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**THE STARLIGHT BALLROOM:
A Documentary Drama
From conception to production**

A thesis
submitted in partial fulfilment
of the requirements for the degree
of
Master of Arts in Theatre Studies
at
The University of Waikato
by
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The University of Waikato

2012

Abstract

This thesis documents the stages of development undertaken to produce *The Starlight Ballroom- A documentary drama*. A play devised by drawing on documentary theatre practice and methodology.

Drawing on the literature of this genre, the thesis presents a historical perspective of the development of documentary theatre practice, from its origins in the work of Piscator through to the work of modern practitioners. This provides the context from which I have drawn my ideology and methodology.

Definitions of documentary theatre are presented and issues regarding the authenticity and integrity of various forms of documentary theatre are discussed. I also present a rationale for the creation of *The Starlight Ballroom* with reference to theoretical and practitioner influence.

The first methodology section details the scriptwriting process; providing a dramaturgical analysis of the play; and presenting a rationale supporting the choice of the particular playtext.

The second methodology section details the production process from script to performance. This presents a description of the development of the rehearsal script during rehearsals and the development of the style and structure of the play.

The conclusion analyses the extent to which my intentions in creating *The Starlight Ballroom- A documentary drama* were met, and reviews areas in which further development could be applied.

Acknowledgements

Over the years my supervisor Dr. William Farrimond has been a source of knowledge and inspiration. When I look back, I see he has quietly guided me to documentary theatre. He recognised my love of people's stories and opened to me the world of theatre as a place to present them. As a supervisor, he has allowed me to explore this genre while keeping a gentle hand on my shoulder to steer me in the right direction. Thank you William.

To Margaret Bagnall, Keith and Pam Hallberg, Joan Lea, Alan Strangwick, Jack Guthrie, Helen and Eric Pidduck, Coralie and Barry Robinson, Trudy Murray, Paul Fisher, Loma Reid, Brian and Frances Wilcock, Jan and Bob Chalklen, Marlene Wilkinson, Andy Shearer, Gerry Clark, Susan Coubrough, Kevin McNeil, Julie Weingott, Dot King, Eileen Beach Kelly, Mollie Rafferty, and Gordon Dobbs. Thank you so much for sharing your recollections of the Starlight Ballroom with me. Your memories and stories made this piece of work possible.

To the cast... Rick Cave, Brittany Holmes, Jacques Fourie, Creaghie Beere, Clive Lamdin, Donald Tweedie, Jono Carter, Zoe Vaile, Matthias Goed, Aram Higgins, Ruth Hare, Matt Powell and Alice Kimber-Bell

the crew... Felix, Alec Forbes and Joe Citizen

and others who gave their time... Pene Scammell, Torry Worth, Linda Holmes, Carl Gordon and Maryann Tuao.

Thank you for your effort and input. I had fun and you are all wonderful.

A huge hug and kiss goes out to my Mum for loving me and instilling in me the love of stories. Without her, I wouldn't be here.

And finally, thanks Felix for everything... including patting my back and saying 'there, there'.

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Introduction

Ladies and gentlemen welcome to The Starlight Ballroom – A documentary drama. (Appendix 1, p. 67, line. 8)

The following thesis details the process I undertook to create *The Starlight Ballroom – A documentary drama*. This is a play about a group of teenagers preparing for and attending a dance at the Starlight Ballroom, a popular Hamilton dance hall, in 1958. The story was created using the recollections of patrons who attended the ballroom in the 1950s and other documentation from the time.

The introduction draws on literature of this genre to present an historical perspective of documentary theatre from which modern practice has emerged. This is followed by a discussion of the definition of documentary theatre and the issues of authenticity and integrity that arise in the treatment of documentary materials. I then briefly outline the theoretical and practitioner influences that have informed the process I used during this project.

The first methodology section follows the process I undertook to create the performance script. This discusses my inspiration, research procedure, ethical considerations and the interviewing process. The stages of script development are detailed and a dramaturgical analysis of the playtext is presented. A rationale supporting the choice of the playtext is presented exploring the reasons for a shift of intent that developed over the script writing process.

The second methodology section looks at the production process from script to performance. This presents a description of the development of the rehearsal script during rehearsals and the development of the style and structure of the play; including the rehearsal schedule, casting, the choice to film Scene 4, blocking scenes, dance, stage sets, props and furniture, costumes, projection images, sound and lighting, and voice and rehearsal warm ups.

The conclusion analyses to what extent my intentions in creating this performance were met and reviews areas in which further development could be applied.

What is Documentary Theatre? – Modern Practice in an historical perspective.

It is acknowledged that the founding father of the German tradition of documentary theatre, which has been a major influence on subsequent works in this genre, was Erwin Piscator (Dawson, 1999; Irmer, 2006; Paget, 1987). He, along with Bertolt Brecht, is responsible for the European *epic* and political tradition of theatre that they formulated whilst working together, in Germany, between 1919 and 1930. The idea for this epic form of theatre was to provide a drama which did not treat the audience as ‘passive observer’ to be carried away with the emotion of a performance, but to create an arena that could be used “for the public ‘discussion’ of political and social issues” (Styan, 1993, p. 128).

Piscator’s first documentary play was written in collaboration with Felix Gasbarra. They produced *Trotz alledem!* (‘In spite of everything’) [1925], a massive agit-prop (abbreviation of ‘agitation’ and ‘propaganda’) production which exemplified “for the first time a production where the political document [was] the sole base for text and scenic work” (Piscator, as cited in Irmer, 2006, p. 18). In this work, Piscator (1980) created a montage of “authentic speeches, essays, newspaper cuttings, appeals, pamphlets, photographs, and film of the [first World] War and the [Russian] Revolution, [and] of historical persons and scenes” (p. 94). These images were incorporated directly into the play along with music, a huge cast, and a multileveled rotating stage creating a massive multimedia production. Piscator (1980) said he wanted to show “the link between the events on the stage and the great forces in history. [And that] it [was] not by chance that the factual substance becomes the main thing in each play. It is only from the facts themselves that the constraints and the constant mechanisms of life emerge, giving a deeper meaning to our private fears” (p. 93). Piscator’s interest was in looking at recent history and staging scenes shaped by political ideas which evoked a high level of socio-political consciousness in its audience (Irmer, 2006).

Paget (1990) describes the work of Piscator’s theatre as a ‘collision montage’ “which can present an event and an attitude simultaneously” (p. 41). Piscator developed and utilised techniques to consistently encourage this audience critique

at the forefront of his productions. This came to be known as the ‘Piscatorian tradition’ and can be defined by the following elements:

- i) They may *use projections of actualities* (in the form of photographs and films) to which the stage action refers.
- ii) They may quote from printed ‘documentary’ sources (projected via slides, written on placards, spoken by performers).
- iii) They may *address the audience directly* from the stage (performers may do this in their own right or via loudspeaker systems).
- iv) They may utilise *music and song* in order to provide an element of critique (rather than a supportive ‘atmosphere’).
- v) Their performers may employ that ‘cool’ acting style associated with Brecht’s *Verfremdungseffekt* in order (for example) to play several roles, rather than a single naturalistic ‘character’. (Paget, 1990, p. 61)

In 1923 the Blue Blouse troupe, led by Boris Yuzhanin, was formed by the National Institute of Journalists in Moscow (Casson, 2000; Dawson, 1999). After the revolution there was a high rate of illiteracy and this group presented an early form of a *living newspaper* “keeping their illiterate audience in touch with issues of the day” (Casson, 2000, p. 108). Combined with these factual broadcasts were “political exhortations and discussions” (Innes, 1972, p. 23) in which to rouse the audiences enthusiasm. They travelled the country seeking out their “working class audiences in their own locations” (Leach, 1994, p. 169). They presented material from newspapers and magazines on improvised stages “without costumes, curtains or scenery” (Innes, 1972, p. 23). The performances were presented as “skits, verse, monologues, and avant-garde oratory among an uninterrupted montage of scene, songs, music, dance, mime, acrobatics and gymnastics” (Casson, 2000, p. 108).

Dawson (1999) describes the “relationship of Piscatorian agit-prop to Russian Blue Blouse styles [as] problematic” (p. 20) because both Piscator and the Blue Blouse Troupe were producing early agit-prop, documentary theatre at the same

time. He concedes that the “historic development shown is the Russian Blue Blouse Troupe’s influence upon the agit-prop theatre of Erwin Piscator and vice versa” (p. 83). However Piscator admits:

I was quite ignorant of what was happening on the Soviet stage at this time – very little news about performances and so on came through to us. Even afterwards I never heard that the Russians had employed film with the same function I had had in mind. In any case, the question of priority is irrelevant. It would merely prove that this was no superficial game with technical effects, but a new, emergent form of theatre based on the philosophy of historical materialism which we shared. (Piscator, 1980, p. 93)

Later, in 1935, in America the Federal Theatre Project was set up by the American government to employ out of work actors during the Great Depression. One of the sub-projects established was that of the Living Newspapers. Federal Theatre Project director Hallie Flanagan had toured Russia in 1927 and had been impressed by the productions of the Blue Blouse troupe. She was aware of Piscator’s work because of appointing John Bonn (Hans Bohn), a German immigrant, as head of the Federal Theatre Projects German section. He had been director and founder of Prolet Buene, a German- American agit-prop company and had gained his staging ideas from Piscator. The function of the Living Newspapers, Flanagan stated, is that they:

... report the struggle of the modern man to understand the forces all about him; agriculture, power, law, housing, social diseases, medicine.... Every one is based on a passionate belief in democracy, on the desire to keep this country a democracy and to make it a better place for more people. (as cited in New Deal Network, n.d, para. 18)

An example of their work is *Power* (1937) in which the documentary tradition laid down by Piscator can be seen. It used a play of words and addressed the power struggles involved in electric power consumption in America. It sought to educate and explore the democratic ideology that “Electric power belonged to the people... and the people must exercise their political power to reclaim it from the

private utility companies” (New Deal Network, n.d, para. 22). In the bibliography of the playtext its research sources are documented as; books, pamphlets, newspaper articles, magazines, organisations, government sources, statistical materials and public addresses (Federal Theatre, 1937, p. 7-10). Further Piscatorian influences can be seen in the production style which “combined spare yet imaginative staging, vaudeville-style skits, statistics, projections, loudspeakers, and music” (New Deal Network, n.d, para. 22).

The rise of the Third Reich had interrupted the experimental work taking place in Germany at this time, including the exile of both Piscator and Brecht. However Piscator’s idea that theatre could contribute to social change continued in the 1960's with a new wave of German practitioners experimenting with the concept of documentary theatre. There was an attitude that this form of theatre should be organised as a political institution that idealistically identified with the New Left movement of the 60's (Irmer, 2006, p. 18). The predominant theatre practitioners during this time were Rolf Hochhuth, Heinar Kipphardt and Peter Weiss (Dawson, 1999; Irmer, 2006). Their works focused “more on one single issue, treating written documents with great accuracy, and shifting its emphasis from the masses to the individual protagonist whose personal responsibility was to be analysed by the audience” (Irmer, 2006, p.18). During this time documentary plays “used historical documents as the source of plays offering new historical insights into the course of history” (Irmer, 2006, p. 17), particularly history related to Nazi Germany and the atrocities which took place.

During this time, Piscator, having returned to Germany after 20 years in exile, directed Hochhuth’s *Der Stellvertreter* (‘The Deputy’) [1963] addressing Pope Pius’s role during World War 2; Kipphardt’s *In der Sache J. Robert Oppenheimer* (‘In the Matter of J. Robert Oppenheimer’) [1964] “based on the hearings of a Personnel Security Board set up by the Atomic Energy Commission in America in 1954” (Styan, 1993, p. 181); and Weiss’s *Die Ermittlung* (‘The Investigation’) [1965] about atrocities committed at Auschwitz (Dawson,1999; Irmer, 2006; Styan, 1993). It is not surprising that Piscator directed these plays, which like his own work, addressed political and social injustices. He also, having directed them in close succession, ensured a revival of the documentary theatre genre.

Peter Weiss's work *The Investigation* (1965) is an example of the kind of subject matter undertaken. Weiss attended the Frankfurt Auschwitz trials between 1963-65, after which he created the “entire text of *The Investigation* ... based on carefully edited excerpts from the trial transcript” (Gross, 1965, para. 2). His aim was to create a “scientific investigation of the reality of Auschwitz, to show the audience, in the greatest detail, exactly what happened” (Munk, Weiss & Gray, 1966, p. 108) and hoped “that they listen very carefully and be completely awake, not hypnotized, absolutely alive, answering all the questions in the play” (p. 111).

A notable contributor to the theory and methodology of documentary theatre, Weiss wrote *Fourteen propositions for a documentary theater* in 1968, a “manifesto-like essay in 14 short paragraphs [which] still offers the best explanation of the functions and intentions of the documentary theatre of the 1960's” (Irmer, 2006, p. 17). In it he defines documentary theatre as follows:

The documentary theater is a theater of factual reports. Minutes of proceedings, files, letters, statistical tables, stock-exchange communiqués, presentations of balance sheets of banks and industrial undertakings, official commentaries, speeches, interviews, statements by well-known personalities, press-, radio-, photo-, or film reportings of events and all other media bearing witness to the present form the bases of the production. The documentary theater shuns all invention. It makes use of authentic documentary material which it diffuses from the stage, without altering the contents, but in structuring the form. (Weiss, 1995, p. 139)

The ideology of Weiss and the other German practitioners at the time was to consciously present the primary source documentation from a specific political perspective, to critique a dominant ideology and to confront the audience with material that engaged them in forming opinions rather than passively receiving information.

While the politically motivated documentary theatre was flourishing in Germany, there was a “realization that the theatre of Brecht and Piscator was relevant in a

British context” (Paget, 1987, p. 319) which resulted in new forms of documentary theatre emerging in 1960's England.

Joan Littlewood has been described as a “theatrical magpie who stole ideas, adapted them and through this process generated an approach that evolved, developed and turned back on itself as she rejected or returned to ideas” (Holdsworth, 2006, p. 2). Influences on her practice included Stanislavsky, Brecht, Laban, Meyerhold and Piscator “alongside popular cultural forms such as music hall, films and street entertainers” (p. 6). Politically she identified with socialism which is reflected in much of her work. Her creation of *Oh What a Lovely War* (1963) established her “reputation as one of the great twentieth century directors” (p. 77).

Influenced by Brecht’s Epic theatre and desire to “create a popular theatre for a working-class audience in opposition to a middle-class theatre of false values” (Styan, 1993, p. 185), Littlewood’s *Oh What a Lovely War* (1963) was an attempt to tell the story of ordinary soldiers in World War One; “in order to provide counter narratives to the official versions of history written in by those in positions of power” (Holdsworth, 2006, p. 80). As was her practice, she experimented with a range of theatrical elements including; first world war songs, traditions of popular entertainment such as music hall, and documentary devices such as “projected slides of recruiting posters and photographic evidence of trench life and war casualties, whilst a ‘ticker-tape’ news panel flashed contextual information, official death tolls and statistics of battles fought, won and lost” (p. 81). She used these as a contradiction to the scripted scenes which had been devised from documentary sources such as “books, newspapers, military dispatches, regimental histories and oral testimonies [which] informed the political stance, subject matter and dialogue of the show” (p. 83). The use of techniques from the Piscatorian tradition was evident, as was the utilisation of the Brechtian *Verfremdungseffekt*. As noted previously, Paget (1990) describes this style as a ‘collision montage’ which makes it “possible to see [in the case of *Oh What a Lovely War* (1963)] the impact of scenes coming up against each other to generate ironic counterpoint, bitter commentary, comedy and radical shifts in tone and atmosphere” (Holdsworth, 2006, p. 82).

Peter Cheeseman at the Victoria Theatre, Stoke-on-Trent, was creating local documentary theatre. Cheeseman wanted to “break away from theatre as a 'cultured' phenomenon. He want[ed] to find a means to destroy the barriers which so often grow up between the creative artist and the most ordinary people” (Elygren. Jr, 1974, p. 88). Inspired by Littlewood’s production of *Oh What a Lovely War* (1963) he used the theatre form of musical documentary to tell local stories to local communities. His rationale was that it promoted a “sense of pride and self-confidence that every district outside London desperately needs – so you don't feel you're a nonentity” (Cheeseman, cited in Paget, 1987, p. 322).

Unlike Piscator and Weiss who presented their material politically and from their perspective, Cheeseman opposed documentary theatre as political or social propaganda. He believed that there was a need “to find a way of asking disturbing questions which do not take a single viewpoint or single alignment”(Elygren. Jr, 1974, p. 91). Cheeseman's requisite was objectivity. He achieved this by establishing artistic guidelines which included presenting many viewpoints so as to raise questions rather than give answers; not allowing actors to create scenes through improvisation but using the primary material as a means of expression, and to measure documentary theatre by its purity. As Cheeseman said; “You can't write a documentary – it's a contradiction in terms. You can only edit documentary material” (Cheeseman, as cited in Elygren. Jr, 1974, p. 92).

In the introduction to *The Knotty* (1966), Cheeseman (1970) describes the creative process they undertook at Stoke-on-Trent when creating documentary theatre. This started with an initial research period of approximately 6 months in which secondary sources, such as books about the chosen subject, and then primary sources, such as has been mentioned in Weiss’s list of sources were researched and catalogued. Next, a ‘research committee’ comprising of researchers and actors would take responsibility for aspects of the material and shape it into a storyline. Cheeseman believed that the process using a ‘committee’ preserved the contradictory viewpoints often present in historical events. If there was no material relating to a certain aspect of the subject then no scene would be created. The proposed story and theatrical shape would then go to the rehearsal process where the playtext was created. Each scene would have its primary material attached and the actors would work with their allocated material. A secretary

would sit in and, when the business for a scene was decided on, she would make a first draft of the script. It was important at this stage that material not be dismantled and re-assembled too much, to protect the integrity and validity of the documentary material.

Another factor in the process was the songs Cheeseman used. He notes that they usually had a narrative function and that often folk songs were utilised as they were accessible to a wider audience. Actors had to be aware that they needed to engage constraint and objectivity when performing their parts so that the focus remained on the material and not on the actor's characterisation of a role. Costume was suggestive and changes were made in full view of the audience to help in preserving the documentary approach (Cheeseman, 1970).

The initial performance would be performed in their district (Stoke-on Trent) and Cheeseman noted:

We have never made any compromise in the direction of making the shows comprehensible to people from outside the district. There is no point – they are our special contribution to its life, and any visitor who drops in must expect to feel like a visitor. I believe myself that an aim as specific as this is likely to be much more creatively fruitful than one which seeks to please the nation – or the world. These are both almost incomprehensible abstractions of which we can only have a kind of mathematical or spatial awareness. The only human situations we can truly comprehend are the ones small enough for us to feel a significant or effective part of. Otherwise our actual sense of existing at all is depressingly diminished. (Cheeseman, 1970, p. xviii)

Interestingly enough, after having said this, Cheeseman found that it was these plays which were created specifically for their community that had a wider audience appeal. Rather than being difficult to comprehend, audiences from other districts, and in fact other countries, found in these plays a unique yet appealing flavour (Cheeseman, 1970).

The work of Cheeseman at Stoke-on-Trent influenced the ideology of the documentary plays in England and was “received by younger practitioners

through the *tradition* it established rather than from direct experience of the work itself” (Paget, 1987, p. 319). Much of the subsequent work at this time had structural and performative elements in common. Paget (1987) credits Cheeseman as the inspiration for what is now known as verbatim theatre (p. 318) although it was not until the mid-70s that this term was used. It is important to note that the manifestation of this form of documentary theatre is attributed to the portable cassette recorder. Rony Robinson a playwright at Gateway Theatre, Chester, set out what he considered the boundaries of verbatim theatre as:

A form of theatre firmly predicated upon the taping and subsequent transcription of interviews with 'ordinary' people, done in the context of research into a particular region, subject area, issue, event, or combination of these things. This primary source is then transformed into a text which is acted, usually by the performers who collected the material in the first place.

As often as not, such plays are then fed back into the communities (which have in the real sense created them), via performance in those communities. In verbatim theatre, the firmest of commitments is thus made by the company to the use of vernacular speech, recorded as the primary source material of their play. (as cited in Paget, 1987, p. 317)

However, within the use of vernacular speech the actors own speech rhythms often emerge creating a balance with the “speech rhythms of the original source” (Paget, 1987, p. 332). The technique of actors finding their own rhythm while preserving the source’s integrity can be likened to the acting style described in Brecht’s ‘The Street Scene’ (Brecht, 2001). Another catalyst in engaging this acting style is the contact often experienced in the interviewing process between the actors and contributors which enables the actor to re-present rather than embody the ‘real’ characters in performance (Paget, 1987).

Many of these early verbatim plays rejected the trappings of traditional staging. Instead they were characterised by an “apparent plainness” (Paget, 1987, p. 32) derived from the use of episodic scenes in which they were structured and

therefore the need for actors to perform “rapid transformations of time, place and scene” (p. 32).

The influence of *Oh What a Lovely War* (1963) is apparent in the prevalent use of such “transformational aids as songs” (Paget, 1987, p. 30). Structurally useful, popular music and songs were used to move between scenes; utilised to provide commentary on action; and inspired an attitude that you could have fun while still recognising that there was a message to be heard.

The ideology of commitment to community is exemplified in the work of “The Living Archive” in Milton Keynes, England. From 1974 on Roy Nevitt, Director of Drama at Strantonbury Campus worked with a community drama group to create documentary based school curriculum materials. At the same time Roger Kitchen was collecting oral histories and creating radio documentaries and community published books. Their work spiked the interest of others and, in 1984, 'The Living Archive Project' (now called 'Living Archive') was founded (Kitchen, 2010). Its philosophy was based in showing:

... how people from all walks of life and of all ages can join together in a process which includes collecting primary source material relating to the past and present life of the place where they live, and giving artistic form to this material, in a way that is interesting, exciting, and accessible for the rest of the community. (Documentary Arts Report, 1985, p. 3)

These art forms included a diverse range of presentation forms and it was believed that all the skills required existed in the community waiting to be “harness[ed], encourag[ed], direct[ed] and develop[ed] for the purpose of putting life into art” (p. 3).

Another manifestation of documentary theatre is that of reminiscence theatre. A forerunner of this form of theatre is Pam Schweitzer. In 1983 she founded the Age Exchange Theatre Trust where she was Artistic Director for 23 years. There she has worked with the elderly to create over thirty reminiscence theatre productions. She has developed reminiscence theatre in a range of ways including “small group work in the context of health and social care, inter-cultural and

intergenerational projects in the community, and therapeutic reminiscence projects in the area of mental health” (Schweitzer, 2007, p. 9). Although it is used in therapy with the elderly, reminiscence theatre has a place in community based projects which result in a vast variety of benefits that arise from working in this genre. It brings people and communities together; helps us see another person’s point of view; it passes on heritage between generations; helps generate a strong sense of who we are; provides an opportunity to reflect back on life; encourages us to recognise people as individuals and provides a place where we can learn from others experiences (Age Exchange, 2008).

These sentiments were voiced by Peter Cheeseman (who Schweitzer (2007) names as a “significant influence” (p. 15)) in an interview in 1974 when he stated that; “One of the things wrong with our society is that too few people have a sense of history. We have lost in our society the sort of natural structure whereby old men pass down knowledge to the young in a community, and people are not taught history intelligently” (Cheeseman, as cited in Elvgren, Jr, 1974, p. 92). He offered through the medium of theatre a way to “show people the past of their community in a way which will give them a sense of their past, in the knowledge that they stand not alone in the present but are part of a historical perspective. This will give them a sense of self consciousness and importance” (p. 92). The idea of reminiscence theatre builds on this by offering an arena for the elderly to tell their life stories and for the young to hear them.

Over the last twenty years there has been a proliferation of documentary forms from around the world. The following examples look at a selected range of styles now being utilised in the creation of documentary theatre.

Anna Deavere Smith, is recognised for her creation and solo performances of documentary work about large-scale public events. One such piece is *Fires in the Mirror: Crown heights Brooklyn and other identities* (1992) about the “Crown Height riots where Jews and Blacks were so violently pitted against one another in Brooklyn, August 1991” (Martin & Smith, 1993, p. 45). Smith conducts interviews herself then portrays the interviewees on stage. A review by Robert Brustein summarises her process and performance technique in saying that she “is not only an objective ear but a characterizing voice, and just as she shapes her text

through editing and selection, so she achieves her emphasis through gesture and intonation” (Brustein, 1994, p. 29).

Emily Mann is known for her theatre of testimony which “weaves oral history and verbatim interview into often chilling dramatizations of private stories and public events, particularly those dealing with both victims and survivors of violence and oppression” (Mann, 2000, p. 1). Mann uses public documents and transcripts from interviews she conducts herself as primary source material for her playscripts. She is a self-proclaimed purist and considers working with the material a matter of sculpting rather than writing (Favorini, 2009; Mann, 2000). As a means of certifying authenticity she uses Piscatorian stage devices and is careful not to change what her interviewees want to say. An example of her work is *Still life* (1980) about “three individuals coping with the aftermath of the Vietnam War” (Mann, 2000, p. 1). Although Mann received awards for this piece it received mixed reviews. Favorini (2009) suggests looking at the piece as “a documentation of traumatic memory, rather than as a document of the Vietnam War qua history” (p. 159). This reminds us to view it as a testimony of the people interviewed rather than a story about the war itself.

The Tectonic Theatre Project, headed by Moisés Kaufman their artistic director, created (among others) *The Laramie Project* (2001) about the murder of gay University of Wyoming student Matthew Shepard. Kaufman and company members visited Wyoming a month after the incident and interviewed people in the town. To create the playscript they not only used verbatim dialogue from the interviews but included “text taken from the actors’ journals, as they collected data” (Anderson & Wilkinson, 2007, p. 154). This meant that both town’s folk and actors’ perspectives were represented on stage.

The Civillians production of *Gone Missing* (2003) was created in a process where actors conduct interviews without recording them. In rehearsal they then recreate the original interview. This results in a combining of elements of the original interview and the actor’s impression of the interview (De Voti, 2003).

David Hare’s *Stuff Happens* (2004), which investigates the American decision to go to war with Iraq, combines both testimony and invented material. He employed a “convention which was if somebody spoke directly to the audience it

was on the record, stuff that [he] was replicating, but as soon as the doors closed and you went into a scene between characters, it [was] completely imagined” (Hare & Stafford-Clark, 2008, p. 63).

In Robin Soans’, *Talking to terrorists* (2005), Soans bases his playscript on interviews conducted with people who were involved in or affected by terrorism. Although Soans considers himself a verbatim playwright he prefers to use a pen and notebook during the interview process as he finds them less intimidating for interviewees than recording devices. Soans is very clear that during the editing process he is selecting material that will fulfil the vision of what the story has revealed itself to be. He refutes the idea that just because his “subjects are real, they have to be portrayed in a way that fictional characters are not, [undermining] the power of the verbatim playwright. [He believes] it prevents the tailoring of the material to make it political, emotional or even theatrical” (Soans, 2008, p. 35). There is criticism of Soans’ *Talking to Terrorists* questioning the way he interviews multiple people from varying cultures who are experiencing different struggles and makes generalisations about them (Bottoms, 2006; Luckhurst, 2008). However Soans makes the important point that although he edits his work he always stays true to the spirit of what has been collected in the interviews.

Definition and the integrity of the form

From the documentary, epic style theatre of Piscator to the modern practitioners of documentary and verbatim theatre there has been a range of manifestations in the collection, treatment and presentation of material.

In an age where we are suspicious of governments’ ‘spin’ and exhibit distrust in the media (Luckhurst, 2008; Martin, 2010); where the West is obsessed by uncovering the truth and seeks this through alternative media, docudrama and reality shows, it is understandable why the appeal of the genre of documentary theatre has flourished. People are seeking an alternative medium in which to explore information and disseminate the truth. The current influx of documentary inspired tribunal and testimonial plays offer an alternative. In a world where

distrust is the default, we in the West tend to place faith in witness and testimony of those who were there or experienced an event. But as Piaget (2009) points out “The material and the methods through which the new documentary theatre seeks to impact on its audience have certainly attenuated somewhat from the rich variety of potential sources suggested by... Peter Weiss” (p. 235).

It is important to mention the discussion among theorists and practitioners regarding authenticity in claims to documentary and verbatim theatre. Bottoms (2006) describes the term documentary theatre as “the foregrounding of documents” (p. 59) while verbatim theatre “tends to fetishize the notion that we are getting things ‘word for word,’ straight from the mouths of those ‘involved’” (p. 59). This is an important distinction. The work of playwrights such as Soans and Hare have been critiqued for claiming to be verbatim plays when the actual process they have used generalises and admits invention (Bottoms, 2006; Luckhurst, 2008; Paget, 2009). This is a long way from the work of Cheeseman and the English verbatim plays of the 1960s and 70s where it was important to keep even the inflection of the interviewee’s speech (Piaget, 1987).

When we discuss authenticity it can be viewed as authentic as in truth and authentic as in true to the practice of documentary theatre. I believe transparency is one of the things asked for within the debate about authenticity, transparency in the collection and selection of material, and in the process of editing. Because, although the processes today’s practitioners undertake may be different to that of Piscator, Weiss, and Cheeseman, they are working towards a piece of work that fits within the documentary realm.

I agree with Martin (2010) when she points out that “styles of documentary theatre continue to morph” (p. 24). It is only natural that practitioners will in their own era utilise, challenge and change aspects of a theoretical practice to suit their needs. So with all the variations and manifestations of documentary theatre over the years can we define documentary theatre?

Throughout my research I have found elements that can be used as indicators common to most documentary theatre. These include: the purpose and function; the material and sources; the editing process; and the presentation or stage devices utilised.

Documentary theatre has to have a purpose or function. Various academics such as Martin (2010) and Dawson (1999) have created or critiqued variations of lists detailing these functions. Paget has compiled a comprehensive list in which he states that documentary forms exhibit at least one of the following functions, depending on which the playwright chooses:

- 1.They *reassess* international/national/local histories;
- 2.They *celebrate* repressed or marginalised communities and groups, bringing to light their histories and aspirations;
- 3.They *investigate* contentious events and issues in local, national and international contexts;
- 4.They *disseminate* information, employing an operational concept of ‘pleasurable learning’ – the idea that the didactic is not in itself, necessarily inimical to entertainment; ...
- 5.They can interrogate the very notion of *documentary*. (Paget, 2009, p. 227-228)

Dawson (1999) simplifies these functions further describing the purpose of documentary theatre as “learning about, recalling, interpreting, or responding to a historical moment” (p. 17).

Documentary theatre is a genre of theatre that uses primary sources as part or all of the playtext. A range of primary sources used has been outlined earlier, as quoted by Weiss (1995). However, while documentary theatre places emphasis on documentation, the later forms such as verbatim theatre and reminiscence theatre rely heavily on interview transcripts or testimony of ‘witness’ accounts.

The editing process, involving selection of material and construction of the script varies amongst practitioners. In its ‘purest’ form, primary source material is altered as little as possible and the job of the playwright (and actors in some situations) is to structure the material in a theatrically appropriate and effective form that honestly reflects the story or event being recounted. It seems that some more recent forms of documentary or verbatim theatre are becoming more factually creative, with their process utilising invented material, allowing actors to present impressions of interviewee’s stories and making generalisations about the

material. In these cases, I believe it is important to be transparent about the process so that the audience has access to the facts and are not under the impression that all that is presented is unbiased truth or ‘straight from the horse’s mouth’.

Documentary theatre tends to utilise Piscatorian and Brechtian staging devices to create a presentational style of performance. These include visual aspects which incorporate the use of photos, video, film, placards and, more recently computer generated text and images (Paget, 2009). Aural devices include the actor’s voice to re-present verbal source material, various forms of recorded speech and, in some cases, music and song. Music can be used as a narrative device or to instil a sense and feel of a time (Cheeseman, 1970; Paget, 2009).

Another presentational aspect is in the acting techniques employed. This can involve actors re-presenting ‘historical’ figures rather than, as in naturalistic acting, seeking to “make the actor psychologically credible as a historical figure” (Paget, 2009, p. 229). To assist in this, actors may represent multiple characters by using simple costume changes done in front of the audience. The Brechtian technique of using a narrator is sometimes utilised to tie episodic scenes together, and to comment on the dramatic events in the play. Staging and props are also often minimalist and authentic, presented in a transparent manner so as to enhance the representational feel, and to create a state in which the audience is invited to form opinions and raise questions rather than ‘get lost’ in the characters and story.

Rationale for the creation of *The Starlight*

***Ballroom*– Theoretical and practitioner influence**

My personal background in performance is that of a storyteller. Throughout my studies I have found an interest in and been supported in exploring the genre of documentary theatre as a way to present peoples stories.

I embarked on this project inspired in particular by the philosophy and working process of Peter Cheeseman and his work at The Victoria Theatre in Stoke-on-

Trent. I was also influenced by previous work I have done in reminiscence theatre, and an interest in the performance techniques of Bertolt Brecht.

I am interested in local history and the retelling of stories of our local communities. The work that Cheeseman has done in Stoke-on-Trent was an inspiring, proven and appropriate working method from which to start. It is ultimately Cheeseman's commitment to relaying the perspectives of everyday people's voices and creating theatre relevant to his community that captured my interest.

During previous studies at post-graduate level, I created a piece of reminiscence theatre. I interviewed three women about how they managed rationing during World War 2 and, using transcripts of their recollections, created a rehearsed reading entitled *Rancid Butter and Silk Stockings*. This experience taught me about the power of documentary theatre as a springboard for creating mutual understanding between groups, in this case different generations, within a community (Cheeseman, as cited in Elvgren, Jr, 1974; Schweitzer, 2007). Those of a similar age group to the interviewees were able to relate to the stories told while younger audience members commented about learning about historical events in context. One audience member told me she had no grandparents so had never been told about 'the old days' and relished the opportunity the performance had given to hear then discuss aspects of the stories with the contributors and older audience members present.

The presentational techniques employed by Brecht have been a source of inspiration since studying and performing in a production of *The Caucasian Chalk Circle* at the University of Waikato in 2005. Since then I have explored his techniques in relation to storytelling as performance. I found Brecht's idea of the 'street scene' (Brecht, 2001) and treatment of actors in Epic theatre comparable to that of the Storyteller's role, and a relevant device for documentary theatre. Brecht places focus on the event taking place, not the actor. The actor is demonstrator and, although he is engaged with the experience, he is not trying to make it a total, emotionally engaging experience for the spectators. The performer is merely reporting what has happened. The actor/demonstrator remembers and depicts that he is not the subject but a demonstrator and "the feelings and opinions of

demonstrator and demonstrated are not merged into one” (Brecht, 2001, p. 47). As happens with the role of the storyteller, Brecht also encourages the demonstrator to change from representation to commentary and explanation whenever s/he can.

Brecht’s use of a chain of episodes to relay a story in his plays (Willet, 1967) is a device which resonates with me, and one which I endeavoured to utilize in the composition montage of *The Starlight Ballroom– A documentary drama*. Michael Wilson (2006), a storyteller and academic, gives an evocative description of the feel behind 'epic' storytelling when he explains that:

Story is simply a structure with which we organise life and attempt to make sense of it. We divide our lives into episodes or anecdotes, which stand on their own as significant events but also hang together to make our autobiography. (Wilson, 2006, p. 53)

Brecht’s idea of Epic theatre works in a similar way; it examines humanity within its social environment, presenting episodes which stand-alone but make up a bigger picture.

Methodology 1:

Creating a Performance Script

The inspiration

I stumbled across my initial inspiration for this thesis topic accidentally. I was between classes and amusing myself by reading through old newspaper clippings in the New Zealand collection when I came across an article entitled *Teenage rebellions begin* (Parker, 1999). It was in a supplementary about the history of the Waikato and gave an overview of how teenagers were viewed during the 1950s in New Zealand, but more specifically focused on the youth in Hamilton. It discussed the dim view taken by ‘disapproving’ adults on the development of rock ‘n’ roll, the arrival of the American youth culture, promiscuity, the bodgies and

widgies and, finally, the government's attempt to thwart all this by setting up a special committee. This eventuated in the *Report of the special committee on moral delinquency in children and adolescents* (Mazengarb, 1954), otherwise known as the Mazengarb Report. I was struck by the idea that this story was similar to today's conflicts between parents and children. Each generation seems to disapprove of the shenanigans undertaken by the following generation.

I took a copy to my mother who confirmed that yes it was like that and said that she and my father had met at the Starlight Ballroom which was mentioned in the article. She pointed out that the 1950s were a pivotal point because before this time there was no 'youth' culture. The term teenager had emerged when "American businesses targeted youth as an important market for mass culture consumption, as post-war boom had given the young vastly increased spending ability" (Parker, 1999). My mother told me in no uncertain terms that bodgies were frowned upon and that she never hung out with 'the likes of them'. The rest of our conversation returned to the dances and the photos came out as she reminisced about the Starlight Ballroom and various country dances.

I spoke to friends and people in the community about this period in history. Older people remembered the Starlight Ballroom and meeting partners there while others my own age said their parents had met there. Many spoke about the bands that had played during the 1950s and some admitted to being a bodgie or teddy boy. An idea for a documentary play started to emerge. This was to explore the Hamilton's bodgie and widgie youth culture during the mid-1950s, the social and governmental reaction and set it around the dances that took place at the Starlight Ballroom.

At least that was the original idea. I later realised I had tried to set parameters on the story before I had collected the material.

Collect rather than select - A procedural structure

Part of the methodology and theoretical basis for documentary theatre I ascribe to is that primary source material be utilised whenever possible (Cheeseman, 1970; Dawson, 1999; Paget, 2009; Weiss, 1995). In particular, I was interested in interviewing local residents who had been in their teenage years during the latter

half of the 1950s, who lived in Hamilton, who may have been a bodgie or widge, and who may have attended the Starlight Ballroom. But before I could interview them I needed to get a broader understanding of the time.

To gain insight into the period I started with a variety of both secondary source materials such as books and internet articles written about the era, and primary source materials such as described by Weiss (1995). The latter included the Waikato Times newspapers; *“That's when life really started to live”: abstracts from an oral history project on youth culture, 1930-1960* (Hamilton Public Library, 1995) archived at the Hamilton City Library; the *Mazengarb Report* (1954) detailing issues facing youth and possible solutions; photographs of Hamilton during the 1950s; and music, radio shows and movies of the era. As I found out more about the attitudes and events taking place in the 1950s I was able to begin formulating ideas for interviewing individuals and collecting verbatim material to utilise in the performance.

Ethical considerations

As with any research undertaken involving people it was necessary to seek ethical approval through the University of Waikato's Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences' Human Research Ethics Committee. The primary issue whilst seeking approval was that of anonymity. The very nature of documentary theatre is that it is re-presenting real stories about real people. I needed to find a solution that protected interviewees but also acknowledged their contribution to the project. This was solved by assuring that:

The 'translation' of material from the interview transcript to the draft/final performance script is a creative writing process which draws on the original spoken words, and rearranges them to suit the dramaturgical needs of the documentary drama. The process does not seek to present the identity of the speaker in a recreated 'reality'. The draft performance script, and the final performance script, will not identify the speakers by name (Appendix 2, p.94).

However to ensure that interviewees contributions were acknowledged, I went on to stipulate that “It is not intended that interviewees will be identified beyond the fact that they have contributed stories” (Appendix 2, p. 94) and that “unless otherwise arranged participants will be openly identified” (Appendix 2, p. 97).

For full ethical considerations addressed during the application for ethical approval please see Appendix 2.

The interviewing process

My initial hope was that I could find prospective interviewees through contacts within my community. While some were forthcoming with further possible contacts none were interested in actually being interviewed. This led me to write a letter to the editor in the *Hamilton Press*. Because of the local focus and possible interest the editor placed it in as an article titled *Student seeks bodgies, widgies* (“Student seeks”, 2011). Responses were immediate and of the 27 enquiries I ended up conducting 22 interviews.

During the interview process I was looking for narratives about people’s memories and experiences. Qualitative interviewing as outlined by Rubin and Rubin (2005) was the most appropriate technique to utilise in collecting this primary source material.

A qualitative interview is a conversation “in which a researcher gently guides a conversational partner in an extended discussion” (Rubin & Rubin, 2005, p. 4). It creates a setting in which a researcher is able to follow up on the interviewees responses thus encouraging depth and understanding about the topic being discussed.

Building a rapport was important. I was fortunate because my interviewees had demonstrated an interest in sharing their experiences by responding to the article I had placed in the local paper. I had given a brief overview of the project in the article and, during the initial phone conversations I was able to explain the process further and begin to build a trust with the interviewees. A large majority of the interviewees made it clear that their interest was in discussing the Starlight Ballroom rather than the bodgie and widgie culture and wanted to know why I had chosen this topic to research. Here I was able to begin to establish the trust

important in narrative research which Rubin & Rubin (2005) says “increases as people see that you share a common background with them” (p. 92). I responded that not only did I have an interest in this era but that my family was from Hamilton farm stock and that my parents had met at the Starlight Ballroom. Inevitably this generated questions about who my parents were and I was able to make some personal connections. I assured them that I would be interested in hearing their recollections even if they felt they were unable to comment on all the points noted in the newspaper article.

Because the participants were aged between 60 and 98 years I offered to conduct the interviews at their own homes. All 22 interviewees agreed that this was the most convenient proposition. Dates and times were arranged at their convenience.

Before conducting the interviews I had devised an interview guide. The interview guide was structured under themes that eased the conversation into the topic to be discussed. I had four themes I wished to explore: general background; stories from the Starlight Ballroom; how spare time was spent and home life; politics, and the term ‘teen-ager’. Under each theme were a series of questions that could be asked to explore ideas and memories further. To see these in full please refer to the interview guide in Appendix 2 (p. 99). Also included in the guide were additional prompts, probes and checks I could use to encourage or clarify conversation.

Being respectful of your interviewees is most important. Observing Rubin and Rubin’s (2005) reminder to “be unfailingly polite and make it clear that you appreciate your [interviewees] help” (p. 98) was important and not only did I appreciate their contribution I also found it fascinating.

Most people were happy to talk about themselves and their memories although some were very conscious of the laptop that I was using to record them. I found that taking hand-written notes drew their focus away from being recorded and they referred to these as they were speaking. I had stipulated before the interview that they could ask for the recording device to be turned off at any time and some interviewees asked me to do so when they wanted to tell me something ‘off the record’, after which the interview continued to be recorded.

One issue for me as a researcher seeking stories to re-present, was that many of the interviewees were very factual during the interview. They relayed practical aspects such as names, places, times and events while being recorded but as soon as I turned off the recording equipment they started telling me anecdotal stories of interesting experiences. When this happened I asked them if it was alright for me to write these down and possibly use them later.

Further research – More collecting

More research took place after the interviews were conducted to find further information and primary sources relating to what had been discussed and revealed in their interviews. A lot of this material concerned the likes of specific musicians, songs, movies, or places spoken about.

During the interview process interviewees raised some contradictions and questions that no one seemed able to answer. These ranged from names of people and places to times of events. One particular question that incited much discussion was the actual origins of the building in which the Starlight Ballroom dances were held. Because it was discussed so much I researched further and found the information pertaining to this in The Hamilton City Council Building Consents 1922-1960 now housed at the Hamilton Central Library. This information was included in the play due to the wide interest expressed in the subject.

Stages of the script development

The development of the rehearsal script, being a script which is written with the expectation that development and changes will occur during the rehearsal process, started in late June 2011 while still conducting interviews. The process went through many stages and the rehearsal script was ready just in time for the start of rehearsals on the 14th of September 2011.

When discussing the process he worked through, Cheeseman (cited in Documentary Arts Report, 1986) said, “First of all, it’s collect rather than

select. The first process is gathering as much material as possible” (p. 8). I had gathered the vast majority of my material and now needed to start a collation process.

Because of the parameters I had set when inviting participants to come forward, I had a specific time and place in which interviewees stories and memories could be located. The setting was Hamilton, New Zealand, and the time period was 1954 to 1960. Those who were interviewed had been in their mid-teens to late twenties during this time so I also had an age group to focus on.

The initial task was to start creating lists of the kinds of people discussed in the interviews who could become possible characters; lists of locations discussed that may lead to scene settings; ideas for images or sounds from the time; and stories that could be utilised to create scenes. The purpose of this again followed Cheeseman’s first step in structural decision making where he considers “What is the story. Where is there a coherent human statement? Where is there a pattern perceivable amongst this? What would be the dramatic structure?” (Documentary Arts Report, 1986, p. 8).

The method I created was to listen to the recorded interviews and note down the elements I was looking for. I created a key to put in the margins of my working journal so I could collate the ideas at the end of listening to a group of interviews. The initial key was:

- PS = Ideas for scene location/place.
- SS= Ideas for a story snippet that could create a scene.
- SI= Staging ideas or images that occurred to me.
- C= Possible characters.
- N= Narrator – possible text or happenings that the Narrator could describe or recount.
- Image= Ideas for pictures, music or sounds to incorporate. (Appendix 3, p. 25)

Early on I had interviewed a gentleman who had been the floor manager at the Starlight Ballroom. I saw immediately the potential of utilising this character as a narrator and so included a key code for the possibility of pursuing a dramatic structure that incorporated narration. At the time, I recognised this appealed to both my background in storytelling and my experience of Brecht's use of narrator. I was also searching for some idea of how to structure the playscript. I was aware that Cheeseman's rule was "that the material must decide; the material must tell you what the answer is" (Documentary Arts Report, 1986, p. 8), and I questioned whether or not I was forcing an idea that was not there (Appendix 3, p. 182).

Part of the appeal of having the floor manager as narrator was that not only could he narrate and comment on the potential story taking place but could also be involved in the drama taking place. The stories this interviewee told included actions that he was involved in. After collating the first five interviews, I explored scripting a page that was based on a narrative that I considered a potential scene. It was about the floor manager turning away the building's owner at the door of the Starlight Ballroom. Not only was it an amusing story but it also relayed information about the era that had been revealed by other interviewee's. The content communicated the need for a high dress standard, a collection of ties available at the door if needed, the price of entry, and the social comment that if you had money and owned the place, dress standards didn't apply to you. I reworked and retained this scene in the final rehearsal script.

I continued this structured collation of elements for the next five interviews. I then found that the factual information was becoming repetitive and it was only the personal stories and experiences that were different. I had initially only intended to interview 5-12 individuals but, as I came to realise that stories could come from anywhere, I chose to interview all 22 who had showed an interest in telling their stories. I had over 15 hours of interview recordings and, due to time constraints, I realised I needed to edit them down before transcribing them. I now had enough of an idea as to what the recurring themes were so retained dialogue pertaining to these, and also kept other interesting stories that interviewees had

relayed which I considered having potential to be a basis for a scene. The final edit retained 4 hours of the recorded interviews. These were then transcribed.

Once I had the transcripts, I set to work collating the interviewees' dialogues under themed categories. This entailed reading each transcript and cutting sections of dialogue from the edited interview and pasting it under the appropriate category. I started out with the themes that I had initially identified and added more as I went. These themed categories ranged tremendously. Some examples include the origins and running of the Starlight Ballroom; girls and guys clothing; dress making; details about bands; work; police encounters; movies and music; censorship; living arrangements; respect; asking a girl to dance; individual's personal stories and many more. In total there were 78 categories and 140 pages of categorised interviewee dialogue.

