



INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTE OF

## MODERN LETTERS

*Te Pūtahi Tuhi Auaha o te Ao*

### Newsletter – 15 June 2006

This is the 88th in a series of occasional newsletters from the Victoria University centre of the International Institute of Modern Letters. For more information about any of the items, please email [modernletters@vuw.ac.nz](mailto:modernletters@vuw.ac.nz).

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#### **1. Final bell for Bell Gully National Schools Poetry Award**

The deadline for entries in the Bell Gully National Schools Poetry Award is tomorrow! Allowance will be made for anyone who's snowed under (literally) in the South Island, however. Last-minute entrants (from year 12 and 13) should see the form on our website: <http://www.vuw.ac.nz/modernletters/activities/schools-poetry.aspx>

#### **2. 48-Hour Film finalists**

MA (Script) graduates Kelly Kilgour and Shahir Daud wrote the Wellington winner of the 48-Hour Film competition this year, along with director Sam Kelly. Their film *The Baby Farmer* goes into the final against the other main cities screening on C4 at 8.30 pm on 23 June. All films were made, from script to screen, in two days. For details on all the finalists, see <http://www.48hours.co.nz/>

### 3. Tough act (to find and follow)

Already on the small screen and gaining positive attention – at least from reviewer Jane Clifton – is Stuart McKenzie’s documentary series *Tough Act*, which follows the lives of the students from the 2005 intake into Toi Whaakari: NZ Drama School, as they embark on their first year of a three-year acting course with dreams of making it big. The series screens on Saturday afternoon at 3.30 pm on TV2. Clifton is unimpressed with the scheduling, describing it as ‘gobsmacking’ in its stupidity. ‘Shamingly for TVNZ,’ she writes, ‘this is just the latest in a long line of good local programmes wasted in hopeless time slots, and it’s almost certainly the highest quality of recent casualties.’ Stuart McKenzie completed an MA (Page) at Victoria in 1998. Catch the programme – which naturally also features Miranda Harcourt, acting teacher at Toi Whakaari and McKenzie’s partner – before it’s gone. Jane Clifton’s full review is at: <http://www.stuff.co.nz/stuff/0,2106,3677568a1869,00.html>

### 4. Young and Hungry

*Tough Act* might be of particular interest to the participants in this year’s *Young and Hungry* season of work by emerging playwrights, which opens this Friday at BATS. 2005 MA (Page) graduate Chris Tse is involved with two of the three plays, doing sound for *Generator* and appearing in *Butt Ugly* (surely not a description that applies to Chris?), a play by Thomas Sainsbury described as ‘a celebration of the underdog’. Given that all three plays are performed each night, it’ll be a busy old time. The Young and Hungry Season runs June 16 – July 1 (no performances on Sundays and Mondays).

Tickets: \$16/12 or \$38/24 for all three shows. Book at Bats: 04 802 4175 or [www.bats.co.nz](http://www.bats.co.nz)

### 5. The angels have landed

*Are Angels OK?: the parallel universes of New Zealand writers and physicists* got off to a flying start with a successful launch at the Paramount Theatre on 31 May. Around 400 people filled the theatre, and the writers and editors were kept busy signing books for at least an hour afterwards. Witi Ihimaera, Jo Randerson, Paul Callaghan and Kim Hill have taken the show on the road in the UK, where the appetite for the event at New Zealand House was also keen – we’re told there was a waiting list of 150. Kim Hill will be broadcasting from London this Saturday, and the show includes an interview with Fleur Adcock, who recently received the Queen’s Medal for Poetry. For a fuller account of the New Zealand launch of *Are Angels OK?*, details of the UK appearances, or to hear the Radio New Zealand series broadcast earlier this year, see [http://www.leafsalon.co.nz/archives/000984montanas\\_sport\\_and\\_angels\\_in\\_welly.html#more](http://www.leafsalon.co.nz/archives/000984montanas_sport_and_angels_in_welly.html#more)  
<http://www.rsnz.org/events/angels/uk.php>  
<http://www.radionz.co.nz/nr/programmes/areangelsok>

## **6. Double Dutch – poetry live**

You can attend the Rotterdam Poetry International Festival from your living room next week. On Wednesday evening 21 June at 8.15 pm (Central European time), the appearances of two Dutch poets, Piet Gerbrandy and Elma van Haren, will be broadcast live in video and stereo on the Dutch section of Poetry International Web. Gerbrandy will be appearing in an international programme around 8 pm, Van Haren around 9.30 pm. Both of their readings will be broadcast live on the website and a simultaneous English translation of the poems will be shown as subtitles. After the live event, both films will be available for download on the poet pages on the site. By our calculation, earlybird New Zealanders who are interested should visit the Dutch pages of Poetry International Web on Thursday 22 June, from 6.15 am. <http://netherlands.poetryinternational.org>

## **7. Five Islands Press launches new poets in New Zealand**

The Australian publisher Five Islands Press will be launching Series 11 of their New Poets Programme next week with readings in New Zealand. Writers in this series are Ali Jane Smith, Nathan Curnow, Gita Mammen, Ross Gillett, Francesca Haig, and Kate Waterhouse. There are also events being planned for Wollongong, Sydney, Melbourne, Ballarat, Portland, Launceston and Hobart later in the year. The New Zealand launch details are as follows:

Thursday 22 June 2006

6 pm Southern Cross Tavern, Abel Smith St, Wellington

(Note – this has changed from the time and location previously advertised. In addition to the five poets in the series, Jen Crawford will also appear at the Wellington launch.)

