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THE bookclub

On behalf of us all at Auckland Theatre Company, it is my pleasure to welcome you to the penultimate production of the 1999 CULTURE OF DESIRE SEASON, Roger Hall's THE BOOK CLUB.

For nearly a quarter of a century, Roger Hall has served as chronicler of life in New Zealand. From GLIDE TIME to MARKET FORCES, MIDDLE AGE SPREAD to CONJUGAL RIGHTS, he has demonstrated an uncanny knack for discerning and distilling to their comedic essence the social phenomena that have shaped our country. His work has played on film, television, radio and of course, the stages of every New Zealand theatre company. His international success on the London stage and small screen and the sale of the play you are about to see to Australia is further testament to his ability to create topical predicaments for recognisable characters that address some universal home-truths. That he can achieve all this while making us laugh places his name at the forefront of New Zealand theatre's role of honour.



We are pleased to welcome Donna Akersten back to ATC after her vivid turn in last year's HONOUR. To guide her through a new matrimonial dilemma (though with a similar literary twist), we extend similar salutations to director Cathy Downes and designer John Parker, the creative team behind this year's earlier smash-hit AMY'S VIEW. Finally, we are delighted to welcome as lighting designer Jo Kilgour, who nearly six years ago served as lighting operator on ATC's 2nd production, DAUGHTERS OF HEAVEN.

As ever, we salute our cultural partners. We gratefully acknowledge the continuing support of TVNZ, Rydges Hotel, Montana Wines, NewstalkZB, Air New Zealand, Consultus, Baycorp Holdings Ltd., BDO and Canon. Tonight's performance is made possible through major funding from Creative New Zealand and Auckland City's Arts Alive Programme. ATC is indebted to Greg Innes and his team at The Edge for its support.

We trust that you enjoy tonight's offering from New Zealand's favourite playwright and look forward to seeing you at ATC's final production for the season, year, decade, century and millenium, CABARET, which opens at Sky City Theatre on 11 November.

Simon Prast
PRODUCER

AUCKLAND
THEATRE
COMPANY



RYDGES
AUCKLAND

Dear Auckland Theatre Company Patron,

Books are great company - they keep you entertained, enthralled and awake at night!

As a hotel, we're in the hospitality business which is also about great company. So when you've torn yourself away from a good book (or play!) come and enjoy ours.

Like a book we can also feed your soul - at Circa Restaurant, under the guidance of our award-winning British chef, Iain Joyce. Circa Restaurant offers a New York Style with Pacific Rhythms, promising all the excitement that Deborah from THE BOOK CLUB longs for so much. With the right company I'm sure you'll find that Circa Restaurant can keep you entertained and enthralled through the night just as the right book can.

Roger Hall is one of New Zealand's most notable playwrights and we at Rydges Auckland are thrilled to welcome this production of THE BOOK CLUB to the City of Sails.

John Clarke
General Manager
Rydges Auckland

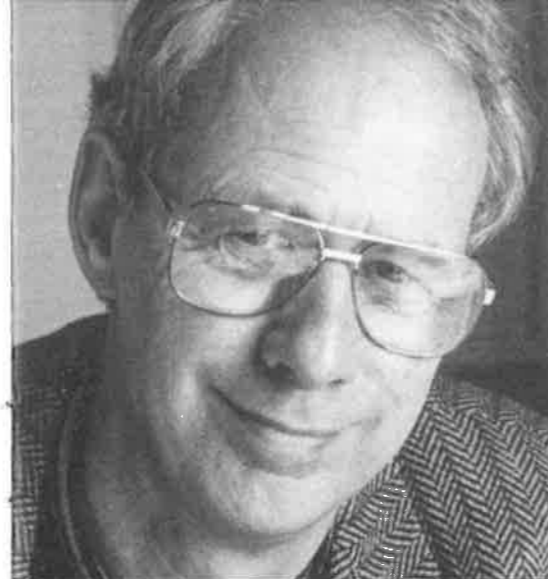


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ROGER HALL

Writing about the origins of THE BOOK CLUB, Hall noted that it arose from two things: 'the first, fairly obviously, was the phenomenon book clubs. They are hugely popular here, Australia, the UK and USA (where they are considered the literary equivalent of quilting sessions, known as stitch and bitch). Several friends belong, and I discovered that one of their main attractions was that yes, people talked about that month's book, but conversations nearly always moved onto food, travel, relationships and putting the world to rights. And that nearly every club had someone who never read the book. The other spur was the love of reading itself. Reading is probably the most popular pastime of all (one day television will rediscover this, just as it recently rediscovered people like cooking programmes) and yet as far as I know the love of reading has never been covered as a topic on stage. For those of us for whom reading is a passion, how can real life ever match up to it!

