

Biographies of Forum Panellists and Seminar Presenters:

Allan Nagy has been a member of the Palmerston North Operatic Society (PNOS) – now known as Abbey Musical Theatre (AMT) - since 1980, working predominantly in the background. He started as a Stage Hand and joined their Executive in 1983. He is the current President of AMT, a role he has held for the last three years. His passion for theatre has seen him turn a hand to almost every aspect of musical theatre and to theatre as a whole (excluding singing as his singing voice has firmly been regarded as belonging to “one of the crew”). Some of the roles he has undertaken in theatrical productions include Floor Sweeper, Stage Hand, Flyman, Lighting Operator/Designer, Set Designer/Builder, Stage Manager, Technical Director, Financial Controller, Production Manager and a few more that he can't think of (or should not mention) at the moment. Throughout his time with PNOS/AMT he has learnt many aspects of theatre and has spent many hours dealing with the trials and tribulations of running a successful voluntary operation. In 2006 Allan was awarded an MTNZ Merit Award. In his other life (the few hours he spends outside theatre) he is a Regional Manager for Turners Transport, a Division of Turners and Growers.

Andrew Comrie has been secretary of North Shore Music Theatre since 2006 and heavily involved in Musical Theatre in Zone 1 since 2004 working on shows such as 'Beauty and the Beast', 'Seussical', 'FAME!', '42nd Street' and 'Footloose' both on and off the stage. During the day he works as an AV Engineer and Programmer for Connect New Zealand designing, building and managing AV projects. As the secretary for North Shore Music Theatre, a production manager, stage manager, lighting designer, sound designer and performer (very occasionally) he has a solid knowledge of what makes a show and a society tick.

Chris Zampese has been involved in various aspects of Musical Theatre for the last 10 years. Starting on stage in a Musikmakers production of “Joseph and his Technicolor Dreamcoat’ Chris has gone on to fill many more roles, both on and off the stage. He has tried his hand at set construction, crewing and set design as well as being a member of the Musikmakers committee. In recent years Chris has devoted his time to producing posters, flyers and programmes for Musikmakers productions. He has been involved in the IT industry for several years and studied E-Commerce at Waikato University. He has recently designed website for Musikmakers, HMT productions and Rotorua Musical Theatre and is currently redesigning the MTNZ website. Chris is passionate about IT and the benefits an online presence can bring, but also understands the challenges and limitations that face many theatrical societies around the country.

Conal McKone re-ignited his interest in musical theatre in 1998 as part of the backstage crew for Wellington Musical Theatre's production of West Side Story on the fly rail and moving the set trucks. With his interest aroused, he joined Porirua Little Theatre and was an Aggie boy for their 1999 production of The Best Little Whore House in Texas. Later in 1999, Conal joined the WMT executive team and has been on their executive since then has been their president for the past three years and WMT's Zone 3 delegate for the past 5 years. His passion for theatre administration and production has seen Conal involved with a number of other society productions for Porirua Little Theatre, Capital Theatre Productions, Heretaunga Players, Gilbert & Sullivan and Club Garibaldi, in addition to numerous (and often multiple) production team roles for all Wellington Musical Theatre productions since 1999. He has also involved himself further by entering into event management for Wellington's Stadium Spectacular, the International 7's. Outside theatre, Conal is a Business Support Team Leader (State) for IAG New Zealand Limited leading a team that under takes specialised system processing work. He also is heavily involved with work social activities that include staff functions, Wellington Round the Bays, and community activities with Volunteer Wellington. When time permits, he lists his other interests as spectating sports, swimming and lately landscaping his garden.

Dale Henderson works at Baycourt Theatre, as the Manager of Events Tauranga, and was a member of the Tauranga City Council Corporate Health and Safety Committee. Dale is currently the President of EVANZ (The Entertainment Venues Association of NZ), and has previously served on the ETNZ (Entertainment Technology NZ) Executive and was President of Tauranga Musical Theatre. Starting in the industry as a theatre technician, and moving through his professional career to be Manager of Events Tauranga, he has a very good understanding of the diversity of the Events Industry and Venue Management.

