

PIPES & PERCUSSION

207
April-May
2026

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

www.wurlitzerorganauckland.com

Dear Friends, as we move towards the end of the installation of the Wurlitzer organ in the Playhouse Theatre, we start a new chapter in our Wurlitzer's life. So it seems appropriate to give our newsletter masthead a fresh look in readiness for the organ's grand return to the Auckland music scene.

The relaunch of the ex-Regent Theatre Wurlitzer organ at the Playhouse Theatre will be a true Celebration of Music on Saturday evening 31 October and Sunday afternoon 1st November, with USA Organist Jelani Eddington. More details to follow – meantime, mark your calendars!

Meantime still a heap of "organ tech work" to be completed. To assist Neil Warrington and his team, Melbourne organist Scott Harrison will be in town in June for a three-day work program and has kindly offered to give the organ a musical workout once the work is completed. So, thanks to funding support from one of our members, we are having a Supper Evening for *Friends of the Wurlitzer* members at the Playhouse Theatre on **Friday 19th June @ 7 pm**. Ticket details inside this issue.

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

THE WURLITZER ORGAN TRUST of AUCKLAND
Invite you to our

**FRIENDS OF THE WURLITZER
SUPPER EVENING**

Friday June 19 @ 7.pm

**Playhouse Theatre, 15 Glendale Rd, Glen Eden
Doors open 6.30pm**

*Enjoy the sounds of our
Wurlitzer Pipe Organ in its new home
with an hour of music from
Melbourne organist Scott Harrison.*

Join us for a cuppa after this mini-show

PRIVATE FUNCTION FOR FOTW MEMBERS & FRIENDS

\$10.00 each

With thanks to funding sponsorship for this show

***Pre-Paid Bookings Only -- NO DOOR SALES!
Attendees will be checked in on arrival.***

**Please call/email Jan to organise your payment for the event
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:** **Club Doo**

Bookings Close Wednesday June 17
NO DOOR SALES

FROM THE TREASURER'S DESK.....

Friends, our annual financial audit is currently underway and once complete, will be uploaded to the Charities Commission website for the world to see. The insurance on the organ for the coming year is soon to be paid, which will leave our finances dangerously low. With no subs being charged again this year, we need your help.

We are obviously not able to use funds granted towards the Organ Project, but the Trust still needs to sustain the monthly charges of running a Charitable Trust, and so once again, desperately need your help. We can't charge you a subscription while the organ is still not playing and there are no shows to enjoy, so we once again seek your help with donations to cover the administration costs, totalling some \$7k!!

**Please call/email Jan to advise of your payment
BEFORE making that 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

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Quote the following:

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

IN APPRECIATION

We waived Annual Subscriptions last year, in lieu of a donation to aid the Trust with the administration costs and once again, members have been so generous in helping the Trust continue and see the organ installation to its completion. The following good people have helped to keep WOTA going. Please accept our heart-felt thanks;

Mr S. Bennett
Mr D. Billing
Mr D. Blomfield
Mr & Mrs J. & B. Briand
Mr N. Brownlee
Mr T. Cheeseman
Mrs Isobel Clarke
Mr D. Clouston
Mr P. Fielder
Mr P. Franklin
M.J. Grobden

Mrs S. Hamp
Mr & Mrs L. & J. Howe
Mr H. Iseli
Mr J.F. Jones
Mr B. King
Mr C.Lamdin
Rosie. Langabeer
Mr B. Lawson
J.Layzell
Mr G. McGhie
Mr & Mrs L & M. Mathews

Mr W. Oldfield
Mr & Mrs P. & S. Phillips
Mrs V. Richmond
Mr Brian Stevens
Miss Charlotte Taylor
Mr M. Thompson
Mr M. White
Mr G.Wingate
Mr & Mrs G J & M Wills
Mrs A. Wolstenholme
Mr Colin Zeff

Please remember, only make a payment to the WOTA Bank Account after you have advised Jan Denise that a payment is being made. If she does not know to look out for your kind donation, she will not know to provide you with a receipt.

IS SHE DRUNK??

Most of you will know from our last Club gathering, that our Membership Secretary and Show Bookings Organiser, Jan Denise, went into hospital mid-last year with some heart issues and while there, suffered a massive stroke! She could not speak, swallow or eat, and when I visited, she had a feeding tube inserted up her nose into her stomach – it was the stuff of nightmares for her and family.