If you hadn't been an actor/actress/director/designer what would you have been?

If I'd stayed in the UK I might have remained in insurance all my life; and in NZ I was a primary school teacher with ambitions to be a lecturer at Teachers' College (see my excellent autobiography *Bums on Seats* now in paperback).

What moment in your life decided your career in acting/directing/design?

A very long process (see my excellent autobiography *Bums on Seats* now in paperback). But a defining moment was when I was at the Eugene O'Neill Memorial Playwrights' Workshop in USA in 1975 and I thought to myself "I will write a play..." and *Glide Time* was the result.

What do you consider your greatest achievement?

My wonderful autobiography *Bums on..*. Oh, alright, my family. And surviving twenty plus years as a playwright. But if you want to know my favourite play, *By Degrees*.

Most memorable (worst/best/funniest) moment on stage?

During the Court Theatre's production of *Glide Time* and the door handle came off in an actor's hand. Not only was the moment bad it also ruined a later line in the play when Wally comes in with a note saying "Broken door handle" and the joke was supposed to be that the note was so old that the handle had been replaced years ago.

What was/is/could have been your favourite role?

I longed to play the title role in *Billy Liar*, but didn't get the part. I would have liked to have played John in *Glide Time*.

Who is your favourite playwright and why? Alan Bennett, Tom Stoppard to name but two. Bennett for his wit and humanity-his *Habeas Corpus* combines the plotting intricacies of a Feydeau farce together with lines as witty as Oscar Wilde's. Stoppard's *Arcadia* is an almost perfect play, and so many of his have given me enormous pleasure...*On the Razzle*, and *Travesties* for example. And, one day I'd love to see ATC do Hecht and MacArthur's *The Front Page*.

What is your favourite book and why?

Bums on Seats - Sorry, sorry, you left yourselves wide open there. Can't restrict it to one, so here's a quick list of great reads: *Illywhacker*; Robertson Davies' trilogies; *The Path Between the Seas* (about building the Panama Canal); *Changing Places* (ideal for the long plane journey). I could go on and on but right now, best of all, I have fallen in love with Patrick O'Brian's twenty novels set during the Napoleonic Wars, and am steadily and excitedly going through the lot. They are wonderful.

What is your idea of happiness? Going to bed with a good book; going to bed with a good cook.

What is the quality you most admire in yourself?

I am very conceited about my modesty. (Needless to say I've used this line in a play.) The ability to keep writing for theatre and TV despite huge numbers of rejections.

What is your favourite journey? Going to the bank.

What is your motto? Per ardua ad bank.

USA BOOK GROUP FAVORITES

The Reader by Bernhard Schlink
Snow Falling on Cedars by David Guterson
In Defense of Elitism by William A Henry
The Sparrow by Mary Doria Russell
Divine Secrets of the Ya-Ya Sisterhood by Rebecca Wells
Little Altars Everywhere by Rebecca Wells
The Poisonwood Bible by Barbara Kingsolver
84, Charing Cross Road by Helene Hanff
Beloved by Toni Morrison
Ladder of Years by Anne Tyler
In the Lake of the Woods by Tim O'Brien

Source: Book-group members and facilitators, *The Wall Street Journal*, Friday January 15, 1999.

TEN MOST POPULAR BOOKS IN NZ 1998

Random House NZ

Into the Wilderness by Sara Donati
The Horse Whisperer by Nicholas Evans
Don't Sweat the Small Stuff by Richard Carlson
Street Lawyer by John Grisham
Amsterdam by Ian McEwan
Notes from the Big Country by Bill Bryson
Memoirs of a Geisha by Arthur Golden
Genesis Code by John Case
The Ghost by Danielle Steel
Under the Tuscan Sun by Frances Mayes

HarperCollins Publishers NZ Ltd.

