



SHAKESPEARE GLOBE CENTRE NEW ZEALAND ANNUAL REPORT 2024

Shakespeare Globe Centre New Zealand's (SGCNZ) has presented a raft of successful events and programmes throughout the 2024 year across the motu. These are outlined and outcomes evidenced in a few of the brief quotes included in this Report.

*"Thank you, too, for helping to secure **a better future for the whole country**, by providing these programmes to uplift, educate, and inspire our leaders of tomorrow :)"*

Yours sincerely – Mother of two participants

Context: SGCNZ's Vision & Objectives

SGCNZ's vision is to transform lives by mentoring potential through experiencing Shakespeare.

In line with this, our key objectives are:

- **Manaaki** – to provide opportunities for personal and professional development.
- **Pūkenga** – to develop life skills.
- **Hauora** – to build resilience and wellbeing.
- **Whanau** – to connect people, regionally, nationally, and globally.
- **Tautoko** – to include and unite people from diverse backgrounds.
- **Mahi hou** – to inspire creativity and innovation.
- **Atawhai** – to cultivate empathetic communication.
- **Mana** – to enhance confidence with gravitas.

Our Shakespeare Festivals include educational opportunities for all ages and provide transferable life-skills enhancing experiences, with mentoring being a vital aspect. Although this does include aspiring young actors, more importantly, it is all the collaborative team who lie behind, alongside and post events and activities whose minds we nourish capabilities we expand. One only needs to sit till the end of the credits of films to see the rafts of teams of those who are actually responsible for making it all happen to present the cast visible on screen. In local films, our Alumni frequently feature, in various capacities.

To prepare all those additional roles, is to 'fire' the imagination of so many careers, and courses of study to get there. For example: technicians for stage and screen, arts management, producing, directing, designing – costumes, set, props, music composition, script writing, gaming designing, preparing PR material – media releases, advertisements, posters, fliers, and so on. These emanate from English, Drama/Theatre, Media & Computer Studies, Fabrics, Music – Humanities, and even Metalwork and Carpentry. Preparing young people for not only for their careers but also for various involvement in their school productions and community-based performances, is beneficial long-term.

"...see how apt it is to learn." The Two Gentlemen of Verona

The same applies to those selected from Nssp to be members of the 24-strong SGCNZ Young Shakespeare Company:

"It has been an absolute privilege and an honour to learn, travel, grow and perform with my SGCNZ YSC whānau."

From spontaneously singing Waiata together, to being a model for an Elizabethan-style gown, these memories and experiences and many more have changed me and my life for the better. There is no doubt in my mind that I will treasure these lessons and people for the rest of my life."

Undoubted outcomes include nurturing enquiring minds, enhancing literacy, close-reading, comprehension, appreciation and enjoyment of Shakespeare, as well as entrepreneurship, creativity, curiosity, collaboration and transferable skills which will enrich this country and further afield, in whatever the students' chosen fields of endeavour.

The term "Life changing" was echoed time and time again. With mental health issues still being all too prevalent among our Rangatahi, the sense of whanau, valuing of opinions and input to productions are all positive contributions to their wellbeing.

At the end of every SGCNZ event, at least one, often several, student/s will state that their involvement stopped them from wanting to self-harm or actually commit suicide. Such is the power of theatre, where both role playing and having input are valued, in a sharing and very caring environment, and pride of achievement instilled, all being contributing factors to turning this negative to a positive outcome. Inclusivity is at our core, especially in relation to LGBTQIA+ gender identification and ethnicities, mental and physical challenges, while self-confidence and communication skills are enhanced.

SGCNZ ensures that its up-and-coming crew members, interns, and volunteers continue to gain valuable work mentored experience in the early stages of their careers. Giving them an appreciation of the importance of volunteering is also a major factor.

SGCNZ REGIONAL UNIVERSITY OF OTAGO SHEILAH WINN SHAKESPEARE FESTIVALS (UOSWSF)

Accessibility: Accessibility to participate in our Festivals is of paramount importance. Individuals do not pay. Each school pays an SGCNZ School Friends Membership subscription of \$220 and the groups an SGCNZ Group Friends Membership of \$115, for which they may enter multiple scenes (within the limit of 12), plus as many Competition entries as they wish. Benefits for Friends include not only participation, but 10% discount on the Globe's on-line (and physical) shop, which has a superb collection of educational resource material. The books include ones written by leading specialists in Shakespeare and Race, Shakespeare and Women, and other highly topical issues.

Who was involved? One of the Regional SGCNZ University of Otago Sheilah Winn Shakespeare Festivals did not take place this year. Unfortunately, the West Coast (South Island) Regional Representative was offered a promotion by a school out of the region at the beginning of the school year. Although another teacher did 'step up', the Festival was only a month away. She is now in situ for 2025. Numbers continued to rise, again with an increase in young student-directors – between 76-85% depending on the Region.

More community groups taking part not only provided opportunities for students whose time-poor teachers were too over-stretched to be involved but meant that there were schools with no drama being taught, the chance for them to participate. Having done so, some of those rangatahi are planning to student-direct in their own school next year, so increasing the number of schools involved. There are currently 274 School Friends, plus 417 Individual Friends, and 100 Group and Honorary Members who of course represent far more.

This year the internal 'play-off' became a Board Policy, officially embracing the schools with hundreds wanting to participate, to perform in 'Prologue Festivals', with up to 12 scenes being chosen for their Regional Festival.

It was justifiably considered unfair for a few of the schools participating to have 35-40 scenes, when most had between five and just one scene. These were all held, as always, by the end of Term I, in 2024 by 12 April.

Selections: As usual, one 5-minute and one 15-minute scene was selected from each Region for the National Festival. Because of the West Coast not participating this year, the two extra slots at the National Festival were easily filled by regions with the Board's Policy of a 'threshold' for larger ones. This states that if there are either 300 or more individuals participating, **or** more than 15 different schools, **or** 50 or more scenes in a Regional Festival, the Assessors are permitted to select 3 groups to attend the National Festival.



At the same time, if there are only two schools and less than 15 scenes, only scene may be selected – a 5 or 15 minute one. This occasionally happens in Marlborough where there were only three secondary schools (now four).

One student not in a group selected for the National Festival but outstanding, may be selected from each Regional Festival as a Direct Entry student for SGCNZ National Shakespeare Schools Production.

Our Regional Representatives: They are fantastic! Each of the 24 Regions has its own SGCNZ Regional Representative, with a new one for Auckland central just having been appointed and a new West Coast one in search of a venue. As volunteers, the Regional Representatives were superb, each coordinating their Festival to the blueprint provided by the CEO, to ensure consistency of the branding, ethos of our objectives and quality of delivery of the event in all respects.

Participants: In January, we did a physical mail out to all the Principals of schools with Years 7-13, plus to directors of Community Youth Drama Groups and coordinators of Homeschool clusters of the Regional Festival Guidelines and Criteria and 6 allied Competitions (detailed further in this Report).

Just over 5000 students participated in the 23 Regional Festivals from schools across the range of socio-economic regions and groups, including (to mention just a few) Māori Immersion School, Te Wharekura O Mauao in Tauranga, Geraldine High School in North Otago, to Champion College Gisborne, Wright Rohde Community Group in the Far North to MCY in Blenheim, and many more from all socio-economic sectors nationwide. This includes the National Festival 'Prologue Festivals' and scene non-performer participants and Competition Winners.

Inclusivity: Many students from migrant families who had arrived in New Zealand appreciated the chance to be in the Festival, as a means of being accepted into the school and whanau of the cast and crew. Typically from non-English-speaking families, they also used this engagement to enhance their understanding of not only English but also Te Ao Māori and tikanga. Often, they contribute some of their own culture to their scene. International exchange students are also pleased to have the opportunity to express their cultures and delve into the similarities and differences of others with whom they interact when co-devising their scenes.

Creating a 'level the playing field' is addressed on many counts. The Assessors were briefed to acknowledge elements which demonstrate understanding of the text, interaction with the audience and each other, raw energy and potential, rather than 'gimmicky spectacles'. Exploring ideas, concepts, creativity and innovation are more important. The 2-minute set up and same length strike time after their scene deters people from even trying to have elaborate sets.

"The Play's the thing" - Hamlet

A comment: *"Thank you for my lovely day at the National Festival. Wonderful to sit & listen to Shakespeare's words being enjoyed by high school students. I thought Joan of Arc was tremendous & it was really well staged. Thanks again! Kia kaha! – K*

Engagement with SGCNZ and its Festivals is often mentioned in ERO Reports as a positive aspect of the complementary extra-curricular activities the school undertakes.

