delivering excellence. Once again audiences will be delighted with another award winning production. We are proud to support this season of Roger Hall's Middle Age Spread.

Hugh Burrett
Managing Director
ASB BANK

COMING SOON.....

The Telecom Season of **the world's wife** Auckland Premiere
By Carol Ann Duffy

Directed By **Miranda Harcourt**

With **Rachel House, Elizabeth McRae, Geraldine Brophy and Fiona Samuel**

Music Composed By **Don McGlashan**
Music Performed By **Don McGlashan & David Long**

Costumes By **Marilyn Sainty**

"stunning performances...exceedingly funny" SUNDAY STAR TIMES, FEB 2002

"girlpower twists on notorious men" THE DOBBINION, FEB 2002

"succulent entertainment" NATIONAL BUSINESS REVIEW, MARCH 2002

Three exceptional actresses bring Carol Ann Duffy's slim volume of poetry to life in this sparkling piece of contemporary theatre.

The 'other halves' of famous men from history, literature, fable and myth take the stage with amazing tales to tell. Mrs Rip van Winkle, Queen Kong, Frau Freud, Mrs Quasimodo, Anne Hathaway, Medusa.... with salty wit, damning truth and luminous beauty they tell it how it is and always was. Their stories are the stuff of which fairy tales, tabloid headlines and legends are made. This is intimate theatre of epic proportions.





ATC and Volvo welcome you to Roger Hall's *Middle Age Spread*, the third production in this the 2003 season of Stage...



Arguably Roger Hall has contributed more to New Zealand Theatre than any other individual. His productions have not only appeared in every theatre in the country they have saved a few of them, more than once. His reputation in the industry as 'THE THEATRE SAVER' is for good reason, a sell out season is almost guaranteed with a Hall in the programme. Not just in this country either, the play you are about to see is the only one this country has produced that has made it to London's West End.

One of the reasons for this success is Roger's skill in creating characters so recognisable to the audience. To watch a Hall play is to glimpse ourselves on stage, at our funniest for certain but also at our most tragic. *Middle Age Spread* is a dinner party that nobody wants to be at, six characters struggling through their lives as best they can, that they never find themselves funny is exactly what makes this play so hilarious.

Colin McColl, John Parker and Elizabeth Whiting, the creative team behind *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead* and *Waiting for Godot* have joined with lighting designer Steve Marshall to create this astounding production of *Middle Age Spread*. Twenty-six years after its first production it still has you clutching at your sides and wiping away the tears.

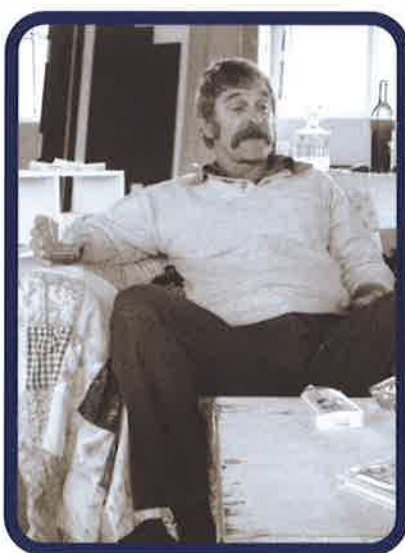
We welcome back Geraldine Brophy, Stuart Devenie, Greg Johnson and Roy Snow to the ATC stage, and are excited that they are joined by Robyn Malcolm and Catherine Wilkin, both making their ATC debut as part of this very talented and incredibly funny cast.

The applications for Artistic Director have now closed and the selection process is underway, it is with much anticipation that we look forward to the next stage here at the Auckland Theatre Company. Rest assured that whoever leads us into 2004 ATC will continue to create theatre of the highest standard for you, just like the piece you are about to see tonight.

