



News Release

Monday 5th January 2004

Launch of UpStage: a new frontier for theatre

UpStage, a free web-based venue for live performance, is to be launched on Friday 9th January 2004, from 6pm at MediaLab South Pacific, 205-207 Victoria Street Wellington.

To celebrate the launch of UpStage, interested parties are invited to a short presentation about the software, followed by a live demonstration featuring cyberperformance artists from New Zealand and overseas.

UpStage is a collaborative software development project between artists Helen Varley Jamieson and Vicki Smith and technologist Douglas Bagnall, that aims to create a web-based venue for cyberperformance. Helen Varley Jamieson coined the word cyberperformance in 2000 to describe her experiments in using the internet to bring remote performers together in live theatrical performance.

UpStage provides tools for creating and viewing interactive cyberperformances and will offer opportunities for collaboration and communication between geographically distributed artists, as well as wider application in areas such as teaching and research.

Project team members Helen Varley Jamieson and Vicki Smith have been experimenting with cyberperformance for several years and for the last two years have worked with Karla Ptacek and Leena Saarinen as the globally-dispersed cyberperformance troupe Avatar Body *Collision*. Their work has been presented around the world, and it was from their work that the idea for UpStage was born. Programmer Douglas Bagnall is also an artist and film-maker, whose other current projects include a film-making robot.

The project received funding from the Smash Palace Collaboration Fund for artists and scientists, established by Creative New Zealand and the Ministry of Research, Science and Technology, and was undertaken with the support of MediaLab South Pacific.

UpStage is available free to artists, students, schools, and anyone interested in exploring live performance on the internet: www.upstage.org.nz

To attend the launch please RSVP to hannah@medialab.co.nz

MediaLab South Pacific is a research consortium fusing together academic research and industry experience to develop commercial opportunities within the ICT sector in New Zealand. For further information please visit www.medialab.co.nz

For information on Creative NZ and the Smash Palace funding see <http://www.creativenz.govt.nz/news/newsitem.html?record=787>