All groups performed their scenes to their school at assembly and sometimes for other occasions, including during ERO evaluations. Through the above, approximately 202,750 students throughout the country watched the scenes, in addition to the audiences actually attending the Regional and National Festivals. This results in very positive action towards audience development per sé.

Particularly special was the signage outside the grounds of Paraparaumu College, and others, congratulating the groups and individuals from their schools which were selected to perform in the National Festival and/or participate in SGCNZ NSSP.

There were manifestations many nationwide of the desire for the Festivals to continue and gratitude to the funders for their significant roles in facilitating this. We are make adaptations where necessary to suit them.

SGCNZ NATIONAL UNIVERSITY OF OTAGO SHEILAH WINN SHAKESPEARE FESTIVAL

From the final date at the end of term 1 - 12 April 2024, by when all the Regional Festivals must be held, there were just under 7 weeks in which to do the huge amount of processing of the information for the National Festival participants. These comprised the 795 performers and non-performers, including Competition finalists, NSSP Direct Entry students, Regional Reps, SGCNZ Young Shakespeare Company members, groups and individuals wishing to pay to attend the Workshops, Performances, Talks and Tours (some of which were free – for others we secured discounts).

The Schedule: A Mihi welcomed all selected participants who could attend the nau mai te huihuinga – social gathering, kindly co-hosted at Toi Whakaari on Thursday afternoon 30 May from 4pm, led by Tumuaki Tanea Heke MNZM . The students and teachers mixed and mingled, already making friends and sharing their journeys to date with others across the motu. So began this enriching 5-day experience of personal and professional development including and uniting people from every type of diverse background.

The next morning all participants gathered at Wellington East Girls' College from 8.15am-12.45pm. We were very grateful to Rangimoana Taylor for again formally opening the Festival with sensitively 'crafted' Mihi Whakatau.

The Workshops: The students, and lots of the teachers, then moved into the 20 allocated spaces for the wide range of Workshops, presented twice so that all could attend two. See list attached, Appendix 2, noting the wide range of different skills being offered to make all aware of different career opportunities and pathways. High calibre arts practitioners were engaged to share their skills and expertise, teach new skills and mentor the rangatahi. Feedback on these was exceptional.

Often, tutors and students who strike a connection, end up working together in the future to produce further theatrical productions or in fact, in any workplace. With there being over 148,500 Alumni, this occurs often.

The Workshops also provide employment for these theatre practitioners (many of whom are Alumni), who both give and gain experience, as they interact with a wider audience from all over the country.

Longer term, often collaborations 'pan-years' of Alumni result.

In the St James: As programmed, rigging took place at the St James Theatre on the Friday morning 1 June, while the students were doing the Workshops and volunteers and the other staff member packed into the theatre.



This included setting up the large Foyer of the St James with merchandise sales tables, others with promotional material, pre-loved donated books (for a koha) and fogo boards with the entries by the Competition Finalists – with winning order being announced on the Sunday evening. Pre-scheduled ten-minute Placing Calls, plus 5-minute mandatory Health & Safety briefings, were held at the St James Theatre from 1pm-7pm and next morning from 7am-9am with each of the 48 groups selected from their Regional Festivals. Every group signed documentation confirming that they had completed these.

The Crew: Josh Wiegman, formerly a crew volunteer for SGCNZ from Kuranui College for 4 years, who has been training at the University of Otago, was again Deputy Stage Manager this year. Mentored into this role by our fantastic Production and Stage Manager of 20 years, Adam Walker, Josh now has set up his own technical supplies and personnel organisation, Cue-Go in Dunedin. He was superb...with grateful thanks to Adam and Josh himself.

Placing Calls: What are 'Placing Calls' people ask?! There is simply never enough time for each group to have a full technical rehearsal; instead each is able to work out entrances and exits, whether via the wings or auditorium, and how long it takes to get across the stage and onto it, if using the stairs up to the stage from the auditorium. It is much larger than school or community halls where most will have rehearsed! Adhering to the strict timing of their scenes – 4-5 Minutes in the Student-only directed scenes, 10-15 Minutes in the Student- or Adult-directed ones, is essential, as overrunning (or under-time) makes them ineligible for scene awards. (This is in fairness to the compliant groups and our tightly arranged scheduling, in order to fit everyone in.)

Young voices are often quite 'light', making the Placing Call an important time to do audibility Sound Checks. Many will never have performed in a theatre in which there will be public audience in the Dress Circle, as well as remembering to speak to those in the Stalls.

Mentoring: A former Wellington East Girls' College / SGCNZ Crew Alumna, Ruby Parker, again performed the role of Front of House Coordinator superbly, having been mentored into it the year before. Adam Walker retained the role of Production and Stage Manager, while also training Josh Weigman to take over those responsibilities next year.

It was an excellent team, who in turn, mentored the secondary age students in the various front-of-house and backstage roles who were either with their groups from all over the country, or local volunteers. This knowledge then gets transported back into the schools. Over the years, I have been advised of many schools whose sound and lighting boxes have been set up by these Alumni, along with the advice from the professionals involved at the Festivals. They feed into the amateur and professional theatres around the country as well.

Mentoring for young people into the various roles gives them all an appreciation of the complexity of what is involved in putting on a production – and real-life experience.

Tours, Talks & Visits: On Friday afternoon, weaving around their Placing Calls at the St James Theatre, the groups attended the discounted or free tours including of various other tertiary institutes, attractions and activities. These were secured and collated by SGCNZ and advised in advance, so that they could be pre-booked by each group. The Thursday, Friday and Saturday evenings are always kept free for the students, from as far-flung parts of the country as Invercargill to the Far North, to attend professional theatre or various other arts genre taking place over King's Birthday weekend. Many are from small towns with little theatre-life, and flood into whatever is in offer in Wellington at the time; several add extremely beneficial Q&As for them. Most of the productions contained Alumni. An extensive list of theatre performances (most with negotiated special price reductions) and tours and attractions were sent to everyone in their National Festival Information Packs as soon as they had registered after selection at the Regional Festival.

Special Session: There were 4 opportunities to attend the 'Special Session', led again by an SGCNZ YSC Alumna, Maddie Brooks Gillespie, who mentored attendees at the Festival who were not in performing groups, what to expect, when and where to go, buddied them up where necessary if they came alone, and made them feel welcome. This is invaluable, ensuring they could maximise their time there. Non-performing participants who were not Competition Winners, NSSP Direct Entry or SGCNZ YSC members, paid only a minimal amount of \$13 for each Workshop and \$15 day-long ticket entry.

The Scene Performances: For the performances of the scenes by the selected groups, it was wonderful to be in the St James Theatre again. The students 'stepped up', valuing the opportunity of being in this prestigious venue, their standard rising to match the honour.

Nothing gives me that feeling of home like being backstage in a theatre and hearing the performance go on.... especially in this beautiful theatre. It's like a giant hug for my soul. – R

Having the Festivals fully 'live' was a great achievement and welcomed by all. In the few instances where Covid was present, there were one or two performers permitted to be 'on book', so that the rest of the cast were not prohibited from performing.

Atawhai: Instead of thinking Shakespeare is difficult, rangatahi embraced the challenge of close reading, analysis and using the many e-facilities to transcribe the play into modern language. They discovered the beauty of the language, and that the power of the Bard's words leading to them being so commonly in the vernacular, whether in their original form, or parodied. Literary figures of speech and devices are explored from alliteration to allegory, puns to paraphrasing, close reading to cognitive processing.

In schools and community groups, interaction and reaction through drama provides invaluable opportunities to explore the human psyche. This is extended into prisons, where literacy is known to be of a poor standard, businesses and team building situations. For over 425 years, Shakespeare's works have continued to be recognised as containing every human condition and relationship. Having this depth of understanding makes for a solid foundation on which to build on the power of communication through language. It is recognised that those who have limited language skills more readily resort to frustration and, frequently, violence.

Pūkenga: Rangatahi are encouraged to care for and about each other, delve into each other's cultural differences and create greater tolerance and understanding. Shakespeare's plays work being themed in any cultures, and frequently are by the rangatahi. Whanau of all cultures are often brought in or consulted to contribute to interpretations which reflect historical through to current issues, including social, political, religious and others.

Banning phones in schools has proved a boon to 'direct-address' communication, eye-balling and talking with people, not 'at' them. This is yet another benefit evidenced by doing drama, where reaction and repartee need to be instantaneous and involve the whole body, not just 'talking heads'.

