



Daughters of Heaven

by
Michellanne
Forster



AUCKLAND

THEATRE COMPANY

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and
"Daughters of Heaven".

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Smokefree Theatre Season

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AUCKLAND THEATRE COMPANY

Welcome to the Auckland Theatre Company's second production in its N.Z. on Stage : SMOKEFREE SEASON.

The A.T.C. operates under a charitable trust that was established following the demise of the Mercury Theatre. It aims to provide live professional theatre to the people of Auckland. Everyone you see tonight, and those you do not, are paid professionals.

Your patronage tonight carries us all closer to a stronger local performing arts industry. As in any industry, ongoing success is defined in dollar terms. The proverbial "Bums on Seats" make or break a theatre company. At the A.T.C., every attempt has been made to streamline administrative costs so that we can offer all contracted artists a living wage, and offer you, the customer, theatre of the highest quality.

We want you to be satisfied. Should you enjoy the performance and wish to support our future endeavours, come to our next production. If you have any suggestions on how we can better meet your needs, please let us know.

Tonight's performance was made possible by the combined efforts of many people who, over the last year, have given so freely of their time and talent, to create a new professional theatre company. From our colleagues in the industry, to the friends we have made in the professional and business communities, we have worked together towards this common goal. To all those who have contributed, but especially Stephen Morrison of Arthur Andersen Accountants, sincerest thanks.

The ATC is proud to present this challenging play about one of the darker moments in New Zealand history.

We hope you enjoy it, and look forward to seeing you in the theatre again.



Simon Prast
Artistic Co-ordinator

MICHELANNE FORSTER

— playwright —

Michelanne Forster is an American by birth and a New Zealander by adoption. She has lived here since 1973. She joined Television New Zealand in 1980 and worked as a writer, director and producer in the Children's Department for nine years. During this time she published four children's books and wrote a number of plays for children. Since the birth of her second child in 1989 she has worked as a freelance writer and director.

This year will see the premiere of two new plays by Michelanne in Christchurch. SONGS MY MOTHER TAUGHT ME, a play with music, commissioned by the Christchurch Arts Network will open in September; and LARNACH, commissioned by the Court Theatre, will open in October.

COLIN McCOLL

— director —

Colin was Associate Director of Downstage from 1974 – 1977 and a founding member of the Depot before becoming Downstage's Artistic Director in 1984. His work at Downstage for innovative productions such as ROMEO AND JULIET and THE THREEPENNY OPERA spurred an invitation to tour his production of HEDDA GABLER to the Edinburgh Festival, the Ibsen Festival in Oslo, the Covent Garden Festival and the Festival of Sydney.

Colin was also acclaimed for his production of MICHAEL JAMES MANAIA which toured to Edinburgh in 1991, and directed Ibsen's THE VIKINGS for the National Theatre of Norway.

Colin directed DAUGHTERS OF HEAVEN and the Australasian premiere of DEATH AND THE MAIDEN at Downstage last year.

Later this year he will return to Holland to direct an English speaking production of THE IMPORTANCE OF BEING EARNEST as well as Shaw's MRS WARREN'S PROFESSION for the Dutch National Theatre.

TONY RABBIT

— set and lighting designer —

After some years exploring the meaning of life and drifting around New Zealand via B.S.A. and Triumph motorcycles, Rabbit discovered theatre at Wellington's Downstage where he was first employed as a Set Builder. For the past 18 years he has continued to work in the theatre and film/television, first as a Lighting Designer and then as a Set & Lighting Designer for both theatre and film. For the past five years he was Associate Director (Design) at Downstage where he designed and lit over thirty productions, mostly working with Director Colin McColl.

He has studied in Canada at the Banff Centre with Czech Sceneographer Josef Sveboda and toured to Edinburgh, London, Oslo and Sydney with productions he has designed and lit.

At last years first Wellington Critics awards he received Best Lighting Design for the Downstage production of DEATH AND THE MAIDEN.



TINA REGTIEN

Since graduating from New Zealand Drama School in 1987, Tina's theatre roles include BRIGHTON BEACH MEMOIRS at Mercury, WOMAN IN MIND, STEEL MAGNOLIAS at Circa, JISM and SEASCAPE at Bats Theatre, GOTHIC BUT STAUNCH and TWELFTH NIGHT at the Depot and HANG ON A MINUTE MATE, LYSISTRATA and DAUGHTERS OF HEAVEN at Downstage.

A presenter of the Holiday programme, Tina's television credits also include SHARK IN THE PARK, RAY BRADBURY THEATRE and SHORTLAND STREET. She also appeared in Peter Jackson's feature film BRAINDEAD and the short film THE INVISIBLE HAND.