By now I was very familiar with the transcribed interviews. I had an understanding of the main themes that the interviewees had recounted as important aspects of their lives and of the era. Looking at the information I had collected, the majority of it pertained to the culture surrounding the dances held at the ballroom. The interviewees had been in their teens and early twenty's during these years and, as such, a major preoccupation was meeting a future husband or wife. Dances were the place you met the opposite sex in those days and you spent a lot of time preparing for the next dance. This information enabled me to decide on a structure for the play. Utilising the Brechtian device of a narrator, I chose to locate the stories of these people over a typical Saturday in 1958. This would allow for aspects of daily life to be presented in the context of preparing to attend the evening dance at the Starlight Ballroom. I chose 1958 because of the interesting and evidently exciting convergence of the big band musicians and the relatively new sound of rock 'n' roll in the dance halls.

Because of the need to protect the anonymity of the interviewees, I decided to use stock characters through which to tell the stories and events that I had collected. These emerged as three girls and three boys who would portray various attitudes of the era. I also considered employing a media commentator who could

introduce excerpts from newspaper articles and governmental reports relating to the time and place.

At this stage in Cheeseman's process of creating a documentary play, he prescribes a self-imposed rule which he considers an essential and important discipline. He requires that, "The material used on the stage must be primary source material. Words or actions deriving from the events to be described or participants in those events are the only permitted material for the scenes of the documentary" (Cheeseman, 1970, p. xiv). In Cheeseman's work at the Victoria Theatre at Stoke-on-Trent, he worked with both a committee of people and also collaborated with actors to create text in rehearsals, to "preserve the contradiction of viewpoint inherent in every historical event" (p. xv). I did not have the luxury of working with a group of collaborators in the composition process for this production but I wanted to attempt using purely verbatim dialogue in the script.

This attempt was akin to that used by Brandt (1994) in his work with Harcourt on the play *Verbatim* (1994) based on interviews with prisoners and their families in the New Zealand criminal system. After deciding on the storyline, crime and characters, Brandt then trawled through the interviews finding "fragments of text, sometimes as small as a sentence or even a word" (p. 27) which he turned into bigger fragments which became the building blocks of the play. This meant that although every word came from the interviews none of the people "whose words are supposedly reported, verbatim, actually exist" (p. 27). This approach suited my use of stock characters around which I wished to create the playscript.

I wrote the initial 'verbatim' script referring only to the collated transcriptions of interviewee's dialogues, and primary source material from newspaper articles and the Mazengarb Report. Any words that were not from the transcripts but were needed for grammatical structure were put in brackets, and I also wrote notes on other possible scene ideas I intended to include later.

It was an arduous task trawling through 140 pages of transcripts and the end result was less than satisfactory. I had long sections of dialogue relaying information,

very little action, stilted conversations between characters and the characters and storylines were undeveloped (see Appendix 3 pp. 195-204).

I met with William Farrimond to discuss directions I needed to consider. He reminded me that this was a documentary drama which need not follow the strictures of a verbatim piece of work, and that the important aspect was to transmit the essence of the interviews and the era. He then shared some examples of how dialogue between characters can be used to create dramatic action which carried the information I was otherwise giving to the Narrator in long monologues. This was an example and a reminder of the way that people speak naturally, employing almost mundane exchanges.

I was disheartened and felt like I had hit the proverbial brick wall and for two weeks I did not return to the script. However, in hindsight, it was during this time that I developed the characters and plot line. I pinned huge sheets of paper to my wall and started mapping characters traits; the stories and pieces of information that they could relay or be part of; the relationships between the stock characters; additional characters that needed to be included as part of the action or drama, and an overall structure for the story line. During this process I stopped thinking about how I was going to stage the work. I realised that I was compromising ideas which could contribute to the writing process when I began to think about staging the work. Once I accepted that the solutions to staging scenes would and should come during the rehearsal process, my approach to writing the script became much more focussed.

However, before resuming work on the playscript, I consolidated my ideas by writing character profiles and a plot structure. The characters contained aspects of various interviewees, making up a generic 'kind' of person. I retained some of the relationships that had existed in the interviewee's stories and created others to give through-lines in the overall plot. This gave me the background information and overall structure I needed to continue developing the script.

While I still kept a lot of verbatim dialogue from the transcripts, I now set to work focusing on creating a dramatically effective script which, while still staying true

to the interviewee's stories, utilised dramatic licence in dialogue and in creating action.

A dramaturgical analysis of the playtext

The story of the drama

The Starlight Ballroom– A documentary drama is a “story of boy meets girl or at least tries to” (Appendix 1, p. 67, line. 12). This is a theme that is common to all cultures and was one of the main themes that came through when I interviewed the participants. Each and every one of them discussed meeting members of the opposite sex at the Starlight Ballroom, many meeting their prospective husbands and wives, and this became the frame for the way in which their stories are presented in *The Starlight Ballroom– A documentary drama*. These individual stories are located within the frame of the venue's history, again drawing on the words of the people who established, developed and managed it.

The play opens with a young couple playing outside a house and, after catching her in his arms, the young man proposes. The Narrator enters the stage and invites the audience to go on a journey with him through a *typical Saturday around 1958* (Appendix 1, p. 67, line. 16). He introduces the story of the origins of the Starlight Ballroom and then tells of a group of youths (3 boys and 3 girls) interacting while planning and preparing to attend a dance at the Starlight Ballroom. The stories of the guys and girls illustrate what it was like being a teenager in the 1950s. Among these youths are the young couple we met in the Prologue; these two meet at the dance and, in the final scene, walk home together where the young man builds up the courage to ask her to the dance the following week. This reveals the beginning of the courtship that leads to the proposal we have witnessed in the Prologue.



Figure.1. Scene 13: Jimmy walks Penny home

Themes

One of the main themes that emerged from the interviews is that of girl meets boy. This universal story brings with it all the joys and anxieties of being young and looking for love. Other themes include relationships between peers and parents; the inner conflict of self-confidence; society's expectations of attitudes and behaviour; rejection; and the creation of memories. These themes are reflected in the words and actions of the characters in the drama.

Milieu

The Starlight Ballroom— A documentary drama is set in Hamilton, New Zealand, in approximately 1958. The ballroom existed and was a popular dance hall that stood on Alexandra Street in the central city. The hall was moved onto the site from Pirongia in 1921, and an entrepreneur named Leo Beeson took over the lease in 1954 and opened it as the Starlight Ballroom. It had a sprung floor, great for dancing, which gave it an *edge over the rest* (Appendix 1, p. 69, line.56) of Hamilton's dance halls.

In the 1950s the dance culture was a prevalent social event. Dances were held at country halls across New Zealand. Locals would come, families attended and ladies brought a plate; it was a community gathering. The Starlight Ballroom however was generally populated by courting couples and young singles scouting for partners. Another emerging difference from the social world of the earlier generation(s) was the move from the popularity of the big bands and swing music to the more youth orientated rock'n'roll. The Starlight Ballroom was a venue for young musicians, enabling them to include a repertoire of music they learnt from the half hour *Hit Parade*, which featured modern rock broadcast on the radio.

The main stories in the play are based on characters who are older youths around the age of dating and seeking prospective partners. It was common during this time to live at home or stay at boarding houses until marrying. Family commitments and, in terms of today's values, a more restrictive moral code was respected. However, with the American movie and music culture encroaching on New Zealand, differences in taste and acceptance of a revised morality was becoming apparent between the new found 'teenagers' and their parents. Part of the conflict was because, unlike their parents' generation who grew up during the depression and war years, the teenagers were able to find work easily, had an income, and had a consumer market specifically targeting them. This gave them a certain amount of independence that enabled them to explore new ways of viewing and doing things.

Structure of the drama

The Starlight Ballroom— A documentary drama consists of a prologue and thirteen scenes, each of which being introduced by the Narrator. These scenes depict the social and psychological issues of ordinary life through the presentational style of 'theatrical realism'.

The Prologue introduces us to a young man proposing to his girlfriend. The first two scenes introduce the Starlight ballroom, and the origins and culture of the venue. Scene 3 creates a shift introducing the first of the two youths at a dance lesson, illustrating and confirming the culture of the venue. Scene 4 breaks away

to give a glimpse of the band members who at the time were heroes, but depicts them as teenagers with the same angsts as those who revered them. Scenes 5 through to 8 introduces us to further youth characters, establishing the relationships they have each other while conveying images of the time, and attitudes of 1950s New Zealand. Scenes 9 to 12 present the accumulation of the *day's* events where the youth characters arrive at and attend the Starlight Ballroom dance. These scenes portray various social interactions and conflicts that occur between the youth characters. Scene 13 links us back to the prologue where the young couple we met in the beginning walk home after the dance and their courtship begins.

The structure of the plot is driven by the Narrator who conducts the story in a chronologically coherent manner, taking the action from scene to scene and navigating the audience through the episodes. Although he narrates in past tense, the characters' actions are set in the time of the 1950s. It is within each scenic tableau that the intricacies of human nature and the relationships are presented and explored. An analysis of Scene 6 provides an example of this. The Narrator introduces the scene with the following dialogue:

Narrator *So while the guys did what guys do, it could take a young lady all day to get ready to go to a dance. And the reason for this was often about sewing a new dress. (Appendix 1, p. 76, line. 241)*

The dynamic tableaux that follows is set in Penny's (one of the youths) home. She is sewing a dress and listening to Elvis while her mother is undertaking a household chore. This creates the image of what the Narrator has just introduced. However, it is within the conversation that these two have that the exposition of themes and character is conveyed. The first we see is Penny's uncertainty about attending the dance; her fears are revealed, and the loving but biased parental response given. We are also able to ascertain that her character is the shy quiet type.

Mother *Now are you going to the dance tonight?*

Penny *Oh I don't know. I don't know whether to go or not.*

Mother *You've been working on that dress half the day.*

Penny *I can always wear it next week if I don't go tonight.*

Mother *For goodness sake, go out Penny!*

Penny *I don't know.*

Mother *You should be meeting people.*

Penny *I just get so shy.*

Mother *Aren't you meeting Lillian and Penny there?*

Penny *Yeah but they always get asked to dance. What if no one asks me?*

Mother *I'm sure one of them will dance with you.*

Penny *It's not the same and you know it.*

Mother *Oh honey you're a pretty girl. Someone will ask you. (Appendix 1, p. 76, line. 246-259)*

When her father enters the scene we are introduced to the attitudes of the older generation conflicting with those of his daughter, when he discusses the music she is listening to.

Father *Hurmph. What are you listening to?*

Penny *Elvis.*

Father *Not in my house.*

Penny *Daddy.*

Father *You can't listen to that, it's just you know so dis, dis, you know disruptive and, and corrupting. Joe Lester has a TV and said that Elvis was on it grinding his... It's not right.*

Penny *I like his music. I never go stupid over it.*

Father *I don't approve, and you shouldn't be encouraging her.*

Mother *I...*

Father *Young people are getting promiscuous and I blame that on the likes of Elvis Presley with their lewd lyrics and gyrating hips.*

Penny *Daddy.*

Father

It's those damn American soldiers. It's their fault for all this American malarkey. It's wild and undisciplined, congregating at milk bars, yobs lounging across the footpath and on the corner of the street. Before them we didn't do that. Milk bar cowboys, James Dean, rebels.
(Appendix 1, p. 77, line.263-281)

The Starlight Ballroom presents a series of inner and social conflicts throughout the play rather than a climatic *peripeteia*. Each of these is explored in the realism of the dynamic tableaux through the action and dialogue of the characters.

Characterisation

The characters include the Narrator who guides the story; the youth who are stock characters and other characters that support the stories and help illustrate historical aspects and the attitudes and feel of the era.

The Narrator is the floor manager of the Starlight Ballroom. He is an all-seeing character who moves in and out of the action. He is able to interact with the audience and with the characters in the world of the stage and also that of the drama. He runs not only the Starlight Ballroom within the story but also the stage. He is able to change the set by bringing on or removing stage furniture, refer to images and music, and engage directly with the audience.

The Narrator, as floor manager, has a wife who sometimes worked on the door of the Starlight Ballroom which is how he was first introduced to the place. He enjoyed the dance scene and wanted the job as floor manager. When asked by Albert, the dance hall owner, *What can you do for me?* the Narrator replies, *I'll double your crowd* (Appendix 1, p. 69, line. 81). He then steps out of the action and tells the audience how he paid for two other dance halls in Hamilton at the time to be closed so he could secure the job.

His role involves relaying specific information about the Starlight Ballroom and the era. He names bands that played there, radio shows of the time, and provides the audience with factual information.

Part of his role is to reminisce, to voice the memories and feelings of those who were interviewed; *Good friends were made; they were happy times where we all looked after each other... They were marvellous times* (Appendix 1, p. 90, line. 593).

The youth characters are stock characters. Jimmy and Penny, who play the love interest, are both the sweet, shy and unsure types. Warren portrays himself as the 'man about town'. Frank is depicted as the side kick, a little naïve, and a follower. Lillian is presented as proper in both attitude and action while Nancy is oblivious to the fact that what she is doing (in all innocence) is just wrong.

Detailed examples of stock characterisation are given in the following analyses of Jimmy and Penny.

Jimmy lives at home on a farm and is required to help out in the running of the farm and family life in general. He is 'the boy next door' type and is horribly shy around the girls his own age. This is revealed when Warren is encouraging him to come to the Starlight and tells him, *Jimmy it's where the girls are* (Appendix 1, p. 75, line. 229) to which Jimmy replies, *Yeah I know. That's the nerve-wracking bit.* Without his friend Warren egging him on (*I'll see you right*) (Appendix 1, p. 75, line.231), he would never even speak to a girl. However, when Jimmy sees Penny and decides she looks nice he gains courage and is respectful and polite in his interaction with her.

Penny lives at home with her mother and father. She is a home body and although she enjoys going to the dances she is worried she will just end up being a wallflower because of her lack of confidence. This is recognised by her mother who is keen to get her to go out and meet people. Penny, like Lillian, is a great seamstress and sews her own dresses. She likes Elvis, much to the horror of her

father, but does not question his parental authority when instructed to turn the music off (Appendix 1, p. 78, line. 294).

Penny has good friends in the female characters Lillian and Nancy, and is comfortable chatting about the boys, as girls of this age do.

Nancy *Oh I love your dress Penny.*
Penny *Thanks. Look there's Robert.*
Lillian *He's got such rough hands and when twirls you round he just about sends you flying.*
Nancy *He's a farmer, of course he's got rough hands.*
Penny *Who's that with Warren?*
Lillian *I don't know.*
Nancy *Eeek. It's my guy from the dairy.*
Lillian *Where?*
Nancy *The one in the bow tie.*
Penny *Not that one, the other one.*
Lillian *Would you stop looking over there... (Appendix 1, p. 84, lines. 456-467)*

Although shy around boys, Penny demonstrates forwardness and, in apparent contradiction in her character, holds Jimmy's hand after he returns her to her seat after dancing (Appendix 1, p. 86, line. 499).

Language and style

By combining the use of storytelling by the Narrator and theatrical realism represented in the interactions of the stock characters in the dynamic tableaux of the performance montage, a Brechtian amalgam of past-tense narration and direct speech carries the vocal narrative of the overall performance.

The language used by both the Narrator and characters is naturalistic, every-day and colloquial, reflecting the nature of the verbatim transcripts of the interviewees.

There is a need to acknowledge a Brechtian influence on my staging and overall structure. Because the stories that are presented in the play belong to actual living people who may attend the performances, Brecht's technique of having actors *present* a character, rather than embodying the character, helps protect the integrity of living interviewees without compromising the dramatic effect of their re-presented words and actions. This was a useful technique to keep in mind during the rehearsal process.

Brecht's use of the narrator to mediate between the actors and the audience, episodic scenes, and the objective distancing of the audience through staging techniques influenced the style and structure of *The Starlight Ballroom— A documentary drama*.

The use of stage sets and furniture and props in the play are minimal. Those that are present are authentic objects and are used to convey the setting of the scene, and are only necessary to directly assist the actors in demonstrating the action taking place. An example of this is in Scene 2 where Albert is telling the Narrator that there is to be *no grog on the premises* (Appendix 1, p. 70, line. 101). The stage directions, however, direct Albert to actually drink while saying this, requiring a glass with 'alcohol' in it.

The scenes are set in various locations and each is only a few minutes in duration, requiring quick and seamless scene changes. This is achieved by having the Narrator setting the staging for the scenes, and also the actors themselves manoeuvring props and stage furnishings. Another Brechtian technique is to have other staging already in place, ready for use. An example of this is in Scene 7, where there is a need for a car on stage. By having it, and other larger props set in spectator view but not in principal focus throughout the duration of the play, combined with the transparency of actors setting their own staging, Brecht's *Verfremdungseffekt* principle may be seen in practice (Willet, 1967).

The use of audio and visual elements in the play is indicated through stage direction, dialogue and as suggested complements to the action. For example, in scene 6, the stage direction states, *Elvis is playing on the record player* (Appendix

1, p. 76, line. 244). An example of music required to support dialogue is that of Nancy singing *Daddy Cool* (Appendix 1, p. 81, line. 375) to a song that has come on the radio. In the later scenes set in the dance hall much of the action is set around couples dancing, implicitly requiring the presence of dance music. The playscript contains no specific stage directions referring to projected images. However, the use of projected historical images enhances spectator associations with historical time and place.

The overall style of costuming is that of *the late 1950s* (Appendix 1, p. 67, line. 11). However, within the script there are suggestions of different social class styles. For example, Jimmy is a farm boy and not comfortable in the social setting of the dances. This suggests he may not be as fashionable as his friend Warren whose parents belong to the yacht club and who has enough money to own a car. The girls' day wear would be different to the dresses they wear to the dances, as was the fashion at the time. We also know from the actions and dialogues that these evening dresses would be tidy and new looking because both Lillian and Penny have both just sewn their dresses for the dance.

Rationale supporting the choice of the particular playtext

The playtext which was performed reflected quite a different intention to that which shaped the beginning of the production process. Originally, I had intended to look at and comment on the youth culture of the 1950s, in particular the bodgies and widgies, and the social and moral attitude toward this subculture in the context of the day. In doing so, I had hoped to draw comparisons with the various subcultures of teenagers today and the social commentary made about these. I had intended to utilise governmental and newspaper reports as primary sources to illustrate the attitudes of the time, and to use the stories from the interviewees to contextualise the issues. The Starlight Ballroom was only to be a setting in which this took place.

If we refer back to the functions of documentary theatre as outlined by Paget (2009) I would suggest that I hoped to “*investigate* contentious events and issues in [a] local... context” (p. 227). In doing so, I had hoped that another purpose of documentary theatre would be realised, this being in the tradition of the Epic theatre of Brecht and the early Piscatorian documentary theatre and, in the words of Weiss I would be able “to show how the world is and find out how to change it” (p. 16). This was a huge undertaking, but I had hoped to create a platform from which understanding and avenues for discussing generational differences between grandparents, parents and their teenagers may be opened. By presenting the lives and issues belonging to a previous generation, I had hoped that today’s youth would get a glimpse of what life had been like for the older generation. Even though it was in a different time being portrayed, they had similar or equivalent issues to face, and that this exposure might penetrate barriers, encourage discussion and let the seeds of understanding between these generations develop. This idea was not a politically but a socially driven intent.

There are multiple reasons that the playtext digressed from this intent and evolved as it did. One of the primary reasons was in the information that the interviewees divulged. Many of them considered the era to be *marvellous times* (Appendix 1, p. 90, line. 598). If we look at it in context, many of them had grown up during the war years and, during the post-war years of the fifties with the hardships of the war years behind them, jobs were plentiful and they were young and looking forward to establishing families and having fruitful futures. Many of them met their prospective partners during this time and most are still with them, fifty years on. They are now older and naturally romanticise ‘the good old days’. We also need to acknowledge the higher moral standards, closely knit families, and greater personal security present in the time they grew up in. The world has changed and many of this generation now see this as a loss to the quality of life.

Very few of them wanted to talk about or, indeed, ever experienced the issues I wanted to explore. Instead, the stories that were predominant were about the dances at the Starlight Ballroom and the social conduct between the boys and girls. There were instances where stories about drinking beer, police encounters,

and kissing in the backseat of the car were recounted but the context was described in a youthful exuberant way, positive and problem-free.

I say very few because there were some who had stories that did explore darker exploits; in particular, stories of promiscuity and adultery which leads me to another reason why the playtext differed in content from that of my initial intent. This concerned the ethical responsibility governing the selection of material available to me in the interviewees' transcribed recollections.

I felt an ethical responsibility to present the interviewees material in the manner in which it was recounted to me. During the interview process, I gradually built up trust with interviewees. Not only did they tell me stories about the period I was researching but also about their lives since. These included personal 'highs' and 'lows' they had experienced in their private lives. During interviews I was, at times, asked to turn off the recording, or asked not to use certain material. To honour this is clearly within the boundaries of expected ethical conduct outlined by the University of Waikato's Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences' Human Research Ethics Committee. Because I didn't identify interviewees in the playscript, attributed traits and stories to stock characters, and employed creative licence I could have explored the concept of promiscuity and infidelity further. However, the issue I struggled with was that so many of the interviewees denied and abhorred the notions of promiscuity and adultery, and tended or preferred to see these years in a romantic light, as one more defined by camaraderie and respect, and I felt it would be betraying their trust by exploring these ideas and not relaying the joys they remembered and considered important. In Scene 11 of the rehearsal script, I do include recollections that some teenagers did end up in the car to 'make out'. However, I chose to utilise one of the interviewees stories which enabled me to portray the scene in a comic style by having a policeman interrupt them before they get to kiss.

This leads me more specifically to the selection of material, in particular the stories and ideas that I eventually presented. It was me alone who selected the stories and text that was used. Therefore, it was subjective to the experiences I had had with the interviewees and their delivery of the stories, and of my personal

preference of the stories told. I was bound by my own feelings of being trusted by the interviewees to tell the story of the 1950s as they remembered these years, and it is in this selection and construction process that I came to better understand Cheeseman's (1970) use of a 'committee' to work on selection of material in order to "preserve the contradiction of viewpoint" (p. xv). This leads me to question whether, had I worked with others, would I have explored these issues in the playtext, and why did I not anyway?

The answer may hark back to my background in storytelling. When I am told a good yarn, I want to retell it. However, in documentary theatre there have been parameters placed on a need for function or purpose. What, therefore, was the function of the rehearsal script that I had created?

I will again refer back to Paget (2009) when he says that one of the functions of documentary theatre is to "*celebrate* repressed or marginalised communities and groups, bringing to light their histories and aspirations" (p. 227). Although they weren't 'marginalised' during the era pertaining to the project, they are now of retirement age and considered by society as elderly. In contemporary society, these people are often marginalised and their worth in society undervalued. Schweitzer (2007) discusses the desire of older people to record a vanishing past. In one of her projects she describes "a strong desire to recall and record the world" (p. 112) they lived in, by the people involved, and that this gave them "a chance to affirm their worth in an earlier epoch [which] seemed to have the therapeutic effect of reinforcing their sense of identity in the present" (p.112). Cheeseman believed "that theatre can document the experience of a community" (Filewood, 1987, p. 17), and I agree with Bruner (as cited in Coleman, 1994) when he states that "telling one's story involves the construction of one's culture not only one's self" (p. 20).

I may not have achieved what I had set as my initial intent, but I believe I was true to Cheeseman's ideology that the material dictates the story. The rehearsal playscript of *The Starlight Ballroom— A documentary drama* explores a time and place in the community of Hamilton. The Starlight Ballroom was an important part of life during this period and some of at least two generations of our

community are here because their elders met there. The playtext communicates attitudes of the time, provides historical information and shares actual stories experienced by people who were there. It can still provide a springboard for intergenerational understanding through discussion, in that it may encourage the younger generation to ask, ‘was it really like that when you were young?’

Methodology 2:

From script to performance

Development of the rehearsal script during rehearsals

Although I had expected changes to the rehearsal script during the rehearsal process most of it remained the same and variations were minor. The changes that were made often related to syntax. In the rehearsal script there were sections of language that had been lifted from transcribed interviews that did not translate well to conversations on stage or the meaning was unclear in context. When this occurred, the actors were encouraged to explore alternative phrasing until a more natural and suitable substitute was found, or it was decided to edit the section out of the script. An example of this is in Penny’s father’s speech about the Americans.

Father *It’s those damn American soldiers. It’s their fault for all this American malarkey. It’s wild and undisciplined, congregating at milk bars, yobs lounging across the footpath and on the corner of the street. Before them we didn’t do that. Milk bar cowboys, James Dean, rebels.*

Mother *I don’t think it can all be blamed on the American soldiers. That was a while ago now.*

Father *They weren’t popular. I admit I was grateful for them to be here what with our boys away fighting but most of them*

were resting up and that meant kicking their heels up. They were boys away from home, promiscuity was rife and it's no good saying "Oh, that's always happened" it didn't, it hadn't happened to the degree that it did then and girls got a bad name if they went out with American boys. I don't want you going out with any American boys Penny. You hear me. (Appendix 1, p. 77, lines. 227-292)

Here the line, *It's wild and undisciplined, congregating at milk bars, yobs lounging across the footpath and on the corner of the street* was a verbatim quote from an interview but *on the corner of the street* sounded unnatural and the actor consistently stumbled over it because of this. The simple solution was to change it to "on the street corner".

In the father's response to the mother he states that *most of them* (the soldiers) *were resting up*. For clarity of meaning this was replaced with the more common term, "most of them were on r and r". In this section, we also deleted the sentence, *it hadn't happened to the degree that it did then* because it sounded 'clunky', being redundant because it was restating a point and detracted from the amusing piece of devised stage action that followed with the delivery of the next line.

Changes to the rehearsal script also occurred to enhance continuity of the story line, and also to play to the actors strengths. At the end of Scene 9 after the patrons enter the hall, the policeman finds a bottle of beer in the bushes. The rehearsal script original read:

(Lillian and Nancy approach, cop walks past door)

Narrator *Evening Harry.*

Nancy *Oh God, I wonder who's here tonight.*

(Cop finds bottle stashed in the bush, picks it up and keeps walking)

Narrator *Evening ladies, 4/6 thank you.*

Henry *(holding up bottle) Looks like there might be a few beers after the dance tonight.* (Appendix 1, p. 83, lines. 445-451)

During the rehearsals it became apparent that almost every scene the policeman was in involved him holding a bottle of beer at some point. The actor playing the policeman worked with this to create a comedic portrayal of the character. It was therefore dramatically logical to emphasise this action the first time we see him do this. Our solution was to bring the policeman on after the girls left the stage and extend the dialogue between the narrator and policeman while he found the beer. The two actors improvised a dialogue that suited the scene and this improvisation remained throughout the performance season, varying slightly with each performance.

Some text changes were purely practical and dictated by props and costuming demands. The most obvious example of this is in the scene where Lillian is about to iron her new dress. The rehearsal script has her saying:

Lillian *I love it. I'll wear it a lot. (Takes dress to an ironing board). Now I just have starch it to within an inch of its life. (Appendix 1, p. 81, line. 371)*

The week prior to production week I still had not found a suitable prop for the 'starch'. This turned out not to be an issue as the actor's costume was made of silk which would not have been starched. In this instance we simply replaced the line with, "Now I just have to press it".

The rehearsal process

Rehearsal schedule

To ensure the availability of the rehearsal and performance space, dates and times for rehearsals were decided in April 2011. After initial casting readings in the first week of September, rehearsals were held twice a week for ten weeks from 14 September to 19 November 2011. This included a production week. Due to prior

bookings of the theatre space there were some weeks when only one rehearsal was held.

In a production such as this the cast are volunteering their time so until the last three weeks, individual cast members were generally only required to attend one scheduled rehearsal per week. For the three weeks leading up to opening night I required all cast to attend two rehearsals a week. I had asked cast members early on to inform me of dates of rehearsals they would not be able to attend. Many did this but there were times when unexpected absences disrupted rehearsals. As I have said, because the actors were volunteering I had to work around these inconveniences.

Casting

My first task was to find 15 cast members to perform the roles specified in the playscript. I had considered casting actors in multiple roles but then realised that during the dance scenes I required all my youth actors on stage to create the crowd atmosphere of a dance hall.

As characters developed during the writing process, I started to consider actors I had worked with before for various roles. I began by approaching these individuals and other actors, inviting them to be part of the production. I also sent out an invitation to acquaintances involved in theatre through the social media platform of Facebook.

At the initial read through, I spoke about documentary theatre, described the process I had worked through to create the script, and introduced them to the concept of *presenting* characters. I spoke about the possibility of the people who shared their stories being in the audience and that the use of Brechtian techniques would protect the integrity of these people. As we read through the script I described the people from whom the stories had come from, and elaborated on the stories and how I had constructed the script. This was to give the potential cast a sense of the time and kinds of people they were re-presenting.

Throughout the reading of the script, I asked people to read different roles to see how they delivered the stories, and how they responded to the readers who were presenting related characterisations. Because I knew the prospective cast

members, I was able to look for aspects in their personalities that suited the character roles in the script.

There were two reasons for this. The first was that I hoped that I could utilise the given character traits to draw out aspects of their personality that already existed, rather than getting them to 'act'. The second was that I was working with a cast who had a range of performance experience and ability. By casting them in roles which reflected their personality traits, I was looking for ways of enhancing their performance work.

From the first readings, I was successful in casting three female and two male youth characters, the Narrator, and an older male character. Other cast members were found in the early stages of rehearsals although I had difficulty in finding the third male youth character and two young men for the roles of the band members. I was fortunate that the actor who took the role of the male youth character was an experienced performer and stepped easily into the role at a late date in the rehearsals.

Choice to film Scene 4

Finding two teenage boys to play the band members posed a challenge. I found two young men who were interested but unable to commit to the rehearsal times. I had a choice to make: cut the scene or find an alternative solution. At this stage, I considered filming the scene. The idea of mixed media in the production appealed to me as it would be an experience in working with a different medium. I also recognised that documentary theatre tradition utilises film and, although it would not be historical footage, it provided a means of distinguishing between those who attended the dances and the band members they revered.

I was fortunate enough to enlist the skills of experienced videographer, Joe Citizen, who worked with me to film and edit the scripted scene. I would have liked to film it in a paddock in which the scene was set, to distinguish further between the band members and dance patrons but, due to issues regarding lighting, it was decided to film the scene in the theatre in which the performance was to take place.

Blocking scenes

The organisation of blocking of scenes one to eight, eleven and thirteen was a simple task to set up as they are episodic and involved only two or three cast at any one time. This meant that in organising the rehearsal schedule I could call only cast required for these scenes. I hoped to construct a basic sense of blocking for the cast members early in rehearsals so they had a physical sense of the context of their actions whilst committing their lines to memory because, as research shows, “memory and comprehension are grounded in bodily action” (Noice & Noice, 2006, p. 17). Throughout the blocking and rehearsal process I encouraged the cast to try different things and to make suggestions. While the final decisions were mine to make I found that this approach generated interesting ideas and encouraged the cast to explore their theatrical creativity and develop some ownership in the process.

The process of blocking required close analysis of the script in order to find the action logic for the actors. For example, in Scene 6 the stage direction says: *Penny on floor with dress pattern and material strewn around. Elvis is playing on the record player, Mother is ironing or some such household task* (Appendix 1, p. 76, line. 244). This scene does not involve a lot of physical movement so I created three levels for the actors: sitting on the floor, sitting on a chair, and standing. During rehearsals it was decided that Penny would be putting finishing touches with needle and thread to the dress (costume) she was to wear in Scene 10, at the dance. This suggested the making of the dress but more importantly, provided a through-line for her actions as we actually see her wearing it later.

The Mother needed a household chore she could do while standing and, as I intended to use ironing as a task in Scene 8 and wanted variety in the actions portrayed we decided on folding washing. I discussed with my mother what would be folded without ironing in those days and said that everything was ironed but that a good house wife would fold the washing first. This made sourcing props for the washing basket simple as I did not have to be specific about the kind of garments for folding.



Figure.2. Scene 6 staging

Questions were posed by a cast member about the relationship between the parents, and why the father was so anti-American. We decided that, if Penny was of marrying age, the parents must have been together for at least around 18 years. From here, we discussed what actors had observed of couples married for this long, and explored ways they might speak to each other, or react to each other's comments. I described the attitudes New Zealanders had to the American soldiers during this time, and the likely reasons for these attitudes. I reminded them that 1958 was not that long after World War II and that past experiences could colour attitudes for some time afterwards. This enabled the cast member to understand the nature of the dialogue he was delivering.

In some scenes, reasons for character actions needed to be found. In Scene 3 of the rehearsal script the stage direction reads: *Music ends, James turns to record player and changes record. Warren leans over and whispers in Lillian's ear. Lillian socks him one, Warren lands on the floor. James turns to see what noise is* (Appendix 1, p. 71, line. 122). To set this scene, we had decided that Lillian and Warren should enter the stage dancing, after which Warren would step on Lillian's toe, to give the cast member presenting James a reason to turn off the music. However, if these two characters took regular dance lessons it would be unlikely that Warren would step on her foot. The solution came after listening to

a dance instructor calling the steps for the Foxtrot. The footwork pattern is “slow, slow, quick, quick... reverse rock turn”. Therefore, it was possible that Warren *could* stand on Lillian’s toes while learning the turn. This calling of the dance was then incorporated into the script and justified James’s impatience with his student, which then led him to stop the record and search for another dance.

A lot of the blocking involved the stage setting of props and furniture. Although actors were to bring on their own props, decisions needed to be made about placement in relation to their purpose, and this was resolved by the cast in the context of their use. Reworking of these placements continued throughout the rehearsal period, especially towards the later stages when full runs were being made. The intention of this approach was to enhance a connecting ‘flow’ between the many episodic scenes. This also relied heavily on the Narrator and his ability to openly manipulate staging in the dramaturgical context of his role.

Instead of offering specific blocking for the Narrator I initially encouraged him to move around the stage as much as possible. I asked him to stay on stage during each scene, and to find a seat on stage from where he could watch the action taking place. I wanted him to perform his role as Narrator/’Stage Manager’ and to feel like the stage was his domain to manipulate. I had cast the Narrator because of his personality and I wanted this to show through. He found this very difficult at first and I had to remind him to stop acting solely as a Narrator. As the rehearsal process developed, his understanding of the role grew and his onstage movements and actions became more theatrically logical, leading to a formally choreographed blocking for the performances.

The most challenging blocking was in the dance scenes ten and twelve. I had a cast of fifteen on stage, delivering lines and performing the action required amongst various dancing couples. A lot of work was put into making sure that those who needed to be in the primary focus of the audience were appropriately placed by choreographing the dancers around them. It was not until the last week that I solved what I considered to be a significant problem. When the cast were entering the dance hall in Scene 10 it was empty. I had unsuccessfully attempted to find rock ‘n’ roll dancers from a local club to be in there dancing, to create a feel of vigour and excitement. An associate of mine attends swing dance classes.

I consulted our dance adviser about swing in the late 1950s and he assured me that this style of dance would be appropriate for the time. I therefore invited my associate and his dance partner to take part in the performance. This transformed the scene: the addition of a couple dancing ‘in’ the hall allowed the other cast members to enter at leisure and create the stage business of the scene.

Dance

Dancing was an important aspect of the performance. Only a few of the cast actually knew how to do ‘old time’ dancing so I organised a dance lesson at Planet Dance, run by Carl Gordon. He took the group through the basic steps of the waltz and foxtrot, which gave them a rudimentary understanding of steps. I was extremely fortunate that he continued to help as advisor and attended rehearsals assisting in teaching steps and devising some choreography.

Stage sets

When planning the performance space I considered ways of using Brechtian techniques to create the objective distancing of the audience. With this in mind, the design for the staging came to fruition during the rehearsal process. There were certain scenes that needed specific stage elements, in particular scenes seven and eleven, set in a car; Scene 9 which required steps entering the Starlight Ballroom building and scenes ten and twelve representing the Starlight Ballroom hall. I had a representation of a car constructed out of plywood and old car seats, renovated for the car scene, and used rostra blocks with steps to suggest an elevation to a doorway. These were set upstage right and left respectively. I also sourced four wooden chairs, in keeping with the era, and these were placed in a row stage right so as not to obstruct the sight lines to the car. All stage furnishings were kept simple and representative in keeping with the style of the production, remaining on stage throughout the performance.

Once the stage sets were established, I was able to utilise them further beyond their initial functions. An example of this is in Scene 5 when Jimmy and Warren are speaking on the telephone. To create distance, I placed Warren standing on the upstage left rostrum while Jimmy conducted the phone call from downstage right.

The design of the stage set around the centre stage served two purposes. The first was to permit the action of many of the episodic scenes to be performed downstage centre front, to create a sense of intimacy, and this also created space for dancers in the later dance scenes. It also created a space for entries and exits down the centre of the stage, under the projection screen. In choosing to do this, audience attention was also drawn to the projected images illustrating the scene setting.

I had considered performing in the semi-round with the audience on three sides, inspired by Cheeseman's (1970) work at Stoke-on-Trent where the "Victoria Theatre is constructed as a theatre in the round" (p. xxii). As the development of the placement of the stage sets took place this became more unlikely. I could not protect the integrity of the audience sight lines with the given staging, and the use of centre stage exits and entrances, so made a decision to place the audience on raised tiers across the front of the performance space.

Props and furniture

Unless specifically mentioned in the rehearsal script, the need for particular props was identified during the rehearsal process. I recorded these needs at the time and sourced them as soon as possible so the cast could start working with them. Because I was using minimal staging, and only using props for necessary stage business, I insisted that these be as authentic to the era as possible. When I was unable to source an authentic item in a timely manner the cast worked with a more modern version until the appropriate prop was found. I sourced props from opportunity shops, recycling centres, Trade Me and borrowed from friends and relatives.

Some props and furniture needed to be restored, such as all the chairs, and some items needed creative input to make them suitable for the era. An example of this was the beer bottles. Initially, I had intended to use a crate with bottles in but I found two old ABC beer bottles and sourced an old Waikato Draught label on the internet which I printed out and glued onto the bottles. When I started using just the bottles it was sufficient to establish the presence of alcohol, and this was also in keeping with my intention to utilise authentic but minimal stage properties.

Props were situated to the side of stage so the actors could be seen to pick them up and set them on stage, reinforcing the *Verfremdungseffekt* for the audience.

I introduced the use of a tea trolley to transport the record player and radio required for scenes as it enabled ease of movement and contributed to representing the era. The stage layout and the location of concurrent stage actions created interesting solutions to bringing this on and off stage multiple times. It is first used in Scene 3, during the dance class. I realised that, because of the transparent use of props and furniture to encourage the objective distancing of the audience, the trolley could be left there during Scene 4 (the film projection) and Scene 5 (which used two spots in other parts of the stage), until it was needed again in Scene 6 when Penny is playing an Elvis track on the record player.

Costumes

Costuming was extremely important in establishing the era of the play, and I sourced all authentic clothing (except the men's shirts) from the Hamilton Operatic Society Costume Hire. They allowed me to select a considerable range of dresses and suits to take to a rehearsal and fit out the cast members. Because I had been encouraging the cast members to present aspects of their own personality as the characters, I encouraged them to try on and choose costumes they felt suited the role they were presenting. I stipulated that the women had to select a day dress and evening dress to suit their role, and this resulted in costuming appropriate to role and period. The men needed a little more guidance in making their choices; in particular the character of Jimmy who I felt needed to represent a lower socio-economic class through his choice of evening attire.

The only exceptions were Albert and the Narrator. These two characters were based on real people and during the interviews the kinds of clothing they wore had been described to me and I chose to retain this detail.

Images

As discussed earlier, there is no indication in the rehearsal script stating which projected images should be used. I set out to show authentic images depicting what was being discussed in dialogue. For example when Peter delivers the

information about the Starlight Ballroom hall, *It got moved to Anglesea in 1921* (Appendix 1, p. 68, line. 41), I considered projecting an image of the record of this from the Hamilton City Council Building Consents. However, I decided against it, selecting instead images to contextualise the scenes. These consisted of images of Hamilton taken during the 1950s and indoor settings from the era. I believe these images successfully served their purpose. However, I wonder if projecting various documents would have complimented the action further and/or been appropriate in portraying the documentary theatre genre.

Imagery for promoting the performance of the play was also a consideration during this time. I wanted the production poster to reflect both the themes in the play and the style of the era. I researched theatre production and band performance images from the 1950s and found they used a variety of fonts and bold blocks of one or two colours. Pene Scammell designed the production poster (Appendix 4) which was simple in style and layout, in keeping with the time, yet striking visually. I also used this image for the cover of the performance programme (Appendix 5).

Sound and lighting

The careful selection of music was important in establishing the era in which the play was set, and for creating a performance centred on a dance hall. For the most part, the music was original recordings from New Zealand artists of the era. The one exception is in Scene 13 when Nat King Cole's *Walking my baby back home* was used. An excerpt of this was used because it complimented the theme and action of the scene, and I also felt justified in using it as one of the interviewees had mentioned Nat King Cole as one of her favourite artists.

Music helped in some scenes, to find the onstage action for the actors. The blocking for the Prologue was initially staid and lacked energy. The scene required a young couple to playfully chase each other around the stage. The sound designer and I selected three songs appropriate to the scene, and during rehearsal, we played each song for the cast members to work to. Through this process we identified the song which they responded to best, and which also served to complement the scene.

I had sourced a recording of the Lever Hit Parade, a radio show of the time, mention by various interviewees. It was held at the Radio New Zealand sound archives. However, due to the recent Christchurch earthquakes, it was irretrievable from the archives, so we used instead a Rinso advertisement which was a product of the shows sponsors, and a familiar advertising jingle from the time.

Lighting was used to direct the principle focus of the audience to the area of the stage set in which the scene was taking place. This generally involved various spots to light areas in which the actors moved.



Figure.3. Scene 11: Spotlight on Frank and Nancy

In Scene 5 where Jimmy and Warren were speaking on the phone, we used hard-edged spots on each character, leaving the stage area between them in complete darkness. In doing this, not only were they physically distanced but the dark space between them added further to illusion of separation.

Interviewees had described the décor and layout of the Starlight Ballroom when the dances were held. Stars hung from the roof and a mirror ball reflected droplets of light onto them and the surrounding walls. This scene was the most challenging to recreate. Stars needed to be suspended from the theatre rigging so as not to be in the line of other lighting and the image-projector beam, or

compromise the sightlines of the audience when viewing the projected images. They also needed to be low enough to catch the light of the mirror ball. Two mirror balls were required to approximate this effect, along with careful placement of lights focusing on the mirror balls. The final result was satisfactory although without the grandness I had imagined. One of the interviewees told me, after seeing the performance, that the original mirror ball had been a revolving ball and perhaps this would have been a better solution.

I purposely placed the lighting and sound technician's table and technical equipment at floor level, in clear view of the audience, making the workings of the theatre visible to them, in order to reinforce the Brechtian *Verfremdungseffekt* I believe to be central to this style of theatre.

Voice and warm ups

My final note on the rehearsal process concerns working with the cast members. It was important for me to encourage trust, respect and camaraderie amongst the cast as a way of creating an ensemble identity which would transfer to the performances on stage. I nurtured this through encouraging the cast to share warm up exercises they knew with the group, getting more experienced performers to work with those new to the stage, and creating exercises to encourage physical closeness while delivering lines to overcome unease and encouraging the contribution of ideas.

I attempted to work with cast member's strengths, but also continued to push them to achieve what I needed. One cast member needed to work on projecting their voice. They played a reserved character so while their natural 'shyness' was a strength they still needed to be heard. I suggested they deliver their lines as if they were angry, as anger often increases volume. This didn't work as they internalised anger and got quieter, but warm up games with other cast members helped raise energy and volume and, as time went on and they grew familiar with their lines, a satisfactory volume level which was appropriate for the performance was achieved. Another cast member was experiencing outside pressures in their personal life and this translated to an aggressive performance on stage. I let them go with this throughout rehearsals until the week before the performance season

and then, through discussion, established ways they could internalise those feelings to present the appropriate performance attitude.

Conclusion

Along with producing a piece of theatre that is based on the methodology of documentary theatre, and which appealed to a general audience, a clear objective was to present to the interviewees a well-crafted story based on the stories they had shared with me. I believe I was successful in achieving this. The feedback I received from spectator/participants via emails were positive and complimentary in this regard. One wrote, “I picked up some of the things you had taken from my history...” (Appendix 3, p. 286), while another stated, “My friend and I were very impressed and thought you were very accurate in your portrayal.” (Appendix 3, p. 285). These comments, together with others, confirmed for me that I had managed to create a performance based on oral history recordings that represented the feel and essence of the era these people had lived through. In this regard, my initial intention with this project was realised.

After the opening night performance, I was part of a conversation where one of the interviewees was telling the actors about a story of hers that had been portrayed in a certain scene. When asked if her father was really like that she replied, “No that wasn’t my story; it was someone else’s story”. (Appendix 3 p. 281). In saying this, I understood that she had accepted the creative licence I had used in integrating multiple stories to create the play.

During the performance I was able to observe the interviewees in their spectator roles. I was obviously familiar with those whose story was being presented on stage and took delight in seeing their reactions when they recognised their contributions or were reminded of events. This was displayed by way of nudging friends or family members, and nods of agreement. Schweitzer (2007) recognised this in her work where “there was evident pleasure and pride on the part of contributors, who at certain points would turn round to the rest of the audiences and say: ‘That’s my story. That bit was mine’” (p. 26).

There were varying experiences and reactions for and from those who had contributed. After one performance two gentlemen called me over and told me they had known each other from the Starlight Ballroom dances and were delighted because they had not seen each other since then. A group who had arranged to meet up to attend the performance stated they were heading home for “a few drinks” and to reminisce about the “good ole days”. Schweitzer (2007) said of her productions, “ I sometimes felt as though what we were doing was creating a special kind of ‘time-jumping mirror’, and holding that mirror up for the audience to see themselves as they were when young” (p. 37). I can understand her sentiments. However, this experience also brought feelings of sorrow for one woman. She told me it had made her feel sad, although she had enjoyed the play, because they were so young back then and you couldn’t get that back. There were also family members present, of those whose characters had been re-presented in the play but who were deceased. These included relatives of two interviewees who had passed away before the performance was staged. These people expressed thanks for seeing something their loved ones had been part of.

If the sole purpose of the performance was to present back to the interviewees their stories, with respect and integrity, then I wholeheartedly believe I succeeded in doing this. But was it of value to an audience beyond these few?

To address this question I return to Cheeseman’s philosophy about the work at Stoke-on-Trent. He states, “The audience for each documentary includes the people you’ve taken the material from, their friends and relations and the people in their place of work. I think that’s the most important thing. Then people who are interested in that particular subject – it’s as simple as that.” (Documentary Arts Report, 1986, p. 9).

As stated earlier, my intent evolved to be a social one in which I hoped to open up dialogue between generations to enhance a sense of belonging for those within the identified community. Many of those who attended were friends and family of the interviewees, cast and crew from the Hamilton community and others who had had associations with the Starlight Ballroom. An associate of mine brought to the performance her two daughters and her mother who had attended the Starlight Ballroom dances. The dialogue I witnessed between the four, following the

performance, was an immediate demonstration of my intention with this work: the grandmother became the ‘expert’ on the subject and was able to discuss her recollected realities of the time with her daughter and granddaughters. Further responses included a friend of mine surprising me by relaying that the man who had laid the sprung floor of the Starlight Ballroom was her grandfather, while another expressed his interest in hearing about the history as a Hamiltonian. Also in attendance was a woman who had been part of the market held in the hall in the 1980s. She also found the history interesting as she was able to place a period of her life in a wider historical context. My mother, who was an interviewee, attended with her friend from England. Her response was that she recognised the action and stories taking place, if not the specific context.