VIPs: It was very special that the Performance Sessions of the Festival, were opened by Councillor Ray Chung on Saturday 31 May. Eight Ambassadors attended at various times; several Central and Local Government politicians accepted invitations to attend over the two days. We were delighted that Katie Nimon MP agreed to be MC on the Sunday evening for the Presentation of Competition Prizes and Scene Awards, along with our Board Chair, Paul Foster Bell and other Board and VIPs.

Festival Scene Assessors & NSSP Selectors: The 3 Scene Assessors were Guest Assessor from the UK, Lucy Cuthbertson, Director of Globe Education, NZ senior actor, Theresa Healey, and Ben Ashby, an Alumnus (SGCNZ YSC 2014), who was Director of Long Cloud Youth Theatre, as well as acting and directing continuously over the past 10 years. While the 3 Assessors collaborate on the Reports, they are actually responsible for compiling comments for a third of them each.

The 3 SGCNZ NSSP Selectors were Alumni - Barney Olson (SGCNZ YSC 2010), Jackson Burling (SGCNZ YSC 2019) and Mia Oudes (SGCNZ YSC 2018), descendant of the Te Arawa waka and is Ngāti Whakaue and Tūhourangi. With such a wide spread of ages, it is clear that there is mentoring among these cohorts as well.

Student-Directing: The fact that over 78% of the directors are students reflects the 'learning curves' they are gaining – truly 'by and for' the rangatahi. Transferable skills emanate from this - leadership of peers, teamwork, listening, re-imagining Shakespeare, recreating, curiosity, innovation, interpretation, self-and time-management, presentation and much more.

Since Covid began, more community groups are taking part, often resulting in a collaboration of students from several different schools. There is a trend some of them going back to their own schools and being brave enough to take on a leadership role there the next year. Teachers have been extremely over-stretched.

Inspiring Showcase and Presenters: As the Assessors and Selectors left to start making their respective selections at 4pm on the Sunday afternoon, a screen was moved on stage for the Inspiring Alumni section. It began with co-Alumni of SGCNZ and the University of Otago speaking on screen about the benefits of their time with Shakespeare.

Connor Norris (SGCNZ YSC 2022) gave valuable advice about auditioning for UK Drama Schools. He is thrilled to have been given a place in Mountview Drama School in London.

Scarlett Clemmet-Jones, from Blenheim, was selected from the Marlborough Regional SGCNZ UOSWSF to present her Monologue *Puck* from *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. With her being only 9, Scarlett was not eligible to be selected for the National Festival per sé, nor are Monologues permitted. However, for this Showcase, Scarlett demonstrated her incredible ability and versatility, also having performed *Ariel* from *The Tempest* and won singing and musical theatre awards, as well as acting ones.

Students from Kuranui College performed one of their items from *Dance Nimble Soles* last year – *As You Mime It – The Arden Forest!*

Trinity College London Speech and Drama Diploma/SGCNZ Alumna from SGCNZ YSC 2013, Claudia Richards was interviewed by Hakaia Daly (SGCNZ YSC 2019) about the benefits of that programme to her performance. Claudia and Hakaia excelled as co-MCs at the National Festival this year.

Māori Alumnus Allan Henry (SGCNZ YSC 2001) spoke of his journey from Flaxmere “going nowhere” with his schooling, to being cast in *Othello* and then his exceptional trajectory began through SGCNZ. He has played almost every ‘role’ with SGCNZ – Actor, Stage Combat Tutor, MC, Selector, Assessor, Speaker, Ambassador. He is now a multitalented actor, stuntman, motion capture (mocap) performer across Aotearoa and internationally. His roles include being King Kong, Cocaine Bear, others in *The Hobbit*, *Lord of the Rings*, *Avatar* and many more. He openly credits SGCNZ for “saving his life”, believing in him and mentoring him through tough times, including endorsing the importance of education. He loved doing it through Shakespeare.

SGCNZ YSC 2024 Performance: On the Sunday evening, SGCNZ Young Shakespeare Company 2024 performed *Shaking Up the Speare – Shakespeare in Action* - vignettes from Shakespeare’s plays, coordinated by Eli Hancock and Jacob Waugh (SGCNZ 2023, and now both SGCNZ Youth Observers). Their session, from 7.00-7.45pm, ended with their haunting Waiata and Haka, followed by an interval till 8.00pm.

Presentations of Competition Prizes and Scene Awards: After the decision-making by the Assessors and Selectors, there was the usual flurry of typing names onto certificates and lists to be read, aligning of book prizes and readying all for presentation on stage.

The constructed costumes from the winning designs in our Costume Design Competition, were photographed by our photographer, Brian Scurfield, being modelled in the Te Papa bush. Collated by film student/SGCNZ Alumna, Jacynta Scurfield, using the winning music entries recorded as background to accompany them, the film was shown on the screen while the costumes were being modelled in real life on stage, alongside their designers. Katie Nimon MP announced the prizes, given to the designers by sponsor Nicole Barker. The Music Prizes were presented by the SGCNZ/Morrison Music Trust Shakespeare Music Composition Competition Judge, Michael Vinten. The winners of the other Competitions received their Prizes and the 45 Scene Awards were presented by Katie Nimon, and other VIPs, donors of awards and sponsors. The supportiveness of everyone to each other was outstanding.

It is noted that SGCNZ has a policy of there being no placings at the Festival; instead Awards are given to acknowledge various aspects of excellence, innovation, inclusivity and creativity. Almost all are sponsored.

Feedback Session & Guest Assessor Talk: On the Monday (‘King’s Birthday’) 2 June, Hon Chris Bishop kindly hosted us in the Banquet Hall at Parliament for the invaluable Scene Assessors’ and NSSP Selectors’ Feedback Session. This was followed by a talk by Lucy Cuthbertson. She spoke on the highly topical subject of *Confronting teenage issues through Shakespeare at the Globe*, with a special focus on *Romeo and Juliet*.

The Festival concluded with a Whakamutunga & Karakia at noon on the Monday.

Globe Education Director additional Sessions: During the two weeks Lucy Cuthbertson was in NZ, as well as at the National Festival, she took Workshops at Te Herenga Waka-Victoria University of Wellington, at Aotea College, where many of the students are Māori and Pasifika, and at UNITEC in Auckland.

In addition, meetings and discussion times were scheduled for her with a variety of key personnel in the arts community, tertiary institutes, theatres and Alumni.

Outcomes: Echoed throughout the Festival were pleas for it to continue, with every stage being valued – for some beginning with SGCNZ Primarily Playing with Shakespeare (SGCNZ PPWS) > Regional Festival > National Festival > SGCNZ NSSP > SGCNZ YSC and along with that, performing on the Globe stage being the pinnacle to achieve.

Ecstatic responses from participants, teachers and audience alike made it clear that the continuation of the Festivals and their flow-on activities are not only enjoyed, but keenly and eagerly anticipated.

“Thanks for another brilliant festival. Our kids have come out fizzing with plans for 2025!” – S

Benefits of the Festivals

“O brave new world that such people in it...” – The Tempest

Interpretations: SGCNZ's Festivals have always provided a safe place for students from throughout the motu to be brave and experimental. There is no right nor wrong way to perform Shakespeare's works. They are not only translated into over 100 different languages, and performed as plays in over 150 countries, but also are recreated in music, opera, song, musicals, rap, ballet, film, television series, story-lines of thousands of books, art works...whether in a pure representation or as an influence, as is seen in so many different renditions.

Participating schools around the motu are as varied as is the interpretation of the plays. They range from small rural state-funded area schools and ones from low socio-economic areas, to integrated colleges and (a few) private schools, plus Homeschoolers and Community Youth Drama Groups with the same age and education demographics as the school students.

There were again scenes with sections in Te Reo, French, Italian (with a Mafia influence in *Julius Caesar*, Pasifika languages, Welsh, German, and other not actually identified in their Regional entries, but anecdotally advised by the Regional Representatives.

The interpretations continue to astound, with the fresh-takes seemingly endless. It is why Shakespeare has survived for so long. As the arts reflect current affairs – such as the wars in Ukraine, Gaza, Syria and so on, extreme political personae emerge, natural disasters affect the world, issues escalate regarding climate change, the environment, mysogony, gender diversity and equality, ethnic acceptance and so much more, new angles constantly emerge. Shakespeare's words easily embrace these.

