



PIPES

&

PERCUSSION

205
November
2024

**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

SHE SINGS !!!

As 2024 is fast coming to a close, it is exciting to report that a small part of our Wurlitzer pipe organ is singing once again. During the most recent visit by our organ technicians from Adelaide, they began to install pipes in the first of the organ's fifteen ranks. The breakthrough came when the blowers were started up and wind filled the chests containing the pipes. Peter Hosking went to the console and began to play. The sound tumbling out of the organ chambers was heartwarming and thrilling. Even better, it could be clearly heard in the Playhouse Theatre foyer, removing all doubts that some had had, that the chamber openings would be inadequate to enable the sound to get out into the theatre.

Neil Warrington and his team have plenty of work ahead of them as they deal with the on-going wind leaks and ciphers in these chests, working through magnets and valves. More details inside this issue.....

With the Playhouse fully booked out to year's end, the Adelaide boys are booked for another visit early next year to push this project closer to its completion.

*++ 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....

Richard Larritt and Peter Hosking's last visit leaves us with the organ being playable. What a huge achievement it was, when Peter Hosking sat at the console and began to play – albeit only 6 ranks! Pop into our Facebook page (Wurlitzer Organ Trust of Auckland) or our new website **www.wurlitzerorganauckland.com** to see and *hear* our Wurlitzer singing in the Playhouse for the very first time!



We now have 6 ranks working, these are the flue ranks. We have wind trunking running to the percussion chamber and to the backstage area, beside the Percussion Chamber, where unclosed percussions will be installed.

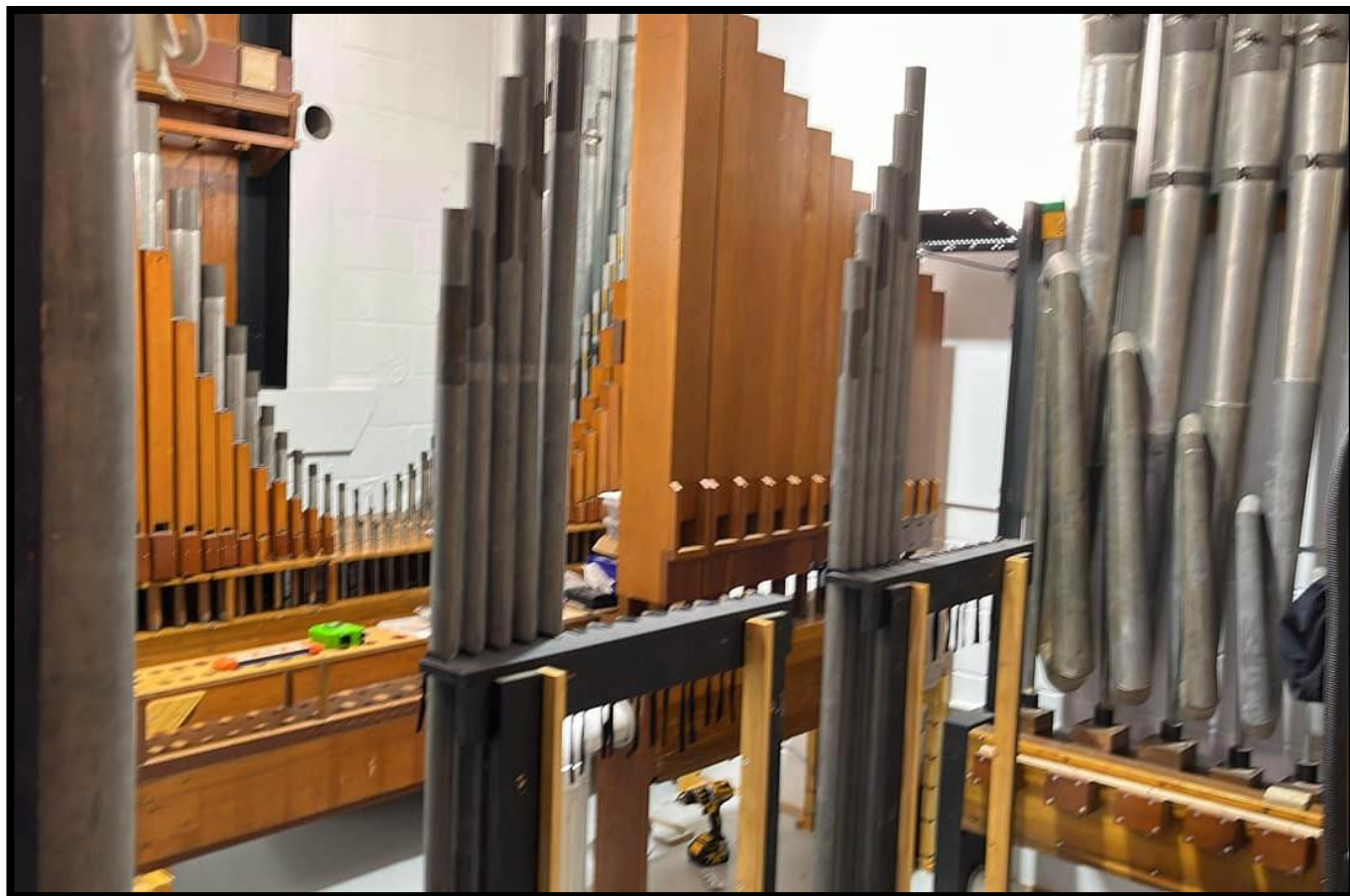
The ranks of pipes that are installed were tuned and are now playable albeit very "raw". This has allowed us to prove that the organ is capable of reaching the theatre, all the way to the back

