

AUCKLAND THEATRE COMPANY WINTER SEASON



TWELFTH NIGHT JULY 13 — AUGUST 5

Lyrical, emotional, bitter-sweet and hugely funny, Twelfth Night has long been regarded as Shakespeare's most perfectly constructed comedy - a delicious concoction of cross-dressing and confusion where everyone is in love with the wrong person. Viola loves Orsino who loves Olivia who loves Sebastian and his twin brother Cesario who also happens to be Viola!

Michael Hurst and his superb cast unscramble the confusion and bring to life the besotted lovers and such glorious characters as Malvolio, Sir Toby Belch and Andrew Aguecheek. Amidst the madness and mayhem Shakespeare's enduring comedy offers searching insights into human nature.



THE BLONDE, THE BRUNETTE & THE VENGEFUL REDHEAD AUGUST 24 — SEPTEMBER 16

Everyone has their own story to tell about the day that Rhonda Russell, deserted wife and mother, went berserk in the shopping mall. But who knows where the truth lies?

In this gripping adventure, the world is turned upside down in a disastrous yet devastatingly funny sequence of events. As the intrigue unfolds seven different characters give a fresh twist to the tale.



THE OCEAN STAR SEPTEMBER 28 — OCTOBER 21

Brian just wants a quiet life. He's content to stay at home, reviewing the books and CDs that land on his doorstep and watching 'Fear Factor' with his son Jay - a short film maker (until the funding dried up). But what lands on his doorstep next is his younger son Ted, and suddenly it's his own family which is up for review. Ted may or may not be suffering from an incurable disease. Jay seems to be nursing a terrible resentment. Then there's the small matter of Brian's agoraphobia, complicated by haunting memories of his long dead wife. Brian soon learns that dysfunction, like charity, begins at home. With a keen sense for the absurd, Michael Galvin has crafted an exquisitely dark and comic play. Your own family never seemed so sane.

AUCKLAND THEATRE COMPANY OFFERS A SPECIAL DISCOUNTED TICKET PRICE OF \$132 FOR ALL THREE SHOWS IN THE WINTER SEASON - A SAVING OF \$15.

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**AUCKLAND
THEATRE
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THE KensingtonSwan [★]SEASON OF
*LAWYERS

Mum's Choir

BY ALISON QUIGAN

MUSICAL ARRANGEMENT BY LAUGHTON PATTRICK

Four-part harmonies and a funeral

**AUCKLAND
THEATRE
COMPANY**





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ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

COLIN MCGOLB

It is our great pleasure to present the Kensington Swan season of *Mum's Choir*; Alison Quigan's heart-warming musical celebration of love and life that has been a hit up and down the country.

Mum's Choir touches on something we all experience sooner or later – the death of one's parent – and that frantic, emotional and sometimes absurdly funny time between the death and the funeral when grief is put on hold and pragmatism and practicality take over.

Alison's play exudes a wonderful sense of family - and the devastating but truthful realisation that no-one knows how to go straight for the Achilles heel as effectively as one's siblings! But what bonds the O'Reilly family is the solace they find in song; as a distraction from grief; as a means of expressing feeling when words are not enough; and as sheer entertainment.

So thank you Alison for this moving, funny and quintessential human piece. Thanks to Director John Callen, Musical Director Laughton Patrick and our great creative team – Set Designer John Parker, Lighting Designer Vera Thomas, Costume Designer Victoria Ingram, Choreographer Susan Trainor and Sound Designer Jason Smith for their contribution to this production.

Welcome back to Paul Barrett, Cameron Rhodes, Elizabeth McRae, Kate-Louise Elliott and Alison Quigan - all popular and clever comic actors who have contributed to the success of Auckland Theatre Company comedies in recent years. And welcome to Heather Bolton and Jamie McCaskill who make their Auckland Theatre Company debuts with this production.

Big thanks, too, to Kensington Swan for sponsoring this season of *Mum's Choir* and for their solid support of Auckland Theatre Company since its inception in 1992.

Enjoy the show!

For a comedy of a different mettle don't miss our next production – Michael Hurst's innovative and delightful version of Shakespeare's *Twelfth Night* or *What You Will* with Paul Barrett, Jacquie Drew, Oliver Driver, George Henare, Andrew Laing, Peter McCauley, Charlie McDermott, Paolo Rotondo, Jason Smith, Jennifer Ward Lealand and Tandi Wright making up a stellar cast.

Twelfth Night plays at Maidment Theatre from July 13.

Best regards,

Colin

Colin McColl





CHAIRMAN, PARTNER

Clayton Kimpton

KensingtonSwan
*LAWYERS

As a major supporter of Auckland Theatre Company for the past 13 years, we are delighted to bring to you the Kensington Swan season of *Mum's Choir*.

Mum's Choir is a moving and uplifting performance about relationships and connection, a mother's love for her children and how she acts as a unifying force in the family, even after death.

At Kensington Swan we understand the importance of relationships in getting to know our clients' businesses and needs. The relationships that we have established with our clients set us apart from all other law firms in New Zealand. This level of client relationship combined with our recognised expertise places us in the best position to ensure our clients are successful.

