



PIPES

&

PERCUSSION

204
April
2024

**NEWSLETTER FOR
THE FRIENDS OF THE WURLITZER**

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

EDITOR: James Duncan - tremsoff@xtra.co.nz
MEMBERSHIP/TICKETS: jandenise@xtra.co.nz



UNDER THE AUSPICES OF
THE WURLITZER ORGAN TRUST of AUCKLAND
www.theatreorgans.com/wota

AWAKENING THE SLEEPING GIANT !!!

Hi there friends, we thought an update was well overdue as we are now well into 2024. Within this issue we feature an update from the Organ Team and other news.

We fully understand your frustration at the length of time this project is taking, but a reminder that if we could close the Playhouse Theatre for 3-4 months with Peter and Richard from Adelaide, putting their own lives on hold for that time, over here in Auckland working 5 days a week on the Wurlitzer organ install, then yes, it would be ready to play very quickly. This is not the case for us, the Playhouse is a very busy, well booked theatre, as are the Adelaide guys, so patience is our best friend as we soldier through the installation.

With the organ still not playing, we are waiving subscriptions to the *Friends of the Wurlitzer* once again for this year. However, the Trust still needs to keep itself legal and audited, plus cover insurance for the organ itself, so desperately depends on donations received from you all in lieu of a subscription. Remember please, all donations are Tax deductible, and we issue receipts for all donations over \$5.00.

+ + *The opinions expressed in this Newsletter* + +
are not necessarily those of The Wurlitzer Organ Trust of Auckland.

NEWS FROM THE PLAYHOUSE ORGAN CHAMBERS.....

Neil Warrington our Organ Curator reports....

All the wooden chests that hold the pipes are now winded and wired back to the relay. The tremulants are operating but will need to be adjusted to correct speed and depth.

Over the Playhouse Theatre's "black period" between late December and late January, we were able to spend some days working on the organ. We ran the main cable from the organ control relay in the blower room, out and across the stage floor to the organ console. The console was brought up to stage level, the main cable connected and with fingers-crossed, the organ blowers started up. You can imagine the huge cheer we gave when the correct pipe on the 16ft rank of pipes chosen, played from the console!! With one of the team in the organ chamber, we ran through the other stop tabs, playing the notes with the corresponding valves in the chests that did not have pipes installed, firing off correctly. This told us that the console and relay were talking to each other and from the relay, the low voltage charge was going to the correct chest and the correct note played. Believe me, this is a huge achievement.



John Swales has reinstated the power supply and back up batteries to the console combination action, and the stop tabs all pop up and down as per their setting on the thumb pistons. Another huge step forward. We now need to permanently install the Main Cable under the stage floor from relay to console.

Richard Larritt and Peter Hosking from Adelaide, are making another visit in July and time has been booked with the Playhouse Theatre. Before they arrive, we need to have built a support and bridge for the main metal wind trunking running from the wooden trunking to the regulators in the sub-chamber. We also need to complete the painstaking task of fixing the remaining ciphers and wind leaks in the chests, in readiness for the pipes to be installed.

ABOVE: One of the big Wind Regulators in the Sub Chamber with the wind lines running up to the pipe chests in the chambers above. (Neil Warrington)



ABOVE: Another view of the Sub Chamber with Tremulants and Wind Regulators which will all feed wind up to the pipe chests in the chambers on the floor above. (Neil Warrington)

During their next visit, Richard and Peter plan to install the pipes in the chests, wind up the Swell Shutters over the chamber openings and begin laying out and installing the percussion instruments and toy counter in the Percussion Chamber.

\$50K NEEDED TO COMPLETE THE JOB..

To enable us to complete the final stage of the organ installation, a further \$50k is required. It should be noted, that when we started this project, airfares between Australia and New Zealand were very reasonable, but when we were finally able to bring Richard and Peter over from Adelaide post-Covid, airfares had gone completely rogue, and these alone have taken a huge bite out of the funds previously raised.

Applications have now been sent to the NZ Lottery Commission, the American Theatre Organ Society's Endowment Grant, and the local Trusts Community Foundation. Sadly, almost immediately, the TTCF declined the application citing their choice "to support other organisations or projects in this funding round".

However, as we already mentioned, the Wurlitzer Organ Trust of Auckland still needs to keep itself solvent, and this is where your donations will really save the day.

MAKING A DONATION TO WOTA

**Please call/email Jan to advise of your payment
so a receipt can be issued**

PH: 522-8944 / jandenise@xtra.co.nz

INTERNET BANK PAYMENT

Account Name: The Wurlitzer Organ Trust of Auckland

Account Number: 12-3045-0449278-00

Quote the following:

PARTICULARS: **Your Name** / **REFERENCE:** **Donation**



David Fletcher – March 2004 Dominion Post

WELCOME TO NEW WOTA TRUSTEE

With the passing of former Trustee John Kleingeld, we are thrilled that another FOTW member has expressed interest in joining WOTA and helping where she can. It is a pleasure to now welcome long-time supporter **Raewyn Reade** to the Wurlitzer Organ Trust of Auckland.

PLAYHOUSE THEATRE OPEN-DAY

On Saturday 2 March, the *Glen Eden Playhouse Theatre Trust* held an "Open Day" to enable members of the public to visit the theatre and see what is on offer. *The Playhouse Theatre Incorporated*, the resident theatre group who present regular live performances on stage, were on hand to show their props workshops, wardrobe department, which is open for people to hire, and some of their younger team of actors demonstrated some of the facilities that the Playhouse has for "live" theatre.

