

Celebrating 10[☆] Years of Magdalena Aotearoa!



The Magdalena Aotearoa National Gathering 2008 will take place 20-25 March (Easter) at the Newtown Community Centre in Wellington. Turn to page 13 for the details, and complete the form on page 15 to register. Flat fee of \$50 for everyone who registers before 29 February!

Editorial

As I write this, I'm enjoying BARK's debut CD, *Home*, featuring the beautiful voice of Angeline Conaghan and drums and electronic instruments of Terje Evensen (www.barkmusic.com). It's just been handed to me by Miff Moore-Evensen, home from Norway for the holidays. As am I, briefly, before heading to Cuba then back to Brisbane to finish my studies. Despite my compulsive roaming and the pleasure of a wonderful network of friends and colleagues like Miff around the world, "home" is still undeniably here.

Coming home is a time to rest, take stock and reflect on what's been a full-on year for many of us - and a truly incredible decade for the Trust. This newsletter represents only the tip of the iceberg - we couldn't possibly do justice in a few A4 pages to all the workshops, performances, meetings, video screenings, parties, funding proposals, dreams, laughter and tears that have unfolded under the name of Magdalena Aotearoa. Not to mention 30 issues of this newsletter (there is still a dream to produce some kind of compilation of all the issues) and many boxes of photos and videos ...

The work of the Trust has largely been sustained by the efforts of many voluntary or minimally paid women - the Trustees in particular, but also many other volunteers along the way. There are too many of these wonderful women - and quite a few men - to thank everyone by name, but you know who you are. I hope you understand how much your contribution has meant.

We also thank our generous Patronesses and donors, whose financial support means the Trust is not completely dependent on the whims and vagaries of the funders. We are always happy to welcome more Patronesses (male and female) and donors into the fold!

And thank you to all of you who have paid your newsletter

subscriptions. We are working to manage the subs more effectively in order to finance the newsletter, currently one of our main activities.

I may have been immersed in academia in Brisbane for most of 2007, but it hasn't stopped me keeping tabs on the busy lives of the Trustees. Congratulations to Lilicherie on the recent success of *Zarathustra Said*, and we wish her all the best for her new projects in Whangarei. Lisa is currently working for the International Festival of the Arts, and Dale continues her education work with the Family Planning Association. Jessica is juggling motherhood with ongoing Ake Ake Theatre productions, and Madeline continues her valuable work with Acting Up as well as working on her solo show and teaching. We all deserve a holiday!

But the holidays will be over all too soon and 2008 promises to begin with a bang - Easter comes early and that brings us our second National Gathering. After the incredible energy and goodwill that was generated at the first Gathering, we felt it was important to hold it again despite failing to get funding. It will be more of a DIY event this time, and we invite everyone to consider what is most useful for you to contribute and also to achieve from the Gathering. The affordable participant fee reflects the exchange nature of the event - there will be no paid presenters and everyone will contribute in some way - but we'll have enough to provide those yummy lunches! See page 13 for more information about the 2008 Gathering and return the form with your cheque to register. Our AGM will also take place during the Gathering (10.30am, Tuesday 25 March) - don't miss it!

Have a restful summer and I look forward to gathering with you at Easter.

Helen Varley Jamieson

The Magdalena Aotearoa Trust is a charitable trust that aims to encourage and promote the work of women in the performing arts.

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Madeline McNamara & Sally Rodwell

Trustees

Madeline McNamara, Lisa Maule, Dale Ferris, Helen Varley Jamieson, Jessica Sutherland and Lilicherie McGregor.

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Newsletter contributions are welcome, but may be edited. Contributions can be emailed to magdalen@actrix.co.nz as an attachment or in the body of an email.

The deadline for the next issue is 30 April 2008



10 Years of the Trust

Founding director Madeline McNamara reflects on where we've come from, and where we're going ...

Looking back on the last ten years I realise, in a kind of a shock, we have made a history.

It is important to acknowledge the early involvement of inspiring mentors, supporters and trustees. Firstly Jill Greenhalgh and the Magdalena International Advisory Board who gifted us the use of the name Magdalena (this was the first time this had been done); early trustees Lis Hughes-Jones, Roma Potiki, Jools Joslin (our first treasured treasurer); and Pagan Lewis who assisted us in getting our first grant from C.E.G. and helped us produce our first issue of the newsletter on the C.E.G. computer. We remember our darling Celia West and Sally whose legendary energy, brilliance and charm motivated us all in the earliest stages. She is always with us and appeared in Island Bay on October 15 2006, the first anniversary of her death, as a brilliant rainbow over the hills of Pencarrow, urging us on.

It's amazing how much we have achieved since Sal, Lisa and I first encountered the work of the Magdalena Project in 1994 in Cardiff. We loved what we saw and what it might mean for women back in Aotearoa: a network to support original, collaborative, self-devised work, work that draws on a multitude of extraordinary and unique traditions of training of the body, voice, and creative energies, work that engages with the issues that we face as a country, as artists and particularly as women artists; a network to connect those women in all parts of the country, especially

those in more isolated areas; a way of making theatre that acknowledges that the process of making the work is as important as what is produced; a place for work that attempts to make a difference in the world, an organisation that motivates such work, a platform for showing it, a framework for creating events to provoke and inspire such work, a place for an expanded sense of community; an international home for such work, a life line to the outside world, a reason and structure to invite others to our country for exchange; a place to develop and to expect a certain quality and rigour, a place to learn to critique this work and to make it better, more effective. A place to write about our work.