We are proud to support another leading production by Auckland Theatre Company and do hope you enjoy the performance.

Clayton Kimpton

THE KensingtonSwan SEASON OF
*LAWYERS

Mum's Choir

BY ALISON QUIGAN
MUSICAL ARRANGEMENT BY LAUGHTON PATTRICK

CAST

Cathy ALISON QUIGAN Noel PAUL BARRETT Jean HEATHER BOLTON Kev CAMERON RHODES
Terri KATE-LOUISE ELLIOTT Aunty Nola ELIZABETH MCRAE Matt JAMIE MCCASKILL

Director JOHN CALLEN

Musical Director LAUGHTON PATTRICK Assistant Musical Director PAUL BARRETT Set Designer JOHN PARKER
Lighting Designer VERA THOMAS Costume Designer VICTORIA INGRAM Choreographer SUSAN TRAINOR Sound Designer JASON SMITH

Production Manager ROBYN TEARLE Stage Manager FERN CHRISTIE
Assistant Stage Manager NICOLA BLACKMAN Properties Master SHELLEY WATSON Sound Engineer RATU GORDON
Lighting Operator MARK BUTLER Set Construction 2CONSTRUCT
Costume Designer Mentor and Costume Construction DENISE HOSTY FROM THE COSTUME STUDIO

Mum's Choir by Alison Quigan is the third Auckland Theatre Company production for 2006.

This production was first performed at SKYCITY Theatre on June 1, 2006.

Mum's Choir is approximately 2 hours and 15 minutes long including a 20-minute interval.

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

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THE PLAYWRIGHT

Alison Quigan

talks to Auckland Theatre Company's Roy Ward.

Your own mother clearly provided some inspiration for *Mum's Choir*. What was she like?

She had a very 'can do' attitude and I think she became more fearless as she got older. Her catch-cry was "Why not?" She inspired me in lots of ways actually. In performances she was someone I looked to if I was playing a woman of a certain age. And she was very proud of the work that I did. When I told her that I wanted to be an actor – none of the family had anything to do with theatre or the performing arts – she said "Good, it's about time". I was twenty-five and working as a typist. She reminded me that typing was only supposed to be a back-up. She encouraged us all in that way – to do the things we really cared about.

But *Mum's Choir* didn't start as a play about your mother's death, did it?

No, I started writing about a choir – drawing on memories of a church choir Mum had been part of during our childhood. After Mum died, an elderly woman rang and asked if we would mind if she and her friends sang at the funeral. They had all been in the choir together. On the day we were totally charmed – they were all in their eighties now but in my mind I saw them as younger women singing their lungs out. I remembered the magic that this bunch of ordinary women made every Sunday and at Easter and Christmas Mass. I started the play and contacted Laughton Patrick about the kind of music I could use. It was his wife Jenny who prompted me to set the choir within the family and to tell the story of Mum's death.

And particularly the lead-up to the funeral.

Yes, that's what interested me. The journey my family and I went on from the death to the burial was so intense. We laughed, cried and laughed again reliving Mum's life. We'd been through Dad's death but this time we had to handle it on our own. And everybody goes through it. Everybody has to bury their parents. Well, you hope not to die before them. So the experience was unique to us and yet

not. It was an incredibly busy time – constant giving out and taking in. Organising Mum's funeral was like putting on a show in three days – that's what it felt like. And as an actor you feel guilty for thinking about it that way, but actually I know everybody else feels the same. It's show time and this is your one chance to get it right. The send-off is important.

How did your family enjoy *Mum's Choir*?

They found it very personal and moving. But it seems that a lot of people have owned the play as their own experience. So many people have said to me after the show that they, too, have an Uncle Kevin just like that and so on. The play serves as a catalyst for audiences to relive their own memories of family funerals. It wasn't

"ORGANISING MUM'S FUNERAL WAS LIKE PUTTING A SHOW ON IN THREE DAYS... IT'S SHOW TIME AND THIS IS YOUR ONE CHANCE TO GET IT RIGHT."

intended to but I'm happy about it. I should say that my family was the starting point of the characters in the play but I've picked up bits and pieces from lots of places.

Tell me about the music in *Mum's Choir*. How did you select those classic tunes?

Laughton Patrick was the Musical Director on the original production. He chose all the music and arranged it all. We wanted to show the variety of music that this family had been exposed to. In Laughton's lounge in Wellington there is a grand piano covered in music and there are singalongs at the drop of a hat. I loved the idea of combining the family story with the music. It could so easily have been heavy because we were talking about a family burying their Mum but we managed to combine the seriousness of the moment with the music and this mad middle-aged family.

How does it feel to act in a play you've written? Do you have a preference for acting or directing?

I like both. When I first started writing I only ever directed the plays, but then I felt I was missing out on some of the fun so I started writing little bits for me.

What led you to write in the first place?

