



COMPANY THEATRE

A Shortcut to Happiness

By ROGER HALL

"There are few shortcuts to happiness, but dancing is one of them!"



Directed by Sian Davis

A stunning Roger Hall New Zealand comedy about the lives, loves and adventures of a folk-dancing class.

9 - 23 August 2014

At The Rose Centre, School Road, Belmont
 Wednesday - Saturday at 8pm
 Matinéés Sun 10th August and 17th August at 2pm
 \$25 Adults • \$20 Concessions
 Bookings 445 9900 or email info@rosecentre.co.nz
www.companytheatre.co.nz

Company Theatre - From the President

Sherry Ede - President of Company Theatre

Welcome. It is always a pleasure for Company Theatre to have Sian Davis direct for us. She is an experienced and insightful director with a passion for Set Design. She is there with a paintbrush, on pack-in day too.

Company Theatre has presented many Roger Hall plays over the years and each one has delighted our audiences. We think this is the perfect play for a winter's night entertainment. Enjoy your night with us.

Sian Davis - The Director



Initially an actor I turned to directing in the late 1990s and subsequently have directed some thirty plays. My association with Company Theatre is considerable, firstly as an actor in 'Just Between Ourselves' by Alan Ayckbourn (1996), my last stage appearance being in 'Kindertransport' by Diane Samuels (2004). The posters in the foyer record the plays directed here for Company Theatre. Obviously, I rather like directing and certainly intend to do some more, if given the chance.

I have to say that my bent is for challenging plays of substance, but, given the realities of a need for an audience (mine, as well as the theatre's), I have ventured into 'pop' (I hope Mr Hall is not too affronted for his plays are not anything if not 'popular'). Actually, 'A Shortcut to Happiness' not only has a good deal of lovely characterisation and wit, it has given me a good deal of delight along with some jolly interesting and stimulating challenges.

I will freely concede that I am an inept dancer so my huge respects to Susanne for the choreography; and also, of course, to the actors for their skills, in acting and dancing, and their sweet tolerance of my eccentricities. And to all the other myriad of folk who have worked so hard for the staging of this play, my heartfelt thanks.



A Shortcut To Happiness by Roger Hall

Susanne Dell - The Choreographer

The Play

A youngish Russian immigrant, Natasha, keen to make a life (and money) in NZ has advertised for people who might just be interested in a spot of traditional folk-dancing....and so she waits to see who might just turn up.

Among the students are recently widowed Ned, Coral, golfing friends Laura and Janet, U3A enthusiast Bev and her henpecked husband Ray, and later on a visitor to the class, Sebastian. After each class some of them gather at Ned's for coffee and a chat

The scene alternates between a Church Hall and Ned's apartment. It takes place over a number of months. It is set in the present.

ACT 1

- Scene 1 The Church Hall – Winter
- Scene 2 Ned's place
- Scene 3 The next class at the Church Hall
- Scene 4 Ned's place after the class
- Scene 5 The Church Hall – 2 weeks later
- Scene 6 Ned's place, the following Tuesday
- Scene 7 The Church Hall – a few weeks later

There will be one interval of 15 minutes during which refreshments will be available in the foyer.

ACT 2

- Scene 1 The Church Hall – February, Summer
- Scene 2 Ned's place – a few weeks later
- Scene 3 Ned's place – after class, a few weeks later
- Scene 4 The Church Hall – the following week
- Scene 5 Ned's place, late afternoon. Winter
- Scene 6 The Church Hall – a few weeks later
- Scene 7 Ned's place – a few days later
- Scene 8 The Church Hall – some time later



A tap and jazz teacher with dance schools in Howick and Papakura Susanne has been involved with all aspects of stage craft from directing, choreographing, stage managing through to stage crewing, lighting, sound and production management.

This is the third Roger Hall show Susanne has been involved in and it is the second time with "A Shortcut to Happiness". Susanne directed and choreographed the show for Howick Little Theatre. She previously played the part of Ruth in "Taking Off" at Howick Little Theatre and directed "Social Climbers" for Manukau Performing Arts.

