



The

BOOK

CLUB

Play

*Life, love and literature collide*

A COMEDY BY  
KAREN ZACARÍAS

DIRECTED BY  
DEB LIND

SEASON  
MAY 6 TO 27 2023



HOWICK LITTLE THEATRE  
SIR LLOYD DRIVE – PAKURANGA  
HLT.NZ/BOOK

BOOK ONLINE  
ITICKET.CO.NZ OR  
PHONE 361 1000



Please switch off cellphones before entering the theatre.  
The taking of photographs and use of recording devices during the performance  
is forbidden by law.

*This community theatre production of The Book Club Play is by special arrangement  
with Dramatic Publishing Ltd and New Zealand Play Bureau Ltd.*

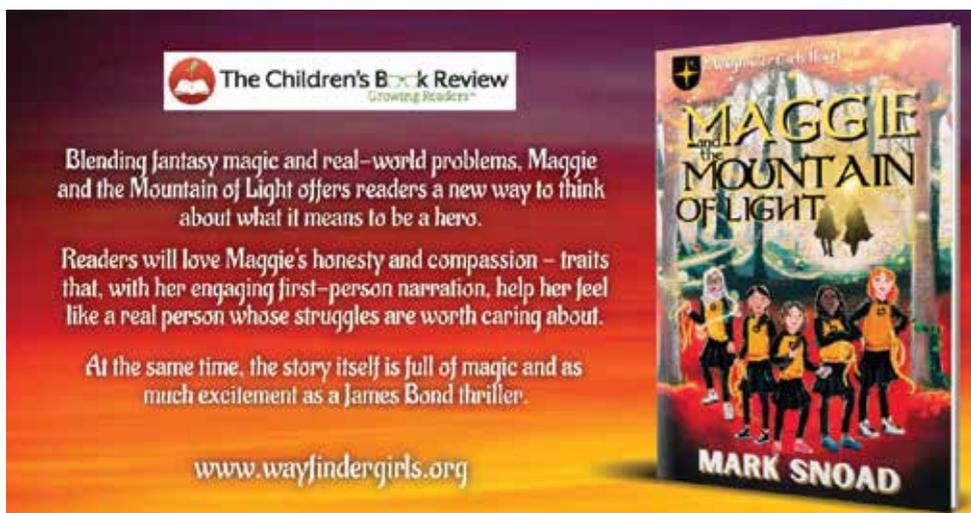


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**The Children's Book Review**  
Growing Readers™

Blending fantasy magic and real-world problems, Maggie and the Mountain of Light offers readers a new way to think about what it means to be a hero.

Readers will love Maggie's honesty and compassion – traits that, with her engaging first-person narration, help her feel like a real person whose struggles are worth caring about.

At the same time, the story itself is full of magic and as much excitement as a James Bond thriller.

[www.wayfindergirls.org](http://www.wayfindergirls.org)

**MAGGIE and the MOUNTAIN OF LIGHT**  
MARK SNOAD



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HOWICK LITTLE THEATRE

## From the Director

As a book lover, in preparation for this wonderfully written comedy by Karen Zacarias, I began turning the pages of the books read by *The Book Club*. The aim was to explore new horizons, read books that were new to me and reread old favourites, all considered classics in their genre. I laughed, cried and challenged myself to understand different perspectives, experiences and moral dilemmas. All emotions and themes that we see throughout this play. And yes, I learnt a lot about whaling harpoons.

It has been a genuinely collaborative experience directing a hardworking, creative, talented cast and crew who trusted the process to bring the characters to life and tell their story through the eyes of the documentary maker Lars Knudsen.

This production includes many new faces at HLT, both on the stage and as part of the technical team. It has been a delight to mentor a new director, Sho Okumoto, who will take on his first solo director role for Howick Little Plays in October. Welcome to Stephen Moran and his team from the Children's Musical Theatre

Studio. Thank you for your can-do, positive attitude to the sound and lighting effects.