I wrote out of necessity. When I was at Centrepoint Theatre (as Artistic Director), I was very aware that at the end of each year we wanted a blockbuster – something that the audience would bring their whole office or their family and friends to see. I also knew that the most successful plays for the company were New Zealand written but there weren't enough New Zealand comedies with broad appeal. I just could not find the kind of play I knew the audience wanted to see, so I set about trying to create them myself – at first with collaborators, later on my own.

Is there something about kiwi humour that is unique?

New Zealanders have a very dry sense of humour – quiet, but very witty. Kiwi humour is born of ourselves and it works best with us. When it's done well we see and hear our own people. It truly reflects the community it comes from. When I write I usually talk and listen to lots of people around the subject. It's from them that the best bits come. Arthur Miller said that comedy is closer to real life. Even in our most emotional times there are moments of humour. I think it's our safety valve.

You moved to Auckland to work on *Shortland Street*. A big change from Palmerston North.

I love Auckland. It wasn't completely new to me – I trained as an actor up here in the late seventies. I love the buzz, the energy here. And the people-watching opportunities. I love watching people – they're much 'bigger' than you expect. A difficulty of the work I do now is that I've become quite recognisable – people are watching me in the street rather than me watching them.

Your *Shortland Street* character, Yvonne, is the 'mum' of the show. Is there anything of your own mother in her?

It's not always deliberate but she's so much a part of me she's there in every thing I do. Every role seems to be a bit of me, a bit of my sisters, a bit of Mum. My sisters have all rung and said "oh my God, we saw Mary on screen again last night".

Shortland Street must keep you very busy. Can we expect a new play from you any time soon?

I would love to write more. But yes, the work I do doesn't really allow long stretches of time to concentrate on anything else and – I'm making excuses now, I know – the other thing is that I wrote three plays in twelve months and directed and acted in them. I

felt pretty burnt out. I really needed to act again without the other responsibilities which is why *Shortland Street* has been so good for me. And *Mum's Choir* has gone on to other productions so that's taken some of my energy. But I'd love to write something about Auckland. There's something about this place, the way people live here, that I really want to capture. I don't know what it is yet – I just feel that there's



Alison Quigan with her Mum, brothers and sisters

something there.

Is there any one thing you'd like audiences to take from *Mum's Choir*?

Spend more time with your Mum. The last years are the sweetest.

Should you find yourself hosting your own *Mum's Choir*-inspired Yorkshire pudding competition, don't forget the three secrets of success: Hot Heavy Pans, Hot Oven, Hot Fat. Read on for guaranteed success, Edmond's Cookbook style.

Classic Yorkshire Pudding

Just like Mum used to make

Ingredients

1 cup Edmonds plain baking flour
 ½ teaspoon salt
 2 eggs
 ½ cup milk
 2 tablespoons water
 2 tablespoons fat

METHOD

Sift flour and salt into a bowl. Make a well in the centre. Add eggs. Lightly beat together then gradually add milk and

water, mixing to a smooth batter. Chill for 1 hour. Stir again. Heat fat in a roasting dish until smoking hot. Quickly pour batter into roasting dish. Bake at 200C for 30 minutes or until golden, well risen and crisp around the edges. Cut into squares and serve with roast beef. Serves 6.

Edmonds Cookbook

Published by Bluebird Foods Ltd
 Auckland NZ.



Recipe For Disaster The Yorkshire Pudding Boat Race

In June 1999, Simon Thackray paid a visit to his local baker in Helmsley, North Yorkshire, and presented him with an unusual request. Would he mind loaning the use of his industrial oven for the baking of a giant Yorkshire pudding, 3ft in diameter?

Thackray, a sculptor from the nearby village of Brawby, explained that he was organising 'The Great Yorkshire Pudding Boat Race', for which he required at least six of the traditional Yorkshire dump-lings, each big enough to hold a small oarsman, each coated with lashings of yacht varnish and each thoroughly pond-worthy. Thackray had dreamed up the event a few years earlier, while drinking at his local pub. "Wouldn't it be great," he mused, "to sail down a river in a giant Yorkshire pudding?" Before long, he had crafted a scaled-down prototype from a shop-bought pudding, powered by a small electric motor. It had its maiden voyage in his bath.



This floating battery model inspired 'The Great Yorkshire Pudding Boat Race'. Despite its name, this isn't actually a race. Rather, it is an enactment of a "mythic legend" penned by Thackray's friend, the poet Ian McMillan, and recited by him to a bemused crowd in what has become a regular event. Five junior oarsfolk, dressed in brightly-coloured safety gear, paddle valiantly aboard pudding vessels in a bid to save "The Thing" from the grasps of a temple of doom, aka "The Shad". "There is," says Thackray unhelpfully, "a start but no finish." Not unlike the colourful stars of the Edward Lear nonsense rhyme, The Jumblies, who went to sea in a sieve, then? "Yes, indeed," muses McMillan. "It's as bizarre as a Dadaist event from 1930.