The constant is Shakespeare's ability to get inside the human psyche, which is universal and constant – with greed, power-struggles, love and hate transcending time and nationalities. He is a story-teller, which sits well with our tangata whenua. They also often find the iambic pentameter makes line-learning easier for them, as they, and people from other Pacific Islands, have that rhythm naturally. The only rule is that Shakespeare's timeless text is used, albeit edited, from the same play.

Other art forms may be included, with ethnic dance, song and live music adding vibrant elements to those performances. Puppetry and shadow play are among different conceits sometimes used.

A 'snapshot' of a few of the many and varied presentations:

Havelock North High School's *Much Ado About Nothing*, in which Kiwi trades try to get another tradeworker to fall in love with the 'unsavoury sheilah' Beatrice!



Paraparaumu College tackled Shakespeare's longest poem, *Venus & Adonis*. In a reversal of the norm, Venus was trying to seduce Adonis.

It was he who said "No", and she left to go back up into the heavens unrequited. The cast described the process of this different 'spin', especially given it was written in a male dominated time – except for Queen Elizabeth I. An influence on Shakespeare?

Wairarapa College's *Henry VI Part 1* explored Joan of Arc, from her capture by the English, on trial facing accusations of witchcraft and heresy. Being condemned to death marked the pivotal moment in the play's historical and political narrative.

In Waipapa Youth Theatre's *The Taming of the Shrew*, their modern-day setting highlights the use of comedy to distract from serious domestic abuse in twenty-first century relationship...or were they always this bad??? This play is frequently used in classrooms to ignite the lively discussion it always evokes about manipulation of females.

Te Wharekura O Mauao's *Romeo & Juliet* scene was set amidst trouble brewing between two feuding factions in pre-European Aotearoa. Two servants of the Kaprereira whanau were joking around, but when they met servants of the rival Motiku whanau, things quickly turned serious.

The final scene, a 5-minute one from *Julius Caesar*, performed by Kristin School was set in 'an unsettled place that echoed recent protests in NZ. Caesar threatened to abuse his power and has been assassinated for it. Different political leaders step up to fill the power vacuum. Is this salvation for the people or will anything really change?' Sound familiar??!

More than being 'glib synopses', considerable research goes into each scene's setting. Just these few of the 48 illustrate the depth and thought that goes into even the 5-minute scenes. Whether celebrating different cultures, religion and language through a different lens, exploring ideologies and trends, current or historical events, they bravely convey their ideas and perceptions, at the same time as entertaining audiences amidst the turmoil internationally.

The rangatahi say how much they enjoy the tangential learning, a few even reporting on their dabbles into Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, on which some of Shakespeare's writing was influenced. They eagerly gather up pre-loved books we make available to them at events – irrespective of whether a koha is forthcoming or not! (We are given many by deceased Shakespeare devotees' relatives.)

There is breaking down of cultural and socio-economic barriers, counteracting of bullying and harassment. Every year, some students tell me – and sometimes all, that their involvement in our programmes has saved them from self-harming or committing suicide. The strength and support of whanau created by in casts and directors and others involved cannot be overestimated.

The social aspect of the Festival, outside of performing and doing workshops, continued to prove that people united by a common bond can break down artificial barriers of race and culture.

Audience Development: Audience development is another key objective. In addition to viewing each other's performances at the Regional and National Festivals, having the opportunity to see theatre in Wellington by professionals and emerging artists gives many experiences unavailable in their own hometowns.

Many scenes nationwide were directed by SGCNZ Alumni, some of whom are still at school. Participants also benefited from the knowledge gained by having Alumni from SGCNZ's Teachers Go Global, and in the sadly no-longer available valuable programmes at the Globe, SGCNZ / SG Emerging Theatre Practitioner Programme and Shakespeare's Globe International Actor Fellowship, endorsing these programmes as well.

Most SGCNZ UOSWSF Alumni who have gone on to participate in NSSP and YSC have been awarded School Colours and Cultural Awards for their excellence in the arts. There is much personal, school and community pride associated!

Festival Registration

Almost all the schools and other groups now use the online registration process for the Regional Festivals.

Because the University of Otago has ended its support, the Registration platform has been moved onto SGCNZ's website by a programmer/AI expert.

This was a massive process but is working well, with only a few 'teething moments'! Garnering all the details and being able to print the programmes and lists from these are very useful features, and make life easier for the Regional Representatives.

Adam Walker, Production Manager and SGCNZ Volunteer for the past 20 years, also maintains the programme he has created in FileMaker in which information for the National Festival is entered. This has been developed brilliantly so that all information is utilised in a variety of ways to produce all the documentation and paperwork required, through to printing of the performances section of the programme, certificates, the Presentation of Awards and final media list, and so on.

Integration of the Regional Festival on-line Registration information with the Filemaker programme is still 'work in progress' to streamline that processing. However, it will require additional funding.

We now use Sharepoint extensively to disseminate information, reducing printing and postage as well. We also use this for our other events and Board Meetings.

SGCNZ's Regional and National Shakespeare Festivals are planned with the same overall format and scheduling - and hopefully all Regions in 2025! The National Festival venues have all been booked, with the St James Theatre firmly secured with a deposit already.

SGCNZ Allied Competitions

"Hope you had a lovely weekend and thank you again for all the work you have put into the National Festival! I had such a wonderful time and am so grateful for such a fabulous way to end off my Shakespeare journey! I am so honoured to have won the costume competition this year and will cherish these memories." – A

Allied Competitions were again held in conjunction with the Festivals. These comprised:

- SGCNZ/Morrison Trust Shakespeare Music Composition
- SGCNZ/Dawn Sanders Shakespeare Costume Design
- SGCNZ/Adam Foundation Poster Design
- SGCNZ/Adam Foundation Static Image Design
- SGCNZ/Adam Foundation Video Title Card Design
- SGCNZ/Ida Gaskin Shakespeare Essay Competition with English at Otago

This year saw the largest number of entries across all categories and the motu. The benefits of these is that they can be done in class or independently, ideal during Covid, and since in far-flung areas and in schools where with a lesser focus on the arts. They serve as a wonderful way of encouraging the rangatahi in exploration into a wider range of career pathways, exploring longer term occupations.

A number of the schools do these as class projects and send in the best as entries into the respective Competitions.) Students from Year 7 to 13 submit creative essays, striking costume designs, and incredibly innovative art works and music items. The rationales required to accompany each entry describe the evocative elements and relevant references they have chosen.



Essay Competition: The ESU (English Speaking Union) generously sponsored the Senior Essay Competition with prize money this year. Sadly, this will also need to be replaced for next year, as the ESU in Wellington has just closed, owing to a decline in numbers.

Category 1 topic was: Write an essay on *The "importance of timing" in a Shakespeare play of your choice* Length 750-1000 words.

Category 2 topic was: Write an essay on *"Many of Shakespeare's plays achieve their drama from a tension between the desire of the individual and aims of the state, family, or other grouping."* Use at least 2 plays in your discussion. Length: 1000-1500 words. These are for Years 11-13 (though younger students may enter them).

We are ensuring that funding will also continue to be sourced of the Junior Competition (Years 7-10), which comprises: Option a) *Write a short story incorporating at least 20 phrases from Shakespeare's plays, poems or sonnets* Option b) *Write and illustrate a short graphic novel, creating a new story by drawing together Shakespearean characters from at least two Shakespeare plays* Length 300-500 words (6-12 pages). Judging of all of the entries in the Essay Competition was by a Senior Lecturer at the University of Otago. The 1st Prize winners' essays were again lodged in Shakespeare's Globe Archive in London.

This year's four winning costumes, video title cards, posters and static images were displayed at Shakespeare's Globe for 6 weeks from mid-July until late-August. Hopefully it will be allowed to take place next year at the Globe; the new management there is reviewing this as space is now very tight at the Globe.

The Competitions provide opportunities for students with other artistic skills to utilise their creativity. Their rationale as to how their designs or compositions relate to the Shakespeare play/character/setting is given as much weighting as the design itself. Some of the former Competition winners are now employed internationally. One former Costume Winner, River Charteris Wright, has been accepted into Guildhall, where she is now training. This is a mammoth achievement, given her health state when she won in 2018.

Competition entries, like the performers at the Festivals, are seen without bias pertaining to race or creed, meaning that they span the wide intersectional demographics in New Zealand.

These will all be offered again in 2025.

SGCNZ National Shakespeare Schools Production 2024

The 9-day SGCNZ National Shakespeare Schools Production course took place from Saturday 28 September to Sunday 6 October 2024 in Dunedin, residential at Tolcarne Boarding Residence.