Future work: On the next visit Richard, Peter and I intend to strip down all of the reed pipes (Trumpet, Clarinet, Oboe etc) of which there are hundreds, and clean each individual reed before they go back into the organ. We can in the meantime, commence installing percussions. Unfortunately, the theatre is very booked up until the end of the year so it's rather a matter of dovetailing in where we can. We can also continue to work on wind leaks and cyphers which will continue for quite some time.

The main blower is producing far more wind volume than we require but it is not producing sufficient pressure. It is producing 13.5 inches of wind, and we require a minimum of 15 at the Tuba rank. 17 inches at the blower is sufficient but 19 would be ideal. Peter has suggested a variable speed drive which is electronic to increase

the blower speed without increasing the current that the motor draws, they currently have one of these on the blower at the Capri Theatre to slow it down. I am looking into this, and it will require that the motor has sufficient capacity to be sped up.

Richard and Peter are looking to spend 2 weeks here from the 1st February to the 14th February - those two weeks have been booked with the theatre.



ABOVE: Some of the now playing ranks of pipes. (Neil Warrington)

A VERY HAPPY TREASURER REPORTS.....

John Palmer writes....

It would seem that in August, things "funding" began to shine in our favour at long last. First, the NZ Lottery Grants Board (Lotto) advised that our application request for funding, aligned with Lottery Grants Board outcomes and the Committee's Lottery Environment and Heritage priorities and funding criteria. The Committee had chosen to fully fund our request with a grant of \$50,840.00 being offered.

Hot on the heels of that wonderful news came an email from the American Theatre Organ Society's Endowment Fund Committee, to advise us that our application was successful, and that ATOS had granted us USD\$13,000 (that's NZD\$21,000), to complete the installation of our organ. This, together with the Lotto funding, not only allows us to do that, but also to spruce up the Wurlitzer piano which is in dire need of some TLC.

It's been nearly 10 years of hard work on this project but as a Trust, we've been meticulous in financial and technical dealings, and I believe it is now paying off. To our *Friends of the Wurlitzer*, staying with us, together with your continued support, is not to be underestimated. You have contributed in a major way to the success of this project. have a look at some figures I put together...

Total funding for the Organ (including removal and storage) from 2015 to 2024 to date is \$371,114.

- **19%** of this came from *Friends of the Wurlitzer*.
- Compare Western Districts Community Foundation at (WDCF) 27%
- Lotto 22%.