Angela's Ashes by Frank McCourt
Blakes and Sheds by Jim Hopkins/Julie Riley
The God of Small Things by Arundhati Roy
Why Men Don't Listen and Women Can't Read Maps by Allan Pease
Men are from Mars, Women are from Venus by John Gray
Wild Swans by Jung Chang
Bart Simpson's Guide to Life by Matt Groening
Eleventh Commandment by Jeffery Archer
Lord of the Rings by JRR Tolkien
The Demon Profession by Michael Laws

Literary Awards

The Pulitzer Prize

In the latter years of the 19th century, Joseph Pulitzer stood out as the very embodiment of American journalism. Pulitzer was the first to call for the training of journalists, at the university level, in a school of journalism. And certainly, the lasting influence of the Pulitzer Prizes on journalism, literature, music, and drama is to be attributed to his visionary acumen. In writing his 1904 will, which made provision for the establishment of the Pulitzer Prizes as an incentive to excellence, Pulitzer specified solely four awards in journalism, four in letters and drama, one for education, and

four traveling scholarships. In letters, prizes were to go to an American novel, an original American play performed in New York, a book on the history of the United States, an American biography, and a history of public service by the press. But, sensitive to the dynamic progression of his society Pulitzer made provision for broad changes in the system of awards. He established an overseer advisory board and willed it "power in its discretion to suspend or to change any subject or subjects, substituting, however, others in their places, if in the judgment of the board such suspension, changes, or substitutions shall be conducive to the

public good or rendered advisable by public necessities, or by reason of change of time." He also empowered the board to withhold any award where entries fell below its standards of excellence. The assignment of power to the board was such that it could also overrule the recommendations for awards made by the juries subsequently set up in each of the categories. Since the inception of the prizes in 1917, the board, later renamed the Pulitzer Prize Board, has increased the number of awards to 21 and introduced poetry, music, and photography as subjects, while adhering to the spirit of the founder's will and its intent.



OUR BOOK CLUB Donna, Cathy, John, Jo, Roger Hall, Danielle Butler (Stage Manager), Steven Morrison (Lighting & Sound Operator) and Amy Drury (ATC Marketing).

1999 Winners

Letters, Drama, and Music

FICTION: *The Hours* by Michael Cunningham

DRAMA: *Wit* by Margaret Edson

HISTORY: *Gotham: A History of New York City to 1898* by Edwin G. Burrows and Mike Wallace

BIOGRAPHY: *Lindbergh* by A. Scott Berg

POETRY: *Blizzard of One* by Mark Strand

GENERAL NON-FICTION: *Annals of the Former World* by John McPhee

MUSIC: Concerto for Flute, Strings and Percussion by Melinda Wagner

SPECIAL AWARD: Edward Kennedy "Duke" Ellington

The Booker McConnell

Referred to colloquially as the "Booker," this literary prize is awarded to the best full-length novel written in English by a citizen of the UK, the Commonwealth, Eire, Pakistan or South Africa. Publishers are invited to submit up to two entries per year, and a panel of judges, usually composed of prominent critics, authors, publishers, and academics, short-lists these entries to six titles before choosing the winner.

The novels shortlisted for the 1999 Booker prize are:

Disgrace by J.M. Coetzee

Fasting, Feasting by Anita Desai

Headlong by Michael Frayn

Our Fathers by Andrew O'Hagan

The Map of Love by Ahdaf Soueif

The Blackwater Lightship by Colm Toibin

Winners 1990-1998

1998 *Amsterdam* by Ian McEwan

1997 *The God of Small Things* by Arundhati Roy

1996 *Last Orders* by Graham Swift

1995 *The Ghost Road* by Pat Barker

1994 *How Late It Was, How Late* by James Kelman

1993 *Paddy Clark Ha Ha Ha* by Roddy Doyle

1992 *The English Patient* by Michael Ondaatje (co-winner)

Sacred Hunger by Barry Unsworth (co-winner)

1991 *The Famished Road* by Ben Okri

1990 *Possession* by A. S. Byatt

The Orange Prize

Established in 1996, the Orange Prize for Fiction is one of the most remarkable cultural success stories of the decade. It is the UK's largest annual literary award for a single novel and has become one of the most prestigious and influential awards in the literary calendar. The aim of the Orange Prize for Fiction is not only to celebrate novels of excellence, originality and accessibility but also to promote women writers to as wide a range of male and female readers as possible. The Prize is run by a Management Committee, administered by Book Trust and sponsored by Orange, the national digital wirefree phone service. The annual prize money of £30,000 - and a bronze figurine created by Grizel Niven known as the "Bessie" - are anonymously endowed.

