



*PIPES*

*&*

*PERCUSSION*

178  
FEBRUARY  
2017

NEWSLETTER FOR  
THE FRIENDS OF THE WURLITZER

& THE "KIWI CHAPTER" of the  
AMERICAN THEATRE ORGAN SOCIETY

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UNDER THE AUSPICES OF THE WURLITZER ORGAN TRUST of AUCKLAND  
C/- PO BOX 6707, WELLESLEY ST, AUCKLAND 1141, N.Z.  
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## ***ANOTHER NEW YEAR!***

Ninety years ago in February of 1927, Aucklanders were about to be treated to one of the latest wonders of the cinema experience, when Auckland's Regent Theatre in Queen Street, was to premier its brand new Wurlitzer pipe organ. The first of the larger Wurlitzer organs to come to New Zealand, the Regent Theatre's 2 manual 8 rank Model F "Unit Orchestra" was to breathe life into the silent movies of the day, and see the Regent Theatre's orchestra reduced to playing only on special occasions. The organ was shipped from Wurlitzer's New York factory in October of 1926 arriving in Auckland in December, just missing the official opening of this grand picture palace. However, Aucklanders only had to wait until February 1927 before they finally got to experience the mighty Wurlitzer pipe organ in full cry!

90 years later, we have to wait just a little bit longer before we get to hear this very same organ, singing her heart out once again, this time in her new home at the Playhouse Theatre in Glen Eden.

So until later this year when we hope to have the organ playing, we will continue to provide some events to keep you all entertained. Some of these events will be slightly left of centre, such as our coming **Club Afternoon** on **Sunday March 19 @ 2pm at the Playhouse Theatre.**

In this issue we have details on the Club Afternoon and an update on developments at the Playhouse Theatre.



**By way of a contrast to our normal fare for a Club Afternoon, we hope you will enjoy something just a little bit different this year.....**

- **The afternoon will open with a light afternoon tea in the supper room around the front of the Playhouse Theatre**
- **We'll have a Lucky Ticket Prize Draw**
- **Main Feature is "Always A Tram In Sight!"**

Well, we did say something a little bit different...this will be a fascinating look at the story behind Auckland's much loved electric trams – **"Always A Tram In Sight"**.

As most of you know, your scribe has a distinct liking of things from a by-gone age, such as Wurlitzer organs and electric street transport, namely trams and trolleybuses. So this subject matter fits the profile!



This presentation was created for another group last year and we thought you might also enjoy this trip down memory lane.

"Always A tram In Sight" will be told through a selection of historic images from the early and often quite stormy years of the trams and will conclude with a ten minute video, taking us through the declining years – these are the years that many of you will remember. Those of you who were with us back in 2008 will have seen this video which we screened as part of a Heritage Festival show with U.K. organist Len Rawle at the Wurlitzer organ. Len provided a "live" musical accompaniment to the video and we have since married the audio recording with the video footage to make for a stunning picture and sound tribute to the last years of the trams.

So although we are delving into a different subject matter, our Wurlitzer organ, although in storage, still has a part to play in this fun afternoon and we do hope you'll join us – remember too, although the event is not open to the public, you are very welcome to bring your friends along.

**Remember – NO DOOR SALES !**

**See your Sub Renewal Form or a Club Afternoon Booking Form  
either of which will be enclosed with this newsletter  
BOOK NOW! - BOOKINGS CLOSE on March 14**



# THIS & THAT FROM HERE & THERE.....

## MEMORIES OF A DAY-TRIP TO TAURANGA

A fantastic day was spent with 50 of our *Friends of the Wurlitzer* members, when we filled a coach and made a day trip to Tauranga, to see and hear our sister Wurlitzer pipe organ in the Addison Theatre, Baycourt.

The *Tauranga Theatre Organ Society* hosted us for the day which included lunch and some of our number and Tauranga's, making music on the Baycourt Wurlitzer organ. We departed Auckland at 9am and were back again just after 6pm and I think it true to say that a VERY good time was had by all!

***What a thrill to catch up with former WOTA Trustee Alan Dadson, now of Tauranga.***

***Alan looked after our Concert Tickets and FOTW Membership and it was great to see him again and to hear that he has kept up his playing on the Wurlitzer – albeit now in Tauranga!***



***Auckland's own John Hardicker joined us on the trip and it is always a pleasure to hear him on the Wurlitzer.***

***John gave us a wonderful range of moods and tempos within the beautiful setting that is the Addison Theatre at Baycourt.***

## **PLAYHOUSE THEATRE UPDATE**

Not a great deal of news to report, however the Playhouse Project architect and FOTW member Graham Upton, has been flat-out working up to Christmas finalising the consent application to the City Council.