The 48 SGCNZ NSSP 2024 troupe was an outstanding troupe. They integrated well, respecting cultural and gender diversity throughout. Their generosity of spirit was frequently evidenced, with impromptu assistance with line-learning and caring conversations.

The Play Directors: On the arrival evening, the students had a 'meet and greet' with their Directors, Ben Ashby (SGCNZ YSC 2014 Alumnus), Jessica Sutherland-Latton (SGCNZ TGG 24 Alumna) and Blaise Barham.

Themselves a harmonious team, their three different styles of direction still resulted in a high standard of performances of the 40 minutes from *Much Ado About Nothing*, *Macbeth* and *The Tempest* respectively. This involved being cast at the end of the first day, learning their lines, being 'blocked' and rehearsed, culminating in 2 public performances on the Friday and Saturday nights. Just 5 half days of these is a great challenge and achievement. The Directors take care to adapt the number of lines if the struggle is clearly too great; however, the students themselves are extremely generous with helping their peers learn them.

The Schedule: At the end of the first full day of rehearsals and workshops, exceptional qualities and aptitude were shown in the students' *What You Will* items.

“The most memorable part of our nightly activities was What You Will, an opportunity where everyone demonstrates their immaculate talents, extending beyond drama into music, dance and even stand-up comedy which was no doubt the highlight of the night.” DS

During the week, half of most days was spent doing rehearsals in their three groups; the other half was spent with the full complement of 46 young actors doing Workshops; meanwhile the Student Costumier was busy creating indicative costume accoutrements, with only \$200 to spend in total (in \$2 and op shops), and the Student Composer devised music as requested by the Directors. These self-directed roles provide considerable personal development as they were weaving their way between arranging contact with the Directors and their innovative endeavours. What they produced was outstanding – such a credit to them.

The Workshops: The Workshop Tutors in Singing, Permissions [aka Intimacy], Verse, Dance, Yoga & Relaxation Techniques, Historical Context were all excellent, and aspects were integrated into the performances.

“SGCNZ NSSP also gave me the opportunity to learn. One of my highlights was the workshop held by Dr Michael Cop. His insights on how Shakespeare gave us stage directions within the text rather than pointing them out directly, how different the staging was in Shakespeare’s time compared to our contemporary and modern stages now and always questioning why and how Shakespeare wrote like he did. I would never have thought or considered most of the stuff Dr Michael Cop discussed with us and I was left that workshop feeling more educated in the scenes and acting I was doing when it came to performing Shakespeare.” – CM

“We had very tightly packed yet fulfilling schedules everyday, receiving two to three workshops from our three directors and guest speakers. Some of the most enjoyable ones for me was Blaise’s Exercises from Phillippe Gaulier, Ben’s Acting is Listening, and Jessica’s Relaxation Techniques which helped cope with the stress of the busy schedule and the memorisation of lines. My absolute favourite, however, was Dr Michael Cop’s workshop about the culture of Shakespeare’s time and his England, which struck with my deep love for English and the history of literature. But perhaps the most important lesson I took away from these valuable workshops was the amount of knowledge needed to be gained behind the curtains, and being an actor was never just about the glamor of being on stage. Grasping the physical techniques, historical context and the playwright’s intentions is the true essence behind a seasoned performer, the key to bringing a character and the entire play to life.” - SS

The half an afternoon and evening Mystery Tour we organised gave the young people the opportunity to visit three very different theatres, with valuable talks about not just their history, but also backstage etiquette, protocols, anecdotes and more life reality checks. Watching an early production meeting at The Globe (in Dunedin) for *Twelfth Night* provided a valuable insight into other production values and techniques.

“SGCNZ NSSP gave me so many memorable moments that I will cherish for the rest of my life. It was so cool to be able to walk around the Regent Theatre and get to explore backstage and then be able to actually go on stage was great. It was also amazing to be able to see the tiny New Athenaeum Theatre and have a Q and A with the owner, in which we were able to ask questions people don’t really get to ask (which I really liked). We got to see people in the process of creating and rehearsing a show at the Globe Theatre which was my favourite experience as I found it really interesting to peek behind the curtain and see how different people put together a show. But, I also saw things that some of the actors did that have inspired me to create more fun and interesting scenes in the future. There were, of course, more memorable moments but I really loved seeing the theatres in Dunedin the most. –“ BW

The SGCNZ NSSP Performances: With no such thing as ‘straightforward’, the day of the students’ first performance (Friday 4 Oct) dawned with very heavy rain still falling and a declaration by the Minister of a State of Emergency midst flooding and landslides. On hearing no buses were allowed on the road, and all other travel to be kept to cases of emergency, and through group discussion and decision-making to stay on-site, the staff allowed us to turn the Tolcarne Boarding Residence Dining Room into a ‘theatre’ for the day and evening.

The performance began at 6.30pm as planned, to an audience of 60, all staying nearby. This included some parents who had travelled long distances to attend them and our Chair, Paul Foster-Bell, who braved the weather and walked up.

However, although 'the show did go on', it was unfortunately without Director Jessica all day and night, who could not get in from the Peninsula, where she lives. Ben missed his group's rehearsal in the afternoon, but did manage to negotiate road closures so he could make it for the evening.

While their casts rose to the responsibility of rehearsing without their Directors brilliantly, Blaise stepped up and gave them some notes as well.

Meanwhile, I had lengthy lists of people to contact regarding the change of venue, from crew, volunteers, audience, critic, media, having signs put up, dinner brought in (as we were to have had it at the performance venue, Logan Park High School Denise Walsh Auditorium and no kitchen staff were able to be at Tolcarne), creating 'wings' and discrete changing areas, completing Risk Analysis and Health and Safety Checks, and so on.

From those who saw both the performance at Tolcarne, and the one finally at Logan Park on the Saturday night, were extremely positive comments, including enjoying seeing one in a more intimate setting first and then in a more conventional Hall/Theatre the next evening. We were delighted to have Professor and Head of the University of Otago School of Performing Arts MusB(Hons) PhD(Canterbury) Anthony Ritchie, speak warmly at the conclusion of the final performance and present certificates along with Paul Foster-Bell.

University Involvement: Although the University of Otago has never funded this course, they did kindly supply some in-kind assistance. This included poster/programme cover design and some printing, Welcome Packs with promotional and other inclusions for the students. They hosted the students for a lunch followed by a performance by students from the Theatre Programme in Allen Hall. Several of the staff were Workshop Tutors and assisted in other ways.

Impromptu Session: Another 'curved ball' was 'tossed in' on the Saturday morning, when we were supposed to have an historical talk and backstage tour of the Dunedin Globe Theatre - it had suffered water damage from the 'weather-bomb' and its tour guide volunteers were 'locked in (to their homes)' by slips. Fortunately, I was able to secure Terry MacTavish, (a former teacher, SGCNZ TGG Alumna and NSSP Director) who had also performed for us (with 3 Alumni) at Larnach Castle during our Mystery Tour, to come to Tolcarne. Within 20 minutes she was giving a fascinating account to the full troupe of her mother's contribution to the arts, especially in dance, and her own, largely in theatre. Aligning them to social situations and developments within the artforms over the last century, as well as attitudes towards women, made for a valuable addition to the programme.

Selection of SGCNZ YSC 2025: Difficult decision-making took place by the 3 Directors and me at lunchtime the next day, after the students were all transported to their points of departure by the wonderful bevy of volunteers who had collected them on the first day.

After a week of consolidating 'The List' of SGCNZ Young Shakespeare Company 2025, I spent the weekend contacting all the successful members. The ShortList has, as always, had to be dipped into as untoward family situations have arisen. Of note, half are of those chosen to be in YSC 2025 are from Regional Festival selections and, in complete contrast to this year, a higher majority are females in the Company. All are extremely excited!

Diversity: SGCNZ always represents New Zealand's multilateral diversity wherever possible.

Rangatahi from the Rainbow community state how 'safe' they feel in SGCNZ's activities. To begin with, the embracing of all without prejudice, is a stated premise from the outset.

All know that every role was played by a male in Shakespeare's day. This leads to ease of cross-gender casting, and acceptance of the variations in the LGBTQIA+ community.

At NSSP week, we provided a space for all to write their preferred pronoun on their name tags, and accommodated their preferences in rooming in dorms, always making sure that others in the dorm are equally comfortable.

