

Written and directed by **Sherry Ede**

This
New Zealand Premiere
tells the pain of
Richard Pearse the aviator
and his passion to follow a dream...



June 10 - 24, 2000

The Rose Centre Theatre,
School Road, Belmont
Bookings essential.
Some nights presold.
Phone 445 9900

the **PAIN** and the **PASSION**

The term 'Kiwi ingenuity' might have been coined for Richard Pearse. While other would-be aviators were yet to leave the ground, he assembled a machine capable of taking to the air, using little more than pieces of scrap metal and bamboo from around his farm. However he saw the honours for achieving powered flight go to the Wright brothers, while his efforts were ridiculed and his patents ignored.

This play supports the view that Pearse's first flight was on March 31st, 1903 which puts him 8 months before the Wright Brothers' flight at Kitty Hawk in December 1903.

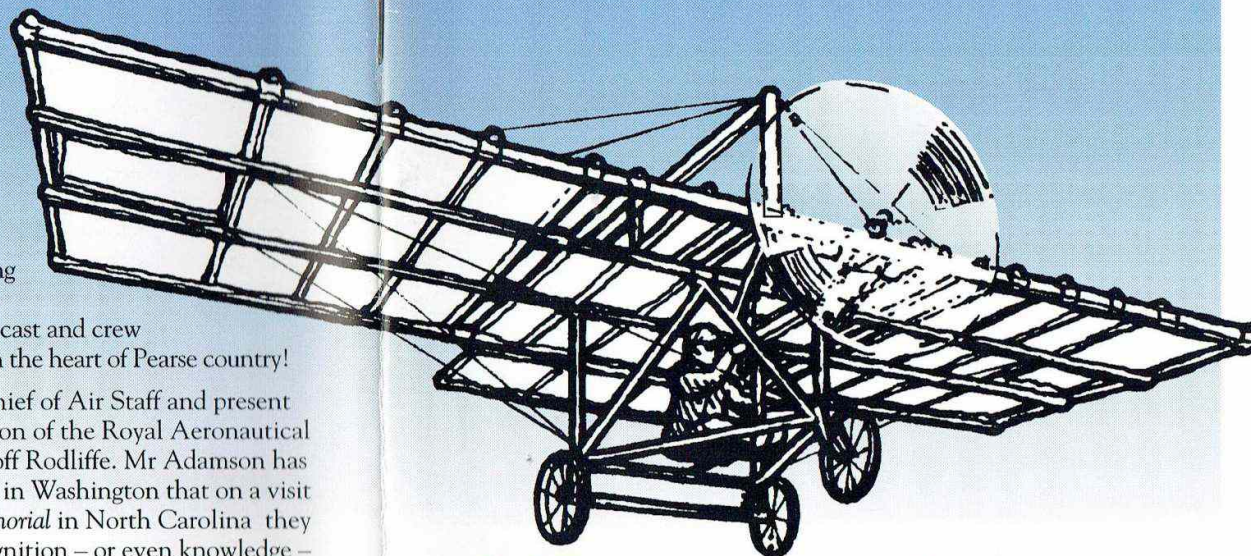
The Future

Interest in this production is beginning to spread. At the end of this season arrangements are under way for the cast and crew to fly to Timaru to present the play in the heart of Pearse country!

Peter Adamson, former RNZAF Chief of Air Staff and present member of the New Zealand Division of the Royal Aeronautical Society has recently written to Geoff Rodliffe. Mr Adamson has received a letter from Defence Staff in Washington that on a visit to the *Wright Brothers National Memorial* in North Carolina they were 'concerned at the lack of recognition – or even knowledge – there of Richard Pearse'.

Talks are going on right this minute on the idea of inducting Richard Pearse into the Wright Brothers National Memorial. Other inductees include Lindbergh, Yeager, Curtis, Earhart and Byrd to name just a few! Here in New Zealand we can only say – about time!