Just prior to Christmas, together with Graham and representatives of the *Waitakere Playhouse Theatre Trust*, your scribe as Chairman of WOTA, attended a preliminary meeting with the Auckland Council Heritage Team to ascertain if there would be any "heritage issues" raised by them, as regards the Playhouse Theatre building and the proposals for the back of the theatre, when our formal application is put before Council. Thankfully they had no issues at all and were quite interested in the fact that two "heritage" items would be amalgamated when the Wurlitzer organ chambers are built and the organ installed.

Within the next week or so the formal Resource Consent will be lodged with Auckland Council and fingers-crossed, there will be no concerns or issues raised with the proposal.

Following consent being granted, the fun really starts. Construction quotes sort, funds raised, building commences..... oh it all looks so easy on paper but as you all will know, it never quite works out that way. The WPTT are as keen as we are to get the organ in and playing as soon as possible and they seem confident that the year will end with the sounds of the Wurlitzer rolling forth at the Playhouse!



## **IT'S THAT TIME OF YEAR AGAIN!**

Yes my friends, it is subscription renewal time once again, and despite the fact that our Wurlitzer organ is still not up and playing, it is our fervent hope that you will stay with us and together, we can see these dark days over when the organ once again rises up to thrill us all, with its sweet and powerful sounds of music!

As with last year, we will work hard to present a couple of musical events with some of your favourite artists so that we won't be altogether starved of theatre organ entertainment. *More news to follow in later newsletters.....*

So, with this newsletter you will find your sub-renewal form which also doubles up as the booking form for the Club Afternoon. Please do check the form carefully to confirm that we have your contact details, email address etc correct.

For those wonderful members who have paid a couple of years in advance, you will only have a Booking Form for the Club Afternoon enclosed.

**In all cases, please contact our Membership & Ticket Secretary FIRST, before you make any internet payments!**

**Jan-Denise**  
**Phone: 522-8944**  
**Email: [jandenise@xtra.co.nz](mailto:jandenise@xtra.co.nz)**

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**When writing or updating your will, please consider a gift towards the ongoing operation of Auckland's historic Wurlitzer pipe organ.**

**The Organ is owned and operated by the Wurlitzer Organ Trust of Auckland, for the enjoyment and entertainment of our friends and supporters.**

**The Wurlitzer Organ Trust of Auckland is a registered Charitable Trust making donations tax deductible.**

**Our Charities Commission Number is 10966**

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## **CLOSING CHORDS!**

It seems that 2016 was a year of passings – we lost three wonderful key people in the latter part of the year.

**Dudley Neil**, WOTA Trustee and husband to our Secretary Carol.

**Carole Nicholson**, wife of Peter, both were former Trustees of WOTA. Carole held the position of Concert Ticket Secretary for many years and both she and Peter worked incredibly hard for the Trust even after their move to Thames.





Lastly, this will be a shock for many of you, dear **Peggy Hassall** passed away in her sleep in late November.

Peggy was one of those "special" people that roll up their sleeves and jump right in wanting to help wherever needed. In recent years she "womaned" the raffle table and brought in some very healthy income from her cajoling of patrons to buy a handful of tickets!

Both Peggy and her late husband Don, served as Trustees on the Wurlitzer Organ Trust of Auckland and in fact had been stalwarts of the Auckland Wurlitzer since the early 1980s.

We have lost a real icon of the Auckland theatre organ scene, one known to all our visiting artists, and a true force to be reckoned with.

*R.I.P Peggy.*



Our thoughts go out to the families of all those we have lost during the year.

## **DATES FOR YOUR DIARIES....**

### **CONCERT TICKET ENQUIRIES & RESERVATIONS**

**JAN NANCEKIVELL – PH: 522-8944**

**OR E-MAIL: JANDENISE@XTRA.CO.NZ**

**THE PLAYHOUSE THEATRE  
15 GLENDALE ROAD, GLEN EDEN**



### **SUNDAY MARCH 19 – *Friends of the Wurlitzer "Club Afternoon"***

Opening our 2017 year, is our popular Club Doo. This year including a light afternoon tea, lucky door prizes and a presentation called "Always a Tram in Sight" a picture and video tribute to Auckland trams.

[May – Negotiations underway for a visit by Melbourne entertainer Tony Fenelon](#)



**THE  
WURLITZER ORGAN TRUST  
of AUCKLAND**

**(REG. CHARITABLE TRUST No.10966)**

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**FRIENDS of the WURLITZER MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY  
and CONCERT TICKETS:**

Mrs Jan Nancekivell

PH: 522-8944



**SUPPORTING  
THE WURLITZER ORGAN TRUST  
OF AUCKLAND**