

# Arts Grants 2016 | Round 2 Application

Date generated: 2/11/2016  
Application Status: Processing

## Applicant details

Primary Applicant:	Theatreview
Primary Contact Person:	John Smythe (Wellington)

## What: the idea

Project title:	Theatreview editorial and website manage	
Brief description:	Towards Managing Editor, Associate Editor and Web Master fees and Web hosting overheads.	
Artform:	Theatre	Funding type: General Arts Fund
Strategic outcome:	New Zealanders experience high-quality arts	

Explain the central idea or kaupapa of your project and how your project will deliver to the Creative New Zealand strategic outcome that you have selected above. You will be assessed on how strong and how well-developed your idea is and how well your project will deliver to the selected outcome:

If relevant to your project you should also explain:

- ☐ how the practice and results of the project are culturally diverse OR based on Mātauranga Māori OR based on Kaupapa Pasifika.\*
- ☐ the way in which your project is innovative in the creation and/or production of the work.
- ☐ how your project benefits community arts participation.

\* Required for all Pacific Arts Fund, Māori Arts Fund, Kava New Leaders Grants and Toi Ake Fund applications .

Theatreview.org.nz is the only performing arts review site in New Zealand that offers comprehensive nation-wide coverage and an easy-to-access archive. As such we provide an essential service within New Zealand's performing arts infrastructure, offering a critically responsive record of the quality, quantity, diversity and trends of current performance and production across the spectrum of the professional performing arts. This application seeks to secure core funding for its 12th year of operation.

Theatreview's mission is to review the full array of forms and content within New Zealand professional performing arts practice in order to:

- evaluate and celebrate excellence culturally diverse production and performance
- inform prospective audiences through timely Reviews (and the Coming Up facility)
- provide informed feedback to practitioners
- welcome audience and practitioner commentary, feedback and debate, and
- build a comprehensive and readily searchable heritage archive of professional performing arts practice in NZ.

Often Theatreview is the only publication to review the work of emerging artists, Fringe shows, return /developed seasons and successive seasons of touring productions. We also post links to other media reviews in order to broaden the 'conversation'.

Theatreview gives smaller regions a voice by commissioning reviews of local professional productions, touring productions and the performing arts components of ever-growing regional festivals. This offers fresh perspectives on shows from elsewhere and keeps all visitors to Theatreview informed about what is playing where and when.

Theatreview sustains a nationwide sense of community within the performing arts world, being the hub of performing arts critical discourse, a virtual meeting place for the performing arts community and the 'go to' place for people from diverse sectors seeking informed commentary on current and past productions.

Over its first 10 years (given content dating from January 2006) Theatreview's reviewing reach has grown as follows (figures are for calendar years):

2006: 233 reviews | 2007: 314 | 2008: 359 | 2009: 448 | 2010: 530 | 2011: 568 ...

2012: commissioned 623 reviews of 569 productions;

2013: commissioned 832 reviews of 681 productions (published 1,127 reviews in total);

2014: commissioned 813 reviews of 719 productions (published 1,082 reviews in total);

2015: commissioned 840 reviews of 680 productions (published 1,075 reviews in total).

International seasons of New Zealand works are also reviewed wherever possible – e.g. The Edinburgh Festival and Fringe (2013; 2014; 2015, 2016 – which this year has included weekly podcast wraps). NZ productions staged in London and New York have also been reviewed, including the 2015 La Mama season. Theatreview aims to engage with such events whenever and wherever they occur.

Because Theatreview's objective is to accurately reflect professional performing arts practice from year to year, the statistics may fluctuate: when output increases, so will ours; when it shrinks, so will ours. What will continue to grow, however, is the heritage resource of reviews, commentary, news and debate.

Theatreview is in constant use by practitioners, the general public, politicians and their advisers, teachers, students, researchers and a wide range of arts and creative industries organisations. Producers and directors refer to the Theatreview record when casting new productions and creating production teams. The website averages 11,500 unique visitors per month, visiting an average of 37,972 pages per month (Google Analytics – see details stats attached). There is a strong demand for its work to continue and the heritage resource to grow.

Based on 2015, if we paid a modest \$200 per review, the commissioned reviews would cost about \$168,000 per annum. This is the value of professional work donated by the reviewers. (See 'People' below.)

## How: the process

Start date for project:

1/01/2017

End date for project:

31/12/2017

Project location(s):

National

### Explain where, when and how you plan to deliver the project:

Editorial responsibilities are shared by the Managing Editor and the Associate Editor. The Managing Editor primarily manages the Theatre content nationwide and all administrative aspects of the Theatreview operation. The Associate Editor manages the Dance and transdisciplinary content, including most cabaret, burlesque and circus shows, nationwide. Each assist the other where necessary.