Although it was not my primary intention to reach a wider audience, in respecting Cheeseman’s approach to documentary drama, there are possible avenues I could have pursued to increase the accessibility of the story for others. This development lies in both the content and presentation of the play. I believe there was room to develop the characters and storyline further. The use of stock characters enables the presentation of universal traits, and this device could have been employed to present primary material I chose not to select out of respect for the interviewees. In hind sight I could have also created juxtapositions between the verbatim stories of the interviewees and primary source material from the print media commenting on the youth culture at the time. This approach could have helped resolve the problem of maintaining loyalty to the material my interviewees provided, while incorporating the contrasting social “reports of juvenile delinquency, sexual promiscuity and gang violence” (Parker, 1999) of the time. It would have also created a wider national and political context accessible to a broader demographic, as well as enabling a greater use of images, newspaper clippings, and radio and film excerpts in the theatrical presentation style common to documentary theatre.

In her work in reminiscence theatre, Schweitzer (2007) advocates the need for productions to “address universal themes and that the story should be transferable to other communities. The characters [she says] must remind other audiences of their equivalents and the progress of the main characters’ lives must in some ways be representative as well as particular” (p. 117). The universal theme in *The*

Starlight Ballroom– A documentary drama was that of ‘girl meets boy’, and the conflict of the play was intended to reflect the everyday angst that accompanies this relationship. Dances were also commonplace and nationwide during this time. In describing this phenomena White (2007) writes “In the fabric of New Zealand social life, dances have been a constant thread. New Zealanders have held them to draw communities together... A history of dance is a history of courtship, music and fashion; dancehalls have been platforms for shifts in popular culture” (p. 11). I believe the universal character of these dances was accurately reflected in this work. However, the love story in which the play is framed could have been explored further, to provide a wider range of dramatic exchanges and situations, broadening the appeal of the story by increasing potential moments of personal recognition for the spectator whose oral history is not being presented.

In retrospect, I believe a live on-stage band would have enhanced the dance scenes, and provided a greater range of associations and connections, for the spectator. A larger group of dancers would have further strengthened the theatrical dynamic of these scenes. Cheeseman (1970) said, “I know I have made my worst mistakes through artistic cowardice more than anything else” (p. xvii). While there may be some truth in this as regards my own practice, I also recognise time and resource constraints contributed to the decision to confine these aspects of the performance to the levels presented. But, perhaps next time I’ll be braver.

The process I have undertaken to create *The Starlight Ballroom – A documentary drama* has been a rewarding experience in both what I have learnt and what I achieved. In creating a documentary play, I recognise that, like the writing process where I took multiple stories and threw them into a creative blender to develop a script, so I took various influences of theatre practitioners and variations of documentary theatre and threw them into a theoretical blender. The result was a performance incorporating elements of Brechtian, documentary, verbatim and reminiscence theatre methodology and practice.

During the process I have been researcher, playwright, director, producer and student. I have learnt a lot about what it takes to produce a documentary performance, and I look forward to further engagement with this form of theatre,

recognizing the on-going creative, intellectual and academic challenges this presents.

I believe *The Starlight Ballroom – A documentary drama* was a successful culmination of this learning process and stages I worked through. Many of the interviewees enjoyed and felt a sense of affirmation through being part of the project; I introduced some of the cast members to a new experience in theatre; and we presented a performance that struck a chord, engaging the audiences that attended. In these regards, I believe I have come some way toward meeting the obligations and responsibilities of a documentary theatre director/producer.

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Appendix 1:
Playscript of *The Starlight Ballroom*
- *A documentary drama*

The Starlight Ballroom

(A rehearsal script)

By Athene Jensen

1 ***Prologue***

2 *Jimmy proposing to Penny. No words. Couple walking hand in hand. Stops, he*
3 *goes down on one knee and her hugging him. Putting the ring on.*

4

5 ***Scene 1***

6 *(Albert and Peter discussing the use of the Alexandra Hall as a venue for the*
7 *Starlight Ballroom and the origins of the Hall)*

8 **Narrator** Ladies and gentlemen welcome to *The Starlight Ballroom* –
9 *A documentary drama.* This evening is a look at the
10 fabulous Starlight Ballroom. It is a story that shares
11 memories of the late 1950s in Hamilton, the emergence of
12 rock'n'roll, the ageless story of boy meets girl or at least
13 tries too. It has been said that the Starlight Ballroom was
14 the essence of everything that went on, on a Saturday night.
15 It was a lively place; it was the place to be. Our journey
16 will take us through what may have been a typical Saturday
17 around 1958. Many people have shared their memories and
18 this performance draws on these memories and other
19 documentation of the time to transmit the essence of the
20 period. I ask you to accept the creative licence that has
21 been enlisted in regards to actual dates... the best
22 storyteller knows that a fish when caught may be this big
23 but grows to this length in the retelling. I will be your
24 guide tonight so as with all good stories let's start at the
25 beginning with a conversation possibly held by Albert
26 Jackson and Peter Farrell.

27 **Albert** Andy and I have the lease on...

28 **Peter** Andy who?

29 **Albert** Andy Caldwell. We've had the lease on the Regent but the
30 lease is up. I noticed you got a hall that's not being used.

31 **Peter** Which ones that?

32 **Albert** The Alexandra, on Angelsea.

33 **Peter** It's my storeroom.

34 **Albert** Ah, well I...

35 **Peter** Bloody handy too.

36 **Albert** It came down from Ngaruwhahia didn't it?

37 **Peter** Some say there, others from Huntly, ah, which could be
38 Hopahopa way. My guess is it came from Pirongia.

39 **Albert** Oh yeah, it was called Alexandra eh?

40 **Peter** Some things in Pirongia still called Alexandra, like the
41 Alexandra racing club and so on. It got moved to Anglesea
42 in 1921.

43 **Albert** Yeah. Well Andy and I wanna set up another dance hall
44 and recon the Alexandra...

45 **Peter** My storeroom!

46 **Albert** ... your storeroom is a great venue.

47 **Peter** Ha, you recon.

48 **Albert** Yeah I do.

49 **Peter** What makes you think it will work? There's plenty of
50 dance halls around.

51 **Albert** You know Johnny McCleary?

52 **Peter** Heard the name, he's a builder ain't he?

53 **Albert** Yeah, pretty good too. He was in the air force.

54 **Peter** WW2?

55 **Albert** Yeah. He's said he can put in a sprung floor. It will give
56 us and edge over the rest of them. Make it a bit more high
57 class, better for dancing. I reckon with a few good bands it
58 will draw the crowds for sure.

59 **Peter** Long as you pay the rent, it'll be your loss not mine.

60 **Narrator** Well that was in 1954. *(Image of council consent record)*
61 And I tell ya what it turned out to be a little goldmine for
62 Albert. He renamed it the Starlight Ballroom. I don't
63 know why Albert actually called it the Starlight but I
64 assume it's something like that *(Looks up at lights that have*
65 *come up on the mirror ball shining onto stars hanging*
66 *from roof).*

67

68 **Scene 2**

69 *(Narrator and Albert sitting over Albert's desk, him smoking a cigar and having*
70 *a drink.)*

71 **Narrator** My wife used to work in the ticket box at the Starlight. I
72 used to pick her up at the end of the night. There weren't
73 buses to where we lived at midnight, and that's when the
74 dances finished. I liked the vibe of the place, I didn't dance
75 myself but I liked the scene. So when I heard that Tass
76 McDermott who was the floor manager might be quitting I
77 decided I wanted that job.

78 **Albert** Tass's work at the University is taking up more time so he
79 has to give it up.

80 **Narrator** I've heard, and I wouldn't mind the job.

81 **Albert** And what can you do for me?

82 **Narrator** Oh, I'll double your crowd.

83 **Narrator** *(To audience)* You can imagine the reaction I got, well, the
84 outcome it was a bit of a dirty trick. There was two other
85 dance halls, one was called the um, Winter Garden which
86 was in Garden Place and the other one was the Frankton
87 Town Hall and I paid the fee on those two halls out my own
88 pocket and kept them shut on the Saturday night so I
89 doubled the crowd at the start of the week and I got the job.

90 **Albert** We hold dances on Wednesday, Friday and Saturday night.
91 Fridays are a bit quieter cause of the late night shopping.
92 People tend to go to the movies after shopping. But one of
93 your jobs is advertising. Let them know there's singing
94 with dancing. You can repeat that up to 8 times.

95 **Narrator** In the Waikato Times.

96 **Albert** Yeah. And this is a classy joint. No bodgies. Lads have to
97 wear tie and jacket to get through the door.

98 **Narrator** Right, tidy dress.

99 **Albert** No exceptions.

100 **Narrator** Right no exceptions.

101 **Albert** No grog on the premises. If they're drunk they don't get in.

102 **Narrator** *(looks at bottle on table)* No grog. No exceptions.

103 **Albert** *(picks up glass and takes a drink)* No exceptions. You
104 look after the staff, girls on the ticket box, guys on the door
105 and Cleaning staff. Now the dance floor.

106 **Narrator** Chalk powder on the floor?

107 **Albert** Hell no, it ruins the wood. Grated wax. It makes the floor
108 like glass. Helps the dancers glide.

109 **Narrator** (to audience) And that's what the Starlight was about,
110 dancing, and meeting the opposite sex, but without the
111 dancing they wouldn't be there. Albert enjoyed dancing he
112 took lessons from a chap up in Auckland and convinced
113 him to come and teach at the Starlight in Hamilton. James
114 Gorden, a champion ballroom dancer. He taught ballroom
115 and Latin American dance for those that wanted lessons.
116 Although sometimes the couples were a little mismatched.

117

118 ***Scene 3***

119 *(Scene opens with James watching a couple- Warren and Lillian- dance,*
120 *commenting on their dancing.)*

121 **James** *(various comments about posture etc)*

122 *(Music ends, James turns to record player and changes record. Warren leans*
123 *over and whispers in Lillian's ear. Lillian socks him one, Warren lands on the*
124 *floor. James turns to see what noise is.)*

125 **James** What's going on?

126 **Warren** She dropped me.

127 **James** Lillian is this true?

128 **Lillian** Yes and if Warren talks to me like that again...I'll hit him
129 again.

130 **James** What did you say?

131 **Warren** I just asked her to the dance on Saturday night. I said we'd
132 have a good time.

133 **Lillian** It's your implication of what the good time may be that
134 offends me.

135 **James** The mark of a true gentleman is in the way that he treats a
136 woman with respect. I would kindly ask you to remember
137 this whilst in my dance class. Do you feel you can
138 continue?

139 **Lillian** Yes Mr Gorden.

140 **James** Warren?

141 **Warren** Yes Mr Gorden.

142 **James** Then take her hand, your left in the small of the back and
143 for goodness sake keep it in the small of her back.

144 **Narrator:** Today young people, a big percentage of them don't have
145 respect for anybody else. The girls accept these rough
146 guys, as, the way the world is. The guys accept the rough
147 girls as the way the world is these days. In those days it
148 wasn't like that.

149

150 ***Scene 4***

151 **Narrator:** The Starlight Ballroom was known for the many bands that
152 graced it's stage. When I started we had the likes of
153 Johnny Corben, Andy Shearer, the George Vercoe big
154 band, Ray Sentsch and his group, the last of the swing
155 bands. Bloody good musicians. But with the later half of
156 the 1950s came rock n roll. You had a young band from
157 Ngaruwahia called The Cravats they started out with a
158 home made amp belting out Bill Haileys Rock around the
159 clock. There was the Dominos who drove a big ole black
160 hearse, The Rocketts from Morrinsville, The Reataz a
161 group of girls who started out at Girls High. They
162 sometimes sang with Ronnie Suden among others. Later on
163 in the sixties there were bands like the The Astronauts and

164 the Mods. And there was a resident band that emerged
165 from the back blocks of Te Aroha The Satellites. The
166 sensational Satellites.

167 *(Two guys sitting on hay bales with guitars and amp.)*

168 **Band member 2** Have you heard Johnny Devlins lawdy Miss Clawdy.

169 **Band member 1** Yeah It's pretty good. What have you got for this week?

170 **Band member 2** 2 songs

171 **Band member 1** Cool. I was listening to the hit parade and picked up -----
172 - kinda goes like this. *(plays a bit on unplugged guitar)*

173 **Band member 2** Nice. We'll wait till the others get here for rehearsal.

174 **Band member 1** Did you tell them to meet us up here.

175 **Band member 2** Yeah the usual rehearsal paddock.

176 **Band member 1** Alberts got us at the Starlight this Saturday. We haven't
177 been there for a couple of weeks it should be huge.

178 **Band member 2** Last weeks gig was pretty good at the Te Aroha hall.

179 **Band member 1** Always nice to play back home. We'll get Sonny to do the
180 16 tons again that was great.

181 **Band member 2** We'll do Rave on as well that gets the crowd rocking.

182 **Band member 1** What about Be bop a lula?

183 **Band member 2** Sure. Hey you know those girls that were hanging around
184 at the Te Aroha gig.

185 **Band member 1** Yeah

186 **Band member 2** Yeah well I was contracting the other day, had on an old
187 singlet and hat and that and these girls went past. I waved
188 out to them, not even an acknowledgment or anything,
189 straight past.

190 **Band member 1** I only got eyes for one girl.

191 **Band member 2** She's a model, you'll never get her. She thinks you're a
192 dick.

193 **Band member 1** She's going to come down to the Starlight Saturday.

194 **Band member 2** How the hell did you manage that?

195 **Band member 1** Persistence my dear man, persistence. I went to her work.
196 She said no thank you quite a few times but I hounded her
197 until she agreed to come out.

198 *(Band member 2 plugs his guitar into the amp. Strums but nothing comes out)*

199 **Band member 1** Didn't you plug it in.

200 **Band member 2** I forgot to switch it on.

201 **Band member 1** I suggest you go back to the cow shed and turn it back on
202 then.

203

204 ***Scene 5***

205 **Narrator** Saturday night was a big night out and the Starlight was the
206 place to go. But you had to get through Saturday first.

207 *(Warren calls Jimmy on the phone)*

208 **Warren** Jimmy?

209 **Jimmy** Yeah.

210 **Warren** What are you doing today?

211 **Jimmy** Nothing much.

212 **Warren** Great. The Cambridge Yacht Club are going to have a
213 party tonight, my folks want some duck to put on the
214 Barbie so Frank and I are going over to the Hamilton lake

215 this avo to get them some, then we're going to go to the
216 Starlight tonight. You keen?

217 **Jimmy** Well I think, I don't think I'll be able to too. I've got to
218 work on the farm with my dad, that takes my whole day up.

219 **Warren** Frank can help me with the ducks...

220 **Jimmy** I've got to feed the chickens...

221 **Warren** ... but you've got to come to the Starlight...

222 **Jimmy** ...chop wood...

223 **Warren** ... it's the happening place to be...

224 **Jimmy** ...bring the wood in...

225 **Warren** ... The satellites are playing...

226 **Jimmy** ...fill the wood box...

227 **Warren** ... it's what we do on a Saturday night...

228 **Jimmy** ...Help milk.

229 **Warren** ...Jimmy it's where the girls are.

230 **Jimmy** Yeah I know. That's the nerve wracking bit.

231 **Warren** I'll be there, I'll see you right. Do the milking like a good
232 boy, get clean and come out.

233 **Jimmy** I don't know.

234 **Warren** I am going do you want to come?

235 **Jimmy** *(pause)* Alright.

236 **Warren** Great. We'll pick you up, 7.30, go down to Garden Place.
237 We'll buy a crate of eight o'clocks and have a few ales
238 first.

239

240 **Scene 6**

241 **Narrator** So while the guys did what guys do it could take a young
242 lady all day to get ready to go to a dance. And the reason
243 for this was often about sewing a new dress.

244 *(Penny on floor with dress pattern and material strewn around. Elvis is playing*
245 *on the record player, Mother is ironing or some such household task)*

246 **Mother** Now are you going to the dance tonight?

247 **Penny** Oh I don't know. I don't know whether to go or not.

248 **Mother** You've been working on that dress half the day.

249 **Penny** I can always wear it next week if I don't go tonight.

250 **Mother** For goodness sake, go out Penny!

251 **Penny** I don't know.

252 **Mother** You should be meeting people.

253 **Penny** I just get so shy.

254 **Mother** Aren't you meeting Lillian and Penny there?

255 **Penny** Yeah but they always get asked to dance. What if no one
256 asks me.

257 **Mother** I'm sure one of them will dance with you.

258 **Penny** *(Penny screws up face)* It's not the same and you know it.

259 **Mother** Oh honey you're a pretty girl. Someone will ask you.

260 *(Father enters, navigates his way through sewing and sits in chair with paper)*

261 **Father** Ask her what?

262 **Mother** To dance.

263 **Father** Hurmp. What are you listening to?

264 **Penny** Elvis.

265 **Father** Not in my house.

266 **Penny** Daddy.

267 **Father** You can't listen to that, it's just you know so dis, dis, you
268 know disruptive and, and corrupting. Joe Lester has a TV
269 and said that Elvis was on it grinding his... It's not right.

270 **Penny** I like his music. I never go stupid over it.

271 **Father** I don't approve, and you shouldn't be encouraging her.

272 **Mother** I...

273 **Father** Young people are getting promiscuous and I blame that on
274 the likes of Elvis Presley with their lewd lyrics and gyrating
275 hips.

276 **Penny** Daddy.

277 **Father** It's those damn American soldiers. It's their fault for all
278 this American malarkey. It's wild and undisciplined,
279 congregating at milk bars, yobs lounging across the
280 footpath and on the corner of the street. Before them we
281 didn't do that. Milk bar cowboys, James Dean, rebels.

282 **Mother** I don't think it can all be blamed on the American soldiers.
283 That was a while ago now.

284 **Father** They weren't popular. I admit I was grateful for them to be
285 here what with our boys away fighting but most of them
286 were resting up and that meant kicking their heels up. They
287 were boys away from home, promiscuity was rife and it's
288 no good saying "Oh, that's always happened" it didn't, it
289 hadn't happened to the degree that it did then and girls got a
290 bad name if they went out with American boys. I don't

291 want you going out with any American boys Penny. You
292 hear me.

293 **Penny** I hear you.

294 **Father** Now turn that music off.

295 **Penny** *(Turns record off)* Mum, I think I will go to the dance.

296 **Mother** Good. If you go, I'll know not to put onion in the dinner.

297 **Narrator** The dislike of the American culture wasn't that uncommon
298 with the adults. It was the images of teenagers out of
299 control. But generally our lads here were fine. Oh sure
300 they got up to shenanigans but nothing that would earn
301 them more than a boot up the arse from the local cop. And
302 that was only if they got caught.

303

304 *Scene 7*

305 *(Warren and Frank are sitting in a car with a couple of floor boards pulled up.*
306 *Warren is reading the paper while Frank is intent on dropping bread crumbs*
307 *down the hole in the floor)*

308 **Warren** The Satellites are playing tonight. And the Reataz.

309 **Frank** Hey I got a job at ----- . Starts off two pounds seventeen
310 and sixpence, a week. But I have to pay my mum board out
311 of that.

312 **Warren** Been paid yet.

313 **Frank** Yeah!

314 **Warren** Have you put your money in the glove box for petrol, booze
315 and burgers?

316 **Frank** Eh?

317 **Warren** Money for petrol, booze and burgers. It's run out you need
318 to put in another {money amount} . I can't afford to be
319 subsidising you now you're a working man.

320 *(Frank fishes in his pocket, counts out money and hands it over to Warren.*
321 *Warren quacks like a duck, both watch the hole in the floor)*

322 **Frank** So how come Jimmy didn't come?

323 **Warren** Got ta help his dad.

324 **Frank** Is he coming tonight?

325 **Warren** Yeah. Finally convinced him.

326 **Frank** I thought you were gonna ask Lillian.

327 **Warren** She was busy.

328 **Frank** But she always goes dancing. And you said she was keen
329 on ya.

330 **Warren** She said something about being terribly sorry but she had to
331 um. I don't know. Who can work girls out. She's pretty
332 but boy has she got a temper.

333 **Frank** What do ya mean?

334 **Warren** Nothing.

335 **Frank** I don't know how you do it. Whenever I ask a girl to dance
336 she has to go to the toilet.

337 **Warren** How many ducks we got?

338 *(Frank looks in the back to count)*

339 **Frank** About eight or ten.

340 **Warren** Should be enough.

341 **Frank** *(Points)* One more?

342 *(Frank and Warren watch duck approach, look through hole in the floor, grab)*

343 *Lighting- Lights cut- Sound – Quacking sound and neck crunch*

344

345 **Scene 8**

346 **Narrator:** There wasn't a lot of rock n roll music on the radio because
347 the radios didn't want to play it. The NZBC was very
348 conservative they were very careful not to rock the boat.
349 The general populous didn't approve but it gradually crept
350 in. They'd have a half hour spot once a week for the Hit
351 Parade and that was it.

352 *(Lillian and Nancy are in a room at a boarding house. Nancy is writing in a*
353 *diary, Lillian is finishing of doing Nancy's hair. On the radio is the Lever Hit*
354 *Parade)*

355 **Lillian** What are you writing?

356 **Nancy** I write down what's on the hit parade every week. I have to
357 listen to the new songs that come out and try to figure out
358 whether I like them or not. Then I know if I want to buy
359 the record.

360 **Lillian** Well hold still I'm almost finished.

361 **Nancy** I'm also writing about the guy at the dairy.

362 **Lillian** What about him.

363 **Nancy** I've got my eye on him. He could well be one of my
364 boyfriends. I've just got to get him to notice me. It's so
365 tiring thinking of fifty different reasons a day for why I
366 have to go in and buy something. Want a sweet.

367 **Lillian** No thanks. There done *(Referring to hair)*

368 **Nancy** What are you wearing tonight?

369 **Lillian** *(Show her a dress.)* I sat up all hours last night sewing.

370 **Nancy** Aww, it's beautiful.

371 **Lillian** I love it. I'll wear it a lot. *(Takes dress to an ironing*
372 *board).* Now I just have starch it to within an inch of its
373 life.

374 *(Reataz song "Daddy Cool" comes on the radio)*

375 **Nancy** I saw a crazy chick a-running down the street
376 I said, a-whoop pretty baby, why the rigged beat?
377 She said, wow, what a square, don't you dig the scene?
378 Daddy Cool's playing his piano machine
379 Daddy who? Daddy Cool!
380 Daddy who? Daddy Cool!

381 I went into town Friday night to get this record and the
382 flipside is Fancy Nancy.

383 **Lillian** And she was a bit fancy.

384 **Nancy** What do you mean?

385 **Lillian** She's got it all?

386 *(Nancy still not getting it)*

387 **Lillian** Oh heavens, listen to the words, it could be taken that she is
388 a street girl – Fancy Nancy. It's banned from playing on
389 the radio.

390 **Nancy** Oh. Do you know why they call themselves the Reataz?
391 Because in the James Dean movie Giant his little house
392 was called the little Reata, so they put a 'z' on the end. The
393 Reataz, cool eh.

394 **Lillian** If you say so.

395 **Nancy** Come and dance with me. There's always so much
396 competition for the good dances and I have to practice.

397 **Lillian** For your boy at the dairy? (*Nancy tries to get her to*
398 *dance, Lillian resists*) I'm no good at rock n roll, I like the
399 quick step, the foxtrot, and the polonaise. I love the
400 polonaise you get to change your partners and you don't get
401 stuck with the same guy all the time.

402 **Nancy** Especially if they have big sweaty hands.

403 **Lillian** Eww. You should practice the waltz. It's the last dance
404 that's important.

405 **Nancy** There is only one man I want the last dance with.

406 **Lillian** Well it doesn't matter tonight. You've got to walk home
407 with me.

408 **Nancy** Even if Warrens there?

409 **Lillian** God forbid.

410

411 ***Scene 9***

412 (*Narrator outside front door. Group of guys, Warren and co, standing outside*
413 *the door trying to look in.*)

414 **Narrator** I had never seen a three step polonaise before I started at
415 the Starlight. You ever seen one? They go right the way
416 round in a circle swapping partners. We used to call it the
417 Maori PT. I thought it was terrible, I tried to cut it out of
418 the program, I nearly had a riot on my hands. You see
419 that's where the boys got to chat up the girls. The night
420 would start out at 8 o'clock with the waltzes, foxtrots, quick
421 step, the more formal dances. About half past nine they'd
422 pick up the tempo and bring in the rock, then by ten o'clock

423 it was all rock in roll. But you had to get the guys in their
424 first. They'd start out crowded round the door seeing who
425 was in there.

426 **Narrator** Come on lads, it's only 4/6 to go in.

427 **Narrator** *(to Frank)* You can't come in without a tie. The ticket box
428 has a rack of ties. Must have about 200 in there. They'll
429 loan you one.

430 *A guy approaches the door in an old tartan Swandry with the elbows hanging out.*

431 **Narrator** *(Stops him)* I'm sorry Sir, you can't come in dressed like
432 that.

433 **Peter** *(Amused)* Ohhh.

434 *(Albert Jackson passing and intervenes)*

435 **Albert** Christ, you can't refuse him!

436 **Narrator** Why not. He hasn't got a Jacket or tie. No exceptions.

437 **Albert** This's Peter Farrell, he owns the building. He is the bloody
438 exception.

439 **Peter** *(Finding this amusing, to narrator)* Good on you.

440 **Narrator** I'm sorry.

441 **Peter** No, no! It's great to see you keeping up the standards.

442 **Albert** *(Opens way for Peter to enter)* You should get a suit and
443 I'll have it here for you.

444 **Peter** Albert, like you said, I don't need to, I own the building.

445 *(Lillian and Nancy approach, cop walks past door)*

446 **Narrator** Evening Harry.

447 **Nancy** Oh God, I wonder who's here tonight.

448 *(Cop finds bottle stashed in the bush, picks it up and keeps walking)*

449 **Narrator** Evening ladies, 4/6 thank you.

450 **Henry** *(holding up bottle)* Looks like there might be a few beers
451 after the dance tonight.

452

453 ***Scene 10***

454 *(Others dancing while the dialogue takes place)*

455 ***In the girls line***

456 **Nancy** Oh I love you dress Penny.

457 **Penny** Thanks. Look there's Robert.

458 **Lillian** He's got such rough hands and when twirls you round he
459 just about sends you flying.

460 **Nancy** He's a farmer, of course he's got rough hands.

461 **Penny** Who's that with Warren?

462 **Lillian** I don't know.

463 **Nancy** Eeek. It's my guy from the dairy.

464 **Lillian** Where?

465 **Nancy** The one in the ----- tie.

466 **Penny** Not that one the other one.

467 **Lillian** Would you stop looking over there...

468 ***In the stag line***

469 **Warren** Well lads, were here to dance aren't we?

470 **Frank** There's Lillian. I thought you said she wasn't coming.

471 **Warren** Must have changed her mind. (*Goes to ask her to dance*)

472 **Jimmy** Frank, look at that girl over there in that white dress, I'd
473 like to dance with her. She looks nice.

474 *In the girls line*

475 **Lillian** Oh God here comes Warren, start talking.

476 **Nancy** He's a real smoothie. (*Lillian gives her a dirty look*)

477 **Warren** May I have this dance?

478 **Lillian** Oh no, sorry, I'm engaged. (*Warren looks for a partner*)
479 I've got to go to the toilet. (*Gets up and leaves*).

480 **Nancy** What's your friends name?

481 **Warren** Jimmy?

482 **Nancy** The one in the ---- tie?

483 **Warren** That's our Frank. (*Warren returns to stag line*).

484 **Nancy** (*To Penny*) Oh God, I wasn't really expecting him to be
485 here.

486 **Penny** Who?

487 **Nancy** Frank from the dairy. Does my hair look alright?

488 *in the stag line*

489 **Jimmy** Well, how'd you get on?

490 **Warren** Oh she didn't..... Her mate was asking about you though
491 Frank. Why don't you ask her to dance.

492 **Frank** Really! Alright.

493 **Jimmy** I might come too.

494 (*Frank asks Nancy to dance, Jimmy asks Penny to dance*)

495 **Frank** Wanna dance

496 **Jimmy** May I have this dance.

497 *(Dance)*

498 *(Band announces supper break)*

499 *(Jimmy takes Penny back to her seat. Penny keeps hold of his hand while talking*
500 *to him. Frank whispers in Nancys ear and they head outside.)*

501 **Penny** Thank you for the dance.

502 *(Jimmy starts to go.)*

503 **Penny** So do you live in Hamilton?

504 **Jimmy** I work on my folks farm.

505 *(They sit down and continue chatting.)*

506

507 ***Scene 11***

508 *(Nancy and Frank in the car. Crate of beer at their feet. Frank drinks out of the*
509 *bottle, wipes it and hands it to Nancy who has a sip.)*

510 **Frank** I've seen you in the dairy.

511 **Nancy** Oh have you.

512 **Frank** You sure like (kind of sweet).

513 **Nancy** Yeah I think I've seen you there. You just started working
514 there eh.

515 **Frank** Yeah. (pause) Do you work?

516 **Nancy** Yep.

517 **Frank** Where?

518 **Nancy** At the school canteen.

519 **Frank** Oh. That's nice. So your friends with Lillian.

520 **Nancy** Yep. We board together.

521 **Frank** That's nice.

522 **Nancy** Is this your car?

523 **Frank** Nah it's Warrens. But he lets me borrow it. We all put in
524 money for petrol so it is sort of mine too.

525 **Nancy** That's nice. It's a nice car.

526 **Frank** I like your dress.

527 **Nancy** Thanks. Your tie is... nice.

528 *(Frank leans over to kiss Nancy, flash light shines in window and Nancy spills*
529 *drink on Franks lap. Henry the cop is at the window.)*

530 **Henry** What are you two doing?

531 **Frank** Nothing. Just talking.

532 **Henry** You all right miss?

533 **Nancy** Yes.

534 **Henry** Now what do you think your mother would say if she knew
535 you were out here?

536 **Nancy** She'd skin me alive.

537 **Henry** Best you get back inside then.

538 *Nancy gets out, henry takes the bottle off her, she disappears inside.*

539 **Henry** As for you, I'll be taking those. And I don't want to be
540 seeing you out here again. Now hop it.

541

542 **Scene 12**

543 *Band announces the last dance.*

544 *(Jimmy and Penny get up to dance)*

545 **Lillian** Where have you been?

546 **Nancy** I went out to the car with Frank.

547 **Lillian** You what!?

548 **Nancy** We just went out to get a breath of fresh air and talk.

549 **Lillian** Oh Nancy you can't do that, imagine what people might
550 think.

551 **Nancy** Nothing happened. The policeman shone his light on us
552 before he got to kiss me.

553 **Lillian** Nancy!

554 **Nancy** What. I really like him.

555 **Lillian** Get your coat we're going home.

556 **Nancy** What about Penny.

557 **Lillian** She'll be alright. I think she's got someone to walk her
558 home.

559 **Nancy** But...

560 **Lillian** But nothing, were going.

561 *Henry the cop walks past the band. Holds up the crate.*

562 **Henry** Another dozen for later boys.

563 *Warren to Frank.*

564 **Warren** How did it go?

565 **Frank** Not so good. There go our beers.

566 *As Lillian walks past Warren.*

567 **Lillian** Well I hope you're happy.

568 **Warren** What I didn't do anything... see you at dance class. Come
569 on lets go get a pie pea and pud.

570 *Jimmy and Penny dancing.*

571 **Jimmy** I've had a really nice night.

572 **Penny** So have I.

573 **Jimmy** Um I came with the boys so I don't have a car.

574 **Penny** Oh that's fine. You don't have to drive me home.

575 **Jimmy** Well I can't, but it would be an honour if you'd let me walk
576 you home. If that's Ok.

577 **Penny** That would be very OK.

578 **Narrator** It has been said that the Starlight Ballroom was the essence
579 of everything that went on, on a Saturday night in
580 Hamilton. Leading up to the 60s Albert went into
581 negotiations with a chap called Charlie Lea who bought and
582 took over the running of the Starlight. He ran it for roughly
583 seven years very successfully too. It was pretty much all
584 about rock n roll by then. He and his wife took over one of
585 the first coffee houses in Hamilton, on London Street. It
586 was a bit of a shift from the old pie cart at Garden place.
587 Definitely had more class. Well when Charlie took over he
588 wanted to run the starlight himself so I exited. If he went
589 away he'd give me a call cause I knew where every switch,
590 every light, everything was. In the time I worked there I
591 probably had six Saturday nights off in four years. Just
592 about every man and his dog came to the Starlight you

593 know, it was quite an icon place. Good friends were made,
594 they were happy times where we all looked after each
595 other.

596 I walk around town now and I often see people and I think
597 “Oh, I remember those two dancing at the Starlight, I
598 remember those two courting.” They were marvellous
599 times, it was magic.

600

601 *Scene 13*

602 *Jimmy and Penny walking.*

603 **Penny** This is where I live.

604 **Jimmy** Oh.

605 **Penny** Thanks for walking me home.

606 **Jimmy** That’s alright.

607 **Penny** Well I better go in.

608 **Jimmy** Hey, my dad will probably let me borrow the car next
609 week. I’d really like to take you to the Starlight. If you
610 want to. Go with me.

611 **Penny** I’d like to.

612 **Jimmy** Great. See you next week, 8’oclock.

613 **Penny** Yeah. Night.

614 **Jimmy** Night. (*Penny goes*) Night

Appendix 2:

Approved application for ethical approval and attachments

UNIVERSITY OF WAIKATO

FACULTY OF ARTS & SOCIAL SCIENCES

HUMAN RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE

APPLICATION FOR ETHICAL APPROVAL

1. NAME OF RESEARCHER

Athene Jensen

2. DEPARTMENT OF RESEARCHER

School of Arts – Theatre Studies

3. RESEARCHER(S) FROM OFF CAMPUS

N/A

4. TITLE OF RESEARCH PROJECT

Stories from the Starlight Ballroom (working title)

5. STATUS OF RESEARCH PROJECT

Master of Arts

6. FUNDING SOURCE, if applicable

N/A

7. NAME OF SUPERVISOR

Dr. William Farrimond

8. DESCRIPTION OF RESEARCH PROJECT

Describe the project in plain language under the following headings:

a) Justification in academic terms

Documentary Theatre creates an arena where stories within a community may be shared. The process of creating Documentary Theatre “includes collecting primary source material relating to the past and present life of where [participants] live, and give[s] artistic form to this material, in a way that is interesting, exciting and accessible for the rest of the community” (Documentary Arts Report, 1985, p.3).

A prominent practitioner of Documentary Theatre, Peter Cheeseman, stated that, one of the things wrong with our society is that too few people have a sense of history. We have lost in our society the sort of natural structure whereby old men pass down knowledge to the young in the community, and people are not taught history intelligently” (Cheeseman, cited in Elvgren.Jr, 1974, p.92). He advocates, through the medium of theatre, a way to “show people the past of their community in a way which will give them a sense of their past in the knowledge that they stand not alone in the present but are part of a historical perspective. This will give them a sense of self consciousness and importance” (p.92). Through Documentary Theatre the young and old of communities can move toward a shared understanding of events, histories and perspectives.

Documentary theatre nurtures an ethos where the stories and experiences of everyday people, the working class, both individual and communal are recognised and valued.

References

- Documentary Arts Report. (1985). In B. Stone (Ed.), *Documentary Arts Report* (Vol. 1, pp. 12). Milton Keynes, England: Milton Keynes Documentary Arts Trust
- Elvgren.Jr, G. A. (1974). Documentary theatre at Soke-on-Trent [Electronic Version]. *Educational theatre journal*, 26, 86-98. Retrieved 14 April 2009, from www.jstor.org/stable/3206583

b) Objectives

- To collect personal stories through interviews and documentation from published sources pertaining to the youth culture during the mid-1950s in Hamilton.
- To create and present a performance piece from the above interviews and documentation.
- To document and critically evaluated the documentary theatre process.
-

c) Method(s) of information collection and analysis

Interviews

It will be negotiated with participants where they wish to conduct the interviews.

Conversational style interviews will be conducted. The researcher will have a set of themed questions which will be used to guide the focus of the interviews. (Please see attached copy of the question guide (Appendix One)).

Interviews will be recorded electronically.

Interviews will be approximately one to one and a half hours long. There may be negotiated exceptions.

Transcripts and consultation

The researcher will transcribe the recorded interviews.

Interviewees will receive a copy of the transcript and will be given 2 weeks to retract any information they choose from part or all of the transcript if they wish to do so.

Interviewees will receive a copy of their audio recording and/or transcript if they have indicated a wish to do so, to keep for themselves.

The 'translation' of material from the interview transcript to the draft/final performance script is a creative writing process which draws on the original spoken words, and rearranges them to suit the dramaturgical needs of the documentary drama. The process does not seek to present the identity of the speaker in a recreated 'reality'. The draft performance script, and the final performance script, will not identify the speakers by name.

Analysis

The analysis is divided into three parts. The first is a dramaturgical analysis and production design (30% of final mark). The second is a public performance - the candidate's role in directing and producing the performance will be subject to an examination by an external examiner (20% of final mark). The third is an exegesis (50% of the final mark). The exegesis will place the project in the context of Documentary theatre, including the collection-collation-composition stages of developing the rehearsal script, the performance composition/rehearsal process, and critical evaluation/review of the extent to which the dramaturgical intentions were realised in performance.

It is not intended that interviewees will be identified beyond the fact that they have contributed stories.

Actors may be given credit for participating in the exegesis as they will be identified in the performance programme to be distributed at the performances, as is expected, and this will be included as an appendix. The exegesis will not

reflect on performers but the actual rehearsal process and performance style and my execution of it.

The performance(s) will not be subject to analysis as part of the thesis study.

Audience(s) will not be canvassed for responses to the performance(s).

d) Procedure for recruiting participants and obtaining informed consent (attach copies of information given to prospective participants and consent forms if applicable – see Guidelines on Information Sheet Content and Format below)

I intend to interview 5-12 individuals dependant on the range of information obtained.

I intend to find potential interviewees through my contacts in the community. Through these contacts I hope to generate further participants to take parts in interviews. I also intend to approach the *Hamilton Press* and *Raglan Chronicle* to run an article describing my project and to invite potential interviewees to contact me to if they are interested in sharing their experiences.

All potential interviewees I approach will be made aware that they are under no obligation to take part if they do not wish to do so.

After initial contact, all interviewees will be provided with an information sheet (Appendix Two). An interview time will be negotiated. Prior to the interview a consent form (Appendix Three) will be presented and an opportunity to discuss any questions they have will be given.

e) Procedures in which participants will be involved

Interviewees will be involved in an electronically recorded interview lasting 60 to 90 minutes.

Interviewees will be given a copy of the transcript and given an opportunity to revise any material they have give or retract part or all of the interview transcript. The interviewees will have two weeks in which to do this.

Interviewees will be invited to attend the performance piece that will be open to the public. There will be two showings of the final performance in November 2011. It is intended that the performances will take place at the New Place Theatre at the University of Waikato. It is anticipated that performers will include students studying theatre studies at the University of Waikato and other local practitioners that may be interested.

Interviewees will be contacted with final dates and will be invited to attend free of cost to one or both performances.

- f) Provide a copy of any research instruments to be used for, or any guidelines relating to, the collection of information from or about people, e.g., questionnaires, interview schedules, structured observation schedules, topics of questions to be covered in qualitative interviews, lists of types of behaviour to be observed in participant observation.**

See appendices.

**9. PROCEDURES AND TIME FRAME FOR STORING PERSONAL INFORMATION AND OTHER DATA AND MAINTAINING CONFIDENTIALITY OF PERSONAL INFORMATION
(Researchers are in many cases expected to store data for between 3 to 5 years or even longer, unless good reason is given for doing otherwise.)**

The initial audio interviews recorded of participants and transcripts will be stored securely on the researchers personal computer under a password know only to her. These will be held by the researcher indefinitely. The initial transcripts will be

seen by my academic supervisor, Dr William Farrimond. Copies of these will be available to participants if requested. The final script will be presented in a public performance. If an occasion rises at a later date where the researcher wishes to use the information collected for a different project, the participants will be individually approached and asked for consent.

Any original transcribed interview dialogue which appears in the playscript to be performed will not directly identify the speaker by name. Pseudonyms will be employed and interviewees informed of this device at the time of the interview, and have the option of withdrawing material from the transcript, as already mentioned.

10. ETHICAL AND LEGAL ISSUES

Outline any ethical and legal issues together with proposed solutions under the following headings, as applicable:

a) Access to participants

Unless otherwise arranged participants will be openly identified.

b) Informed consent

Before signing a consent form participants will be informed both verbally and through the information sheet about the nature of their involvement in this project. Their rights regarding participation and consultation will be outlined. They will have access to any information collected on them.

c) Potential risk to participants

The potential risk to participants is they may divulge information they later decide they do not want portrayed in the final performance script. Because the nature of the project acknowledges contribution(s) by participants, I have included a

consultation stage in which participants may ask information be withdrawn or altered.

d) Publication of findings

Interviewees will be made aware that the findings of this research will be presented as a public performance and as a thesis (both hard copy and online) to meet the requirements of a Masters of Arts in Theatre Studies at the University of Waikato. It is possible that a journal article may result from the research also. This information will be included in the consent form.

e) Conflict of interest

The researcher is unaware of any conflicts of interest.

f) Intellectual and other property rights

The stories remain the property of the participants. The final performance script will be the property of the researcher. Information/stories will be credited to participants.

g) Intention to pay participants

There is no intention to pay participants.

h) Any other ethical or legal issue

The researcher is unaware of any other ethical or legal issues.

i) The Treaty of Waitangi

All participants will be treated with manakitanga.

11. ETHICAL STATEMENT

The basic ethical principles that will guide this research are those of respect, fidelity, openness, honesty and benevolence. These principles will be applied by adhering to the University of Waikato's regulations concerning the ethical conduct of research.

Appendix One: Interview Guide

Topic: Documentary Theatre: Stories from the Starlight Ballroom.

Theme One: General Background.

How old were you during the 1950s?

Were you born and raised in Hamilton?

Did you reside in town or in the country?

Which area did you live in?

Theme Two: Stories from the Starlight Ballroom.

Did you ever attend dances at the Starlight Ballroom?

Do you remember who organised these Dances?

Who did you attend with?

What did you wear?

Can you recall any of the bands or musicians that played when you attended?

Can you share with me any memorable incidents or stories from the dances?

Theme Three: How did you spend your spare time?

What kind of music did you enjoy listening to?

What kind of audio device did you listen to it on? (record/radio)

What kind of reading material did you enjoy?

Did you attend the movies?

What were some of your favourite movies or actors?

Did you have any hobbies or sports you played?

When you spent time with your friends, what kind of activities did you engage in?

Can you tell me about any memorable occasions for you spent with friends?

Theme Four: Home, politics and the term 'teen-ager'.

Did you have to help out around the house (or farm)?

What kinds of chores did you have?

Can you tell me about any memories you have about the politics of that time?

Can you tell me about any recollections you have of politics being discussed in your home?

How did you feel about your parents views?

How do you think your generation differed from your parents' generation?

Can you remember the Mazengarb report being released about *The moral delinquency of children and adolescents*?

What was your reaction to that?

Do you have memories of the term teen-ager coming into general use?

Can you share those memories with me?

Prompts:

Nod, smile, ah ha, mmmm, I see, Ah okay, really. Paraphrasing and repeating back.

Probes:

How do you feel about that?

Can you tell me more about that?

Can you give me an example of that?

Can you explain what you mean by that?

What does that mean to you?

Checks

So what I'm hearing you say is "...” is that correct?

Do you mean...

Are you saying that...

So as I understand it...

Are you talking about.

Appendix Two: Information Sheet

Participant Information Sheet

Documentary Theatre – Stories from the Starlight Ballroom

Researcher:

Athene Jensen

21 Primrose Street

Raglan

Phone: (07) 8258580/021 0440 523

Email: athenejensen@gmail.com

Dear _____

I Athene Jensen, am currently studying for my Master of Arts in Theatre Studies at the University of Waikato. My thesis examines the process of creating Documentary Theatre. As a practical element of my studies I aim to create a performance based on the principles of Documentary Theatre. This involves collecting people's stories and other documentation, then collating them into a performance script, and finally presenting a public performance piece.

Participants will be involved in a recorded interview in which they will be encouraged to tell their stories/memories about their youth during the mid 1950s in Hamilton, New Zealand. Topics of interest include stories about the Starlight Ballroom, how they spent their spare time, their attitudes to the political climate and memories of the newly emerged term "teen-ager". During this time participants may ask to turn off recording equipment at any time, or ask for an excerpt not to be used in the transcript. It is

expected that this will initially not require more than an hour of the participant's time unless otherwise negotiated.

The interview will then be transcribed and a copy given to the participant to review, correct or omit information. Participants will have two weeks in which to do this at which point they may withdraw from the research if they choose to do so.

Participants contributions will be presented under a pseudonym in the performance script. However it is common practice in Documentary Theatre to acknowledge the source(s) of the stories by listing the real name of the contributors/participants. If the participant does not wish to have their real name used in this way, an alternative can be negotiated.

The final script will then be used in a rehearsal process and finally be presented in two public performances in November 2011. Participants will be informed of the performance date and invited to attend free of cost. It is anticipated that the performance will take place at the New Place Theatre on the University of Waikato campus.

The initial audio interviews recorded of participants and transcripts will be stored indefinitely on my computer under a secure password. Transcripts will be seen by my academic supervisor, Dr William Farrimond. Both audio and transcribed copies of the interviews will be available to participants if requested. If the researcher wants to use the information given for any purpose other than this current project she will approach participants individually for consent.

A thesis to meet the requirements of a Masters of Arts in Theatre Studies at the University of Waikato will be submitted in hard copy and will be accessible online. It is possible that a journal article may result from the research also.

This research project has been approved by the Human Research Ethics Committee of the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences. Any questions about the ethical conduct of this research may be sent to the Secretary of the committee, email fass-ethics@waikato.ac.nz, postal address, Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, Te Kura Kete Aronui, University of Waikato, Te Whare Wananga o Waikato, Private Bag 3105, Hamilton 3240.

Yours sincerely

Athene Jensen

Appendix Three: Consent Form

UNIVERSITY OF WAIKATO

Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences

School of Arts – Theatre Studies

Master of Arts

Documentary Theatre – Stories from the Starlight Ballroom

Student: Athene Jensen

Supervisor: Dr. William Farrimond

CONSENT FORM

I have read the **Participant Information Sheet** for this study and have had the details of the study explained to me. My questions about the study have been answered to my satisfaction, and I understand that I may ask further questions at any time.

I also understand that I am free to decline to answer any particular questions in the study or withdraw up to two weeks after being presented with my transcript to edit or amend. I agree to provide information to the researchers under the conditions of confidentiality set out on the **Participant Information Sheet**.