REBECCA MASSEY

Becky began acting while studying at Auckland University. Her first role was as Hermia in the Theatre At Large acclaimed production of A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM in 1990. Her first professional role was Susanna Walcott in the Mercury's production of THE CRUCIBLE. Since completing her studies she has worked for the NZ Puppet Theatre. With Stronghold Theatre, she appeared in their production of THE POSSIBILITIES and most recently enjoyed a successful season as Beatrice in this year's Summer Shakespeare MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING.

LEE GRANT

Lee is one of this city's foremost actresses, and in 1991 she was recognised with an MBE for her contribution to the arts. Since the closure of Mercury Theatre last year, Lee has been involved in television, appearing in the KURT VONNEGUT THEATRE and THE RAY BRADBURY THEATRE. Currently she is flying back and forth to Queenstown, where she is appearing in a new television production WHITE FANG. After a long break from the stage, Lee is pleased to be back in front of a live audience.

RAEWYN BLADE

Raewyn was born in Auckland and trained at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama in London. She appeared in theatre, television, film and music halls through Britain, including playing principal roles in several West End musical productions.

Since returning to New Zealand in 1986, she has been seen in THE SOUND OF MUSIC, GERSHWIN BY GEORGE and THE IRVING BERLIN SHOW at the Mercury Theatre. Television credits include OPEN HOUSE, GLOSS, HOMEWARD BOUND and MARLIN BAY.

For two years Raewyn has been a soloist with the Auckland Philharmonia Orchestra for their Light Series Concerts and has just finished recording a programme of duets with jazz singer Beaver.

HELEN MEDLYN

Helen's interest in performing stems from her early involvement with various Auckland amateur light opera clubs. In 1981 she embarked on her professional career and has since enjoyed success as a soloist in numerous operas, musicals, oratorios and light music concerts. Since winning the Herald Aria last year, Helen has been in constant demand, appearing with the Auckland Philharmonia, and has secured a principal role in the forthcoming opera THE MAGIC FLUTE, for Auckland Opera at the Aotea Centre.

This is Helen's second straight dramatic role, her first being Joy Gresham in the Mercury's acclaimed production of SHADOWLANDS.



ROSS DUNCAN

Ross trained at New Zealand Drama school in 1971 and was an apprentice actor at Mercury for the following two years, before appearing with most of this country's professional theatres. In 1981 he joined Theatre Corporate spending the next four years with the main theatre company. From 1986 until its closure last year, Ross was a principal actor in the Mercury Theatre company. Many will recall his acclaimed portrayal as C.S. Lewis in SHADOWLANDS. Other highlights include THE TEMPEST, EQUUS, THE THREE SISTERS, BREAKING THE CODE, HAMLET, COURTING BLACKBIRD and SINGLE SPIES.

Ross appeared as Colonel Pickering in MY FAIR LADY at the Aotea Centre last year, and can be seen on television at the moment in numerous commercials!!



PAUL GITTINS

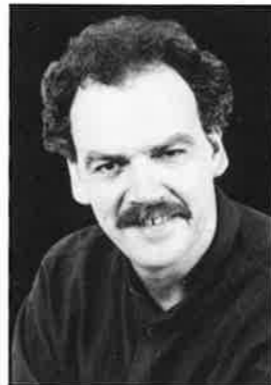
Since Paul's career began at Theatre Corporate in the mid seventies he has appeared in over sixty stage productions playing such diverse roles as the transvestite window dresser Molina in KISS OF THE SPIDER WOMAN, the Brooklyn wharfie Eddie Carbone in VIEW FROM THE BRIDGE and the title role in HAMLET.

He has also worked extensively in film and television, most recently being seen as the father in the award winning film END OF THE GOLDEN WEATHER, the crooked constable in GOLD and of course continues to be seen as the indomitable Doctor McKenna in SHORTLAND STREET.



JOHN CALLEN

John Callen has worked extensively in theatre, television and radio for almost 20 years. He has appeared in almost 100 stage plays, mostly for Downstage and Circa Theatres in Wellington but also for the Mercury Theatre, Aotea Centre and most recently as Frank in the Watershed's production of THINK OF A GARDEN. Last year John played the leading role in the highly successful MACBETH for which he won national critical acclaim. John is often heard on television and radio commercials and has narrated many documentaries, performed in several dozen radio plays and in a number of television series. He may be recognised as one of the fishermen in New Zealand's favourite TV advertisement, for Instant Kiwi. He lives in Herne Bay with his wife, TV director Judi Callen, and two children.