We wanted to make sure that the network would benefit all communities, especially Maori women, and so began a long and rewarding collaboration as we undertook a political journey of partnership, drawing on our varied understandings of the Treaty of Waitangi as a guiding light. The now independent Tii Kouka Trust will one day tell their own story.

In 1999 we hosted our first major festival in Wellington and Paekakariki with more than 40 companies showing work and half of those from overseas. Since then we have continued to host an incredible group of international guests who have shared their work and performances with us. We have put together a multitude of our own workshop programmes and performance events and attended many other international Magdalena Projects. These precious learning opportunities have given New Zealand women the opportunity to hone their performance and teaching skills, to connect with each other and build working relationships, and to continually discuss the work and how to make it better.

Ten years on, I think Magdalena

Aotearoa is characterised by three key things: firstly, the community of women theatre makers who claim allegiance to its aims and goals and who contribute to and benefit from its work; secondly, the Magdalena Aotearoa website and our newsletter which comes out three times a year; and finally, what is fast becoming a regular event, the Easter Gathering.

The newsletter is our main organ of communication and the place where we write about our work and others. Its continued existence (and that of

*Every birthday
needs a present ...*



our website) is due to Helen Varley Jamieson's incredible patience and editorial, time management and desk top publishing skills, as well as to all those who contribute material. Its original existence was due to Sally's own love of writing and her understanding in the power of such a vehicle for sharing each others' work and keeping in touch.

Last year's Easter Gathering was an uplifting and inspiring event after a very dark time, a time which included the sudden death of Sally's partner Alan and then her own tragic passing. Women (and some men) came from all over the country for the five-day Gathering, which centred around the presentation and critique of 7 works in progress. It was such a rich and happy meeting that we are going ahead with an improvised version this coming Easter (2008) despite funding not being forthcoming from CNZ. We hope it will become a regular meeting and opportunity to present new work in the making.

Through these three channels new women, both younger and older, continue to be drawn into the network. They don't come in their droves but if they need us they seem to find their way to us, as is the Magdalena way. Jill has always insisted on the organic approach to growth and that seems to be the way of things with us too.

Prior to the National Gathering last Easter, we had begun talking about hosting another major festival, but when we looked around we could not see the work. The Gathering was a way of starting to seek out

those works and nurture them into being so that when we do hold another festival we can contribute works that have taken time in their making and been allowed to mature through many showings at different times. The Gathering allowed us to see some strong possibilities and convinced us that it is now a time to focus our energies on supporting the birth of works that need the right conditions to develop.

A sense of urgency and determination to make these works has developed since the National Gathering. It takes an incredible will to turn our backs on the things that draw us away from that work - the meetings, the earning of money, the organising of events for others. There is a kind of selfishness that is



required to turn away and focus on oneself and on what one has to say - and I think this is where many of us are at.

So though there was initial excitement about creating another big festival, we have realised that what we most need is to create new works. Works that can be programmed in our own festivals and works that can be offered for inclusion in festivals abroad. We need to make all kinds of work - solo shows, duos and great expansive collaborations; we need to document our processes and start writing about that work.

We do not always know how to make this work but when we come together we find each other. We become bigger than ourselves. We become more important than we thought we were. It's not self aggrandisement but a necessary inflation of belief in self, a necessary growth in confidence, a



confirmation that those gnawing and persistent ideas have currency, that they should not be abandoned after all. The theatrical offerings at the Gathering were like photographs developing in the dark room for the first time - an image magically appearing when exposed to the right kinds of chemicals. Of course there will be other processes, additives, enlargements and fixing solutions necessary to take the image to its completion but you get a good idea of whether the photograph is worth pursuing, worth immersing yourself in for all the time it will take to bring it through to completion. And that's really valuable information.

We will continue to host Magdalena artists from other parts of the world as often as we can and to support projects overseas. Our focus however for 2008 and our contribution to the beautiful spirit of the Magdalena Project that has inspired and sustained us for so long will be to stimulate and support an *inflorescence* of new work by women theatre artists from Aotearoa.

Madeline McNamara

Inflorescence is the time and process of budding and unfurling of blossoms; a flowering, flourishing heyday, prime; the flowering part of a plant or arrangement of flowers on a stalk. It is often used in connection with the cabbage tree, Tii Kouka.



Photos on this page: top, Madeline at the first Treaty and Performance workshop; centre, Sally and Madeline with Eileen Cassidy; bottom, Madeline with Chloe Reeves (aka Chloe of Wainuiomata) at the final *Not Broadcast Quality* season.

International Festival of Women's Performance

Wellington & Paekakariki
March 21 - April 3, 1999



Above, Pacific Sisters;
right, international
artists perform waiata
at Paekakariki; below,
Teatro La Mascara



Above, street
performance;
below, taiaha
workshop;
below left,
Dawn Albinger

21 overseas theatre companies, 20 NZ theatre companies and individuals



over 150 individual performers!
over 120 exhibiting artists

close to 5000 people
attended festival events,
including 700 at
Paekakariki



As the crows flew ...