David Bosworth is a specialised theatre rigger and has worked on many productions across New Zealand, Australia and the UK. David's theatre career began with stage management at Christchurch's Court Theatre, and then with shows in the West End of London, Pitlochry Festival Theatre in Scotland, Mercury Theatre and NZ Opera in Auckland. David then moved into stage rigging work and this saw him working on shows such as CATS, Aspects of Love, Buddy and JC Superstar. Currently the Touring Mechanist for the consortium productions of Miss Saigon, David has also completed mechanist work on tours of Les

Miserables, 42nd Street and West Side Story. David is part owner of the Light Site, a stage lighting and production company, supplying lighting and consultancy services to the theatre (both large and small societies and professional companies), entertainment and corporate conference industries—www.lightsite.co.nz

Geoff Turkington has worked for companies like Walt Disney Special Events as Casting/Resource Manager and the Melbourne Fringe Festival as it's Artistic Director. He has managed two theatres and designed/staged hundreds of large-scale multi-media productions for major corporations throughout Australasia. Geoff's first passion, however, will always be theatre. He has directed, choreographed and/or designed over 20 stage shows including Grease, Cabaret, Chicago, Jesus Christ Superstar, Joseph, Blood Brothers, Return to the Forbidden Planet and Rent. For the past five years Geoff has working for SKYCITY Auckland - initially managing its Entertainment and Events Department but most recently as Manager of Sky Tower.

Helen Horsnell has been involved with musical theatre for over 30 years. She moved from onstage back row of chorus, to give most things a go. After shifting to Dunedin in 1998, she got involved in backstage work and soon moved up to stage manager. Helen's big chance came two nights before opening night for "42nd Street" when she first got to call a show. Nothing has been as nerve racking since, but she enjoys the challenge that each new show brings. Helen is currently the Zone Five representative on the MTNZ Executive.

Ian Reid's first involvement with theatre was in a high school musical in the UK. Born in Glasgow, Ian moved to Napier, New Zealand in 1960 with his parents and two sisters and has lived there ever since. Ian joined the Napier Operatic Society in 1967 whilst serving an electrical apprentice with the Napier City Council, starting as lighting board operator for 'Little Mary Sunshine' and moving on to props for later productions. Ian served on the executive committee of Napier Operatic for some 25 years and has been awarded Life Membership of Napier Operatic and a MTNZ Merit Award in 2003 for services to musical theatre. Ian's involvement with the arts is a fulltime one; he is manager of Napier's Municipal Theatre and the Century Theatre and he is also the current President of MTNZ.

Karen Ruske comes from a strong technical training background in Jazz and Ballet. She is an Examiner for the American Jazz Dance Affiliation and a Registered BBO Ballet Teacher. She has performed and taught throughout the Country. While living in Dunedin she became sought after as a Choreographer and worked with a number of Production and Theatre Companies. Now based in Christchurch, Karen has worked with Whitebait Productions, Christchurch City Council and Artist Doctors to name just a few. This year she has taught Musical Theatre Workshops down in Invercargill. As a Freelance Choreographer, Adjudicator and Examiner, Karen has a very busy timetable and just to add to the list she has just launched an Entertainment Agency and looks forward to highlighting the great talent that is out there.

Kate Ghent's debut in front of the curtain was in 1969 when she starred in a ballet panto as a tree and her first job behind the curtain was after school as assistant table setter for MATS theatre restaurants in the late 1970s, in Masterton. Greatest claim to fame was playing the totally nude Japanese prostitute in Ken Russell's Madam Butterfly for the 1994 Festival of the Arts - dress rehearsal really did take on a whole new meaning. Over the last 20 years, Kate has tended to be involved more in the backstage areas of the theatre and production for Wellington societies and various festivals, after returning from her big OE in 1989, pretty much doing anything that doesn't require climbing a ladder or wires and electricity and has often appeared on stage in various "females of ill-repute" roles – ah, the life of an alto, with her most recent onstage role as Carmen Bernstein in the NZ Premiere of Curtains. In her corporate career Kate has worked for companies such as Lion Breweries, Castrol, Lotteries, NZRU and Saatchis, in EA, conference and event roles and currently also works part time for RNZ2011 – the Rugby World Cup.