In 2005 Susanne directed the New Zealand premiere "Bernard's Daughters" at the Stables Theatre. In 2006 she gained a NAPTA nomination as Best Director, Set Design and Best Show for "Rent" (also a New Zealand Premiere) and in the same year a nomination as Choreographer for "Stepping Out". In mid 2009 Susanne had the dual role of directing and choreographing "West Side Story" for Baradene School for Girls. At the end of 2009 Susanne directed the 50th Anniversary review "Yesterday, Today, Tomorrow" for the Harlequin Theatre, 2010, "Social Climbers" at Manukau Performing Arts and "Me and My Girl" for the Pukekohe Light Opera Club. "A Christmas Carol" was staged at the Harlequin at the end of 2011 which Susanne directed and then choreographed "Joseph" in 2012. Last year was been busy with directing for Howick Little Theatre (A Short Cut to Happiness), appearing in "Calendar Girls" for Harlequin, directing at Strathallan College (West Side Story), and Pakuranga College (Copacabana) and finally "Grease" for the Harlequin.

Susanne thanks Sian, Sherry and the cast and crew of "A Shortcut to Happiness" for their help and hard work. It has been a pleasure working with them.



Roger Hall - The Playwright



A prolific and successful playwright, Roger Hall has consistently written for the stage. He has also written scripts for radio and television, and for children. Hall's writing is known for its comedy, political and social purpose, and underlying pathos. His plays have toured widely and have been performed at international venues. His biggest success was with *Middle Age Spread* that ran for 18 months in London's West End and won the award for Comedy of the Year (1979). Hall has been the recipient of awards and fellowships in recognition of his work. He published an autobiography, *Bums on Seats*, in 1998.

A desire to write and to act was kindled by his father's talent as an impersonator, frequent family visits to the theatre, especially revues, and by his love of post-war British radio comedies such as 'Hancock's Half Hour'.

As an only child growing up on the edge of London, he became an avid reader, and occasional actor. Hall began working at an insurance company, but in 1958, aged 19, he sailed for New Zealand on an assisted passage scheme for migrants.

With a long list of successful plays over the years, the most recent box office hits are *Spreading Out* (2004), *Taking Off* (2004), *Who Wants to be 100?* (2007), *Four Flat Whites in Italy* (2008), *You Can Always Hand Them Back* (2011) and *A Shortcut to Happiness* (2012).

A Shortcut To Happiness by Roger Hall

THE CAST

- | | |
|------------------|----------------------------|
| Natasha | Wendy Dynan-Gleeson |
| Ned | Peter Segrove |
| Janet | Pip Simonian |
| Laura | Ruth Hyde |
| Coral | Donna Franks |
| Bev | Ann Baxter |
| Ray | Steve Wright |
| Sebastian | Craig Blackwood |

After the Show



Our house bar stays open after the performance. You are welcome to stay, enjoy our range of Coopers Creek wine and mingle with the cast and crew.



Alastair Fletcher - Company Theatre Bar Manager



A Shortcut To Happiness by Roger Hall

BIOGRAPHIES

THE CREW

Director	Sian Davis
Choreographer	Susanne Dell
Production Manager	Sherry Ede
Set Design	Sian Davis
Lighting Design	Bridget Fogarty
Lighting / Sound Operator	Stephen Hood
Stage Manager	Lynne Davis
Properties	Fred and Doreen Gould
Costumes	Linda Camplin and her team
Hair	Anne Dennis/Maddie Dennis
Set Construction Manager	Phil Davis
Set Construction	Tony Sandy, Alastair Fletcher, Stephen Hood, Ron Reichs
Set Painting	Caroline Parker/Tony Sandy/ Anne Rimmer/Sian Davis
Front of House Manager	Sherry Ede
Bar Manager	Alastair Fletcher
Publicity/Photos/Programme	Sherry Ede
Rehearsal Assistant	Sherilee Shackleton
Rehearsal Prompt	Sheila Copus