So for now, slip back to the seventies for a dinner party that will never make it through to the coffee.

oliver driver

Acting Artistic Director



PLAYWRIGHT
ROGER HALL

Roger Hall is New Zealand's most successful playwright. The extraordinary successes of plays such as *Glide Time*, *Middle Age Spread* and *Take A Chance on Me*, the stage musical *Footrot Flats*, and the television series *Gliding On* and *Market Forces* and more recently *Spin Doctors* have made him a household name. His plays have broken many New Zealand box-office records – indeed his plays have saved several of the country's theatres many times over – and there is almost always at least one of Roger's plays in production somewhere in New Zealand or Australia. Internationally, Roger's work has been performed in eight countries, including Britain where *Middle Age Spread* played on London's West End for fifteen months, and was named West End Comedy of the Year.

Born in Woodford Wells, Essex, England, Roger Hall arrived in New Zealand on Good Friday 1958, after a six-week voyage on board the *Captain Cook*. As a teachers college student he wrote for, and later edited, the college magazine *Student Opinion*, and became involved in the newly formed Downstage, New Zealand's first professional theatre. After teachers college, Roger spent time in the classroom, before leaving to work for School Publications as the editor of *Education*, the department's official magazine for teachers.

Although he had failed in an earlier attempt to convince Wellington's *Evening Post* to employ him as a film reviewer, Roger spent fifteen years writing revue sketches for stage and television, and contributed to TV series and had a one-off play televised, before starting on his first stage play, *A Hard Day at the Office*. It was [sensibly] renamed *Glide Time* and it opened more than twenty-five years ago, on August 11, 1976, at Wellington's newly-formed Circa Theatre. Set in an unidentified government

department, *Glide Time* created the joy of recognition among middle New Zealand that was to become the trademark of a Roger Hall play. The season sold out, and transferred to the 1200 seat Opera House where it packed out seven nights. Initially turned down by Auckland's Mercury Theatre, a new director accepted the work and it was so popular it ran for three seasons.

The year after *Glide Time* was first staged, Hall wrote another landmark play, *Middle Age Spread*. Written partly in Janet Frame's old room at Otago University during Hall's time as the Robert Burns Fellow, it had sell-out productions throughout the country and then played on London's West End for over a year, and was subsequently made into a film.

A year or two later, *Glide Time* became the television series *Gliding On*, which ran for five years and became a classic of New Zealand television, and made Roger Hall a household name. And that was just the beginning.

In the last twenty-five years, Roger Hall has written and co-written well over 150 scripts. *Glide Time*, *Middle Age Spread*, *The Share Club*, *Conjugal Rites*, *Social Climbers*, *Dirty Weekends* and *The Book Club* all show Roger's acute understanding of middle New Zealanders' concerns and interests. He was one of the first New Zealanders to tell our stories on stage, and his work has paved the way for other New Zealand storytelling. He remains very involved in New Zealand theatre, where the generosity and support he shows to other performing arts practitioners, especially writers, is well known.

Auckland Theatre Company have produced five Roger Hall plays since it was formed in 1992: *By Degrees*, *Social Climbers*, *Market Forces*, *The Book Club* and the world premiere of *Take A Chance on Me*.

1977 Here was the news

Rob Muldoon was in his first term as Prime Minister.

Elvis Presley died.

The average wage was \$119 a week.

A loaf of bread was 30c, milk 10c and an average house in Whangarei was \$25,000.

Abortion of still illegal in NZ, hence the "weekender" in Aussie.

David Lange was elected to his first seat.

Star Wars and *Saturday Night Fever* became two of the most popular films ever!

The legal leaving age for school was 15, also the legal Drivers Licensing age with no restrictions.

The God Boy won the Feltex Award for Best Play.

Middle Age Spread was launched by Circa, and consequently in London where it received The Society of West End Theatre Comedy of the Year Award presented by Sir John Gielgud.

Middle Age Spread was nominated for the award alongside Michael Frayn's *Clouds* and Richard Harris' *Outside Edge*.

It was the Queen's Silver Jubilee.

Glossary

STJC: Senior Teachers of Junior Classes, a mythical winged creature who lived in a mythical time when there were no teacher shortages.

The Joy of Sex: A book published largely by men, intended largely for women to turn them into paisley ties.