Thank you to Susanne Dell, Lynnette Leggett and Trevor Hynes for your steadfast support and for knowing that the production is in safe hands. To Jenny and Ginny, for the many hours you spent finding those mix-and-match wardrobes. And to David Gifford and his set-build team. As always, you bring your skills and dedication to transform an empty stage into a director's vision. A huge thank you to everyone at HLT who volunteered much of their time to make this production successful.

A heartfelt thank you to our families for supporting our passion and love of theatre, especially to my husband for his constant support while I disappear into the theatre world. And to you, our audience, in a world that continues to go through uncertain times, what better than coming together to celebrate and embrace the joy of live theatre.

*Deb Lind - Director*

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**Setting** - A living room in the United States circa now.  
There will be a 15-minute interval between Acts I and II.

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### The Cast

**Julia Kellett**

Ana Smith

**Rama Buisson**

Robert Smith Jr

**Senica Calder**

Lily Jackson

**Erin Parkinson**

Jennifer "Jen"

McClintock

**AJ Johnson**

William Nothnagel

**Jazmyn Astill**

Pundit 1

**Lou van Jaarsveld**

Pundit 2

**Mark Snoad**

Alex

### Production Creatives

**Director**

Deb Lind

**Director (mentee)**

Sho Okumoto

**Sound and Lighting Design**

Stephen Moran

**Stage Manager**

Trevor Hynes

**Assistant Stage Manager**

Bruce Wighton

**Production**

**Co-ordinator/**

**Rehearsal Prompt**

Susanne Dell

**Assistant Production Co-ordinator/**

**Vocal Coach**

Lynnette Leggett

**Wardrobe**

**Co-ordinator**

Jenny Connors

**Wardrobe Assistants**

Ginny Jones,

Georgina Malzard

**Set Builders/Painters**

David Gifford

(foreman),

David Guthrie,

Pat Hudson,

Doug Johnson,

Dan Lockett,

Chris Woodhead

**Intimacy Adviser**

Deb Lind

**Props/Décor**

Beate Wiebel,

Betty Oudney,

Susanne Dell

**Sound and Lighting**

**Operators**

Daniel Ng,

Andrew Kennedy,

Stephen Moran

**Graphic Design**

Emma Love

**Photography**

AJ Johnson

**Marketing**

**Co-ordinator**

Charmaine Chapman

**Marketing Services**

Senica Calder,

AJ Johnson

## Acknowledgements

Domino's Pizzas – Highland Park, Vic Leilua, Hanneke Beets, Nicole Ashley,  
The Art Bureau and artist Don Service

## Deb Lind

DIRECTOR

As a Brit, Deb grew up performing in musical theatre in the UK (*Anything Goes, Me and My Girl* and many more), and then in Auckland (*Aladdin, All Shook Up, Nunsense - The Mega Musical, Calendar Girls*). She then moved to performing plays with Remarkable Theatre in Queenstown (*A Murder Is Announced, 'Allo 'Allo, Pint-sized Plays*) and notably directing *One Man, Two Guvnors*, nominated for 9 OSTAs, including Best Director and Best Production.

Deb took to the HLT stage for the first time in *The Game's Afoot*, playing Sylvia, the critic who met an untimely end with a knife in the back. She then stepped into the role of HLT President as Covid struck, and after three tumultuous years, she is delighted to return to the creative side. Deb is also an Intimacy Adviser for HLT, tutored by Jennifer Ward-Lealand.

## Julia Kellett

ANA SMITH

Julia has recently landed back in Auckland after nine years in the UK and it's her first time performing with Howick Little Theatre. She likes to think she's not as neurotic and obsessive as her character, but given that she recently hauled almost 15kg of second-hand books back from London (thank goodness nobody bothers to weigh hand luggage!), she's probably not in a position to make any judgment!

She has loved getting involved with theatre again and has been overwhelmed by how warm, open and friendly the HLT community has been. She says it's been a real challenge getting inside her character and a delight to work with such a wonderful bunch of people and get to know them better.