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Kate Alexander from Places and Graces, Devonport.
 The Antique Shop, Milford. Scott Thomas - Lighting Advisor
 Kath Hair, Manager of The Rose Centre



Wendy Dynan-Gleeson

Wendy was born and bred in Ireland and grew up in a theatrical family who owned a Performing Arts School. She completed a BA Degree in Drama and Psychology at the University of Glamorgan, South Wales, followed by a postgraduate year at The Drama Studio, London where she was in the top 5% at graduation.

She performed a variety of roles in Ireland and Britain including Shakespeare's Oberon and Lady MacBeth, Chrissy in 'Dancing at Lughnasa' by Brian Friel, Frieda in 'Ourselves Alone' by Anne Devlin, Mary in 'New Morning' by Declan Hughes and Marie in 'The Nutcracker and The Mouse King' adapted by Jane Buckler.

Moving to New Zealand has been an incredible experience. She came across the auditions on Company Theatre's website and is finding the role of Natasha a wonderful challenge.



Peter Segrove

Peter first appeared with Company in 1981 in "They Came to a City" (1981). He was involved with Company Theatre in many productions as an actor and director until 1995. During this time he was very active in the development of the Rose Centre. He directed Habeas Corpus (1992) the first production for Company in the newly completed theatre. He has also been associated with many other Auckland Societies. The most recent of these were Playhouse Theatre in Glen Eden and Waitemata Little Theatre in Henderson. He says "It is fun to be back at Company after a gap of 19 years – but perhaps not so much fun for Sue, our choreographer, who realised too late that I have two left feet. Great cast though, and thanks Sian and Sue for their patience".



BIOGRAPHIES



Steve Wright

Steve has enjoyed playing a variety of roles over the last 25 years. He lists a spell in Oxford, England as the source of a few memorable roles including playing Stephano in "The Tempest" at Trinity College Gardens. His most loved role was that of Arnold in Pilgrim production's "The Boys Next Door". Other roles include Hugh in Roger Hall's "Glide Time" Nevis in "Improbable Fiction" Sydney in "Absurd Person Singular" Ernest in "Bedroom Farce" - all by Alan Ayckbourn. Steve has also turned his hand to directing, with a particular interest in Roger Hall plays including "Prisoners Of Mother England" "Social Climbers" "Glide Time" and "Market Forces"

Steve tells us he is thoroughly enjoying playing Ray in this production of "A Short Cut To Happiness" for the variety the play offers and the camaraderie it generates.



BIOGRAPHIES



Ruth Hyde

Ruth studied theatre, film and drama at Victoria University and completed a Bachelor of Education including papers in process and creative drama for teaching, at Auckland University. She enjoyed a 6 week summer workshop in England at the London Academy of Music and Drama, and also studied theatre in England at the Holborn City Literary Institute. She had roles with the New Independent Theatre and also Arena, during the 1980's, and in the 1990's with Mairangi Players and Auckland University.



Ann Baxter

Ann has many years of experience in all aspects of theatre including writing and directing and she has appeared in varied roles on stage and T.V. She was last seen on stage with Company Theatre in "Calendar Girls" in 2013. Being in "A Shortcut to Happiness" is particularly appealing as she is in the company of old friends. "The role of Bev, the domineering wife of Ray is fun to play and dancing the night away is a bonus".



Pip Simonian

Pip is delighted to return to Company Theatre after her last performance as Sandra in Brassed Off (2012). Since then she has appeared in "Bedroom Farce", "Present Laughter", and "Keep It in the Family" with other theatre groups, around Auckland. Comedy is definitely Pip's preference! When off the boards, she is a teacher and is crazy about her adventure motorbike which has taken her off-road round most of the North Island. She loves the part of Janet and has improved her dancing since her debut on stage in "Stepping Out" 8 years ago!