With thanks to... **Broady's Coal Range Co Ltd, East Tamaki**
Devonport Car Yard, Lake Road, Belmont
Harwood Morris Sound Studio, Devonport
Auckland Theatre Company
The Lion Foundation

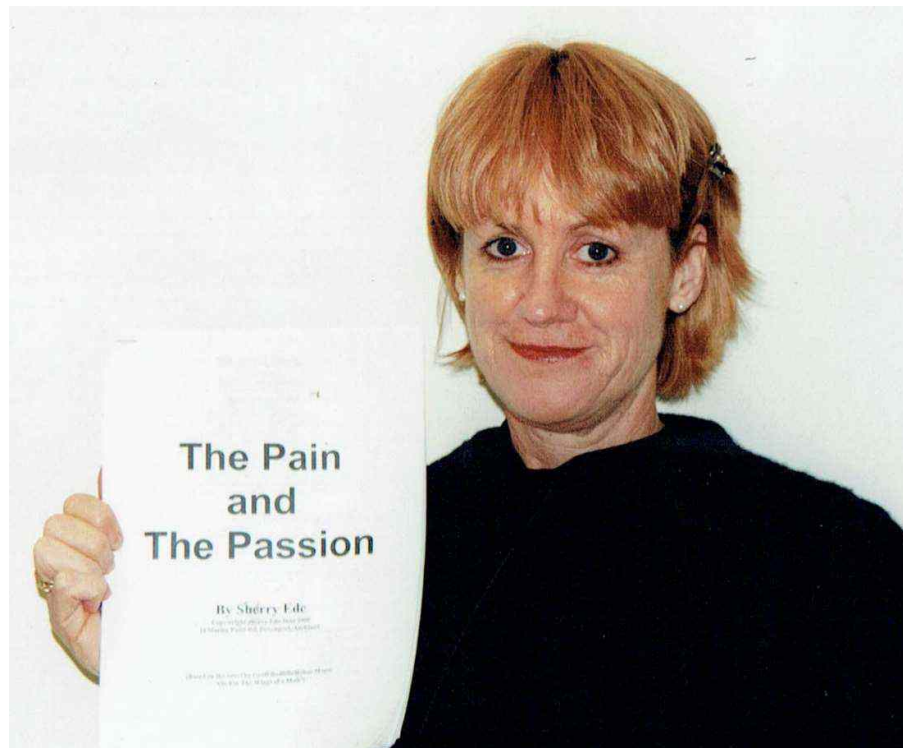


PREMIER PRODUCTION — JUNE 10-24, 2000
 ROSE CENTRE THEATRE, AUCKLAND



The Pain & The Passion

Written & Directed by Sherry Ede
 Based on the Geoff Rodliffe novel, *Oh For The Wings of A Moth*



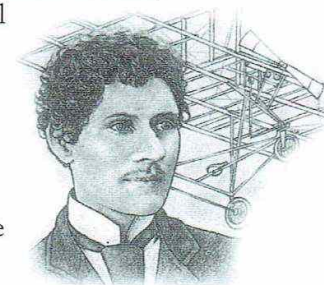
Written and Directed by Sherry Ede

In the depths of the winter of 1951, a frail elderly man with long white hair was helped from his home in Christchurch and taken to Sunnyside Hospital, a psychiatric institution in the city's southwest. Weak and distraught, he muttered about attempts being made on his life and people out to steal his inventions. He knew his age (73) and his year of birth (1877) and although his conversation was 'jumbled and largely incomprehensible', he was not declared insane. He was just no longer able to care for himself and had no where else to go.

This is the starting point for *The Pain and the Passion*. The play then goes back to the summer of 1903 when Pearse was preparing for his first historic flight. The date, March 31st 1903, has been determined by Pearse's biographer, Gordon Ogilvie and aviator/engineer/author Geoff Rodliffe (the latter being the inspiration behind this play,). Both have made a lifetime study of the Pearse story including detailed analysis of 37 witness accounts, 18 of which were eye witnesses.

The only difference between Ogilvie and Rodliffe is the word 'flight'. Ogilvie prefers the term 'powered take-off'. Rodliffe declares that the mere fact that he got a machine off the ground and into the air for a period of time should qualify Pearse for a place in the history books of the world as the first man to fly.

Pearse's achievement, in a small town in New Zealand, at the bottom of the world, far away from all the big machines and expensive tools available in Europe and America is one of the most astonishing and fascinating stories in New Zealand history. It surely deserves to be made into an international film. The ingredients are all there: a romantic genius working in isolation, encompassed by a passion above all passions to fly, who works on through ridicule and ostracism to astoundingly, at the young age of 26, achieve a dream. Throughout the rest of his life and up to the present time, his achievements have on the whole remained unrecognised, unremembered and unacknowledged.



We hope that interest generated by this production will give further recognition for the pain and the passion of Richard Pearse.

Synopsis

The play opens in a room at Sunnyside Hospital, Christchurch in 1953. It is just months before Pearse's death. His cello is one of his few remaining possessions. Other items, including his plans and final calculations, which he brought with him a couple of years ago and guarded in a locked suitcase, have been thrown away by the hospital staff, dismissed as nothing more than scribble.

