



# Wainuiomata Little Theatre Inc.

Established in 1955

## Les Misérables Update

As Trevor mentions in his report, we are now well underway with the production. We have all had to face some challenges with our planning because of Covid, but as we always do as a team, we face these things head-on and work it out. We are a month into our rehearsal schedule and things are going really well. We are very lucky to have a fantastically talented group of people making up our cast, some who have been on board since our original casting, and others who have come in a bit later, replacing cast who were no longer available post Covid.

There is a great 'vibe' within the group and we are fortunate to have a lot who are new to WLT amongst them. Everyone is excited for what's to come as we progress through our schedule.

WATCH THIS SPACE!!

## Working Bee

Our foyer and front of house toilets are looking a little sad and the hall owners have given us permission to do some refreshing of the area. So we plan to paint the FOH foyer and both toilets, replace the Lino in the ladies and the toilet in the men's. First step is to clean everything down for painting and the paint. If you know anyone who can lay lino or would like to help with the refresh, please let me know.

Plan :

- Saturday 13th March—Clean and prepare for painting
- Saturday 20th March—Painting
- Saturday 27th March—Toilet replacement and Lino Laying

Contact:  
Rick 0274 523 923 or [richard.jonassen.rj@gmail.com](mailto:richard.jonassen.rj@gmail.com)

## Workshop

The first workshop was held at the college hall on Sunday the 29th of November from 2:00pm – 4:00pm.

Firstly thanks to all the WLT members that come down and spent a couple of hours being available for any one to talk to them. While there wasn't a rush it was encouraging to see several people pop in and see what we are about. And at least two are keen to get involved in our current production either in set build or back stage.



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### Contributions

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- If you have an idea for an article or would like to contribute please get in touch.

## Presidents Message



Welcome everyone to the first newsletter of a new year. A new year which hopefully will continue to allow us to enjoy our usual freedoms and more importantly, allow us to get back on stage again! Everyone is excited about getting together once again.

There is no doubt that Covid will continue to be a part of our lives for some time to come yet but we have been so lucky in New Zealand. The fact that we can get together to attend concerts, sporting events and even in a group to rehearse, is a luxury that other parts of the world can't enjoy. Long may it continue.

In gathering together as a group once again our priority is keeping everyone safe in that environment. To this end, we have worked on detailed Covid plans for our upcoming rehearsals and performances that cover the range of factors that we need to keep in mind. The plan includes current advice for safe rehearsal, use of QR codes, good hygiene measures etc. which have been put in place. Drawing upon work done by other groups from 2020, it also contains measures for performances and consideration if there is a change in alert levels at some stage. A copy of the detailed plan can be found on the WLT website or is available upon request.

This brings us to the exciting part of the year ahead. Our small undertaking for 2021 – Les Misérables. Firstly, everyone who has stuck with it for this production deserves an award for perseverance. Through thick and thin, the production team and original cast from February 2020 have come back ready to give it 100%. The production journey has just started in earnest with rehearsals going for just over three weeks. Chris, our MD, is working the cast hard getting to grips with the fantastic music in the show and its intricacies. Although it is very early in the process, things are looking good. We are looking forward, finally, to be able to bring this iconic show to the stage in Wainuiomata in June this year.

Keep safe everyone and be kind. We look forward to seeing you at the show later in the year.

## Memory Lane



### Local Theatre

#### New Zealand Fringe Festival 2021

New Zealand Fringe Festival, NZ's largest open-access arts festival of unbridled creativity and cultural expression is back for another year with the largest programme of events in its 30-year history.

NZ Fringe stretches across 38 different performance venues and showcases 156 independent events, spanning 25 genres of art with over 1000 emerging and professional artists from across Aotearoa.

Between Friday 26 Feb 2021 and Saturday 20 March 2021

Tickets :

[Available Here from](#)

## Dear Actors & Crew.....Thank You for Tonight

### Chris Peterson

*OnStage Founder & Editor in Chief*

Dear Cast & Crew of the shows we just saw,

Thank you for the past couple of hours. Thank you for an incredible night of theatre. With your performances and work, you impacted an entire audience of people. You made us laugh. You made us cry. You made us think. You let us escape our world and enter yours, even for a brief moment.

It probably wasn't easy. God knows what kind of day you had before coming to the theatre. Maybe your job was stressing you out. Maybe you were at the end of a horrendous tech week. Maybe your personal life was crumbling around you.

But when the lights went down and the curtain went up, you left all of that behind and became your characters. And we believed every second of it. You may never know what your performance did for some of us tonight. You may have inspired a young child to want to become an actor or designer. You may have been the encouragement someone needed to get back up on that stage. You may have changed someone's life for the better.

Some of us were your families and friends, and we couldn't be prouder of you. Maybe you felt you didn't give the performance or there were things that didn't go as planned. You may be doubting your talents right now. You may be thinking that this will be your last show. We hope that's not the case. Remember, at the end of the day, you got on that stage in the first place. You succeeded in doing something that only a few can say they've done, you performed or ran a show.