Winners 1996-1997

1997 *Fugitive Pieces* by Anne Michaels

1996 *A Spell of Winter* by Helen Dunmore

The Whitbread Prize

Established by Whitbread Breweries in 1971, the prize is administered by the Booksellers Association of Great Britain and Ireland and is for the best work of fiction written by an author who has lived in Great Britain or Ireland for over three years.

Winners 1990- 1998

1998 *Leading the Cheers* by Justin Cartwright

1997 *Quarantine* by Jim Crace

1996 *Everyman for Himself* by Beryl Bainbridge

1995 *The Moor's Last Sigh* by Salman Rushdie

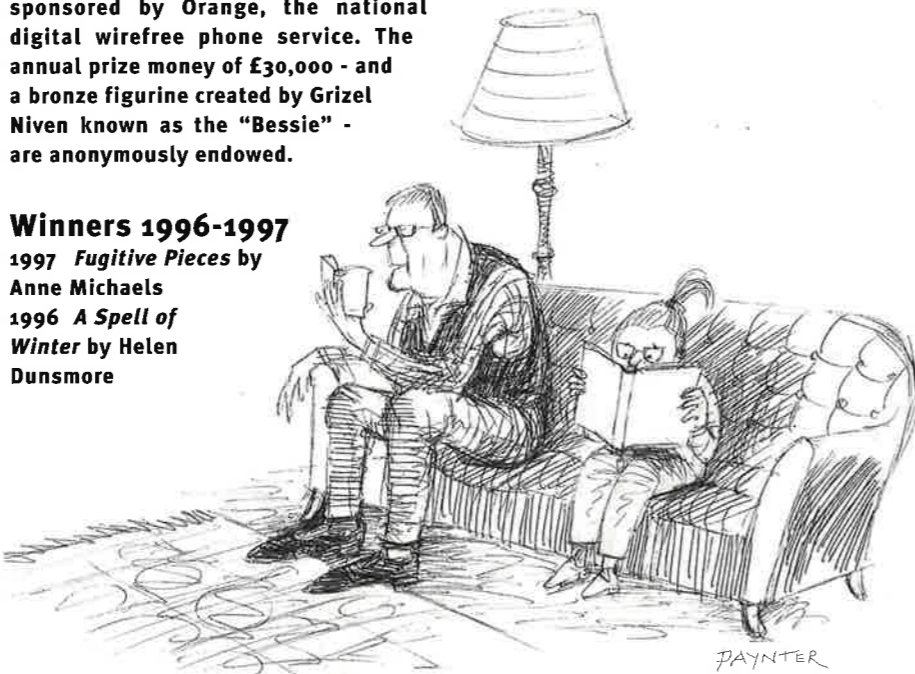
1994 *Felicia's Journey* by William Trevor

1992 *Theory of War* by Joan Brady

1992 *Poor Things* by Alasdair Gray

1991 *The Queen of the Tambourine* by Jane Graham

1990 *Hopeful Monsters* by Nicholas Mosley



CATHY DOWNES MNZM director



1. If you hadn't been an actor/actress/director/designer what would you have been? Unemployed.
2. What moment in your life decided your career in acting/directing/design? Watching my mother and grandmother in local amateur production, with their company "The Utopians".
3. What do you consider your greatest achievement? My son.
4. Most memorable (worst/best/funniest) moment on stage? Realising the enormous queue stretching round the corner and down the road in London was for me, in *The Case of Katherine Mansfield* (after the *Time Out* review appeared).
5. What was/is/could have been your favourite role? Masha in *Three Sisters*, Nimrod Theatre, Sydney, Director: Aubrey Mellor.
6. Who is your favourite playwright and why? Chekhov - the bottomless resonance's in character.
7. Who is your favourite author and why? Katherine Mansfield - her writing has encircled my life and work so deeply.
8. What is your favourite book and why? *The Case of Katherine Mansfield* - because it's my selection and compilation of significant Mansfield writings.
9. What is your idea of happiness? Opening a bottle of good champagne with a loved one at sunset beside the sea.
10. What is the quality you most admire in yourself? Empathy.
11. What is the quality you most admire in a woman/man? Empathy.
12. What is your favourite journey? Somewhere beautiful, warm, by the sea with a loved one.
13. What is your motto? Champagne/sunset/seaside - are much better when shared with a loved one!