We return to 1903, with Pearse just 26 years old and at the height of his youthful enthusiasm and endeavour. The Pearse family, we meet only one of his younger sisters, Annie, are middle class. The father is able to provide farming land for each of his sons although they are not overly wealthy.

They belong to a small community, where superstition and narrow mindedness constantly threaten Pearse's dreams. Only Mrs Evans echoes the warmth of those few who have secret dreams of their own. The action of Act One moves steadily towards the evening of the 31st March, and the first successful flight.

Act Two is in four time periods. Beginning with the historic flight, we move ahead five years to see Pearse's frustrations and remoteness, begin to taunt his mind.

Nearly 40 years later, after the Second World War, Pearse and his brother Warne are reunited at the Carleton Hotel, Christchurch.

In his room at the Sunnyside Hospital, alone and lonely, Pearse thinks back on his life.

A few lines from T.S. Eliot form a link back to 1953 and Pearse's last few days...

*We shall not cease from exploration
And the end of all our exploring
Will be to arrive where we started
And know the place for the first time.*



John Palmer
as Richard Pearse

John Burton & Dianne Lamont
as Digory & Sarah Pearse

Kate Ryan as
Matron & Mrs Evans

Martyn Scott & Elizabeth Swan
as Warne & Annie

Nial Greenstock
as waiter & constable

Ngaire Jones
as Nurse Janine & Deborah

Production Team

Director	Sherry Ede
Advice and Support	Geoff Rodliffe
Production Manager	Anne Rimmer
Set Designer	Philip Heath
Stage Dresser	Glyn Amor
Lighting Design	David Powell
Costumes	Cathie Sandy
Make-up & Wigs	Ruth Quinn
Properties	Maureen Kenny
Set Construction	Tony Sandy
Set Assistant	Angie Holmes
Construction helpers	Bob Stevens John Burton Anthony Whitehouse Caroline Parker
Plane Construction	Geoff Rodliffe
Lighting Operators	Phil Searle & Maureen Kenny
Prompt	Sue Gross
Sounds Selection	Sherry Ede
Sound Technician	Rikki Morris
Sound Operator	Helen Davies
Stage Managers	Angie Holmes Sheila Stevens Anne Rimmer
Bookings	Doug Bourke
Poster Design	Chris Meierhofer
Front of House	Richard Johnson & Sue Gross
Publicity	Karen Leyden Sherry Ede
Barman	Tony Sandy

Richard Pearse	John Palmer
Matron	Kate Ryan
Nurse Janine	Ngaire Jones
Pearse's Mother, Sarah	Dianne Lamont
Pearse's Father, Digory	John Burton
Pearse's sister Annie	Elizabeth Swan
Pearse's girlfriend Deborah	Ngaire Jones
Constable Reeves	Nial Greenstock
Mrs Evans, a neighbour	Kate Ryan
Pearse's brother, Warne	Martyn Scott
Waiter	Nial Greenstock

Cast
in order of appearance

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- Scene 1 Sunnyside Hospital Christchurch, 1953.
 - Scene 2 The Pearse Family kitchen, early March 1903
 - Scene 3 A Sunday in March, 1903
 - Scene 4 The Pearse Family kitchen, March 1903
 - Scene 5 On the way to the workshop, March, 1903
 - Scene 6 Pearse's workshop, March 30th, 1903

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

- Scene 7 The Pearse Family kitchen, 1903
- Scene 8 The First Flight - March 31st, 1903
- Scene 9 Upper Waitohi Village, July, 1903
- Scene 10 Pearse's Workshop, August, 1903
- Scene 11 The Pearse Family kitchen, 1911
- Scene 12 The Carleton Hotel, Christchurch, 1949
- Scene 13 Sunnyside Hospital, Christchurch, 1953

The Scenes

The Players

John Palmer (Richard Pearse) has experience in many types of theatre. He first appeared for Company over 10 years ago, playing Ken Harrison in *Who's Life is it Anyway?* Earlier this year, he was in Company's *How The Other Half Loves*, an Alan Ayckbourn farce in stark contrast to this very demanding role of Richard, where he needs the ability and agility to change and age between 75 and 26 years.

Dianne Lamont (Pearse's mother) is a former professional actress and broadcaster. Most recently seen at Company in *Hedda Gabler* and *Blithe Spirit*.

John Burton (Pearse's father) is Company Theatre's President. He has enjoyed several comedy roles for Company - *See How They Run* and *How The Other Half Loves*. This is his first chance to play a more serious role.

Ngāire Jones (Deborah) has a strong theatrical background in theatre - particularly musicals. Her last role was Laura in *Oklahoma*. After a six year break to start a family she is back on stage.