Of course, WOTA was there too, thanks to Neil Warrington, Bill Ridge, and James Duncan. We had the organ chambers open for inspection, the console up and connected to the small number of playing 16ft pipes, and during the morning, the "Pops on Pipes" video was played on a laptop computer, enjoyed by the locals who took the opportunity to visit the theatre and passed by the organ console. It was great to see some of our own FOTW members supporting the event, thanks to an email sent out to advise of the Open Day.



LOOKING TO THE FUTURE OF FOTW SUBSCRIPTIONS

When we first set up the *Friends of the Wurlitzer* (FOTW) mailing list, the subscriptions charged covered the cost of printing and then posting 6-8 newsletters each year. We now find, in these recent times, the printing and postal charges far exceed the \$20.00 annual subscription we once charged.

Today, most people have email now, and have their monthly power and phone invoices emailed through to them. So, moving with the times, WOTA needs to make changes as to how we manage the FOTW newsletters. Can we email yours now?

When the organ is back up and playing and we use our newsletters once again to promote coming shows, the annual subscription will need to increase to meet the printing and high postal charges. Those who are happy to have their newsletters emailed out, may not incur a subscription charge.

This will not take effect until the organ is back in action, so give some thought as to how you'd like your newsletter delivered moving forward – either printed with a Subscription charge or emailed out at possibly no charge.

FOR YOUR LISTENING PLEASURE

One of our past Resident Organists from our Hollywood Cinema days, Denis McCombe, is in the process of down-sizing his collection of L.P.s, cassette tapes and compact discs. Denis says he is happy to pass these pre-loved gems on to a new home and would just ask for the postage to be covered.

3 x Reginald Dixon at Tower.

On Cassette tape

2 x Robert Wolfe and Nicholas Martin - Wurlitzer organs unnamed

Society Gold - Ann Holmes/Denis Palmistra/Peter Parkinson/Ron Boyce

1 x John Atwell at Malvern Town Hall - Compton

Nigel Ogden - From Stage and Screen -Wurlitzer unnamed.

1 x Unnamed organists - Wurlitzer

Jim Riggs - Grand Lake Wurlitzer

1 x 5 different organists at different Wurlitzers

"Trinity Sounds" - Arnold Loxam - COS Northern Wurlitzer

1 x Chris Powell at Hollywood

2 x Jelani Eddington plays Leroy Anderson. Wurlitzer

"Black and White" - Ray Thornley and Tony Fenelon

There are also Electronic Organs as follows.

2 copies of "Mighty Wurlitzer" unnamed - Phil Kelsall.

1 x "Hooked on Hammond" unnamed organist

2 x Klaus Wunderlich on Hammond.

I also have a number of "home recorded" cassettes which someone might find interesting.

Organists include: 1. Margaret Hall. 2.Jimmy Leach. 3.William Davies, Phil Kelsall and Douglas Reeve all on one cassette, 4. Richard Smithers, 5.Stanley Wyllie 2 broadcasts from Ritz, Belfast and 6. Tony Fenelon, "Beyond the Organ " (unnamed) and interviews including Wurlitzer, Melbourne State Theatre.

If interested, please contact Denis direct;
PHONE: (07) 867 7933 / or email: andendunedin@xtra.co.nz

IN APPRECIATION....

As you all know, we waived Annual Subscriptions last year, in lieu of a donation, and once again, members have been so generous in helping the Trust continue and see the organ installation to its completion. To the following good people, please accept our heart-felt thanks;

N. Brownlee
T & H Cheeseman
S. Crawley
P. Franklin
M. Grace
D & S. Hamp
J. Hipperson
J. Holdaway
J. Hunter
J.F. Jones

B. King
C. Lamdin
B. Lawson
L & M. Mathews
G. McGhie
V. McMurtry
P & S. Phillips
D. Rawlinson
R. Reade
D. Richmond

V. Richmond
O. Saran
J. Swales
B. Teague
P. Wallace
J & G. Wills
G. Wingate
A. Wolsenholm

Substantial donations were also received from;

Ken Double (USA Organist)

M.Massey

J & G. Wills

***Can you help keep WOTA going?
Please consider making a donation to assist
with the Annual Audit costs and
insurance of our Wurlitzer pipe organ.***





**THE
WURLITZER ORGAN TRUST
of AUCKLAND**

(REG. CHARITABLE TRUST No.10966)

Visit us at:

www.theatreorgans.com/wota

CHAIRMAN:	Mr James Duncan <i>Concert Manager/Newsletter Editor</i>	PH: 027 2525706
SECRETARY:	Mrs Carol Neill	PH: 575-8645
TREASURER:	Mr John Palmer	PH: (07) 855-3267
PROJECT LEADER ORGAN REINSTALLATION:	Mr Neil Warrington	PH: 828-4934
TRUSTEES:	Mrs Margaret Cox Ms Tina McNally Mrs Raewyn Reade Mr Bill Ridge	PH: 440-9984 PH: 828-0963 PH: 846-3555 PH: 636-9579

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**FRIENDS of the WURLITZER MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY
and CONCERT TICKETS:** Mrs Jan Denise PH: 522-8944



SUPPORTING THE WURLITZER ORGAN TRUST of AUCKLAND