

HOWICK LITTLE THEATRE

presents

# Aurélia

A thriller by  
**Robert Thomas**  
from **Jean-Pierre  
Ferrière's** novel  
translated by  
**Tudor Gates**

Directed by  
**Arthur Young**

**A THRILLING  
MYSTERY  
OF INTRIGUE  
AND MISTRUST**

**4 - 25 MAY  
2024**



**iTICKET**

**HLT.NZ/AURELIA**

**Howick  
Local Board**  
Auckland Council



Please switch off cellphones before entering the theatre.  
It is strictly forbidden for audience members to make  
any form of recording of this production.

## ROOF RENEWAL FUNDRAISING

2024 celebrates the 70th anniversary of our beloved theatre and the 50th anniversary of our home here at Lloyd Elsmore Park. It also marks a need for us to complete vital repairs and improvements to our roof. In short, we need a new one!

We are making great progress through grants and fundraising, but we need your help!

Your donation will not only help us renew the roof but also protect our equipment, sets, props, and extensive wardrobe, and ensure the theatre continues to put on quality productions for another 70 years.

Donate online by scanning the QR code, visiting [hlt.org.nz/donate](http://hlt.org.nz/donate) or simply spread the word. Thank you for your support.

*Howick Little Theatre is a non-profit and registered with the Charities Commission (No. CC21274). Donations over \$5 are tax deductible.*



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This community theatre production of *Aurélia* is by special arrangement  
with Samuel French Ltd and New Zealand Play Bureau Ltd.

# AURÉLIA

## FROM THE DIRECTOR

Welcome to HLT's production of *Aurélia*, I hope you enjoy the twists and turns that are coming.

My journey started last year when I got the call to see if I'd like to direct *Aurélia*. I read the script and was hooked, I could see the room and the characters clearly, and loved the way the story unfolded.

I was also pleased to see that it was a cast of only six and not the cast of 12 I had for *Arcadia* (at Dolphin Theatre in 2022). I thought this would make the casting process easy.

However, the number of exceptional actors who came to audition made the process difficult. In the end, we've managed to bring together a wonderfully talented cast

who have made the rehearsal process a pleasure.

A big thank-you to my crew, who have helped to realise my vision for this play. It's all been a relatively easy process to get everything together.

Also a special thank-you to my assistant director, A.J. Thanks for the help and support throughout – you need to direct a show of your own.

And finally, thank you to you, the audience, for coming out to watch this play. I know you are going to enjoy the show. There will be some laughs, some suspense, some tears, and a few shocking surprises that will have you talking.

*Arthur Young*

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**Setting:** The drawing room of Lady Chalmont's home on the edge of a Cotswolds village in the 1980s.  
There will be a 20-minute interval between Acts One and Two.

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## THE CAST

### **Aurélia**

Ellie Barrow

### **Isabel**

Olivia Skelling

### **Lady Chalmont**

Debbie Allan

### **Vera**

Brenda Jackson

### **The Visitor**

Thomas Campbell

### **Mr Mercer**

Romain Mereau

## PRODUCTION CREATIVES

### **Director**

Arthur Young

### **Assistant Director**

Andrew (AJ)  
Johnson

### **Production**

**Co-ordinator**  
Devon Hansen

### **Stage Manager**

Trevor Hynes

### **Assistant Stage Manager**

Sho Okumoto

### **Set Design/Décor**

Ruth McNeilly

### **Lighting Design**

David Blakey

### **Assistant Lighting Design**

Sho Okumoto

### **Sound Design**

Daniel Ng

### **Technical Operators**

Nathaniel Moran  
Bailey Livingston

### **Wardrobe**

Judy Rankin

### **Properties**

Erin Parkinson  
Nicole Harvey

### **Intimacy Adviser**

Anna Baird

### **Graphic Design**

Emma Love

### **Photography**

Andrew (AJ)  
Johnson

### **Set Construction Team**

David Gifford  
(foreman)  
Matthew Cousins  
Pat Hudson  
Doug Johnston  
Ian McMahan  
Ruth McNeilly  
Jack Sew Hoy  
Andrew Walden  
Chris Woodhead



### **ARTHUR YOUNG**

**Director**

Arthur did a lot of acting in high school and university back in the 80s and 90s, but he took a break from it all when he had finished his studies and went to get a “real” job. He came back to the theatre in 2008 for HLT’s *Twelve Angry Men*. Since then, he has been a regular around Auckland’s community theatres, acting in shows for Dolphin Theatre, Ellerslie Theatre, Company Theatre and most recently Papakura Theatre Company.

In 2021, he began his directing career with the one-act play *The Hound* at Dolphin Theatre. He then directed Tom Stoppard’s *Arcadia* in 2022 (also at Dolphin Theatre). *Aurélia* is Arthur’s first directing role for HLT.