Career Highlights

Director: *Amy's View*, *Four Cities*, *Social Climbers* and *Market Forces* for ATC, *The God Boy*, *Purapurawhetu*, *Closer*, *Vita & Virginia*, *Lady Windermere's Fan*, *Les Parents Terribles*, *Half Hour Call Mr Trimmer*, *Tzigane*, *A Long Undressing*, *Eugenia*, *Three Tall Women* and *Shortland Street*. Acting: Marcus Antonia in *Julius Caesar*, *The Case of Katherine Mansfield*, *Three Sisters* and *Tales from the Vienna Woods*, *Falling from Grace*, *The Secret Rapture*, *Macbeth*, *A Streetcar Named Desire*, *Three Sisters* and *Joyful and Triumphant*. Writing credits: *The Case of Katherine Mansfield* and *The Farewell Speech* (an adaptation of Rachel McAlpine's novel).

JOHN PARKER designer

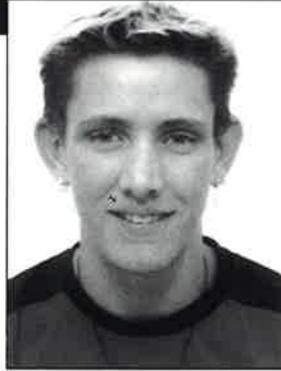


1. If you hadn't been an actor/actress/director/designer what would you have been? A scientist.
2. What moment in your life decided your career in acting/directing/design? A drunken party.
3. What do you consider your greatest achievement? Survival.
4. Most memorable (worst/best/funniest) moment on stage? Whenever the audience applauds the set.
5. What was/is/could have been your favourite role? I don't act.
6. Who is your favourite playwright and why? Shakespeare - timeless, forever relevant.
7. Who is your favourite author and why? I don't read fiction for pleasure.
8. What is your favourite book and why? The Chairman Mao Memorial Construction photo-essay.
9. What is your idea of happiness? Work.
10. What is the quality you most admire in yourself? The ability to work.
11. What is the quality you most admire in a woman/man? Passion.
12. What is your favourite journey? The Yangtse River.
13. What is your motto? Life ain't a dress rehearsal.

Career Highlights

Head of Design, Theatre Corporate: *Hedda Gabler*, *Trafford Tanzia* and *Cabaret*. Resident Designer, Mercury Theatre: *Our Country's Good*, *The Homecoming*, *Brighton Beach Memoirs* and *The Mikado*, and in Melbourne, *Chess*. Opera NZ: *Cavalleria Rusticana* and *Pagliacci*. ATC: *Amy's View*, *Julius Caesar*, *Honour*, *Dead Funny* and *Lovelock's Dream Run*. Throughout his involvement in theatre, film and television John has maintained his passion for ceramics winning numerous awards and being represented in collections including Waikato Museum, Ministry of Foreign Affairs Tokyo, and Pennsylvania State University USA.

JO KILGOUR
lighting designer



1. If you hadn't been an actor/actress/director/designer what would you have been? Architect.
2. What moment in your life decided your career in acting/directing/design? Nothing major - accidentally fell into it!
3. What do you consider your greatest achievement? Still waiting...
4. Who is your favourite author and why? Carol O'Connell - crime novels that aren't obvious from the beginning.
5. What is your idea of happiness? Fresh air, sunshine, open space, music playing.
6. What is your favourite journey? The quickest one!
7. What is your motto? Keep travelling, Variety is Good.