Tristan Tzara would feel very much at home."
 By Jane Czyzewska
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The Mystery of the Osti Frock - by Alison Reid

For *Mum's Choir*, Costume Designer Victoria Ingram wanted Osti Frocks, a humble piece of clothing popular here in the 1960-70s. Auckland Theatre Company enlisted Box Office Manager (and general expert in these sorts of things) Alison Reid to retrieve a few Osti Frocks relegated to the back of wardrobes when fashions changed. Where had all the Osti Frocks gone? What was expected to be an easy task turned out to be a challenge and led Alison into the complex world of the Osti Frock. Here is her story. "There was a lot of debate as to what an Osti frock actually was. A Google search was fruitless, only turning up a few auctions on eBay. I thought a simple call to my mum would solve the problem. Mum said that Osti was in fact a brand but could not elaborate much more on that. I headed down to the Auckland Public Library convinced the magic book on the elusive Osti would be there. There was no such book. I began to get desperate, surely there must be something on the Osti in the library. I began to search old copies of the 'Eve' magazine when a lady tapped me on the shoulder saying "you won't find the Osti in there". It turned out 'Eve' magazine was too 'classy'

for the Osti. Some on-lookers joined in the conversation. "The Osti frock was an easy cheap dress made from rayon (a shudder went round the room) sold in Farmers, Rendells and George Courts. The fashion often called for flowery pastel colours and the length would rest at the calves. The dress was usually belted and I gather that the philosophy behind the sizing was one size fits all." One interested lady commented, "It was one of those dresses you could throw in a suitcase for a holiday and at the other end you just pulled it out, and gave it a shake - no ironing required!" Evidently you could hand wash it the night before and it would be bone dry by the morning. There was one problem raised due to the nylon fabric and that was - "It would cling like buggery". I left the library with no evidence on the Osti at all only stories and the lingering of laughter as memories of the frock consigned to fashion history were recounted."



by Victoria Ingram

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MUM'S MUSIC

THE STORIES BEHIND THE SONGS

AFTER YOU'VE GONE

Words and music by Henry Creamer and Turner Layton. Introduced by Al Jolson in 1918, the song was recorded by both Sophie Tucker and Louis Armstrong in the 1920s. Benny Goodman recorded it (for the first of several times) in 1935, and Judy Garland made it her own in the 1942 film *For Me and My Gal*. It was later recorded by Bing Crosby and also by Shirley MacLaine in the 1958 film *Some Came Running*.

THAT'S AMORE

By composer Harry Warren and lyricist Jack Brooks. It became a major hit for Dean Martin in 1953. The song, which pokes affectionate fun at the Italian-American stereotype, first appeared on the soundtrack of the Martin and Lewis comedy film *The Caddy*. Martin did not attempt to deliver the lyrics with an authentic Italian accent but with the accent of an American trying to mimic Italian pronunciation. Surprisingly perhaps, the song is popular in Italy.

AG-GENT-TGHU-ATE THE POSITIVE (Mister-in-Between)

A Johnny Mercer / Harold Arlen composition. Sung by Bing Crosby in the 1944 movie *Here Come The Waves*, it was nominated for an Academy Award as Best Song but lost to the Rodgers and Hammerstein tune *Might as Well Be Spring* from the movie *State Fair*.



Dean Martin

TAMA NGAKAU MARIE (Son of a peaceful heart)

A traditional Maori hymn, often sung at funerals. It was adopted by the men of the 28th (Maori) Battalion and sung when they buried their dead on the battlefields of North Africa and Italy.

DON'T GET AROUND MUCH ANYMORE

Words and music by Bob Russell and Duke Ellington, 1942. The song has been recorded more than 250 times. Popular versions were released by Mel Torme, Frank Sinatra, Ella Fitzgerald, Nat 'King' Cole, Tony Bennett, The Mills Brothers, Patti Page, Harry Connick Jr, Michael Buble and ... Rod Stewart.

EV'RY TIME WE SAY GOODBYE

Introduced in 1944 in Billy Rose's musical revue *Seven Lively Arts*, this Cole Porter song has become a jazz standard. It was recorded by Ella Fitzgerald in 1956 and later by Nina Simone, Sarah Vaughan, Chet Baker, Ray Charles, Carly Simon and Robbie Williams. Simply Red included it on their 1987 album *Men and Women*. Annie Lennox sang it on the 1990 Aids benefit album, *Red Hot and Blue*, and in Derek Jarman's 1991 film *Edward II*.

THE GOOD SHIP LOBBIPOP

The trademark song of child star Shirley Temple who first sang it in the 1934 movie *Bright Eyes*. Nearly seventy years later it was parodied in *The Simpsons* episode *Last Tap Dance in Springfield*, in which Lisa Simpson enrolls in a tap-dancing class headed by the Temple-esque Lil' Vicky Valentine. In a big finale dance number the class performs *On the Spaceship Lollipop*. The ship in the original song is not, as commonly believed, a boat but an airplane.



Shirley Temple



JAVA JIVE

A 1940 hit for the legendary Ink Spots, an American vocal group who helped define the musical sub-genre 'doo-wop'. They and the Mills Brothers, another black vocal group of the 1940s, gained considerable acceptance in the white community. Offshoots of the original group have continued to tour in recent years.