Well, she is a fighter and managed to scramble her way back to 80% “normal”, coming home just in time to celebrate her 84th birthday. However, she has been left with minimal feeling in her right hand and speech not quite perfect – so when talking with her, you do need to listen to what she is saying. One member who called her recently, claimed she was drunk at 11am in the morning, this was far from the truth!!

Jan desperately wants to keep supporting the Trust and maintain the friendships she has made with you, our members, over the years. Jan will continue to help with the bookings for the coming Friends of the Wurlitzer Supper Evening in June, so if you call her, remember to listen carefully as she speaks, we can all understand her perfectly, and with patience, I know you will too.

WE NEED YOU !!

The Wurlitzer Organ Trust of Auckland is now looking for expressions of interest from members (or others) to join the Trust, particularly looking to cover roles such as Treasurer and Secretary.

Please email: wotaauckland@gmail.com for more info.

NEIL WARRINGTON - OUR ORGAN CURATOR REPORTS.....

In November last year, Adelaide's Richard Larritt and Peter Hosking's final work program was undertaken, with them formerly handing the Organ over to us – their brief was to get the organ installed and playing – and these wonderful guys delivered and so much more!!.

We now have all percussions installed and working more or less, except for the single tap xylophone and toy counter, bass drum and cymbals. There is still work to be done to get the sleigh bells and reiterating xylophone to work correctly. The rubber cloth on the motors has stiffened over time through ten years of no movement and if we are not able to soften it, might need to be replaced.

The harp needs to have some of the hammers replaced. I have been able to source doweling and I will ask John Swales to build a jig to make this a simpler task.

We had significant issues with the tremulants for the Tuba and the Tibia. These had previously been rebuilt but had been rebuilt incorrectly. Richard spent quite some time rebuilding both tremulants which has improved them significantly.



It became obvious early on that the Christie built Harp would never have fitted in the Percussion Chamber along with the other units, not forgetting of course the shutter actions take up their fair share of space.

So the Harp is now installed in the Main Chamber adjacent the 8' String basses.

Neil Warrington

Work still to be done.

- Install platform above the crossover for the unenclosed percussions. Paul Jones from Playhouse has offered to help with this
- Install single tap xylophone, toy counter, cymbals and bass drum, on the platform once built
- Buy and install motor for the piano console
- Have the piano assessed as to whether it needs further work
- Connect subwoofer to the Artisan system for the "digital" bass voices
- Run the main cable under the stage to permanently connect console to organ
- Design and build wiring system for one button start for the organ
- Continue with snagging work which we will need to attend to. For example, multiple ciphers on the Trumpet. These may settle down, otherwise we will need to readjust the pallet springs.

- Orchestral Oboe has a blown motor at the bottom end.
- Clarinet has a cipher at middle C. Possibly a pallet has come off.
- There are still several dead notes which we will need to attend to. We are gradually working our way through these.

The Playhouse Theatre is one busy venue, and Neil is struggling to get some windows of opportunity to get in for a series of days to a week, to accomplish some of this work. Having Scott Harrison over in June is a Godsend for us – back in the Hollywood days, we had a number of work programs on the organ completed with Scott’s input and then, hearing the fruits of his labour as he performed a show on the Wurlitzer. I am certain you will all be wowed in June this year.

Neil Warrington setting up the Cathedral Chimes in the Percussion Chamber with the ChrysoGlott in the centre foreground.



So, lots to get done before the opening night of the Wurlitzer’s return to the Auckland music scene in late October this year!!

We have just been advised that the *American Theatre Organ Society* has given us permission to use the remaining funds they provided for the pipe work installation, on other items. We are thrilled to be able to move forward on these....

- Install the remote startup system for the organ blowers - \$2500
- Get the Wurlitzer piano down to the Hamilton Piano Company for refurb - \$7000
- Cover some of the costs of Scott Harrison’s June work program - \$1200

MARK YOR DIARIES'.....



The Regent now Playhouse Theatre Wurlitzer pipe organ returns to the Auckland music scene over the weekend of 31st October & 1st November With the USA's Jelani Eddington at the console.

Did you receive this newsletter in the post?

Could you help the Trust save on the rising costs of printing and postage by having the newsletter emailed to you?

Please let Jan Denise know so we can change you over to our email list.



Check us out on



And our website www.wurlitzerorganauckland.com



**THE
WURLITZER ORGAN TRUST
of AUCKLAND**

(REG. CHARITABLE TRUST No.10966)

Visit us at:

www.wurlitzerorganauckland.com

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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