Please circle your choice

- | | | | |
|----|--|-----|----|
| 1. | I agree to participate in an interview as specified in the Information Sheet | Yes | No |
| 2. | I have been given the opportunity to ask any questions relating my participation in the interview. | Yes | No |
| 3. | I understand that I can refuse to answer any question or terminate the interview at any time. | Yes | No |
| 4. | I agree to this interview being audio-recorded. | Yes | No |
| 5. | I understand that I can withdraw from this research project up to two weeks after I have received a copy of the transcript for editing and/or amendment and the student interviewer will delete the recorded interview and destroy the interview transcript. | Yes | No |
| 6. | I agree that material from the interview can be used for a public performance, master's thesis and possibly journal articles. | Yes | No |
| 7. | I understand that a pseudonym will be used in the performance script but am happy to be acknowledged for my contribution. | Yes | No |

8. I wish to be given a copy of the audio-recording of the interview. Yes No

“I consent to be interviewed for this research on the above conditions”

Signed: _____ Date: _____

Interviewee

“I agree to abide by the above conditions”

Signed: _____ Date: _____

Interviewer

Any inquiries about the ethical conduct of this research may be made to the University’s Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences’ Human Research Ethics Committee (University of Waikato, Private Bag 3105, Hamilton 3240, or fass-ethics@waikato.ac.nz). This Committee has given approval for the interviews in this Course to go ahead.

Researcher’s contact details:

Graduate Student/Interviewer

Athene Jensen

athenejensen@gmail.com

Ph: 07 825 8580

Supervisor

Dr. William Farrimond

Email: williamf@waikato.ac.nz

Phone: (07) 856 2889 ext 6130

Appendix 3: Production journal

Covering all aspects of the performance composition process and the performance season.

February to November 2011.



Documentary Theatre

“The documentary theatre shuns all invention. It makes use of authentic documentary material which it diffuses from the stage, without altering the contents, but in structuring the form” (Weiss, 1995, p.139).

“You can't write documentary – it's a contradiction in terms. You can only edit documentary material” (Cheeseman, cited in Elvgren.Jr, 1974, p.92)

Elvgren.Jr, G. A. (1974). Documentary theatre at Soke-on-Trent [Electronic Version]. *Educational theatre journal*, 26, 86-98. Retrieved 14 April 2009, from www.jstor.org/stable/3206583

Weiss, P. (1995). Fourteen propositions for a documentary theatre. In A. Favorini (Ed.), *Voicings: Ten plays from documentary theater* (pp. 139-143). New Jersey, USA: The Ecco Press.



My initial ideas - Feb 2011

For my Masters Thesis I would like to explore the process of Documentary theatre. The subject I wish to create a performance around is the 1950s in Hamilton, particularly the starlight ballroom and the youth culture.

Key avenues to explore: Starlight ballroom, dances, music, rock 'n' roll, bodgies and widgies, milkbars, Mazengarb report, The Satellites, Johnny Devlin, MP Hilda Ross, censorship of 'objectional' material, youth.

Why this particular topic?

- My parents met at the Starlight Ballroom during the 50's.
- Inspired by the newspaper article in Waikato Times.
- The Starlight Ballroom is a well known Hamilton icon
- I'm interested in presenting and preserving stories of the community.
- Issues facing youth then are still relevant now.
- Curious about the 'milkbar' culture of the 50's.
- Huge range of performance possibilities to explore.

Research sources.

- Hamilton/University library archives
- Newspaper archive
- Interviews
- Wellington/National archives
- Historical websites (for leads)
- Film/Radio archives
- Documented oral histories
- Hamilton City Council
- McLean, G. (2007). *How to do local history*. Dunedin, New Zealand: Otago University Press (gives details of where to find research sources).

I intend to explore practitioners in Documentary theatre, in particular directors, theatre companies and their processes.

- Peter Cheeseman -Stoke-on-Trent
- Peter Weiss
- Moises Kafman
- Living newspaper
- Erwin Piscator
- Living Archive
- Jeremy Weller
- Tadeusz Kantor
- Stephen Bottoms
- Jonathan Holmes
- Emily Mann
- The Civilians – Steve Cosson
- Derek Paget
- Bertolt Brecht
- And more....

Teenage rebellions begin

Women, Children & Family

can the Waikato Times headlines from the 1950s and you are likely to believe that Hamilton youth was a generation of moral degenerates.

Reports of juvenile delinquency, sexual promiscuity and gang violence dominated. But an analysis of the 1950s decade reveals it was mostly a time of conformity and sexual repression.

It was at the end of World War II the term "teenager" first emerged. American businesses targeted youth as an important market for mass culture consumption, as a post-war boom had given the young vastly increased spending ability. Special fashions, music and films were produced to capture this growing market.

New Zealand's youth, experiencing full employment and increased wages, enthusiastically adopted the American teenage trends. With their own distinctive dress and music, youth developed a separate identity as teenagers.

Rock 'n' roll caused a sensation when it arrived in the mid-50s. Saturday night in Hamilton saw the Starlight Ballroom pounding with the music of popular local band "The Satellites", and teenagers dancing with abandon.

Teenagers embraced the new music, but adults distrusted it. Many believed that rock 'n' roll music and dance, with its suggestion of sexuality, was leading to a decline in the morals of the young. A number of recordings were banned.

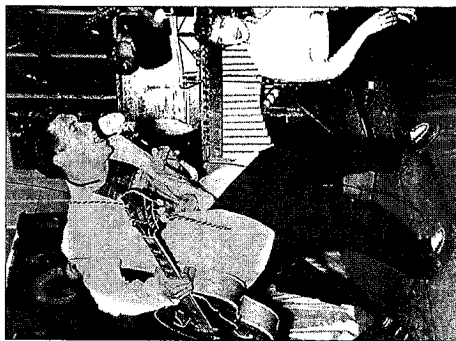
Elvis Presley was the supreme rock 'n' roll teenage idol but he was feared by the adult population. In 1958, Johnny Devlin, New Zealand's version of Elvis Presley, became this country's rock 'n' roll star. Disapproving adults frowned upon his energetic performances, and the shirt-ripping antics of his fans.

In general, however, although a generation gap developed in the 1950s, most teenagers continued to share their parents' values. Very often the generation differences was confined to dress and taste in music, and the majority of adolescents tended to lead conservative and conformist lives. The roles they adopted as men and women varied little from previous generations.

Nevertheless, a very visible section of the teenage population overtly rejected adult standards of respectability. Members of these rebellious cults were called boddies and widdies, milkbar cowboys, or teddy boys, and they maintained that they were reacting to an era of stifling authoritarianism.

They were identified by their appearance, which set them apart. Boddies adopted a flamboyant and exhibitionist style of dress and behaviour and referred to anyone outside their cult as "square".

A visiting American academic Milkbars became meeting places



ALL SHOOK UP 1950s rocker Johnny Devlin. PICTURE: John Dix.

described the bodge as "a teenage cultist with a distinctive haircut and costume who frequents milk bars, is a rock 'n' roll addict, raves about on a motorcycle, tends to be sexually promiscuous, and engages sporadically in hooliganism, vandalism and other kinds of unlawful activity".

Milkbars played a major role in teenage cults.

Youths gathered around the milkbar jukeboxes to listen to their favourite music as public broadcasts of rock 'n' roll were strictly controlled in the 1950s.

for teenagers who rejected adult authority.

They he rebels recall they were reviled. Newspaper reports of teenage violence, or dangerous games such as "chicken", blamed boddies and teddy boys. More conservative teenagers who also disapproved of the boddies saw them as "louts". The two Auckland milkbar youth slayings further convinced the general public that the teenagers regarded as "juvenile delinquents" were a threat to society.

The 50s decade was an era when parents strictly disciplined adolescents and closely monitored their morals. Sex outside marriage was considered immoral. Adolescents were told by their parents and church leaders to keep themselves "pure" until marriage, and most did. Fear of pregnancy was an added deterrent.

It therefore came as a shock to New Zealanders when, in 1954, the nation's newspapers revealed the Hutt Valley sex scandals. Described as "rampant juvenile vice and immorality", the scandals involved a number of teenagers from the Hutt Valley being charged with sexual offences involving minors.

The Waikato experienced its own teenage sex scandals in the 1950s, with members of the

infamous Hamilton gang, the Demos, being charged with carnal knowledge offences that took place at The Narrows.

Throughout the 1950s, parents and the clergy warned of the dangers of the corrupting influence of American mass culture on adolescents, and moral delinquency was believed to be widespread among the young. Strict discipline was advocated. In 1954, Hamilton MP Hilda Ross told a Parliament concerned about declining youth morals, "The cure is strictness, not laxity... The Government cracked down on films, pulp fiction, comics and pop music aimed at teenagers. Anything judged objectionable on religious, sexual or political grounds was banned.

The Government also set up the Special Committee on Moral Delinquency in Children and Young People. In the Mazengard report, the Committee attributed the declining morals of youth to broken homes; working mothers; the influence of Hollywood; a decline in organised religion; and the spread of new psychological ideas.

In the 1950s the government, churches and parents combined to preserve the post-war dream of building a stable and prosperous society by stressing the importance of conforming to the conservative political and moral opinions of the time. Authority and censorship were used to enforce conformity to these ideals.

- Sally Parker

26 OUR STORY - A History of the Waikato - Waikato Times (NO. 0445 NZ collection Newspapers)

Our story: A history of the Waikato / editor Deborah
[Hamilton (N.Z.)]; Waikato Times [1999] Challinor

Thursday 17th March : Why this Project for my Masters?

(Waikato Times
Supplement)

I guess a good place to start this process is to delve into myself and examine why I choose to undertake this particular project for my masters thesis. There are two points of inspiration for my choice of direction with this project. The first lies in how I came to be interested in documentary theatre which is the process I intend to utilise. The second is my choice of topic, *Stories from the Starlight Ballroom* (working title).

Documentary Theatre

I was raised with stories. Bed time stories, sitting with my father in the Lazy Boy as he read *The Pied Piper of Hamelin* or *The Lady of Shallot*. I wore out tapes listening to classic tales set to classical music. We travelled a lot and different parts of the country meant a different story. For example, Rotorua meant my Dad would tell me the story of Hinemoa and Tutanikai. My favourite stories were my Mum's. She had a head full of stories from her childhood and beyond to stories of our ancestors. I loved those real life stories. They gave me a sense of belonging in time and space.

When I started working with children all those stories tumbled out. I didn't need books to tell them like the other teachers, telling stories was just something I did. To the real life stories mum had told me I added my own childhood experiences. I made up stories with the children using their experience and imagination. Eventually I gave up teaching to tell stories. I started performing at festivals, childcare centres, kindergartens, schools, libraries and one a dental technicians conference. I started running workshops for educators in storytelling. I did a few workshops in puppetry but felt like the props got in the way of the magic of oral storytelling.

When I decided to return to study (to up my qualifications for tertiary teaching) I decided theatre was the closest thing to storytelling I'd find.

It was an unknown world for me. I had played a tree and a munchkin in a school play of *The Wizard of Oz* at about 8 years old. My first paper at University was "Play production" and I was cast as... The Storyteller in Bertolt Brecht's play *The Caucasian Chalk Circle*. Perfect introduction. Over the next few years William Farrimond kindly let me explore storytelling as performance. He finally gave me a little push and introduced me to verbatim/reminiscence theatre.

It was like a whole new world opened up. Here was a way to hear and share other peoples stories. An arena where those life experiences that I had enjoyed as a child could be heard and valued as an

important part of the human condition.

Personal histories can be shared and an understanding of each other can be forged. I created a play called Rancid butter and Silk stockings from interviews with three women and their experiences of managing the rations during world war two. I enjoyed the process and found that the interviewees did too. The experiences of these women were valued, and the women themselves were pretty stoked that someone wanted to hear their stories, that in their twilight years they had something to offer. I was thrilled by the audience reaction. I had feedback about how members of the audience had learnt so much about life at that time. One woman commented that her Grandparents had all died before she was born so she had never had anyone to tell her stories like this.

I would say I take a bit of a purist attitude to the creation of a documentary/verbatim performance. It is important that the content is true to the source, and structured in a way that retains the essence of the experience shared. These are people's real life stories not to be exploited but to be re-presented to encourage understanding of people's place in time and space.

The Topic

The topic I want to explore is the youth culture of the mid 1950s, Hamilton. In particular stories surrounding the Starlight Ballroom. I was inspired by an article from a special edition of the Waikato Times which looked at Hamilton's past. I spoke to Mum about it and she told me that she and Dad had met at the Starlight Ball room, one of the dance halls mentioned in the article. That put a personal spin on things. It comes back to that sense of belonging. If they hadn't met there then I wouldn't be here. Mum's a little older than the age I'm interested in but I'm sure I can utilise some of her memories.

The idea of the bodgies and widgies fascinated me. I so often look at teenagers and can't fathom what draws them to a certain sub-culture. I guess again it comes down to a sense of belonging, of relating to something. The bodgies and widgies emerged during the time that the term 'teenager' emerged. There were some staunch views about this from the older community concerned about the morality of the days youth.

Teenagers brains seem to be wired to think they are the only ones to be teenagers, that if you're over twenty five you have no understanding of what they're going through. I guess I hope to find stories that today's teenagers can relate to from a generation that belongs to their Grandparents and reminds the Grandparents and parents that they were once teenagers too.

Thur 17 March

Key words for Documentation Search - Waikato Times

Starlight Ballroom, The Satellites,
(1954) Hilda Ross Hamilton MP, (1950s) The Demos,
(July 54) Hutt teenage scandal, Hulme + Parker
(Oct 54) Mazengarb Report, (Nov 54) Report distributed
Milkbars, (1958) Johnny Deolin., Elvis Presley.

Jan 1 1954 - Feb 18th 54

Jan	Queen Visit*	Heiress Runaway.
	Tangiwhai talked about	Pans Circle (kids page)
	News for Women (page)	Atomic Power

Feb Army Training for schools (9 Feb)

Bands that played at Starlight Ballroom 1954
Te Aroha, Neil Campbell and his Popular band
Da and Gerald (OZ),

over **Tuesday 22 March 2011 Research leads from Amazon and Google Scholar**

✓ Get Real: Documentary Theatre Past and Present (Performance Interventions) by Alison Forsyth and Chris Megson (Apr 28, 2009)
Call No: PN2051.G48 2009
L3 Uni

Verbatim: Techniques in Contemporary Documentary Theatre by Will Hammond and Dan Steward (Sep 1, 2008)
Call No: PR635.H5V47 2008
L3 Uni

Collective Encounters: Documentary Theatre in English Canada [Hardcover]
Alan Filewod (Author)
Call No: PN2304.F54 1987
L3 Uni

German Documentary Theatre (Inaugural Lecture) by Arrigo Victor Subiotto (Jun 1972)

Show with music: An approach to the practice of musical documentary (Theatre in education)
[Unknown Binding]
Robert G Newton (Author)

Voicings: Ten Plays from the Documentary Theater [Hardcover]
Attilio Favorini (Editor) Various playwrights
Call No: P5627.H55V65 1995
L3 Uni

New Theatre Quarterly 42: Volume 11, Part 2 (v. 11) 'Nice Girls': The Via gives a voice to women of the working class
(stoke on trent article may 1995 pp.109-)
Woodruff, Graham

Attilio Favorini (1994). Representation and Reality: The Case of Documentary Theatre. Theatre Survey, 35, pp 31-42 doi:10.1017/S0040557400002775

True stories?:
documentary drama on radio, screen, and stage, Derek Paget - ~~chapter notes of~~

"Oh what a lovely war" and the broken tradition of documentary theatre:
an investigation into the origins, manifestations and influence of documentary theatre in the U.K.
Derek Paget, David Edgar, University of Manchester, British Library, Document Supply Centre,
British Thesis Service
(True: Joy Theatre Workshop, Charles Chilton + the members of the original cast
call PN6120.R5036 off campus storage

New challenges for
documentary
Call No: PN1995.P6D6N48
2008 L3 Uni

Verbatim verbatim:
contemporary documentary theatre
Will Hammond, Dan Steward

same? →

Verbatim
William Brandt
+ Miranda Harcourt
call N° PR9701.882144
L.4 Uni 1994

Drama and society
By James Redmond 1979 p.196
Of campus storage PN1643.067 1977

same! →

Collective encounters: documentary theatre in English Canada
Alan Douglas Filewod - 1987

Theatre quarterly: Volume 4
1974

On directing: interviews with directors
By Gabriella Giannachi, Mary Luckhurst 1999 (chapter with interview with peter cheeseman)
Call N°: PN2053.06 1999
L3 Uni (on loan 15/04)

Reminiscence theatre: making theatre from memories
By Pam Schweitzer 2007
Call N°: PN3156.538 2007
L3 Uni:

Erwin Piscator's political theatre: the development of modern German drama
By C. D. Innes 1972
Call N° PN2658.P5154 1972
L3: Uni:

Our Australian theatre in the 1990s
By Veronica Kelly 1998

✓ Dramaturgy of the Real on the World Stage
Carol Martin - 2009
Call N° PN1872.D73 2010
L3 Uni

Englisches Theater der Gegenwart: Geschichte(n) und Strukturen
By Klaus Peter Müller 1993 Documentary Theatre in the United Kingdom, 1960-1990D Paget

✓ Documentary Theatre at Stoke-on-Trent
Gillete A. Elvgren, Jr.
Educational Theatre Journal
Vol. 26, No. 1 (Mar., 1974), pp. 86-98
(article consists of 13 pages)
Published by: The Johns Hopkins University Press
Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3206583>
Have copy electronic + hand copy

✓ Theatre Journal
Volume 54, Number 4, December 2002
E-ISSN: 1086-332X Print ISSN: 0192-2882
DOI: 10.1353/tj.2002.0137
Re-Presenting Oscar Wilde: Wilde's Trials, Gross Indecency, and Documentary Spectacle
Salamensky, S. I. (Shelley I.)
Theatre Journal, Volume 54, Number 4, December 2002, pp. 575-588 (Article)
DOI: 10.1353/tj.2002.0137
Have electronic copy.

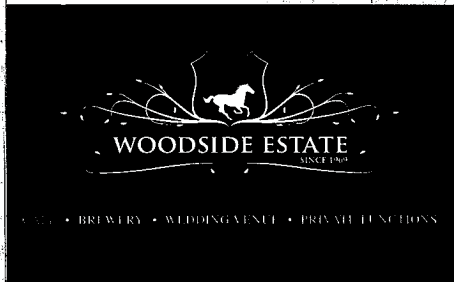
Derek Paget (1990). 'Oh What a Lovely War': the Texts and Their Context. *New Theatre Quarterly*, 6, pp 244-260 doi:10.1017/S0266464X00004553

Initial names I came up with to research:

- Peter Cheeseman -Stoke-on-Trent
- Peter Weiss
- Moises Kafman
- Living newspaper
- Erwin Piscator
- Living Archive
- Jeremy Weller
- Tadeusz Kantor
- Stephen Bottoms
- Jonathan Holmes
- Emily Mann
- The Civilians – Steve Cosson
- Derek Paget
- Bertolt Brecht

Wednesday 23rd March

Had lunch at Woodside Estate and discovered the original Starlight Ballroom sign on the wall.



The sign was bought/acquired by

████████████████████
████████████████████

Tuesday 29th March

Checked out the "Historical Hamilton Exhibition". This exhibition stops @ the 1940's. Got the details of the Collections Manager at the Waikato Museum.

1 Grantham Street
Private Bag 3010
Hamilton 3204, New Zealand

Darryl Pike
Collections Manager
Poutaki Taonga

D. 07 838 6546
P. 07 838 6606
F. 07 838 6571
M. 021 220 8567
E. darryl.pike@hcc.govt.nz
www.waikatomuseum.co.nz

 **Waikato Museum**
TE WHARE TAONGA O WAIKATO

acquired

Thur March 24 March

Garden Place Library

Looked @ abstracts...

Youth Oral History Project 1995 Hamilton Public Library.

* "We used to be tremendous rock 'n' roll artists:
dancing through the 1950s"

(N) - An interview with Russell Young

By Jan Lindsay

Call No: OH 0262

Russell Young born 13 Jan 1941

Discusses

- Socialising - story of prank diverting bus
- skating arches of fairfield bridge
- Fashion - "String ties" were a rebels way of conforming
- Movies + Dancing - types of movie - hero worship
- mentions Elvis, Cliff Richard, Bill Haley
- Attitudes towards rock 'n' roll
- "It was the beginning of the ruination of us, the adults had the attitude it must be stamped out at all cost."
- school conditions - Remembers classic comics.

4 notes: Would be worthwhile listening to this history in full.

* "I made friends for life, I had a wonderful time": Hamilton teenager during 1950s"

(N) - An interview with Rob Corner

Interviewer - Megan Peinell Abstract - Stefanie Clark

Call No: OH 0276.

- Clothes - was a bedgie (discusses clothes +
- Socialising - Bands Crawats + satellites / other music
- Starlight Ballroom (fights)
- Movies
- Hollywood Milk Bar (16-17 yrs)
- American influence

- Socialising cont - 1958 saw Johnny Declin
- about 1958-59 badges began to disappear.
 - Radio - Coon Show - Take it from here, Round the Horne + Randy Stone.
 - Pascoes Corner Garden Place Friday Night

My Note: Must listen too recording. His name had been mentioned by a friend as potentially good to interview before seeing this oral history.

"If there was trouble at school I was always in it":
primary school during World War II.

- (M) - An interview with Lester Bowler
By Megan Peinell call N° OH 0274

Socialising - Starlight

"The YMCA was generally for younger ones, and you kind of graduated to the Starlight, I would think in those days half of the people would have met their prospective wives (including myself) at the Starlight Ballroom. It was the place to go to"

Milk Bars - Monte Carlo, Dolly Vardon, the 24 hour cafe + pie cart Garden place.

Meeting other teenagers - "Pascoes corner" - that was the meeting place for everybody. We used to walk up + down and ogle at the girls + they ogled back."

My Note: Not high on the listening to list.

- ④ - "Country childhood in 1950's"
An interview with Norman Keyte
by Joan Keller call N° - OH 0271

Social life - movies - James Dean
- motor bike mags + comics
- Rock n roll music

Local Issues - Mabel Howard - listened to her
on radio, starting "a storm"
in Parliament.
- Also Hilda Ross + her patriotic involvement

My note: From Te Mata - local issues may be interesting.

- ⑤ - "We did all our courting in the snow": growing
up in the 1950s
An interview with Diana Houtman
By Glenn Ede call N° - OH 0267

Socialising - Describes her feelings about the
'bodgies' + 'widgies', mentions 'milkbar
cowboys', the starlight ballroom ...

My Note: Females impressions of above.

- ⑥ - "Memories of candy floss: summer + winter shows
in the 1950s" call N° - OH 0261
by Sarah Smith

Entertainment - Starlight - Satellites
- mentions bodgies + widgies
- Talks about dances + fashion
- Story about rock n roll

Remembers Hilda Ross

My Note: Possible listener - ~~not~~ she a little young? born 1942

Teenage years in the Frankton railway settlement around 195

- An interview with Ann Gibson by Jan Lindsay call no 0H0260

- Entertainment + Socialising
- Starlight ballroom
Describes rock'n' roll, people, music + fashion
 - Pigeons Coffee House
 - motorbike as transport, milkbar cowboys' pulling their pillion pussy's

My Note: Definitely have a listen.

"You made your own entertainment + boy did we make it": a 1950s teenager looks back

- An interview with Heather Hornibal by Sarah Smith call no 0256

Entertainment - Rock + roll dancing cafes

- Bands

- smoking, boyfriend with car

- movies James Dean, Elvis

Fashion - Influenced by movie stars

- Parents attitudes to rebel teens

Hamilton - Badgies + wadgies

- bike gangs

My Note: Could be varied + very worthwhile

started → Sun 27th March - list of possible interviewees.

Through discussing the project ideas with various people these names have come to light.

[redacted] (Mum) [redacted]

[redacted] @ council said his brother in law was a boogie & was his friends in Hamilton

[redacted]
[redacted] - [redacted] ([redacted])

[redacted] mentioned Bob Comer (have since found an oral history interview with him in Ham Library).

[redacted] Dad was in the Satellites

[redacted] (from work) attended Starlight

[redacted] Dad attended Starlight Ballroom in late 50's (Now 67/68)

Thur
28th April

[redacted]

[redacted]

[redacted] Rang 28-04-2011

Crawats, Satellites, sang there.

Jim Henery - Dinsdale - in Crawats.

"Wild one" Na Fisher (Paul Fisher) sang there.

Posidia -

my had Green Zepher convertible with Red Hood.

Dress up - had a friend made herself

a new dress every week for Saturday dance

[redacted] brother-in-law.

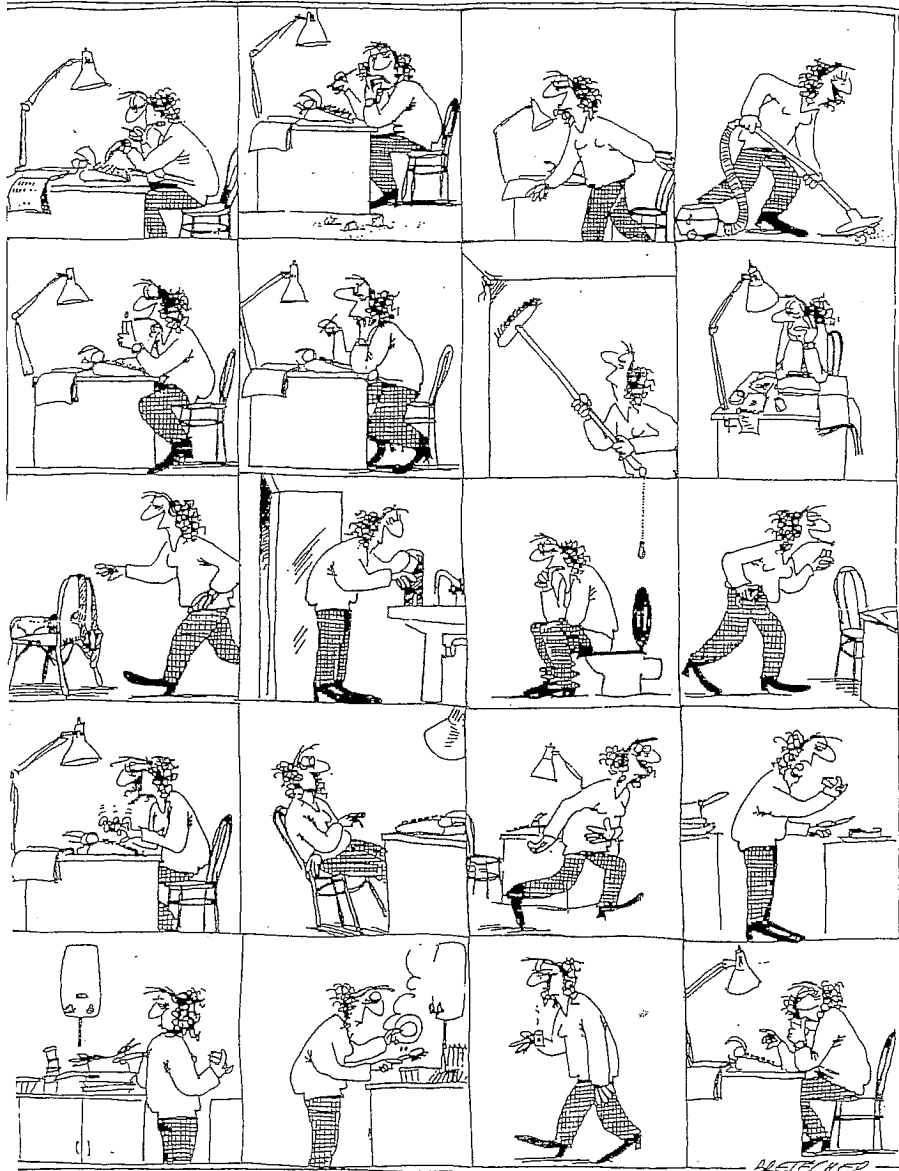
Listened to
he +
went

Cole Porter + Elvis

45s - gramophone.

Wed Fri + Sat nights until got married.

CREATION [of a thesis]



© AIRE BRETECHER/METHUEN LONDON

BRETECHER

Friday 8th April

- * Blue Smoke by Chris Bourke Library call 10°
Some names + background on ML3505-N45B68 2010
NZ music in 50's pp261 →
mentions Mazergerb report.

Meeting with William (Thur 9th)

- Set a date for production week + performances in November.
~~Book~~ Work backwards from production week and book rehearsal space at the New Place Theatre.
2 rehearsals a week for 4 hrs each.
 - Send these dates to William who will pass them on to be booked
 - If later decide don't need then can cancel.
- Add a third column to timetable to have as a 'completed' record. ✓ 15/4
- There will be a budget - have/make a shopping list & go with William with credit card to buy. William will investigate other purchasing options.
- Re-Oral History project at library
Ask them "If I wish to reference or quote dialogue as part of Masters Thesis, are there any restrictions?"

- Start investigating and exploring Starlight Ballroom History (dig up stuff)
 - Who managed it?
 - How was managed?
 - By laws concerning dances? (liquor)
 - Did it change hands?
 - Why did it close?
 - etc.

Sunday 10th April.

Had an email from [REDACTED]
 He has looked at my ethics proposal and wants further comment on 3 points. Have sent an email to William with 2 of the points changed. I have issue with [REDACTED] first point. I had 'accidentally' (bad proofing on my behalf) stated in the info sheet that I would give interviewees a draft script to view (I had done this for ~~the~~ Racial Butter and silk stockings). I really DON'T want to do this.

- A) The dramatic licence that is taken when cutting up and ~~re-plotting~~ editing stories may not be understood by the interviewees. It allows them to have an opinion on the structure, i.e. they may not like something they said being used in someone else's story cause they didn't say that. From my perspective it may be that it makes it a better piece of dramatic performance.
- B) I presume the performance (script) will change and grow throughout the rehearsal process and I don't want to be tied to using an 'approved' script when it may be better to change it.

Research Ethics Application FS2011-17

3 messages

Fri, Apr 8, 2011 at 10:50 AM

To: athenejensen@gmail.com
Cc: William Farrimond

Athene Jensen
William Farrimond

8 April 2011

Dear Athene

Application for Ethical Approval: FS2011-17 "Stories from the Starlight Ballroom"

Thank you for submitting an Application for Ethical Approval to the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences Human Research Ethics Committee. It was received on 21 March and was about to be distributed to Committee members for the April meeting when a request was made for its urgent consideration. I have therefore looked at it in my capacity as Chair, in the light also of the fact that you have previously had applications successfully considered by the Committee. The following are points that require further consideration:

1) There appear to be two points in the research process where interviewees have a chance to check and amend the information they provide to you – a) upon the presentation to them of the transcript of the interview, which is clearly set out in your Application and in the consent documents, and b) upon seeing a copy of the performance script, which is not mentioned in your Application (unless your comments in section 10c refer to it) but is mentioned briefly in a sentence in the Information Sheet (end of the third paragraph). This second opportunity for interviewee checking and approval is important because it is the performance script that will be a public presentation of interview material and any interviewee opting for anonymity needs to be assured that their identity is kept secret. On the other hand, the process whereby the researcher gains approval for the interview material included in the script should be fair to both the interviewee and the researcher, enabling the researcher to avoid being held up if an interviewee does not respond reasonably quickly. I suggest you consider the following in order to ensure a robust and effective process:

i) Include in the Information Sheet that participants will be given the opportunity to see the script for approval (as you have done) but include the process and a deadline for response – for example, that you will email or post or personally deliver the script to them and that they will have one or two weeks (or whatever time period you deem appropriate) to get back to you with any changes they wish, and that you will assume approval if you don't hear from them by the deadline. [This avoids any delay in this process – and as long as the procedure and time period is clearly set out in the Information Sheet then the interviewee is fore-warned about it.] Alternatively, if you wish, you could instead make the statement that you won't proceed with the performance until you hear back from them giving their approval (with or without suggested changes) in which case you may need to chase up any interviewee you don't hear back from straightaway.

ii) Include in the Consent Form a statement along the lines that "I understand that I will be given two weeks [or whatever period you choose] to check the material from me used in the performance script" Yes/No or "I understand that the performance script will not be finalized until after I have had the chance to comment on it" Yes/No.

In this way, a clear and agreed process is developed to protect both the interviewee and yourself regarding what is included in the performance script.

2) More information should be provided to the Committee and to the interviewees concerning the performance: when will it be presented; where; who will be the performers; what is the likely audience; will interviewees be able to attend without cost. At least some of this information should be provided in the


<https://mail.google.com/mail/?ui=2&ik=8f6e57027c&view=pt&cat=Masters%20Corr...> 13/04/2011

Information Sheet so that interviewees can assess how their interview material may be made public.

3) More information should be provided to the Committee on how you intend to document and evaluate the documentary theatre process in relation to where it might involve observing people other than yourself (e.g., actors, audience etc.). If you need to observe other people and/or refer to them in your thesis and/or any publication, issues of informed consent may arise. Alternatively, if you will not be referring to other people, then these issues will not arise.

I would be grateful if you would consider these points and submit any revisions directly to me.

With best wishes,


Chair
FASS Human Research Ethics Committee

Athene Jensen (AJ) revised ethics approval application.

1 message

Athene Jensen <athenejensen@gmail.com>

Mon, Apr 11, 2011 at 5:44 PM

To: [REDACTED]
Cc: William Farrimond [REDACTED], Athene Jensen <athenejensen@gmail.com>

Dear [REDACTED]

Thank you for looking at my Ethics Application so quickly. I really appreciate it. Please find attached the amended proposal. To make the reading easier I have outlined below the changes I have made. I hope they meet the requirements.

First point 1):

Added statement

8c) Methods of information collection and analysis

Transcripts and consultation

The 'translation' of material from the interview transcript to the draft/final performance script is a creative writing process which draws on the original spoken words, and rearranges them to suit the dramaturgical needs of the documentary drama. The process does not seek to present the identity of the speaker in a recreated 'reality'. The draft performance script, and the final performance script, will not identify the speakers by name.

In the information sheet removed statement (3rd paragraph)

"The researcher will then create a draft performance script using all or part of the participants reminiscence. Participants will receive a copy of this script for a final approval."

Second point 2):

Made change to

8e) Procedures in which participants will be involved. (3rd paragraph)

Interviewees will be invited to attend the performance piece that will be open to the public. There will be two showings of the final performance in November 2011. It is intended that the performances will take place at the New Place Theatre at the University of Waikato. It is anticipated that performers will include students studying theatre studies at the University of Waikato and other local practitioners that may be interested.

Interviewees will be contacted with final dates and will be invited to attend free of cost to one or both performances.

In the Information sheet (5th paragraph)

<https://mail.google.com/mail/?ui=2&ik=8f6e57027c&view=pt&search=inbox&th=12...> 13/04/2011

The final script will then be used in a rehearsal process and finally be presented in two public performances in November 2011. Participants will be informed of the performance date and invited to attend free of cost. It is anticipated that the performance will take place at the New Place Theatre on the University of Waikato campus.

Third point 3):

Made change to

8c) Methods of information collection and analysis

Analysis

The analysis is divided into three parts. The first is a dramaturgical analysis and production design (30% of final mark). The second is a public performance - the candidate's role in directing and producing the performance will be subject to an examination by an external examiner (20% of final mark). The third is an exegesis (50% of the final mark). The exegesis will place the project in the context of Documentary theatre, including the collection-collation-composition stages of developing the rehearsal script, the performance composition/rehearsal process, and critical evaluation/review of the extent to which the dramaturgical intentions were realised in performance.

It is not intended that interviewees will be identified beyond the fact that they have contributed stories.

Actors may be given credit for participating in the exegesis as they will be identified in the performance programme to be distributed at the performances, as is expected, and this will be included as an appendix. The exegesis will not reflect on performers but the actual rehearsal process and performance style and my execution of it.

The performance(s) will not be subject to analysis as part of the thesis study. Audience(s) will not be canvassed for responses to the performance(s).

Thank you for your time.

Yours sincerely

Athene Jensen

 AJ Application-for-Ethical-Approval - revised final draft 17.03.11.doc
73K

Unsigned Copy.

Research Ethics Approval FS2011-17

1 message

John Paterson
To: Athene Jensen <athenejensen@gmail.com>
Cc: William Farrimond

Wed, Apr 13, 2011 at 12:32 PM

[AJ: I will send a signed copy of this letter to William for you - John]

Athene Jensen
William Farrimond

13 April 2011

Dear Athene

Application for Ethical Approval: FS2011-17 "Stories from the Starlight Ballroom"

Thank you for submitting a revised Application for Ethical Approval in response to my letter of 8 April. Your revisions were received by email on 11 April. Thank you for your attention to detail and for clearly setting out the changes you have made.

The changes you have made satisfy the points raised by the Committee. I take it from your comments on the third point that to all intents and purposes the actors are not research participants. However, I assume they will be informed how the performance is related to your thesis research.

This letter is to provide formal ethical approval for your project.

I would be grateful if you would arrange for a hard copy of your revised Application, signed by yourself and your supervisor, to be given to the Committee's secretary, Delle Dellow (FASS Dean's office), so it may be placed in our files.

With best wishes,

John Paterson
Chair
FASS Human Research Ethics Committee

Friday 15th April

- ① Sent text to [redacted] who acquired the Starlight ballroom sign. Requested a chat + asked for a good time to ring.
- ② Emailed Darryl Pike at the collections manager at The Waikato Museum asking if they had info in their collections.
- ③ Revised personal time line
- ④ Sent rehearsal, production week and performance dates to William to look at, approve and maybe send on.
- ⑤ [redacted] (from N°1) replied: Unable to recall where he got the sign from.

Saturday 16th April

- [redacted] replied - can't remember where got sign from.

Thursday 21 April. Meeting with William

- Possibly between \$500 + \$1,000 for production
- 3 rehearsals not able to book
- Hamilton Press - Wintec journalism students.
- Gail Pittaway is @ Wintec

Thursday 28 April

Hamilton Press 849 6180 or 0800 806 180

Sue ~~edit~~ jpeg photo 200 dpi 1mb.

Editor = sue.pairaudeau@wrcn.co.nz

Email Article → send photo also.

- * Article + photos sent to Sue today @
- * Same article to Raglan Chronical today.
- * Rang [redacted] spoke to her asking about being interviewed. Seemed reluctant to be interviewed however started to talk about it (see notes Sun 27 March / 28th April) will talk to her husband and get back to me.



Timeline:

	Stages to complete	Date completed/Comments	Ongoing jobs	Comments
February	Enrol 28 th February			
March	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ethics approval application Collect data from Waikato Times (1954-1958) Check Hamilton and Uni library and council for info on starlight ballroom 	<p>✓ Approved 13 April 2011</p> <p>Some done</p> <p>Library has some recorded histories - some edit ones - need to listen to</p>	<p>Journal</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> collection process doc theatre practice <p>Annotated Bibliography</p>	
April	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conduct interviews Collect data from Waikato Times, libraries and internet of incidents mentioned in interviews Source photos of the era related to info in paper articles and interviews Approach papers to print article inviting interviewees Approach contacts known to me to interview (after approval of ethics application) 	<p>Done 20/04 archival + Hamilton Press.</p>	<p>Journal</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> collection process doc theatre practice <p>Annotated Bibliography</p>	
May	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conduct interviews Collect data from Waikato Times, libraries and internet of incidents mentioned in interviews Source photos of the era related to info in paper articles and interviews Collation of documentation and interviews 	<p>19 Interviews Completed</p> <p>Interviews edited Audio</p>	<p>Journal</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> collection process doc theatre practice <p>Annotated Bibliography</p>	
June	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Playscript Development Collation of documentation and interviews. 	<p>23 Interviews completed</p> <p>Condensed + edited into 4hrs</p>	<p>Journal</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> collation process composition process doc theatre practise <p>Annotated Bibliography</p>	

July	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Playscript Development • Begin to approach and source performers • Final draft to William 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - hrs of interview transcribed 	Journal <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • composition process • doc theatre practise Annotated Bibliography	
August	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (Dramaturgy) • Production design and performance composition • Moved reading of the script. • Report on moved reading. • Production tasks (costume, pies, music, posters, venue, rehearsal schedule etc) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Writing script - Reading of 1st script - not needed - need to revise. - 2 week creative block 	Journal Annotated Bibliography	
September	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rehearsals • Production tasks 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> script-rehearsal done costing Rehearsals start. 	Journal	
October	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rehearsals • Production tasks 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rehearsals + Prop collection. 	Journal	
November	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Production week • Performance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 13 Nov - Full day 15 + 16 Dress + Tech Performances 18 x 19th x 2 	Journal	
December	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exegesis 			
January	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exegesis 			
February	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exegesis 			

Saturday 16 April - Hamilton Mayors and other interesting stuff.



Harold David Caro 1938-1953



Roderick A M Braithwaite 1953-1959

DR Dennis Rogers 1959-1968

http://kete-hamilton.peoplesnetworknz.info/hamilton_heritage/topics/show/103-hamilton-mayors

Looking back, moving forward : 30 years

Author: Hamilton This Week

Edition: Souvenir ed.

Imprint: Hamilton, NZ : New Zealand Herald, 2007.

Collation: 60 p. : col. ill. ; 29 x 41 cm.

Notes: Formerly Waikato this week.

Souvenir edition, August 2007.

30 years anniversary edition, August 2007.

Garden Place Library Level 3 Heritage

079.9334 HAM Newspaper Not for loan (Set: 01 Oct 2007)

Hamilton City Libraries Ephemera collection is held on Level 3 of the Garden Place Library in the Heritage department. If you have an queries about this poster or other HCL ephemera, please contact us or enquire at the Information Desk on Level 3.

Rehearsal bookings

Reply

Athene Jensen show details 1:20 PM (0 minutes ago)

to William
Dear William.

Sorry William, I feel like I must be clogging up your mail box, but here's some more. At our last meeting you suggested I book the Newplace Theatre for rehearsals, production week and performances. This is what I have come up with. If you think the time frame is manageable and that I can get done what I need to do in this time could you please pass it on to be booked or let me know who to send it to (I presume it will be [REDACTED]). There are 20 rehearsals booked plus the production week.

Kind regards
AJ

Rehearsals please book all times 5.30pm to 9.30pm

September

Monday 5th
Wednesday 7th
Monday 12th
Wednesday 14th
Monday 19th
Wednesday 21st
Monday 26th
Wednesday 28th

October

~~Monday 3rd~~
Wednesday 5th
~~Monday 10th~~
~~Wednesday 12th~~
Monday 17th

Wednesday 19th
Monday 24th
Wednesday 26th
Monday 31st

November

Wednesday 2nd
Monday 7th
Wednesday 9th

Production Week (November)

Sunday 13th 10am to 6pm
~~Monday 14th 5.30pm to 9.30pm~~
Tuesday 15th 5.30pm to 9.30pm
Wednesday 16th 10am to 9.30pm
Thursday 17th all day
Friday 18th all day (Performance)
Saturday 19th all day (Performance)

Friday 29th April. Internet Investigation

Wed May 27: 1964 → "Charlie Lee who was in charge of the Starlight Ballroom"

http://members.optusnet.com.au/leonisackson/btr_book_format_c15_ed.html

Then there's the music generated from our neighbourhood, with an endless list of Hamilton sons and daughters who've 'made it' into the biggest business in the world. That's entertainment, and it includes Oscar Natzke, Kiri Te Kanawa, Malvina Major, as well as the Finn brothers, the Datsuns, the Topp twins, Jenny Morris, Maria Dallas, the Trenwiths and the Hamilton county Blue Grass Band, Paul Fisher and the Satellites, Liam Ryan and the Narcs, Midge Marsden and Tom Sharplin etc etc etc. And since dancing is again the rage, I must mention the Starlight Ballroom on Anglesea Street.

The Chamber Voice ISSUE 48 April - May 2006 11

Tuesday, 23 November 2010

Hamilton Harmony 2 - Daddy Cool - The Reataz - 1960

Kiwi girl group doo wop? In Hamilton? In 1960?

Nothing surprises me anymore. *Blue Smoke* showed clearly that for every overseas pop cultural music movement there was both a spirited local response and sizable market for the music produced. It also revealed a surprising depth and breadth of engagement in rock n roll (the first wave) that previous music histories fail to reflect. *All Shook Up* had a brief wider than just music coverage while *Stranded In Paradise* covered 1950s and early 1960s rock n roll poorly concentrating mainly on Johnny Devlin and even then failing to show how powerful his music (as opposed to his cultural impact) actually was. Both books left the impression the fabric of early rock n roll in New Zealand was thin.

The OTT response to Devlin should have set the alarm bells ringing so should the amount of rock n roll music made and released here in response although that didn't become clear until John K Smith spelled it out in his still astonishing discography.

Certainly Hamilton wasn't off the rock n roll map. Johnny Devlin had left his mark. Johnny O'Keefe rocked the town the previous year. Bill Haley and The Comets and The Shadows both touched down there. Locally The Satellites had a regular spot at Starlight Ballroom on Anglesea Street and their own dedicated singer in Ivor (later Paul Fisher) and backing vocalists The Reataz. There was also Clive Griffiths, who had a stab at Blue Suede Shoes for Zodiac Records, the following year.

Daddy Cool by the teenage Reataz - Coralie Wilson, Claire Beale and Jan Jones - is a sharp swinging version of The Rays and The Diamonds dual 1957 US hit from three sassy Hamilton girls ably backed by the city's rock n roll perennials, The Satellites. They found Daddy Cool on the b side of Silhouettes. A prescient choice as it turned out as groups pushed it into the charts in the 1960s and 1970s.

Here Ken Wadsworth's sax yakkety yaks convincingly as The Reataz squeeze a tempting bad girl vibe out of a Lieber and Stoller-ish R&B gem from Bob Crewe and Frank Slay. This track has subsequently been released on a number of Kiwi rock n roll compilations.

<http://mysisterex.blogspot.com/2010/11/hamilton-harmony-2-daddy-cool-reataz.html>

5/12/2010

Satellites sorely miss band mate

By NATALIE AKOORIE - Waikato Times Last updated 12:00 18/11/2009

Waikato musical talent Sonny Murray has died, aged 79.

Mr Murray, who died last Friday after a long battle with emphysema, is probably best known for his time with Waikato rock'n'roll band The Satellites.

The then Auckland man joined the band as lead guitarist in 1960, three years after it was begun by siblings Ken and Dawn Wadsworth and friend Paul Fisher.

Mr Murray had played a concert in Hamilton backing the Howard Morrison Quartet and later, at The Starlight Ballroom, was spotted by Mr Wadsworth and asked to join The Satellites. Six months later another guitarist, Derek Cummings, joined the band and Mr Murray took up bass guitar.

During the years to come he also played the electric mandolin and violin, and often sang.

Mr Wadsworth said his bandmate's deep voice was likened to that of 1950s and 60s American country and pop singer Jim Reeves.

"We used to feature a number with him on the electric mandolin called Mandolin Boogie, very much like Guitar Boogie. "He was very well-known and very well respected."

The Satellites was a hugely popular band in Hamilton in the 1960s, frequently packing out The Starlight Ballroom and releasing several covers and singles.

Members including Mr Murray celebrated with a sold-out 40th reunion gig in 1997 and their 50th reunion show, in Hamilton in 2007, was massive.

By then Mr Murray was too ill to play but make a guest appearance singing I Love You Because, dedicating the number to his wife of 48 years, Trudy.

Mr Wadsworth said Mr Murray was a great talent who would be sorely missed. "It's like losing a brother really. He was one of the family."

Mr Murray was also a keen golfer, and a member of the the Hamilton Cosmopolitan Club.