IN THE MOOD

The signature tune of Glenn Miller and one of the best-known arrangements of the Big Band era. Miller's rendition topped the charts at Number 1 in 1940. Upon request in his will, *In The Mood* was played at the funeral of Peter Sellers in 1980. It was a ghoulish last joke on Sellers' part – the comedian hated the song.

HINE E HINE

A Maori slumber song by the Princess Te Rangi Pai (Fanny Rose Howie). Fanny launched a singing career in England in 1901 using as a stage name a shortened version of her mother's name Te Rangi Pai (The Beautiful Sky). She was in demand for recital work but her mother's death and her own ill health led her to return to New Zealand in 1905. She made several tours throughout the country and achieved acclaim with *Hine e Hine*, her most famous composition.

Hine e Hine became the most familiar Maori tune in New Zealand when, from 1979 to 1994, it was used as TV2's closedown music. Viewers were gently encouraged to follow the example of the cartoon 'Goodnight Kiwi' who switched off the TV transmitter and went to sleep with his pet cat in the transmitter tower.

YOU MADE ME LOVE YOU

Music by James Monaco, words by Joseph McCarthy. Perhaps the best known version, *Dear Mr Gable*, was adapted for Hollywood star Clark Gable's 36th birthday. Judy Garland sang it at Gable's birthday party, producer Louis B. Mayer loved it, and Garland sang it again in MGM's next big musical *The Broadway Melody of 1938*. Sixty years later it would be parodied by *Sesame Street's* Cookie Monster as *Dear Mr Cookie*.

TAHI NEI TARU KINO

By Pariare Tomoana. An early action song from the East Coast, expressing the joy and anxieties of love. Numerous recordings include Ana Hato and Deane Waretini in the 1930s, Bill Wolfram and His Islanders (1955), Inia Te Wiata (1966).

Kiri Te Kanawa (1990s). The song's second verse is not often sung these days. The rhetorical question "He aha kei taku uma Pākikini nei?" (What is this within my chest that pinches so?) is likely to be met with derisive comments about "Tokopā!" (Indigestion).

HAERE MAI

Sam Freedman's song was designed to greet tourists with an echo-the-leader style of tune which was popular in the 1950s and with a few phrases of Maori well known to Pakeha of the day. Published in 1952, it was perhaps written to welcome Queen Elizabeth II who had just been crowned and who was scheduled to make a Royal Tour of New Zealand in 1953. ("Throughout the land we want to shake your hand"). The song was made popular by Daphne Walker who performed a number of Freedman compositions, often with Maori themes and Hawaiian-style backing. Walker came from Great Barrier Island and sang in Maori, Tahitian and other Polynesian languages as well as English.



FAURÉ'S REQUIEM



Gabriel Fauré

First performed in 1888, Requiem in D minor, Op. 48 by Gabriel Fauré (1845 – 1924) rapidly became one of the most popular funeral masses. Absent from Fauré's Requiem is the apocalyptic horror of God's wrath. It concludes instead with *In Paradisum*, a serene and ultimately comforting vision of heaven.

Fauré: "It has been said that my Requiem does not express the fear of death and someone has called it a lullaby of death. But it is thus that I see death: as a happy deliverance, an aspiration towards happiness above... Perhaps I have also instinctively sought to escape from what is thought right and proper, after all the years of accompanying burial services on the organ. I know it all by heart. I wanted to write something different." Personal grief may have influenced the composition as it was begun after the death of his father and by the time it was completed his mother had also passed away. Fauré's Requiem was performed at his own funeral in 1924.

Cast

'Gathy' - Alison Quigan

Mum's Choir is Alison's second performance for Auckland Theatre Company having previously appeared as Jean in last year's production of Roger Hall's *Taking Off*. Since 1984 she has directed over 60 plays (original and classics) including: *Othello*, *Hamlet*, *Macbeth*, *Romeo and Juliet*, *Equus*, *Ladies Night*, *Pack of Girls* and *Mum's Choir*. Since 2004 Alison has played the role of Yvonne Jefferies on *Shortland Street*. Her other television experience includes: *The Strip*, *Duggan* and *Hercules*. In November 2004 Alison completed her 18-year post as Artistic Director of Centrepoint Theatre in Palmerston North. During her tenure she wrote and co-wrote 11 plays including: *Netballers*, *Shop Till You Drop*, *The Newberry Hall Dances* and *The Big OE*.



'Noel' / Assistant Musical Director - Paul Barrett

Paul was last seen on the Auckland Theatre Company stage in 2005's return season of *The Bach*. Other Auckland Theatre Company credits include: *Caligula*, *Spreading Out*, *A Christmas Carol*, *Art*, *Masterclass*, *Foreskin's Lament*, *Waiting for Godot* and *Noises Off*. Paul was also a band member in the sell-out production of *The Rocky Horror Show* in 2002. Other recent theatre experience includes *Mr. Marmalade*, *Under Milkwood* and *The Goat or Who Is Silvia?* Paul was also the musical director for Silo Theatre's production of *Jacques Brel is Alive and Well* and *Living in Paris*. Film experience includes: *Atomic Twister*, *Ike - Days of Thunder* and *Spooked*. Television experience includes: *Being Eve*, *Shortland Street*, *McPhail and Gadsby*, *Secret Agent Men*, *Cleopatra 2525*, *Maddigan's Quest* and *Interrogation*.