Jane Keller has lived in New Zealand for 22 years. She trained at The Ohio State University where she received a Bachelor of Music, Bachelor of Music Education and a Master of Vocal Pedagogy. Although classically trained and with over 30 years of operatic experience, Jane's real loves are musical theatre, cabaret and jazz. Her cabaret shows "Bigger Is Better" and "Do I Have To Get Naked" received rave reviews in NZ and the U.S. Jane received critical acclaim for her latest cabaret shows, "So Many Disappointed Men" and "Boomers Behaving Badly" both of which debuted in the St James Cabaret series. Jane has a large private singing studio in Wellington and she teaches singing at Toi Whakaari: NZ National Drama School. Jane teaches at The NZ National Singing School and travels the country doing her one woman shows and teaching workshops.

Lesley Reid first became involved in musical theatre in 1962 in Timaru, where she performed in numerous shows, both in the Operatic and Repertory branches of the South Canterbury Drama League. She became involved with Napier Operatic Society in the early 1980s working in the kitchen and front of house areas at the Tabard, and assisting with dressing for "Annie" when her daughter was in the cast. She has performed on stage in numerous productions for NOS, including both productions of Les Miserables, Chess, My Fair Lady, and many of their Tabard Theatre Productions. She has been Production Manager a number of times, and worked in most areas back stage. She spent four years as an executive member of the Society, four years as vice-president, and then six years as president, retiring at the end of March 2006. She completed her year as past president, and spent some of 2007 assisting with "Beauty", before having to take some time out to care for her late husband Tony. During her time on the Executive of NOS, she was the Society's representative on the Consortium Committee, which was an invaluable experience, and a vehicle which is imperative if societies in this country are going to continue to produce big budget shows. In Lesley's life away from Theatre, she is the Financial Administrator for a sharebroking firm in Hastings. Lesley is the Vice President of Musical Theatre New Zealand.

Luke Di Somma has just returned from New York, where he graduated from New York University's prestigious Tisch School of the Arts with a Master of Fine Arts from the Graduate Musical Theatre Writing Programme. A Fulbright scholar, he is increasingly in demand as a musical director, composer and conductor, and is fast establishing himself as one of New Zealand's most exciting young musical theatre talents. Luke has worked for Showbiz Christchurch, The Court Theatre, Leap of Faith Productions and Invercargill Musical Theatre among others. He has conducted the Auckland Philharmonic, Christchurch Symphony, the NZSM Orchestra and the National Youth Orchestra in rehearsals and workshops. His musical direction credits include SWEENEY TODD, MY FAIR LADY, LES MISERABLES, THE FULL MONTY, RENT, HAIR, WHO WANTS TO BE A HUNDRED?, THE HOT SHOE SHUFFLE, THE WITCHES OF EASTWICK, LITTLE SHOP OF HORRORS and THE FIEND, for which he wrote the score. Future projects include SPAMALOT for Showbiz Christchurch, mounting a reading of THE WAY LIFE SHOULD BE, as well as beginning work on a new musical.

Ngaire Holmes' involvement in musical theatre began in Southland many years ago. Her first memory of performing was when she was five years old singing a duet in the local school concert. She was brought up in a large musical family in the little town of Tuatapere. Ngaire became a member of Western Southland Musical Theatre in the 1960's and from there to Hamilton when she became a member of Musikmakers Hamilton in 1994. She performed onstage for Musikmakers in a number of shows and then due to ill health had to turn her hand to the production roles. She has been Production Manager for many top shows for Musikmakers and Hamilton Musical Theatre over the last 15 years including, Miss Saigon, Les Mis, My Fair Lady, Fiddler on the Roof to name a few. Ngaire held the role of Secretary for two years and President for four years and is the current Treasurer of the Riverlea Theatre Board of Management a position she has now held for ten years. Ngaire has worked for the past 17 years as an Office Manager for Stiles and Hooker Architects and Engineers. She is the current Zone 2 Rep on MTNZ and relishes the daily challenges that this role places her in. She enjoys the fellowship of likeminded people within the Musical Theatre family.