Career Highlights:

Lighting Designer: *Vita & Virginia* and *Les Parents Terribles* for Circa Theatre, *The God Boy* for Downstage Theatre. Technician: Edinburgh Festival, NZ International Festival of the Arts. Lighting Technician: Michael Parmenter's *Jerusalem*.

DONNA AKERSTEN
Deborah



1. If you hadn't been an actor/actress/director/designer what would you have been? OTHERWISE ENGAGED.
2. What moment in your life decided your career in acting/directing/design? INNER VOICES.
3. What do you consider your greatest achievement? BREAKING THE CODE.
4. Most memorable (worst/best/funniest) moment on stage? THE FIRST NIGHT OF PYGMALION.
5. What was/is/could have been your favourite role? ST JOAN.
6. Who is your favourite playwright and why? JOHNSON OVER JORDAN - WHOSE LIFE IS IT ANYWAY.
7. Who is your favourite author and why? JULIUS CAESAR - A FUNNY THING HAPPENED ON THE WAY TO THE FORUM.
8. What is your favourite book and why? THE BOOK CLUB - JOYFUL AND TRIUMPHANT.
9. What is your idea of happiness? A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM.
10. What is the quality you most admire in yourself? INSIGNIFICANCE.
11. What is the quality you most admire in a woman/man? THE IMPORTANCE OF BEING EARNEST.
12. What is your favourite journey? A LONG DAYS JOURNEY INTO NIGHT
13. What is your motto? Pol, Ad spectaculum saepius nobis eundum est (You really should got to the theatre more often).

Career highlights:

Theatre: *Honour, The Cripple of Inishmaan, Broken Glass, Good Works, Angels in America, Sisters Rosensweig, Daughters of Heaven, The Importance of Being Earnest, The Odd Couple, The Best of Friends, Emerald City, Woman in Mind, Renovations, Away, Sweet Bird of Youth, Sex Tips for Modern Girls, As Is* and *Loose Connections*, and for ATC, *Honour*. Television: *Jackson Wharf, Nga Wahine, Mirror Mirror, Shortland St, Bread & Roses, Matrons of Honour, Roses, The Marching Girls, Peppermint Twist, Open House, The Fireraiser* and *Country GP*. Film: *Via Satellite, The Last Tattoo, Te Rua, Bad Blood, Middle Age Spread* and *Sleeping Dogs*.

Auckland Theatre Company
Presents

THE
bookclub

By Roger Hall

Presented by arrangement Playmarket

The Book Club was first performed at the Fortune Theatre on 12 February 1999

This is the sixth production of the 1999 *Culture of Desire* season

The Book Club opened at The Herald Theatre on 14 October 1999

CAST

Deborah

Donna Akersten

Director
Designer
Lighting Designer
Wardrobe
Stage Manager
Technical Manager
Sound & Lighting Operator
Props
Set Construction

Cathy Downes
John Parker
Jo Kilgour
Fiona Nicholl
Danielle Butler
T.O. Robertson
Steven Morrison
Suzanne Gratkowski
Third Stage Ltd.

There will be a 15-minute intermission

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Susanne Ritzenhoff
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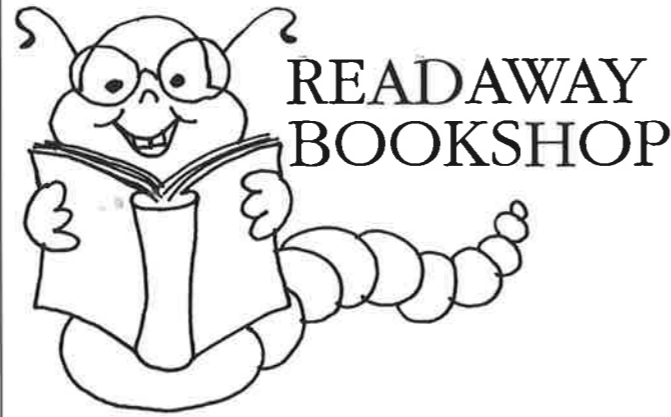


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The FOUNDING 100 was established on 27 July 1998. Its aim is to aid and support Auckland Theatre Company by raising funds for activities such as an education programme and theatre workshop that are in addition to the company's core business. Please contact Amy Drury on 309.0390 Ext 3. or write to PO Box 6513 Wellesley St. Auckland for more information.