Kate Ryan (Mrs Evans) has enjoyed theatre since her school days and has performed in a variety of plays. She has a passion for this production and is glad to return to the stage from a six year break.

Martyn Scott (Warne) has been on and off the New Zealand stage since arriving from England a few years ago. He was last seen with Company in *Straight and Narrow*. In every show of the last few years he has carried suitcases!

Nial Greenstock (Constable/Waiter) was last seen on Company's stage as the rather restrained Arthur in *Straight and Narrow*. He never in his wildest dreams thought he would be dancing in this show!

Elizabeth Swan (Annie) is a newcomer to the Company Stage. She has previous experience with school and college, and is enjoying the part of the spirited young sister.

Author of *Oh For The Wings of A Moth*

Geoff Rodliffe's interest in aviation dates from his school days before World War II when, without the knowledge of his parents, he spent five shillings of his pocket money for two flights in a World War I aeroplane which was offering joyrides from a field near his home.

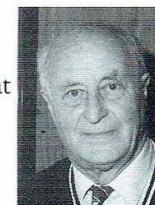
He joined the Air Force in 1935 and qualified as a ground engineer. It was during the war years that he first heard of a New Zealander who was reputed to have flown before the Wright brothers.

He moved to New Zealand in 1962 and on a visit to Auckland's Museum of Transport and Technology, noticed a strange conglomeration of an aircraft which first looked like a stage prop until his experienced eye took in the detail which no stage prop would have needed. He started asking questions and has pursued the Pearse story ever since.

He has published numerous books on the technical aspects of Pearse's achievements and just last year, in 1999, he wrote a novel called *Oh For The Wings of A Moth*.

In January, 2000, Geoff approached Sherry Ede to ask her to write a theatrical play based on this novel. Geoff says that the resulting production is 'more than he ever dreamed'.

The model aeroplane and the 3/4-size replica used in the Flight Scene were both made by Geoff Rodliffe.



Geoff Rodliffe

The Director and Playwright

Sherry Ede has a lifetime interest in theatre and has been involved with Company Theatre for 9 years .

Sherry has acted in many types of theatre: comedy, drama and Music Hall. In 1995, she directed her first full production, a Variety Show, which included a One Act Play that she later took to Taumaranui as part of the Theatre Federation One Act Play Festival where she was awarded a 'Best Director' certificate.

During the years 1995-1998, Sherry was involved with the Devonport Arts Festival, performing in, writing for and directing a theatrical group known as Arthro. In 1998 she directed a new Australian play called *Money and Friends* by David Williamson.

Sherry Ede

Acknowledgments

In January this year, I was approached by Geoff Rodliffe to write a script on the story of Richard Pearse.

On meeting Geoff, I was amazed by the passion and intelligence of this 86 year old man whose personal dream is the international recognition of Richard Pearse's achievements.

On completion of the script, I was very hesitant to put myself forward as the Director of the show as it is a difficult position to direct one's own creation. I am extremely grateful for the support and encouragement I received from the Company Theatre committee and the cast and crew of the show. My thanks go to a very tolerant cast who allowed me to continually workshop scenes (in mostly good humour!) and allow me to make changes to the script well into rehearsal time.

Successful theatre, particularly amateur theatre, needs a team of hard working people. My thanks to all involved and in particular: Cathie Sandy for her dedication to costumes, Ruth Quinn for turning up on my doorstep fresh from 20 years experience with Granada TV in the UK, and offering her amazing selection of wigs and make-up advice. My sincere thanks to Philip Heath for set design drawings to a standard never before seen at Company, to Chris Meierhofer for the poster design, to David Powell for his enthusiastic lighting ideas which Phil Searle brought to fruition, to Rikki Morris for his technical support on the sound tape, to Glyn Amor for accurate set dressing, to Maureen Kenny for properties, to my unflappable production Manager Anne Rimmer, to my 'gofer' Angie Holmes, and my chief set builder Tony Sandy and his band of merry helpers.

Most of all I would like to thank Geoff Rodliffe, for his faxes and e-mails and phone calls of continued advice and support. He, like Pearse, is a man with a mission and a single minded passion! I hope that in your approaching 87th year, Geoff, some of your own dreams have come true with this production.