Paul Barrett with his Mum



'Jean' - Heather Bolton

This is Heather's first appearance with Auckland Theatre Company and her second appearance as an O'Reilly family member - having just completed Downstage Theatre's season of *Mum's Choir* in Wellington. She is a member of Ranters Theatre, Melbourne and has performed in the company's *Roulette* plays, *St Kilda Tales* and *The Wall*. Other theatre experience includes: *Good Works*, *Boston Marriage*, *The Woman Before*, *Ruby Moon*, *Blak Inside*, *Speaking in Tongues*, *Assassins* and *Into the Woods*. Television experience includes: *Blue Heelers*, *Stingers* and *Phoenix*. Film experience includes: *Evil Angels*, *Angel Baby* and *Mr Wrong* and a film version of *Hamlet*.



'Key' - Cameron Rhodes

Cameron's most recent performance with Auckland Theatre Company was in last year's production of *Up For Grabs*. Also for Auckland Theatre Company: *Ladies Night*, *Goldie*, *A Christmas Carol* and *The Duchess of Malfi*. Cameron's other theatre experience includes: *A Clockwork Orange*, *Cyrano de Bergerac*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *Serial Killers* and *Sweeney Todd*. Film experience includes: *Lord of the Rings*, *Bread & Roses* and *Absent Without Leave*. Directing credits include: *The Jungle*, *Closer* and *Happy End*. Television appearances include: *Rangers*, *Mercy Peak*, *Xena Warrior Princess* and *Dark Knight*.



Cameron Rhodes with his Mum



'Terri' - Kate Louise Elliott

Kate-Louise was last seen on the Auckland Theatre Company stage in *A Christmas Carol*. She has appeared in more than 20 productions at Centrepoint Theatre, including: *Shop Till you Drop*, *The Newbury Hall Dances*, *Macbeth* and *Dancing at Lughnasa*. She has also appeared in productions of *Let's Go* and *Let's Make Love in London*. Television experience includes: *Shortland Street*, *Maddigan's Quest*, *Outrageous Fortune*, *Matuku* and *Street Legal*. Kate-Louise also sings with *The Rodger Fox Band*.



Kate-Louise and her family



'Aunty Nola' - Elizabeth McRae

Mum's Choir is Elizabeth's seventh performance with Auckland Theatre Company having most recently appeared in Roger Hall's *Spreading Out*. Other Auckland Theatre Company credits include: *Collected Stories*, *The Cripple of Inishmann*, *The God Boy*, *The Wind in the Willows*, *Social Climbers* and *Uncle Vanya*. Elizabeth's other theatre highlights include: *Once a Catholic*, *Under Milkwood*, *The Crucible*, *Caucasian Chalk Circle*, *Dark of the Moon*, *The Admirable Crichton*, *Pygmalion*, *The Plough and the Stars*, *Happy Days*, *Not I* and *Vinegar Tom*. Elizabeth was in the original cast of *Shortland Street* and played the character 'Marj' for four years. Other film and television credits include: *An Angel at My Table*, *Jubilee*, *Scarecrow*, *Never Say Die*, *Return Journey*, *One of those Blighters* and *The Doll's House*.

'Matt' - Jamie McGaskill

Jamie has enjoyed much success since graduating from UCOL Theatre School, Palmerston North in 2000. Jamie was nominated for 'Best Male Newcomer' at the Chapman Tripp Theatre Awards 2004 for his appearance in *When Sun and Moon Collide*. He also wrote and appeared in the highly acclaimed *Wassup Bro* at Centrepoint and Bats Theatres and co-wrote and appeared in *It's a Whanau Thing* for which he was again nominated for a Chapman Tripp award, for Best Original Composer 2005. Other recent theatre experience includes: *Oho Ake*, *Hinepau* and the touring festival production *King and Country*. Jamie also plays music in a band by the name of *Smokey Feel* and like Heather Bolton has just completed Downstage Theatre's season of *Mum's Choir* in Wellington.



Jamie McGaskill with his Aunty



DIRECTOR John Callen

John has a career in stage, screen and radio going back more than 30 years. He has won awards as best actor and best supporting actor in Wellington and in 2002 won best actor in a short film. He was a member of the Downstage Theatre and Mercury Theatre companies and has worked around New Zealand and in the US. Recently John has directed a short film and episodes of *Shortland Street*. He has also written and directed several documentaries for a new series called *Taonga*. He is a visiting tutor at Toi Whakaari, New Zealand Drama School (Wellington) and at the University of Auckland.