SIMON PRAST

Simon graduated from the Theatre Corporate Drama School in 1984. Since then he has acted at Theatre Corporate, Mercury Theatre and Downstage Theatre in such plays as CAT ON A HOT TIN ROOF, THE SEX FIEND, HAMLET and M. BUTTERFLY. Television credits include GLOSS, EREBUS : THE AFTERMATH and THE SINKING OF THE RAINBOW WARRIOR. Simon is Artistic Co-ordinator for the Auckland Theatre Company.



Daughters of Heaven

by
Michellanne
Forster

CAST

JULIET HULME Tina Regtien
PAULINE PARKER Rebecca Massey
BRIDGET O'MALLEY Lee Grant
HILDA HULME Raewyn Blade
HONORA RIEPER/MATRON Helen Medlyn
DR HENRY HULME/JUDGE ADAMS Ross Duncan
HERBERT RIEPER/GRESSON Paul Gittins
ALAN BROWN/DETECTIVE John Callen
WALTER PERRY/DR MEDLICOTT Simon Prast

DIRECTION Colin McColl
STAGE AND LIGHTING DESIGN Tony Rabbit
STAGE MANAGER Jana Seymour
ASSISTANT STAGE MANAGER Devlin Bishop
WARDROBE Elizabeth Whiting
PROPERTIES Rob Buck
LIGHTING OPERATOR Jo Kilgour
MARKETING/PUBLICITY Helen Goudge
SET CONSTRUCTION Ready Set Go Ltd

AUCKLAND THEATRE COMPANY

ARTISTIC CO-ORDINATOR Simon Prast
PRODUCTION MANAGER Teresa Sokolich
PRODUCTION CONSULTANT John Verryt

THEATRE FOUNDATION TRUST BOARD MEMBERS

James Macaulay (Chairman)
Judith Tizard M.P.
Simon Prast
Timothy MacAvoy
David Stubbs

*DAUGHTERS OF HEAVEN premiered at the Court Theatre, Christchurch on 19 October 1991.
First performance by the Auckland Theatre Company
at Watershed Theatre, Auckland.
April 15, 1993.*

— CHRONOLOGY OF THE PARKER-HULME CASE —

Juliet Hulme is the elder daughter of Dr Henry Hulme, Rector of Canterbury College, and his wife Hilda. They are both English. Hilda is a well known broadcaster and member of the Christchurch Marriage Guidance Council, however her marriage to Henry is ending because of her relationship with Canadian, Walter Perry. Pauline Parker is the middle daughter of Herbert Rieper, a fishmonger, and his common law wife Honora (nee Parker). The family take in boarders to supplement their income.

February 1952

Pauline Parker and Juliet Hulme meet at Christchurch Girls' High School and form an intense friendship.

April 1953

Pauline's diary states that the girls experience a mystical revelation of the Fourth World and they are among the 'Elect'. From this point the girls create their own fantasy world, keeping diaries and writing extravagant novels, becoming obsessed with movie stars and pop music. Pauline Parker leaves school.

May – September 1953

Juliet Hulme becomes ill with tuberculosis and is admitted to the Christchurch Sanatorium in the Cashmere Hills – she does not return to school. During this time she and Pauline correspond regularly.

March 1954

Dr Hulme is forced to resign from Canterbury College after differences with his colleagues. This, combined with his marriage problems, leads to his decision to return to England with his son Jonathan. It is thought best for Juliet that she go and live with an aunt in South Africa until the family problems are settled. Pauline pleads to accompany Juliet, but all of the parents object, particularly Pauline's mother Honora Parker.

June 1954

Pauline imagines that getting rid of her mother would enable her to accompany Juliet. Ideas of a murder plan had occurred as early as February 1954, but now the two girls refine a plot to murder Honora Parker and record the plan in Pauline's diary.

June 22, 1954

Juliet, Pauline and Honora Parker go to Victoria Park. The outing has been arranged by the girls as a special treat before Juliet leaves New Zealand. On the track in the adjacent reserve they batter Honora to death.

August 23 – 28, 1954

Juliet and Pauline are tried before Mr Justice Adams. The defence on the grounds that they are insane (folie a deux) fails. On the afternoon of the verdict a Ranfurly Shield match is played in Christchurch before a large crowd. Juliet spends most of her imprisonment at Mount Eden in Auckland and Pauline Parker the greater part of her time at Arohata Borstal in Wellington. Great care is taken by the welfare services over their education.

November 16, 1959

Juliet Hulme is released and leaves New Zealand to join her mother who is now married to Walter Perry.

November 29, 1959

Pauline Parker is released but is on probation until 1965. She goes to Auckland University and finishes her degree.

