

# Zone Two Newsletter - June 2009

## TALOS

The Awamutu Light Operatic Society has just completed a very successful season of 'Shirley Valentine' with 10 performances.

This went really well, great write up in local press.

We are auditioning for Wizard of Oz early June for season August /Sept.



Random Fact  
A Gaiety Girl – 1893  
This was one of the first hit musicals

## Morrinsville Little Theatre

Morrinsville Little Theatre has recently concluded a short season of Roger Hall's play "Taking Off", directed by Garth Summers. We had a 96% attendance rate which makes us think maybe another night or two..... The show went very well and the cast and director have had lots of complimentary calls, which is very rewarding. For those of you who don't know the play, it is unusual in that there is almost no interaction between the four characters, and little movement is necessary; it's a word play rather than an action one. It is vintage Roger Hall.

## Rotorua Musical Theatre

### LADIES OF THE NIGHT

Rotorua Musical Theatre's latest production *Ladies of the Night* was directed by Jan Beets and assisted by Merv Beets. The show ran from 2<sup>nd</sup> May to 16<sup>th</sup> May 2009 at the Casa Blanca theatre in Rotorua.

The show is a light hearted review of 30 plus contemporary songs, and starts with an early morning wake-up call until the clock quickly moves through their night determining which songs about the night should be sung.

In keeping with the RMT's encouragement of young talent we had 8 new singers and dancers in the 14 strong cast who made their stage debut.

The experienced Laura Mansell was our choreographer for this show, and with the solos, company songs, dancing, sparkling costumes and excellent lighting by Michael Hermans, made for a dazzling night of light entertainment. From melancholy ballads to lively dance numbers, snippets of light hearted humour, there was something that would appeal to everyone in the audience from these young talented entertainers.

During the two week season, audience numbers picked up, no doubt helped by the good reviews, letters and independent notices printed in the Rotorua newspapers.

Rotorua Musical Theatre looks forward to working with members of this talented cast in future productions



#### *Random Fact*

***Hellzapoppin'*** is a musical revue which was a Broadway hit, running from 22 September 1938 to 17 December 1941, and was at the time the longest-running Broadway musical with 1,404 performances — one of only three plays to run more than 500 performances in the 1930s

## Tauranga Musical Theatre

Kicking off the beginning of the year was "Arabian Knights". A youth theatre production written and directed by Marlise Hughes and Matthew Roderick. Our committee supported this initiative as an investment in the youth (future) of our Society, acknowledging that it may in fact cost us some money. Happily, the reverse was true, and not only was it a huge artistic success, but produced a profit in the order of \$ 2000.

We have just completed our season of Eurobeat, with a bit of a mixed result. Many of our Patrons left telling us that they really enjoyed the production, (including the rather raucous bunches from Whakatane and Hamilton - THANKS !) however overall Audience numbers did not reach expectations, and it looks like we will make a modest loss on this one. Our thanks go out to Merv from Matamata that came over and helped out with the lighting design, and then as crew. A real example of how our societies in Zone 2 can benefit from working together.

Our major production for 2009 is Cats, and Grant Meese from Auckland has cast this already. We are very pleased with the strength of our cast, and are looking forward to when rehearsals will start in mid June. The budget for this production is well in excess of our traditional budgets, and as a result our ticket prices have had to be lifted. We felt that with a big name show like Cats, it did give us the opportunity to raise our prices, as they have remained relatively constant for approximately 12 years. Opening night is 5th September.

- We have confirmed that we will be mounting the production "Fang Re-Vamped" in October of this year (a change from our initial plans of Cabaret). There is already huge interest in auditions, and you can expect the same level of attention being spent on both what happens onstage, as well as the themeing of the auditorium. Marlise and Matthew are already well down the planning path for this one.
- Planning is underway for our 2010 production of Miss Saigon as part of the Consortium. We have appointed Toni Henderson as the Director, and are working through the appointment of Heads of Departments. This is earlier than our traditional 'big' show, and will be staged in April 2010.

One more sad note (which will be of interest to those society's that have amalgamated with their Repertory equivalent), Lois Heagren who has been President of Tauranga Repertory Society had a significant medical event, that has left her with very limited movement in the left side of her body. Currently in hospital, and learning to do basic things like talk and eat again. Our thoughts go out to her.

We are looking forward to hosting the Zone meeting in July, and hope to see many of our friends from our Zone at both this, and our production of Cats.

## Musikmakers

"Musikmakers has just completed a very successful season of Cabaret. Jane Barnett (Director), Coryn Knapper (Musical Director) and Gayle Williams (Choreographer) have lead this very talented cast to success. With audiences never going under 75% capacity, Musikmakers is very happy with the outcome.



It should be noted that Musikmakers has noticed a change in the ticket sales. In the past the box office would have had a steady trickle of ticket sales throughout the season, however this is not the case with Cabaret. For Cabaret, patrons are not booking until the very last minute. Not sure if this is a one off trend for Cabaret, or if it is a reflection of the financial crisis.



Musikmakers will be holding Auditions for Sound of Music on the 13th and 14th of June.

## Matamata Musical Theatre

Matamata have complete a successful season of Reach for the Stars. The Sunday programme was a sellout out with very good attendances. Reports have been very encouraging. We are planning a new Xmas Dinner show with a Chinese theme this year. This type of show has been very successful in the past, so we are hoping this will be the same.

## Thames Musical Theatre

Thames Musical Theatre is currently rehearsing the Sound of Music. Director is Richard Carey from Tauranga. Opening night is June 20<sup>th</sup>.