Supervision & Observations: The CEO and a Co-Supervisor lived-in with the students. This enabled them to view the students in social settings and assess other behavioural aspects, vital to the evaluation for the 24 chosen to form SGCNZ YSC. Talent is only part of what is required – for any career, especially acting and being in teams of any kind it is the other ‘50%’ ie coping with it, that counts.

The CEO also observed and met with the 3 Directors almost every day to note the attitude and progress of each student and note keenness to learn and absorb, be empathetic and considerate to their peers and all the adults with whom they interact, including hostel staff.

Empathy: It was a privilege to hear some of the heart-wrenching ‘back-stories’ some of them chose to share. Their backgrounds were hugely differing – from lowest-socio-economic levels, with only one or no parent present, through to those from more affluent situations – though not necessarily ‘trouble-free’. Recent passing of a family member or friend, sometimes intentionally, are very moving – and frequently subjects of *What you Will* items, in the form of songs or recitative.

Two Reports from SGCNZ NSSP are attached. These demonstrate the life-changing impact of this event, and the Festivals which lead up to it. The rangatahi do, in turn, give back to their communities through their newfound techniques and capabilities.

SGCNZ YSC 2025: The list of the students chosen to form SGCNZ YSC 2025 is also attached. This year’s troupe had a greater % of tane; next year’s has more wāhine. Overall, they were an outstanding group, very empathetic and cohesive.

SGCNZ NSSP 2025: This 9-day event is booked to take place in Wellington in 2025, 20 September – 28 September (the first week of Term II holiday) residentially at St Pat’s College, Silverstream, Hutt Valley, Wellington, with culminating performances on 26 and 27 September.

SGCNZ YOUNG SHAKESPEARE COMPANY & SGCNZ TEACHERS GO GLOBAL 2024

SGCNZ YSC & TGG 2024 arrival in London: On 6 July at 5.55am, the SGCNZ Young Shakespeare Company’s and Teachers Go Global’s flight arrived safely at Heathrow. The planned five-hour coach tour around London was, as always, a great way to start. However, after the lunchbreak at Trafalgar Square, even the Tour Guide and Coach Driver did not expect the utter congestion chaos caused by the Palestinian protest marchers. It added over an hour to the trip, before we finally arrived at Bankside. Our troupes found it fascinating all the same. London was ‘heaving’!!



At the Globe: The Globe experience began on the Sunday afternoon, with a fun, lively rendition of *Much Ado About Nothing* – the play on which the SGCNZ YSC and TGGs were about to rehearse and perform less than two weeks later.

The 24 SGCNZ Young Shakespeare Company (YSC) and 11 Teachers Go Global (TGG) began their courses the next day at the Globe with several joint sessions, in particular for the Introductory session and some of the talks and tours. Once split up into their respective groups, they met their directors, Hal Chambers for the YSC and Susan Vidler for the TGG. Both were superb, empathetic and ‘gelled’ brilliantly with their respective companies. Alumnus from SGCNZ YSC 2005, Sam Smith, was my excellent co-Tour Leader.

The Schedule:

*“One of the biggest take-aways for me would have to be all of the priceless knowledge taught by the team in London; it felt like a whole semester of university squeezed into only 2 weeks. There was no time wasted, every day was filled with so many exciting things to do. Our 2 Monday to Fridays would start with an amazing breakfast from the hostel, a morning karakia and then straight into the mahi with a mixture of courses. The courses included dance, movement, singing, voice, text, lectures on the three different shows we watched, being *Much Ado about Nothing*, *Richard the Third* and *Taming of the Shrew* and of course rehearsals for our midnight matinee of *Much Ado about Nothing*. Each and every one of the courses offered so much to learn with amazing teachers.”- BRM*

Among the thought-provoking talks on the schedules for both groups were ones on Shakespeare and Race and Shakespeare and Women.

“Preparing for our performance of Much Ado About Nothing was an invigorating process, as we delved into the nuances of the text, explored the dynamics of our characters, and honed our craft under the tutelage of a dedicated team of professional tutors. These experts specialised in voice, movement, and textual analysis, offering us invaluable insights that enhanced our performance skills.” - NH

All were astounded by the *Heaven to Hell* tour, and to learn of how much was achieved in the ‘tight spaces’ above, behind and below the stage. They appreciated the contrast when viewing the backstage facilities in the National Theatre and Royal Albert Hall on those visits, among extra components which Kerry Maher and I added.

Through the very generous Clarence Tan, of the NZ Society, a visit to Girdler’s Hall, where the NZ Society meets, was arranged and where we were treated to a taste of ancient rituals and items.

Again, we were generously hosted for a Reception by the NZ High Commission, where we were warmly addressed by NZ High Commissioner HE Phil Goff. SGCNZ YSC member, Billy McCarthy responded, followed by the Waiata and Haka, with several NZHC Staff coming in to watch. Kai followed, as the High Commissioner mingled with the students.

A talk at the Rose Theatre gave all an insight into the proximity of its competition to the original Globe. They were able to view the lit outlining of the Rose footprint. The talks were embellished by footage filmed of famous actors, adding their weight to its restoration, as much as will be possible, given the building above it.

A talk with Q&A on the auditioning process in London was given by Alumna Sadie Sumich, a ‘jobbing actor’ in the UK. In between, all packed in shows and plays, making the most of what London offers!

“Through rehearsing our collection of scenes from Much Ado About Nothing we were presented with lectures and workshops with some of the highest calibre Shakespeare practitioners in the world. Notably Doctor Hanh Bui, who gave us lessons on each of the plays we would see at The Globe. Dr Bui fostered a welcoming and intellectual learning environment that I enjoyed immensely. Our Course Director, the wonderful Hal Chambers, quickly became my favourite director I have ever worked with. His grasp and control of text and human connection is completely unmatched and the sense of humour and fun that he brought to our rehearsals was inspiring.” - SS



The Midnight Matinee: The end of two intensive weeks of excellent workshops and rehearsals culminated in the *Midnight Matinee* on Thursday 18 July. This comprised scenes from *Much Ado About Nothing*. The students’ performance was outstanding. They used the space brilliantly, commanded a strong presence on stage, and interacted superbly with the audience. Several parents and teachers travelled over to watch this!

SGCNZ TGG: The SGCNZ Teachers Go Global troupe also acquitted themselves well, especially given that several had not acted at all or for many years. Their Director, Susan’s clever conceits showed them in their ‘best light’. The performance was a huge credit to everyone, and especially the Directors and Singing Tutor, Joe, and all the 35 performers. As always, the spine-tingling Waiata and Haka under the stars was a magical conclusion.

However, that was not the main object of their trip. It was gaining pedagogical skills that was at the heart of the TGG programme.

“There was a number of standout sessions but some of the most inspiring were Teaching Macbeth - session by Scott Brooksbank. Macbeth was used to look at poetry and the characters of Macbeth and Lady Macbeth throughout the play. I also enjoyed a session of Female characters in Shakespeare, in which we examined a number of the female characters including Viola, Lady Macbeth and Juliet from a variety of plays.” - KO

In Stratford Upon Avon: The troupes travelled to Stratford Upon Avon was on the Saturday morning, with an hilarious performance that night at the Royal Shakespeare Theatre of *The Merry Wives of Windsor*. The next day there was a Backstage Tour of the RST, and Walking Tour of Stratford, including the Birthplace. Monday began with a visit to Anne Hathaway's Cottage, followed by Warwick Castle and, late afternoon, an RSC outdoor performance in the Swan Gardens of *As You Like It*.

En route to Heathrow: On the final day, the Coach took all to Oxford for a guided tour, on to Windsor, and then the 'bitter/sweet', emotion-filled farewells, and more Waiata and Haka on the way and at Heathrow...and for those returning to NZ, at Christchurch Airport. Another "life changing experience".

The final word from SGCNZ YSC MM: *"Doing the haka in a kilt at the Globe Theatre at midnight is not really a standard thing I would do, but, as they say, expect the unexpected. My time with the Shakespeare Globe Centre New Zealand's Young Shakespeare Company (SGCNZ YSC) has been nothing short of a whirlwind of challenges, growth, and unforgettable moments."*

[MM has just heard that he has been accepted into Duke University in the States in the class of 2029 and been awarded a huge scholarship. Although my references may have helped, MM, who hails from the Far North, puts a lot of his success down to his SGCNZ experiences.]

A full set of their Reports is available if required. SGCNZ YSC trip is from 27 June – 16 July 2025, with the *Midnight Matinee* on Thursday 10 July on the Globe Stage at 11.30pm.

