

18. THE SUMMERTIMES PROGRAMME



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Corporate Plan Output: SummerTimes	

The purpose of this report is to provide a post-festival brief of the 2001 SummerTimes Festival, which was co-ordinated by the Leisure Unit's Events Team.

SUMMERTIMES FESTIVAL

SummerTimes, the ever-popular festival of free, fun, outdoor family entertainment featured eight large-scale events and several smaller concert series in 2001, and drew an estimated collective audience of 158,750 despite two key events being cancelled due to poor weather.

New Year's Eve Event

This annual gathering in Cathedral Square was unfortunately cancelled owing to extreme weather. One of Christchurch's most dynamic rock bands 'Scarecrow' had been booked for this – a popular band with whom we are currently negotiating for this year's event.

Despite the pouring rain, the Police estimated some 3,000 hardy souls braved the elements to herald in the New Year in the Square.

Teddy Bears' Picnic

A much-loved family picnic held in North Hagley Park, this event caters not just for children and their parents, but also for people of all ages who have a soft spot for Teddy Bears. This event was cancelled owing to poor weather.

The event had been revamped from that of previous years into a 'total teddy experience' with wonderful new elements being added, namely Toy Town, Teddy Harbour (utilising Victoria Lake), Teddy Bear Market, Crayola Pavement Art and the Mobile Children's Library. This great new design will be recreated for the Teddy Bears' Picnic in 2002.

Tip Top Icecream have reconfigured their sponsorship nationwide and are no longer the naming rights sponsor for this event. The company will stay involved in the event, but will take a lesser sponsorship role alongside Griffins. A new naming rights sponsor for this popular event is currently being sought.

Kids' Play

This free community event, designed for five to twelve-year olds, once again featured Amazing Games and Cushion Theatre, and was held in each Christchurch ward in mid-January. 'Rumpelstiltskin', performed by the Court Jesters, was the featured play this year. The modern version of the classic children's tale delighted the audiences and the Amazing Games team worked their magic on all ages. 1,210 children attended and audience totalled 1,750 including parents.

Botanic Bands

The sounds of Christchurch's municipal pipe and brass bands flowed throughout the Botanic Gardens for six consecutive Sundays running January to March. Steady audiences of approximately 100 seated plus through-traffic enjoyed each performance in warm weather conditions.

Cathedral Square Lunchtime Concerts

The Friday lunchtime concerts were enhanced by a selection of top local talent, some of whom are now based internationally. From the folk strains of the acoustic guitar duo to the razzmatazz of the Garden City Big Band, from the rock sound of young emerging talent Duluxeboy to the Celtic funk of the Two Jimmys, there was something for everyone and the audiences (2,400 in total) gathered to soak up the sounds of summer in the Central City.

Retro!

This "blast from the past" nostalgic event (formerly known as Strawberry Fields) provided a celebration of flares and disco, polyester and sideburns, all under the cover of a 1970s theme.

12,000 people gathered in 34-plus degree temperatures in North Hagley Park to enjoy the well-loved hits performed by local artists Stonefish, Puree and the Vague-As Brothers. Over a third of the audience dressed up in 1970s and retro gear, with prizes being awarded for the widest flares, biggest medallion and the best overall costume.

Summer Theatre

This year's theatre production of "Whose Bard is it Anyway?" was held in the delightful setting of the Daffodil Lawns in the Botanic Gardens. Christchurch's much-loved Court Jesters involved the audience from start to finish, creating hilarious, unpredictable, unscripted prose, poetry and song, with no two shows the same. Twenty lively performances attracted a total of 16,000 people over the three-week period.

Twilight Series

Combining the magic of old-fashioned drive-in movies with superb summer weather, the Telecom Twilight Series transformed the Victoria Park Amphitheatre into a cinematic experience with a difference. Three movies were shown over three consecutive weeks, drawing larger crowds than had been anticipated – a total of 9,000. A new event for SummerTimes, the Twilight Series proved extremely popular, so much so that the 2002 series will head out into the Christchurch community wards. Increasing to six movies, light pre-movie entertainment will highlight the talents of local emerging jazz artists.

Starry Nights

With dramatically declining audiences at Candlelight Opera, a new format was needed and Starry Nights was born! Under a clear evening sky sprinkled with twinkling stars, ASB Bank Starry Nights certainly lived up to its pre-event hype as a 'stunning showbiz spectacular'.

Over 20,000 gathered in Hagley Park to be wowed by the elaborate costumes, dynamic choreography and the dazzling cast of 500 local performers and musicians showcasing popular hits from the Westend, Broadway and movies. A three-dimensional stage with extended catwalk kept the show flowing from a few surprise entrances from mid-audience. However, very few people will forget the scene of the helicopter rising and circling above the audience during the Mission Impossible Theme or the hauntingly beautiful voice of Hayley Westenra singing 'Time to Say Goodbye'.

With almost double the audience of the past few years' Candlelight Opera, the formula for Starry Nights proved to be an instant hit with the public. Over 50 letters of appreciation came into the Council, talkback radio ran hot with praise for the event and media coverage was extremely high. "97% of those attended were 'satisfied or very satisfied' with ASB Bank Starry Nights". ASB Bank has signed as the naming rights sponsor of this event for a further three years.

Classical Sparks

Celebrating the finale of SummerTimes 2001, Christchurch's biggest annual outdoor event presented a collection of stirring classical music performed by the Christchurch Symphony, Christchurch City Choir and young Canterbury emerging soloists.

Mid-way through the first half, the Crusader Horsemen (dressed as cavalymen) rode through the crowd to the beat of the Light Cavalry Overture, evoking a passionate response from the audience.

With the most perfect conditions for fireworks, the crowd of 100,000 were spellbound by the new pyrotechnic effects utilised (previously seen only at the Sydney Olympic Games) in the vibrant display immaculately timed to the dramatic 1812 Overture, performed by the Christchurch Symphony.

In addition, Rick Armstrong Motors, the naming rights sponsor, gave away a brand new car to a lucky Cantabrian during the show's interval.

SUMMARY

The weather played an unfortunate part in forcing the cancellation of two key events. However, attendance at all other events was high, with record numbers for Starry Nights (based against Candlelight Opera numbers) and a superb turnout for Summer Theatre and the new Twilight Series.

New events Starry Nights and the Twilight Series proved more popular than anticipated and were an instant hit with the public of Christchurch.

Council funding for SummerTimes 2001 resulted in a cost of \$2.70 per attendee (this did not include the two cancelled events).

The festival received high media coverage with Classical Sparks in particular receiving greatly increased coverage in the Press.

For the first time 140,000 full colour festival brochures were produced and delivered into every household in Christchurch with a positive response. "62% remembered the SummerTimes Festival programme that was delivered to their home"* (*Data provided by Opinions Market Research. Full statistics will be presented at the meeting.)

In order to keep enjoying its current level of success the programme for SummerTimes is continually being reviewed to provide fresh entertainment in line with the changing times. This year's Classical Sparks and Teddy Bears' Picnic have been revamped within the existing event structure.

Chairman's

Recommendation: That the information be received.