When we include Donations to keep the Trust going, the FOTW contributions are;

- **FOTW 30%**,
- WDCF 23%
- Lotto 19%.

Total expenditure on the Organ (including removal and storage) 2015 to 2024 to date \$272,941

IN APPRECIATION

As you all know, we waived Annual Subscriptions this year, in lieu of a donation to aid the Trust with the administration costs such as auditing of accounts, insurance of the organ etc, and once again, members have been so generous in helping the Trust continue and see the organ installation to its completion. Even though the year is well advanced, the following good people have continued to donate. Please accept our heart-felt thanks;

Mr L. & J. Boyd
Mr A. Burns
Mrs Isobel Clarke
Mr Terry Clements
Mr & Mrs Terry & Louise
Creighton
Mr J Fryer
Mr D. Handley

Mr R. Kilroy
Mr B.King
Mr C.Lamdin
Mrs A. McCarrison
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Mr. Ian Snell
Mr John Stallard

Mr Brian Stevens
Miss Charlotte Taylor
Mrs E. Vujnovich
Mr George Watt
Mr J.K. Webster
Mrs J.Wilcox
Mr & Mrs G J & M Wills

WE STILL NEED YOUR DONATIONS TO HELP COVER RUNNING COSTS FOR WOTA

**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
Account Number: 12-3045-0449278-00

Quote the following:

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

TIME FOR A NEW WEBSITE

Our Hon Treasurer, John Palmer spent the first part of the year preparing Funding Applications, three in fact. As you've just read, that all paid off. So, with the installation fully funded and no Shows to work on, yet, John looked around for something else to do. That something was a new website. Creating a website has been on our bucket list for years. Do we still have bucket lists, or is that passe now?

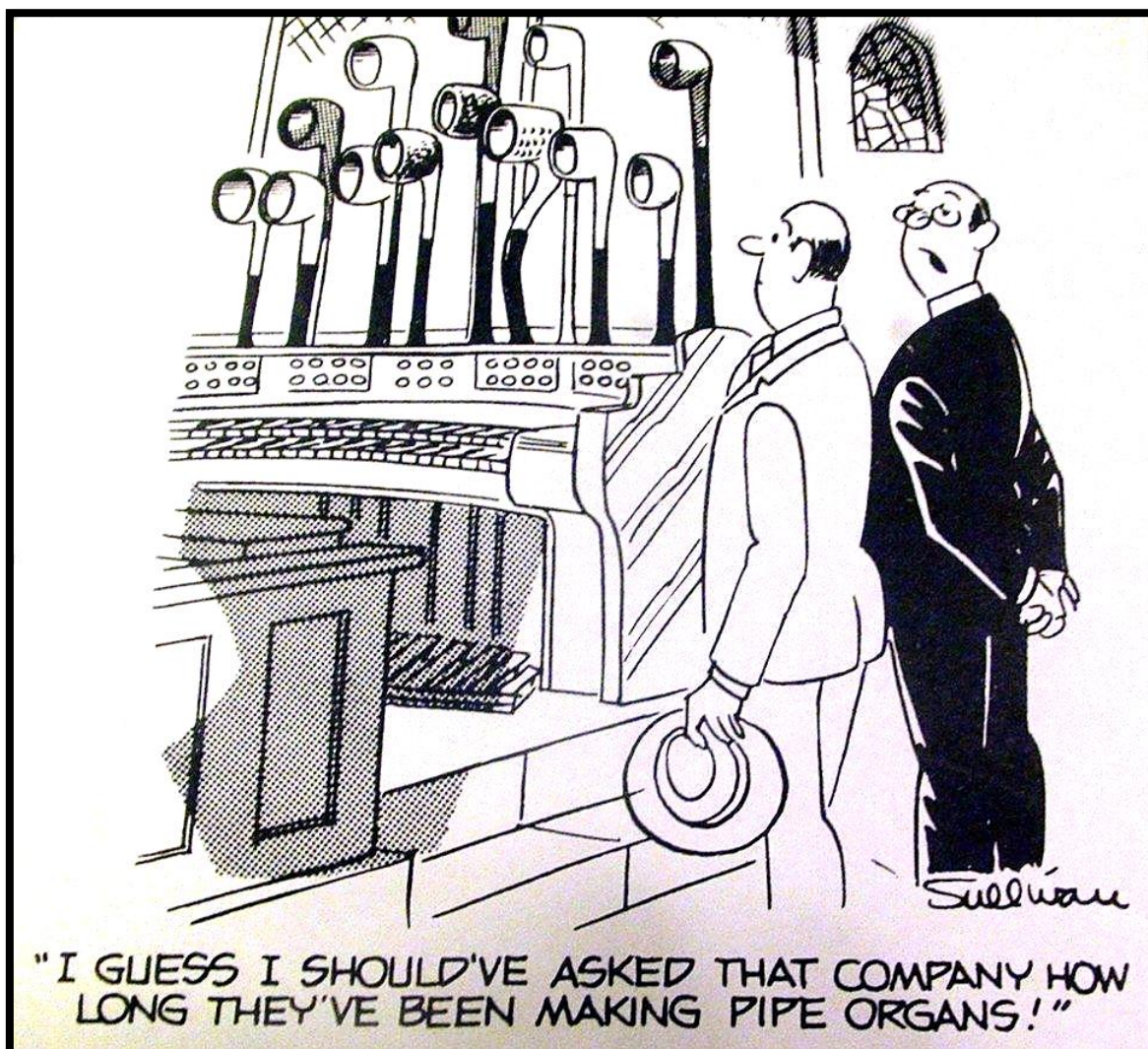
John reports.....