They have served five years in prison.

Both women changed their names.

— SIGHTLINES —

The following comments were collected by Michelanne Forster when researching Daughters of Heaven. She interviewed 25 people who remembered the girls and their families.

Juliet Hulme

"She was a good actress ... and very mysterious in that you couldn't read what was on her face. She was very self contained and dismissive of other people."

"She was in love with herself. Her main consideration was to take over someone else."

Pauline Parker

"... a very plain child. She had a greasy unattractive face. She wasn't nearly as attractive as Juliet and had nothing like her personality."

"Dark, dark eyes and on the plump side. She was like a shadow person and Juliet queened about."

"The upper class closed ranks when the incident happened. Pauline was crossing her class to associate with Juliet. This is a story of class and gender rather than nationality."

Hilda Hulme

"She was trim, neatly dressed, attractive and well organised. She was poised but did not have flair or stand out in any way. Her voice was middle of the road – not excessively posh at all."

"In typical 1950s fashion she was not demonstrative to her children."

"Hilda was a lonely women and needed another relationship. She was not close to her daughter."

"She was ambitious and as hard as nails. She had her hair done the day after the murder ... as cool as a cucumber ... she was frightfully frank and rammed sex down her children's throats. There's a Rudi Gopaz painting of Hilda – by God, he got the evil in her face!"

"She hated New Zealand. She called it a god-forsaken country because she couldn't get wringer mops here."

Henry Hulme

"He was forced to resign – he wasn't a good manager. He left New Zealand just before the trial and took his son Jonathon with him."

"He was as mad as a maggot. His contribution during the war was to work a system to serve wine at the right temperature."

Walter Perry

"His wife came out by ship from Canada and he flew. On the way she fell in love with the Purser and departed to Australia. Perry went to Mrs Hulme to get help with his marriage." (Hilda Hulme worked for Marriage Guidance.)

Herbert Rieper

"He was originally from Australia. A devoted father and family man – a good bit older than his wife."

Honora Parker

"She'd been Rieper's de facto wife for 23 years."

"There was nothing special about her."

Alan Brown

"A kind but hopeless drunk."

"Bloody decent – never cheated – but he lived in a hall of mirrors." (After the trial, Brown spent some time in Ashburn Hall, Dunedin, where Medlicott was a psychiatrist.)

Terrence Gresson

"He didn't appeal to the emotions enough. He was desperate to be a judge so was deferential to Adams." (Gresson later committed suicide.)

Dr Reginald Medlicott

"To him Freudian interpretation was very beautiful stuff."

"He lived like the Rajah of Bong, only drank splendid brandy."

Bridget O'Malley

The only character in the play who is entirely fictitious.

The Hulmes had several housekeepers and caretakers while living at Ilam. All are still living and did not wish to be included in the story.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Auckland Theatre Company gratefully acknowledges the invaluable support of the following:



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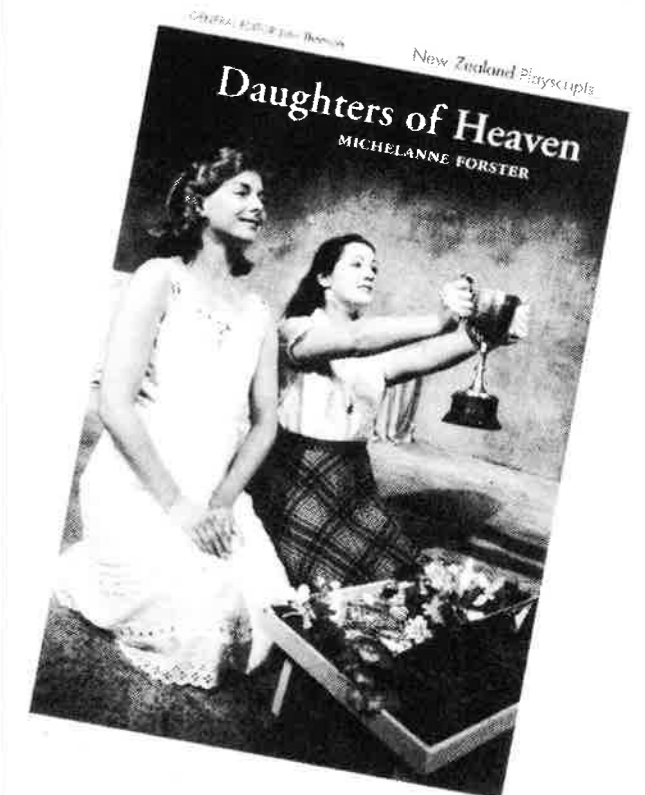
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