Milk Bottle: A 500ml glass receptacle which, when placed at the front gate with 10 cents at night, was found full of milk in the morning.

Values Party: Jeanette Fitzsimmons' Kindergarten.

SBX: A small book of physical exercises designed to make your waist as slim as the publication.

Jaycees: A voluntary organisation committed to helpful community work.

Wombles: large furry animals beloved of children – similar to Jaycees.

Karitane: 1. A community nurse who looked after infants.
2. A distinctive shade of beige.



BACKGROUND

'what we do, Elizabeth, is the dishes:' COLIN

When I start a play I never know how it will end. Nor do I know, otherwise where's the fun? When I typed the words, 'What we do, Elizabeth, is the dishes,' I knew there was no other possible ending.

A few months later, Circa arranged a read-through. I went up to Wellington and turned up at the Harris Street theatre where there was a cast and handful of Circa supporters as an audience. I was nervous and when it was over, anticipating unfavourable reaction, I said quickly, 'Not as good as *Glide Time*.' One of the Circa supporters, Bernard Kaiser, said quietly, 'It's better.' Circa scheduled *Middle Age Spread* for late November with Michael Haigh to direct.

Grant Tilly was Colin, the schoolteacher, the lead part; Dorothy McKegg his house-proud wife, Elizabeth. Ray Henwood was the philandering teachers' college lecturer Reg, with Jane Waddell as his long-suffering wife. Donna Akersten played Colin's lover, Judy with John Reid as Robert, the accountant.

In Circa's cramped space, the set changes were inevitably a major problem. The wretched cast had to do most of the shifting themselves (clearing china and drinks off tables, moving or rearranging furniture) and all of this in the dark. To cover these times, John Reid had hit on the idea of a slide sequence of the characters, showing them in their lives outside. The photos were taken by future film director Gaylene Preston.

'It's going in to the west end

The Lyric, Shaftesbury Avenue. That's the best one, because it's the closest to Piccadilly

Circus.' Jenne Casarotto of Douglas Rae management, Charing Cross Road.

For two mornings in a row, *Morning Report* on radio had items about the opening, and each time I woke up too late to hear it. People stopped me in the street to talk about the 'good' news, news I'd heard nothing about. The show had, as they say, mixed reviews, but more positive than negative. The *Daily Telegraph* was very guarded, but included the phrase 'Despite almost continual laughter' and I knew that the words 'almost continual laughter' would be posted outside the theatre.

The most thoughtful and analytical review came from Harold Hobson, then no longer writing for the *Observer* alas, but for a quarterly magazine, *Drama*. As far as I can remember, he was the only one who picked that all the political statements that I agreed with were given to Reg, a shit. And he quoted the last line about the dishes, commenting, 'This is of a wisdom Voltaire himself would not have despised.' Hobson's quote was not the one posted outside the theatre.

BBC Television did a feature about it, with coverage of the first night and a sullen and very effeminate audience member giving his verdict to camera: I give it six weeks.'

But reasonable reviews, plus the stars, were enough to ensure that it would have a decent run. The plain fact was that the public were going to see Richard O'Briens and Paul Eddington (of *The Good Life*) and the vehicle didn't much matter. It was my extreme good fortune that they'd chosen *Middle Age Spread*



The play's been nominated for a SWET AWARD!

JOHN GALE

The SWET Awards (Society of West End Theatre Award, now known as the Olivier Award) were to be held at the Café de Paris on the Sunday before Christmas. I went to Moss Bros to hire the dinner suit, and set out. I got out at Oxford Circus and walked down Regent Street crowded with people enjoying the Christmas lights, and into Café de Paris.

I was introduced to Peter Barkworth, the MC for the evening. 'Ah yes,' he murmured, 'I'm reading your name out later.' A jolt; did that mean? No, simply that he knew I was nominated. I unashamedly stared at the stars. There was Alan Bates and Tom Conti. I wanted to have someone to nudge. There was Judi Dench, and Dianna Rigg who was stunning.

