



Deaf theatre patrons treated to New Zealand Sign Language drama

Going to the theatre is a pleasure taken for granted by many; but not by the Deaf and hard of hearing. In 2015 the Auckland Theatre Company, aware of the barriers that Deaf people contend with, staged two NZSL-interpreted performances with sponsorship from the Oticon Foundation. Under the company's Accessibility Programme, they staged *Heroes* by Gerald Sibleyras, and Frank Loesser's *Guys and Dolls*.

Heroes, translated by Tom Stoppard, played for three weeks at the Maidment Theatre, attracting over 5,000 patrons. It included a signed performance on Sunday 13 September. The Audi Season of Frank Loesser's *Guys and Dolls* attracted close to 8,000 patrons and the signed performance was on Sunday 8 November.

This is the second year ATC has provided the Accessibility Programme for vision-impaired and Deaf audiences. Videos were posted on ATC's Facebook page with alerts sent to Deaf and vision impaired patrons and supporters.



NZSL Interpreter, Dan Hanks and performers, Ray Henwood and George Henare from the sign interpreted performance of *HEROES*.

Make sure you get your funding applications in by 31 March ... Grant applications close then, so send yours to the Oticon Foundation as soon as possible. Check out the back of *Soundscape* to find out how to apply or go to www.oticon.org.nz.




World Hearing Day and thanks David Underwood

Over the past 40 years the Oticon Foundation has donated millions of dollars to New Zealand organisations to assist the hearing impaired and in recent years the Oticon Foundation in Denmark has also provided additional millions to fund research projects at Auckland and Canterbury universities. *Soundscape*s reports on some of these projects.

This edition coincides with World Hearing Day on Thursday, 3 March. Its theme is 'Childhood hearing loss: act now, here is how!' For information please see <https://www.nfd.org.nz/our-work/news/hearing-week-2016-29-february-to-6-march/>

The Trustees wish to remind you that it's time again to apply for the Oticon Foundation grants. How can we help you make a difference to the lives of people with hearing impairment? We need your applications by 31 March. See www.oticon.org.nz or the back page for how to apply.

David Underwood, a founding trustee when the Oticon Foundation in New Zealand was established in 1976, resigned at the end of last year due to health issues. Thank you David for your dedication and stewardship over 40 years and good wishes for the future.

Karen Pullar
Secretary to the Trustees


THE OTICON FOUNDATION IN NEW ZEALAND WAS ESTABLISHED IN OCTOBER 1976.

INCOME GENERATED FROM THE FOUNDATION'S INVESTMENTS IS DISTRIBUTED TO GROUPS AND ORGANISATIONS SEEKING FINANCIAL SUPPORT FOR PROJECTS THAT BENEFIT THE HEARING IMPAIRED.

Barriers fall with new technology

Information and communication technology has created opportunities to participate more equally in the community, seek a broader range of job options, and access information. Smart phones and tablets now allow Deaf people to use a variety of tools to communicate anywhere, at any time,' says Dr Phillip Harper, international expert on accessibility and technology for Deaf people.

Phillip was the keynote speaker at the Sign Language Interpreters Association of New Zealand July Conference. His attendance was sponsored by the Oticon Foundation in New Zealand.

Never before, he says, has ICT impacted so greatly on communication options available for Deaf people, and subsequently for sign language interpreters. Now with a plethora of new technology, there are many ways for Deaf people to communicate. Sign language interpreting can be provided from remote locations, and New Zealand's emerging Video Relay Service (VRS) and Video Remote Interpreting (VRI)



Dr Harper speaking at the conference, 'New technology has opened up many new ways for Deaf people to communicate'.

allow Deaf people to communicate in their own language.

'The Deaf community, sign language interpreters, and the wider community need to build awareness and learn how to use these new services to maximise the experience and benefits,' Phillip says.

The challenges sign language interpreters face, he says, is to be able to adapt to this new interpreting

environment. This includes learning how to use the technology, manage the communication protocols in a remote setting, and subtly change their interpreting style to suit a 2-dimensional experience.

'As interpreters immerse themselves in becoming skilled and working with new technology, the availability and quality of services will improve,' Phillip says.