Born in the Far North at Te Hapua in 1930, he was raised in Te Kao and then settled in Hamilton. He was affiliated with Ngati Kuri and his tangi was held at Hui Te Rangiora Marae in Clarence St.

Mrs Murray said musicians from all over had attended the funeral and recounted stories to her about Mr Murray's renowned busking in Raglan, Rotorua and other towns.

Back then he would travel to the towns with his band for gigs or parties, and the next day they would busk to raise enough money for their return trip to Auckland.

Mr Murray is survived by Mrs Murray, and their four children, Richard, Sandra, Shirley and John.

His surviving fellow band members are Mr Wadsworth, Mr Fisher, Dawn Finch, Trevor Akoorie, Wayne Wright and Johnny McIntosh.

Response to newspaper article

~~Friday, 29 April 2011~~ 4th May
10:05 am

Wow. Feeling a little overwhelmed at the moment. This evening I had six responses to the article that was put in the Hamilton Press. The enormity of being responsible for re-presenting peoples stories has lodged itself in my head and I don't even know what the stories are.

The responses come from a range of people. [redacted] husband was one of the band members [redacted] and he passed away last year. She just called to put me in touch with one of the founding members but after a bit of a chat she seemed quite keen to be interviewed. Sounded quite chuffed and from the sound of her voice she may have some great tales. Have organised an interview for a weeks time.

[redacted] restored the hall in the 90s and sounds very keen to share his knowledge. Sounds like the Starlight meant a lot to him. His son, [redacted] also called me, text me and emailed me to put me in touch with his Dad... who had got there first. Will call [redacted] tomorrow to arrange an interview.

[redacted] called me to give me her sisters number [redacted] who was a champion dancer and had married one owner, [redacted] to tell me her parents owned it at one stage and gave me her Mum's number. [redacted] had worked with Paul Fisher and called me with his number after talking to Pauls wife.

I called [redacted] folks and spoke to his Mum [redacted] who said they could get the Satellites all together for an interview and put me in contact with friends who courted there and are still together.

The idea of interviewing the whole band excites me but scares me at the same time. Immediately I look forward to hearing these stories and witnessing these people retelling an important time in their lives but then I think about the task of creating a piece for performance and I wonder if I can do it.

Wednesday 4th May - Response to Article in Paper
(Hamilton Press)

- ✓ ① [redacted] called
- Named Paul Fisher
 - Said S.B hall came from Ngāruahia and was originally Alexandra Hall
 - Banned Hall 1991
 - Found sign up front covered up
 - Hall had sprung floor.
 - Ring [redacted] tomorrow to organise interview.

- ✓ ② [redacted]
- > Wife of [redacted] ([redacted])
 - > She used to serve Orange Fanta + coke
 - > Ph [redacted]
 - > Have interview sat 14th after lunch
 - > [redacted]
 - > Call Friday to Bth to confirm.
- Give me Ken Wadsworth's phone number
[redacted]

- x ③ [redacted]
- Worked with Paul Fisher for years (To young self to have attended Ballroom)
 - Talk to [redacted] - Paul Fisher's wife she said to call Fri to Sunday
 - Paul Fisher number [redacted]
 - (Sign donated to [redacted])
 - Said Paul Fisher ran Starlight Ballroom.

- ④ [redacted] ([redacted])
- Sister was about 21 learnt dancing
 - married manager Leo Beeson
 - Married Has medals in Wellington for dancing
- sisters [redacted] - [redacted]
- Remarried [redacted] [redacted]
- Tell [redacted] that Her sister # [redacted] pimped on her

Remembers "ones" B+W ^{they} were the ~~the~~ rebellious
_{edgies idgies}

^{SB} Was all black with stars on the roof.
* Would like me to call her to tell her when the play is on.

x ⑤

→ [redacted] mum and dad owned the Starlight Ball Room 4 yrs ago.

Dad: [redacted] Mum: [redacted]

Abit shy ← Has talked to her mum [redacted], happy to talk, is away till Tuesday but will be expecting my call Tuesday evening ✓

x ⑥

[redacted] ([redacted] son text me) [redacted]

Remembers

Dad's name: [redacted]
As kids were down there till midnight as kids while his parents did it up [redacted] text "Hi my mum + dad restored the starlight ballroom many years ago, my father has a lot of info etc on the ballroom and also knew people who danced there back in the day, he also has many photos of the starlight in action back in the old days."

⑦

I Rang [redacted] ([redacted] mum) his dad out but will call me tomorrow or weekend

[redacted] said could get the Satellites together to talk.

She 8 yrs younger [redacted] played the Ballroom in another band before ^{had played with} the Satellites

Can put me in touch with people that courted at the Starlight.

Mentioned Ken + his sister with all the menobillia

Student seeks bodgies, widgees

DO you remember the Starlight Ballroom dances?

Raglan's Athene Jensen, undertaking her master's thesis in Theatre Studies at Waikato University, wants to hear from people who do.

"I am hoping to collect stories and memories from people who attended the Starlight Ballroom dances, worked at the Starlight, played music at this venue, remember being a youth in Hamilton in the 50s, or recall the bodgie and widgee culture."

Her thesis focuses on the process of creating a performance using the methodology of documentary theatre. This means collecting personal stories and documentation



MEMORIES: Athene Jensen is collecting stories from people who attended Starlight Ballroom dances in Hamilton. Photo: SUPPLIED

from a time or happening and editing it to create a theatrical performance piece.

"I have chosen to create a piece that has the working title of *Stories from the Star-*

light Ballroom." Ms. Jensen said she would love to talk to people aged around 15 to 20, between 1954 and 1960, who would be interested in being interviewed about their memories. Interviews would take about an hour and confidentiality discussed prior to the interview. The information will be used to create a public performance (which contributors will be invited to) and to inform her master's thesis about the documentary theatre process.

People interested in being interviewed, contributing material or who have any questions can contact Athene Jensen ph 825 8580 or email athenejensen@gmail.com.

Thursday 5th May

✓ ⑧

- Manager for 4 years during time Ballroom dance came to close... Move upbeat started.
- There when Satellites started
- Listed other bands: - Dominos
- Cravats
- Rockettes

→ Interview Thur 12 @ 2pm

⑨

(Emailed

→ Email said - "Athene - Interesting topic you have chosen. I went to the Starlight for many years, probably from 1954 to 1961. What a rewarding time. Could write a book on it! If my experience can be of help to you then give me a call on [redacted]"

Lang [redacted]

→ He was friends with and worked with my Uncle David 65 years ago. Would love Davy's contact details.

[Redacted]
[Redacted]
[Redacted]

Said: That everyone dressed up nice, spoke nice + behaved themselves. The boys would hang around the door eyeing up the girls. Girls sat around edge of hall talking to their friends. You'd have to walk across the hall to ask a girl to dance. If you were too scruffy, she'd say no she was engaged, and you'd have to walk back across the room.

→ Arranged an interview for Thursday 19th May. Need to ring him night before to ^{remind} tell him.

⑩ [Redacted]

- Is a member of The Mods
 - Played the starlight 1964 → 66
 - First of the 4 piece bands to play there in 60's
 - People didn't know what hit them because they played things like The Rolling Stones & the Beatles.
 - Mods just had their 47th reunion (still play together)
 - Happy to be interviewed - Ring him at the beginning of the 3rd week of May.
- * → Told me on ^{old} jokes Interview 23 May 10am
 Q "What is a widge?" [Redacted]
 A "A ~~the~~ widge is a ~~step~~ badgies ground sheet."

⑪ [Redacted]

Would be
[Redacted]
[Redacted]
[Redacted]

(Text me first)
Early 60's danced there
Liked the chicks
Dressed like Susame.

→ Interview on 2 June @ 2pm

① [Redacted] - Rang Back and arranged an interview for Mon 9th May @ 9am at his place [Redacted]

⑩

/ (12)

[redacted]
Late 50's early 60s
Bass player for the Astronauts.
Was in semitones before this

[redacted]
Interview on Mon 9th May @ 12noon

(13)

- mother knew an older girl who took [redacted] to Starlight for the first time
- Didn't know how to dance but would watch the others dance to learn
- Buses were blue, they used to park outside the old post office
- She used to walk from the bus to the Starlight then catch a taxi home. First time she did this her money got taken/stolen after that she left the money at home and paid driver then
- address [redacted]
- Interview at 10am on Tue 10 May.
- Phone [redacted]

(14)

- weren't allowed alcohol
- Poser - white rabbit
- Teenagers get their own fashions
- But younger - all - own money
- attended during early 60s.

→ Was a nurse
→ Interview 20th May (Fri) 10am

→ [redacted]

- ⑮ [redacted] [redacted]
- names mentioned: Marine Watson, Lee Beeson, Taz McDermont.
 - other dances: YMCA, Matangi Hall, Junior Nationalist Huntly dances.
 - Mirrorball, Dance Comps, Winkle picker shoes, Bright colours, bright pink tie, Girls in hoop skirts, Square necks, Rock n Roll. Girls made new dresses. Music Green door, buttons + beads. More romantic. Looked after the girls, their friends sisters. More respect than today.
 - We went to the car to have a cuddle not to have sex. All help one another. Take 8 people in the car.

To Ring on 16th (Mon) of May to arrange an interview. Rang - he will call me.

- ✓ ⑯ [redacted] [redacted]
- Original satellite ([redacted])
 - Donated sign to [redacted]
 - Interview Tue 10 May @ 4pm

off [redacted]

- ✓ ⑰ [redacted]
- Twist comp - Won a twist competition
 - May have photos.

[redacted] [redacted]

Interview Sat 14th @ 10am

18

Interview: Thur 19th May @ 11am

Ham

Ph 846 2459

5

Ph

([redacted]) Mum.

- Married [redacted] before he bought
- Leo Beeson out
- Had Starlight for 7 years
- ~~at~~ Dances always packed
- Always downen to monitor alcohol
- Sattelites
- She worked ticket box - sister in law
- babysat little ones
- Mr [redacted] tight ballroom dancing

[redacted] (grey brick)
Ring on sun 22 to confirm interview time
for Monday 23 May

19

Has check out passes I can have
Call Sat 21 May to pick up.
Maybe interview.

20

80yrs - Thinks she went 1949 → 52
Born + bred in Raglan
Went to Starlight

[redacted]
Interview 24th May @ 12 noon - Have lunch

② [redacted] (Emailed - called her)

→ 15 69 yrs

→ Danced Wed + Sat @ Starlight

[redacted]
[redacted] Ph [redacted]

Interview 2:30pm on Tue 24th May

✓ ③ [redacted] 98yrs old.

Had the dance school @ Starlight

[redacted]
[redacted] Ph [redacted]

Interview Fri 13 May @ 2pm

• ③ [redacted] (rang back with more info)

→ Dresses came to a couple of inches below knee

→ She proposed to Bruce in car outside her house
after he bought her home from a dance.

■ "We could get married couldn't we?"

■ "I was just thinking that."

→ Books she read were fiction.

✓ ③ [redacted] (emailed)

email: "Hello Athene, In reply to your article in the Hamilton Press, I can help with your request for information. In 1957 I was a member of the Cravats Dance Band formed in Ngaruohia I was 17 at the time. Our group was six piece and we were the first teenage band to play at the Starlight. I have a collection of photos and newspaper clippings. I can be contacted on [redacted], Regards [redacted]"

Interview Thur 12th @ 3pm

[redacted]
[redacted]
Same place, same day as [redacted]

✓ (24)

██████████ ██████████ ██████████
70yrs - used to go to Starlight regularly
- Had dance lessons there (Bobo-husband?)

██████████ ██████████
██████████ but 50km sign ██████████

Interview sun 15 May @ 10:30 to end turn left.

[Faint, mostly illegible handwritten notes, possibly bleed-through from the reverse side of the page.]

And the responses keep coming

Monday, 9 May 2011
9:44 p.m.

I have had something like 21 responses to the article in the Hamilton Press and the letter in the Raglan Chronicle.

I did my first two interviews today.

██████████ had a little info but more about what happened to the hall in the 90s when he and his wife revamped it. The interview only lasted about 15 mins

I interviewed ██████████ who played in the Astronauts and before that the Semitones. He had a lot of information about the names of band members and gave a bit of history about other bands and things he was up to at the time.

He has photos which he is happy to lend me to scan or whatever. His wifes name is ██████████

Gave me a couple of sheets of names and what not that he wrote down and a copy of an advert of the Astronauts playing 3 gigs over Easter. Some good facts.

Time is pressing as I have quite a bit of prep work for my job as well as all the interviews and that is without even contemplating transcribing them. Have spoken to Anthea, she charges \$100 an audio hour. Have the number of Kates friend who charges \$15 an hour... so depends on how fast she can transcribe. Will check out services at Uni to see what they can offer.

Felix and I discussed actually editing the audio material to useful parts and getting that transcribed. Need to discuss this with William as I am supposed to be giving interviewees their transcripts to go over before going ahead with the script.

The 50s gets colour

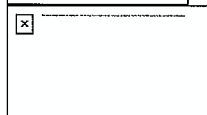
Tuesday, 10 May 2011
10:00 p.m.

Two more interviews today. The first was with [REDACTED]. Her house was amazing. When I walked in it was like a time warp back to the 70s with the pristine original wallpaper and Formica 'picture' cupboards with wood edging. She had some great stories about the Starlight. Meeting her husband, holding on to his hand after the dance finished to talk, wearing her white dress with a red rose. She told about her mother telling her to go to the dance to meet people and her indecisiveness over the day, then finally going. A lovely woman with some delightful tales to tell, definitely worth transcribing a large proportion of her interview. At the end of the interview I told her I was going to interview [REDACTED] in the afternoon and she exclaimed "Oh" and said to say "Hi" from [REDACTED] (nee name), "not hat he'll remember". When I did say "Hi" to him he remembered her name and said to send his regards if I spoke to her again.

[REDACTED] was so friendly and extremely helpful giving me not only stories about the Satellites but also the Starlight and some of his own personal stories. I asked him about how the band came across there name because there seemed to be a space theme going on with the Satellites, the Astronauts, the Rockettes etc. He said Sputnik had just gone up, the space race etc. He and Ken had been watching the satellites in the sky... hence the name. Will transcribe most of his interview.

I did mention to [REDACTED] that I was worried I wouldn't do the time or the stories justice and he said not to worry my heart was in the right place and he could see I was starting to 'see' what it was like. It got me to thinking and he is right. Until today I saw the 1950s in a vague black and white picture. After talking to these two today I am building a more detailed picture or movie and colour that I didn't realise existed is appearing.... Strangely enough it's in pinks and leopard print lapels.

Pinks
and
leopard



Thur 12 May Meeting with William

- Expenses up to \$375 + cost of binding + copying one copy of 'thesis'
- Travel, photocopying, material - costumes etc production related.
- Can buy without Williams approval - trusts me.
- Get receipts or Invoices
- Check basement at Uni theatre
The following transcript from our interview may be useful in the preparation of the performance.
- William will ask about transcribing
- 40mins - 1hr.
- Thank you notes after doing interviewing
- When get some transcript give to William.

Thur 19 May Things to find/Research

- 3 → Map of central Hamilton 1950s - garden place, ballroom, pascos, pie cart
- Photos of Hamilton 1950s.
- ① → Book: Light Fantastic - Dance floor courtship in New Zealand
- Follow up email to Museum.
- ② → Thur night The Lever Hit Parade - Radio.
- ✓ → Thank [redacted] for Crovats photos
- ① Call 10° @ uni library GV1746. W552006 L4 NZ Collection
- ② Have links to possible recordings - in Note book.
- ③ Panel + saved map with Alexandra Kulkarni marked on.

Interview
NOTES

Thurs 12 May

3 step

Polanase $\frac{3}{4}$ way into evening
x2 during evening 9:30/10

The Reataz - Something to do
With James Dean.
With crowds + satellites

When I was leaving [redacted] told me a story.

"His family lived by the railroad in Ngaruwhaka. Trains went past all night. If he was late home he'd wait until a train went past to put the key in and unlock the door so his parents didn't hear."

Light Fantastic

Dance floor courtship in New Zealand
- Georgina White.

Pub: Harper Collins 2007

Always wanted to be a farmer.

~~My husband makes me sick~~

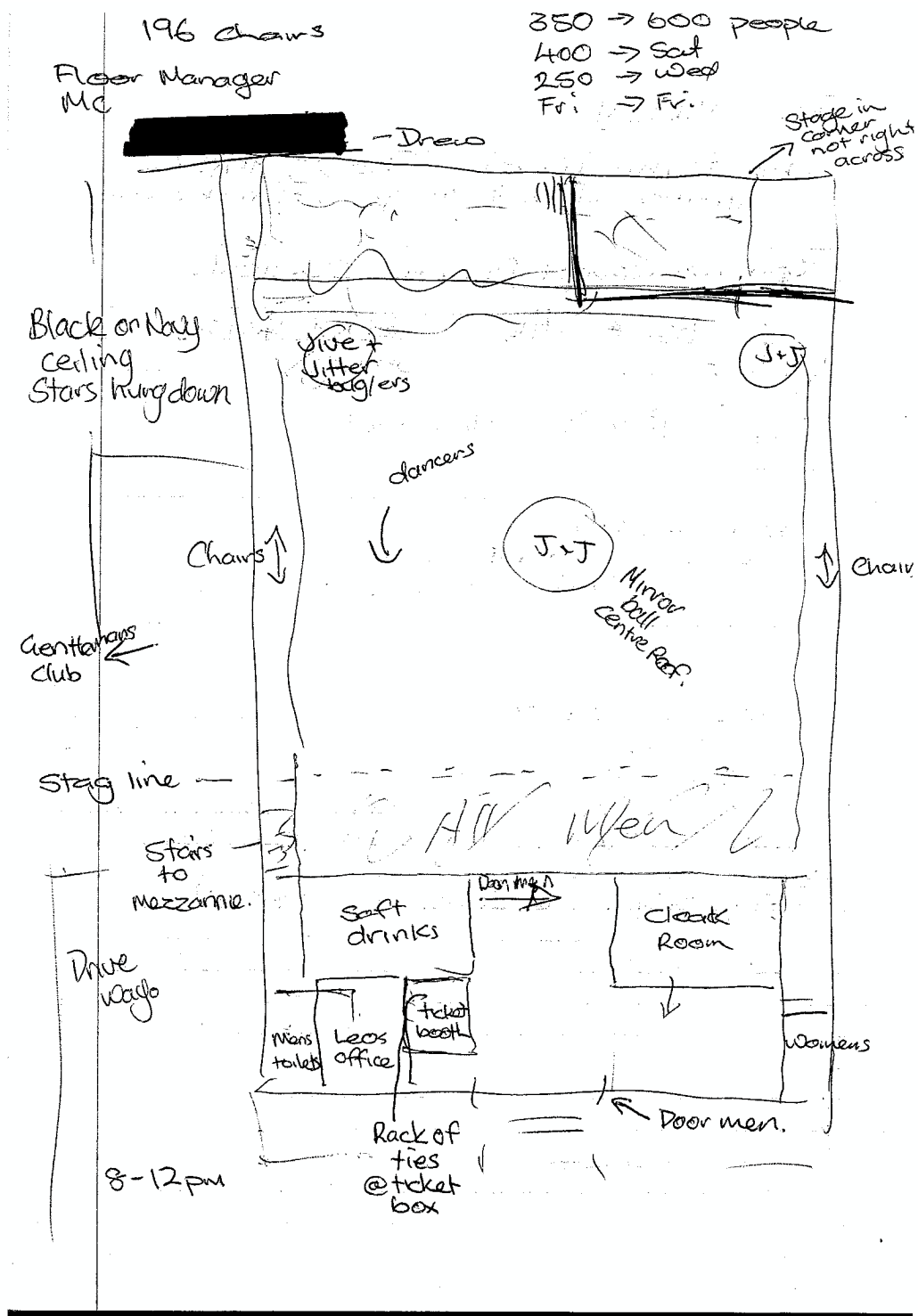
all handsome chap who got all the girls, many girls teaching him privately with lovely body.

[redacted] went to the record player to change recorded - heard a thump, turned around + guy was flat on his back on the floor. "she dropped me" floor.

If he talks to me like that again, I'll hit him again

(Tall elegant refined girl)

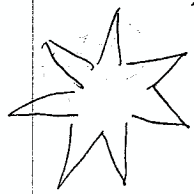
Couple couldn't dance together so tried her with him with his wife both danced ok separately. Husband said to wife "it's now like dancing with a big fat cow!"



[REDACTED]

Waikato This week Oct 23, 1997.
Satellites celebrate 40 years of rock and roll

10pm Pub closing finished Starlight.



Big & little Gold & yellow
Shiney

Petals - Hair style.

[REDACTED]

Boys - Stove pipe pants
- burl cream

Orange socks + tie -
Flock nylon
Stiff petticoats - starch

Slivery
hoover hit parade - (Rinso) sponsored by
Leaver industries

[REDACTED]

(starlight 1956)

dark hair

Sister [REDACTED]

Thursday 19th May.

Music Union - city went round.
The Rockettes → Owen Coniffiths.
The Stoners 1964
Mads photo - black polo neck. Photographer Bill Limberg
Dec 1965 New Years Radio IXT
Happy Day Fonze - Badgie.
Magazine Play Date (Movie magazine)
John Hart (film d)

Photographer - Paul Escart.
Website: www.

Construction Sax player in 50's
Ph

Eyes older than 36
↓
1961 → 68

Old stars - could be silver.

* 3 step Polnase. (Fast)

Maxima

Foxtrot

Waltz

(Fast foxtrot for rock)

Bee Gees fav group, Michael Jackson.

Artist appearance Dinah Lee, Alison Durbin

Guest.

Maria Dallas

Pounds shillings + pence

→ London street coffee bar

would have been @ starlight couple of years

Claudette shoes (Brand)

song.

* 3 step Pololaniashes - The Maori Battalion
(March to Victory)

Dean Martin - Volare. (song)

TELLITES SET FOR NOSTALGIA TRIP



TELLITES' Paul Fisher, left, and Tony Edwards jiving inside the Starlight Ballroom.

PICTURE: SA

SA PEARSON

may have some grey hairs and wrinkles now, but Walkato roll band The Satellites reckon they got what it takes to groove

band, which re-formed this year after off the performing circuit at revival hop at the Starlight Ballroom on Hamilton's Angleson Street tonight.

Band back in groove at the Starlight

Vocalist and frontman Paul Fisher (known as Ivor Fisher during the '50s) said the band decided to get back together to have some fun and join the new wave of rock n' rollers that has emerged during the past couple of years.

The Satellites, who all originated from the Morrinsville-Te Aroha area, first started out in 1957 with Paul Fisher, Ken Wadsworth on saxophone and his "kid sister" Dawn Finch (then Dawn Wadsworth) on piano.

In 1961 guitarist Al Murray joined the group, followed by Murray on bass guitar and Morrie Holmes.

Today the band, which Morrinsville recently formed, still "had it", has all its members, except for Morrie Holmes, three years ago.

Paul Fisher said the band has been "done up" the way of the '50s and '60s, was a special n' rollers. "For us, walking like walking back 25 years."

"Welcome to the Starlight"
Sign on the back wall.



DANCE
DANCE
DANCE

At Waikato's No. 1 Centre. The home of dancing and social activities. The ever popular

BALLROOM STARLIGHT

It's another "BIG NIGHT" featuring a group fast rising to the top

THE DAZZLING
D-O-M-I-N-O-E-S
D-O-M-I-N-O-E-S
D-O-M-I-N-O-E-S

with vocalist
MIKE BUCKLER

swest, local lad, popular and very promising

Also that trio of talented girls, THE REATAZ, Singing Specially for you!

Be sure you join them

TOMORROW NIGHT
TOMORROW NIGHT
TOMORROW NIGHT

Powerful Music
Wonderful Floor
Happy People!

Admission 4/8 and 5/-

STARLIGHT NIGHTS ARE ALWAYS GOOD.

Direction:
LEO BEESON, M.B.A.T.D., N.Z., F.D.T.

DANCING

Be Sure "YOU" are at "STARLIGHTS"

Dance of Dances

TONIGHT - TONIGHT
TONIGHT - TONIGHT
TONIGHT - TONIGHT

Auckland's top recording artists are here again! Yes, it's

BILL SEVESI
BILL SEVESI

With WILL JESS and the famous

JESTERS
JESTERS
JESTERS

Featuring N.Z. Hit Parade Idol Star Vocalist

RONNIE SUNDIN
RONNIE SUNDIN

Also Hamilton's own top talent, three lovely girls, singing specially for you

THE REATAZ
THE REATAZ
THE REATAZ

All Big games on VIKING recordings. Mighty Music and Top Hits of today!

D-A-N-C-E
D-A-N-C-E
D-A-N-C-E

On the finest floor in the Waikato. At the most popular and patronised centre. The one and only

BALLROOM STARLIGHT
BALLROOM STARLIGHT
BALLROOM STARLIGHT
BALLROOM STARLIGHT

Admission 4/8 and 5/-

Direction:
Leo Beeson, M.B.A.T.D., N.Z.F.D.T.

Popular 'Satellites' to re-form and play for Gracelands

THE highlight this year of Gracelands third birthday celebrations will be the appearance of the 'Satellites Band' who after some 20 years are getting together again to perform.

The Satellites were established in September 1957 by Ken Wadsworth (saxophone), Dawn Finch (nee Wadsworth, piano), Paul (then Ivor) Fisher (vocals) and Irvine Young (drums).

Their first job was at the Kiwi Fertiliser Works social upstairs in the Peachgrove Lounge in Morrinsville. The fee for the night was £1.10 each, a total of £6 for the night.

In 1960 the Satellites undertook a contract with the Starlight Ballroom in Hamil-

ton. For two years they played professionally for three nights per week.

Just prior to this Irvine Young, the drummer at that stage was replaced by Morrie Holmes. They also added a bass guitarist Sonny Murray and guitarist Tony Edwards.

Today 34 years later the line-up will be: Ken Wadsworth (sax), Dawn Finch (piano), Paul Fisher (vocals), Sonny Murray (bass), Tony Edwards (guitar) and Tony's son Curtis (drums). Curtis will be replacing Morrie Holmes who passed away three years ago.

The band last played together in 1982 for a silver anniversary reunion held in Hamilton. One of the high-

lights of the band's era was a tour of New Zealand in 1967 as a backing band for Millie Small, Maria Dallas, David Whitfield and Eden Kane.

They have also backed many top artists like Howard Morrison, Ray Columbus, The Chicks, Lou and Simon and Bill and Boyd to name a few.

Tickets for the birthday hop are now available (see the public notices in this issue).

The organising committee for the birthday celebrations have put many hours' work into organising this night, and as an added attraction there will be a 'floorshow' to entertain the capacity crowd expected.



Susan Linke

The Chicks, Mods, Rumor (Huntly), Ray Columbus
Shane, Diana Lee Allison Durbin, Tom Sharpling
Larry Norris.

Annex

Show Buildings

Corner Pembroke + clearance.

Down under toilets

PASCOS

700 Cart

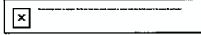
Woolworths
Woolworths
Woolworths

VIC ST.

The Lever Hit Parade

Sunday, 22 May 2011

2:31 p.m.



The Lever hit parades featured on New Zealand government radio stations that were in the NZBS's commercial arm. They were compiled by Lintas NZ Ltd and the sponsors were Lever Brothers. These charts were not sales based and more information is needed on how Lintas went about gathering data though my information is that it was via polling.

The charts began in the 1950s but this web site covers 1960 and later.

Pasted from <<http://www.flavourofnz.co.nz/index.php?pageID=Lever%20hit%20parades>>

The Radio King of New Zealand

The Jack Maybury introduction to radio was inspirational in two ways - for Jack himself and for his audience. It transformed an electrician cum car-radio salesman into the most popular radio personality the country had seen.

From a humble start on the 3ZB lunch-hour shift, Jack made every step a winner. From 1937 and through the World War II years 1939 -1945 as host of the Children's Hour programme with Grace Green, they were the adored combo of Jacko & Gracie. For kids in Christchurch and outlying areas this 5 pm weekday slot became their escape from the grey tones of a World War. There were novelty quizzes in the studio, talent quests and teaser games, adventure outings like bike hikes and treasure hunts and coordinated Club creations like the Happy Feet Club and the Musical Army where every local kid got to explore their abilities as musicians or tap-dancers.

Added to this impact on families were the fund-raising efforts by Jack at weekly Sing-alongs in the Civic Theatre and War-bond excursions on the North-South Railway Network with whistle stop entertainment at major stations along the way. These pastiches were second nature to genial Jack. He was a first rate musician who'd been a cornet champion with the Ashburton Silver Band as a teenager and later led his own dance-band at Wellington's Majestic Cabaret. On top of that background he was a fun-loving prankster with a marvellous sense of humour who respected and cared for the man in the street. If most Canterbury homes had earlier hung portraits of Michael Joseph Savage in their living rooms it was Jack who had captured their heart. At the close of the War in 1945 the tumultuous crowd who gathered outside 3ZB's studio in Colombo St they all chanted as one "we want Jacko, we want Jacko". And an elated Jack emerged onto the balcony behind his office, mike in hand to broadcast the celebration. From luncheon host to local hero his radio career had virtually only started.

Soon would come the ascent from provincial identity to

national recognition as Jack accepted the offer from Lever Brothers to become compere of three outstanding radio formats on the Commercial Radio network. These programmes were delightfully varied and commanded a complete range of listeners. There was the 'Lever Hit Parade' catering to the musical tastes of so many, 'Quiz Kids' with appeal to all families and then 'Lux Money-go-round' the first network quiz to carry rich rewards in prizes. So now, not just Canterbury folk could enjoy the talent of this remarkable broadcaster but the whole New Zealand audience from North Cape to the Bluff.

In 1947, Jack Maybury moved to Wellington, now wedded to his second wife Dorothy Jean and operating through the Advertising Agency Lintas Pty Ltd assisted charities all over the country by bringing his quiz shows to their town. Jaycees, PTAs Scouts, etc would take all door sales from the crowds who thronged the venue and offered an intimate setting for the recording session involved. People watched their neighbours go through the quiz process and cheered every success. So the Jack Maybury image grew nationwide and maybe it was

inevitable that an offer would eventually come from across the Tasman. In 1952 Atlantic Union Oil Company offered him a ten-thousand-pound carrot to leave NZ shores and match his radio skills with the two Australian greats; Jack Davy (a fellow kiwi) and Bob Dyer (ex USA).

You're the radio king of New Zealand with a big decision. A young competitor in

Selwyn Toogood had made his voice heard with a novelty quiz called 'Posers, Penalties and Profits' (which aired for only ten weeks) was waiting in the wings. You've built an unmatchable following over nearly five years and you're going to walk away from it. Thank you Lintas. Thank you Lever Brothers. But the ten thousand Australian pounds a year sounds promising! Jack's gone.

In Dad's absence, Selwyn Toogood had taken on the role and had launched the eminently successful 'It's in the Bag'. But after only a year away and knowing the NZ market well, Jack Maybury came up with new formats that appealed instantly to a new sponsor, Colgate Palmolive. By 1954 he was back on the Commercial network with 'Scoop the Pool' and 'Number Please'. It meant he was competing with Toogood as a celebrity but their shows were on the same network and not opposed to each other. The NZ

audience could enjoy both of these talented quiz men and have a preference if they wished. But their styles were in quite different and probably balanced out happily for listeners all over the country.

While introducing these new quiz shows, Dad talked his sponsors into one extra musical format called 'Tossing the Tune' which involved the pair of us, me in Australia (then hosting the weekday breakfast show at 2SM), he of course in New Zealand. The idea was for me to record my choices at the 2SM studios and in turn Dad would insert his selections highlighting performers of an earlier era. This show gave my mates in NZ a chance to hear my old voice again one night a week and earned a little pocket money on the side. As it turned out I never heard the finished product and don't know what lines of mine got through Dad's editing process. No problems, he was the boss.

From 1954 through to his shock death in 1960, Jack Maybury was again part of the NZ

way of life, a favourite in homes everywhere. One of the most popular quiz formats he introduced along the way was the '64 Hundred Question' with his popular show sign off "when you buy Colgate Palmolive products tell them Jack sent you" that became a catch phrase around the country.

My starting date at 3ZB Christchurch was March 1951 but maybe nobody noticed. Jack Maybury had ruled the roost in radio but I was destined to root the rules. For nine years, I too enjoyed my studio time that took me to Wellington and then on to Sydney & Melbourne. Then for a further two years as the front man for the Colgate Palmolive national radio show, taking over from Jack.

Pasted from <<http://www.johnmaybury.com/the-radio-king-of-new-zealand.htm>>

While the pop-music avalanche gathered pace abroad, young Kiwis had to make do with the weekly Lever Hit Parade, compered by Selwyn Toogood, and an additional half-hour allocation on Saturday evenings.

Pasted from <<http://www.stuff.co.nz/dominion-post/news/obituaries/4761017/irrepressible-broadcasting-pioneer>>

"The big cover was Wild One by Bobby Rydell in 1960," Wadsworth said.

The number one hit led radio's The Lever Hit Parade - then the New Zealand music charts - for several weeks and at the end of its reign, The Satellites' version was played, giving the band even more recognition.

Pasted from <<http://www.stuff.co.nz/waikato-times/news/53137/Re-entry-as-The-Satellites-celebrate-50th>>

Blue Smoke (link to radio nz)

A four part audio history of popular music recorded in New Zealand in the 1950s, when discs spun at 78 rpm and the nation's only dedicated pop show on radio was The Lever Hit Parade, hosted by an avuncular Selwyn Toogood. It features rare recordings and occasional excerpts of interviews with the participants.

Pasted from <<http://www.radionz.co.nz/concert/programmes>>

Lawdy Miss Clawdy'

The 'Wanganui Elvis', Johnny Devlin, was New Zealand's answer to Elvis Presley. He had his first number one hit with a cover of 'Lawdy Miss Clawdy' in June 1958. It was recorded at the Jive Centre in May and released on the Prestige label.

The recording quality was considered to be 'awful' by the experts but Auckland teenagers couldn't get enough of it. When sales topped 2000 radio stations could no longer ignore it. Within a few weeks the disc was at the top of the Lever Hit Parade. By August 10,000 records had been sold and Devlin was in hot demand. By October he had recorded a dozen new tracks. New Zealand's first rock 'n' roll star had arrived.

Pasted from <<http://www.nzhistory.net.nz/culture/the-1950s/1958>>

John Lockett Devlin was born on May 11, 1938, the son of a railway ganger stationed in the small mid-North Island town of Raetihi. The family soon shifted to near-by Ohakune and then Marton before eventually settling in Wanganui, where John spent his formative years. He received a guitar for his eleventh birthday and it never left his side. His parents and three other brothers were all musically minded and when in his early teens, they formed a group called the Devlin Family. They performed country songs at Wanganui talent quests. The family used to listen to the Lever Hit Parade to get new songs to perform. One night they heard "Rock Around the Clock" and were blown away.

Pasted from <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Johnny_Devlin>

Possible recordings of hit parade

System ID

148931

Title

[Lever hit parade].

Creator/Contributor

New Zealand Broadcasting Service

THORPE, Ted

Date

1961

1962

Date/time & Place of Event Note

Actual recording and broadcast dates unknown.

Description

Songs hits of the 1961 and 1962 lever hit parade compered by Ted Thorpe. 1961 mentions in part the Highwaymen, the Everley Brothers, Bobby Vee, Helen Shapiro, the Shadows and more. Includes musical examples. 1962 - the Twist and excerpts of various songs.

General Note

Poor quality recording, speed varies at times with a dull sound.

Genre

Popular music radio programs/Radio programs

Duration

00:30:51

Pasted from <<http://collections.soundarchives.co.nz/search.do?id=248757&db=object&page=1&view=detail>>

System ID

8750

Title

Lever hit parade. 1965-12-30.

Creator/Contributor

Gwynne, Peter

Maybury, Jack, 1907-1960

Maybury, John

MCCORMICK, John

PETRIE, Brian

THORPE, Ted

Toogood, Selwyn, 1916-2001

TRIGGS, Sandy

INGLE, Pat

HAMBLETON, Keith

3ZC (Radio station : Timaru, N.Z.)

Date

30 Dec 1965

Description

Final programme of the "Lever Hit Parade" from 30/12/65.

Announcer: Peter Gwynne

Compere: Ted Thorpe

Also contains John Maybury speaking on behalf of father Jack Maybury, Selwyn Toogood, Sandy Triggs (past compere), Brian Petrie (producer), John McCormick (technical).

See also LISTENER 24/12/65, page 8.

Includes many musical examples of the day and radio commercials like Sunsilks shampoo, Lifebuoy, Pepsodent toothpaste, Dur: 65'47"

Ends with an episode of Archive four - from 3ZC, Timaru. Miscellaneous scrapbooks of the past compiled by Pat Ingle and introduced by Keith Hambleton.

Recording date unknown. Dur: 32'00"

Genre

Radio commercials/Radio announcements/Radio programs

Rock music radio programs/Radio programs

Duration

01:05:47

Pasted from <<http://collections.soundarchives.co.nz/search.do?id=299006&db=object&page=1&view=detail>>

01/37/15 -

Side One (3 3/4ips) -

Tk1 - Lever Hit Parade with Selwyn Toogood, 07/06/56. Includes radio adverts with Toogood for Pepsodent Toothpaste and Persil soap powder. Dur: 29'30"

Tk2 - Thursday Jan 6, 1957. Lever Hit Parade with Selwyn Toogood. Dur: 29'00"

Side Two (3 3/4ips) -

Tk1 - unknown person talking on telephone to someone in Timaru - could be the Archives.

Tk2 - presenting Guys and Dolls (1955) (radio movie show reviewing moments of the show). Includes interviews by Walter Pidgeon with Sam Goldwyn, Jean Simmons, Marlon Brando. Dur: 45'00" approx.

brittle emitape 4.

NB: 17/06/02 - PRESERVED from Emitape4 to CDR using HHB. Contains only one ID at the start. DataBase ID: 101441 also relates to this recording. JK.

Pasted from <<http://collections.soundarchives.co.nz/search.do?id=266366&db=object&page=1&view=detail>>

Initial themes

Tuesday, 24 May 2011
1:54 p.m.

Scenes keep popping into my head. I imagine the black box dressed like the Starlight Ballroom with stars hanging from the ceiling, a mirror ball reflecting spots across the room and on the stars.

The audience is seated to the sides of the room just as the woman would have sat waiting to be asked to dance.

At one end in the right hand corner is the stage with red and black curtains hanging behind it. The other is empty waiting for the stag line to form.

In front of the audience is rows of female dancers waiting to be asked to dance. In come the boys to make up the stag line. When the excuse me dance comes up the line moves forward slowly with and [redacted] character coming along to make them step back.

One scene is [redacted]'s story about the dance lesson, another is [redacted] asking [redacted] to dance and her holding his hand when he leads her back to her seat.

Interviewing [redacted] was delightful.

[redacted] was one of the first to admit quite cheerily that he used to stash beer in his boot (and not just a bottle or two) and go out of the dance to drink. He has a fantastic story about the cop catching him drunk in Garden place and kicking his butt and sending him home.

[redacted] is very candid about sneaking out for a kiss in the bushes with her boyfriend. Funny story about her boyfriends mum biking down and watching them from the mezzanine above.

Impressions and feelings coming through, main themes:

- Courting
- Carefree times
- Respect for others
- Close friendships
- Jobs easy to find
- Close family groups - all pitched in
- Respect for parents
- Dancing and music
- Old dances and rock 'n' roll converging
- A real period of changing culture

Need to remember that the information I am getting is from those that enjoyed this time and that wanted to talk about it. This means that the information is skewed towards the good times.

Starting to think it may be appropriate to tell a story about a couple courting.

Compile the woman's stories and the men's stories into two characters courting in amongst the goings on of the Starlight and 1950s Hamilton.

Title Idea: Starched skirts and leopard print lapels.

Nz 50s music

Saturday, 11 June 2011
12:09 a.m.

3. The 1950s

During the 1950s, 45 rpm and long-playing microgroove 33 1/3 rpm vinyl records replaced the "old" 78-rpm discs due to their superior durability, low surface noise and capacity for extended play. By the end of the decade these two formats had become the industry standard. Among New Zealand's first long playing records pressed here was South Sea Rhythm featuring Bill Wolfgramm and His Islanders with Daphne Walker. It was recorded at the Astor Recording Studios, Auckland over four months in 1955.

In the 1950s popular music mainly reflected the tastes of New Zealand adults. This preference tended towards Country and Western, played by early recording stars like The Tumbleweeds and Johnny Cooper and his Range Riders; Hawaiian-influenced music from notable performers like Bill Wolfgramm and Bill Sevesi; Māori Show bands such as The Howard Morrison quartet and also solo singers and musicians, among them, John Hoskins, Mavis Rivers, and Nancy Harrie.

The era also saw record releases showcasing Kiwi culture, landscape and events. Popular songwriters who celebrated this new sense of national identity included Sam Freedman with his Māori themed songs; Sam Freedman's Melodies of Māoriland , Ken Avery who wrote Paekākāriki, Tea at Te Kūiti and Gumboot Tango and, in the early 1960s, Peter Cape whose popular colloquial hits included Down the Hall on Saturday Night and She'll be Right.

However by the late 1950s Rock 'n' Roll had exploded onto the New Zealand scene, changing forever the face of the New Zealand recording industry.

Johnny Cooper was the first New Zealander to record a Rock 'n' Roll song in New Zealand, (and reputedly the first to record Rock Around the Clock outside the USA), but it was a young man from Wanganui, Johnny Devlin the "satin Satan" who, as New Zealand's answer to Elvis Presley, helped turn Rock 'n' Roll into an unstoppable phenomenon. In 1958 Devlin's song Lawdy Miss Clawdy was reputed to have sold a staggering 100,000 copies, mostly to teenagers who from then on increasingly dictated the type of popular music that would be recorded and listened to. As the music industry quickly sought to accommodate this new youth market, rock and pop music soon became the dominant sounds listened to by young New Zealanders.

Pasted from <<http://digital1.natlib.govt.nz/support/discover/m2essay.htm>>

Themes from interviews

Wednesday, 15 June 2011

5:15 p.m.

Dances

Foxtrot

Quickstep

Music and songs

Maria Dallas - Tumbling down

Susan Donaldson

Bill Haley

Chuck Berry

Jim Reeves - He'll have to go

Guitar Boogie

Johnny Cash

Elvis -Jail House Rock

-Great pretender

-Blue suede shoes

Connie Fancis

Tom Durlley

-My chewing gum stuck to the bed post(?)

-My boy lollypop

-Dark moon

-Walking in the rain

White sports coat and pink carnation (x2)

Dihnah Lea

Alison Durbin

-Sixteen tons

Satellites-Wild one

Nat King Cole

Vera Lynn

22 June 2011 Meeting with William

Things I want to discuss:

- * Approaching constructing play script
 - Narrator to link flow? (perspective of an informed character ie [redacted])
 - Identifying possible scenes first
 - Does it have to follow a story or could it be snippets of scenes.
 - Idea Narrator telling of Ballroom + current events/local happenings/cultural norms and a story of a Saturday running parallel (a girl + boys journey of getting to the starlight).

NO * Dramaturgical Analysis: Because it is me that is the "author/creator" do I write it from my perspective? Do I have to give an academic background to what dramaturgy is? What kinds of literature would be used to reference beyond the script? ie references to common motifs etc?

* Rough outline for exegesis (ie background on Documentary theatre/history/development etc)

Structure - Logic to performance

Lists of kinds of people (narrators) Characters.

Locations - Garden place, entrance, interior

(8 o'clock was sports paper)

Don't have to create whole ballroom

Who might she/he be talking to.

Re-presenting - actor can never be who they re-presenting.

Essence.

- Images (and sounds of places (ie garden place))

Tue 28th June 2011

IA Images - sounds etc

PS place for scene

SS = story for a scene

SI = staging ideas

N = Narrator

C = Characters

[redacted] interview.

Narrator: - Back ground to Leo acquiring

Starlight - Huey Falwell sprung

Johnny Mac Cleary - built floor

P-S: Standing in empty hall.

P-S: Approaching Leo to get job as floor manager + paying for other two halls.

SI
N

"I don't know why Leo actually called at the starlight but I assume it's something like that"
(N looks up - lights on mirror ball shinning onto stars)

P-S: Ballroom - as dance floor

P-S: Ballroom - empty of punters. (behind scenes)

SI
N

(Thinking)
N: And the things you had to do before a dance went into progress sort of thing, you know. One was advertising, which was quite funny in those days. You were only allowed in the local paper to have a single column, a strip like that (Screen with an old ad on the N points to). Ah, it's the sort of thing that you see, bold writing up the top if you wanted it there and there are (is) singing with dancing, that was it. Monday night, Monday night, see dance, dance, dance and that was it. You could repeat that up to eight times. ~~It was a terrible~~ You weren't allowed like you see (now) a photo of colours. It was a terrible type of

Advertising wasn't it."

P-S Ticket box

P-S Outside front door -

stamps/bands

SS: Ties @ ticket box.

SS: Stag line on dance floor.

SS: Rock n Rollers on dance floor.

N: Story about the Mount.

PS: Gentlemen's club (flat next door)

N+SS: Charlie taking over from Leo

SS: Outside front door - guys looking before paying
- ~~the~~ incident with Huey Fatwell

PS: Coffee bar in Collingwood st - the Mezzanine

SS: Mystery dance (find out where is to stash beer)

SS: Announcing dances - MC/Band.

PS: Girls sitting down waiting to be asked to dance

N Just about everybody + his dog came to Starlight you know, I mean it was, so it was quite an icon place, and that. And I think that the dances were well run, you know, they were sort of well organized. You know I walk around Hamilton now, and I often see people and I think 'Oh, I remember those two dancing at the starlight, I remember those two counting'."

B: Garden place. pie cart. (Old pie, pud + peas)
Characters: Floor manager, Leo, Charlie, Huey, ticket, ~~door~~ doorment, police, bands, men in stag line, girls on seats, MC,

Saturday July 2nd 2011

~~██████████~~ interview

SS Possible story / scene idea. Narrator talking about bands. Narrator or Leo talking to band about playing the starlight - questioning about experience etc. Where played etc (Info in History of the Crawcuts - By ~~██████████~~) + Interview. Could lead into mentioning other bands + who played leading up to the satellites.

PS
mag The Embassy
Belwyn Toogood (Radio) let His in the Bag - Radio

SS: ~~Band~~ learning music by car from Radio or records

S/SS: Photo shoot @ starlight on a Sunday afternoon - with babe in pushchair.

C. Band members wives / girlfriends

Image: Play slips

PS/SS: Outside @ car with stashed drinks

S/SS: Walking home

SS: Getting work.

[REDACTED]

C: Girl attending dance

SS: Making dress for dance

PS: Kitchen evening

SS: meet you inside - pay for selves

PS: Monte Carlo

[REDACTED]

SS: PS - Asking girl to dance from stag line
Sitting waiting to be asked seated

PS: Cafeteria / supper time

SS: Asking girl @ cafeteria to dance

SS: Bringing greg in, in a sock.

PS: Work (sheetmetal - Witcom + Tombs)

N: "I suppose another thing when you actually went to the starlight, ok, the music + the dancing was wonderful but most, most probably had their eyes open for a mate, probably, comprende. May not go there entirely for that purpose, but I mean it was probably ninety percent the reason for going, probably."