We clapped at the end of the show, but sometimes applause isn't simply enough. Which is why we wanted to write this letter to you. And while we may never forget tonight's performance, the best part is, we're coming back tomorrow night.

Thank You,



### Actor's Corner

*This is the next in a series of resources to help actors.*

#### Body Language

As an actor, body language plays a crucial role in your overall success in auditions, roleplay and performance. Mastering your nonverbal communication can set you apart and give you an advantage.

Here are eight body language acting tips to showcase your natural talents, level-up your character mastery and become the most memorable person in the room.

Before we dive in, let's see how you currently use body language and nonverbal communication. Here are a few questions to ask yourself:

- How do I prepare my body and voice before an audition?
- What facial expressions do I make in the audition room when I'm not performing?
- How does my voice inflect when I introduce myself to casting directors?
- What did I do in my last audition to land the role?
- Did body language contribute to my last rejection? What did I do and how can I change it?
- Once you have completed your self-diagnosis, use these body language hacks for actors:

See Pages 4-5 for the full article

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- Once you have completed your self-diagnosis, use these body language hacks for actors:

## 1. Master Your Space

Spatial norms, known as proxemics, are an important element in the audition.

Researchers have found that how we use space can give us interesting information. Specifically:

The body to body distance between two parties encodes the nature of the relationship between the participants themselves as well as observing third parties. In other words, we use space to decide how someone feels about us and we look at space between others to try predicting their relationship.

Everyone has their own space bubbles. These are the areas around our body where we like to interact with different kinds of people. Everyone's bubble is slightly different, but here are some averages:

- **Intimate space** is 0 to 18 inches from our body. People who are in that space have to be intimate with us because they are close enough to reach out and touch us. You never want to go into someone's intimate space accidentally.
- **Personal space** is 1.5 to 5 feet from our body. This is the most common zone we use. We easily can reach out and shake hands and speak so someone can hear us. This is our favourite zone to use when talking to friends at a party or colleagues in the break room.
- **Social space** is 5 to 7 feet from our body. This often is used with people you feel are not a threat, but you are not necessarily interacting with them. It can be at a party or networking event or even in a large event space.
- **Public space** is beyond 7 feet. This gives us enough space to figure out someone's intentions before an approach. At 7 feet, you can see their entire body, their hand gestures and posture. We like to get a good read on someone before talking to them.

**Action Step:** Practice safe space boundaries. Remain in the personal and social space zones with the casting director and other decision makers.

## 2. Know the Seven Microexpressions

A microexpression is a brief, involuntary facial expression that appears on a person's face according to the emotions being experienced. Unlike regular, prolonged facial expressions, it is difficult to fake a microexpression.

In other words, when we feel an intense emotion, that emotion reveals itself on our face (for better or worse).

The seven universal microexpressions are:

- Disgust
- Anger
- Fear
- Sadness
- Happiness
- Surprise
- Contempt

In an audition, you want to project the emotion of the character you're portraying. If your script is sad, practice showing the sadness microexpression in the mirror beforehand to truly get into the mind and body of the character.

Additionally, smile only when you want to show happiness. Many actors make the mistake of plastering on a fake smile throughout the entire audition. Unfortunately, we can spot ingenuine happiness a mile away, so be mindful of your smile and intention behind it.

**Special Note:** Be sure to avoid negative expressions (disgust, anger, contempt and sadness) as you enter and leave the room, especially if you've been given negative feedback. Remain as facially neutral as possible to leave a positive, lasting impression.

**Action Step:** Memorize the seven microexpressions so you can use the correct one in the correct scene no matter what script you are handed:

# Actors Corner—Body Language

## 3. Use a Launch Stance

To be confident, your body language must show it.

First, the easiest way to project confidence is to claim territory. Own your body and own the space around you by standing or sitting tall.

Keep your arms loose by your side or place one or both hands on your hips. Relax your shoulders down your back and open your chest. These expansive postures (what we refer to as a Launch Stance) will show others that you're confident and sure of yourself.

Be wary of low power postures (unless the script calls for it!), such as crossing your arms or turtling your shoulders to your ears as this may signal defeat.

## 4. The Power of Leaning

Leaning is a specific nonverbal cue that allows us to cross into someone's space bubbles.

When we lean toward someone or lean across the table toward someone, we get closer to their next zone as we discussed in the first acting tip. It is a subtle way to 'warm-up' someone as you get to know them.

Lean toward the director as they ask more about you and your experience to show warmth and camaraderie. Additionally, lean toward them when receiving notes and feedback to nonverbally show you're listening and actively want to improve.

## 5. Prepare with a Vocal Warmup

Here's a big prepping problem:

We often prepare for our first few lines of a speech or monologue, but we rarely think about how we deliver those lines.

You can say the greatest line in the world, but if you sound nervous saying it, then your message is ruined!

I do a vocal warm up exercise before every presentation, meeting or speech where I'm speaking for more than a few minutes.