GRANT UPDATE: LISTEN HEAR! NEW ZEALAND

This year sees the roll out of Listen Hear! NZ research, spearheaded by The National Foundation for the Deaf (NFD). Between March and July a sector-wide national analysis of the social and economic impacts of hearing loss in New Zealand will begin.

'It's a time of seeking information as we carry out research to develop Listen Hear! New Zealand,' says Louise Carroll, CEO of NFD. 'This benchmark research will be a comprehensive look at the situation people with hearing loss are facing in New Zealand in 2016.'

The study is funded by the Oticon Foundation of New Zealand and the Zena and Jack Peat Charitable Trust. Enquiries can be directed to Louise Carroll, CEO at NFD.

New research on restoring speech recognition in noisy environments

Age and sensorineural hearing loss limit the ability to perceive temporal (timing) cues in speech, that help listeners to segregate voices and understand speech when many people are speaking. This accounts for some of their speech perception difficulties, especially in noisy backgrounds.

Research by Dr Abin Kuruvilla-Mathew and colleagues at the University of Auckland and the Eriksholm Research Centre in Denmark has shown that adults with slight or mild sensorineural hearing loss also have impaired auditory processing of fine structure timing cues.

New research funded by the Oticon Foundation in Denmark will allow Dr Kuruvilla-Mathew and Professor

Suzanne Purdy at the University of Auckland and their colleagues at Eriksholm Research Centre, Dr Niels Henrik Pontoppidan and Dr Filip Marchman Rønne, to extend this research to test whether these lost cues can be restored through artificial signal processing.



Dr Abin Kuruvilla-Mathew and Professor Suzanne Purdy analysing research data.



Audiometry and otoscopy with primary school children in Tonga.

Researching the hearing health of Fijian and Tongan children

Improved long-term ear and hearing health of children in Tonga and Fiji are the ultimate goals of two epidemiological studies currently underway at the University of Auckland. PhD students Fiona Langridge and Elizabeth Holt are supported in their work by a grant for essential equipment from the Oticon Foundation in New Zealand.

Elizabeth's study investigates the prevalence of childhood ear disease and hearing impairment in Fiji. 'I aim to improve understanding and management of the disease and work closely with the Fiji National University and medical staff at the local tertiary hospital. I will be visiting frequently to ensure local collaboration and relevance. Data collection begins mid-2016,' she says.

Hearing is just one component of

Fiona Langridge's study. 'Little is known about child health in Tonga,' she says, 'so we gathered data on all aspects'. 'The results should identify the key health issues faced by these children and help us develop interventions. As a result of the study, fifteen percent of the children were referred to the local ENT clinic for further review,' Fiona says.

Both Fiona and Elizabeth say their research could apply to the broader Pacific region, and has the potential to make a positive impact on the health, economic, and social outcomes for Pacific Island and New Zealand children. They say the research could improve the prevention, identification, and treatment of ear disease and hearing impairment and assist in the development of sustainable ear and hearing services in the Pacific region.

Tinnitus relief research wins Oticon Foundation student prize

Mary Kerridge has been awarded the 2015 Oticon Foundation Audiology Prize for the best Master of Audiology thesis at the University of Auckland. The award recognises work of original and outstanding quality in audiological research. Mary's thesis: 'Transcranial Random Noise Stimulation [tRNS] and Adaptation Level Theory for Tinnitus Relief', was supervised by Dr Grant Searchfield and Dr Giriraj Singh.

'Tinnitus is a grave public health concern,' Mary says. 'About 275,000 New Zealanders are impacted by it, and with the expected increase in hearing loss as our population ages, its prevalence will certainly increase. There is no current cure, so research into this field is crucial and timely.'

Mary's thesis explored the effectiveness of a new treatment, tRNS, to

suppress tinnitus perception. 'My results show it is a potential tool but the treatment requires further investigation and fine tuning to optimise its effectiveness,' she says.

Mary is currently employed at Waikato Hospital and working towards her Clinical Competency Certificate. Her future ambition is to complete a PhD with further research on tinnitus relief.



Paediatric hearing care and clinical best practice

Assessment and treatment of children with hearing loss has significantly improved in the past 30 years, thanks in part to the work of a Canadian husband-and-wife team, Professor Sheila and Dr Shane Moodie. They were in New Zealand to speak at the annual Oticon Paediatric Seminar on current paediatric hearing care and clinical best practice.