Lisa Maule submits to an interrogation on her long association with the Magdalena Project.

Tell us how it all started.

In 1994 I donned my black cowboy hat and got into debt to leap across the world with Sally Rodwell, Madeline McNamara, Robin Nathan and Helen Johnstone. I was cowgirl, Helen was goth. Madeline, Sally and Robin were old (!). We went to Cardiff to some festival Sally and Madeline thought we should go to. Our show was *Crow Station* - great music, beautiful eccentric and funny characters - and I still vividly remember my lighting.



My life was two things at that time: I was a student of interior design and a designer and technician for performance. Both had very intense work periods which I loved. Working really hard, really focusing, putting the hours in, and then having a drink after. I wore my black cowboy hat a lot and I had dreadlocks. Stella Chiwesi, the Zimbabwean musician and personality extraordinaire, thought I was a man and tried to chase me out of the women's toilet.

It was great to meet lots of people from other countries making performance but it was even better seeing the work. There was so much you couldn't see it all, which prompted discussions - what did you see, how was it? Our little travelling group was full of great critics. The old nurses' hostel where we stayed had a common room at the end where we stayed up late having conversations across languages: "Maison", aha she is talking

about a house or a home ..." Sally particularly shone in this situation - she had quite a bit more French than me. Later we went on another tour with Madeline, Sally, Robin and musician Lorraine Horstmanhoff. We paraded in the Love Parade in Berlin in costume, (well they did - I just gawked), listened to teenage stereo wars in the YMCA in Coventry and performed in an old mill in the centre of Amsterdam.

What was it like to be the technical director of the '99 festival at the same time as having your first baby?

He was a few months old and I was used to not sleeping so it worked well. During the festival his dad brought him to me for feeds. Sonia (who helped us with all

the admin) had a baby the same age. They would roll around together on the floor being cute. Sonia's boy was bigger so Giovanni got his clothes.

Why do you keep coming back to theatre when you have so many other demands in your life?

It's what I know now. It's got good people in it. I still like working intensely. Lighting is cool. Demand's shemand's, they're only children. They'll grow out of it - won't they? What other demands do I have? Hmm, making money I suppose. Well there's time for that in the future.

Do you regard being a Magdalena trustee as part of your creativity?

When it's project based work I'm involved with it is. Being part of a network is part of being creative for me, especially for performance as it always seems better when it's a collaboration with others. Being interested in other projects and talking to other people about their experiences is research really for



theatre creativity. Maybe I am finding it more relevant now after having had a break from theatre and coming back to it. I am really keen now. I want to make work, to produce it, to light it, everything.

Any dreams for Magdalena Aotearoa in the next 10 years?

I would love our profile to be greater and for it to include more people. There is definitely a place for it in our country, for the benefit of community and professional theatre alike. If I have a mind switch and put more effort into Magdalena Aotearoa as a trustee then I will get more out of it, I know. I guess it's freeing up time or committing regular time.



Some Important Things That Happened

1994

Crow Station tours to Magdalena '94 in Cardiff



1997

Jill Greenhalgh tours NZ.

The first issue of this newsletter published in April and an office is rented in the Trades Hall Building in Vivian Street, Wellington. In August, the Magdalena Aotearoa Trust is registered as a charitable trust, with trustees Madeline McNamara, Sally Rodwell, Celia West, Jools Joslin, Lis Hughes-Jones and Roma Potiki.



Moira Aberdeen and Jo Randerson attend the Raw Visions festival in Wales.

Workshops are held and a season of Not Broadcast Quality (women's performance) is the final show at Taki Rua's Alpha Street venue.

2002

Jill Greenhalgh visits. Seven centre tour by Josefina Baez (Dominican Republic/USA), and visit of Birgitte Grimstad from Norway. Daughters of Aotearoa (DOA) attend the Magdalena Pacifica Festival in Cali, Colombia.



2003

Magdalena Australia - a delegation of 17 represents Magdalena Aotearoa, and as well as our own work we present *Aotearoa Day*.



1998

Planning for our international festival, including commissioning five new works, by Pacific Sisters, Nga Tuahine, Tai Timu, Louise Majich, and Lilicherie McGregor and Olivia Lory Kay. More workshops are held.

2004

To save money, we down-scale the office at Trades Hall to a filing cabinet at WACT.

2005

Launch of the Projects Handbook, a resource for women theatre makers, and the Patroness Programme, a fundraising initiative aiming to raise \$20,000 in annual donations.



1999

Visit of Spiderwoman, USA, then the Magdalena Aotearoa International Festival of Women's Performance, with post-festival tours south by some of the international artists.

2006

The Whistle Stop Tour "On Training" - workshops in Christchurch, Dunedin, Auckland and Wellington. Visit of Rosa Casado (Spain), Jadranka Andjelic (Serbia) and Antonella Diana (Serbia/Italy). Founding Trustee and co-director Sally Rodwell dies.



2000

Making Waves workshop series: Treaty, Political Theatre; and others on writing, performance, DJ-ing. Maori women within the network begin to form their own autonomous organisation, Tii Kouka. Founding trustee Celia West dies.

2007

First National Gathering held at Easter, and planning begins for another Gathering at Easter 2008.