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ARTS ALIVE
AUCKLAND CITY

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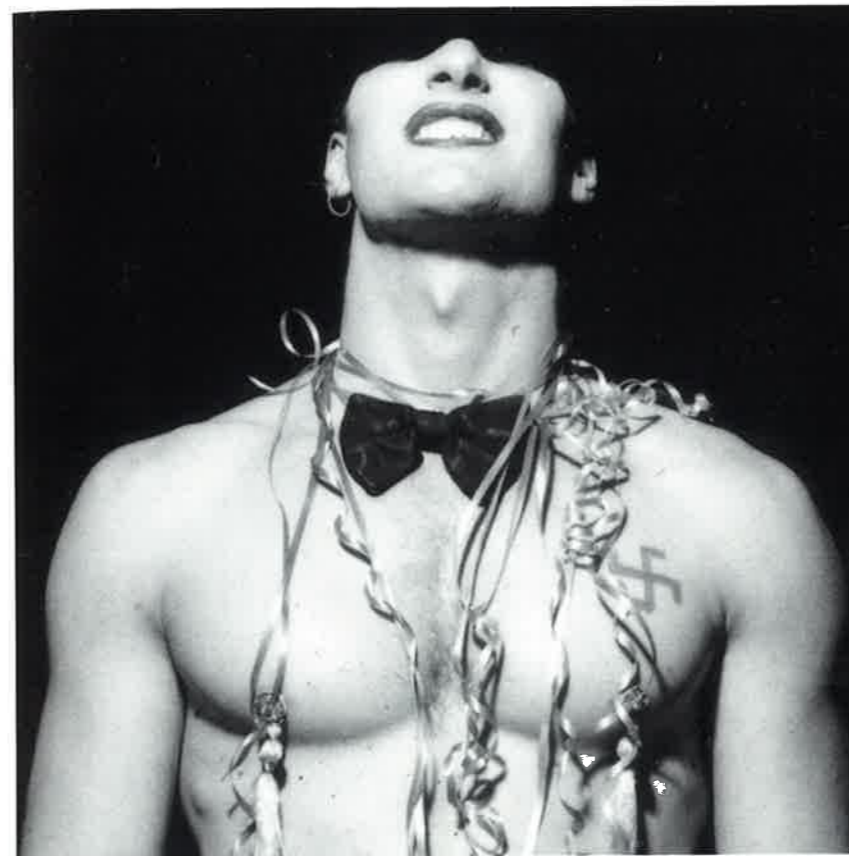
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Cover & rehearsal photos: John McDermott
Title Treatment: In-House - Arch McDonnell
Programme: Pix Design - Bill Paynter
Compiled by: Amy Drury

COMING ATTRACTION



Berlin. 1930. Seeking inspiration for a new novel, young American writer Cliff Bradshaw arrives in a Berlin caught in the gathering storm of Nazism. At the sinfully sordid Kit Kat Klub, he meets and falls in love with irrepressible British Chanteuse Sally Bowles, who introduces him to a world of divine decadence and dark prophecy. Under the sexy, cynical gaze of the Klub's Emcee, the two begin an affair, sharing dreams of a future that will never be, in a world uncontrollably racing towards the horrors of World War II.

Inspired by Christopher Isherwood's BERLIN STORIES and featuring some of the best known songs in musical theatre, CABARET is an intoxicating cocktail of show tunes, social commentary and political warning. To celebrate the new millennium, leave your troubles outside and "Willkommen! Bienvenue! Welcome!" to the provocative and unforgettable world of CABARET.

Starring	Sophia Hawthorne
Keith Adams	George Henare
Jeremy Birchall	Helen Medlyn
Claire Dougan	Ingrid Park
Glen Drake	Simon Roborgh
Georgia Duder	Shena Sanders
Latham Gaines	Roy Snow
Ross Girven	Rima Te Wiata
Michael Hallows	Sara Wiseman

Cabaret

Music & Lyrics by John Kander & Fred Ebb Book by Joe Masteroff

Directed by Raymond Hawthorne
Designer by John Parker
Lighting by Bryan Caldwell
Musical Direction by Matthew Brown
Choreography by Vicky Haughton

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