Peta Spooner is the Director of Wakatu Dance Theatre and the Peta Spooner Academy Of Dance and is a Musical Theatre Dance Examiner. She is a member of I.D.T.A. (International Dance Teachers Association) and an Examiner Fellow in Classical Ballet, Modern and Freestyle and has a Dance Exercise Diploma (Hons). Peta has had 44 years teaching and directing and has been involved with Stage Challenge for schools. She took professional dancers to Finland with Richard Nunns in 1997 and a New Zealand dance troop to Jamaica in 2009. Also in 2009, she directed and choreographed CATS for Nelson Musical Theatre.

Roger McKenzie started his involvement in Entertainment in School Concerts back in the middle of last century. He was a boy soprano at St Andrews Cathedral in Sydney. His first musical was OKLAHOMA! in 1963. From 1974 to 1976, Roger worked for Air NZ in Auckland and performed around the North Island in Review and Promotions with Roland and Yvonne Everard: and was Helen (2010 Conference Key note Speaker) Medlyn's "Honey Bun". It was during this time that he met Nola Speir and Sandy Sewell from the then NZFOS. Returning to Sydney, he directed his first musical, CHARLIE GIRL, in 1979 and has been producing, directing, conducting, performing, customer servicing and administering Community Theatre ever since. In 1993, Nanette Frew (from Chapel and Co) invited the NZFOS Executive Committee to hold a meeting in Sydney and through Roland and Yvonne, contacted Roger with an offer to address a collection of local theatre companies on the merits of the Federation. That meeting was the start of the Association of Community Theatre (Inc.) – A.C.T. {we didn't think that Aussie Fosies was a suitable title}. Roger attended

his first NZFOS Conference in Auckland in 1994. This will be his tenth. He has worked on professional productions of AN IDEAL HUSBAND, SHOWBOAT, THE SOUND OF MUSIC, THE RETURN OF ULYSSES, ANNIE, THE MERRY WIDOW, POPCORN, PIAF, THE MASTERSINGERS OF NUREMBERG and THE LION KING as well as numerous WIGGLES shows and a number of PANTOMIMES, REVIEWS and TRADE PROMOTIONS. He moved to Tweed Heads (Northern N.S.W.) in 2001 and became the Gold Coast Area's Reviewer for STAGE WHISPERS MAGAZINE in 2007.

Stuart Hendricks is currently the Manager of the Music Licensing and Hire Department for Hal Leonard Australia. He has a background in Music, Education and Arts Management. **The Hal Leonard Corporation**, founded in 1947, is today the world leader in the print music industry. In 2002 the Australian arm commenced operations in their Music Licensing and Hire Department for Australia, New Zealand and parts of Asia. They now represent many of the world's leading classical and theatrical publishers and rights agencies that include Music Theatre International, Josef Weinberger Ltd, Dramatists Play Service Inc, Boosey and Hawkes Music Publishing, Faber Music, Schott Music and Oxford University Press. With this extensive music theatre catalogue they currently represent such works as **DISNEY'S BEAUTY AND THE BEAST, ANNIE, MISS SAIGON, LES MISERABLES, RENT, GUYS AND DOLLS, FIDDLER ON THE ROOF, WEST SIDE STORY** and works of such composers as **Stephen Sondheim, Stephen Schwartz, Leonard Bernstein, Frank Leosser** and many more.