Sherry Ede

JUNE 30, 2000

THE NATIONAL BUSINESS REVIEW

PERFORMING ARTS: AUCKLAND THEATRE

Pearse soars

- *The Pain and the Passion*, written and directed by Sherry Ede. Company Theatre production at Rose Centre Theatre, North Shore City
- Reviewed by Nevil Gibson

At the turn of the century a South Canterbury farmer made what could have been the first powered flight. Based on a limited range of information from magazines and his own calculations, Richard Pearse built a light engine, wings from bamboo and cloth and an undercarriage from bicycle parts.

He took off three times in the autumn and winter of 1903 across farm paddocks at Waitohi, near Temuka, the first eight months before the Wright brothers' made their famous flight at Kitty Hawk.

Pearse was unable to build on his work. He died nearly 50 years later in obscurity at a Christchurch psychiatric hospital, obsessed by his life's failure.

This is the outline of a play based on the work of aviation buff Geoff Rodliffe, one of many who have championed the cause to gain recognition for Pearse's pioneering works.

So why did Pearse fail? Shirley Ede's script fails to provide a satisfactory answer because it largely blames external causes: isolation in a small-minded provincial society and lack of support from indifferent government agencies.

Yet this was a period of great technological progress and invention, particularly in the burgeoning American capitalist society; Thomas Edison, alone, obtained over 1000 patents during his lifetime.

He, too, was an eccentric loner while, closer to home, Ernest Rutherford showed a decade or so later how a farmer's son from Nelson, more isolated than Timaru at the time, could achieve world fame after his talent was spotted early during his education.

Ede's emphasis on this hostile environment, which often came from within his own family as well as from neighbours, lessens the focus on Pearse himself. Too often the dialogue and characters fall back on caricature to explain why the Pearse family was considered "odd" but hardly that different by today's standards.

The pressure on Pearse to concentrate on his farming and to settle into family life is heightened through an unsummed romance with a local girl that haunts him later in life.

By contrast, the technical scenes, explaining Pearse's work and his success in building a machine that "flew," demonstrate much stage ingenuity. The flying machine models are works of art by Rodliffe. John Palmer, as Pearse, gives a virtuoso performance in a demanding role.

This premiere production will next be performed in Timaru and could easily become a New Zealand classic as the Pearse legend becomes more widely known.