At our table were some of the cast members plus others from John Gale productions. I sat next to Ian Lavender of *Dad's Army* fame. At the next table was Michael Frayn, a contender for the same award with his play *Clouds*, and I introduced myself. Up until then, I had assumed there was no chance of the award and hadn't cared very much about it. It was enough simply to be there. But on the menu cover there was a photo of the award itself, a very handsome piece of sculpture. Suddenly I desperately wanted to win.

Someone at our table said, 'There's a rumour

going round that we've won. You better have a few words ready.' I could think of little else, and went over and over the 'few words' in my mind. In the gents I had a pee next to Warren Mitchell.

There were numerous awards and between them there was an extract from current shows, a cabaret of top stars. Of course, since the show was televised, there were in effect trailers advertising each show.

Comedy of the Year was the third to last to be presented; the waiting seemed for ever. Then it was announced.

'The contenders: *Middle Age Spread*, *Clouds* and *Outside Edge*.' The envelope was duly opened. '*Middle Age Spread*.' I murmured a totally insincere condolence to Michael Frayn and went up on stage to receive the award from Sir John Gielgud. In my nervous state I didn't hear a word that Peter Barkworth was saying, which was that I was from New Zealand. My first words to the audience were, 'Most of you won't know this but I'm from New Zealand.' I gave the obligatory thanks to the cast, producer and director, and then went on to thank the two theatres that helped me get started: Circa and Downstage. The whole show was televised and broadcast the next night on the BBC, and it was a pity that it was never shown here, as I would have liked my thanks to the theatres to have been made public.

Excerpts from *Bums On Seats* by Roger Hall.
Published by Penguin Books [NZ] Ltd 1998

Auckland Theatre Company Proudly Presents the ASB BANK Season of

MIDDLEAGE SPREAD

BY ROGER HALL

CAST & ARTISTIC TEAM

Colin	Greg Johnson
Elizabeth	Geraldine Brophy
Reg	Stuart Devenie
Isobel	Catherine Wilkin
Robert	Roy Snow
Judy	Robyn Malcolm
Director	Colin McColl
Set Designer	John Parker
Lighting Designer	Steve Marshall
Costume Designer	Elizabeth Whiting
Stage Manager	Emily Danby
Lighting Operator	Rhed Clift
Sound Operator	Conan Richards
Flyman	Wayne Williams
Assistant Stage Manager	Graham Bedwell
Props Master	Stafford Allpress
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AUCKLAND THEATRE COMPANY

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General Manager	Gregory Heap
Production Manager	T.O. Robertson
Marketing Manager	Helen Bartle
Head Stage Manager	Frith Walker
Box Office Manager	Alison Reid
Accounts	Alex Gortchinski
Education	Sarah Peters
Literary Manager	Colin Moy
Box Office Assistant	Andi Crown

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PLAY INFORMATION

This is the third production of the Volvo 2003 Season of *Stage. Middle Age Spread* previewed on Thursday 15 May 2003 at Sky City Theatre.

Middle Age Spread is approximately two hours, with a 15 minute interval.

Please remember to switch off all cellphones, pagers and watch alarms.

By arrangement with Playmarket.

THE CONTEXT

The dinner party, which is given in August 1977 on the last day of the school term, is divided into four parts. The scenes in between take place during the weeks which precede the dinner party.

SCENE 1	Late August – the dinner party
SCENE 2	Ten weeks earlier – the sitting room
SCENE 3	A few days after Scene 2 – Judy's bedsitter
SCENE 4	The dinner party continued
SCENE 5	Six weeks earlier – the bedroom
SCENE 6	A few weeks after Scene 5 – Judy's bedsitter

INTERVAL

SCENE 7	The dinner party continued
SCENE 8	Three weeks earlier – the sitting room
SCENE 9	A few days after scene 8 – Judy's bedsitter
SCENE 10	The dinner party continued





GERALDINE BROPHY

Elizabeth



One of New Zealand's most renowned and respected actors, Geraldine Brophy most recently appeared in *The World's Wife*, by Carol Ann Duffy.

Her last play for Auckland Theatre Company with ATC 2second Unit was the critically acclaimed *Small God* by Jacques Strauss.