The Wellington-based Managing Editor will:

- ☐ Identify theatre productions for review
- ☐ Liaise with the Associate Editor re dance and transdisciplinary productions
- ☐ Liaise with producers, publicists and venues to obtain production information & images
- ☐ Commission and liaise with critics and secure their bookings
- ☐ Prepare and publish production page information & images (a week to 10 days ahead of opening night)
- ☐ Receive, edit, format & post reviews
- ☐ Publish links to Theatreview reviews on the Theatreview Facebook page
- ☐ Access reviews published elsewhere; prepare & post teasers & links
- ☐ Liaise with Radio NZ Afternoons and Reviewers re the Thursday reviewing slot
- ☐ Receive, edit, format & post news items
- ☐ Monitor and participate in Comment streams and Forums (and moderate where necessary, although free and open exchange is preferred)
- ☐ Liaise with Webmaster re maintenance needs and to monitor/manage website quality
- ☐ Liaise with Chair, Secretary and Treasurer on relevant issues as they occur
- ☐ Manage Audience membership issues and enquiries
- ☐ Manage the Performing Arts Directory (PAD) including membership issues and enquiries
- ☐ Respond to general enquiries (including general public requests for information and advice)
- ☐ Manage all business aspects of web hosting and domain name ownership (through OpenHost)
- ☐ Represent Theatreview in arts industry and public forums, as and when required
- ☐ Attend Theatreview Trust meetings and perform tasks as requested and directed, towards fulfilling its purposes, raising funds and receipting donors, to ensure the continued viability of Theatreview.

The Auckland-based Associate Editor will:

- ☐ Receive, edit and uploads dance and transdisciplinary production information and images
- ☐ Schedule dance shows for review
- ☐ Commission and liaise with dance reviewers and secure their bookings
- ☐ Receive, edit and publish dance and transdisciplinary reviews
- ☐ Attend to Auckland issues as required and appropriate
- ☐ Represent Theatreview in arts industry and public forums, as and when required
- ☐ Apply for funding as required
- ☐ Support the Managing Editor as and when required.

Links to dance reviews are posted to the NZ Dance News network. Links to all Theatreview reviews are posted to our Facebook page. Our honorary Tweeter (Kris Wehipeihana) updates followers on our Twitter feed. Interested parties spread the word through their own social media communities. Social media postings bring a steady stream of visitors to the site.

The Webmaster, remains on hand to undertake routine maintenance, troubleshoot any technical issues as they arise and improve the site as required. This year (2016) Theatreview has consolidated a relationship with Radio New Zealand's AFTERNOONS with Jesse Mulligan whereby we provide a weekly on-air reviewer for a current performing arts production. RNZ pays the reviewer and promotes Theatreview as the place to go to read the full review. A key demographic of potential audience members is served through this partnership and their awareness of Theatreview is heightened.

Ongoing agreements with The Big Idea and Scoop Media see links to Theatreview reviews posted on their sites regularly. We also have a reciprocal linking agreement with TheatreScenes: The Auckland Theatre Blog.

Theatreview has registered with the PressPatron crowdfunding platform which "empowers audiences to fund their favourite blogs and journalism websites, with one-off or monthly contributions." It is currently under development and we have yet to see if this will be a good fit for Theatreview. Meanwhile we are 'on board'.

Plans for a major upgrade of the Theatreview website have been shelved (see file note, attached).

In the short-term we plan to commission a 'reskin' of the site. This is subject to operational funding being secure for at least a year, then further funding being raised for this purpose (estimated cost: \$5k). The objective would be to:

- make the site more accessible to smartphones and tablets
- create a fresh new look
- improve searchability, and
- enable micropayments (if arrangements progress with PressPatron).

Also subject to special funding being secured, Theatreview would like to convene gatherings of reviewers in key centres prior to Regional, Fringe and major Arts Festivals, to introduce, align, refresh and upskill each reviewing team. We believe a collegial forum will be the best way of improving the

## Who: the people

Tell us about the key people/organisations involved in the project:

Add a new record for each person/organisation.