The old website was passed its use by date. It was difficult to update and the tech behind it was ancient by today's standards.

I have used a Website Builder called WIX [www.wix.com]. It is highly recommended and is also successfully used by the Auckland Art Deco Society.

Our new website's aims are twofold. First to market the organ and generate interest from the public. Secondly, as an historical record. You'll find just about everything you need to know about our Wurlitzer pipe organ there.

Check it out for yourself www.wurlitzerorganauckland.com



CLOSING CHORDS

In July your scribe was saddened to receive a phone call from Ann McCombe to advise that her husband Dennis, had passed away and a private service had been held.

For some years **Dennis McCombe** had been one of our team of organists at the Hollywood Cinema and his shows were always well rehearsed and presented. With his Irish background, he always finished his shows off with a lively Irish jig, the perfect way to take the console down.

Go well Dennis on your next journey.....



Then in late September we learnt of the passing of one of our hard-working supporters, **Ann Johnston**, after a period of illness.

You will all know Ann, she, with husband Ian, would show you to your seats at the Hollywood and in recent years, the Playhouse Theatre. Then after the show, with best-buddy Margaret Massey at her side, Ann would be helping serve afternoon tea.

It is people like Ann that give so tirelessly to the cause and without whose work, organisations such as ours could not function.

The service to celebrate Ann's life was held at Davis Funeral Home in Henderson and was beautifully conducted by celebrant Alice Worsley, a former name from Auckland's radio past.

The **ORGAN** ♦ as an added ♦ **ATTRACTION**

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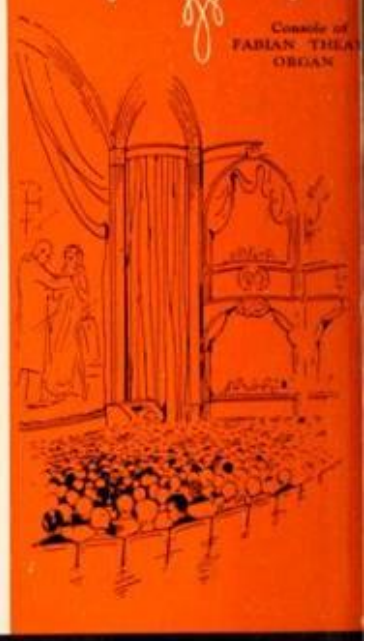
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and CONCERT TICKETS:**

Mrs Jan Denise

PH: 522-8944



SUPPORTING THE WURLITZER ORGAN TRUST of AUCKLAND