Shane and Sheila collaborated to develop the Desired Sensation Level (DSL) method of hearing aid selection and fitting in children, and his real-ear-to-coupler difference (RECD) measurement procedure has changed how hearing aids are fitted to children.

Shane points to the development of a systematic (evidence based) approach to both testing and fitting hearing aids as the most significant development over the 36 years he has been working in this field.

Sheila Moodie is Chair of the Knowledge and Implementation in Paediatric Audiology (KIPA) group. This group of academics and professionals meets twice a year to critically evaluate and share current research. "Regardless of where you live in the world," she says 'professional practice behaviours correlate with the quality of care you receive, and by collaborating and sharing information we avoid having to "reinvent the wheel";' she says.

Sheila says it is also important that professionals have forums, such as the Oticon Paediatric Seminar, to share knowledge, expertise, and concerns, and ask questions.

The seminar brought together more than 40 clinicians, advisers, and teachers of deaf children from around New Zealand. The Moodies were guests of the Oticon Foundation in New Zealand as part of its commitment to professional development.



How to apply for grants

Applications must include:

1. The name and address of applicant
2. If relevant, the organisation represented and position of applicant within the organisation, plus copies of latest balance sheet and annual report
3. Details of expenditure involved
4. Information about funding you are seeking from any other organisation for this or supplementary projects
5. Overseas travel details where applicable. Please state whether an applicant/s will be returning to New Zealand permanently after the visit is completed
6. How the hearing impaired in New Zealand will benefit from your project/research
7. Information about how you will publicise your project and its results. (We would like you to seek as wide an audience as possible)

8. Details about how you will promote the Oticon Foundation if your application is successful

Applicants applying for project funding should also include:

1. Title of project
2. Summary of project (not exceeding 150 words)
3. Qualifications of applicant relevant to project
4. Aims and design of project, and expected completion date

Applications for grants other than project funding should also include:

1. Details of grant requested
2. Reasons for request

Successful applicants will be required to:

1. Submit a report (five copies) within three months of completion of the project
2. Disseminate results or information from the project to as wide an

audience as possible, such as to the bulletins and newsletters of professional groups, hearing impaired and Deaf groups

3. Acknowledge the Oticon Foundation in any reports or publications about your project/research

deadline

Grants are allocated annually.

Applications (an electronic copy (Word or PDF) and four hard copies) should be made no later than 31 March in any year.

Applicants will be notified whether their grant application has been accepted by 30 June of the same year.

Please address applications to:

The Secretary
Oticon Foundation in New Zealand
PO Box 28058, Kelburn
Wellington 6150
Phone: 021 647 330
E-mail: info@oticon.org.nz
www.oticon.org.nz

Oticon Foundation 2015 grant recipients

AUCKLAND THEATRE COMPANY, delivery of signed and audio described theatrical performances.

ELIZABETH HOLT AND FIONA LANGRIDGE, University of Auckland, support of PhD research into hearing problems of children in Pacific Island countries

ELLEN MA AND ASHLEIGH DONALD, travel grant to attend the 2015 Eriksholm Summer Camp, Denmark.

MG MARTIN TRUST, travel grant for Professor Mary Pat Moeller to present at the NZ Audiological Society conference.

NATIONAL FOUNDATION FOR THE DEAF, Advocacy programme delivery.

NATIONAL FOUNDATION FOR THE DEAF AND UNIVERSITY OF AUCKLAND, support for national "Listen Hear NZ" research project, to report on the social and economic impact of hearing impairment in New Zealand

NZ AUDIOLOGICAL SOCIETY, travel grant for Dr Sara Mamo to present at the annual conference.

OTICON NEW ZEALAND, travel grant for Professor Sheila Moody and Dr Shane Moody to present at a paediatric educational seminar

SIGN LANGUAGE INTERPRETERS ASSOCIATION OF NEW ZEALAND, travel grant for Dr Phil Harper to present at their annual conference.

SPECIAL OLYMPICS HEALTHY HEARING, grant to purchase a DPOAE unit for hearing screening.

UNIVERSITY OF AUCKLAND, audiology student prize.

UNIVERSITY OF CANTERBURY, support for ongoing research into monitoring otologic surgery to reduce the likelihood of hearing loss.