**Favourite Book:** *True Stories*, by Sophie Calle



## Rama Buisson

ROBERT SMITH JR

Rama is over the moon to be joining such a talented cast for his first HLT production. Recently off the back of playing Octavius Caesar in Shakespeare's *Antony and Cleopatra*, Rama welcomes a very different challenge in this "sitcom"-style comedy. The more varied his roles are, the more his keen curiosity is quenched. Coming out of Wellington's prestigious Toi Whakaari drama school, Rama is packed full with acting tricks, and excited to utilise every opportunity he gets to put them to use.

**Favourite Book:** *The Silver Sword*, by Ian Serraillier

## Senica Calder

LILY JACKSON

This is Senica's third foray on HLT's stage, having just finished the season of *Home, I'm Darling*. Her sanity has been questioned, but since she loves theatre so much, she's willing to allow it. She has very much enjoyed working with this cast and hopes to do more with them in the future. In her spare time, Senica likes to travel, indulge her passion for Chanel, eat, raise two children and, of course, read as many books as she can get her hands on.

**Favourite Book:** *Scent of Darkness*, by Margot Berwin

## Erin Parkinson

JENNIFER "JEN"  
MCCLINTOCK

Erin is excited to be involved in her first show at HLT and only her third show ever after her debut role in *Arcadia* and behind-the-scenes work in *Kiwifruits*, both at Dolphin Theatre. In *The Book Club Play*, Jen is disorganised, chaotic and loves books. Like Jen, Erin is similar, often running late, blurring things out that should have stayed in her



head, and obsessively buying “just one more book”. The sense of community that Jen loves as part of *The Book Club* mirrors the sense of community and amazing friends that Erin has discovered in theatre.

**Favourite Book:** *Little Women*, by Louisa May Alcott

## AJ Johnson

WILLIAM NOTHNAGEL

AJ usually attempts to do way too many things at once, mostly in an attempt to use up all of his enthusiasm. He's been acting for more than 30 years, most recently as Bernard in *Arcadia* at



Dolphin Theatre, and returned last year to professional acting after a long break as Shane in Black Creatives Aotearoa's sell-out season of *Po' Boys & Oysters*. HLT credits include *California Suite*, *Our Man in Havana* and *The House by the Lake*. He is a re-founding and life member of the University of Canterbury Drama Society, works as a media studies teacher and freelance photographer, and very occasionally can be seen around Auckland performing stand-up comedy. There are currently 22 things on his “creative tasks” to-do list, and more expected by Saturday. His favourite book is *Catch-22*, which he is certain the book club would enjoy. Well, most of them. Okay, maybe not Ana.

**Favourite Book:** *Catch-22*, by Joseph Heller

## Jazmyn Astill

PUNDIT 1: *Elsa Jones-Eisenblitz*, *New York Times* agent; *Frank*, *Secret Service agent in Washington DC*; *Sam W Thompson*, stock manager for *Wal-Mart, Amarillo, Texas*; *Carl Banks*, book dealer, *Bay State Correctional Center, Framington, Massachusetts*; *Edith P Simpson*, retired librarian, *High Point, North Carolina*.



Jazmyn has been a student in the HLT adult acting class since 2020 and is thrilled to be making her HLT acting debut as a pundit in *The Book Club Play*. In her free time, Jazmyn loves

reading books and is studying to become a school librarian, graduating later this year. She has had fun rehearsing and working with all the cast. She hopes everyone in the audience has a great time and enjoys this production.

**Favourite Book:** *Jane Eyre*, by Charlotte Brontë

## Lou van Jaarsveld

PUNDIT 2: *Elsa, Frank, Sam, Carl, Mrs Simpson*

Having moved from the Coromandel Peninsula 11 years ago, Lou has found teaching in South Auckland both eye-opening and hugely



rewarding. Her acting “talents” are not lost on her students; they can often be found writing narratives while dressed in mad assortments of dress-ups. Lou was last seen at Howick in 2019 (before the world went awry) in the HLT Studio production of *Eating the Wolf*. Playing the role of five pundits (an expert in a particular subject or field who is frequently called upon to give their opinions to the public) is a bit of a hoot. Lou says ask anyone who knows her – she is always ready with an opinion!