2001

Crazy Voyage, the video documentary of the 1999 festival, is completed and launched. Teatro delle Radici (Argentina/Switzerland) tours Wellington, Christchurch and Dunedin. In July, Tii Kouka is launched as an independent trust.



Top - workshop with Jill Greenhalgh; Birgitte Grimstad, Dale Ferris, Josefina Baez and Ana Edwards; Daughters of Aotearoa - Te Itirawa Nepia, Rapai Te Hau, Bridget Nawalowalo; Lyne Pringle and Jadranka Andjelic; martial arts workshop with Sue Lyttolis.

Meeting Magdalena

In 1997 I was studying for a PhD at the University of Canterbury. I knew more about theatre internationally than I did about theatre-makers in Aotearoa New Zealand. I had heard of Red Mole, and Alan Brunton had been writer-in-residence at the University, but I never imagined that they would be interested in meeting, let alone collaborating, with me. I had been studying the work and influence of Jerzy Grotowski, and knew that Julia Varley was an actress with Odin Teatret, so when the notice was posted for a workshop with Julia Varley and Jill Greenhalgh of The Magdalena Project I immediately signed up. As well, I enquired if I could travel with them on part of their tour. At the last moment Julia could not come. Jill Greenhalgh was unknown to me, but I decided to continue with the workshop. Thus unfolded my inspiring meeting with Jill and The Magdalena Project, participation in her workshops, and travelling with her to Wellington where I was part of the first Magdalena Aotearoa gathering. Particularly memorable was a journey up the Wanganui River to Jerusalem, a pilgrimage, time to develop a relationship between Sally, Madeline, Jill and myself.

Jill's visit to Aotearoa was a pivotal point in my life. Because of her visit I wrote to Julia in Denmark asking to study directing at Odin Teatret, and from this two extended periods of work followed. Jill's visit opened me to the Magdalena network we have today, of communication and exchange between women performers both nationally and internationally.

Thanks to the bravery and leap of faith of Sally and Madeline in taking their performance *Crow Station* to the Magdalena festival in Wales in 1994, we in Aotearoa have been privileged to host women performers from around the world. There is a solidarity between the women of The Magdalena Project. These are women who stand tall and speak, sing, dance about politics, war, peace, water, violence, children, language, culture - women who work because of a necessity. Their actions and stories inspire me to keep going, this bravery of spirit and strength, of the women who are my Magdalena Sisters.

Lilicherie McGregor
Trustee Magdalena Aotearoa



Above: Sally Rodwell and Jill Greenhalgh at Jerusalem; and below, Nancy Brunning and Moira Aberdeen.



Above: Rosa Casado and her chocolate island. Below: Miff Moore; the garage sale sign, and Ruby and Alan Brunton at the garage sale.

Photos on page 6: top, Stella Chiweshe; middle, Sally and Madeline in Crow Station; bottom, Deb Hunt.



Local News

FATCAT & FISHFACE are also celebrating their 10th birthday. The self-proclaimed outlaws of New Zealand children's music launched their brand of musical mayhem with *Horrible Songs for Children* in 1997. Ten years, five albums, three animated music clips, and some very happy children later, Fatcat & Fishface are still going strong. www.fatcatfishface.com



Congratulations

to Michele Leggott, who was recently named New Zealand's Poet Laureate - a great honour. A long time supporter of Magdalena Aotearoa, she is pictured here reading at Not Broadcast Quality in 1997.



Zarathustra Said

Alan Brunton's script *Zarathustra Said* was performed at HAPPY, 25-27 November by third year Wellington Performing Arts Centre acting students; directed by Lilicherie McGregor; Music by Fertility Festival; Lighting Design by Lisa Maule; Film (*Hades Window*), by France Herve.

Zarathustra Said, an operetta, was the last show that Alan Brunton wrote and the last performance that he and Sally Rodwell gave together, at the Porsgrunn International Theatre Festival in June 2002 in Norway.

After reading many plays, Lilicherie chose *Zarathustra Said* as being a suitable piece for the students and as an intellectually and theatrically challenging piece to stage. HAPPY, run by Jeff Henderson, was chosen as the venue because Sally and Alan collaborated over many years with Jeff; he composed original music for both the 2002 and 2007 versions of *Zarathustra Said*. Credited as a site-specific performance, elements of the space and decor were incorporated into the action with the spectators scattered around the edges.

Based on Nietzsche's *Thus Spake Zarathustra*, Alan's condensed text is a collage of metaphor and poetry, a cry in the wilderness for Joy and Truth, "You are nothing. You are just a POET!" It is a poem of/from the heart:

My heart is deep
My heart is black
My heart is a bell
My heart is
the midnight hour
My heart lives by itself, my heart is
an afternoon in June
my heart is

The last blue grape hanging on the vine!
(*Grooves of Glory*, 116)

For those who missed the November performance, the show will be restaged during the NZ Fringe Festival on 26 & 27 February, at HAPPY.



"A fecund piece of theatre ..."