Stuart Mitchell has been leading the New Zealand Sales team at Selecon since 2001 and spent many years on and off the boards at the Harlequin Theatre in Howick, doing everything from Lighting design and operation to production & stage management and a wee bit o' singing (in the chorus). Stuart's passionate about light and lighting and the products he sells to make lighting a true art form. Philips Selecon's products have now been joined by products from other world class companies such as Varilite* (moving lights), Color Kinetics (LED) and Strand (dimming and control), making Stuarts lighting product palette one of the best around. Stuart's quite fond of Star Trek too. Contact details: Philips Selecon, 19-21 Kawana Street Northcote, Auckland.

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Introducing the MTNZ Executive (those not listed above)

Patron and Life Member - Donna Philpott, QSM - Affectionately known to all as Dame Donna, she was involved with Wellington Musical Theatre for 40 years, retiring in 2003. Her main role had been as production manager 18 years, overseeing and organising rights, auditions, personnel and all of the other tasks associated with getting "a show on the road". Instrumental in forming the Musical Theatre Consortium that negotiated the rights to bring Les Mis to NZ the first time in 1994, she then went onto gain the performing rights for 42nd Street in 1995. Donna is firmly committed to musical theatre throughout NZ and was the MTNZ Zone Three representative for 23 years. She was honoured with Life Membership of MTNZ in 2008 and the MTNZ highest honour - Patron.

Zone One Representative – Delwyn Smith

Delwyn's involvement in theatre started in 1983 when she was dragged in to help on the props team of Mikado by a girlfriend, by the end of 1984 she was hooked. She joined the committee of North Shore Operatic Society in 1987. Her involvement has been Stage Manager, Props, Crew and Production Manager and more recently, Publicity. Delwyn was President of NSOS in 1995 – 1996, at which time NSOS performed A Chorus Line which was the first show performed in the newly built Bruce Mason Center, and again in 2001 – 2002 at which time the society changed its name to North Shore Music Theatre. Delwyn was on the Board of the Pumphouse for a period of 3 years from 1998 to 2001. Delwyn married her husband Mike in 1992 and they have a daughter Tracey and son Paul. She now looks after her granddaughter Jennifer full time while Paul and Vicky work, and after school Levi and Krystal, Jennifer's brother and sister, also her other Granddaughter Ryiah, Tracey's daughter a couple of days a week. Delwyn has been on the Executive for MTNZ since 2003 and has very much enjoyed being part of the team.

Zone Four Representative– Ross Benbow

Born in Takaka, Golden Bay, Ross' family came from South Canterbury and his Mum sang in the Anglican Church Choir in Ashburton and his Dad played in the brass band in Temuka. Both Ross' parents became involved with the Takaka Drama Society and the Motueka Dramatic Society when they lived in Motueka. Ross moved to Nelson when he was eight and was involved with church pageants etc. The first show he remembers seeing was The Tinder Box produced by Nelson Repertory in the 1950's. His next memorable show was the Scots College (Wellington) production of Ruddigore in 1960 – it made him want to get involved in theatre, which he then did the very next year in Nelson's Oklahoma. His first show was in 1965

with Nelson Operatic and he has been involved ever since. Ross has done everything from chorus to spotlight operator, painting sets, hanging lights to meeting his wife Pam in Fiddler on the Roof where they played opposite each other as Hodel and Perchek. For his sins, he has also been production manager for many shows. A little bit of directing has come his way and he has also been on the Nelson Musical Theatre Executive for a number of years including President, Vice President, Secretary and has also been made a life member. Ross says he enjoys the theatre life and although it can be frustrating at times, it is always interesting. In his other life he is a real estate salesperson in Nelson.

Life Members

Donna Philpott QSM, Jim Fenton QSO, Tim Blennerhassett, Len Speir, Ella Duddridge, Shona Spencer, John MacGibbon, Sandra Sewell, Ray Spence, Kevin Murphy, John Antony

Honorary Auditor – Len Speir; Honorary Solicitor – Markham Lee;
Business Advisor – Kevin Murphy