BIOGRAPHIES



Craig Blackwood

Craig has only recently caught the theatre bug having performed in two rock musicals in 2013 and the Rose Singers' 'Dad's Army' in 2014.

With his background in dance, and a desire to give acting a go, the character of Sebastian was an appealing prospect.



Donna Franks

"Great to be working under Sian Davis again. Last play I did with Sian was Roger Hall's "The Bach" (2007). I would not like to be type cast as the dizzy blonde but am having a lot of fun creating the character, Coral. My last acting role was a cockney busy body in the new musical The Great Fire of London (2014) It was such fun! Who knows what next?"



BACKSTAGE PROFILES



Bridget Fogarty - Lighting Design

Bridget Fogarty has a B.A in Theatre from Victoria University and has been a secondary Drama teacher in both New Zealand and the U.K. She has nearly twenty years experience in the arts as a director, producer and researcher. Bridget has won awards in the Sheilah Winn Shakespeare Festival and produced award winning short films that have screened at international festivals. She has produced Fringe theatre in Wellington and London and currently runs around the North Shore after her two small boys. Bridget would like to thank Kath Hair & Scott Thomas for their invaluable help in her first lighting design with Company Theatre.



Stephen Hood - Lighting and Sound Operator

Since high school, Stephen has been involved in theatre both on and off stage. He was Manuwatu Summer Shakespeare's webmaster for a couple of years, and lighting operator for Stage Two Productions' "The Crucible" a couple of years ago. After working at the Palmerston North City Library for over a decade he moved north, and now works in the IT sector here in Auckland. This is Stephen's first time as Lighting and Sound Operator for Company Theatre, and as their name suggests "they do make rather good company".



Kate Alexander - Set Dressing

Thanks to Kate Alexander of Places & Graces who provided and styled some of our set items. Kate runs Places and Graces locally from her studio in Devonport. She provides styling and props for real estate, retail, events and interiors. www.placesandgraces.com



BACKSTAGE PROFILES

Set Construction - Phil Davis



Phil's interest in theatre began with the Torbay Dramatic Society in 1963, where he has tripped the boards with his versatility in drama, comedy, vocal and dance for over fifty years.

His interest in set building coincided with his wish to become a builder. From 1967 until today, Phil has been on the set building team of every production he has been involved with.

He is so well known and valued in theatre groups around the Shore and has worked on stages from Forum North to the Victoria Theatre in Devonport. Also while son Guy was a student at Kristin School, Phil was involved with the construction of several sets for their major productions.

In recent years he has enjoyed supervising the set construction for the majority of Company's productions including some of the most difficult - 'Noises Off', (2006) with its double storey and revolving stage, 'Run for Your Wife'(2003) and 'Caught In the Net '(2005) with their many doors and more recently 'Fawlty Towers' (2012) with its multiple levels. Phil and son Guy's building company Super City Homes Ltd., won the contract to construct Company Theatre's new rehearsal and storage space (2013) and Company is very grateful for all the extra building help that Phil has contributed, individually, to Company over the years.



BACKSTAGE PROFILES

Linda Camplin - Costumes



Having been involved with Company Theatre for a number of years, this is my first foray into the world of costumes. Costuming a modern play has been both challenging and rewarding. A special thank you to the entire cast who have been so helpful and patient and my team of wonderful helpers - Paddy Stafford Bush, Cathie Sandy, Ruth Chapman, Sherry Ede, Anne Dennis and Madison Dennis.