SGCNZ Primarily Playing with Shakespeare

In a quantum leap, the number who participated in this year's SGCNZ PPWS jumped from 198 last year to 330 this year!! They loved it! We held the performances over 3 lunchtimes, with 5 different groups in each. Performing a specifically age-appropriate edited *A Midsummer Night's Dream* was obviously a draw-card – for the tamariki, teachers/directors and audience.

Personnel & Roles: Teacher, Tama Smith, was the SGCNZ appointed Co-Director/Mentor, who did the cutting, and visited every group once or twice, or more in some cases, who chose to engage him for more visits. Tama created the Narrator's script for PPWS Alumna, Jacynta Scurfield, who played that role, and assigned each group their scene/s. His role also included deciding on the colour of a garment element to denote each character. At the beginning of the performance, Jacynta asked each of the same character, wearing their themed colour in their costuming, to stand for the audience to identify them, before she set the scene and linked each of the groups in turn through her narration.



Participating Groups: Again, the participating schools and groups encompassed the whole region, including two new schools to this year's line-up: Clifton Terrace Model School (central City), Crofton Downs Primary School (2 groups), Karori West Normal School, Kelburn Normal School, Kenakena School (Paraparaumu), Maidstone Intermediate School (Upper Hutt), Miramar North School, Otari School (Wilton), Ridgway School (Mornington), Samuel Marsden Collegiate School (Karori), Te Aro School, Wilford School (Petone), Wellington Home Education Network and WHEN Alumni (from all over the region!)

"It was such fun and really cool to watch other schools." – Yr 6 student CTMS

The Process: Rehearsed throughout Term III and Term IV in their school or halls by their own teachers or theatre professionals, till the performances on 5, 7 and 12 November, the groups had freedom of where they set and style of costuming their scenes. It brought delightfully varied interpretations and reimagining of the Bard's work.

The SGCNZ PPWS Jig (captured on You Tube) provided a highly spirited finale, with over 100 tamariki dancing en masse to conclude the performance - in true Globe style!

"My highlight of the day was the whole day, but especially being able to make friends with other schools."

There was a total of 392 – audience, supervisors & SGCNZ staff.

The expansion of this programme into other regions is currently being finalised for 2025 – in Manawatu, Wairarapa, Blenheim, Nelson, Whanganui, Auckland.

Cost: It is free of charge for the children to participate, though as with our Festivals, each school/homeschool cluster/community drama group is required to pay an SGCNZ Group Membership Friends fee. With SGCNZ PPWS being for Years 1-8 and SGCNZ's Regional and National Shakespeare Festival for Years 7-13, students who can fit into both categories, may perform in both through the school/group's Membership Fee. It is a wonderful segue for them.

"I love how wonderfully eager and enthusiastic the students are, and how, as well as being such very young students, they enter into it all with such gusto and love of words!!!!" – Audience Member sent message

SHAKE ALIVE PERFORMANCES

Naturally Shakespeare – Venus & Adonis

This performance was held in the Wellington Botanic Garden as requested by the Wellington City Council staff there, to conclude the Spring Festival. As this coincided with my second day in Dunedin, having set all the actors, scripts and costuming for *Venus & Adonis* in place before went south, I left very capable SGCNZ YSC 2022 Alumna, Jacynta Scurfield, in charge of the artistic side of the event, with Brian Pearl overseeing the minimal production aspects.

Our alumni performers, wearing Costume Competition garments, roamed in 2 groups of 3 – a Venus, an Adonis and a Narrator, quoting lines from *Venus & Adonis* to those who were visiting the Garden to 'smell the roses'! For 30 minutes before lunch and again mid-afternoon, the actors and audience gathered on the Duck Pond lawn, for readings of the edited poem with invited cue-script interaction. It was very well received. [However, it was reported that there was a noticeable impact of the cycleway beside the Garden taking away all the parking, reducing numbers of visitors in general.]

Dance Nimble Soles

Shakespeare wrote in *R&J*: Romeo to Mercutio: *You have dancing shoes with nimble soles*". Indeed, they had to be. This event was supposed to have been just after our last meeting. However, that had to be postponed owing to the Remutaka Hill Road being closed in evenings for roading repairs and strengthening. These meant that the busload of volunteers, crew and performers being kindly brought over from Kuranui College by Juanita McLellan to play their respective invaluable roles, would be unable to get back.

The eventually rescheduled date, by agreement of all parties and venue, was Thursday 24 October. Miraculously just held, without the Kuranui troupe, as the Remutaka Hill Road was again suddenly closed for weeks of evenings, and only 30% of the original cast and new crew, it was a very successful event! Those who had been rehearsing for the duration were extremely grateful it still went ahead, as were the new performers, who were rapt at the chance to perform. Even then, there were changes up till the day before for unpredicted reasons. Alumni to the rescue, and a great multicultural, multigenerational, multi-artform performance took place, with Hakaia Daly as the charming MC! All the same, it is probably the last year of this programme.

Wellington Heritage Festival

For the first time, SGCNZ was invited to perform in the Wellington Heritage Festival. What better than a 'heritage' playwright in two of Wellington's heritage buildings and another in the Wairarapa.

From 26 October to 17 November, the Wellington Heritage Festival took place throughout these regions, with an exposé of some 155 events including visits to historic places, events, talks, tours and performances.

SGCNZ's three events:

The Eternal Woman of William Shakespeare - Old St Pauls 7 Nov

Written by the late Rhona Davis MBE in the 1960s, with substantial input by William Shakespeare, *The Eternal Woman of William Shakespeare* has been performed several times over the years since then. It was co-produced by SGCNZ and the Wellington Shakespeare Society.

Featuring 21 significant speeches by women from youngest to oldest in Shakespeare's plays are cleverly linked by a Narrator, with a little input by 4 men! It is a very insightful journey through the qualities and persona of Shakespeare's women, at times amusing, at others poignant, and some prophetic and even 'women's lib-ish'! The impressive line-up comprised: Kathy McRae (Narrator), Grace Hoete, Ashlyn McLachlan, Edie Moore, Amelia Taylor, Molly Powell, Liv Calder, Harriet Prebble, Dawn Sanders, Bea Lee Smith, Bethany Miller, Alison Stephens, Amalia Calder, Fiona Watson, Lynley Hutton, Hilary Norris, Kassie McLuskie, Jenny Pearl, Carmel McGlone, Jude Gibson, Carmen Downes, Brian Pearl, Robert Gordon, Eli Hancock and Elias Meier.

Wonderful to have all involved – how thrilled Rhona would have been!

Shakespeare Dreamers – Erskine Chapel 9 Nov

Opening with an enthusiastic group of tamariki from Crofton Downs Primary School from *Primarily Playing with Shakespeare 2024*, performing a scene from *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, they were followed by musical items by SGCNZ/Morrison Music Trust Music composition Competition winner, Jesse Pollard-Simmiss, and Aaylia Middleton, song and speeches performed by SGCNZ NSSP and YSC Alumni. Having been arrived as an Intern from German a week before, Elias Meier had 'let slip' that he sang in a church choir back in Germany. He filled the Chapel with his sonorous singing.

A very special Guest graced us with her delicious presence, stepping in at the last minute to cover illness leaving a gap – Penny Ashton, with an audience interactive excerpt from her hilarious Bardful frolic, *Tempestuous*, at Circa and tour.

Sitely Shakespeare - Llandaff Country Residence 15 Nov

This took place at the stately and very lovely Llandaff Country Residence in Wairarapa. Students from Kuranui College, organised by Juanita McLellan, entertained in the grounds, with a miscellany of Shakespeare influenced items in dance and acting from 1.00pm – 1.35pm prior to the start of the tours of the House and grounds. Bad weather drove all the performers and audience into the Barn, which had been adorned, appropriately with fairy lights – most scenes were from *A Midsummer Night's Dream*.

Being part of the **Wellington Heritage Festival** increased publicity of our events, at no extra cost. With the intended aim being to 'cast the potential funding net' as widely as possible, these events will have helped increase our visibility and breadth of reach.

Providing Performers

Wellington Youth Orchestra and Wellington Sinfonietta Orchestra

With only a week's notice, I was contacted with a request by the organiser of the Wellington Youth Orchestra and Wellington Sinfonietta Orchestra (comprising the very young – a 'feed' to the WYO) for 2 actors to read excerpts I was asked to select from *Henry V* to accompany William Walton's *Henry V suite* which they played. They were excellent! Alumni Brendan West and Eli Hancock (at the time working for SGCNZ on casual basis), stepped into the breach and alternately performed a soliloquy between each movement. They too were superb. Roaming in the audience, they delivered their speeches with clarity, audibly and with the power and leadership tenor, sure to influence any 'band of brothers' about to face a fearsome challenge.