John Callen (far left) with his Mum, Dad and older sister



MUSICAL DIRECTOR Laughton Patrick

"The front room of a character home, a family home – slightly untidy with a grand piano in the centre." That's our home. Jenny and I sat in that room, the ancestor photographs on the wall behind us, having a drink with Alison and talking about her idea for a play about choirs and families. I lost the plot slightly but by the end of the evening found we had a story about a funeral – Alison's mother had died recently and Jenny's a couple of years before. We remembered the way everyone had gathered and had been drawn into the arrangements for celebrating a life in drama and music and performance.

Two months later I was rehearsing a cast at Centrepoint Theatre and finding out how involved everyone was with their own stories of a mother or father's death. Then, some weeks later on opening night we all discovered that that involvement was there with our audiences too. At Palmy, Downstage and now Auckland Theatre Company, I have been so lucky to work with actors who are great singers, very skilled musicians and people who share my love for the wonderful music, both popular and classical, that we have grown up with.

Laughton Patrick was the Musical Director for the original production of *Mum's Choir* at Centrepoint Theatre and also for this year's production at Downstage Theatre. Laughton's recent musical direction credits include: *Big River*, *Fly Me to the Moon*, *Let's Go* and *Blue Smoke*.



SET DESIGNER John Parker

"As an only child, I am continually fascinated by the dynamics of large families and their sibling relationships and rivalries as viewed from outside the group. I am not exactly known for design realism, so my approach to the play has been from the point of view of abstracting collective family memory. Without slavishly and authentically presenting a realistic house interior more familiar as a TV soap/movie set, I was interested in evoking the concept of a well-loved family home. The limited colour palette is intended as feel good: autumnal and warm and comfortable. The place is full of memories and nostalgia and there is the continued presence of the recently departed mother in image form reminiscent of the memory books the grand-children have made for her. There are key elements such as the dining room table, the piano, the sofa, the kitchen. These areas provide points of focus around which so many key moments in their lives would have been enacted."

John has a long history of designing for Auckland Theatre Company, his most recent set designs include *Doubt*, *Taking Off*, *Equus*, *Caligula*, *The Bach*, *Middle Age Spread* and *The Rocky Horror Show*.



CHOREOGRAPHER Susan Trainor

"When I was asked to choreograph for Mum's Choir I was delighted as I have always enjoyed working with actors. After reading the play I realised I needed to incorporate different dance genres into the choreography and to try and make the dancing flow through the action.

John Callen and I agreed that we did not want the play to be interrupted by song and dance numbers. It became clear that the dance had to be something that the characters remembered from their past, for example in 'The Good Ship Lollipop', which they all performed as children. The dance needed to be fully choreographed and then deconstructed to allow for the length of time since they last performed it together."

Mum's Choir is Susan's second production for Auckland Theatre Company. Throughout her years as a professional dancer, Susan has performed many different dance styles and has also been involved in theatre, film and television as a dancer and an actor.



Vera Thomas in her Mum's tummy

LIGHTING DESIGNER Vera Thomas

"The lighting design for Mum's Choir will be a combination of very functional understated clean lighting, interspersed with stylised moments.

The use of a clean colour medium and reasonably high lighting levels will help to achieve a natural and realistic look. The set John Parker has designed is very natural in style, but also has stylised touches. People will instantly feel at home when they see the very familiar setting that John has created. It is important that the lighting does not distract from the overall look or action on the set."

Vera Thomas began her lighting design at the Mercury Theatre in the early 1990's. She has worked on many productions since then and is excited to be working with Auckland Theatre Company and the *Mum's Choir* design team.



COSTUME DESIGNER Victoria Ingram

"Designing the costumes for Mum's Choir has been an entertaining and enjoyable process where I have been able to explore and express my understanding of the complexities of the family unit.

After going through the loss of my own grandmother only last year this story is relatively close to home and has helped me understand how every family seems to have a hierarchy and patterns of behavior they seem to fall back into when they get together. The characters in Mum's Choir have all come from the same beginning but have developed into diverse individuals since then, so they have all been designed from the same autumnal colour palette and have different fashion sense within this to show their own individualism."

Mum's Choir is Victoria's second costume design role for Auckland Theatre Company having previously designed the costumes for last year's production of Roger Hall's *Taking Off*. She has also designed costumes for several Silo Theatre productions including *Mr. Kolpert*, *Mr. Marmalade* and *The Jungle*.



Victoria Ingram, Mum and big sister

THE NEXT STAGE

New NZ Plays

Auckland Theatre Company's annual showcase of plays in development.
See some of our best acting talent at work on staged readings of these exciting new scripts...

MY NAME IS GARY COOPER by Victor Rodger

Thursday 29 June and Saturday 1 July 8.00 p.m., Sunday 2 July 4.00p.m.

Jumping time zones and cultural divides – from Samoa in the 50s to Los Angeles in the 70s to Auckland in 2000 – this provocative new play challenges our gaudy Technicolor images of island life and Hollywood dreams. Staged reading directed by Roy Ward. Cast includes Robbie Magasiva.