Lilicherie McGregor has hit the nail on the head with this production of Alan Brunton's *Zarathustra Said*. With third year Wellington Performing Arts students Deborah Rea, Tamati Pere, Emma Walker and Jessica Aaltonen, McGregor has crafted a fecund piece of theatre that not only stretched these young actors to the limit but also provided a fitting finale for their course in Devising Theatre. They were ably supported by the sounds of Fertility Festival led by Jeff Henderson. I remember staggering out into a beautiful



starry evening after witnessing *Grooves of Glory* performed at The Space in Newtown and thanking those lucky stars that theatre like this existed to swirl around my viscera: this show evoked the same reaction as I was led through waves of succulent language married with juicy sounds and vibrant images. Richly textured theatre that satisfies on so many levels and completely unique – what a whakapapa!

Lyne Pringle

Performance photos
by France Herve,
poster by Gerard
Crewdson



Local News

EAT feeds your art

The Emerging Artists Trust (EAT Wellington) has been recently established to fund and mentor emerging film and theatre artists and projects in the Wellington region, encouraging the continuation of high quality creative work coming out of the city. The trust was established by Charlotte Larsen in recognition of the lack of support in the film and theatre industries and is endeavoring to support artists we believe are launching a sustainable career in the arts. There will be 3 funding rounds in 2008, closing in January, May and September. Application forms and information: www.eatwellington.org.nz

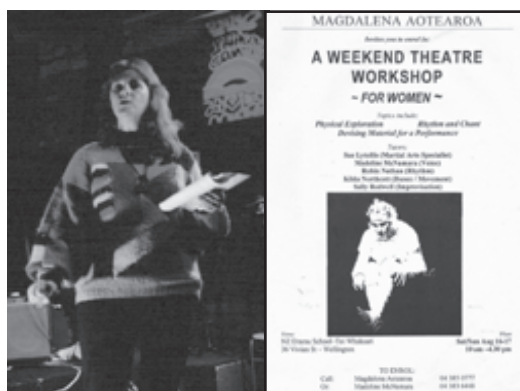
An information session on the application process will be held at 6pm, Tuesday 15th January in the Upper Chamber at Toi Poneke: Wellington Arts Centre, 61-63 Abel Smith St, Wellington. All are welcome.

We are facilitating a mentoring programme in conjunction with our three funding rounds, and seeking experienced film and theatre practitioners (all areas) who are willing to be on our database of mentors that we can call on from time to time, as applicants come through with particular mentoring needs. The mentorship would involve an initial meeting with the mentoree (the coffee is on us!), and there is no obligation to take it any further from there. Please contact administrator Alice Baxter for further info on admin@eatwellington.org.nz

As well as giving money away we are always on the look out for sponsorship too! If you are interested in supporting EAT, either by financially or otherwise, please be in touch. We are looking for in-kind sponsorship on any product that may be of use to our recipients (i.e.: discounts on paint, costumes, printing etc...) On April 1st 2008, the new tax laws on charitable donations come into effect, removing the current \$1890 cap on donation rebates. EAT is a registered charitable trust.

Contact Emma Carter, Events and Sponsorship Co-ordinator, events@eatwellington.org.nz or check our website www.eatwellington.org.nz for further details.

Below: Moira Wairama at Not Broadcast Quality; workshop poster; martial arts workshop led by Sue Lytollis; workshop led by Sally Rodwell.



Revenge of the Amazons

By Jean Betts and William Shakespeare: a 70's re-working of Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. Bats Theatre, Wellington, December, 2007.

Originally written in 1983, *Revenge of the Amazons* premiered that same year at the Circa Theatre in Wellington. This current production was directed by Rachel More and Jacqueline Coats with twenty actors, many award-winning performers; produced by Greg Wikstrom, designed by Jennifer Lal, music by Jamie Burgess.

Seeing *Revenge* makes it all clear why live theatre is vital and healing to our souls. Experiencing a good play where the actors are having as much fun as the audience is a wonderful time well spent. Extremely well written, the theme of love and lust is even funnier when roller skates and a disco ball enter a Shakespearean stage. The wonderful play within the play, by the 'Fallopian Thespians', had me rolling in the aisle in memory (and pain) of consciousness-raising meetings, which I organized in my own home in the U.S. in the 70's.

It is not possible to point to any one actor as rising above the rest since this is a strong collaborative ensemble; however, with that said, because I am a new resident of Wellington and don't toe to any faves (yet), I will say that Tanea Heke as Puck was pure joy. Wearing an Afro wig and a psychedelic body suit, she captured the essence of this mischief-maker each time she roller-skated on the stage. It takes great talent to look like you don't know what you are doing -- and be able to do it so well.

In the program notes, Betts is quoted as saying that she wrote *Revenge* for fun, mostly to provide more comic parts for women and a better share of the famous lines. And this she accomplishes with humour and an original take on this famous play. I think Shakespeare would have approved every bit. The production has closed now but it's probably one of those plays that you can read with equal enjoyment and experience belly laughs. The script is available from The Play Press - founded by Jean Betts, this organisation is devoted to publishing new and innovative NZ work. Check it out: www.playpress.co.nz.

Diane Spodarek
www.dangerousdiane.blogspot.com



Local News

Nancy goes forth ...

Dear sisters of theatre,
I am back in Aotearoa, awed by her beauty after traversing four continents, so that says something.

My creative pilgrimage was such a powerful gift to myself I'm still kissing myself on the shoulder every morning. Again and again I was struck through with sparkly chills of excitement over so much life lived so differently. And the obvious replication of spiritual worship despite the irony of ongoing religious conflict. The veils, the incense, the song, the sculpted stone were present whether I was sitting in a church in Barcelona, a mosque in Casablanca or a wat in Thailand.