Aside from theatre, Arthur’s other hobbies also lean into his need to perform. Firstly, there are the roleplaying games like Dungeons & Dragons and Call of Cthulhu. Secondly, there are the pole-dancing classes. (Note: After a couple of whiskies, he can be encouraged to demonstrate what he has learnt in class.)



### **ANDREW (AJ) JOHNSON**

**Assistant Director**

AJ is thrilled to be assistant directing on *Aurélia* after 20 years off from directing. A regular on the HLT stage, he previously directed and co-directed numerous shows for a decade as a Life Member and re-founding member of the University of Canterbury Drama Society, including *Romeo and Juliet*, *Shakespeare Who?* and *Albuquerque Jones and the Raiders of the Lost Script*. Between voice acting and recording audiobooks, stage appearances, very occasional stand-up, and photography gigs, he can be found teaching Media Studies to senior secondary school students. Thanks to Arthur and the theatre for having him on board for this journey bringing *Aurélia* to the stage.



### **OLIVIA SKELLING**

**Isabel**

Olivia’s past acting experience includes various high school productions such as *Dark Road* and *The Lonely Hour*, as well as Stray Theatre’s 2021 Original Bill *A Shot in the Dark*. Alongside exploring her passion for theatre, Olivia is pursuing a Bachelor of Arts and Bachelor of Laws as well as working as a hotel receptionist. Thanks to all the cast and crew, she has found working with HLT for the first time a great experience, and hopes the audience enjoys the show.



### **ELLIE BARROW**

**Aurélia**

Ellie is thrilled to be back onstage after a hiatus, especially in a role as complex and fun as *Aurélia*. Since last appearing in a much smaller role as a crime-solving psychic in HLT’s *Dead Simple* in 2020, she’s been involved behind-the-scenes in several shows, is serving on the management committee, and now works in the theatre office, so she can honestly say she’s never actually been that far away from the HLT stage! She’s thoroughly enjoyed working with this immensely talented cast and crew and hopes they’ll all come back to HLT so she can work with them again.

## **BRENDA JACKSON**

### **Vera**

Brenda revived her high school passion for musicals in 2022, joining the ensemble cast of *Mamma Mia!* at the Harlequin Musical Theatre, followed by *School of Rock* and *Shrek* in 2023. Brenda was both nervous and excited to audition for the part of Vera, having never been involved in a play before. In awe of the incredibly talented cast and directors, she is grateful for their support and guidance in bringing the eye-rolling, sherry-loving busybody of a housemaid to life on stage at the HLT. By day, Brenda teaches piano and singing in schools.



## **DEBBIE ALLAN**

### **Lady Chalmont**

Until now, Debbie's experience has been limited to enjoying acting classes and assisting backstage. However, her participation in the 2023 Short Plays Table Read at HLT ignited a newfound passion. Believing it's never too late to embrace new challenges, Debbie courageously steps out of her comfort zone and onto the stage for her debut role. Professionally, Debbie is a dedicated Deputy Principal at the local Bucklands Beach Intermediate School. She finds balance through walking and gym sessions. Her most cherished moments involve family and she's especially energised boogie boarding with her beloved grandchildren!



## **THOMAS CAMPBELL**

### **The Visitor**

Thomas returns to the stage following his contributions to Dolphin Theatre's acclaimed *Misery* last year. With over a decade of theatre experience in Tāmaki Makaurau, he paused his journey in 2022 for a two-year Canadian hiatus, skiing and tramping in the Rocky Mountains. Recently enthralling audiences as Christopher Wren in *The Mousetrap* at Shoreside Theatre, Thomas previously starred as Robbo in *Dead Simple* at HLT four years ago. Notable roles include Charles Musgrove in *Persuasion* and Bartley McCormick in *The Cripple of Inishmaan*. Offstage, he fuels Kiwis at Atomic Coffee Roasters, and would happily ski black diamond slopes if Auckland had snow and he had the money.



## **ROMAIN MEREAU**

### **Mr Mercer**

A graduate of Atlantic Acting School in New York, Romain was most recently in *In Pieces* at The PumpHouse Theatre. Other recent shows include *Misery* and *Kimberly Akimbo* at Dolphin Theatre; and he first performed at Howick Little Theatre in *The Girl on the Train* in 2021. When he's not on stage, Romain works as a Sustainability Manager, and can also be found doing yoga, nerding out over films and video games, making art and eating tacos. He's excited to be part of this compelling thriller and is enjoying his time with the mercurial Mr Mercer.