At our recent AGM in addition to electing the officers the decision was made to form a committee to look into amalgamating with our local Little Theatre group. We understand from other groups that have done this that it can be a long complicated process

## Putaruru Theatre Players

Putaruru Theatre Players are putting on a play "Cash on Delivery" by Michael Cooney June 23-27 June comedy a farce at its best! Cast of 10

End of year show is a musical "Rucking Rugby" or something close to that adapted slightly from the musical "Rocka socka" On Stage late November early December.

Sad news was we had to cancel "Grease" because of the lack of men! Plenty of women however!

## Theatre Whakatane

Theatre Whakatane has just completed a 10 performance season of The Sound of Music, with 8 of the 10 performances to full houses. A total of 118 people were involved in cast and crew. The black minimal set was well received by the public.

The season was 80% sold by opening night. A revised ticketing scheme, where members were granted the ability to buy ticket for others at a discount rate, was trialed. The free member seat was dropped. The previous bulk ticket (buy 6 get 1 free) scheme was dropped. The end result was an increase in the average seat price with minimal grumbling from the public. We are looking at introducing affiliate society memberships so affiliated bodies can get the member discount as an aid to marketing and assist pre sales.

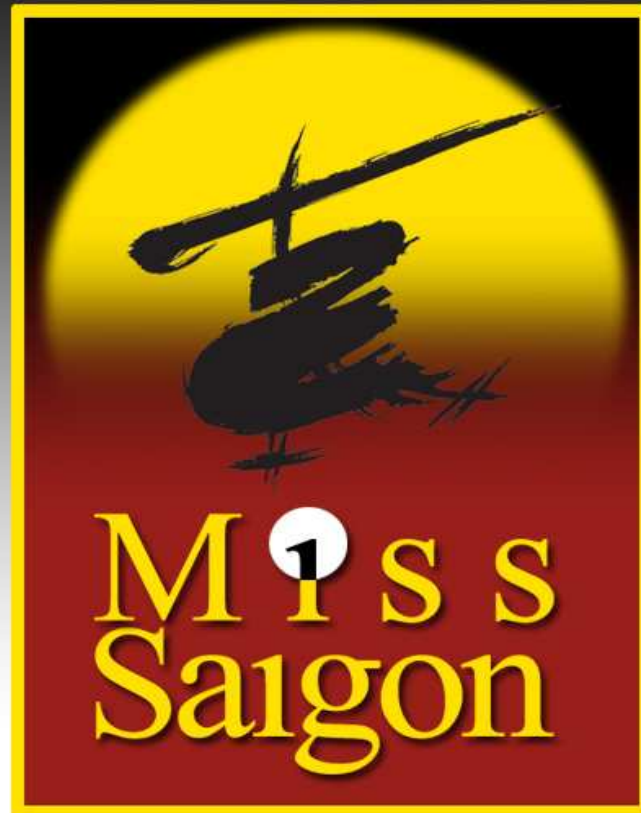
Mid season the society held a celebratory function to recognise 50 years since the inception of the Whakatane Operatic Society. This was well attended by past and present members, with 3 founding members also present. Of interest was the lack of attendance from performers; the bulk of the attendees were either retired members or current committee or organisational members.

A pantomime is scheduled for October, with a play being sourced as a contingency plan. There is a lot of interest by the younger set in the panto.

In July the society has entered into a joint venture with one of the local Rotary clubs to stage a junior talent quest. Negotiations with Rotary are interesting as they have no concept of the production costs and are also very risk averse.

The society is assisting Whakatane High school technically with their production of Grease in June.

Hamilton  
**MUSICAL THEATRE**  
presents



**Coming to Hamilton  
July 2010**

# From Your Zone Rep

Well what a very busy Zone we have, there have been so many shows on in May, unfortunately I could not get my helicopter sorted in time to visit you all. However I did get to Ladies Night in Rotorua and to Whakatane to the Sound of Music and to join in their 50th Birthday celebrations. Both shows were very good and a thoroughly enjoyable experience.

50 years is a long time and so our heartiest congratulations go to Whakatane on reaching this milestone and the success of their sold out Sound of Music was certainly a good omen for the future of musical theatre in Whakatane.

I also attended Musikmakers production of Cabaret; a very good show with some amazing talent.

Thank you Rotorua, Whakatane and Hamilton for the hospitality extended to me on these occasions and I will do my utmost best to get to a performance from every society in the zone at some time throughout the year.

I would encourage you all to go to as many of the shows in the Zone as you can, it is good to see the comradeship of the societies in the zone and you will be made very welcome when you attend other Societies. There is a wealth of experience and knowledge within our Societies and it is very important for us all to support one another.

Don't forget the Zone Meeting being held in Tauranga on Saturday the 11th July - there will be separate notification sent with programme for the day attached once this has been finalized. Please make every effort to get as many representatives to this meeting as you can and I can guarantee you will have an enjoyable informative day and meet many likeminded people.

A lighting and sound workshop weekend is being planned for the 22nd and 23rd of August. Again information on this will come to you all separately with registration forms, programme, cost etc. We plan on keeping the cost as low as possible to give all societies the opportunity to send some personnel to this very worthwhile weekend. This will be held in Riverlea Theatre in Hamilton so keep this weekend free.

Well goodbye to another month Xmas is on the horizon – Auckland Conference is not far away and whats more is within driving distance for us all so start saving those pennies now for the celebration of a life time. I

I urge you to contact me with any problems, concerns etc and if I cannot help then I will find someone who can. I am here to help you all.

Ngairé Holmes  
Zone 2 Representative