### Name of key individuals or organisations

### Brief background information relevant to the project

John Smythe, the Managing Editor (Theatre)	<p>John has a Bachelor of Dramatic Arts from the National Institute of Dramatic Arts (NIDA) in Sydney and has previously been a theatre reviewer for the National Business Review, Theatre Australia Magazine, The Australian, The Melbourne Times . His most recent play, Where There's a Will, was produced at BATS Theatre in April 2015. His non-fiction book titles include Downstage Upfront (VUP, Nov 2004) and The Plays of Bruce Mason – a survey (VUP &amp; Playmarket, Nov 2015).</p> <p>John (who trades as Words for Action) is the founder and Managing Editor of Theatreview. He works from his home office in Wellington (which he provides to Theatreview as in-kind support) to manage all administrative aspects of the Theatreview operation and manage theatre reviews nationwide.</p>
Raewyn Whyte, the Associate Editor (Dance & Transdiscipline)	<p>Raewyn has an MA from the School for Contemporary Arts, Simon Fraser University, Canada; major in dance criticism; thesis topic: Writing dancing - the scope and limits of contemporary modern dance criticism. She is a remote copy editor for BookSprints Limited, manager of the NZ Dance News Information Service (unfunded), the dance writer for NZ Herald and an occasional contributor to DANZ Magazine.</p> <p>Raewyn (who operates as All My Own Words) became Theatreview's Dance Editor in October 2011. She works from her home office in Auckland (which she provides to Theatreview as in-kind support).</p>
Sascha Monteiro, the Webmaster	<p>Sascha is skilled in Java, PL/SQL, Servlet, JSP, PHP, HTML, CSS, SOAP, REST Linux, Oracle, Apex, Tomcat, VMWare, MySQL . He remains available to respond to our needs and is essential to our operation.</p>
Reviewers, in-kind contributors	<p>Theatreview has a dedicated team of experienced reviewers nationwide, including in many small regions. Most have practical performing arts experience (unlike many print media critics). Most have relevant tertiary qualifications or are undergraduates in related areas. Many are lecturers, teachers or post graduate students. Their names are hyperlinked to brief biographical notes that establish their credentials.</p> <p>Theatreview recruits new reviewers as and when required by putting the call out through the existing network of reviewers, the Theatreview Audience Member database and the Theatreview Facebook page. Approaches from would-be reviewers are also considered according to their credentials.</p> <p>All Theatreview reviewers share a passion for the performing arts and are generous enough to contribute to the critical discourse for two complimentary tickets.</p> <p>(The Trust would love to pay everyone properly but has agreed we can only do so when a funding source is secure and sustainable.)</p>
Kris Wehipeihana , Honorary Tweeter	<p>Kris is the Manager, Nola Millar Library, Toi Whakaari: NZ Drama School.</p>

## How much: the budget

Amount requested:	\$35,000.00	Total cost of project:	\$274,260.00
Have you applied for funding for this project from another source?	No		
Have you received funding for this project from another source?	No		

## Budget Notes

'Total cost' = the total value of the project (including what is contributed 'in-kind').

Following the declining of funding from CNZ in the March 2016 Arts Grant round, Theatreview has secured \$10k from NZ Community Trust to cover Managing Editor fees for Sep, Oct, Nov, Dec 2016. Our application to CNZ for QR Funding (Dance) secured \$2k towards covering the fees for the Associate Editor Dance & Auckland through to the end of 2016. We will go back to NZCT mid 2017 for more (although they have cautioned us not to assume they will offer ongoing funding).

We will seek some of the shortfall for 2017 from Wellington City Council Arts & Culture Fund (who previously granted \$2,500 towards fees for Feb, Mar 2016 – prep for NZ Fringe)

(Funding for the proposed website 'reskin' will be approached as a discrete one-off project.)

# Support Material

The following information has been added to this application:

Support material type	Name/description	Web-link
Project budget	Theatreview project/annual budget	
Support material for 'What: the idea'	Google stats for 12 months July 2015 to June 2016	
Support material for 'What: the idea'	Link to Theatreview	<a href="http://www.theatreview.org.nz">http://www.theatreview.org.nz</a>
Support material for 'What: the idea'	Letters of support from David O'Donnell (VUW), Anton Carter (DANZ) plus excerpts from previous support messages'	
Support material for 'How: the process'	Long term rebuild plans and website feedback summary	
Support material for 'Who: the people'	Letters of acceptance from John Smythe, Raewyn Whyte and Sascha Montiero	
Eligibility: permission from the Manager, Copy Central to reproduce	Copy Central to reproduce permission to resubmit.	

## Sign

### Declaration

Subject to its statutory obligations, Creative New Zealand treats all information in funding applications as confidential. The personal information provided is used solely for the purpose of administering and assessing the application. (Contemporary popular music applicants should note that Creative New Zealand, NZ On Air, the New Zealand Music Commission and Te Mangai Paho share information on applications to ensure that there is no duplication of funding) We hold any personal information in accordance with the Privacy Act 1993 and, in particular, the Privacy Principles contained in that Act. Personal information is stored in a secure environment accessible only by authorised persons for legitimate purposes. You have the right to access your personal information and ask for the information to be updated or corrected where necessary.

If you are offered a grant, one of the conditions is that Creative New Zealand has the right to publish your name, a description of the project, and the amount of funding. We may also include a brief description of your project in our media releases and publications, including on the Creative New Zealand website. Creative New Zealand is subject to the Official Information Act 1982 and we may have to release information under that Act to third parties if requested. Creative New Zealand is also subject to the requirements of the Public Records Act 2005; this includes seeking permission from the Chief Archivist to destroy records or transfer records to Archives New Zealand.

Signing this application

I confirm that I am logged in to the Creative New Zealand portal and signing this application as myself, and not on behalf of any other individual.

Signed by:

Applicant	Signee	Date signed
Smythe, John : Theatreview	John Smythe	29/08/2016