**Action Step:** Learn any 5 vocal warmups:

## 6. Use Purposeful Gazing

The eyes have it!

Confident performers and actors know the power of eye gazing. To increase your confidence, be sure to look people in the eye as you are speaking AND as they are speaking. Too often we look away, check our phone or scope out the rest of the room. This is not only rude, but very low confident.

**Action Step:** Use purposeful gazing and eye contact to your advantage. When you enter the audition room, keep your head up and look in front of you. After you plant yourself in your Launch Stance, look at who you're introducing yourself to. Don't shift your eyes too much and never look at the floor.

## 7. Harness Confidence

There's a big confidence myth: Confidence is just one of those things that "you have or you don't." No way! It's a skill, one that can be developed like any other skill, through intentional practice.

Your ability to display confidence increases trust and comfort levels with others. You can build confidence with your body language in many ways. Here are six ways to authentically develop inner confidence before your next audition:

- Harness your professional happiness.
- Create a pump-up playlist.
- Manage and deal with any social anxiety or performance anxiety.
- Write down three positive self-truths. These are the ideas we tell ourselves and the beliefs we carry around.
- Find a confidence role model who demonstrates leadership, isn't afraid to be unique and communicates and interacts with everyone.
- Do a pre-performance routine...

## 8. Your Pre-Performance Success Routine

What do you do before each audition? Before you take the stage? Before you walk into the room?

The most successful people have professional warm-up routines.

Daniel McGinn, author of *Psyched Up: How the Science of Mental Preparation Can Help You Succeed*, calls professional warm-ups "Pre-performance Rituals."

Pre-performance Rituals: A routine or habit a performer, athlete or professional does to enhance their performance, get their mindset right and beat nerves.

McGinn argues that we all should create our own Pre-performance Rituals to have more day-to-day success. This is not only a way we can prepare ourselves for better performance, but it's also a way to combat nerves.

**Action Step:** Learn how to psych yourself up.

# Media Tech in Live Theatre Performance

A live theatre performance is the culmination of actors rehearsing lines and spacing, costume designers dressing them for the part, scenic designers drafting and building sets and backdrops, lighting designers creating the visual mood, properties designers providing the smaller items handled by the actors, and sound designers adding aural nuances to the action, all under the guidance of a director.

## Digital Tech Enhances Live Performances

In the past 20 years, advances in digital technologies have affected all areas of live performance, including dance, drama, and music, perhaps most dramatically in the realm of visual effects. In the not too distant past, visual effects were created with stationary lights and colored gels, plastic sheets that slid into a frame placed in front of a lamp, typically housed in a Fresnel lantern.

Manipulating the intensity and placement of the lights was organized to match the feelings and actions taking place on the stage. Stagehands could change the gels in the sidelights, usually during a pause or intermission in order to change the mood to match the action on stage. In the more recent past, moving lights, also called intelligent lighting, have mostly replaced static lights hanging from overhead or placed on poles for side lighting.

Moving lights are programmable and speedily change color without physical manipulation, as was the case with gel lighting. In the even more recent past, the use of projectors has nearly replaced the painted backdrop. Projectors can be used to display still and moving images that assist in telling the story. Some projectors are made with lasers, which allows for intricate and complex designs.

## Flexibility in Creating Visual Effects

Specific computer programs allow designers flexibility as they create visual effects. Images can be projected onto something as simple as a sheet or a cyclorama, or as specific as a projector screen or LED wall. With the use of projectors, special screens and specific software, a live action play or musical can look almost like a movie. In 2007, the United Scenic Artist's Union Local 829 added Projection Design to its membership category. According to the USA 829, projection design is "the use of image as a means of enlightening or complimenting the text of a production."

The Projection Designer is "responsible for overseeing the design of the system, specifying equipment, sequencing the material in co-ordination with the other design departments and the production at large, and supervising the production of original content." Recent Broadway hits such as *Frozen* and *Anastasia* are examples of how projection design can take live action visual effects to another level. Projections increasingly are becoming part of plays, musicals, ballets, operas, and music concerts and the demand for people with specific training in projection design has increased.

Performing arts companies and venues include specific skills and education in job descriptions related to projection design. Proficiency in projection, video, and editing technology must be combined with the ability to create original art. An understanding of the stage action, whether it be dance, drama, or music provides context for the holistic nature of producing a live stage show. Therefore, the ability to collaborate with the team of designers, directors, and technicians is also important.

The projection designer must know how to use specialized software tools such as ShowCue, QLab, Final Cut, Avid, ProTools, Vectorworks, and the myriad of products available today. The designer must also know the functions, specifications, rigging, cabling and set up of projectors, screens, and computer networks. Often, the projection designer is also responsible for the maintenance, repair, replacement, and upgrading of equipment over time.

### *From the WLT Tech Team:*

This year's *Les Miserable* performance will see us using projection. It's not the first time we've used projection but it will be used to enhance the show in a way we have never done before. And hopefully will blow our audiences away. Something to look forward to in the coming rehearsals as the stage build gets underway.