SS - Last dance

- PS - Tearooms after dance
- PS - Pie cart garden place
- S-SS - Making dress

[REDACTED] (1960s)

- PS - Biking
- PS - Halls of Residence (teachers college)
- PS - Car down by lake (???) Parking up.
- * - Excuses used not to accept dance
- Images - Photos of Lake area
- SS - Cops shining torch in car window

KEYS

- PS - Ideas for scenes location / place
- SS - Ideas for story snippet that could create a scene
- SI - Staging ideas or images that occur to me
- N - Narrator - possible text or happenings that the Narrator can relay.
(Words could be given to others?)
- C - Possible Character/s
- Image - Ideas for picture or sounds

Saturday 2 July - Ideas for characters/locations/images (1st 5 interviews)

List of characters/Kinds of people.

Narrator (idea - floor manager)

Floor manager

Master of ceremonies

Leo Beeson (1st manager)

Charlie Lea (2nd manager)

Huey Fallwell (owner)

Ticket lady

Girls serving supper

Doormen

Police

Bands

Men in stag line

Girls waiting to dance

Band members girlfriends/wives

Locations/Settings for scene.

Empty hall

Ballroom :

- as dance floor
- Stag line
- Girls waiting to be asked to dance
- Cafateria/Supper time

Ballroom – empty of punters/behind the scenes

Ticket box

Outside front door

Gentlemans club/Flat next door

Coffee bar/tea rooms – The Mezzanine

Garden Place

Pie cart

The Embassy

Outside in parked cars

Walking home

Kitchen evening

At workplace (various)

Biking

Car at lake

Images and sounds to source.

Selwyn Toogood – It's in the bag – Radio

Pay slips

Pie cart

Garden place

The Mezzanine

Lake area

Cars of time

Scene ideas from first 5 interviews

Narrator giving background of Ballroom

Narrator approaching Leo to get job as floor manager and paying for other two halls.

Stag line on dance floor – asking girl to dance – girls waiting- accepting- talking about boys - Huge scene ideas here – important.

Rock n rollers on dance floor

Charlie taking over from Leo

Ties at ticket box

Outside front door – guys looking in before paying; couples arranging to meet inside; incident with Huey Fallwell.

Finding out where mystery dance was so could stash drinks.

Narrator talking about bands - Scene asking "Cravats" about experience as a band, where practiced etc. Use [redacted] interview and writing to develop script. Lead on into talking about other bands who played there. Lead into scene with Satellites (not in these interviews) developing name etc.

Band learning music by ear from radio and records.

In cars outside stashing/drinking beer – Cops checking cars.

Couple making out in car – Cops shining light in (outside dance or at lake?)

Getting work

Monte Carlo dance

Last dance scene

Initial script and staging ideas (from 1st 5 interviews).

Narrator: I don't know why [redacted] actually called it the Starlight but I assume it's something like that" (*Looks up at lights that have come up on the mirror ball shimmering onto stars hanging from roof.*)

Narrator: (*Thinking*) And the things you had to do before a dance went into progress sort of thing, you know. One was advertising, which was quite funny in those days. You were only allowed in the local [Waikato Times] paper to have a single column, a strip... Like that (*Screen with an old ad on that the narrator points to*). Ah, it's the sort of thing that you see, bold writing up the top if you wanted it there and there are [is] singing with dancing, that was it! Monday night, Monday night, see dance, dance, dance and that was it. You could repeat that up to eight times. You weren't allowed like you see [now] a photo of colours. It was a terrible type of advertising wasn't it.

Narrator: Just about everybody and his dog came to Starlight you know, I mean it was, so it was quite an icon place, and that. And I think that the dances were well run you know, they were sort of well organized. The music and the dancing was wonderful but most, most probably had their eyes open for a mate, probably, comprehend. May not go there entirely for that purpose, but I mean it was probably ninety percent the reason for going, probably. You know I walk around Hamilton now, and I often see people and I think 'Oh, I remember those two dancing at the Starlight, I remember those two courting'. {Note to self: Could lead into the storylines of the girl and guy getting ready to go to dance}.

Outside front door. Narrator comes and joins doorman. {Note to self: Could be part of scene where guys are looking in before paying and couple are arranging to meet inside} Group of guys standing outside the door trying to look in.

Narrator: Four shillings to go in [guys/gentlemen].

Guys pay their entry.

Narrator: (*To one of the guys as a greeting*) Colin. (*To another with no tie*) Ticket box has a rack of ties. Must have about 200 ties there. They'll loan you one.

A guy approaches the door in an old tartan Swandry with the elbows hanging out.

Narrator: (*Stops him*) I'm sorry Sir, you can't come in dress like that.

Huey: (*Amused*) Ohhh.

(Leo Beeson passing and intervenes)

[redacted] Christ, you can't refuse him!

Narrator: Why [not].

[redacted] That's [This's] Huey Fallwell, he owns the building.

Huey: (*Finding this amusing, to narrator*) Good on you.

Narrator: I'm sorry.

Huey: No, no! It's great to see you keeping it safe.

[redacted] (*Opens way for Huey to enter*) You should get a suit and I'll have it here [for you].

Huey: Leo, I don't need to.

Sun 2 July 2011



SP - Self help store

PR - The drive home after last dance

Image - The alexandra hall (pre starlight)

Image - Song book (not in this interview)

SP - Apartment/boarding house

SPSS - Walking to starlight with friends

SS - Doing up hair for a dance (Alfi)

ES - Door man scene - Guy with leathers - boogie trying to get in - Jacket + tie - "On your way mate."

N: "I don't know how to describe it really but... When the young people became promiscuous... [some] I blamed that on celebrities like Elvis Presley + his kind because of what they conveyed + what they sang and the way they move [a] their bodies."

N: "I look back and things have changed over the years in society. There there aren't the values + the standards and the respect that we had way back then, and long before that of course."

3-SP Home Mother teaching her the Waltz

* NB: Go back to [redacted] recording + get her talking about seeing [redacted] at the garage.

SS-SP Talking during dance "You enjoying yourself"

Dialogue "Oh can I have the next dance?"
"I'm sorry, but I'm booked"

SS: Leaving home with Chill banes + high heels.
(Talking about it at home getting ready +
flipping, then at ~~home~~ door way going
in straightening up as arrive).

Journal entry: 2 July.

* I need to start to get some clear dates to create a clear time line.

I really like the idea of using a narrator who exists in multiple realms of the theatre space. At present my ideas include an introduction by him as "performer/storyteller" introducing the ~~space~~ the concept of the performance, welcoming those who have been involved + who this will bring back memories for + those who ~~may~~ I like the idea of him relaying his narration directly to the audience, the flow of the action based around his narration of unfolding events and happenings.

He is able to refer to and interact with props, staging and images outside of the action.

He is also able to move into the action becoming a player within scenes stepping into the role of ~~per~~ 'actor' in his role of stage manager: "that sees all", because "he was there".

This harks to my roots of storyteller, moving the genre into theatre and combining the two - Bringing the telling of others stories to a theatrical space. As storyteller it is a "solo performance", through bringing in others, actors, representing the action it becomes collaborative. This reflects the contribution of all the people who have shared their stories.

The idea of the 'narrator' introducing the 'performance' as self, as a performer is part of a storyteller setting the code, - who they are, what gives them the right to tell this story. In this case the 'narrator' is doing this on behalf of 'the production'. This may or may not work but I think of it as my spin on Brecht's idea of representing.

I would very much (at present thinking point) like to have an actor/performer who I can give the ~~script~~ 'working script' to and who can talk the words or just and work it to tell the story - to create a persona that is floor manager and storyteller in the 50's and present day.

Questions I have about trying all this are:

- Will it create a documentary feel? rather than 'play'.
- Will it enhance or hinder the audiences ability to set aside disbelief. Full immersion in the action or view as a representation of stories.
- Is it new? Is it OK? Why not try?

I have also had an idea of creating a character's who relays public opinion or media and political views, feelings or ideas of the time. These may include the American influence of the youth culture; the political + social views of youth immorality and the cold war / Russian 'vibe' at the time.

These characters could come in the form of reporters/media, political figures such as Hilda Ross or Mazengarb or a parent figures.

This could work or could be seen as a cop out from integrating this into the script. Not sure yet.

Although William has warned me not to get to set in ideas I find my need for organization and sense of direction insists that I start off in a direction that my mind + creativity sends me. My understanding (which I admit may be lacking in areas) of how storytelling + theatre can be combined in relation to experience + theory I have read tells me that these ideas could work. I will remain open to the evolution of the material but this is where I need to go at present.

I am grateful to my sister for the transcribing but am finding that I need it faster than what she can keep up with at present.

The positive side of this is that I am forced to mull over the material I have at present further and I am forced to consider (or chase to) other complimentary forms of documentation to source.

Bill Lindberg

1925?
18 July 1950 Permit No 3539 Waikato club
Builder T.S. Heary Descript Ainer Building

*

Hamilton City Council Building
Consents 1922-1960 (Building Permits 1922-1960)

Date 18 May 1954 Permit No 7184 Street Anglesea Section + block #?3 2983

Owner Basson, Campbell (Falliwell) Builder J.M. Cleary Description Verandah + Screen

Value 170 Building fees 1

~~18 May 1956 Waikato club - work done altered partitions~~

Maori land court building

Date 1921 Permit No 28(?) Street Anglesea Section + block Pt. 278 (275?)

Owner Alexandra Masonic Lodge Builder Cor J McKinnin Hall

Author Hamilton City Council

131 Anglesea St
Valuation No
04003-615-00
Legal description
Lot 2 DP 571530

Microfilms
Garden Place Library
Pub Ham city council

Library site
Online Resources
Newspapers + mag.
Papers Past

~~Notes~~ Newztext + (Starlight)

Sunday 10 July 2011

SS - Garden place - Drunk as a Lord
running over cops foot

Script for girl: P.S deciding on dress to wear.

SS - Mrs [redacted] sitting in gallery watching her
son dancing with girl friend

SS - In girls bedroom listening to the ^{lever} hit parade
writing it in her diary
Portable radio. Writing about which boy
was interested in (boyfriend in diary)
Writing that had been watching boobies +
widges @ milk bar and not telling mother.

PS - coffee bar
PS - Caught by head mistress in street without hat.
kneeling to measure skirt length

SS - Hanging outside Pascoes

SS - Milk bar the Peter Pan

SS - Father cruising the main street after mooves
to pick her up.

- SSSI - Waiting to be asked to dance.
 "Yuck I hope he doesn't ask me."
 "Oh, I wish he'd ask me."
- Mates slagging off boyfriend - snarky remarks
 "the wonderful mother that went around on
 the bike"
- SS Snogging under tree across the road or having
 an argument
- mage - Ties ^{socks} orange, pink, lime green, electric blue (SS)
- SS Black budget of SS father swearing
 would never smoke another cigarette.
- SS Mazeranis report - mother hiding it because
 it had rude things in it.
- SS Being shocked
- SS Hair in Rags
- SS p. 25 Pulling off steering wheel + driving
 with vice grips
- SS At lake, in car catching ducks through
 the floor.

Mon July 2011

[redacted] interview

SS [redacted] 3+4 great description of her husband asking her to dance + attempting many times then asking her next time.

SS Guy at home and his mate ringing him to ask him to come along

SS meeting the parents

SS Finding taxi money from coat stolen

SS Leaving money in the laundry. / House key.

SS ^{girl} ~~#~~ at home, her mother convincing her to go to the dance

SS Girl asking friend to keep an eye on 'Allen' because she wouldn't be there for a couple of weeks

SS Girl sewing during the day using + ohbring. mum "Well if you go, I'll know not to put onion in the, in the dinner"

SS Limbo

SS Guy that can't dance - girl ~~was~~ discussing this when gets back.

SS Dancing with a broom stick to practice mum suggesting it.

SS Baking shortbread - getting distracted by wedding party - shortbread brown then giving it to boyfriend who visited.

[redacted] interview

- SS - Dance lesson - Victor Sylvester + his ballroom orchestra - on record player.
- SS - Entering hall "Oh God, whos here tonight".
meet with friends
- SS - At home with father - Elvis comes on.
Dad "you can't listen to that music".
(~~its~~ you know disruptive + corrupting"
- SS - Buying beer from bottle store
- SS - Hiding beer outside.
- SS - Parents waiting till get home checking time
- SS - Boy picking up girl + ^{Father} Grilling him about what he did, time etc
- SS - [redacted] guy coming to dance "Oh God here comes Jimmy, he's got sweaty hands"
go to toilet

Interview [redacted]

- SS - Doing jail house rock.
- SS - Rehearsing in the paddock - long lead
- SS - Recording with lead going down to the toilet for reverb
- image - Advert for the bands from Warkato times to track time line.

SS - Taping music from radio + learning to play.

Image - [redacted] has the old tape used to record on.

△ 2 songs each. (Tui beat (although not till 60s))

SS - Coming up with the name the satellites

Image - Sputnik - Iron curtain. (Media reportage of this).

PS - Cabaret on Grey street

SS - Leo Bason putting satellites under contract.

SS - Courting [redacted] - her driving down the street him driving beside her.

PS - Gentlemen's club (previously N°1 court) complaining (practice on Wednesday a/o)
"Oh that noise is something shocking."
"Can we speak to the person in charge."

PS - When courthouse became flat - Gatherings after gig.

PS - Fight at Starlight "sorry about that mate"

PS - "Buff Henry" the cop - confiscating beer from the cars - later come see the band + say "Got about 5 dozen tonight mate - see you after you've finished."

N - Discuss what killed the dances

Scene ideas from next two interviews.

Self help store

The drive home after last dance.

Apartment/boarding house.

Walking to starlight with friends.

Doing up hair for dance.

Doorman scene – Guy with leathers , bodgie trying to get in with leathers on “On your way mate”.

Home with mother teaching girl the waltz.

Talking during the dance “You enjoying yourself?”

Leaving home with chilbanes and limping but straightening up as approach the door of Starlight.

Garden place – as drunk as a lord and running over the policemen's foot.

Deciding on dress to wear (p.5 Helen interview).

Mrs █████ sitting in the gallery watching son dance.

In girls bedroom – Listening to Lever Hit Parade and writing top songs. Portable radio, Writing about boy at grocery store and reasons to go down. Writing that has been watching bodgies and widgies at milkbar and not telling mother.

Coffee bar.

Caught by head mistress in street not wearing hat – sneaking off to watch movie with boyfriend.

Hanging outside Pascoes.

Milkbar – Peter Pan.

Father cruising main street after watching a double feature and being home late.

Waiting to be asked to dance “Yuck I hope he doesn't ask me” and “Oh I wish he'd ask me”.

Mates slagging off boyfriend when jealous – snarky remarks – “the wonderful mother that went round on the bike”.

Snogging across the road under the tree or arguing outside ballroom.

Black budget of 58 – Father swearin would never smoke another cigarette .

Mazengarb report – Mother hiding it “cause it had rude things in it”.

The Humes/Parker murder

Hair in rags.

██████████ interview – pulling the steering wheel off car and driving down the street with vices on wheel.

At lake catching ducks through the floor.

Images

Ties and socks – orange, electric blue, lime green and pink.

The Alexandra masonic lodge – before the starlight.

Song books from lever hit parade.

Narrator

“I don’t know how to describe it really but... when the young people became promiscuous ... [some] I blamed that on celebrities like Elvis Presley and his kind because of what they conveyed and what they sang and the way they move[d] their bodies.

“I look back on and things have changed over the years in society. The, there aren’t the values and the standards and the respect that we had way back then and long before that of course”.

Characters

Boyfriends mother

Mothers and Fathers

Character commenting on society.

Media representative.

████████████████████ interviews.

Ideas for story snippet.

██████████ p.3-4 great description of her husband asking her to dance and attempting many times to ask her.

Guy at home and his mates ringing him to ask him to come along.

Finding taxi money stolen from coat

Leaving money in the laundry/house key.

Girl at home, her mother convincing her to go to the dance. Girl sewing during the day while uming and arhing about attending dance. Mum "Well if you go, I'll know not to put onions in the, in the dinner".

Girl asking friend to keep an eye on "Allen" because she wouldn't be there for a couple of weeks.

Limbo

Guy that can't dance – girl discussing this with friends when gets back.

Dancing with a broom stick to practice dance. Mum suggests this.

Baking shortbread – getting distracted by wedding party – Shortbread brown – then giving it to boyfriend who visited.

Dance lesson – Victor Sylvester and his ballroom orchestra – on record player.

Entering hall "Oh God, Who's here tonight" meet with friends

At home with father – Elvis comes on - Dad, "you can't listen to that music, You know disruptive and corrupting".

Buying beer from bottle store.

Hiding beer outside.

Parents waiting till got home checking time.

Boy picking up girl – Father grilling him about what he did for a job etc

██████████ – guy coming to dance "Oh God here comes Jimmy, he's got sweaty hands" goes to the toilet.

Satellites doing Jail House Rock.

Satellites - Rehearsing in the paddock with a long lead.

Satellites – Recording at studio with lead going down to the toilets – toilet flushing.

Satellites – Taping music from the radio and learning it. 2 songs each to bring to rehearsal.

Coming up with the name for the band Satellites.

Leo Beeson putting Satellites under contract

Courting [REDACTED] – driving down street while her walking.

Fight at starlight “sorry about that mate”

“Buff Henry” the cop – confiscating beer from the cars – Later come to see the band and say “Got about 5 dozen tonight mate – see you after you’ve finished’.

Images

Adverts for the bands from Waikato Times to track time line.

[REDACTED] has the old reel tape they recorded on.

Possible location/scene.

Meeting the parents

Cabaret on Grey Street

Gentleman’s club – (previously No 1 court) complaining about noise for Wednesday practice. “Oh that noise is something shocking” “Can we speak to the person in charge”.

When courthouse became flat and band had gatherings after gig.

Narrator.

Discuss what killed the dances.

Sunday August.

Huge frustration with the script writing I have in my own heart be adamant that I will use verbatim language in the script writing process. This means selecting some of the stories told that I think will make good scenes + working on expanding these. However this means scrolling through 140 pages of transcript to give the character's verbatim language. Not only is this time consuming but it results in stilted language + underdeveloped characters + storylines. This was bad to frustration and procrastination.

I met with William who has given me examples of spoken language and the fact that people speak naturally in stilted almost mundane exchanges. He has pointed out that documentary theatre need not be verbatim and that the important thing is to transmit the essence of the interviews and the time it represents. This conflicts with my initial view and desire to be utterly and completely true to ~~my~~ the words of those I interviewed. Having said this I now realise that the task of making the script completely verbatim is beyond my capabilities, both in meeting a time frame and creating rich characters and storyline.

~~I feel what I have to do~~ This was evident when I got a friend to read the script to me. It was the first time I had read it aloud and in its entirety. It was stilted, unnatural

language that never really gave you an insight to the characters I have created in my head but failed to translate onto page.

It has taken me a couple of weeks to digest all this and accept the fact I need to be more 'creative' in my approach. Initially as I have said I was disheartened because it felt like it would be bastardising the process but I am slowly coming to the realisation that if anything it could be + will be a freeing experience.

My first step now is to utilise what I have created of my script to write an analysis of my characters who they are in the play so far. I will then take what I have written and

create a story map of what I have in my head as the storyline. ~~It is~~

From this I will return to the script, use the verbatim language I have as much as possible but build on this to develop the characters + story.

The characters I have created are made up of parts of the people I have interviewed and ^{shared} I have attempted to create 'types' that encapsulate the different attitudes of the youth at that time.

Initial script idea using Verbatim language from transcripts.

Intro what the starlight meant to a generation.

Narrator: The Starlight Ballroom was the essence of everything that went on, on a Saturday night. It was a lively place,

Origins of the Hall/Ballroom

Narrator: I made some enquires and so forth, you know just to find out and someone said that uh [the hall] had been moved from Pirongia. Some [others] dispute that and said it had been moved from up in Ngaruwahia, [or] it came from Huntly, ah, which could be Hopahopa.

Well, uh, it had Alexandra Hall on it and that was the original name from Pirongia, some of the things in Pirongia are still call Alexandra, The Alexandra racing club and so on.

[The Hamilton city council building consents have it logged as being shifted to Anglesea Street in 1921 and the owners at that time as the Alexandra Masonic Lodge]. So that makes me think that it was the town hall from there, [Alexandra, Pirongia].

During the war, or just after the war it was used as a wool store. In actual fact the building belonged to an industrial chemist Huey Fallwell and he had a storeroom, which in those days the old Riverina Hotel at Hamilton East and over the road where the bank slopes down was a storeroom and that had the lease running out. So he needed other premises which was the Alexandra Hall.

Now Neil Campbell had a dance band and he and Leo Beesan were leasing a place called the Regent Ballroom but {it was going to be demolished OR the lease ran out}. So Leo Beesan, he approached [Huey] and wanted to know whether he could use [the Alexandra] as a ballroom, which I think Huey thought was a bit of a joke at the time, so they leased the Alexandra Hall and renamed it the Starlight Ballroom. That was in 1954. *(Image of council consent record)* It turned out to be a little goldmine for him.

Another chap that I knew quite well, Johnny McCleary who was in the Airforce, WW2, a little fellow, and he ah, he was a very good carpenter and he laid a sprung floor in the Starlight.

Narrator: I don't know why Leo actually called it the Starlight but I assume it's something like that" *(Looks up at lights that have come up on the mirror ball shinning onto stars hanging from roof).*

Talk about bands that played, Before and after this time.

Introduce the satellites

Satellite band scene – Picking a name.

(Two guys sitting in a paddock with guitars, old amp and long lead)

Band member 1: Russias put up what they call a sputnik

Band member 2: [Yeah, I] watched the Satellite go over. Fascinat[ing].

Band member 1: That's a good name.

Go on to talk about songs selected for rehearsal etc

Scene Narrator/Floor manager gets job at Starlight

Narrator: I got involved with [the Starlight], my wife used to work in the ticket box at night at the dances and I used to go down and sort of take her home because there weren't buses to where we lived, you know, at midnight at night sort of thing and the chap that was the sort of floor manager if you like to call it that or M.C. was a university, um, instructor at Waikato named Tass McDermott. And Tass, the university work was getting more and more and he had to give it up. So they needed a [floor manager], and I happened to be there and I said to Leo, um

(Action-)

Narrator: I wouldn't mind that job.

Leo: Well what can you do for me?

Narrator: Oh, I'd double your crowd.

You can imagine the reaction I got, well, the outcome it was a bit of a dirty trick. There was two other dance halls, one was called the um, Winter Garden which was in Garden Place and the other one was the Frankton Town Hall and I paid the fee on those two halls out our own pocket and kept them shut on the Saturday night so I doubled the crowd at the start of the week and I got the job.

Narrator discusses a little about his job and the kinds of dances - brief

Narrator discuss dance classes at the hall. Mention Jack Guthrie

Narrator: [redacted] taught Ballroom and Latin American

Scene at Jack Guthrie's dance class

(Scene opens with [redacted] watching a couple- Warren and Lillian- dance, commenting on their dancing.)

[redacted] (various comments about posture etc)

(Music ends, Jack turns to record player and changes record. Warren leans over and whispers in Lillians ear. Lillian socks him one, Warren lands on the floor. Jack turns to see what noise is.)

[redacted] What's going on?

Warren: Lillian dropped me.

Lillian: Yes and if Warren talks to me like that again...I'll hit him again.

Narrator: Today young people, a big percentage of them don't have respect for anybody else. The girls accept these rough guys, as, the way the world is. The guys accept the rough girls as the way the world is these days. In those days it wasn't like that.

Some people may see it differently depending on their experiences. I can only tell you from my experience, and that is the guys I knew, [I] can be proud of 'em.

I suppose there was skulduggery went on {but we looked after each other} You know and that's what [was] instilled in everybody, saying if you're gonna play up, play up but don't play up to the point where you've got a record. It just ruins you. Later on.

Narrator: Didn't know people like that – Talk about respect and friendship and looking out for each other- get up to high jinx but nothing to get a record.

Scene Warren calling Jimmy

Warren: Bruce

Jimmy: Yeah

Warren: The Cambridge Yacht Club are going to have a party, they want some duck to put on the barble. [Frank and I are going] to the Hamilton lake [this avo, then] what say we go to the Starlight?

Jimmy: Well I think, I don't think I'll be able to too. I've [got to] work on the farm with my dad, that takes my whole day up.

Warren: It's a with it place...

Jimmy: [I've got to] feed the chickens...

Warren: As far as the old Starlight goes, it is just part of life isn't it...

Jimmy: ...chop wood...

Warren: You just do, you just go...

Jimmy: ...bring the wood in...

Warren: ... That's where we go...

Jimmy: ...fill the wood box...

Warren: ...That's where boy meets girl.

Jimmy: [That's] kind of nerve wracking.

Warren: I am going do you want to come?

Jimmy: (pause) Alright.

Warren: [We'll pick you up, 7.30, go down] to Garden Place, buy a crate of eight o'clocks and have a few ales [first].

Narrator talk about Garden place. – lead into it being pretty safe, not having to worry about walking – parents being happy for girls to go out

Scene at Penny's home

(Penny on floor with dress pattern and material strewn around. Elvis is playing on the record player, Mother is ironing or some such household task)

Mother: Now are you going to the dance tonight?

Penny: Oh I don't know. I don't know whether to go or not.

Mother: For goodness sake, go out Penny! You should be meeting people.

Penny: I'm so shy. I could be a wall flower. I could not get asked [to dance] all night.

Mother: [You'll] go there, meet other people. You'll know [Lillian and Penny], chat with them or dance with them.

(Penny screws up face. Father enters, navigates his way through sewing and sits in chair with paper. He then realises whats on the record player)

Father: You can't listen to that music.

Penny: Daddy.

Father: You can't listen to that, it's just you know so dis, dis, you know disruptive and, and corrupting.

Beep Beep Beep Media on Elvis Presley

Hold on to your hats, folks, you're about to meet Elvis (the pelvis) Presley, latest American singing sensation who has jet propelled his way to fame. His incredibly successful "Heartbreak Hotel" opens the ZB Hit Parade this week and is set for an inevitable climb to the top. Elvis, 21, was born in Mississippi, and a few years schooling did nothing to alter either his version of the English grammar or his cornpone accent. His voice ranges (or lurches) from bass-baritone to near falsetto, following an insistent beat from his own guitar, and his "style", if you can call it that, combines rock'n'roll and hillbilly music.

It is the visual factor in a Presley performance which has earned him the nickname of Pelvis Elvis. He rocks, rolls, bumps, throbs, and thrusts with every beat of his music while frenzied teenage audiences scream and sway in hysterical imitation of this uninhibited singer.

On a television show Elvis treated the audience to such an exhibition of primitive forthrightness it brought forth a stream of protest from viewers who thought his gyrations had no place in the family living room.

(NZ Truth, 17 July 1956, cited in Yska, 1993, p.143)

You never had no place for the family living room

Scene at Penny's home continues

Penny: I like [Elvis's] music. I never go stupid over [it].

Father: Young people [have] become promiscuous and I blame that on celebrities like Elvis Presley and his kind because of what they sing and the way they move their bodies.

Penny: Daddy.

Father [i] don't like the American influence [that] has crept in [since] the war. It is wild and undisciplined, congregating at milkbars, yobs lounging across the footpath and on the corner of the street. Before [them] we didn't do [that]. Milkbar cowboys, James Dean, rebels.

We were grateful for them to be here um, because the Japanese threat was very real and our boys were away fighting in the islands. We had nobody to defend us so the Americans came here. Mind you that was a resting place for them because a lot of them were up there fighting too.

But they weren't popular. They were so different they were boys away from home, promiscuity was rife and it's no good saying "Oh, that's always happened" it didn't, it hadn't happened to the degree that it did then and girls got a bad name if they went out with American boys.

Penny: [Mum] I am going to the dance.

Mother: Well if you go, I'll know not to put onion in the dinner.

Need a Joiner here to make it flow.

Scene at lake with ducks

(Warren and Frank are sitting in a car with a couple of floor boards pulled up. Warren is reading the paper while Frank is intent on dropping bread crumbs down the hole in the floor)

Warren:

Good floor? The best

Best Band? That's for sure.

Yes. It will be a "beaut" dance, Tonight, tonight, tonight.

Ken Wadsworth leads his sensational Satellites, Satellites featuring star vocalist Ivor Fisher. Also three lovely girls with a smile and a song, The Reataz. Have yourselves a good time. Of course it's at the Starlight Ballroom...

Frank... Starlight Ballroom, Starlight Ballroom. [Hey] I got a job at ----- Starts off two pounds seventeen and sixpence, a week. But I have to pay my board out of that.

Warren: Have you put [your] money in the glove box [for] petrol, booze and burgers?

Frank: Eh?

Warren: It's run out you need to put in another {money amount} [for tonight].

(Frank fishes in his pocket, counts out money and hands it over to Warren. Warren quacks like a duck, both watch the hole in the floor)

Warren: [How many ducks?]

(Frank looks in the back to count)

Frank: About eight or ten.

Warren: [Should be enough]

Frank: *(Points)* [One more?]

(Frank and Warren watch duck approach, look through hole in the floor, grab)

Lighting- Lights cut

Sound – Quacking sound and neck crunch

Need a Joiner

(Beep Beep Beep) Media or politician report on censorship

REPORT OF THE SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON MORAL DELINQUENCY IN CHILDREN AND ADOLESCENTS

VII. Some Visual and Auditory Influences

(3) Broadcasting

Disapproval has been expressed of many of the broadcast serials and suggestive love songs. If considered dispassionately by adults, most of these are merely trashy, but quite possibly, and particularly in times like the present, the words of a song, or the incidents of a serial, may more readily give offence. Obviously, the New Zealand Broadcasting Service can never please each individual listener, but, equally obviously, it should seek to avoid giving any public offence. The Service seems conscious of its responsibilities and tries to make its programmes generally suitable for family audiences; but it also aims to reflect the standards of its listeners, and some may feel that it should try to raise those standards.

Just when, how long, and how often, children, adolescents, and even parents listen to the radio is something that has never been accurately determined in New Zealand. It is well known that young children listen after 7 p.m. and that adolescents listen until a very late hour, particularly on holidays, and for this last-named fact no allowance is made when the programmes are being arranged. Adolescents listening to the latest songs stimulate the demand for popular sheet music. It is the words of those "hits" that form the chief target for criticism expressed to this Committee. Popular songs are transitory in nature, and it is the tune, rather than the words, that makes an impression.

In Summary: 7. The possibility that children may hear radio programmes unsuitable for them calls for firmness and discretion on the part of parents and more care by the Broadcasting Service in arranging and timing programmes. Serials and recordings giving undue emphasis to crime or sex are not desirable, nor is the frequent repetition of recordings that are capable of misinterpretation, particularly in times like the present.

Narrator: There wasn't a lot of aah rock n roll music on the radio because the radios didn't want to play it in those years they, [the] NZBC was very conservative they were very careful not to rock the boat. They were very reluctant to but it gradually crept. They'd have a half hour spot once a week for, for our music, you know.

Scene – Girls at the boarding house

(Lillian and Nancy are in a room at a boarding house. Nancy is writing in a diary, Lillian is finishing of doing Nancys hair. On the radio is the Lever Hit Parade)

Lillian: [What are you writing?]

Nancy: I write down what's on the hit parade every week. [I] listen to the new songs that come out and try to figure out whether I like them or not.

I also write which boy I have my eye on. One of my boyfriends works in the dairy at the end [of the] road in the shopping centre and I have to think of fifty different reasons a day why I have to go up the road and buy something from him.

Lillian: [Done] *(Referring to hair)*

Nancy: [What are you wearing tonight?]

Lillian: *(Show her a dress.)* [I] sat up all hours [last] night sewing.

Nancy: Aww, it's beautiful.

Lillian: I love it. I'll wear it a lot. *(Takes dress to an ironing board)*. [Now I just have] starch it to within an inch of its life.

(Reataz song "Daddy Cool" comes on the radio)

Nancy:

I saw a crazy chick a-running down the street
I said, a-whoop pretty baby, why the rigged beat?
She said, wow, what a square, don't you dig the scene?
Daddy Cool's playing his piano machine
Daddy who? Daddy Cool!
Daddy who? Daddy Cool!

I [went] into town Friday night to get [this] latest record and the flipside is Fancy Nancy.

Lillian: And she was a bit fancy.

(Nancy gives her a questioning look)

Lillian: She's got it all?

(Nancy still not getting it)

Lillian: Oh heavens, listen to the words, it could be taken that she is a street girl – Fancy Nancy. It's banned from playing on the radio.

Nancy: Oh.

Nancy: *(Picks up a broom to dance with)*. [Do you know why they call themselves the Reataz?]
[Because in the] James Dean movie Giant his little house was called the little Reata, so they put a 'z'
on the end.

(Dance with me) there's always so much competition for the good dances and [I have] to practice.

Lillian: *(For your boy at the dairy?)* *(Starts dancing)* I'm no good at rock n roll, [I like] the quick step,
the foxtrot, the polonaise [that's] nice you get to change your partners and you don't have to stick
with anybody all the time.

Nancy: [Especially if they have] big sweaty hands.

Lillian: The last dance is the one you wait for.

Nancy: There is only one man I want the last dance with. I [just] hope he asks me.

Narrator: I had never seen a three step polonaise. You ever seen one? You ever...

Well they go right the way around here in a circle and they play this la de da de da de dit dit dit dit,
but it's, we used to call it Maori PT *(laughs)*. I thought it was terrible anyway, I tried to cut it out of
the program, I nearly had a riot on my hands. They had two, like one would be about three quarters
of an hour into the evening and one probably three hours you see, and of course that was the point
where the boys met the girls you see. So they, those had to be, they, they were an absolute must the
two three step polonaises you see and eh, they changed and they'd be chatting up, the guys would
be chatting up girls and usually I'd say if there was a 400 crowd I'd say there'd be 100 and, perhaps
ah, 150 girls, 250 boys if you get my meaning

And they used to er, basically the night would start off with um, er, waltzes, foxtrots, quicksteps,
formal type dances, see, with the, just the odd, and that, the tempo would step up and after about

say, it started at eight o'clock, about half past nine they'd begin to bring in the rock stuff and by quarter to ten it was all rock.

The whole floor was (?). The formal dances you, you'd either pick up go along with it or you might as well go home because you couldn't dance around, you know, when

It got to a stage there, where the, you couldn't control it, that was just right the way through. And that's what they wanted to do you know, and

And er, they'd be there doing their rock n roll and

Scene entering Ballroom at dance

(Outside front door. Narrator comes and joins doorman. {Note to self: Could be part of scene where guys are looking in before paying and couple are arranging to meet inside} Group of guys, Warren and co, (Warren may have stashed a beer in a tree on the way in) standing outside the door trying to look in.)

Narrator: 4/6 to go in [guys/gentlemen].

Guys pay their entry.

Narrator: *(To one of the guys as a greeting)* Colin. *(To Frank with no tie)* Ticket box has a rack of ties. Must have about 200 ties there. They'll loan you one.

A guy approaches the door in an old tartan Swandry with the elbows hanging out.

Narrator: *(Stops him)* I'm sorry Sir, you can't come in dress like that.

Huey: *(Amused)* Ohhh.

[Redacted] passing and intervenes)

[Redacted] Christ, you can't refuse him!

Narrator: Why [not].

[Redacted] That's [This's] Huey Fallwell, he owns the building.

Huey: *(Finding this amusing, to narrator)* Good on you.

Narrator: I'm sorry.

Huey: No, no! It's great to see you keeping it safe.

[Redacted] *(Opens way for Huey to enter)* You should get a suit and I'll have it here [for you].

Huey: Leo, I don't need to.

Narrator: *(laughs)* **[Redacted]** he used to sit in his office with his blue tuxedo on and his cigar and put his head out the door every now and again. He was a hard case that man, drunk, always drunk.

(Lillian and Nancy approach, cop walks past door)

Narrator: Henry

Nancy: Oh God, [I wonder] who's here tonight.

(Cop finds bottle stashed in the bush, picks it up and keeps walking)

Narrator: [Evening ladies] 4/6 thank you.

The dance scene

(During this scene play a one of Satellites rock recordings and the last dance a waltz.)

Boys asking girls to dance

Penny: [There's Robert]

Nancy: [What a] farmer [he's] got rough hands and throw[s] you round, twirls you round and will just about send you flying. I hope he doesn't ask me.

Lillian: Oh God here comes [Warren], start talking.

Nancy: He's a real smoothie. (Lillian gives her a dirty look)

Warren: May I have this dance?

Lillian: Oh no, sorry, I'm engaged. (Warren looks for a partner) I've got to go to the toilet. (Gets up and leaves).

Back in the stag line

Jimmy: Well, how'd you get on?

Warren: Oh she didn't.....

Jimmy: Oh look at that girl over there in that white dress, I'd like to dance with her. She looks nice.

Band on the stage – or sound

I'm playing this for you...

Band announces the song before the supper break

Band wives stifling the groupies

(2 groupies sitting by bands wives)

Groupie 1: There's some really good looking dudes amongst them.

Groupie 2: I wouldn't mind. (Girls flirt and wave)

Wife 1: All these girls hanging around. You know [redacted] being a contractor, cleaning out drains and stuff [was in] an old singlet and hat and that and these girls went past. He waved out to them, not even an acknowledgment or anything, straight past. It's the band up there the lights, [those] things

that attract them. (She taps wife two and winks and says loudly) Hey ----, that guy playing the bass what do you reckon, isn't he gorgeous.

Wife 2: {Says something about her husband}

Wife 1: Just give him the eye.

(Groupies start glaring at wives and all four flirt and smile at the band.)

(At the end of the set Wife 2 becons to her husband while the groupies aren't looking. Guys come off the stage and go straight over to the wives not knowing what is going on. Band member puts his arm around wife.)

Band member: [Hey darling what's up?]

Wife 1: [Oh nothing] (smirks at groupies who huff off).

Cop -Buff Henry coming in and telling band members that have confiscated beer.

Outtro - Talk about Charlie Lea taking over, death of the dances and the legacy.

Hamiltons Satellites, singing, dancing showband, have lasted longer than the Russian sputnik whose name they adopted. (Waikato this week, Oct 23, 1997, p.14)

After listen to this - reading and recording it with a friend, I realise there is no flow and no real story plot.

Some examples of dialogue from William.

Intro what the Starlight meant to a generation. Origins of the Hall/Ballroom

Narrator On a Saturday night, it was a lively place. The Starlight Ballroom was the essence of everything that went on,

Two men, standing outside the Ballroom.

A It used to be on Angelsea Street.

B What?

A The local ballroom.

B Yeah, The Regency.

A It was above John Chambers Engineers, in the Andrews and Bevans Building. On the top floor.

B Now, we've got the Starlight.

A Used to be an industrial chemists. A bloke called Huey Fallwell.

B What'd he use it for?

A He injected sheep with penicillin.

B Where, at the Ballroom?

A Nah, ya bloody idiot, out in the paddocks. They used it as a storeroom, where the Starlight is now. It used to be a storeroom.

B Who told you that bullshit?

A Ask the doorman, he'll tell you.

B Someone said that uh [the hall] had been moved from Pirongia.

A I thought it had been moved from up in Ngaruwahia, or from Huntly, around Hopahopa.

B Make up ya mind.

A Well, it did have had 'Alexandra Hall' on it and that was the original name from Pirongia,

B You might be on to something there. Some of the things in Pirongia are still call Alexandra.

-William example cont- ...

- A Not to mention The Alexandra racing club ...
- B And, I think it was also used by the Masons. They used it as a Lodge.
- A And a wool store. My dad used to work there a bit just after the war.
- B That was after.
- A Yeah, it must have been.
- B Then it turned into the Starlight.
- A Yeah, with Neil Campbell and his dance band.
- B Yeah, him and Leo Beccan.
- A Weren't they in a place called the Regent.
- B Yeah, I heard the lease was going to run out there or they were going to pull the place down, or something.
- A Something like that. I reckon Mr Fallwell is making a packet out of the deal.
- Narrator I don't know why Leo actually called it the Starlight but I assume it's something like that. *(Looks up at lights that have come up on the mirror ball shimmering onto stars hanging from roof).*
- B Are you meeting anyone?
- A Nah, I'll just keep my eye out. You never know.
-

William example cont...

Narrator Then there was Johnny McCleary who was in the Airforce, WW2, a little fellow. He was a very good carpenter and he laid a sprung floor in the Starlight.

A man and a woman, dancing.

A Can you feel it moving?

B What?

A The earth, Baby, the earth, it's moving for us.

B That's not funny, Johnny.

A It's the best floor in Hamilton. I should know, I laid the bloody thing.

B There's no need to swear and, yes, it's a great floor.

A It's professionally sprung. Can't you feel it?

B Yes, Johnny, I can feel it.

A I told you, Baby, it's moving for us.

.....
A Susan said she saw you here last night.

B Yeah, Julie and I came down after the shops closed. We were looking for some taffeta for Julie's new dress.

A Is she making another new frock?

B She spilt something down the front of her green one and she can't get the stain out.

A When did that happen?

B You'll have to ask her. Anyway, she doesn't want to wear it any more.

A I don't wonder. Susan said you were sitting upstairs with Jack Morrison and his mates. Up on the mezzanine.

B Julie was with me.

A All the time?

B Not when we were dancing.

A With Jack Morrison?

B Yeah, what's wrong with that?

A He was with Mary Roberts last week.

B So what?

Characters and story plot

Narrator.

The narrator is the floor manager of the Starlight Ballroom. He is an all seeing character that moves in and out of the action. He is able to interact with the audience and with the characters in the play world. He runs not only the Starlight Ballroom within the story but also the stage. He is able to bring on sets, refer to images and music and engage directly with the audience.

He is in his late twenties to early thirties. He has a wife who sometimes works on the door of the Starlight. He enjoyed the dance scene and wanted the job as floor manager so much that he paid for two other dance halls at the time to be closed so he could secure the job. He is dedicated to creating a high class scene at the dance hall, making sure that the dress code is abided by and that the dancers have what they want. This includes making sure the dances are what the punters want, keeping booze out of the hall and making sure the boys tow the line.

~~Albert~~ Albert

Based on transcripts of a real person. ^{Albert} ~~Albert~~ set up and runs the Starlight Ballroom. He is an older man and is generally found in his office with a cigar and glass of booze. He pops in and out of the goings on to check up on what is happening. He is a tough man but has good business sense. He is well known for wearing a blue reefer jacket with leopard skin print lapels.

Warren

Warren is aged around 17. He is a sharp dresser in the style of the English 'teddy boys'. He is a bit of a man about town, a ladies man and if she is good looking he'll give it a go. He does not have the most respectful attitude towards women and at times approaches them inappropriately for the time. The rebuffs he gets does not concern him and he will continue to pursue his desires.

He is the ring leader of his group of friends, he owns a car which gives him 'cool' status and organises the money for petrol, beers and burgers that equate to a good night out for the boys. He lives at home, is from farming stock around Cambridge and comes from money.

His best friend is Jimmy whose practical nature keeps him out of too much trouble. Frank is his other friend that fulfills his need for an admirer. He is interested in Lillian whose disinterest in him spikes his desire to pursue her.

Jimmy

Jimmy is about 17 years. He lives at home on a farm and is required to help out in the running of the farm and in family life. He is 'the boy next door' type and is horribly shy around the girls his own age. Jimmy is an honest and sincere type of guy. Without his friend Warren egging him on he would never even speak to a girl and when he does he is respectful if not a little tongue tied.

Frank

Frank is in awe of Warren, a year or so younger he idolises the charisma he believes Warren to exude. Whenever Warren calls Frank makes himself available to carry out whatever plan Warren

has up his sleeve. Although fairly confident around the girls he has no experience of them and approaches them with an unrefined approach. He has two left feet when dancing, he's the boy with the clammy hands but his friendship with a guy with a car and boyish good looks still make him appealing to the girls.

Lillian

Lillian works at giving herself the air of a proper lady. She demands respect and wants a boy to court her in a romantic but mostly respectful way. She is a hair dresser and is always well groomed with a chic sense of dress. She is a tremendous sewer. Lillian prefers the old time dances to the new rock'n'roll but will partake in the new style of dancing at the Starlight. She has left home and is in a boarding house with Nancy.

She is aware of Warren's advances and although she does not like his reputation as a man about town she is flattered by his interest in her. This said she plays hard to get rebuking his inappropriate advances and arrogant attitude.

Penny

Penny lives at home with her mother and father. She is a home body and although she enjoys going to the dances she is worried she will just end up being a wallflower because of her lack of confidence. This is recognised by her mother who is bent on getting her to go out and meet people. Like Lillian she is a great seamstress and enjoys other hand crafts. She likes Elvis much to the horror of her father but by no means gets carried away with this new genre of music.

Nancy

Nancy lives at the boarding house with Lillian. She has a job in the local school canteen. Nancy is fully into the teenage culture emerging from the United States. She listens to all the latest music both acquiring records and listening to the Hit Parade religiously. She buys the latest magazines from America and follows the stars both locally and internationally with a passion. She attempts to follow all the latest fashions but sometimes gets it wrong with make up a little too bright and skirts a little too short. Because of this she comes across as a little ditsy and brash but in a naive manner. She is boy mad and describes all her crushes as boyfriends. She is keen on a boy that has started work at the local dairy. This turns out to be the good looking but unrefined Frank.

Penny's mother

Penny's mother quietly wears the pants in the house. She accepts her husband's old fashion views and lets him have his rants but encourages Penny to get out and get involved in the dances and teenage culture.

Penny's father

Penny's father is old fashioned and highly opinionated about the modern teenage culture. He blames the American soldiers presence during the war years for what he considers corruptive music and the decline of social values. Although he has his rants he does not oppose his wife's authority in the raising of their daughter.

██████████ Peter

Peter ██████████ is the owner of the Starlight Ballroom premises and many other buildings around town. He was an industrial chemist and known for his work with penicillin. Although wealthy he does not flaunt this with fancy clothes and high airs. He is a shrewd business man.

The two band members

Generic members of the band, The Satellites. These two seventeen year old boys are engrossed in their music. Practicing and creating a name for themselves in the dance scene. Both are around 17 or 18 years of age. Most of their time is taken up learning new songs and rehearsing for the next gig. They have their girlfriends and whilst they may indulge in the odd beer they are music focused.

Band members girlfriends

16 to 17 years in age these girls attend the dances with their boyfriends on stage and at the heart of many a girls desire. They are aware of the appeal of their boyfriends popularity and have contrived ways of keeping the groupies at bay.

██████████ James Gordon

Top competition dancer and dance instructor. ██████████^{James} is older than the pupils he teaches. He is passionate about his craft and serious in his instruction.

Buff Henry -Policeman

Buff Henry is a big burly Maori guy. He patrols the outside of the Starlight Ballroom for young guys drinking. After confiscating beers he passes them on to the bandmembers for an after dance gathering. On catching a young offender drinking or drunk he is just as likely to kick their bum and send them on their way with a warning.

Story plot

Narrator welcomes audience to the performance. He talks about the Starlight Ballroom being the essence of what took place on a Saturday night in Hamilton in the late fifties. Introduces Leo and Hughy negotiating use of hall.

Scene One

Albert ██████████ and Peter ██████████ discussing the use of the Alexandra Hall as a venue for the Starlight Ballroom and the origins of the Hall. Mention Johnny McClary doing sprung floor.

Scene Two

Narrator talks about getting the job at the Starlight. This is to express his role as the floor manager and the fact that he was privy to the goings on. Gives brief outline of his role as floor manager and importance of having a great venue for dances. (He and ██████████^{Albert} sitting over Leos desk, him smoking a cigar and having a drink).