Previous work with Auckland Theatre Company includes *Noises Off*, *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead*, *Arcadia* and *Molly Sweeney*. In 1998, she won the Chapman Tripp Award for Best Actress in a Supporting Role for *Tzigane* (Downstage). She has worked for most NZ theatre companies, most notably as a Court Theatre member for 10 years. She first appeared on television in the telefeature *Home Movie* for which she was named Best Actress at the NZ Film & Television Awards in 1998. She became a core cast member of *Shortland Street* as receptionist Moira Crombie and was a finalist as Best Actress for the role at the TV Guide NZ Television Awards in 2000.

Geraldine Brophy's first script of *The Viagra Monologues* was presented as part of ATC's Playreading series this year.



GREG JOHNSON

Colin

Greg Johnson won the 1998 New Zealand Film and Television Award for Best Supporting Actor in *CityLife* and was nominated for Best Support Actor for *Marlin Bay II*.

A well-known face to local television viewers having played the character of Dean Crombie in *Shortland Street*, Greg has also performed in numerous other television series and telemovies including *Hercules*, *The Chosen*, *Citylife*, *Coverstory*, *Plainclothes* and *Letter to Blanche*.

His feature film credits include *Broken English*, *The Whole of the Moon*, *The End of the Golden Weather* and *The Piano*.

This is Greg's second outing with Auckland Theatre Company having appeared in Roger Hall's *Take a Chance on Me*.

"A really frightening thing about middle age is the knowledge that you'll grow out of it."



STUART DEVINIE

Reg



Stuart Devenie is one of New Zealand's most accomplished actors with a career spanning over three decades. Last year for Auckland Theatre Company, Stuart performed in the World Premiere of Tom Scott's *The Daylight Atheist* and ATC 2second Unit's *Small God* by Jacques Strauss. *Small God* featured as ATC's first radio play on National Radio this year.

ATC Theatre credits include director for *The God Boy* and roles in *Take A Chance On Me*, *Copenhagen*, *Serial Killers*, *The Cripple of Inishmaan*, *Twelve Angry Men*, *Uncle Vanya*, *Molly Sweeney* and ATC 2second Unit's *The Atrocity*.

Other credits include *The New Rocky Horror Picture Show*. He's appeared in numerous television shows including *Jack of all Trades*, *Hercules*, *Market Forces*, TV One's comedy series *Willy Nilly* and TV2's *Shortland Street*. Stuart is about to embark on a North Island tour of *The Daylight Atheist*.



CATHERINE WILKIN

Isobel

Catherine trained as a student at the Mercury Theatre, Auckland in the early seventies.

Since then she has worked extensively in theatre, television, film and radio in New Zealand and Australia.

In Australia recent theatre credits include *The Misanthrope*, *Burnt Piano* (Melbourne Theatre Company) and *The Goldberg Variations* (Playbox Theatre). In New Zealand, *Hedda Gabler* (Downstage Theatre) which toured to Oslo, Edinburgh, Covent Garden and Sydney Festivals, *King Lear* (Theatre at Large), *Lady Windermere's Fan* (Circa Theatre) and most recently *Ghosts* (Court Theatre) directed by Colin McColl.

Television credits include: *Flying Doctors*, *Gloss*, *Embassy*, *Blue Heelers*, *Marlin Bay*, *Duggan*, *Halifax* and *The Chosen*.

She has just finished the third series of *McLeod's Daughters* and the second of the children's series *The Saddle Club*, both of which are currently screening in New Zealand.



ROBYN MALCOLM Judy



Robyn graduated from Toi Whakaari, The New Zealand Drama School, in 1987 and since then has had a varied working life in the theatre and on both sized screens.

She has performed in over 25 productions in Wellington, many times with director Colin McColl at Downstage Theatre. Production highlights include: Wilde's *The Importance of Being Earnest*, Brecht's *The Threepenny Opera*, Lorca's *The House of Bernada Alba* and Carol Churchill's *Serious Money*.