Friday 23 June 2006

6.30pm - Palmerston North Public Library, Palmerston North Public Library, 4 Library Square, Palmerston North

Saturday 24 June 2006

1.00pm - The Atrium, Massey University, Albany Campus

3.30pm - The Pumphouse, Auckland

## **8. South Pacific writing**

Jennifer Webb and Kavita Nandan are putting together an anthology of short fiction and poetry written in and/or about the South Pacific, by both established and emerging writers. They invite submissions of unpublished poetry, or short fictions (up to, say, 1500 words). The editors do not wish to set a theme, but to respond to the works that are submitted, and to produce a book that showcases writing from the region. The anthology will be launched at the triennial ACLALS Conference in Vancouver, Canada, in August 2007. Submissions may be emailed or posted to Jen Webb ([Jennifer.Webb@canberra.edu.au](mailto:Jennifer.Webb@canberra.edu.au)) and Kavita Nandan ([nandan\\_k@usp.ac.fj](mailto:nandan_k@usp.ac.fj)) by 15 September 2006. The editors note, however, that ‘for the purposes of this

collection, and for reasons of focus, South Pacific does not include Aotearoa/NZ, Australia or Southeast Asian nations.' They will accept submissions from any Pacific Islanders (including those living in New Zealand), and are also interested in work about the South Pacific by other writers.

## **9. Feast of fools**

No, not a banquet at Bellamy's, but a medieval pageant soon to be staged at Wellington's Town Hall. The evening will take the form of a Medieval Ball, with dancing for all, accompanied by a medieval dance band. The dancing will be interspersed with floor-shows including a medieval Mystery Play directed by Victoria University Professor Kathryn Walls, medieval musical numbers from professional musicians, and dance demonstrations led by Jennifer Shennan. Food and drink will be available from 'taverns' around the perimeter of the hall, and the audience will have the opportunity to try their hands (or rather feet) at medieval dance steps as well as see them expertly performed by students of Historic Dance from the Theatre School at Victoria University. Proceeds will go towards the restoration of the Maxwell Fernie Organ, at St Mary of the Angels. The Feast of Fools: A Pageant of Medieval Music and Dance for the Midwinter Solstice. Wellington Town Hall, Saturday 24th June 2006, from 7:00pm. Tickets \$35, only available in advance from Ticketek (booking fee applies). For more information see <http://www.feastoffools.co.nz/>

## **10. From the whiteboard**

A critic cannot be fair in the ordinary sense of the word. It is only about things that do not interest one that one can give a really unbiased opinion, which is no doubt the reason why an unbiased opinion is always absolutely valueless. (Oscar Wilde)

## **11. Recent web reading**

One of the great anthologies of current poetry in English

<http://www.thepage.name/>

(go to the right-hand column)

NZ book design awards

[http://www.leafsalon.co.nz/archives/000992book\\_design\\_awards\\_huh.html#more](http://www.leafsalon.co.nz/archives/000992book_design_awards_huh.html#more)

Literary agents

<http://www.neilgaiman.com/journal/2005/01/everything-you-wanted-to-know-about.asp>

One-on-one speed-poetry contest

[www.quickmuse.com](http://www.quickmuse.com)

Writers get digital

<http://www.nytimes.com/2006/06/05/books/05digi.html>

Batwoman comes out

<http://www.suntimes.com/output/books/cst-fty-batwoman01.html>

Cohen poetry

<http://www.bloomberg.com/apps/news?pid=10000088&sid=aYQUIbMgwWsw&refer=culture#>

Hollywood screenwriter's blog

<http://www.janeespenson.com/>

Overrated writers

<http://www.litkicks.com/BeatPages/category.jsp?what=OWP>

Theodore Roethke poems

<http://gawow.com/roethke/poems/>

All the best bands were from New Zealand

[http://www.saidthegramophone.com/archives/said\\_the\\_guests\\_jona.php](http://www.saidthegramophone.com/archives/said_the_guests_jona.php)

Be careful out there

<http://www.pocket-lint.co.uk/news.php?newsId=3599>

Band name generator

<http://www.elsewhere.org/bandname>

Adolescent poem generator

<http://www.elsewhere.org/hbzpoetry/>

Dedicated

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/g2/story/0,,1793688,00.html>

Toibin wins world's richest fiction prize

<http://www.impacdublinaward.ie/News.htm>

## 12. Great lists of our time: readers' choice

We received the following suggestions from newsletter readers in response to our request for examples of 'silent onomatopoeia', or words that seem to imitate other qualities (besides sound) of the phenomena they represent – although we suspect one or two of these might be examples of the more conventional sonic kind:

*tip, hesitate, tentative, swoop, crash, breathe, flee, wave, pick, gobble, gargle, excruciating, flash, groan, wooden, metallic, muddy, sodden, bereft, fruity, earthy, dominant, flourish, cloying, refurbish, clingy, taut, abrasive*

But the *pièce de resistance* comes from Susan Pearce, who sent us this verse:

Squint, heckle, finicky, flop,  
soothe, drizzle, persnickety, slop.  
Dipsy doodle, hotchpotch, mishmash, frazzle,  
flabbergast, capriccio, persiflage, dazzle.

Slither, lour, mince, fizzle,  
rammack, whorl, pash, drizzle.  
Stolid, snooze, slippery, kerfuffle,  
dribble, swift, boondocks, scuffle.

Blatherskite, vacuous, wrangle, haggle,  
Crass, fatuous, ignoramus, snaggle

Readers interested in pursuing the idea into the visual domain might like to take a look at Lawrence Weschler's take on visual rhymes, or what he calls 'convergences' in his book and associated contest:

<http://mcsweeneys.net/books/everythingthatrises.contest11.html>