Scene Three

Narrator gets up and discusses the fact that being a dance hall that while some learnt to dance by watching, others from parents that ^{Albert} [redacted] enlisted the skills of ^{James} [redacted] to teach dance lessons. Talks about ^{James Gordon} [redacted]. Great teacher but sometimes his students were mismatched.

Action of ^{James} [redacted] teaching Lillian and Warren. This introduces how Lillian and Warren know each other and shows Warren hitting on Lillian and her rebuffing him.

Narrator discusses that back then girls didn't go for rough boys although they may find them a little intriguing.

Scene Four

Narrator introduces the fact that to have a great dance you needed great bands. Goes through earlier bands and later bands then introduces the Satellites.

Two band members sitting on hay bales with guitars talking about getting name and now being called the sensational satellites, having contract with ^{Albert} [redacted], amount get paid and talking about songs they have learnt for rehearsal.

Scene Five

Narrator talks about the fact that a lot of planning went into a Saturday in anticipation of Saturday night at the Starlight for both the boys and girls. Maybe about it being the place to be and the fact that he still looks around and sees couples who met there. Boys looked after each other.

Eric rings Jimmy to get him to come out.

Scene Six

Narrator talks about the girls getting ready, sewing dresses.

Scene at Penny's house.

Narrator comments about fathers attitudes towards the Americans not being uncommon, mentions Mazengarb report but the fact that nothing was going to stop the teenage culture however generally boys didn't get up to too much just a bit of shenanigans.

Scene Seven

Scene with ^{Warren} [redacted] and Frank catching ducks. Include plans to keep beer in the car and maybe one in the bush outside. Talk about Lillian.

Scene Eight

Narrator talks about although there was opposition to the new rock and roll music the youth were listening to it on records and on the half hour Hit parade show.

Scene with Nancy and Lillian at the boarding house. Talking about music, the song Fancy Nancy being banned and boys- the boy at the dairy who turns out to be Frank and Warren. Practice dancing etc, doing hair – so lucky to have a friend who is a hairdresser. Talks about the stars referring to magazines. Lillian warns her that she is boy mad and not to get a reputation.

Scene Nine

Narrator on the door. Talks about the time the dances start, getting guys lining up to look in side. Entering the ballroom scene.

Scene Ten

The big dance scene. Jimmy notices Penny and tries to get up the courage to ask her to dance, Warren asks Lillian to dance gets refused, Nancy realises her dairy boy is Warrens friend, Lillian warns her he's got sweaty hands and throws you around dance floor. Nancy dances with Frank and then goes out to the car to have a beer with Frank. Jimmy gets up the courage to ask Penny to dance. Band members girlfriends ward off groupies.

Scene Eleven

Nancy and Frank in the car having a beer, Frank tells her he has seen her at the dairy, gosh she sure likes (some kind of lolly. You don't look like you eat them all, buff Henry comes along and shines a touch on them. Sends them back inside.

Scene Twelve

Lillian spits dummy at Nancy for compromising her reputation, Jimmy asks Penny for last dance. Can't take her home cause with friends but would like to pick her up next week. Buff Henry comes in and tells band that he's picked up beers for later.

Narrator rounds off evening and history of Starlight.

Home	Alexandra - 1188
Chapters	Lodge History
Charity	
District Grand Lodge...	The Alexandra Lodge received its charter in 1867 and originally met in Alexandra, now called Pirongia in the Western part of the Waikato. The rough terrain and climatic conditions of the area made farming very difficult those early days.
Grand Lodge...	
Lodges	When many of its ex-colonial soldier, settler/farmer members moved away from the area to gold-mine on the Coromandel or dig for kauri gum on the Hauraki Plains, the number of Lodge members fell significantly.
MEETING SCHEDULE	
Membership Enquiries	The Lodge subsequently moved to Hamilton.
Useful Links	Today, it continues to meet on a regular basis in the Waikato Masonic Centre that it shares with two NZ Constitution Lodges and a number of other Masonic organisations.
What is Freemasonry	Alexandra follows the ceremonial practices of the Lodge of Emulation, No 21.
Click Here for Email Tel: (09) 579-9056 - Call Toll Free: 0800 80 FREEMASONS (0800 80 3733)	

From the book "The view from Pirongia"

Alexandra, the proposed capital of the region, was named in honour of Princess Alexandra of Denmark, the wife of Edward VII. In the 1860s it was a busy frontier town of five hotels, a bank, p. 39

Waipa's horses not only carted Paddy's pigs to market and brought the parson to baptise some newborn child, they also saved the settlers from the stultifying embrace of isolation. Any farmer's family possessed of the meanest hack had access to neighbours to the library of the nearest township, to a store, a church, a school, and a lodge. For a heavier investment in horseflesh, perhaps in a pair, a farmer was enabled to transport his family in style to the church soirées, Masonic balls and stock-sale shopping sprees, that were a regular portion of pioneer life. If the farmer had enjoyed a particularly good return from last season's beef and wool sales, and had an eye for a fine stable, he might well have joined Basil Hewett, who came to Kihikihi from Wanganui to introduce the equestrian sport of polo into the Waipa in 1892. p-74

Some clues to the possible origins of the Alexandra Hall.

The parson, priest, minister or vicar established one of the few focal points of community life that existed in late nineteenth century Waipa. Alternate focal points, the hotel, stock sale and lodge, were exclusive. Women were unwelcome at all three and only the school committee and annual school meeting vied with the church to provide community focal points incorporating the entire family. Discussion following church services also allowed farmers an opportunity to exchange farming information. Many an invitation to inspect a prize bull or to make a fair offer for a pen of ewes was quietly made between Sunday-suited farmers, out of earshot of parson and womenfolk, outside the church gates. p-76



59 Clarence St, P O Box 463, Hamilton 3204, New Zealand
Phone: 0-7-839 3082 • Fax: 0-7-839 3226 • Website: www.hamiltonoperatic.co.nz
hoswardrobe@gmail.com

Thurs or Fri
12pm
12-6

Costume Hire Price List for

Schools, Theatre Groups, Performance Groups, Film and Media Groups, and Fundraisers

Hamilton Operatic Society is a community based group that has been operating and collecting costumes, props, and cloths for 100 years. We have the biggest selection of costumes for hire in the Waikato. We offer Schools, Theatre Groups, Performance Groups and Film and Media Groups very competitive rates on hireage - which are considerably below our normal hireage rates. The following is a brief outline of the reduced hireage rates that we offer to your type of organization and the best thing is we do all the laundry!

Price List

\$30-\$35	Specialty Dresses
\$20	Animal Suits, Long Dresses with trains
\$15	Leather Jackets, Long Dresses
\$10	Short Dresses, Capes, Tailcoats, Blazers, Frock Coats, Furs
\$ 5	Waistcoats, Petticoats, Skirts, Shirts, Pants, Wigs, Corsets, Hats, Shoes
\$ 2	Scarves, Braces, Gloves, Socks, Accessories

Note: Dry-clean only items incur an additional \$8 per piece charge for dry-cleaning. These prices exclude GST.

The Process

- You or your helpers come in to select costumes during the week, we are open Monday, Thursday, Friday 12.00-6.00pm.
- Our experienced staff will offer you professional advice.
- You take the costumes away on appro. (a bond may be required).
- You fit and return the costumes within three working days.
- You select more costumes and repeat the process, as necessary.
- Hamilton Operatic Society stores your selection until pick-up date.
- 1 week before opening (or by prior arrangement) you pick up your selected costumes and pay for costumes.
- 1 week after your final performance you return costumes.
- Prices apply for a maximum of 1 month Hireage.
- Hamilton Operatic does the Laundry.

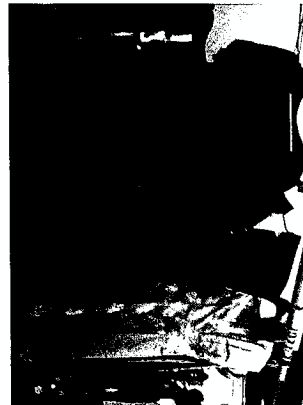
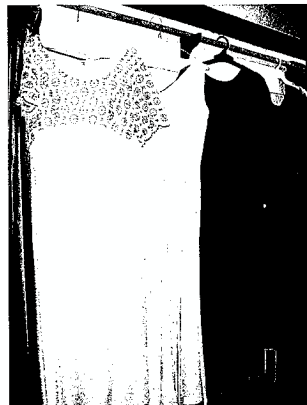
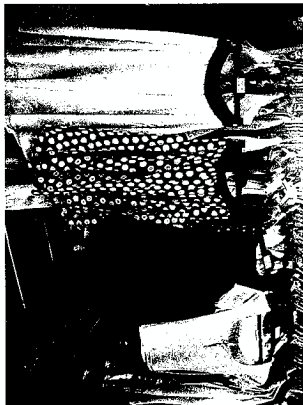
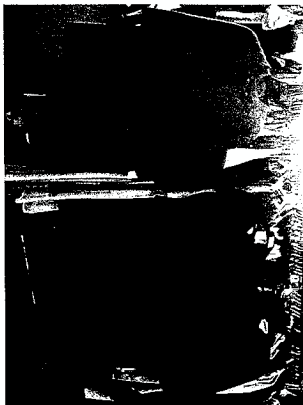
Note:

- 20% penalties may be incurred for late returns.
- Lost or Damaged Items will incur a full replacement or repair charge.
- Hamilton Operatic Society does not do individual fittings of students at the above prices. Individual Fittings are only available by negotiation.

Other Items for hire:

Scenic Backdrops (cloths) - view images and prices on our website www.hamiltonoperatic.co.nz

"Hamilton Operatic Society - creating theatrical opportunities for our community"



City of Hamilton 1745-1445 (NO.0120) Waikato Times 11th Feb Issue, Vol. 1745 P.49

Band member's fond memories

PAUL Fisher has fond memories of the old Starlight Ballroom in Anglesea St. It was there, 38 years ago, that he and a group of young musicians from Te Aroha and Morrinsville first broke on to the Hamilton entertainment scene. In those days the entertainment scene was the Starlight Ballroom. Twice a week, on Wednesdays and Saturdays, Hamilton's young would rock 'n' roll the evening away.

The operative word was evening. Paul recalls. There was no such thing as dancing into the wee hours. Strict laws ensured the public had left and the doors were closed by 12pm. Just as popular were the Wednesday evening sessions and Paul remembers why. That was the night the nurses from the hospital nursing home made their appearance. For the guys it was a chance to renew acquaintances and check out any new arrivals.

While rock 'n' roll reigned supreme for young people at the Starlight, an older generation were still happy to two-step the night away at the other end of town. Rivinea Cabaret catered for a more sophisticated group of party-goers. In fact, those were the days of formal balls held by various service groups. It was also easier to grab a bottle or two from the car boot in remote areas than it was in town, where an alcohol-free zone banned bringing alcohol within a mile of the premises.



PAUL FISHER has fond memories of the Starlight Ballroom.

... and the bands play on

TAKE an Englishman from Surrey and a one time country lad from Morrinsville, let them talk for an hour or more and you'll begin to get some idea of the kind of music that has kept Hamiltonians happy for close to 50 years. Of course, both Tony Edwards and Ritchie Pickett are quick to point out that the post-war years were a little before their time. But the nostalgia, Rock 'n' Roll might have ruled in 1969 when Tony made his debut in Hamilton with the Semitones, then the Satellites, but at the dance halls Hamiltonians still wanted the fox trot and the big band sound still had them

heading for the dance floor. In those days the Starlight Ballroom reigned supreme. The dancers were generally aged between 16 and 18 years although there must have been a few teeny bopper hangers on as well. One of these was Morrinsville's Ritchie Pickett. He began his career in Morrinsville playing in country halls, at birthday parties at the age of 10 when the Beach Boys and the Beatles were on their way up and schoolboy voices could handle both.

It wasn't until he slipped out one night and went to Hamilton as a career today, Ritchie says he couldn't convince his parents that Ritchie decided that a career in music was what he business.

Give William poster + programme to print.
 \$300 budget.
 Alec lighting? William will ask.

Holmes - (Britany) [redacted] - Yep - Keen.

List of Characters

- [redacted] Albert (40-50) 40+
- [redacted] Peter (35-50) 35+
- Narrator (30ish)
- [redacted] James ~~Age~~ (30-50) 25+
- ① Warren (16-24)
- Lillian (16-24)
- ② Band member 1: (16-24) Prefer basic guitar
- ③ Band member 2: (16-24)
- ④ Jimmy (16-24)
- Penny's Mother (35-50) 30+
- Penny's Father (35-50) 35+
- Penny (16-24)
- ⑤ Frank (16-24)
- Nancy (16-24)
- Henry (25+ preferably maori)

Males

Girls

- | | |
|--|-------------------|
| Albert 1 - (40-50) | Girls 3 - (16-24) |
| Peter 2 - (35-50) | 1 - (30+) |
| Narrator 1 - 30ish | |
| [redacted] James (30-50) | |
| 5 - (16-24) 2 with basic guitar skills | |
| Frank 1 - 35+ | |
| Henry 1 - 25+ | |

29-08-2011 Ad for Face book.
Seeking actors ^{play based on the} For Starlight Ballroom.

~~The~~

~~Star~~

Title: Seeking actors for a play based on the Starlight ballroom.

Time: Monday 5 + Wed 2 of September 5:30-9:00pm

Locations: New Place Theatre situated next to the Law School near Gate B on Hillcrest Rd.

Created by: Athene Jensen

More info: As part of my Masters ~~Kiaora~~ ~~at~~ I ~~am~~ have interviewed 20 plus Hamiltonians who attended the Starlight Ballroom in the late ~~ninete~~ 1950s. The area of rock n roll, and big cars. ~~and~~ ^{inspired by} ~~these~~ ^{working script} these transcripts I have created a ~~play~~ ^{script} telling the story of the Starlight & those who attended.

~~I would like to invite you to~~
go. Now I am seeking ~~performers~~ who would like to be involved
I need

Various male + females to dance.

Rehearsals will be on ^{and/or} Mon & Wed nights. ~~at~~ ^{some} (Flexibility here) ~~between~~

The production week will be ^{Sun 13th} To ^{Thur 17th}
And the ~~final~~ ~~performances~~ will be held on: Friday 18th Nov
Sat 19th Nov.

If you are interested or want to know more post here or call me ~~XXXXXXXXXX~~

1 Sept Meeting with William.

- He has contacted Radio NZ sound archives regarding recordings I wanted.

Fix up set out of script and William will get it printed.
He will leave them with Katie.

Katie or Alex for key with New Place theatre.

Alex expects to do lighting - contact him about it.

- Poster (will be programme cover)
Image/title - a documentary drama about Hamilton's SLB
N P P
Day date time
admission Free.

William will make up a sheet for programme.

Jobs to do for next few days

✓ *
Amiled

Contact Fairfield + Hillcrest High about performers

★
★

Contact ✓ Donald [redacted] ✓ Andrew

✓ Lindsey (Karin) [redacted] ✓ Richard [redacted]

✓ *
Amiled

Contact cast with roles ✓ (+ ask for days ✓ they can't rehearse)

✓ *
♥

Contact possible dance classes

* List of possible props needed - mari

* Start making - sign
- stars

* Search for lever hit parade + 1950s radio ad

* List of possible images.

✓
Done *

Post last two thank yous for interviews.

✓ *
★

Contact Ruth. [redacted]

Band member list

Bathroom. Possible Dance classes for east.

BR
Replied

Christine Simmons Dance Emailed 12/9
Director Christine Simmons
Studio Location: Fraser Tech Rugby Clubrooms
Corner Norton Road + Mill St Ham
Ph: 854 1376
email: studio@christinesimmons.co.nz
Time table: Wed 8:30-9:30 Social dance club \$15 per person per night
- Ballroom for beginners.

BR *
Replied

Footwork - Dance studio Emailed 12/9
Instructors: Rachel + Terry Kawiti
Studio location: 50 Commerce St, Ham
Ph 847-0450 \$15 per adult.
Email: dance@footwork.co.nz \$12 student

BR *
Replied

Simply dancing (can dance after lesson)
Owners: Gary + Rani Jacobs
Studio location: Methodist church centre Auditorium @ 60
London Street, Hamilton Emailed 12/9
Ph: 856 0268
Email: simply.dancing@clear.net.nz

BR *
Replied

Planet Dance \$12 casual
\$10 casual student
Instructor: Carl Gordon
Studio location: 169 London St, London St - op Toyota motors
* see web site
Ph: 838 0096
Email planetdance@xtra.co.nz Emailed 12/9

(Have photos of teenagers)

Rock 'n' roll

Drifters - Rock 'n' roll club inc
Contact Mike Feck (PAL officer) 027 413 0039
email info@drifters.org.nz
Sent email 12/9

River City Rock 'n' Roll club inc

Dance Hall: Melville Hall, 84 Chapel Rd Hamilton.
club nights - Wed 8pm - \$6 non-member. (Lessons \$6 non member)
web site: www.rivercityrocknroll.co.nz (Full in contact page)

Sent email 12/9

Replies

Footwork - Will let me know possible times
- may have a couple to dance

Christine Simmons - Tuesdays @ 8:30pm for next few weeks

Simply dancing - Can come to us - cost their time (work something out)
or arrange @ studio

Planet dance - Could arrange rock n roll (dont normally)
- Ballroom dances Mon 7-8 (classes)
Tue 7-8
- Can ask if people who want to

Rehearsal dates

4 messages

Athene Jensen [REDACTED]

Sun, Sep 11, 2011 at 6:48 PM

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Kia ora all,

Would love to see the cast so far this Wednesday at 5.30 in the New Place Theatre to pick up scripts and have a couple of read throughs.

Below I have the dates that are booked for rehearsal times. I am aware that some of you have other things happening on some of these times. Could you let me know which ones are impossible for you to turn up to and I will try to work the schedule around this. I will also try just to have you rehearsing once a week until later in October and November.

I have sent emails to some of the schools to find teenage males actors. If you know of any can you please let me know or encourage them to come along.

September

Monday 12th
Wednesday 14th
Monday 19th
Wednesday 21st
Monday 26th
Wednesday 28th

October

Wednesday 5th
Monday 17th
Wednesday 19th
Monday 24th
Wednesday 26th
Monday 31st

I am going to see if I can find a couple of dance classes for us to attend on the week/s with one or no rehearsal in Oct. Fun, fun, fun.

November

Wednesday 2nd
Monday 7th
Wednesday 9th

Production Week (November)

<https://mail.google.com/mail/?ui=2&ik=8f6e57027c&view=pt&search=...> 12/09/2011

Sunday 13th 10am to 6pm
Monday 14th 5.30pm to 9.30pm
Tuesday 15th 5.30pm to 9.30pm
Wednesday 16th 10am to 9.30pm
Thursday 17th all day
Friday 18th all day (Performance)
Saturday 19th all day (Performance)

Cheers guys and gals
AJ

[REDACTED] Sun, Sep 11, 2011 at 7:17 PM
To: Athene <athenejensen@gmail.com>

Ha ha, ignore my last request.

From: athenejensen@gmail.com
Date: Sun, 11 Sep 2011 18:48:54 +1200
Subject: Rehearsal dates
CC: [REDACTED]

[Quoted text hidden]

[REDACTED] Mon, Sep 12, 2011 at 11:35 AM
To: Athene Jensen <[REDACTED]>

Hi AJ

Just looking ahead,

September 19th, 21st and 26th are not great for me, would it be possible for me to miss these?

And Wed 26th Oct and Wed 2nd Nov I would prefer to have free as I have either my honours project due the next day (27th) or my exam on the 4th Nov which i need to study for.

But basically from November 5th onwards I am completely free and at your display!

Is there a rehearsal tonight?

Cheers

[REDACTED]
[Quoted text hidden]

[REDACTED] Mon, Sep 12, 2011 at 11:37 AM

No not tonight, Will start on Wednesday. Thanks for the dates. AJ

<https://mail.google.com/mail/?ui=2&ik=8f6e57027c&view=pt&search=...> 12/09/2011

M	19 Sept No script No Job Proton rehearsal with Catherine for 1 hour	20 Sept	21 Sept No script No Job Rick + Bethany done + Zoe Alice + Zoe Juno + Rick	22 Sept	23 Sept	24 Sept	25 Sept	26 Sept No script No Job No Zoe (6-30)	27 Sept	28 Sept No script No Job No Zoe (6-30)	29 Sept	30 Sept	1 Oct	2 Oct	3 Oct No script No Zoe (6-30)	4 Oct No script No Zoe (6-30)	5 Oct No script No Zoe (6-30)	6 Oct No script No Zoe (6-30)	7 Oct	8 Oct	9 Oct	10 Oct	11 Oct	12 Oct	13 Oct	14 Oct	15 Oct	16 Oct	17 Oct No script No Zoe (6-30)	18 Oct	19 Oct No script No Zoe (6-30)	20 Oct	21 Oct	22 Oct	23 Oct	24 Oct No script No Zoe (6-30)	25 Oct	26 Oct No script No Zoe (6-30)	27 Oct	28 Oct	29 Oct	30 Oct	31 Oct
T	27 Sept	28 Sept	29 Sept	30 Sept	1 Oct	2 Oct	3 Oct	4 Oct Complains 8 day	5 Oct No script No Zoe (6-30)	6 Oct	7 Oct	8 Oct	9 Oct	10 Oct	11 Oct	12 Oct	13 Oct	14 Oct	15 Oct	16 Oct	17 Oct	18 Oct	19 Oct	20 Oct	21 Oct	22 Oct	23 Oct	24 Oct No script No Zoe (6-30)	25 Oct	26 Oct No script No Zoe (6-30)	27 Oct	28 Oct	29 Oct	30 Oct	31 Oct								
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Rehearsal 14th Sept 5:30pm

- Give out scripts / characters / article
- Get dates cast can't make rehearsals
- Discuss convenient nights for dance classes
- Call for more young men (+ older)
- Discuss Creaghie (as Albert rather than Peter)

4pm - Text Alice sick, Jono has other rehearsal.
Alice picked up scripts for her and Jono

Rick came and read for role of Jimmy and said he'd like to take the role.

Clive was at another rehearsal and would like the role of Peter (read the part). Issues with rehearsals to sort.

Creaghie is Albert and the father of Penny.

Talked to the cast present and the two days in October (mondays) are fine for them to attend a dance class.

What we did.

Read through the script. I encouraged the crew to walk around while they were doing the reading. (I read in for characters not present or got others too.

I spoke to Jacques (narrator) and said that I want him to move around a lot so that he gets a sense of owning the stage. I said its OK for him during rehearsal to walk through a scene. I want him to get the feel of owning the stage and interacting with actors, audience + space. And time.

I showed some of the cast photos of the people I had interviewed. Nice for them to see that these were real people who had shared their stories.

At the end I selected a couple of scenes where the present crew could work opposite in the scenes.

I think it is important to create a warmth of feeling and acceptance among the cast as it is a feeling of comradeship that needs to come through in the stories.

I also want to get across the idea of being presenters of stories, re-presenting the story of the starlight. That each actor has an element in them that represents a part of the story as a whole.

Jobs to do.

- ✓ - Email Rick.
- ✓ - Email Clive (contact him)
- ✓ - Set up a facebook page.
 - Contact possible places to get actors given to me by Zoe + co (Alec homeschool group)
 - Get dates cast can't attend
 - Sort dance classes
 - Contact Kate re singing
- ✓ - Have emailed all about rehearsals for 19th + 21st

Scene break down

Prologue P. 2

Jimmy - Rick
Penny - Brittany

Scene 1 P. 2

Albert - Craighie
Peter - Clive

Scene 2 P. 4

Narrator - Jacques
Albert - Craighie

Scene 3 P. 5/6

James - Donald
Warren - Jano
Lillian - Zoe

Scene 4 P. 7

Band member 1. Aram
Band member 2. Marthias

Scene 5 P. 8

Warren - Jano
Jimmy - Rick

Scene 6 P. 10

Mother - Ruth
Father - Craighie
Penny - Brittany

Scene 7 P. 12

Warren - Jano
Frank - Matthew

Scene 8 P. 13 (14)

Lillian - Zoe
Nancy - Alice

Scene 9 P. 16

Peter - Clive
Albert - Craighie
Narrator - Jacques
Warren - Jono
Frank
Jimmy - Rick
Nancy - Alice
Lillian - Zoe
Henry

Scene 10 P. 17

Nancy - Alice
Penny - Brittany
Lillian - Zoe
Warren - Jono
Frank - Matthew
Jimmy - Rick
Others

Scene 11 P. 19

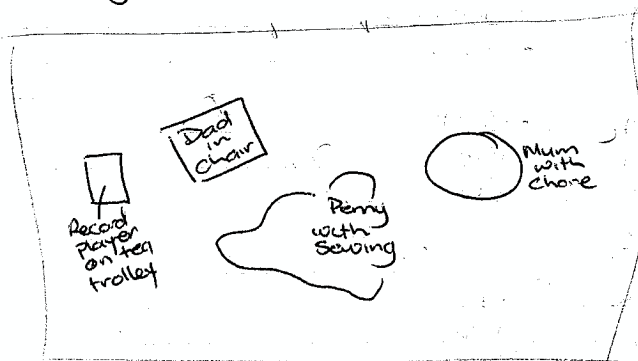
Nancy - Alice
Frank - Matthew
Henry - Donald

Scene 12 P. 21 P. 23 Closing Scene

Lillian - Zoe
Nancy - Alice
Warren - Jono
Penny - Brittany
Jimmy - Rick
Frank - Matthew
Henry - Donald

Rehearsal 19th Sept 5:30pm

- Scene 6 - Penny (Brittany) Mum (Ruth) Dad (Creaghie)
- Adjust fathers lines (Book instead of paper)
- Decide what mothers chore is
- Basic blocking
- Run through lines



Ideas for mothers job

What ~~it is~~ to ~~be~~ ~~it~~ ~~be~~ ~~she~~ ~~is~~ ~~peas.~~

Polishing cutlery

Peeling vege schucking peas.

What we did.

- Adjusted lines to read with more of a flow.
- Read through. I talked to the cast about the feel in the household. Mum + Dad been married 20 odd years, Mum + dad nurturing but influenced by war

→ Blocked scene 6 to give the cast an idea of its shape when they are learning lines.

- Ran through the scene about 10 times. One run was a speed run to stop them thinking and hit cues quickly.

- Talked about need to find timing of lines.

- Discussed bringing on own props.

jobs to do.

Props so far

→ Chair

→ Book

→ Dress pattern + material (scissors?)

→ Record player (on tea trolley)

→ Mums job ???

→ Image of inside 1950's house.

Ring mum and ask her about a household jobs in particular what wouldn't be ironed in the 1950s - only folded.

Rehearsal 21st Sept

- Rick has to be gone by 6:30.
- Work on scene: 5 Jimmy + Warren $\frac{1}{2}$ hr
- " " scene: 12 Penny + Jimmy. $\frac{1}{2}$ hr
- Work on scene 3 Warren + Lillian $\frac{1}{2}$ hr
- While scenes are being worked Zoe + Brittany run lines then John + Lillian run lines together.

John not able to make rehearsal. Zoe arrived but no one to run her lines with.

Worked on scenes 12 with Rick and Brittany.

Blocked scene 12 returning to seat after dance, him offering to walk her home and him dropping her at home.

Worked on voice projection and did some exercises in getting them physically close. Doing lines back to back then moving around doing lines while touching various parts of the body.

Scene 12 props → Chairs - old school
Closing scene → White picket fence
Image of 1950s house.

Saturday 24th Sept.

I have been having difficulty finding young male actors so have been looking for a solution to the two band members (scene 4).

One solution was to write the info into the script of others talking about them. Then it occurred to me I could film the scene and show it on the screen. This would mean I only have to find two lads for a day of filming.

I discussed this as a solution with William who said it might work.

Last night at one of the Hamilton fringe festival exhibitions I ran into Joe Citizen and asked if he had any students who may be keen to film it. He said no but he could.

When I mentioned filming in a field he was a bit horrified and suggested a black box for the sake of lighting. He said he could create a 1950s film feel that way.

I think this could work for a couple of reasons. 1) This is the only scene + story about actual band members. All other scenes are from those who attended. So it separates them and this scene from the rest. 2) It gives them a slightly removed sense as their experiences were different from those that attended. 3) If the film is made to look 1950s then it offers another sensory experience of the 1950s contributing to the feel of the time.

Draw back - Another technical aspect that could fluff off the night.
- Arranging the filming?

Mon, Sep 12, 2011 at 11:35 AM

To: Athene Jensen [redacted]

Hi AJ

Just looking ahead,

September 19th, 21st and 26th are not great for me, would it be possible for me to miss these?

And Wed 26th Oct and Wed 2nd Nov I would prefer to have free as I have either my honours project due the next day (27th) or my exam on the 4th Nov which i need to study for.

But basically from November 5th onwards I am completely free and at your display!

Is there a rehearsal tonight?

Cheers

Thu, Sep 15, 2011 at 11:37 AM

Reply-To: [redacted]
To: Athene Jensen [redacted]

Kia ora AJ!

I can squeeze in this Wednesday casting rehearsal but other than that I will be unavailable until the Monday rehearsal on the 26th of September with Fringe stuff sorry

Mon, Sep 19, 2011 at 10:40 AM

To: [redacted]

Hey AJ

just a few dates i cant do...p.s am i able to get a rehearsal shedual?

tues 27 spet and wed 28 spet after 6.30pm

Mon 3 october after 6.40pm

Saturday 8th october-Wedding

31st october-after 6.40pm-I can possibly get out of this if you need me to.

Im avilable after 3.30pm days during the week and before the times stated above.

Thu, Sep 15, 2011 at 7:59 PM

To: [REDACTED]

Athene,

Hi. Good to catch up with you yesterday. And pretty cosmic that I'd phoned you only a few hours before.

Anyway, just to confirm my availability, but I'd like to make a request. My wife is very understanding, but does tend (with some justification) to think that I spend too much time doing play rehearsals so, as I only have one short scene plus four lines in another, I wonder if I could be excused regular attendance at rehearsals. I'm happy to come to as many as necessary, and to keep in touch with the production progress, but if you could do without me as much as possible, particularly in the early stages, I'd be really grateful.

Many thanks, and I'll keep in touch.

Good wishes,
[REDACTED]

Sun, Sep 18, 2011 at 6:44 PM

Athene Jensen [REDACTED]

To: [REDACTED]

Dear [REDACTED]

That is fine. I will aim for an evening in early October for everyone to get together so I can get an idea of how it will run through and everyone can meet then would like to get you in from the 31 of October for a couple of rehearsals and then the production week which is from Sunday 13 Oct through to performances which are on Friday 18 Nov and Saturday 19 Nov. How does that sound to you?

Kind regards

AJ

[Quoted text hidden]

Sun, Sep 18, 2011 at 6:53 PM

To: Athene Jensen <[REDACTED]>

AJ,

Hi, and thanks for this. Stating the obvious (I think, but I never take anything for granted), you obviously mean Sunday 13 November. Don't bother to reply to this if I'm right. And, if so, yes, that's all fine. Happy to do whatever's necessary for you to feel confident about me, but would like seriously like to avoid Mondays before 5 November, and Wednesdays as far as possible.

Thanks and good wishes,
[REDACTED]

Tue, Sep 20, 2011 at 11:59 AM

To: [REDACTED]

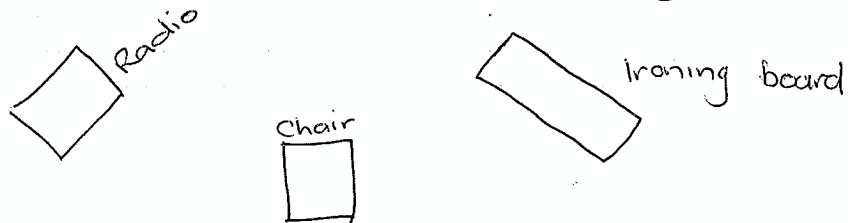
Hi there AJ,

Sorry I haven't got back to you, my dates for Fringe rehearsals have only just been confirmed (finally!!!!) and it is our tech run on Wednesday so that puts my out for this week. I will be free to rehearse as of next week as Fringe finishes this weekend for me. Really sorry about the late reply, things are pretty crazy at the moment, but should be back to normal next week.

Thanks,
[REDACTED]

Rehearsal 26th Sept

- Block scene 8 with Lillian and Nancy



Work with Zoe + Alice to block scene.

Jacque will need to roll out radio which suits his narration into this scene. The girls to carry out own props.

Alice to turn up radio when she hears Daddy Cool (Not tried - but I think Zoe will need to go and turn it down for the sake of the speech to be heard).

Got them working with doing speed lines then working the lines trying out different things.

Props.

Starch, iron, iron board, chair, radio/trolley, sweets, magazines, diary, bobby pins, pen.

Image for room: two single beds in room.

Jobs to do

Wintec - hair

Ring guy about dance lessons

Jaqui Wheeler [redacted] (tel her I know Zoe)

26 Oct books down.

Email Alice + Zoe Daddy Cool.

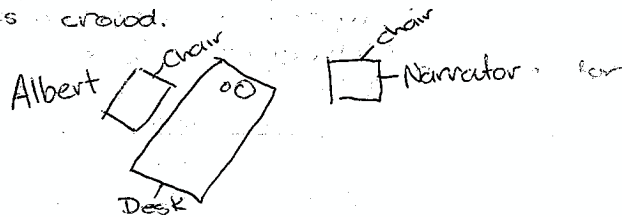
Alice - 10 (size 12 top)

Zoe - 8

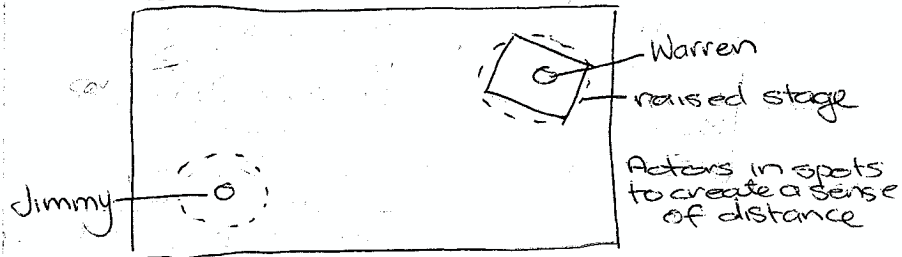
Rehearsal 28th Sept.

- Block scene 2 with Jacques + Craig
- Block scene 5 with Jano + Rick.

Scene 2: Jacques ill so blocked with Craig + used Jano. Jacques will have to work on how he addresses crowd.



Scene 5:



Worked on lines, hitting cues quickly. Tried Jimmy dragging his lines so Warren could talk over end but this made Jimmy sound whiny.

Scene looks good with distance + the different heights. Jimmy close to audience as many will relate to having to get chores done.

Props.

- Two old phones.
- No image.

Meeting with William

For those who are quiet - try getting them to perform angry or frustrated.
For Over acting - tell them not to act.

For Assessor - Script, description of where original material came from, and Methodology. Describe, don't defend. Let him know what my intention was.
- Narrator - scenes pictures of the narration - Dynamic Tableds⁽⁶⁾

Poster - Keep range of colours down

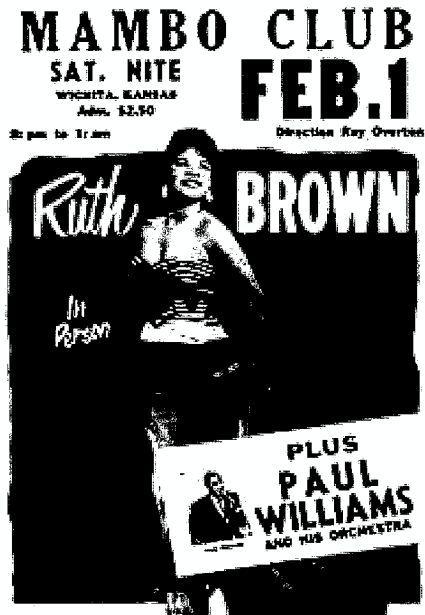
Programme

classy {
Front cover
Inside
Back cover
Inside back

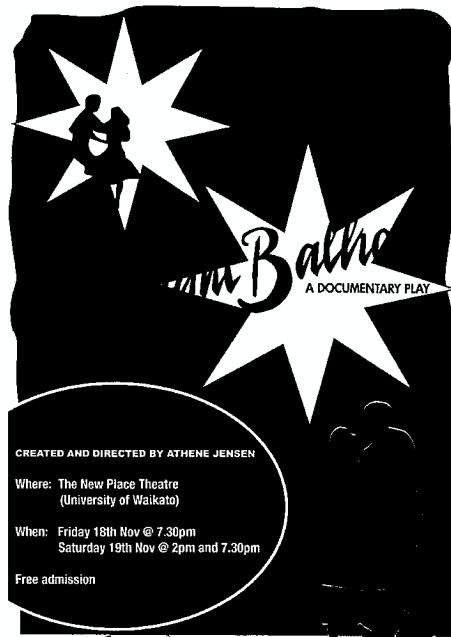
- Page acknowledgements
- Provide on A4
- 14 text (bold good)
- In word?
- 12 or 8 pages
- Directors note
- Williams page (durb bait paper)
- Historical summary
- Middle pages cast
- Can include a note on cast thanking them for their work
- Section acknowledging those who I interviewed (co-authors)



Poster ideas

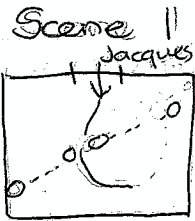


Inspiration for poster style



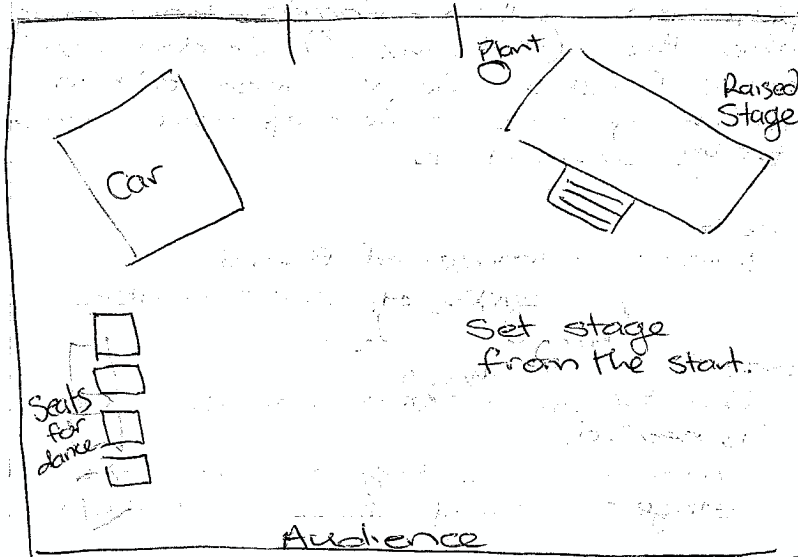
Final poster

Rehearsal 5 Oct 2012



Main st image
Alexandra race course image
Starlight lights coming on

Scene 8



Need - 3 chairs / Bushman

Started with scene 1.

Peter, Albert + Narrator

Narrator - enter middle

- Peter + Albert move to sides

- narrator speaks

- As he gets to end Peter + Albert walk to stage right ish. When narrator finished speaking - they start

- At end P + A shake hands + that frames Narrator entering to speak again.

Scene 2.

Albert + one/two others bring on table
+ 2 chairs, glass + bottle sherry.
@ end Table + chairs removed.

Scene 3.

On "James Gordon" (in narrators speech)
James rolls out tea trolley with record
player on. Lillian + Warren dance out
after them (waltz music?) Gordon instructs
music finishes + Gordon ~~instruct~~ turns
to change music - Rest of scene - leave
trolley where it is.

Scene 4

Narrator - images of Bands
Video of Band members

Scene 5

Narrator speak from wherever he
is seated.
Warren + Jimmy stage - Warren elevated
stage - Jimmy stage front right.

Scene 6

While narrator speaks Nether +
Penny bring out own props, someone
brings out feathers chair.
At end cast take off own props
while narrator speaks Frank + Jimmy
take their place.
Narrator rolls off tea trolley (swap for radio)

Scene 7. ?

Frank + Jimmy
Frank + Jimmy
Frank + Jimmy
Frank + Jimmy

Scene 8

Rolls tea trolley out with radio on.
Lillian + Nancy follow with their
props.

@ end L + Nancy take own props
someone to get trolley.

Scene 9 - Narrator to appear on raised
stage.

Props + Images

Prologue: Picket fence, I: 1950s house Ring + Ring box

Scene 1: ~~Picket fence~~ I: Hamilton St. / Alexandra racing Club.

Scene 2: 2 chairs, Table/Desk, glass, sherry bottle

I: office room

Scene 3: Record player, trolley

Scene 4: I: Bands, video

Scene 5: 2 phones

Scene 6: Record player/trolley, Dads chair, washing basket + clothes, Material/sewing, pattern, book for Dad. Table for basket.

I: Inside 1950s house.

Scene 7: Car, News paper, bread crumbs, coins.

Scene 8: starch, iron, iron board, chair, radio, trolley, sweets, magazines, diary, bobby pins, pen

I: Bedroom/dorm room.

Scene 9: Bottles beer. Plant. -Bushy.

Scene 10: chairs

Scene 11: Beer crate? Bottles of beer. Flash light.

Scene 12:

Closing scene: House image, white picket fence.

Car: [REDACTED]
1938 Essex metal floors - Panel.
Essex

Future rehearsal dates and dance class details

1 message

Athene Jensen

Sat, Oct 8, 2011 at 10:34 AM

Hello my darlings....

Firstly thank you for the work you put in on Wednesday. I found it really useful as director and appreciated your "can do" attitudes.

This Monday 10th October I have arranged a dance class at Planet Dance. The address is 169 London Street and the class starts at 7.00 - 8.00 Ballroom/Latin (Beginner). I have informed the dance instructor that we will be there. Can I ask that you be prompt as others will be attending the lesson also and it would be impolite to hold the class up.

The class costs \$12 (full-time students \$10). I am happy to pay as it is something we need for the production, but if you feel you could contribute that would be great. If you are a student please bring your ID so I can get the discount. I am looking forward to it, should be fun. Here is the web link if your interested in having a look <http://www.planetdance.co.nz/index.html>

The following dates are the future rehearsal calls.

Monday 10 October - Dance lesson at Planet Dance
Wednesday 19th Oct - 5.30 New Place
Wednesday 26th Oct - 5.30 New Place
~~Monday 31 Oct - 5.30 New Place~~
Wednesday 2nd Nov - 5.30 New Place
Monday 7th Nov - 5.30 New Place
Wednesday 9 Nov - 5.30 New Place
Sunday 13 Nov - 10am New Place
Production week 14 - 17 will depend on how good we are
Friday 18 Nov - evening performance
Saturday 19 Nov - afternoon and evening performance.

I have the dates and times that people have given me that they can not attend so I am aware of this.

Once again thank you all for your work.

Love and mung beans
AJ



Athene Jensen [REDACTED]

Query: Dance for a play production

6 messages

Athene Jensen [REDACTED]

Mon, Sep 12, 2011 at 9:39 PM

Kia ora,

My name is Athene Jensen (AJ) and I am currently studying for my Masters in Theatre Studies at the University of Waikato.

For my masters thesis I am producing a documentary play about the old Starlight Ballroom in Hamilton. I have interviewed 23 individuals who attended the Starlight during the 1950s and have created a working script that captures the essence of the time and utilises the stories these people have told me. The period I have chosen to depict is loosely based in the year of 1958 when the traditional dances and rock 'n' roll were both featured at the Starlight Ballroom.

I am contacting you with two enquiries. The first is that I would like my cast (of up to 15 persons) to have a dance lesson and get a taste of rock 'n' roll dancing. I was wondering if it would be able to arrange an evening where we came to one of your dance classes/evenings or if there was some other option for giving them a basic experience of rock 'n' roll. I am aware it would take more than one class to become competent but I would like them to get a taste of it initially.

The second enquiry is whether or not you have a few dancers aged between 16 and 24 who would possibly like to be involved in the dance scene in the production and show case their rock 'n' roll skills. I also still have speaking parts for 4 men in this age group if they are interested. Rehearsals are Monday and/or Wednesday night (dancers would not have to attend all the rehearsals) and the production is on the 18th and 19th of November.

Thank you for your time and I look forward to your response,
Kind regards
Athene Jensen

Carl Gordon [REDACTED]

Mon, Sep 12, 2011 at 11:03 PM

Reply-To: Carl Gordon [REDACTED]

To: Athene Jensen [REDACTED]

Hi Athene,

I used to go to the Starlight Ballroom to learn ballroom dancing, and rock 'n' roll :)

1. Yes, I'd be delighted to teach the cast some dancing at my studio. We don't do regular rock 'n' roll classes, but we could arrange a time to do that. However, we do have regular ballroom classes. The timetable is on www.planetdance.co.nz

2. I can ask if there are people who might want to perform in your production.

Kind regards
Carl Gordon

From: Athene Jensen <athenejensen@gmail.com>
To: planetdance@xtra.co.nz
Sent: Monday, 12 September 2011 9:39 PM
Subject: Query: Dance for a play production

Athene
[Quoted text hidden]

Carl [REDACTED]
To: Athene Jensen [REDACTED]

Sat, Oct 8, 2011 at 12:42 PM

Dear Athene,

I'm looking forward to meeting you and the cast too.

Kind regards

Carl

*Planet Dance
838 0096
169 London St
Horn*

Starlight

3 messages

[REDACTED]
To: Athene Jensen [REDACTED]

Thu, Oct 6, 2011 at 9:42 AM

AJ,

Hi. I just wanted to thank you for your consideration last evening, in letting me get away on time. A great rehearsal. Definitely the best organised and most effective I've ever done. I live quite close to Uni, so if I can get away by soon after 6, I'm happy to come to as many 5.30 Monday and Wednesday rehearsals as you need me to. Just let me know, eh.
Thanks again and good wishes.

PS. I see you've changed your email address since a couple of years ago. Should I delete the old one?

Athene Jensen [REDACTED]
To: [REDACTED]

Sat, Oct 8, 2011 at 9:14 AM

Dear [REDACTED]

Thank you for that feedback I really appreciate it and thank you for being able to come to the rehearsals. I will email later this weekend with finalised rehearsals and make sure we work your scenes first...

Yes do delete the old email.

Regards

AJ

[Quoted text hidden]

[REDACTED]
To: Athene Jensen <athenejensen@gmail.com>

Sun, Oct 9, 2011 at 8:52 AM

Dear Athene,

Thanks for this. One small request. The week-end of the performances (18-19/11/11) I also have a [REDACTED] - on the Sunday (20/11).

I know I'm only a very small bit-player, and I really am happy to fit in with the needs of the over-all project, but if it was possible for me to be free on the Wednesday (16/11), it would help me a lot.
Many thanks and good wishes,

[REDACTED]
[Quoted text hidden]

Rehearsals on ~~24~~¹⁹ + 26 Oct.

Wed ~~24~~¹⁹ Oct

First run right through. Nice to see it will work although there are a lot of wrinkles that need ironing out. There are a lot of scene changes with props coming on and off. Need to practice these so they are smooth.

Wed 26 Oct.

William came to watch this evening 4 actors absent - so disjointed as some scenes couldn't be rehearsed.