As for the theatre, I saw lots in and out of theatre venues. I was deeply satisfied to meet and study under Phillip Gaulier after all I had heard about him from Christian Penny, Annie Forbes and Tim Denton - and I was not disappointed. Now I look always towards the pleasure of the work with fondness of memory for that Parisian chapter. And Odin Teatret just blew me away with their focus and genius not to mention deep integrity about everything - process, product and most importantly people.

I carried around books to work on *Double Helix* but just couldn't get started. It has slipped away for now somehow. Not sure what that's about except maybe that there were so many colourful options in the global toyshop that this year has been.

And now begins a very new chapter of my life as I head off to the Cook Islands January 21 for a three year contract as the Performing Arts Education adviser to the Ministry of Education. You better come visit! There I hope to start a new chapter of Magdalena and get really fit arms canoeing.

I plan to return at Easter for our Gathering and share some highlights in a workshop. See you there,

Nancy Fulford

Below: Daphne Owers and Nancy Fulford; Stasa Dailianis and Lucette Hindon.



Bipeds Productions News

After the quite torrid couple of years getting our show *Fishnet* up and running and touring around NZ, we decided to make 07 an 'Inhale' year. This was a good move, personally I felt like it gave me time to come to terms with menopause and I am sure it gave Kilda time to nest and establish herself in Dunedin. That said we have both been active in various projects: *Fishnet* was bought by the Hastings Blossom Festival and Massey University; Kilda performed in a remounted *Limbs* work, with the original cast members, choreographed by Mary-Jane O'Reilly as well as her own solo in the tempo festival in Auckland as part of the Old Yellar programme; she has also been teaching and choreographing for younger performers in Dunedin and caring for elderly in their homes; my big project for the year was *Living in Colour*, a seven month progression through the colours of the spectrum culminating with my 50th birthday in September. Recently I choreographed *Urinetown* for Downstage Theatre and began developing ideas for our new piece which I am contemplating calling *Away with the Faeries*. I had the pleasure of working with Megan Adams who has just given birth - a good rhythm new mother/baby and older dancer - this had given me some fuel and structure to take into our January workshop in Port Chalmers with dancer Julia Milsom and actor Rhys Latton. Kilda will then go on to work with choreographer Daniel Belton on his latest film. We are heading for a preview of the new work later in the year - more info on www.bipeds.co.nz - watch this space. Seasons greeting. Peace to you all.

Lyne Pringle

Above: Lyne Pringle, *Living in Colour* Project - Newtown Red. below, Sally Rodwell leads the *Complainers* outside *Te Papa*.



International News

The Open Page 13 Call for contributions

Contributions are sought for the thirteenth issue of The Open Page which has the theme "Theatre - Women - Letters". Contributions could include letters to the Open Page or other recipients; or articles about a letter, women's choice of letters as a communication medium, letters as a source of theatre history, and the individual letters of the different alphabets as action, inspiration, sound, awareness and rhythm. Julia Varley writes in her the letter to authors (the complete letter is available online at www.theopenpage.org):

With this theme we hope to encourage some women theatre practitioners to look into their personal and theatre archives to reveal documents that will throw light on the motivations which guided us in the past and also help us rediscover the enthusiasm we need for our work today. By explaining the background and context of a letter, an article can bring to life forgotten episodes and events which can help us understand how we arrived at the subsequent outcome.

At Transit 5, during the presentation of the experimental performance Women with Big Eyes, we saw letters projected on a white wall and falling off sentences like rain or leaves; letters painted with water evaporate and disappear; letters written as urgent messages on strips of paper burn to light up a tree. Letters can compose many words and meanings, they can become part of books, anthologies and biographies, but they can also speak for themselves. This issue hopes to find them, print them and reveal some of their secrets.

If you intend to contribute, please let the Editorial Board know by January 6 th 2008. Articles should be sent by the beginning of March 2008, with a five line curriculum vitae, to Rina Skeel, Odin Teatret, Box 1283, 7500 Holstebro, Denmark, or rina.skeel@odinteatret.dk. The final lay-out and proof reading will be done in April 2008, the issue will be printed in May to be ready in June.

Stasa writes from London

I am working for the London Borough of Lambeth helping to deliver a programme of arts, cultural and community sports activities as part of the 2012 Cultural Olympiad. The Olympiad runs from August next year when the Olympic flame is handed to London at the end of the Beijing Games and runs for all the years leading up to 2012. Creatively I haven't done much since I left NZ, although I did help produce and 'star' in (ha!) a music video for Leila Adu. I'm not short of ideas for work though - every day stimulates new thoughts, unbelievable images appear, people and sounds, chaos and incredible systems operating to ferry everyone around. Why are we all here - so tightly packed in as we are? Amazing. And

Magdalena Sin Fronteras

In January, Helen Varley Jamieson heads to Cuba for the Magdalena Sin Fronteras festival, thanks to a grant from Creative New Zealand. At the festival she will participate again in the collaboration *Women With Big Eyes*. This was begun at the Transit Festival in Denmark last January, and brings senior practitioners within the Magdalena network together with younger members to collaborate on a performance work.

