



Chair's Report for the 28 July 2014 AGM

The last year has been a time of consolidation, success and growth for the Victoria Theatre. Our operator The Vic Limited has continued to consolidate the sustainability of the business; the Trust has successfully completed its digital conversion; and audience numbers have continued to grow.

Operations

The Vic Limited has operated the theatre for nearly two years and manager Philipp Jaser has settled into the business and made good progress in developing The Vic as a community cinema with Auckland-wide appeal. While cinema continues to be the main focus of the business, the performing arts and community events continue to be a strong component of the Vic's programme. Philipp has shown a real commitment to performing arts and has worked hard to put The Vic on the map as a performing arts venue. He has succeeded in developing The Vic as a lively cultural space as well as a cinema and this has widened the audiences and diversified the product he offers.

Audience numbers have increased strongly over the year. There have been 38,400 seats sold over the past 12 months and we have seen a 20% increase over the first half of this year. This is mainly due to the conversion of two cinemas to digital projection and the success of a number of music events at the Vic. This has had a flow-on effect to the VTT as The Trust receives a one dollar donation on every ticket sold at The Vic. Consequently the better the Vic does the more money the Trust has to spend on the building. The Trust also earns income from rental from the Didas tapas and wine bar.

Digital Conversion

The Trust's most important achievement for the year has been raising the funds and purchasing two digital projectors. Without DCP projection we knew the Vic would simply not be sustainable and set out to raise the \$180,000 necessary to convert the two large cinemas to digital projection. We received grants from the ASB Community Trust, Lotteries, Pub Charities, NZ Community Trust, the Becroft Foundation and Trillion Trust and want to thank these organisations for their support. The Trust ran a very successful raffle, held two Peta Mathias shows and received a number of donations to raise around \$23,000 towards the projector conversion.

In the second half of last year we installed the two projectors with associated new screens and sound equipment. This was a very satisfying achievement as immediately we had access to all the latest films and could compete with other cinemas.

Live Performance and Community

The Vic is establishing itself as a viable and attractive venue for live performance. We had 34 live events over the year and music shows are still the most popular with several top quality New Zealand acts performing. Don McGlashan, Anika Moa, Nathan Haines, Beyondensemble and Julia Deans to name a few performed at the Vic to full houses.

Our downstairs Victoria Theatre also hosted a dance performances, plays and talent quests and is becoming a popular small venue for emerging artists.

The Vic continues to be a highly popular venue for community and fund raising events and we had 48 such events at the theatre over the year. These ranged from PlayCentre, Scouts, Dyslexia Society, Heritage and Bible School events and we even hosted a wedding. Film nights specials at the Vic have become a highly popular fundraising vehicle for many groups in our community.

The Vic has developed into a very family friendly place with a wide selection of children's movies, a venue for private birthday party screenings and school holiday film making courses. These are growing in popularity and are often now booked out in advance.

Maintenance and Improvements

Last year during heavy rain event we had a serious leak problem into the two main cinemas. We discovered that the roof gutter details could not cope with such deluges and this has been remedied. There have been on going work on the theatre toilets and various small improvements. A major improvement early this year was the building of a backstage toilet and shower room for performers.

Restoration

The technical requirements for seismic strengthening were determined quite some time ago. Since then many other community buildings have also joined the need for major capital grant funding which the traditional grant organisations cannot handle and this is a watching brief at this time. Seismic and other restoration work may be some time away and we are mindful that in the interim The Vic needs to provide a comfortable venue form patrons. The lobby and some seating upgrades will be required in the short to medium term.

Trustees

Local architect Hamish Grotrain joined the Trust this year and is making a huge contribution to our restoration planning. At our June meeting Mark Sigglekow and Margot McRae were elected to continue as co chairs, Matt Kemp as treasurer and David Downs as secretary. Karen Webster will continue to take the lead on grant applications, Gillian Werry on legal matters. Hamish Grotrian will be responsible for our restoration plans. Rob Lauder is a Vic Friends volunteer who has worked to keep the Vic running attending to maintenance matters. We wish to thank this great team for all the work they have done over the last year. It has been a highly satisfying year and we look forward to a continuing bright future for The Vic.

Margot McRae

Mark Sigglekow