For five years, Robyn played the part of Nurse Ellen Crozier on *Shortland Street*, for which she was nominated Best Actress in the 1998 Film and Television Awards. During this time she had her first Auckland theatre experience playing Emelia in Michael Hurst's production of *Othello* at the Watershed Theatre.

In 1999 Robyn co-founded the New Zealand Actors Company with Tim Balme, Simon Bennett and Katie Woolfe and for two and a half years toured shows around New Zealand: *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, Roger Hall's *A Way of Life* and *Leah*, an adaptation of King Lear.

During this time she also revisited Downstage in Miranda Harcourt's production of *Much Ado about Nothing* playing Beatrice and then in Colin McColl's production of *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof* playing Maggie the Cat.

Other recent television and film credits include the television film *Clare* for which she was nominated again for Best Actress at the 2002 Film and Television Awards, *The Lord of the Rings: The Two Towers*, Gaylene Preston's *Perfect Strangers*, yet to be released, and a small part in Christine Jeffs' film *Ted and Sylvia*.

Most recently, however, she has been dishing out advice in the television show, *How's Life?*, and the highlight of 2002 was her televised excursion to Vietnam in *Intrepid Journeys*.

Middle Age Spread is Robyn's first show with ATC.

ROY SNOW Robert



Roy is recognisable to many from his role as Matt on *Shortland Street*. In addition to being a regular on the TV series, Roy has performed on stage in a number of productions including the smash-hit *The Rocky Horror Show*, *Hair*, *Cabaret* and *Death of a Salesman* for Auckland Theatre Company. Other credits include *Les Miserables*, *Godspell*, *Blondel*, *Grease* and *The Mikado*. Roy has also appeared in episodes of *Xena Warrior Princess* and had lead roles in several short films, including *The Incubus* and *The Package*.

COLIN MCCOLL director



Leading New Zealand theatre director, Colin co-founded Taki Rua Theatre in 1983. He was Artistic Director of Downstage Theatre in Wellington, 1984-1992 and has directed many première productions of New Zealand plays, the most recent of which was Victor Rodger's *Ranterstantrum* for the NZ Arts Festival.

Colin has considerable reputation for his innovative treatment of classic plays – particularly the works of Chekhov and Ibsen – and has directed for many leading New Zealand and Australian theatre companies, the Norwegian National Theatre and the Dutch National Theatre. Colin won Best Director for ATC's 2001 production of *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead* and has won Best Director at the Chapman Tripp Theatre Awards several times – most recently for his production of *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf*.

For ATC, Colin has directed *Waiting for Godot*, *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead*, *Serial Killers*, *The Seagull*, *Uncle Vanya*, *Skylight*, *Daughters of Heaven* and *Honour*. Opera directing credits include *La Boheme* (Wellington City Opera), *The Marriage of Figaro* and *The Prodigal Child* for the NBR NZ Opera.

DIRECTOR'S NOTE

I've known Roger Hall since the Sixties when his late night satirical revues, *Knickers*, would have Downstage audiences lining up around the block to get in! Nearly forty years later and he still knows how to get us laughing about ourselves.

You see this play on the page and you say "oh is this really funny? – it's too close to the bone, too real, audiences are never going to laugh!" But don't underestimate Roger Hall. He knows the NZ psyche and he knows how to make theatre magic! Two minutes into a performance audiences are beside themselves with laughter; the actors are flying, there's a shared delight at recognition, the knowledge that "yes, damn it, this is us!"

Middle Age Spread is like Bergman's *Scenes From A Marriage* put through a laugh machine!

JOHN PARKER designer



John gained an MA degree in Ceramics from the Royal College of Art in London in 1975, was Head of Design at Theatre Corporate from 1983-86 and was Resident Designer Mercury Theatre from 1986-89.

A freelancer since 1989, John's theatre work includes *Chess*, *Cat On A Hot Tin Roof*, *Serial Killers*, *Into the Woods*, *Decadence*, *On the Razzle*, *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead* and *Chicago* among others.