Fred and Doreen Gould - Props



Lynne Davis - Stage Manager



Sheila Copus - Rehearsal Prompt



Tony Sandy - Set Painting



Caroline Parker - Set Painting



Company Theatre List of Shows

Company Theatre is the Resident Theatre group at The Rose Centre, Belmont. Many other theatres and private groups hire this venue during the year. Here is a list of recent Company Theatre productions:

2005 – Company Theatre Silver Jubilee Year. 25 Years 1980 - 2005

Caught In The Net by Ray Cooney. Directed by Sherry Ede
 Trick of The Light by Ken Duncam. Directed by Sian Davis
 The Ghost Train by Arnold Ridley. Directed by Graham Wagstaff

- 2006 Spreading Out by Roger Hall. Directed by Kathy Gent.
 Gym & Tonic by John Godber. Directed by Lesley Locke
 Noises Off by Michael Frayn. Directed by Richard Parmee.
- 2007 The Bach by Stephen Sinclair, Directed by Sian Davis
 Daughters of Heaven by Michelanne Forster, Directed by Mary Cavanagh
 Funny Money by Ray Cooney, Directed by Sherry Ede
- 2008 Someone Who'll Watch Over Me by Frank McGuinness.
 Directed by Steve Wright
 'Allo 'Allo, by David Croft and Jeremy Lloyd. Directed by Kathy Gent
 Boeing Boeing by Marc Carnoletti. Directed by Richard Parmee
- 2009 Relatively Speaking by Alan Ayckbourn. Directed by Lynne Davis
 Tom, Dick and Harry by Ray and Michael Cooney. Directed by David Adkins
 Murdered To Death by Peter Gordon. Directed by Sherry Ede

2010 - Our 30th Year (1980- 2010)

Who Wants to be 100? (Anyone who's 99) by Roger Hall.
 Directed by Sian Davis
 Brassed Off by Paul Allen. Directed by Kathy Gent
 Music Hall 2010. Devised and Directed by Ruth Chapman.& Sherry Ede

- 2011 Pride and Prejudice by Jane Kendall. Directed by Karl Buckley
 Four Flat Whites in Italy by Roger Hall. Directed by Richard Parmee
 Improbable Fiction by Alan Ayckbourn. Directed by Lynne Davis
- 2012 Fawlty Towers by John Cleese and Connie Booth. Directed by Kathy Gent
 The Mousetrap by Agatha Christie. Directed by Sian Davis
- 2013 Calendar Girls by Tim Firth. Directed by Kathy Gent
 It's Just Sex by Jeff Gould. Directed by Richard Parmee
 Little Gem by Elaine Murphy. Directed by Des Smith
- 2014 An Ideal Husband by Oscar Wilde. Directed by Steven Arnold
 A Shortcut to Happiness by Roger Hall. Directed by Sian Davis
 MORE Fawlty Towers by John Cleese and Connie Booth.
 Directed by Kathy Gent

NEXT PRODUCTION:



MORE FAWLTY TOWERS

by John Cleese and Connie Booth
 Directed by Kathy Gent

3 Episodes from the famous T.V. Series
 Fundraising bookings now being taken

15-29 November 2014



Scott Hayden & Julie Collis once again take the roles of Basil & Sybil Fawlty in these new episodes

COMPANY THEATRE NEW MEMBERS

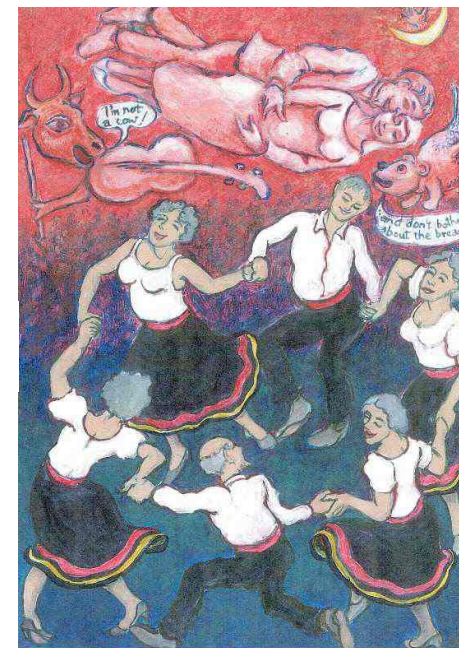
To receive our FREE email newsletter, with details of upcoming shows, go to our website and sign on under MAILING LIST. See the website for AUDITIONS, CLUB NIGHTS, FUNDRAISING NIGHTS and BOOKINGS information.

www.companytheatre.co.nz





Siân's thank you
card for key helpers





Wendy happy to take lead role

on, Ann
de and

The lead role of Natasha, in Company Theatre's production of Roger Hall's comedy *A Shortcut to Happiness*, will be played by Irishwoman Wendy Dynan-Gleeson.