It will also be another opportunity to meet with the global Magdalena family and experience another local version of the network. This is the second Magdalena festival to be held in Cuba - Sally Rodwell attended the first in January 2005 (and wrote about her experience in Issue 22 of this newsletter).

This year the festival has the theme "Actresses-Directors" and it will look at what motivates actors to become directors. The programme includes many familiar names from other Magdalena festivals, as well as several groups from Cuba. Helen will report on the festival on her return.

Miss Havisham Abroad



Dear All,
Just a short message to let you know that I am touring my solo show, *Playing Miss Havisham* around Queensland next year. It's all organised by the Queensland Arts Council and I'll be travelling in May for about 3 - 4 weeks.

I am very excited as I will have two HELPERS, a driver/tour manager and stage manager, which is a real bonus, seeing I usually travel by myself. If anyone knows anyone in Queensland and would like me to send you my itinerary, please email me at hmoulder@xtra.co.nz and I'll send the INFO to you.

Helen Moulder

yet I feel no urge to leave and come home permanently (I feel many urges to come home for a holiday and visit everyone!).

Winter is here, the decorations are up in the streets and the city looks lovely - I really like London at Christmas, it all makes much more sense over here. We live in Bloomsbury/Covent Garden, on the back of the Shaftsbury theatre - right up against the stage part! At the moment we are listening to the last half of *Hair Spray* as we go off to sleep at night.

All my love to everyone, xx stas

Gathering 2008

The 2008 Magdalena Aotearoa National Gathering will take place from Thursday 20 to Tuesday 25 March at the Newtown Community Centre in Wellington.

Building on the tremendous energy and goodwill that manifested at the 2007 Gathering, the 2008 Gathering will have the theme of "exchange" and will feature a blackboard programme. Rather than a pre-planned programme of paid tutors and presenters - which we do not have the resources for this time - participants are invited to contribute to a flexible programme based on what we can each offer and what we each want to get out of the Gathering.

All participants will pay a flat fee of \$50 (provided you register before 29 February) which will cover the hire of the venue and luscious lunches organised by our very own kitchen queen, Moira Aberdeen.

We anticipate that the programme will include some of the following:

- morning physical warm-ups (requested at the last Gathering);
- work-in-progress showings, followed by facilitated feedback sessions;
- open workshopping of excerpts from the works-in-progress;
- presentations and discussions with artists and arts workers;
- evening programmes - bring something to show!
- opportunities for exchange, meetings, and networking.

Proposed Presentations/Workshops

Ideas put forward so far for presentations and workshops include:

- Works-in-progress: already four different works-in-progress have been proposed; these will follow the same format as last year (presentation followed by discussion) and may also take the form of an open rehearsal, where participants can observe and participate in the process.
- Documentation workshop: as practitioners we need to be able to produce presentable documentation of our work, for funding proposals, touring and archiving, but this can be a difficult and time-consuming job. This workshop is an opportunity for those who have successfully documented your work and produced showreel material to share your experiences with others.
- Presentations: from arts workers in roles that support independent theatre practitioners, and from those who are operating independent theatre companies.

Magdalena Aotearoa National Gathering 2008

exchange

20-25 March 2008 (Easter)
Newtown Community Centre
Wellington

all welcome
only \$50
if registered before 29 Feb

Programme Outline

We will be operating a 'blackboard' programme - that is one that participants contribute to at the outset of the event. The following is a guide only, to give you a general idea of what will take place at the Gathering.

Thursday 20 March

6pm - registration and compiling programme
7pm - opening round
8.30pm - shared meal
9pm - programme confirmation

Daily, Friday 21 March - Monday 24 March

8.30-9am - house-keeping and programme planning
9-10am - physical warm-up session
10.30-1pm - presentation and discussion, or open rehearsal/workshop
1pm - lunch (catered at the venue)
2-4pm - work-in-progress presentation and discussion
4.30pm - networking time, or continuation of workshop
6pm - dinner (at local restaurants)
7.30pm - evening programme - video screenings, short performances, etc.

Tuesday 25 March

8.30-9am - house-keeping
9-10am - physical warm-up session
10.30-11.30 - Magdalena Aotearoa AGM
11.30-1pm - evaluation and future plans
1pm - lunch
2pm - venue cleaning

*Magdalena Australia are also holding a Gathering at Easter 2008, in Brisbane.
They have proposed some kind of exchange between the two events.
For more information about the Australian Gathering: scotiam@optusnet.com.au*

Nourishing the Gatherers

Those who attended the 2007 Gathering have fond memories of the luscious lunches and snacks that appeared from the community centre's kitchen. Our kitchen queen, Moira Aberdeen, is already dreaming up the menu for 2008. She writes:

Feeding people interesting and nourishing kai so they can focus on the brilliant and important work of the Magdalena hui was such an honour and a delight last year, I am happy to co-ordinate it all again for Easter 2008.

In 2007 we were able to cater for vegetarians, non-vegetarians, vegans, and the gluten-free to their seeming satisfaction. A team of enthusiastic volunteers made sure we have great kai on the table on time everytime and we encourage people who would like to assist us this year to put their hands up now. It's heaps of fun. A special request for this year would be a guitar player to accompany us so we can sing while we work/play.

This year's menu is likely to build on our extensive culinary accommodation and repertoire from last year - secrets spilling out from the menu planners include fillos, buckwheat pancakes; gluten-free scones, gluten-free shortbread ...