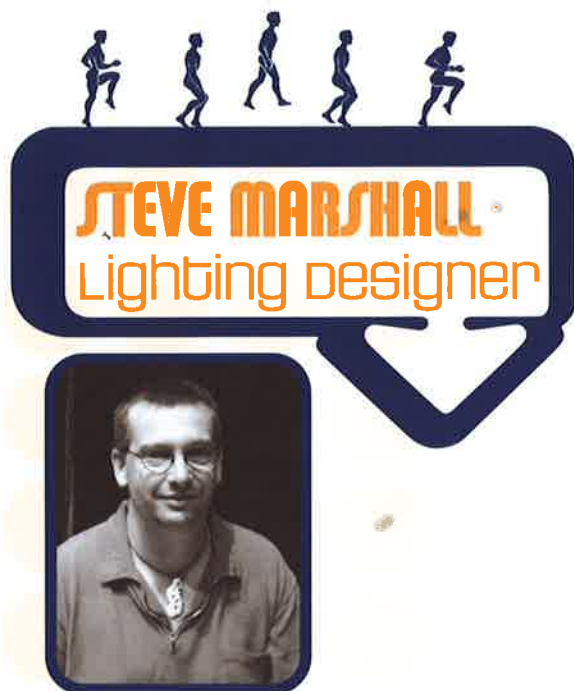
Most recently, John designed the set for ATC's sell-out hit *The Rocky Horror Show*, *Waiting for Godot* and *Noises Off*. For the NBR New Zealand Opera he has designed *The Marriage of Figaro* and *The Barber of Seville*.

He also designed for *The Louis Vuitton Ball*, *The America's Cup Ball* and was Installation Designer for *Bendon's Next To Nothing*, *Bellsouth Pharaohs* and *Precious Legacy* for the Auckland Museum.

The *Middle Age Spread* of the title has been conceptualised, abstracted and stylised to be able to suggest the physical and mental aspects behind a mid life crisis.

The concept for the set was to pare away the period veneer and all the inessentials to focus purely on the relationships between the six characters, much as film director Ingmar Bergman did in his *Scenes From A Marriage*.

All this takes place within the context of NZ Art of the late 70s.



Steve Marshall is the head of the Performance Technology programme at the School of Performing and Screen Arts, UNITEC. He is a Lighting Designer and Production Manager, and was instrumental in the redevelopment of Auckland's Maidment Theatre from 1991 to 1998 and Wellington's BATS Theatre from 1989 to 1991.

In 2002, Steve designed *The Play About the Baby*, his debut for Auckland Theatre Company, and a production of a new Opera, *Galileo*.

THOUGHTS ON DESIGNING MIDDLE AGE SPREAD:

It is a thrill to be working once again with Colin, John and Elizabeth and, of course Auckland Theatre Company. *Middle Age Spread* is a play about my parent's generation and the situations are as real for me now as they were then, especially as I approach a certain age. Often it is called 'a play of its time' however there is much about the state of education in New Zealand then, which rings true today. Anyway flares and side burns are back in! But not bean bags and fondue, I hope.



Elizabeth works with NBR New Zealand Opera, Auckland Theatre Company, Royal NZ Ballet, Human Garden, Douglas Wright, Auckland Ballet, Black Grace and Mika Haka.

Most recently Elizabeth designed costumes for Auckland Theatre Company's productions of *The Shape of Things*, *The Rocky Horror Show*, *Waiting for Godot*, *Stones in his Pockets* and *The Bellbird*. For the NBR New Zealand Opera she has designed *The Marriage of Figaro* and *Falstaff*. Elizabeth has also been costume designer for ATC's productions of *Hair*, *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead*, *The Blue Room*, *Into The Woods* and *Cabaret*.

THOUGHTS ON DESIGNING MIDDLE AGE SPREAD:

A trip down memory lane! I was in Zambia in 1976-77 when *Middle Age Spread* was first produced in NZ. I came back to hear of a play that was part of the New Zealand psyche. However, this is the first time I have ever seen it performed.

As the design team wanted to emphasise the content of the play rather than the period nature of its content, I have kept the costuming comparatively subtle. The thrill of recognition will still be there but somewhat understated.