FINDING MURDOCH by Margot McRae

Friday 30 June 8.00p.m., Saturday 1 July 2.00 p.m.

No All Black has been more controversial than Keith Murdoch. Since his rugby career ended sensationally in 1972 he has attempted to live in obscurity in Australia. But in 1990 television journalist Margot McRae set out to find him. Her dramatised account asks the hard questions about rugby myths, sensationalist media and the right to privacy. Cast includes Sally Stockwell, Geoff Dolan.

THE OIL FACTOR by Geoff Chapple

Saturday 1 July 5.00 p.m., Sunday 2 July 8.00 p.m.

Wily entrepreneur Joseph Hatch found himself at the centre of an international row over cruelty to Macquarie Island's penguins – over three million of which he rendered down for their oil. This one-man show recreates the magic lantern lectures given by Hatch in 1920 - a vigorous attempt to see his revoked oiling licence restored. Making full use of dozens of historic photographs, The Oil Factor offers a rousing hour in the company of this charismatic, obsessive man. Reading directed by Paul Gittins.

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WHAT'S ON IN THEATRES AROUND THE COUNTRY

AUCKLAND THEATRE COMPANY

Maidment Theatre 13 July – 5 August

TWELFTH NIGHT William Shakespeare

Twelfth Night brings together some of the country's finest actors to revive some of Shakespeare's most memorable characters – including Tandi Wright as Viola and George Henare as the roguish Sir Toby Belch. *Twelfth Night* will be directed by New Zealand's finest interpreter of the bard, Michael Hurst.

SILO THEATRE, Auckland

22 June – 22 July

PLENTY David Ikin

To know the pleasure of power. To feel the heat of passion. To stretch life to the absolute limit.

DOWNSTAGE THEATRE, Wellington

10 June – 8 July

THE GOAT OR WHO IS SILVIA? Edward Albee

America's greatest living playwright offers a powerful parable that plumbs the deepest questions of social constraints on the individual expression of love.

18 June

24 HOUR DEADLINE THEATRE

With only 24 hours to write, rehearse and perform a brand new ten-minute play, eight writers, eight directors and 24 actors will throw themselves into intense creative mayhem.

13-22 July

KING AND COUNTRY Dave Armstrong

King and Country is a powerful and evocative drama based on the personal accounts of New Zealanders during World War I.

CIRCA THEATRE Wellington

24 June – 22 July

TROY - THE MUSICAL Paul Jennen and Gareth Farr

Two of Wellington's most prodigious talents collaborate for the first time on a saucy, satiric and absorbing new musical. For those who

like their history light and their musicals rich, this is the perfect winter evening out.

COURT THEATRE, Christchurch

10 June – 15 July

YING TONG Spike Milligan

Ying Tong is an hilarious and touching insight into the mind of comic genius Spike Milligan.

FORTUNE THEATRE, Dunedin

June 23 – July 15

WAITING FOR GAUTEAUX Ed Waugh and Trevor Wood

'Motivators' is the worst health and fitness club in the world. There's a chance it will appear on a reality television show - but it's really difficult for the members to give up the cakes and chocolate...

July 28 – August 19

HITCHCOCK BLONDE Terry Johnson

A media lecturer and his female protege find some deteriorated Hitchcock footage. It would appear they have discovered some early rushes but what film were they for and who is the mysterious blonde?

CENTREPOINT THEATRE, Palmerston North

31 March – 13 April

DOUBT John Patrick Shanley

Hot from a grand slam of Broadway's theatre awards, *Doubt* is a new classic of American Theatre in the tradition of Arthur Miller, Tennessee Williams and Edward Albee.

27 July - 2 September

THE GRADUATE Terry Johnson

California in the 1960's: Benjamin has excellent grades, very proud parents and, since he helped Mrs Robinson with her zipper, a fine future behind him... Starring Donogh Rees as Mrs. Robinson.



King and Country

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General Manager Kim Acland

Associate Director, Artistic & Literary Roy Ward

Education & Second Unit Coordinator Lynne Cardy

Associate Director, Production Robyn Tearle

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Heith Mackay-Cruise

Declan Mordaunt

Jane Vesty



Entertainment Operations Executive Geoff Turkington

Theatre Services Barbara Lodge

Theatre Supervisor Bernie Brown

Head Usher Joy Owen

Acknowledgements

Steve Marshall and Jonathan Hendry at Unitec

PPS Hairwear

Ed Campbell at Western Caskets

Steve Crowcroft at The Edge

Yvonne Sanders Antiques.

John Morgan at Morgan Furniture for the La-Z-Boy

First Scene Props

Sonali Amarasingham from Screentime

Stephen King at Sovereign Industries

Andrew Malmo for photographic montage and liaison

Neville Newcombe Reprographics for photographic prints

Kate Robertson and Jo Richardson at Downstage

Carolyn Armstrong

Alison Reid for the emergency photography

Barbara Lodge, Bernie Brown and the staff at SKYCITY

James MacKenzie at Oceania Audio

Chagall Hair Design

Glen Candy from Pernod Ricard

Samantha Callen

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