**Favourite Book:** *When the Lion Feeds*, by Wilbur Smith

## Mark Snoad

ALEX

Mark returns for his second show of the year at HLT, loving the thrill and fun of theatre too much to stay away. He really couldn't resist being in a play about books,



especially as he is now a published author. Mark's debut Middle Grade novel, *Maggie and the Mountain of Light*, has been described as a bit like *Men in Black* for kids, but with an all-girl team. Mark feels blessed to be part of another fantastic play and has loved working with such a talented and creative team. He hopes you enjoy the play and would adore it if you said nice things about his book.

**Favourite Book:** *Lord of the Rings*, by JRR Tolkien



an award-winning theater company that teaches playwriting in local public schools in Washington, DC. Karen is fluent in English and Spanish and highly proficient in Danish and French. She has BA with distinction from Stanford University and a Masters in Creative Writing from Boston University. Her award-winning plays include *The Book Club Play*, the sold-out world premiere drama *Just Like Us* (adapted from the book by Helen Thorpe), the Steinberg-citation award play *Legacy of Light*, the Francesca Primus Award-winning play *Mariela in the Desert*, the Helen Hayes Award-winning play *The Sins of Sor Juana*, and the adaptation of Julia Alvarez's *How the Garcia Girls Lost Their Accents*. Her TYA musicals with composer Debbie Wicks la Puma include *Jane of the Jungle*, *Einstein Is a Dummy*, *Looking for Roberto Clemente*, *Cinderella Eats Rice and Beans*, *Ferdinand the Bull*, and *Frida Libre*. Her musical *Chasing George Washington* premiered at The Kennedy Center for Performing Arts and went on a national tour. The script was then adapted into a book by Scholastic, with a foreword by First Lady Michelle Obama.

## The Playwright

KAREN ZACARÍAS

Born in Mexico in 1969, Karen now lives in Washington DC with her husband and three children. She is one of the most produced playwrights in the US. She is one of the inaugural Resident Playwrights at Arena Stage in Washington, DC, and a core founder of the Latinx Theatre Commons. She is also the founder of Young Playwrights' Theater,

## The Play

A hit comedy about books and the people who love them. When the members of a book club become the subjects of a documentary and accept a provocative new member, their long-standing group dynamics take a hilarious turn. This delightful play is about life, love, literature and the side-splitting results as friends start reading between the lines.

### 2023-2024 Management Committee

Deborah Lind (President),  
Andrew Gordon (Vice-president),  
Roger Mudford (Treasurer),  
Judith Clarke, Trevor Hynes,  
Senica Calder, Ellie Barrow &  
Alison Mudford

### Founder

Alma Woods, MBE

### Patron

Irene Fryer

### Membership

Sign up online at [hlt.org.nz](http://hlt.org.nz) or ask for a membership form at the office. A year's subscription is \$20.

### Showcard Subscriptions

Subscribe to receive discounted tickets and priority bookings. Showcards also make ideal gifts.

See [hlt.org.nz](http://hlt.org.nz) for details and payment options.

### Information

Office hours:  
9.30am-1.30pm Tues-Fri,  
ph 534-1401 (general enquiries),  
email [info@hlt.org.nz](mailto:info@hlt.org.nz).  
PO Box 82-003, Highland Park,  
Auckland 2143  
Website: [hlt.org.nz](http://hlt.org.nz).

### Bookings

Book at [iticket.co.nz](http://iticket.co.nz),  
or phone 361 1000.

### Costume Hire

HLT hires costumes.  
Phone office for details.