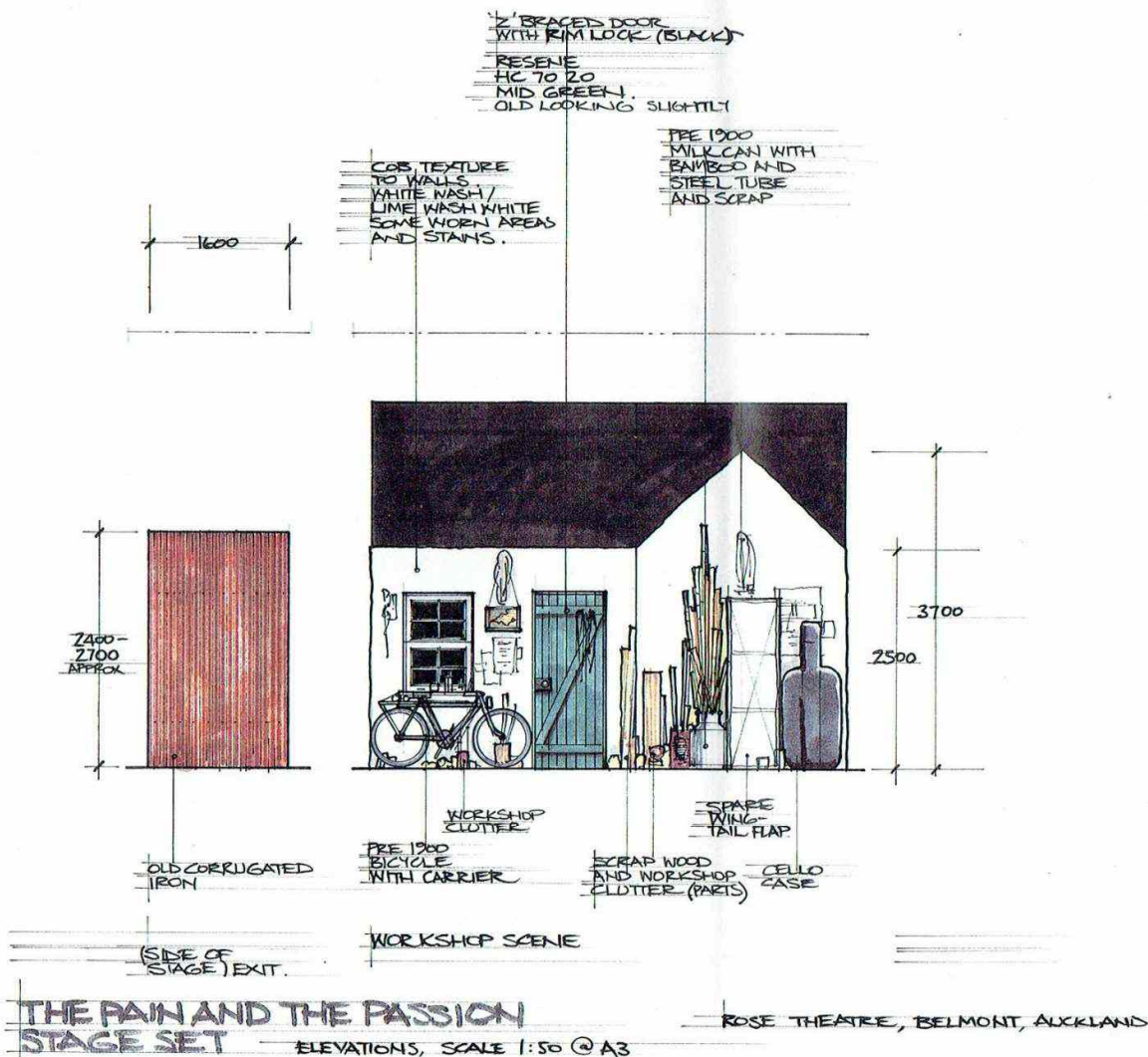
THE SET

John Palmer, John Burton, Elizabeth Swan, Martyn Scott, Front-Dianne Lamont

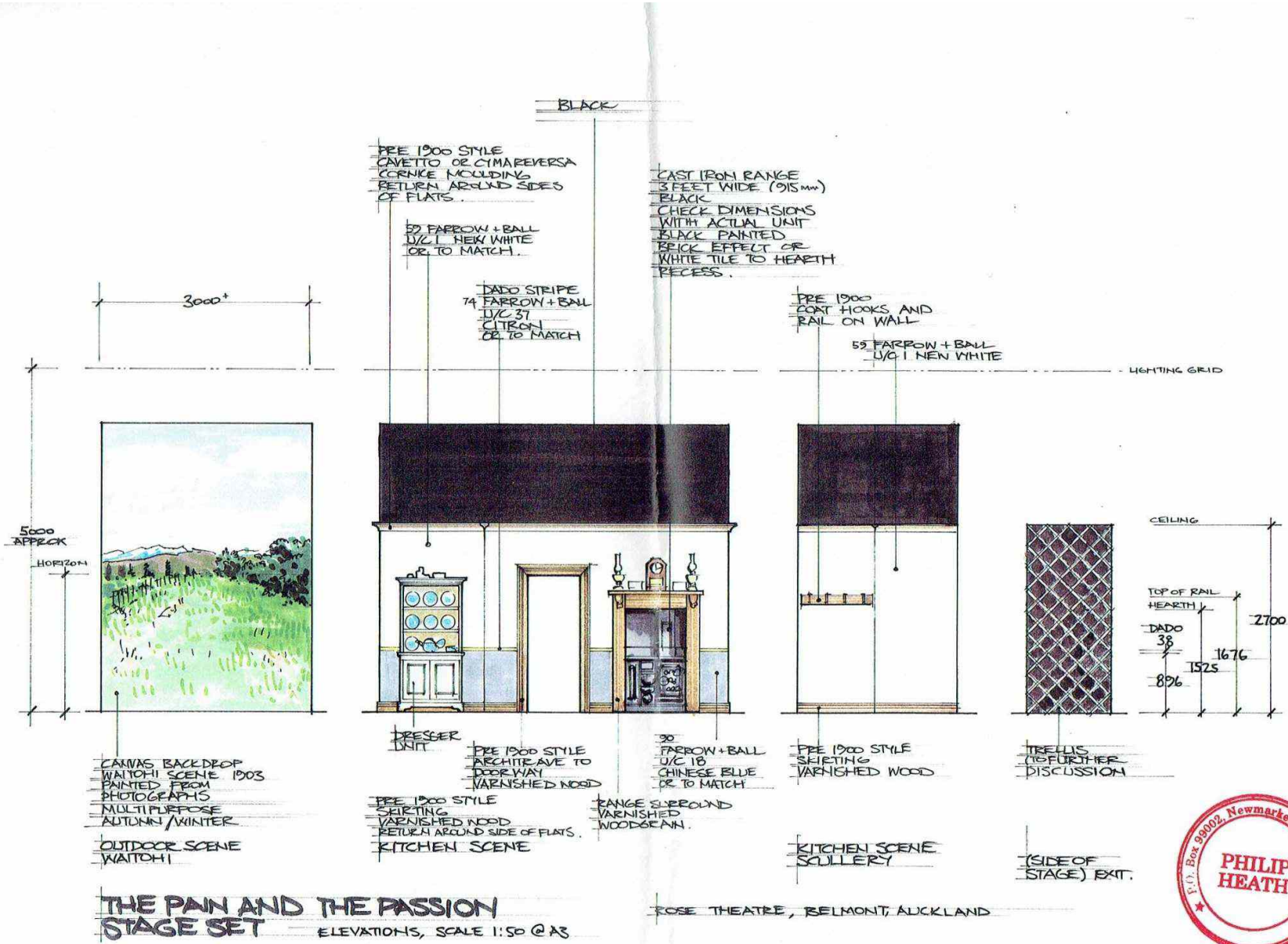
taken from the 15th Anniversary Book compiled by Scott Thomas