Dynan-Gleeson was born and bred in Ireland and grew up in a theatrical family who owned a performing arts school. Theatre has always been a huge part of her life and she completed a BA in Drama and Psychology at the University of Glamorgan, South Wales, followed by a postgraduate year at The Drama Studio, London where she was in the top 5% at graduation.

Dynan-Gleeson performed a variety of roles in Ireland and Britain, including Shakespeare's Oberon and Lady MacBeth. Other memorable roles were Chrissy in *Dancing at Lughnasa* by Brian Friel, Frieda in *Ourselves Alone* by Anne Devlin, Mary in *New Morning* by Declan Hughes and Marie in *The Nutcracker* and *The Mouse King* adapted by Jane Buckler.

Dynan-Gleeson says coming to New Zealand has been an incredible experience and she feels fortunate to have been involved with a number of Theatre in Education shows in Auckland. "Life here in New Zealand has been amazing and made very easy by such a welcoming nation."

After having two Kiwi children, Dynan-Gleeson decided it was time to get back on stage and came across the auditions on Company Theatre's website.

"The role of Natasha, in *A Shortcut to Happiness*, by Roger Hall, is a wonderful challenge. She is opinionated to the point of offence which is great to portray as she thinks



**Leading lady...
Wendy Dynan-Gleeson**

and says things which are totally inappropriate. However I find she is a victim of her own circumstances at times and is really quite vulnerable underneath it all. I'm enjoying the journey of getting to know her."

A Shortcut to Happiness is directed by Sian Davis, who last directed *The Mousetrap* for Company Theatre. Bookings through the Rose Centre on 445 9900. The show runs from August 9 – 23 with two Sunday matinees at 2.00pm. Tickets \$25/ \$20.

A shortcut to happiness

Company Theatre at The Rose Centre in Belmont, presents the warm hearted, Roger Hall comedy *A Shortcut to Happiness* from August 9 to 23.

This comedy is about the lives, loves and misadventures of a folk-dancing class and has all the usual Roger Hall trademarks – shrewd observations, much

mocking of Kiwis' curious customs, and of course, plenty of laughs.

The story tells of Natasha, a recent immigrant from Russia, who teaches a dancing class to supplement her income, to meet Kiwis and to improve her English. Singing and dancing comes naturally to her, but in New Zealand, she must pull together a rag tag collection of seniors who have other things on their minds.

We meet Ned (Peter

Segrove) a widowed gentleman, who becomes an initial figure of desire among the small following of dancers. Coral (Donna Franks) is desperate to meet a man and throws herself at him. Laura (Ruth Hyde), also widowed, has the work of meeting a new man done for her by best friend Janet (Pip Simonian), who tries to set her up with Ned, for future golf and cruising outings where couples just seem to work better. Ned's popular position



Delightful duo: Steve Wright and Ann Baxter play Ray and Bev.

however is threatened when a new male, Sebastian (Craig Blackwood) dances onto the scene. There are many humorous moments with husband and wife Ray (Steve Wright) and Bev (Ann Baxter) wearing matching outfits and proudly proclaiming that they are retired and ready to attend all sorts of leisure classes.

Catchy rhythms and syncopated steps, put together by choreographer Susan Dell, work well with direction by Sian Davis. Lighting design by Bridget Fogarty.

The show will run Wednesday to Saturday at 8pm from August 9 to 23, with Sunday matinees on August 10 and 17 at 2pm. For bookings phone 445 9900. Tickets \$25 for adults, concessions \$20. Cash door sales. More: companytheatre.co.nz.