### HLT Studio

The HLT Studio, supported and developed by HLT, is a platform for new works and creatives. Short seasons of plays and play

readings are staged each year. For more details see: [facebook.com/thestudiohlt](https://facebook.com/thestudiohlt)

### Fundraising and Group Bookings

PlayDate nights are available for your group, school, office or club for fundraising or socialising. A PlayDate booking reserves all the theatre for a performance, and guests will enjoy the friendly social atmosphere before the show with our full bar facilities. For details, including catering options, contact the office.

### Acting Classes

HLT offers acting classes, taught by a leading professional, for all ages. For details, see [hlt.org.nz](http://hlt.org.nz) or call the office.



# HOWICK LITTLE THEATRE PRODUCTIONS 2023

**A MURDER MYSTERY BY AGATHA CHRISTIE.**

**DIRECTED BY MATTHEW COUSINS**

**SEASON: JULY 8 TO 29, 8PM. MATINEES: JULY 9 & 16, 2PM.**

In Agatha Christie's most ingenious murder mystery, the villagers of Chipping Cleghorn, including Miss Jane Marple, are perplexed by an advertisement in the local gazette that reads: "A murder is announced and will take place on Friday October 13th, at Little Paddocks at 6.30pm." A crowd begins to gather at the appointed time when, without warning, the lights go out...

*A community theatre production of A Murder Is Announced by special arrangement with Samuel French Ltd and New Zealand Play Bureau Ltd.*

## A MURDER IS ANNOUNCED

MISS MARPLE,  
ARE YOU THERE?



**A THRILLER BY FREDERICK KNOTT,**

**ADAPTED BY JEFFREY HATCHER**

**DIRECTED BY CARLOS LEHMANN**

**SEASON: SEPT 9 TO 30, 8PM. MATINEES: SEPT 10 & 17, 2PM.**

In this adaptation of the 1966 classic, Susan Hendrix, a blind yet capable woman, is terrorised by a trio of men in her apartment in Greenwich Village in 1944. As the climax builds, Susan discovers her blindness might be the key to her escape, but she must wait until dark to play out this thriller's chilling conclusion.

*By arrangement with Music Theatre International Australasia Pty Ltd, on behalf of Dramatists Play Service, Inc.*

## WAIT UNTIL DARK

SHINES A LIGHT ON  
THE POWER OF DARKNESS

**A COMEDY BY NORM FOSTER.**

**DIRECTED BY TRACEY HOLDSWORTH**

**SEASON: NOV 11 TO DEC 2, 8PM.**

**MATINEES: NOV 12 & 19, 2PM.**

A story of courtship, rekindled romance and the indomitability of hope, *Old Love* spans three decades, and half-a-dozen meetings between Bud, a salesman, and Molly, his boss's wife. One of them is smitten from the first, the other less so. Another hit from Canada's Norm Foster, this clever and witty heartwarming journey celebrates the never-ending pursuit of love – old and new.

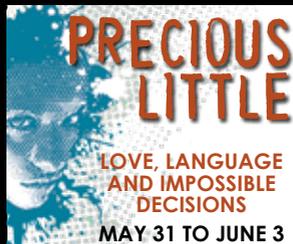
## OLD LOVE

*Broken hearts and  
second chances*



**hlt  
studio**

Supported and developed by HLT, the Studio is a platform to encourage new creative talent and scripts. For details of the 2023 Studio line-up see [hlt.nz](http://hlt.nz).



## DONATIONS

Our mission is to perform plays and hold workshops and acting classes, but we also spend a lot of time and money maintaining our building. You can help by attending productions, becoming a member or a sponsor or by making a donation. Every little bit helps. Howick Little Theatre is a non-profit organisation registered with the Charities Commission (No. CC21274). Any donations are greatly appreciated. Donations over \$5 are tax deductible.



COMING SOON TO HOWICK LITTLE THEATRE

AGATHA CHRISTIE'S

# A MURDER IS ANNOUNCED

MISS MARPLE,  
ARE YOU THERE?

SEASON: JULY 8 TO 29

A MURDER MYSTERY BY AGATHA CHRISTIE  
DIRECTED BY MATTHEW COUSINS



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