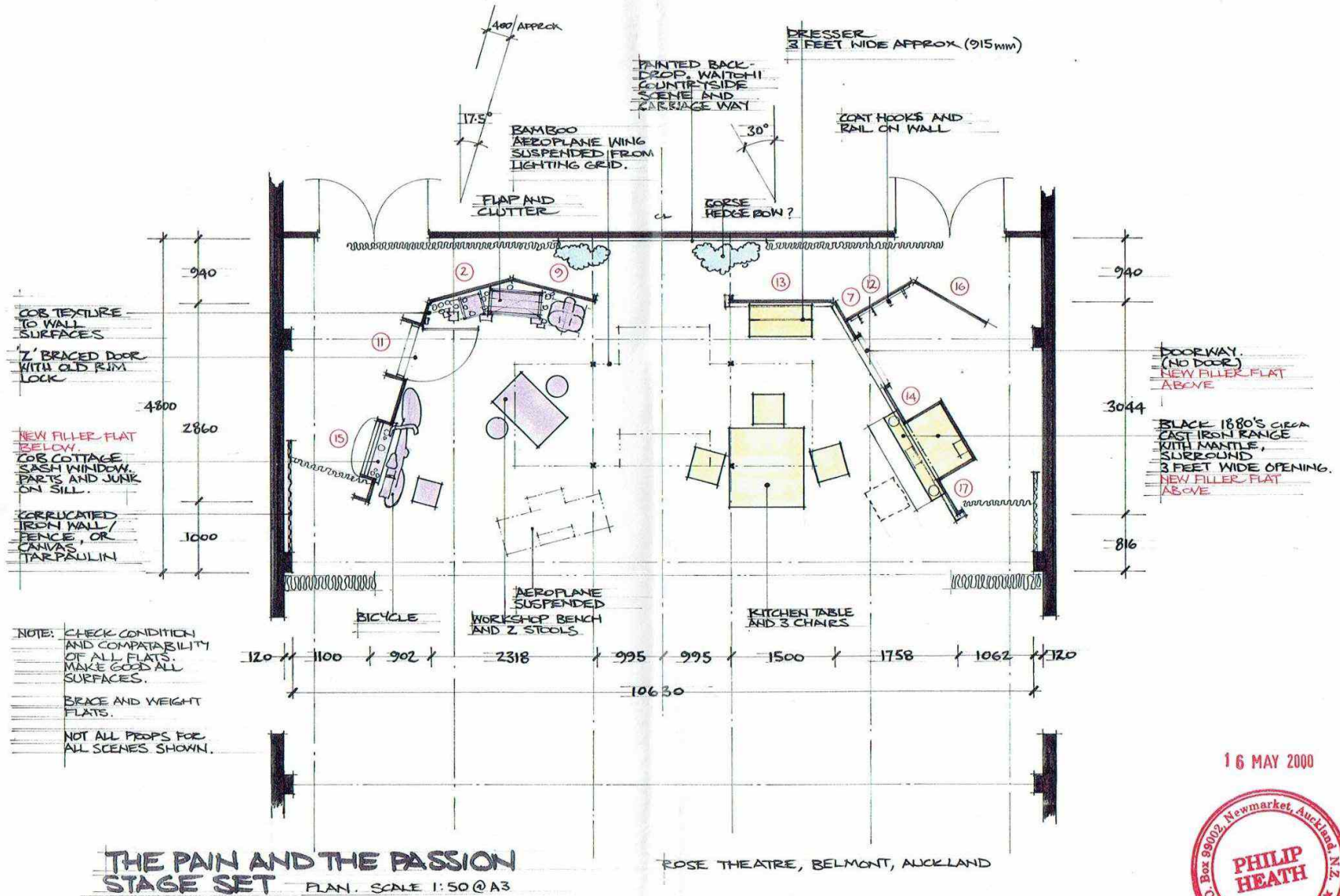
Ngaire Jones, John Palmer

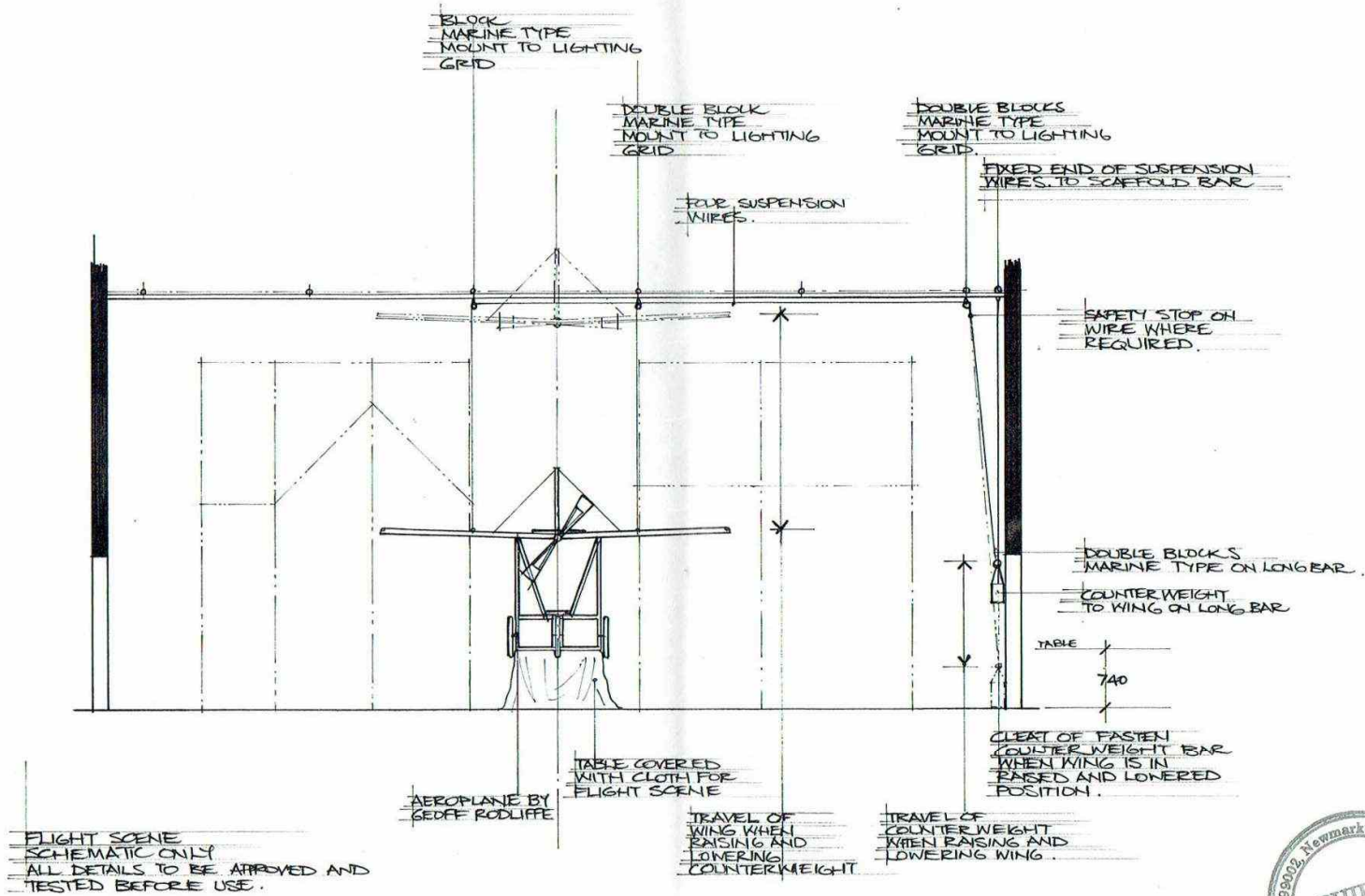


16 MAY 2000



16 MAY 2000





**THE PAIN AND THE PASSION
STAGE SET.**

FRONT ELEVATION: SCALE 1:50 @A3.

ROSE THEATRE, BELMONT, AUCKLAND



16 MAY 2000