## **DAVID BLAKEY**

### **Lighting Design**

David has directed and designed stages and lighting at Howick Little Theatre and several other Auckland community theatres. He is working on a handbook for stage and lighting designers, a dramatisation of *The Third Policeman* by Flann O'Brien and an English adaptation of *Le Jeu de l'amour et du hasard* by Pierre de Marivaux. In 2023, he directed *Ali Baba and the Magic Cave* by William Glennon at TheatreWorks in Birkenhead.

## **DANIEL NG**

### **Sound Design**

Daniel is 16 and a student Ormiston Senior College. He has been a technical operator for *The Book Club Play* and *Howick Little Plays* at HLT. Daniel has been doing a variety of roles, ranging from lighting/sound operation to design, including the Kiri Te Kanawa Theatre (Aotea Centre), the Bruce Mason Centre, Kristin School and Ormiston Junior + Senior College for shows such as *Shrek the Musical*, Disney's *Aladdin*, *The Addams Family*, and *Showquest*, and is taking on multiple roles for *Hairspray The Musical* in August at Ormiston Junior College.

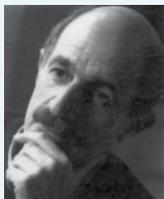
## THE PLAYWRIGHTS



### Robert Thomas

Robert Thomas was a French writer, actor and film director, and is credited as one of the creators of the 'comédie policière' or 'comedy thriller' genre.

His 1960 play, *Trap for a Single Man*, achieved overnight success in Paris, with the rights being purchased by Alfred Hitchcock. He is probably best known for the play *Eight Women*, which won the Hachette Prix du Quai des Orfèvres for Best Play in 1961 for its revival season. It was adapted into a movie musical by François Ozon in 2002.



### Jean-Pierre Ferrière

Jean-Pierre Ferrière (1933-) is a French author and screenwriter, with a long career in the crime and thriller genre where he is considered by some as the 'French Agatha Christie'. In 1957, with the novel *Corpses on Sale*, he began his Blanche and Berthe Bodin sisters amateur detective series.

Ferrière has also written over 40 radio plays. His popular character, 38-year-old bourgeois detective Évangéline Saint-Léger, was originally created for *The Masters of Mystery* radio series before appearing in the Évangéline series of novels. His later career focused on murder mysteries and thrillers set in the fictional town of Châtignes. *Aurélia* is one of his only two theatre credits, and created in collaboration with Robert Thomas.



### Tudor Gates

Tudor Gates was an English screenwriter and playwright. His early career focused on screenplays including *Barbarella*, *The Vampire Lovers*, *Fright*, and *The Optimists of Nine Elms*, as well as television series *The Sweeney* and *Strange Report*. He turned to stage in the 1970s with playwriting credits including *Who Saw Him Die?*, *Aurélia*, and *Who Killed "Agatha" Christie?*

### 2024-2025 MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

Laurie Mills (President)  
Matthew Cousins (Vice Pres.)  
Roger Mudford (Treasurer)  
Ellie Barrow  
James Calverley  
Judith Clarke  
Trevor Hynes  
Alison Mudford

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Alma Woods, MBE

### PATRON

Irene Fryer

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### COSTUME HIRE

HLT hires costumes.  
Phone office for details.

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A PlayDate booking reserves all the theatre for a performance, and your guests can enjoy the friendly social atmosphere before the show and at the interval.

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**JULES VERNE'S  
AROUND  
THE WORLD  
IN 80 DAYS**

**6 - 27 JULY**

**Adapted by Laura Eason  
Directed by Nathan Hey**

A man of money and scientific reason in Victorian London, Phileas Fogg has staked his life's fortune that he can circumnavigate the globe in a mere 80 days. Join Fogg and his loyal valet, Passepartout, on their action-packed and globetrotting adventure across seven continents filled with bandits, runaway trains, a herd of buffalo, and a meddlesome detective interfering at every turn.

*A community theatre production of Around the World in 80 Days by special arrangement with Nick Hern Books and the NZ Play Bureau Ltd.*

**THINGS  
I KNOW TO  
BE TRUE**

**NEVER LEAVE IT TOO LATE**

**7 - 28 SEP**

**A drama by Andrew Bovell  
Directed by Emma Love**

A funny, honest account of life in the suburbs, where Fran and Bob Price have built a home, brought up four kids and still managed to keep their sense of humour. It should now be time for them to stop and smell Bob's precious roses. But just when things look like slowing down, the lives of their wildly complicated adult children come crashing through the back door. *Adult content.*

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**9 - 30 NOV**

**A comedy by Chris Chibnall  
Directed by Ashton Brown**

Rachel and Scott are getting married. They are also buying a house together – never the easiest of things to do at the same time. When house prices go up, their plans for a dream wedding have to be downsized accordingly. However, Rachel's mother has other ideas. What if their family could join forces to make it a wedding to be proud of?

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Adapted by **Laura Eason**

Directed by **Nathan Hey**

**6 - 27 JULY 2024**



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