ESU Wellington Christmas Luncheon

We were asked to provide 30 minutes of entertainment for the final luncheon of the Wellington Branch of English Speaking Union. As with many organisations, membership is falling, literally, with lots sadly 'shuffling off this mortal coil'.

Our stunning-voiced Intern, Elias Meier, 'came to the party', 'book-ended' the performance with 2 Christmas Carols at each, singing them first in German, and then leading the members singing them in English. An Alumna, in SGCNZ YSC 2025, Ashlyn McLachlan, read 2 delightful monologues from *As You Like It*, separated by the Angelic voice of another Alum, Bethany Miller, who sang 3 songs, 2 Shakespeare influenced.

SGCNZ Sponsors, Funders & Donors

SGCNZ could not operate without its raft of funding sources.

In 2024, the second of three years of funding from the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Youth Development were hugely appreciated. The new procurement process for MYD funding for the period commencing 1 July 2025, began with submitting of a considerable amount of information in November and December. We are still awaiting the decision on whether we have been selected for the final stage of the procurement process.

We were grateful to have had the funding from the University of Otago for 18 years, though, of course, sad that it was not longer able to continue it. Considerable work is in process to replace this.

Having the new funding from the Raye Blumenthal Freedman Trust confirmed again for next year is greatly valued. We were delighted to have the Chair of that Trust come from Auckland to Wellington for our Regional Festival. (He knew already he would unfortunately not be available to attend the National Festival.)

We appreciate the Wellington City Council through its support from its Arts and Culture and Venue Subsidy grants.

Other funders include Aotearoa Gaming Trust, Otago Community Trust, Lion Foundation, NZ Community Grants Board, Trinity College London, NZ Community Trust, Sheilah Winn Trust, Morrison Music Trust (and Julie Nevett), Nicole Barker & Tessa Ratcliffe, Mary-Annette Hay Bequest, The Fame Trust, The Adam Foundation, The Baines Family Trust, Speech New Zealand, Theatre NZ, in kind from KPMG, Eftpos, L'Affare, Wellington East Girls' College, Toi Whakaari: NZ Drama School, plus our 1000 Club members, donors – from the regular Automatic Payments to annual or one-off payments to help fill our coffers and make it possible to offer all the programmes we do.

SGCNZ Supporters, Interns, and Volunteers

SGCNZ thrives thanks to the commitment of its volunteers and their willingness to support our Festivals and other projects. There were around 80 volunteers assisting throughout the National Festival, and approximately 2000 nationwide in the Regional Festivals, plus some 220 with our other activities. These included SGCNZ Alumni, SGCNZ Friends and Wellington Shakespeare Society members, Rotarians, Rotoractors, Interactors, some other schools and Shakespeare devotees.

Prior to the Festivals, they assisted with publicity, promotion, and other administrative roles from enveloping to making name tags and many other essential task – another 'reality check' as to what is involved. These volunteers, in addition to assisting SGCNZ to carry out its work to the highest degree possible, also develop their own transferable life skills and learn techniques for marketing and administration which are integral parts of any organisation.

There was an Assistant to the CEO, who decided to leave in August to return to teaching. In spite of its tiny staff of the full time CEO and short term /part time Assistants and 1-3 month Interns, the network created by SGCNZ helps us engage a number of different partners to help make our events successful for all. We have two once a week invaluable mature and skilled volunteers - Brian Pearl and Alison Stephens.

As always, we are eternally grateful to those SGCNZ Alumni locally and those who travel from outside Wellington to help with our Festivals and other events, including, from time to time, performing at *Shake Alive*, 'all-inclusive' performances.

Volunteers and Interns in SGCNZ's Offices in Toi Poneke:Arts Centre

The hard work of our interns and volunteers throughout the year is integral to the smooth set-up and operation of our festivals and other events, and we are incredibly grateful for their support. Over Covid we have had a few of changes of Assistants and, of course, no international interns. However, we have continued to have community support. We have had a number of local interns join the team for short periods and casual volunteers. Our regular volunteers - for which extra special thanks are due.

Volunteers from Schools

At the National Festival, students from Wellington Girls' College, Wellington College, Wellington East Girls' College (in spite of the Festival not being at their schools), and Wellington High School crewed information desks, sold merchandise, served food, assisted with transportation and undertook other tasks backstage and front of house.

NUMBERS

SGCNZ UOSWSF: 795 Performers and Non-Performers (as defined above) at the National Festival. Audiences totalled 1405 in the Wellington Regional and National Festivals (SGCNZ UOSWSF).

Competitions: In our Competitions in costume design, music composition, static image, poster, Video Title Card, Essay there were 172 entrants (these are those pre-culled to be 'semi-finalists', sent by the schools/groups/homeschool clusters).

Totals:

SGCNZ has now had approx 141,000 participants in our Festivals nationwide over the past 33 years, with another approx 7500 across our other activities.

Primarily Playing with Shakespeare: 330 participants

Our Alumni continue to succeed in a vast number of careers and ways nationally and internationally. These include every form of the arts, whether in performance or the plethora of supporting and administrative roles, to public positions, including leading politicians including Hon Chris Bishop and Hon Jacinda Ardern, teachers, lawyers, doctors, journalists, reporters, playwrights and other authors, Māori Youth Workers, leaders of all types, decision makers and ever so many other occupations. Often it is mentioned to us that seeing involvement in SGCNZ's activities is a very positive credential in selecting employees.

Media and SGCNZ

In recent years, several videos have been made on the backstory of the SGCNZ UOSWSFs and Competitions. Special acknowledgment to the University of Otago and the Ministry of Youth Development for their assistance with these. This year, SGCNZ YSC 2023 Alumna, Libby Frazer, created a superb promotional film, capturing the views of several past participants. This was deservedly highly graded towards her Media Studies NCEA Level 3. The link: <https://youtu.be/HTw5zjsmV4w?si=w-V7cDKIGVIXO2jA>

The videos are available to view on YouTube – see our website – sgcnz.org.nz.

In addition to this, almost all of our previous UOSWSF's have been filmed and most are stored in the Ngā Taonga; Sound and Vision, where they have been digitally recorded. These create a valuable record of SGCNZ's legacy, and are sometimes requested for viewing by school groups visiting Ngā Taonga.

Many years of the Festivals and NSSP are available via Glass Gecko Films on Vimeo – Video on Demand. More recent ones are on *Memory of Light Photography/Galleries/SGCNZ*

An excellent article in Education Gazette 22 July 2024 Vol 103 *Interpreting Shakespeare through te ao Māori*

Website: sgcnz.org.nz

Instagram: [@SGCNZ](https://www.instagram.com/SGCNZ) [instagram.com/SGCNZ](https://www.instagram.com/SGCNZ)

Facebook: [@SGCNZ](https://www.facebook.com/sgcnz) [facebook.com/sgcnz](https://www.facebook.com/sgcnz)

Twitter: [@SGCNZ](https://twitter.com/SGCNZ) twitter.com/SGCNZ

Evaluation

As always, a large number of unsolicited communications start arriving only minutes after the Festival ends - a very few of which are quoted in this report. These were received from all sectors - participants, those assisting and assessing, workshop tutors, teachers and audience members, via texts, Facebook, e-mails, cards, letters and phone calls.

Questionnaires were given to all participating schools and Regional Organisers and recommendations are being given full consideration and changes made where appropriate.

Conclusion

We are delighted to hear about Shakespeare being included in the Education curriculum again. There are thousands of written endorsements of the benefit of what we provide which has certainly kept Shakespeare alive. It is a natural return in some guise into the curriculum which marries with this.

We are extremely grateful to the Ministry for providing this three year funding to support us to achieve our objectives, which mirror yours: to nurture the development of young people, encourage enquiring minds, literacy, close-reading, comprehension, appreciation and enjoyment Shakespeare, as well as entrepreneurship, creativity, curiosity, collaboration and transferable skills which will enrich this country and further afield, in whatever the students' chosen fields of endeavour.

Being able to understand, interpret and perform Shakespeare is like 'learning the whole alphabet' – once understand it is a foundation block for whatever follows.

With more very warmest thanks for your support,



Dawn Sanders ONZM, QSM

SGCNZ CEO & Member Shakespeare Globe Council, London

December 2024

M: 027 283 6016

E: dawn@sgcnz.org.nz

P: PO Box 17215, Wellington 6147