Moira Aberdeen

Memories from the 2007 Gathering.

Below: Kitchen queen Moira Aberdeen gets her just desserts; right, top: Jean Hyland, Helen Moulder and Jo Randerson; and below, Pauleen Hayes, Nancy Fulford and Chrissie Butler performing in the final concert..



Documenters Needed!

Are you clever with a camera? valiant on the video? pedantic with a pencil? dedicated with a dictaphone? *The Gathering needs you to help document the event.*

At the 2007 Gathering, we videoed all of the work-in-progress presentations and feedback sessions, and some of the rest of the programme. We were able to provide the presenting artists with the raw footage of their sessions, thanks to the marathon effort of Helen Varley Jamieson, but we did not have the resources to edit anything. Next time, we would dearly love to be able to produce better documentation - for the benefit of everyone involved but also for archival purposes and future funding applications.

If you can help at all in this department, please let us know - email magdalen@actrix.co.nz. We can't pay a fee, but we will cover the cost of materials. This is a great opportunity for a student or anyone who wants to gain experience in documenting theatre and creating show reels.



**Magdalena Aotearoa Trust
2008 AGM
10.30am, Tuesday 25 March
Newtown Community Centre,
Wellington**

This year the AGM is included in the Gathering programme. Come along and find out exactly what goes on at this annual ritual!



Winter to have NZ premiere

The fabulous reading and feedback of my one-act play *Winter* at the 2007 National Gathering gave me what I intuitively knew: it was ready for production. *Winter* is a New Zealand play and I'm happy that it will premiere for a season at BATS in June 2008. Before that I intend to present an excerpt at the 2008 Gathering.

Winter is a two-character play about some obvious and not so obvious cultural differences between the U.S. and New Zealand. As seen through a 'second time around' relationship between a NZ man and a US woman, *Winter* is about finding peace in our hearts. Full of humour, mystery and symbolism, *Winter* is a one act play set on the Kapiti Coast.

Anyone interested in being part of the production, please email me. I'm looking for the usual production help: designers, lighting/sound technicians, a director, producers and of course actors.

After a sell-out season of my play *The Drunk Monologues* at BATS in 2006, I am looking forward to working with the wonderful people at BATS again.

If you would like to see the script, email me at diane.spodarek@gmail.com.

Diane Spodarek

Gathering Registration

To register for the 2008 Magdalena Aotearoa National Gathering, please complete this form and return it with your cheque to the Magdalena Aotearoa Trust, P.O. Box 27-300, Wellington.

Don't want to destroy your newsletter? Visit our web site, <http://magdalena.actrix.co.nz> where you can either download a copy of this form, or complete an online registration (you will still need to post us the payment, as we are not set up to take credit card payments).

Name:

Address:

.....

Phone number(s):

Email:

The flat fee includes all workshops, panels, presentations, and evening entertainment from Thursday 20th to Tuesday 25th, as well as morning/afternoon teas and lunches on those days. Dinners will be arranged at local restaurants and are to be paid for individually.

Early bird (before 29 Feb 2007) \$50

Late bird (after 29 Feb 2007) \$70

Cheque for \$ enclosed (payable to Magdalena Aotearoa Trust).

Special needs - please indicate if you have any of the following special needs:

Vegetarian or Vegan

Other dietary needs (specify):

Other special needs (note – the venue is suitable for wheelchairs); relevant information:

.....

Do you require assistance in finding billet accommodation (no promises but we will try to help)?

.....

Please tell us if you have a proposal for the programme, or any specific skills/information to exchange (continue on separate sheet if necessary):

.....

.....

.....

YOUR NEWSLETTER SUBSCRIPTION IS NOW DUE!

In order to make our processes easier and more efficient, ALL newslettersubscriptions now falls due annually in April, which means that YOURS IS DUE NOW - this is for April 2008 to April 2009; we won't be asking for subs again until the beginning of 2009. If you value the newsletter and want to keep receiving it, please complete the form below and send it with your payment to the Magdalena Aotearoa Trust, PO Box 27-300, Wellington, NZ/Aoteaora.

If you're also registering for the Gathering, use the form on the back of this page and send everything together.

Don't have a cheque book - or overseas? You can pay with a direct transfer, via internet banking or through your branch. If you choose this method of payment, PLEASE ensure that you identify your payment with your name so we know who it's from, and "NEWSLETTER SUB" so we know what it's for. You must still return the form below so that we have all your details. Tick the "Paid by direct deposit" box."

Our bank details are:

Account name: Magdalena Aotearoa Trust

Swift code: ANZBNZ 22 (for international transfers)

Account number: 06 0513 0148465-00

Your newsletter subscription and Gathering payment include GST; donations are tax deductible. You will receive a receipt with your next newsletter. Please note that international transfers will incur a \$12 charge from our bank; you are welcome to pay for more than one year or combine your payment with others to reduce the charge - just note the details on your sub form.

Magdalena Aotearoa Newsletter Subscription Form

Name:

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I would like to receive the newsletter; amount enclosed:

\$30 waged

\$20 unwaged

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Cheque enclosed

Paid by direct deposit

Total amount: \$..... includes subs for year(s) and donation of \$

Please send me information about the Patroness Programme

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