Enjoy!

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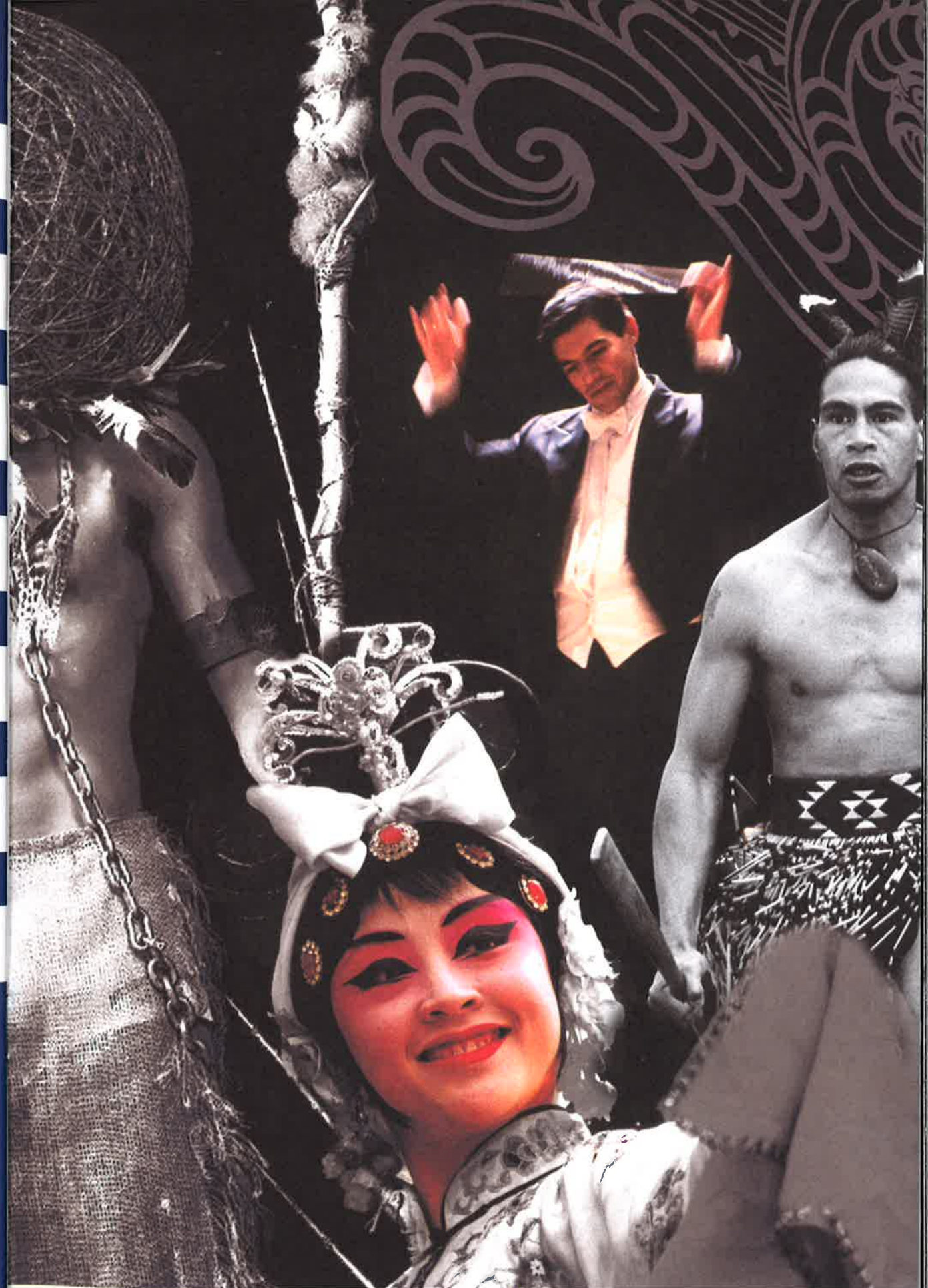
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