Williams suggestions.

- Keep the 'illustration scenes' centre stage to create an intimate feel.
- No problem keeping props to the sides of the stage + bringing them on from there. - utilise Jacques for this.
- Energy comes from the voice. Need to get more energy into the voice.
- Everyone needs to slow down.

Mon 31 Oct - Rehearsal Plan.

- Take as many props as I have + or can fit in the car.
- Sort with cast the two dress rehearsal nights in production week.
- Get the cast to put their names in the programme.
- Rehearse + block + get the flow to scenes 1 to 8 + 11.

Prologue - Get Jimmy + Penny to play a bit when coming out. Cut the knee bend. @ and try getting them to run back into house - Jacques to remove the fence ^{when finished speaking.}
_{stage right}

Scene 1: Get them to come to centre stage - slow speech down.

Scene 2: Get ~~Jacques~~ ^{Narrator} to bring on table ^{From Stage right} and set it down before he starts speaking. Try with.

Scene 2: While ~~Jacques~~ ^{Narrator} speaking lean on the desk. ~~Craig~~ ^{Albert} bring on chairs and make a point of moving ~~Jacques~~ ^{Narrator} to correct side of table - Albert go + get his bottle + glass. _(can even give him his chair to place)

After "Helps the dancers glide" while narrator speaking Craig remove glass + bottle - come back for chairs + tap ~~Jacques~~ ^{Narrator} to get off. ~~Jacques~~ ^{Narrator} remove table at end of speaking.

Scene 3: James pushes record player on from back stage, Warren + Lillian to dance on behind them. (While rehearsing prologue + scenes 1 + 2 These cast + Ruth to go + sort a choreography for this) at end of * Record player stays in place ~~for~~ this scene.

Scene 4: Narrator + Film

Scene 5: Boys carry on own phones while Narrator speaks. Carry off own phones

Scene 6: Narrator sets fathers chair. Penny + Mother bring on own props.

Penny make a point of collecting up her sewing, finishing off + putting needle away. Take her sewing to record player with her. Rolls off at the end. Mother removes her props Father removes his chair.

While Narrator speaks Warren + Frank take their place. (Newspaper on the chair already).

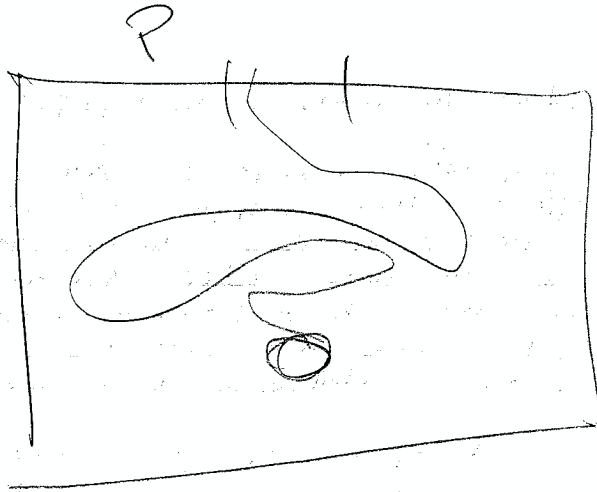
Scene 7. At end of scene replace floor boards + bring beers to the front.

Scene 8 (After quack & rock + roll start - gives ^{narrator} Jacques time to roll out radio - can give impression that is listen to music - can nod to sound box or move forward + stop to indicate ~~end~~ of start of speech so music goes down

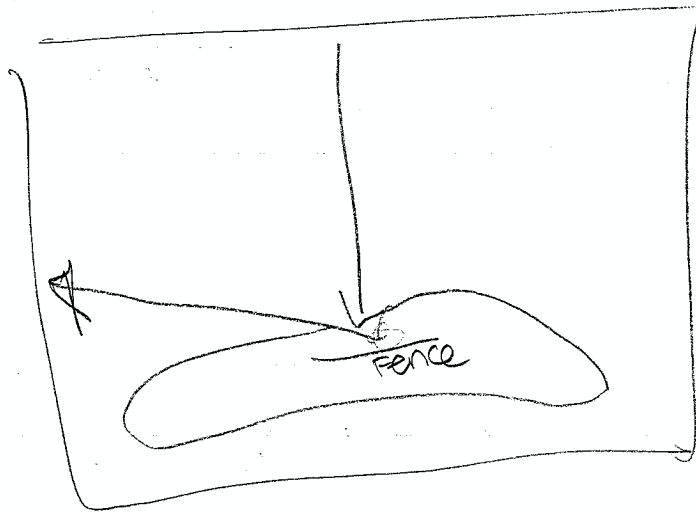
Nancy + Lillian to bring on own props.

At end Nancy place her props on radio trolley
+ roll off - Lillian carry hers off (stage right)
Narrator start to speak come to collect
chair use the time after "You ever seen one"
to take chair off + position himself
in place for scene nine, start again on
"They go...." (Polonaise music here?)

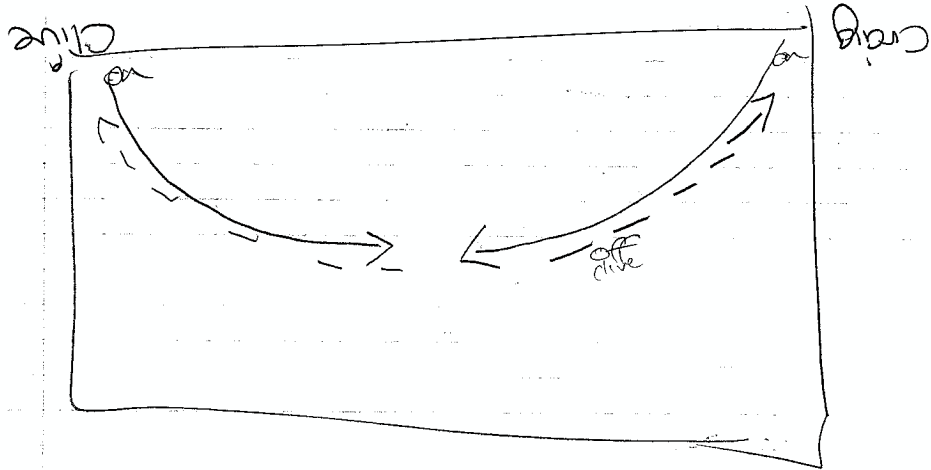
Scene 11: Frank pop the top off the bottle takes
a drink, wipes before handing to Penny.



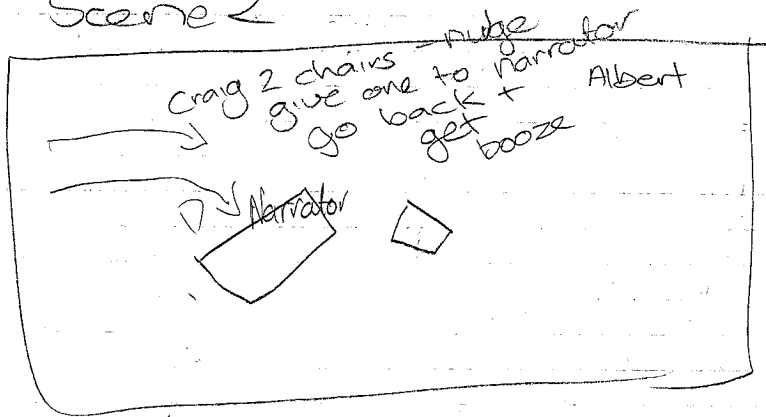
Scene 1
Narrator



Scene 1



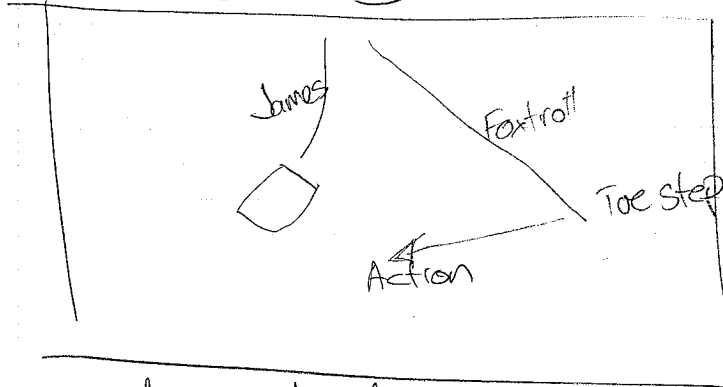
Scene 2



Craig takes away glass
Comes back for chairs - knocks
Narrator

of

Scene 3



at end of scene James leave.

Warren + Lillian freeze.

Narrator lines - pushes Warren off
- kisses hand + spins Lillian off.

Scene 4 - Film

Jacque continues to introduce film

After film Narrator on stage-stage left
in spot

Narrator walks forward - Warren steps
up back.

Scene 5 Jimmy + Warren
pick up phones + walk to spots

Done late Nov 4th - about 7:30
Done working Sun 13th till 4:30
No Zoe 2 Noo

Tue 1st Nov

* need.

Discussion about Filming

3 hay bales, Amp, 2 guitars

* - Extra hay @ home.

- Lapel mics (need shirts to hide) * Singlets, black/white
one in gumboots - other bare feet.

* Shirts - avoid - Red, black, dots + stripes.
- collect a range to check through monitor.

* Need extension leads.

Sun 6th Nov - 9ish AM. Boys may have to sit
round while I go get J

→ Borrow van would be helpful.

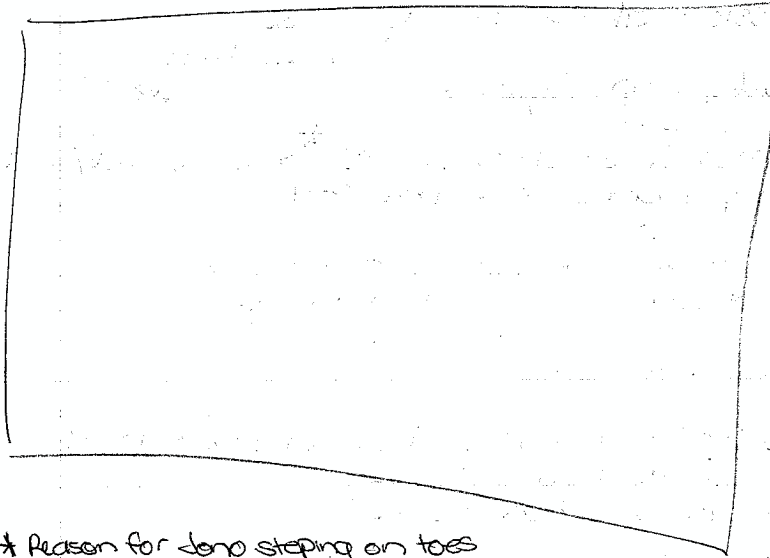
→ Send scene to Joe so he can get a feel for
it.

Discussed with J the feel, where it sits
in the play - what I am trying to achieve
with this.

These are the 'gods' the band that everyone
went to see. Yet they're still just guys.
Instead of putting them on the obvious
stage it is them in a field rehearsing
and experiencing all the same stuff as
what the rest of the characters experience.
The angst of youth.

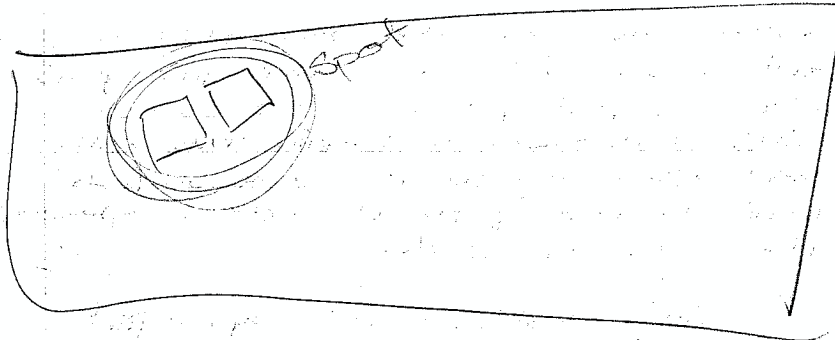
The filming separates them. They are part
of the reason the others are attending the
ballroom. However we show them in a
'real' human episode.

Scene 6



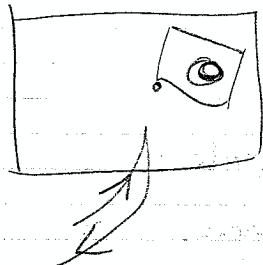
* Reason for doing stepping on toes
slow, slow, quick, quick - turn.

Scene 7



Scene 9

Lindy Hop?



Scene 10

order

- * Dancers
- * Penny
- * Albert + Peter
- * Ruth
- * Boys
- * Jacques

Song till end

Girls come out

Scenes

Fr^o 18th 2 [REDACTED]

2 sets Rock n Roll dancers
1 or sets of waltzers.

Meeting with William - 3 Nov.

* [redacted] - assessor.

→ Hicup with printing.

Don't worry too much about template.

- Examine after Friday night show.

Palmer rags - on the farm
jeans wide leg - baggy.

Fannelt / brushed cotton shirts.
William will bring in sweendry.

→ Programme - Mon + Tues. to William.

→ Cover - inside blank - inside back Blank.
Cover back - Red or Black - Waikato
white logo centre.

William will send me ~~set~~
waikato page. (14 pitch)
(Back page)



★ Met with Alec

- Will come Sun 6th to filming with Jo
- Will attend Mon Rehearsal
- Stars OK - maybe 2 mirror balls.

Day of Filming Sun 6th Nov.

Collingwood St opp Dara 9am
R-Block - Moving image.

Extension leads (9 or 10 - multiboxes)

Not domestic.

8 → 10 moving cast + gear

10 → 11 setting lighting

11 → 2:30 filming

2:30 → 6 gear + cast

6pm → 2am editing

20hr day = 45 second film.

Filming - involves far more setting up of lights than I imagined. Rim lights etc.
Interesting seeing difference it makes + discussing with camera/lighting technician

- Learnt in the editing that it is helpful if some lines + actions are maintained + used by actors.
- Different to theatre acting - everything is small + internalizing works.
- Had some difficulty with actors announcing + sound of rain on roof.

Editing - Long process. Selecting pieces of film, working from wide shot in closer, cut away then wide again.

- Some sound ruined by rain. To see if sound technician can master.

Long but calm and eventempered day.
Fun in fact.

Monday 7th of Nov Rehearsal plan.

- Lighting technician to come see about lighting.
- Run through ~~the~~ once or twice
- Time run of play.
- Work on individual scenes while working with scenes on stage others to go run lines + work on blocking
- First individual scenes to work on those with Frank + Nancy characters.
- Explain to cast will run for lighting then work on scenes → then run again.

Stepped in at the Hamilton Operatic Society costume hire and they gave us or let us take a huge range of costumes for the cast to try on.

Costumes

Donald.

Cop Jacket/hat } own black pants
Jacket
Shirt

Clive

Swamy
jeans
Bennie
white T

Matt

Dark green surtjacket
white shirt

Own ~~Blue~~ stubies

Blue shirt
own pants
Creeky tie

Brittany

Blue / light
Blue / Dark

Rick

Green
Yellow
Grey
Jacket
shirt
Pants

Alice

Black
Peach-check

Jane

Black pants own
Red jacket
white #sk
own white shirt

Ruth

pink/grey/yellow button dress
pink + black swing dress

Zoe - AKA LILS

black/green chiffon dress
Asian style green dress

Craighie

Blue jacket.

2nd run of the night

- Jacques chair
- Craigie - pour drink
- Craigie - Dancers slide - good follow through Jaque
- Jaque & Zoe hand kiss Jaques need to see that look
- Rick phone - getting louder - still need louder
Jono phone - text but slower.
- Jaque - great looking when saying a new dress - could even gesture.
- Love Penny family scene. (Ruth need more clothes?)
- Car scene - all good
- Nancy open diary to diff page can see
- Lillian good idea put iron down to move dress before she comes
- Nancy take trolley off through middle.
- Jono not quite so rapey when looking at the crowd.
- Clive - I like the big Peter character
- On dance floor its good how you engaging with each other
- Rick speak up
- When say going for wee - Jono look for engaged person

Rick + Brittany in rock dance don't
forget to

~~B.~~
You are all fun in the rock n roll dance
- great feel, ~~At~~ the moment

- Nice alicia when you getting dragged
off looking back
- ~~Alicia~~ Brit + Rick more of a reaction
when catch

Rehearsal Plan for Wed 9th Nov

- ⇒ Dance instructor coming 6.30 till 7.30
 - Waltz scene
 - Donald (slow slow - quick quick)
what does he say for the turn.
 - show Rock n Roll scene.

= Jaques Ronnie Sundin P.2 ^{change} _{memo}

Zoe - starch line

Craig giving Jaque chair

Craig drink timing

"Reverse Rock turn"

Craighie

Donald lower voice on active

Brittany don't turn to far back

Ruth you can talk



email
Carl about
the Gordon.

Zoe - → If not acting for
Matt help pick out vocals.
Clive + Ruth - waltz step.

Plan for Sun 13th Rehearsal.

Proposal - Fine
Play with diff - Actual proposal needs work
Music ideas x4 take time - look in eyes a bit.

Scene 1 - Craig + Clive ✓

Scene 2 - Albert + Narrator - work this

Scene 3 - Dance class - timing with music +
Reverse rock turn
- Counting dance

Scene 4 - Film

Scene 5 - Phone Call - Run a few times for ^{there own} order.

Scene 6 - Family scene ✓

Scene 7 - Ducks - Newspaper line
- Duck
- Timing - setting up duck scene in beginning

Scene 8 - Lillian + Nancy - Alice's dancing.

Scene 9 - Boys walking on - Music + timing etc + girls
- choreograph + weaving

Scene 10 - ~~Scene~~ Whole scene

Scene 11 - ✓

Scene 12 - Whole scene

~~Scene~~ Closing scene - How are we ^{Timing + lighting} going to finish

Cast call - Rock n Roll

Scenes

Proposal: - Play with different music ideas (x4)
- Actual proposal

Scene 1. ✓

Scene 2. - Albert + Narrator. - Placement of chair ✓
- Drinking ✓
- Pace ✓

Scene 3. - Dance scene (lesson) - timing with music + reverse
rock turn
- counting

Scene 4. - Film

Scene 5. - Phone call - Run so boys can cement their order.
- slower over mentioning ducks so audience gets it in scene 7.

Scene 6. ✓ Elvis track - try 2 diff ones.

Scene 7. Ducks - Newspaper line (Not reading the times)
- Duck
- Timing - setting up the duck catch - bread crumbs etc.

Scene 8. Lillian + Nancy - work on dancing.

Scene 9. Boys walking on - Music + timing - gals
- choreograph while think

Scene 10. Whole thing

Closing - Timing + lighting
- How to finish

Run with clothing changes.

Cast call, rock n roll.

Jobs

- * Hang stars
- * Paint car?
- * Iron clothing that needs ironing
- * Pack staging into carriers
Try using dividers
- * Set own clothes on the racks
- * Clean fly spots off fence.
→ give a little moss on it.

Direction

- * Talk to Craigie about what he needs in scene 2.
- * Zoe - keep the attitude
had pull it back
- * Clive + ruth waltz step
- * Ben + ruth swing
- * Matt - run through some vocal exercises with Kirk
- * ~~Ben~~

Notes for dress run on Sun 13 rehearsal.

Brit + Rick - Kiss

Kill the street sounds in scene 1. ♂

Put chair down - something like this

Albert scene 2 - No ashtray - no agar
Oh -
Makes the dancers glide.

Craig don't stack the chairs

Nice hold Lillian + Jono
Nice spin.

Phone - Good volume Rick

Look @ Ruth when doing.

Car scene - Need to be there
same time

Bread. coins - top pocket.
Just ~~do~~ Matt go for it.
Bottle up by seat.

Lillian Dress Set in in right way
Good - waiting for music to go down
before saying

Going in Jono tie?
Rick tie?

Curls - Nice coming →
Albert + Peter on together

Nice ruth
Look theres robert - Ben

Jaque - not sitting

Rick + Brit - OK looking at others
odd sly look an grin at
each other.

Clive + Jaque - Don't st.

Frank + Nancy - go straight to the
car.

Good f

Nice Lillian

John -

Dance scene looking lovely

Lillian - Loved the hand to face

Get your ^{get your coat} things - rather than stuff.

Hope Your happy

Well I can't - laugh at your
insult joke

Jacques - Really warm - I like you
+ connect

Start the music as they enter
Credit glances

8"

- For Assessment
 - Script
 - Description of where original material came from
 - Methodology
 - What is my intention
 - Narrator - scenes pictures of the narration
 - Dynamic tableaux (50)

The Starlight Ballroom - A documentary Play is based on the stories of people who attend, performed at and worked at the ^{Hamilford} Starlight Ballroom dance hall in the 1950s.

I interviewed 22 people from this era and used a set of questions designed to jog their memories about various aspects of their lives at the time, including what they could recall of the Starlight Ballroom + any experiences they had there.

Much of the information was repetitive but useful in establishing definitive themes + understanding the essence & feel of the time. Some interesting stories were told and kept in the editing process.

The twenty odd hours of recorded interviews was ~~then~~ edited down to 4 hrs of interesting stories + dialogue. These were then transcribed.

which make up the dynamic tableaux

personal impressions

③ The stories ^{being allocated to 3 male + 3 female} + ~~characters~~ of the interviewees suited ~~using~~ stock or generic characters, ~~These~~ along with supporting characters to create scenes.

As a storyteller, I utilised the ~~idea~~ of using a narrator dialogue given to me by the floor manager at the Starlight at the time. He knew all the comings and goings of the place + those that attended.

② His character makes the perfect narrator ^{and} a vehicle to tell the story. ~~He is both~~ He breaks the fourth wall by speaking ^{manipulating steps} + connecting to the audience ^{and out of} about also steps into the action on stage.

~~During rehearsals I encouraged him to think of the stage as his own, that he so he could set it so he became comfortable moving between storyteller and actor.~~

and a series of dynamic tableaux.

① To organise & create a script, I designed a frame work that used a narrator to ~~give~~ tell the story of the origins of the Starlight Ballroom, and a possibly typical Saturday leading up to and attending the ~~Starlight Ballroom~~ dance. ~~The story~~ The script utilises interviewees stories and other documentation I researched about the time + place.

My initial draft of the script was completely verbatim from the ^{interviewees} transcripts and various documentation. Although the ~~case~~ idea was there it was ~~it was~~ ~~this process~~. It didn't work. It relied far too heavily on the narrator, ^{there was} no character development, and very little dialogue other than the narrator. After discussion with William Farnham (my supervisor) I enlisted creative licence and reworked the script out that maintained much of the interviewees dialogue ~~but~~ and essence of the time but was more suitable and pleasing as a theatrical performance.

The play is created first and foremost to be presented back to those that shared their stories. It is about a particular time and place and includes real peoples experiences. It was therefore important to me ^{that this} to be open + transparent about ~~this~~. I have ~~therefore~~ used the ^{outline} narrator to introduce the play + how it was produced. I have characters bring on their own props ~~so that they~~ ~~transport~~ in the hope that they are seen as ^{a story} actors telling ^{and that will be} of a story, that belongs to the audience, ~~not to those on stage~~ as their story.

^{recognised}
^{by the}

Throughout the process I have kept in mind Peter Cheesman's statement, "You can't write documentary - it's a contradiction in terms. You can only edit documentary."

The selection of images, music, costume + props is designed to not only complement to ~~the~~ set a sense of the time but to trigger memories + responses for those that lived during the time. ~~Where possible original recordings have been utilized. Recordings of artists mentioned in the play have been used.~~

I like to think of The Starlight Ballroom. a documentary play as a fusion of documentary theatre and storytelling.

I hope you enjoy it.

Tue
~~Mon~~ 15th Nov Dress rehearsal
Rick + Brit - slow down to quick?
Jacque set chair back a bit.
Set the record player.
But were forg
Jacque
Love the jerkin
Dont want you going out - pause before.

Rehearsal feedback

1 message

William Farrimond <[redacted]>

Wed, Nov 16, 2011 at
9:20 AM

To: Athene Jensen <[redacted]>

Dear AJ,

Thank you for the opportunity to observe your rehearsal last evening. The work I saw reflects a very good attention to detail in all aspects of the production. The performers appeared responsive, confident, and comfortable in their roles, and your design of the performance space provides an effective and attractive frame for the story you are presenting - appropriate to both the content and the style of the presentation.

You asked me for a comment about the film clip - I think it has its place in your work, contributing further stimulus to the overall performance montage.

Best wishes for your remaining rehearsals - I look forward to the performance on Friday.

Kind regards,
William

6.05 Wed 16th Nov Dress rehearsal
Prologue - To fast

Jacque-Fish

Jacque set the table forward so
you don't have to move it out
from wall.

Craig - try not to say ah - sorry
if you

Donald make sure record
player round right way

Hillian - great reaction - looks surprised
by what you did.

~~Donald set the record player
on Jacque.~~

Resident Band.

Spot on Rick - Needs to be
there for him to find

Nice save Jacque

Penny slow down in lounge
scene
Penny louder.

Like the come on when she's
slow - very subtle.

John money in top pocket.

Nice freeze at end.

Girls remember to stand
in angled line

Rick - House may have Nancy
then "How'd you
get on."

Brit no looking
Putt - him down.

Walk out with touch on ground

Donald There go our beers.

Lovely car + walk scene.

Final jobs for Friday

- ✓ ~~Pick up alternative film edits from Joe.~~
- ✓ ~~Pick up Jacques jacket~~
- ✓ ~~Poster wall - outside venue.~~
- ~~Reserved seats~~
- Final check bathroom scene lighting
- X ~~Plant grass - Decided against.~~
- ~~\$20 to Alex for p.m. lights.~~
- ~~Pick up programmes.~~

Thur 17th Nov - Day before first performance.

Barr needing a couple of pin lights to reflect off the mirror balls. I am pleased that we are where we are with the performance.

The last couple of weeks have been a whirlwind.

Props

All the props have come together nicely and reflect an authenticity and hopefully will trigger memories and reminiscences for those there ~~during~~ who attended the Starlight. I have set the play around 1958. The Waikato beer labels are the 1957 labels (copies of), I have magazines + newspapers from 1958, chairs that were manufactured during the era + restored, cotton reels that are wooden, radios + record players that were produced during the 50s, an early iron with a one only setting as far as possible. I have tried to be authentic. Most props were sourced from trademe, second hand shops & recycle centres.

costumes

The costumes were hired and Coethy from the Operatic Society. The centre was extremely helpful. She allowed me to take a huge selection for my cast to try on. I let my cast (especially the girls) select the dresses they liked as I wanted them to feel good in what they were wearing. Because I had selected actors who suited their roles they actually selected costumes appropriate to their characters. ~~I gave a~~ AS far as the girls went I just had to approve.

their selections. The guys needed a little more direction as their roles ~~very much~~ character defined more than the girls what they should wear. I sourced all their "day" shirts from second hand shops as this was a cheaper option. The costumes selected were definitely based on presenting their characters.

Music - With the help of Felix the sound design & technician I have used as much New Zealand produced music as possible. An invaluable warning from him was not just to use the music for the hell of it.

The music before the show is all New Zealand artists from the era. The music used during the play is based on artists or songs mentioned by interviewees. The only use of other music is to set mood or scene - only twice I think.

We ~~created~~ sourced a rnsa add as this was used by the Lever brothers ~~for the~~ to sponsor the Lever hit parade. Unfortunately with the christchurch earthquake sound recordings I had hoped to source were unable to be retrieved from the damaged building. Thus we had to put together the best we could.

We were able to find original recordings of the Sattelites + the Reetaz, two musical groups.

that played at the starlight and of whom I had interviews singers from. Other sound effects were used sparingly I started with street sounds for a scene + just found it distracting so out of it. I love the duck killing sequence + sound - very effective. Again I am very fortunate to have had a great sound technician who has a good ear for being minimal but meaningful. He was able to be at rehearsals for the last few weeks so cast were able to work with ~~these~~ the sound from early on.

Oh I forgot to mention the car. Sourcing 1950s car seats proved extremely difficult. I finally found some out the back of an artists studio. They were wet, covered in dirt + had kaikua grass growing out of them. Amazing what sugar soap + spray paint can do. Felix made the platform for them to sit on and I found an old floor panel at the Riverlea wreckers - Vala - a car.

Dancing. Whilst some of the cast are able to waltz + work out a rock n roll step or two... some just had two left feet. I showed a ballroom dance lesson for them to get the idea of what ~~was~~ the old dances were. Carl Gordon from Dance Planet was extremely helpful. He has given his own time since to come to rehearsals and patiently help the

cast and I create a couple of fairly convincing dance scenes. We kept it simple but made it work. I had real problems with a scene where everyone enters the starlight. They were entering an empty hall. The solution came with a local Raglan lad who does swing dancing. He found a partner and they enter to the Satellites "Rave on" after which the cast can enter at their (timed) leisure. The song is too fast for swing so our sound guy slowed it down and it looks fabulous.

One of the main challenges is co-ordinating up to 15 cast and technicians. Getting the cast together for full runs is like pulling hens teeth. Because all are volunteering I am extremely grateful for the time + effort they put in but my need for ~~perfect~~ getting it right requires everyone to be there. Some cast turn up to every rehearsal while others have other commitments. I am learning it is the nature of the beast.

Ultimately I am really pleased with what has been created, as William + some of the cast have said "I have a play". But what matters more is that I have a play that I am proud to put my name to and I am proud to give back to the people I have interviewed.

Fri 18th Nov - Opening night Spanish

Well everything is done, the stage is set and all that awaits is for the actors and the audience to create theatre.

I chose to name seats for those that have shared their stories as it is their gig + they are the guests of honour. The rest of the reserved seats just have 'reserved' written on them. We are 10 off a full house - yay!!!

I am totally confident that my actors know what they are doing and will do it to the best of their ability. I will just run through with the two dancers their cue line and remind them about talking to Ruth then freezing after the lookie lookie dance.

Notes about The Starlight Ballroom- A documentary play season.

General comments and observations.

At times I would have liked the cast to have spoken up more; occasionally lines were lost in a mumble or to the back of the stage.

Generally the cast were very good at taking direction and tweaking aspects I wanted corrected.

I selected cast in roles that suited aspects of their personality. The Jimmy character a great example of this. Members of the audience commented that they could feel his awkwardness which translated well to his stage character and made him endearing.

I believe the performance was entertaining and had enough action to keep the audience going.

A question raised by my assessor was about the presence of conflict and whether the play was too nice (not his words but the gist I got). I believe there was a series of little conflicts. Inner conflicts "Will anyone ask me to dance" (Penny), conflict between generations "You can't listen to that..." (Penny's dad), conflict in boy meets girls or at least tries to, conflict about what is right and wrong (going out to a car with a boy) and so on. One of my work colleagues sent me a text saying, "Well done. So goo! Loved the stories and the connections. I could feel the angst and awkwardness of guy meets girl in the 50s. Also loved that members of the audience were nodding and saying 'yes' during the play" (Kathy). An example of audience reception of the conflict present.

As for it being too 'nice', I had made a conscientious decision to do this. The reason for this was that most of the interviewees viewed the time as a special time, a nostalgic and magical time of their youth. There were 'juicy' memories and stories told but some were off the record and I had been asked not to relay, while others would have broken the illusion that some of the interviewees felt about the time. It was not my intention by any means to confront these people with sordid memories but to translate the magic that many felt and provide a space for these people to remember and relive these times that were so special to them. In saying this I realise that there is a place for these stories as they are a valid part of our history. I think if I was to address the fact that human nature is the same no matter what the generation, it would be interesting to raise these points such as drinking, pre-marital sex and adultery and how they exist in any time in human existence. But that is for another project.

How effective was it in meeting my intentions? My intention was to write a play that presented back to the people who shared their stories a story about them. It was to honour their time as young people and validate their memories. I believe I achieved this to some extent. One woman who I had interviewed kept nudging her husband throughout the play pointing to herself or him at times when her story was presented back. She smiled and nodded as the scenes unfolded and laughed at some of her direct speech that had been utilised as a punch line to a scene. After the performance she asked if she could meet the actors who were loosely based on her and her husband's characters. She identified with these characters and shared more details of the actors that had played her part. I think the opening explanation by the narrator of taking the stories and using creative licence was a useful device... "a fish when caught is this big but grows to this size in the retelling"... as this woman was asked if her father (she was raised by a single mother) was really like that about Elvis and she replied "no that wasn't my story it was someone else's story". She confided in me that although she thoroughly enjoyed the play it made her feel "a little bit sad". I guess we can feel sad remembering our youth and a way of life that will never be the same again. Memories can be good but evoke a sense of loss also.

A couple of the gentlemen I interviewed called me over and were quite excited. They had known each other during the Starlight Ballroom days but had not seen each other for 40 years until that opening night. This 'catching up' was reflected in many of the audience members who stayed around (on opening night for an hour) to chat and catch up.

My assessor asked me what was in it for someone who was not from Hamilton and what was the appeal for the wider audience? It wasn't written for them. It was for the people who had gone there, for their children, grandchildren and others from the community. One group that came along was 3 generations, Grandmother who attended the Starlight, daughter and 2 granddaughters. The grandmother was telling the girls about her experiences after the play, adding her stories to what had taken place in the performance. She disputed the drinking and going out to the car but conceded that it was perhaps because she was a very good girl who wouldn't have done that. I guess this was another intention, to get people sharing their stories with their families. A platform you may say on which to springboard their own stories and experiences off.

Although it was written for an intended audience I believe it had universal themes and happenings that those from the time but other places. One of the audience members had a friend that was raised in the UK. She was from the same era and although she did not move to New Zealand till later on she said she recognised the representation of the time and the goings on in the dance scene.

I chose simple costumes and props that were suited to the time of the play setting. I sourced original items when possible. The interviewees provided a lot of ideas and material about what the set-up of the dances were like to create the format of the scenes. One of the interviewees and audience members commented that she was impressed with how I had represented the time and dance scenes. She said it was amazing that I could represent something so well without having actually being there.

There was certain language used in the performance that was very particular to the time "...a crate of 8 o'clocks" that got nods and murmurs of recognition from those that attended and were from Hamilton. A crate of 8 o'clocks was an expression used in Hamilton in the fifties, and a very recognisable term to those who had either shared their stories or lived here during that period.

12 December 2011

Some time has past now and looking back at the process I think I was very caught up in the fact that it was documentary theatre and that I was so emotionally caught up with the fact that I had to be true to the stories people had given me that I lost sight of the stories as an overall play performance. Now when I stop and look at it I think I could have developed the characters more. Particularly the two youths in the love story.

Sun, Nov 20, 2011 at
9:48 AM

To: [REDACTED]

We went off to the show , and enjoyed it very much. we noticed the tips you had picked up - Ladies dressed nicely—the poorly dressed guys got the 'cold shoulder from the ladies' Guys were vetted at the door. Oh- yes very good, congratulations.-- Send me David's phone No sometime if you remember Thanks.-- [REDACTED]

Thank you

1 message

Sun, Nov 20, 2011 at 8:03
PM

To: Athene Jensen [REDACTED]

Dear AJ,

First of all, I just want to thank you for the opportunity be in the play. A good play, and one I think you should be proud of. I really did enjoy the play itself.

Second, as I've said before, a wonderful group of people and a really enjoyable experience working and being with them - every single one of them

Third, I assume you know about Campbell Smith as a local documentary playwright.

Fourth, your comment about wanting to just be you, doing this, and not wanting fame or fortune. I relate absolutely to that, and it's my musical ambition completely. My role in life is to work with local choral musos, singing 'quality' (by my definition) music. I'm attaching a poem, called 'Song of Allegiance', by the NZ poet, R A K Mason that sums it up for me. You may relate to it too, but if not, not to worry.

So, good luck with the rest of the paper, and keep in touch; if you ever need an old actor for anything, I'm your man.

Take care, and have a good Christmas.

Good wishes,
[REDACTED]

Song of Allegiance

Shakespeare Milton Keats are dead
Donne lies in a lowly bed

Shelley at last calm doth lie
Knowing 'whence we are and why'

Byron Wordsworth both are gone
Coleridge Beddoes Tennyson

Housman neither knows nor cares
how 'this heavy world' now fares

Little clinging grains enfold
all the mighty minds of old . . .

They are gone and I am here
stoutly bringing up the rear

Where they went with limber ease
toil I on with bloody knees

Though my voice is cracked and harsh
stoutly in the rear I march,

Though my song have none to hear
boldly bring I up the rear.

R A K Mason (1925)

Starlight Ballroom

1 message

[REDACTED] Mon, Nov 21, 2011 at 4:51 AM

To: [REDACTED]

Thank you so much for inviting me to your production after all your hard work in its preparation. My friend and I were very impressed and thought you were very accurate in your portrayal. Your actors were excellent in their parts, especially the narrator. It is a pity more people did not know of the production so they could also have enjoyed it.

Every best wish for your assessment - I hope the person assessing your work can appreciate what we did.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] Mon, Nov 21, 2011 at 11:27 AM

To: Athene Jensen <[REDACTED]>

Hi AJ,

Congratulations on a very good production. It was well scripted, directed, and acted. As a short play it allowed ample time for narration, characterisation, and development of plots, with plenty of unstated moments. Padding it to have made it longer would have made it an essay, not a play. You are welcome to pass this view on to your supervisor(s). I have a lot of theatre production experience.

I have over 400 good pictures, with a bit of editing still to go. I'm not sure what your arrangement with Linda is, but I'm happy to give you a watermarked set on disc so that your crew can check them out.

You have a great team. It was a joy to work with them. I hope you keep them together, and write another play ☺

Kind regards

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]
To: Athene Jensen <[REDACTED]>

Mon, Nov 21, 2011 at 5:03 PM

Hello Athene.

I would like to thank you for asking me to your presentation. I enjoyed every minute of it. I picked up some things you had taken from my history about the NZBC being careful not to "Rock the boat"

[REDACTED] had told me about him hiring the Frankton Hall to double the people at the Starlight.

The actors and sound were splendid. Altogether a very enjoyable evening, you must feel very proud of

your achievement. [REDACTED] would have loved it, especially the dancing.

Kind regards.

[REDACTED]

Friday night play

2 messages

Wed, Nov 23, 2011 at 1:12 PM

To: [REDACTED]

Hi AJ

I really enjoyed seeing your play on Friday night. Thank you for the opportunity.

I think you had a very VERY challenging task, to undertake the interviews and then write a play and then put it all together for a performance. There are so many different aspects to it all. And I thought you did it very well. It is always difficult to avoid being drowned in the details and richness of qualitative interview material - but the best use of it is to be very selective and work with only the most relevant information. I thought you did that extremely well.

Best wishes,

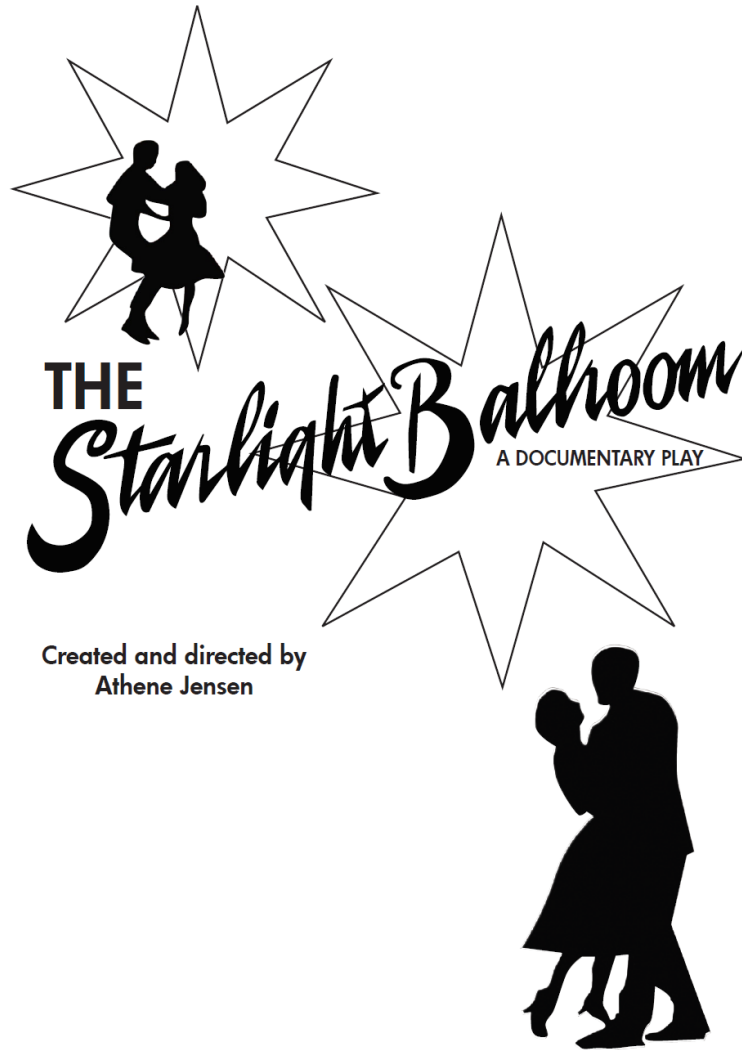
[REDACTED]

Appendix 4:
Production poster



Appendix 5:
Performance programme





Acknowledgements

I would like to thank William Farrimond, for his support and guidance during the creation of *The Starlight Ballroom – A documentary play*. His faith in my ability and vision has been unwavering.

Directors note

“You can’t write documentary – it’s a contradiction in terms. You can only edit documentary material” Peter Cheeseman

As a storyteller, documentary theatre makes sense to me. It utilises real people’s stories, original documentation and events of a time to tell a story. It provides another space in which to tell stories. Real life stories of real life people.

The creation of *The Starlight Ballroom – A documentary play* started way before I was born. My parents met there in the 50s, they married and eventually had me. If they hadn’t met there I wouldn’t have been interested in the story, but because they did I had a personal connection to it.

Since starting this process I have discovered a lot of people from Hamilton have a connection to the Starlight Ballroom. The older generation may have danced there, performed there, and met their husbands and wives there. The younger generation often discover their grandparents, parents, or aunts and uncles remember it and when reminded start telling them stories of it.

I conducted 22 interviews with people who danced or performed at the starlight ballroom from the mid-fifties to early sixties. I asked them to share their memories, impressions and stories of this time. I took these, threw them in a creative blender and came up with a story about the Starlight Ballroom.

Yes, the stories are real, but I have assigned these stories to imaginary characters. The year I have selected is circa 1958 but don’t look too hard or you will see and hear discrepancies. Creative licence has been used; it is the storyteller’s prerogative.

I hope you enjoy your story.

Athene Jensen

A brief historical note

The Starlight Ballroom was a very popular dance hall here in Hamilton for many years. It was situated on Angelsea Street, opposite Knox Street roughly where the Avis car yard meets the A&E building.

Although some say the hall came from up Ngaruwahia way it was also suggested it may have come from Pirongia (once call Alexandra). After trawling through the archives I am convinced it did come from there and was moved to Angelsea street in 1921.

It opened as the Starlight Ballroom in 1954 and quickly became a popular venue for the young people of Hamilton. It had a sprung floor unlike other dance halls of the time and was well known for its outstanding live music. The Hamilton music scene was quite lively and included (among many others) the likes of Johnny Corben, Andy Shearer, the George Vercoe big band, Ray Sentsch and his group, The Cravats, The Dominos, The Rockets, The Reataz, Ronnie Sundin, The Astronauts, The Mods and of course, The Satellites.

It remained a dance hall for many decades. I personally remember it as a market place in the late 80s. It was eventually demolished in the 90s after it was deemed unstructurally sound.

The Starlight Ballroom may no longer exist, but the memories created there live on.



Cast in order of appearance

Jimmy: Rick Cave

Penny: Brittany Holmes

Narrator: Jacques Fourie

Albert: Creaghie Beere

Peter: Clive Lamdin

James: Donald Tweedie

Warren: Jono Carter

Lillian: Zoe Vaile

Band member 2: Matthias Goed

Band member 1: Aram Higgins

Penny's mother: Ruth Hare

Penny's father: Creaghie Beere

Frank: Matt Powell

Nancy: Alice Kimber-Bell

Harry: Donald Tweedie

Crew

Written, produced and directed by: Athene Jensen (AJ)

Sound technician: Felix

Lighting technician: Alec Forbes

Film clip and editing: Joe 'rush job on a rainy day' Citizen

Graphic design: Pene Scammell

Photography: Linda Holmes Photography

Hair design: Annick Faubert



The Satellites

A thank you for the stories

I would like to acknowledge and give a heartfelt thank you to the following people for sharing their stories and memories of the starlight ballroom with me. It has given me amazing material to work with. I feel privileged to have heard these stories and in turn be able to retell a tale of a magical era.



The Cravats

Thank you to: Margaret Bagnall, Keith and Pam Hallberg, Joan Lea, Alan Strangwick, Jack Guthrie, Helen and Eric Pidduck, Coralie and Barry Robinson, Trudy Murray, Paul Fisher, Loma Reid, Brian and Frances Wilcock, Jan and Bob Chalklen, Marlene Wilkinson, Andy Shearer, Gerry Clark, Susan Coubrough, Kevin McNeil, Julie Weingott, Dot King, Eileen Beach Kelly, Mollie Rafferty, and Gordon Dobbs.

Thank you to the cast and crew

It is a big ask to commit to a rehearsal and performance schedule and I would like to thank the cast from the bottom of my heart. Thank them for committing their time, for their patience while I tried out different ideas, for sharing their ideas with me, and for bringing to life snippets of real peoples stories.

Thank you to the crew who shared their expertise. Without them, that stuff just wouldn't get done.

A special thanks to...

Carl Gordon from Planet Dance for giving us a dance lesson... some of the cast just have two left feet and advising on dance music; Cathy from the Hamilton Operatic Society Costume Hire for her help; and Joanna and Corina, two very patient and willing helpers.



The Reataz

Theatre Studies at the University of Waikato

Theatre has been practiced by many cultures for thousands of years and it remains as the heart of much artistic expression today, searching for new ways of creating meaningful relationships between actor and spectator as well as representing the stories of the past.

The live encounter at the centre of a performance makes theatre unique, perhaps more so at a time when film and television media are so enhanced by technological advances, and it is this uniqueness which shapes the nature of Theatre Studies at the University of Waikato. The Theatre Studies Programme has established the study of performance as its primary objective in both teaching and research.

The Programme of study uses a theory-through-practice approach to teaching and learning to enable students to gain an informed understanding of theatre. A Major in Theatre Studies is a rich and challenging pathway to an undergraduate Arts degree which can have a wide range of vocational applications. Many papers offer the opportunity for a focused practical study of performance while others offer analytical approaches to the theories which have informed theatre practice over the centuries, including the work of contemporary practitioners in Aotearoa and other countries and cultures. Three papers have public performance seasons as the principal outcomes, and their study programmes are closely linked to the process of page-to-stage or idea-to-stage which creates a performance.

Programmes of Graduate and Postgraduate studies are also available, leading to Honours, Masters and Doctoral degrees.

The practical tutorials, seminars and rehearsals which are at the centre of the teaching and learning take place in a fully-equipped theatre laboratory space, The New Place Theatre/ Te Tapere Hou, and in The Playhouse Theatre of the Academy of Performing Arts, the venue for most of the public performances.

Further information about study opportunities is available from the Dr William Farrimond, Theatre Studies Convenor (williamf@waikato.ac.nz).